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DRESSED-UP SIN AND OTHER SERMONS
By William Moses Tidwell

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INTRODUCTION

It seems presumptuous for me to write an introduction for the well-known author of this book. However, I consider it an honor to be invited to do so.

It has been my privilege to hear Rev. W. M. Tidwell in five holiness conventions. These conventions were conducted in Texarkana, Oklahoma City, and Wichita. In the closing service of the first Oklahoma City convention there were one hundred seekers; in the closing service of the second convention in Oklahoma City there were fifty seekers; and in the last service of the Wichita convention there were seventy seekers. Rev. W. M. Tidwell was the speaker for each of these services. Not only is he a soul winner, but he has proved his ability as a pastor by serving the First Church of the Nazarene of Chattanooga, Tennessee, for over forty years. He organized this church, and under his leadership it became one of the greatest in his denomination.

His ministry is constantly in demand for conventions and revivals throughout the United States and Canada. Because of his popularity as a preacher he can accept only one call out of every thirty he receives.

Since it is impossible for him to share his ministry with many thousands who desire to hear him, he is to be commended for preparing these sermons for publication and sending them forth in book form. Those who have heard him and those who desire to hear him and have not had that privilege will welcome this book of sermons. They will bless, challenge, inspire, and search the hearts of the readers.

W. M. Tidwell has a great compassion for the lost and is one of the best evangelistic preachers I have heard. He also loves the church to which he has given so many fruitful years of ministry, and in his preaching gives admonition, instruction, and wise counsel which we will do well to heed. He is always a courteous, Christian gentleman.

Ray Hance

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01 -- DRESSED-UP SIN, OR THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE

In Jeremiah 4:30 we read, "And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life." Here Israel is compared to a spoiled, polluted, and abandoned harlot seeking to atone for her loss by substitutes. God admonishes Israel to consider what she will do. "What wilt thou do?" What course will you pursue? It is a good thing to stop and consider the effects of sin. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The considering is usually done when too late. We will here notice some lessons from the picture of this harlot seeking to keep up appearances.

I. She was spoiled. "When thou art spoiled."

To spoil is to decay, to pollute, to contaminate, to render worthless. That is just what sin will do. Sin does all of this and more. Sin has spoiled the world. "By one man sin entered into the world." The dark stream of sin that broke out in Eden has polluted the world. Sin spoiled Lucifer. It turned him from a high and holy angel into a cunning, malicious, wicked, fiendish devil. I am afraid of anything that will make a devil out of an angel. Behold the mighty throng of vile, nude, smoking, blaspheming, morally unclean as they march to hell. See the 100,000 hobo girls as they roam over the country like vampires. Look at that subtle throng of harlots who ply trains and steamships, polluting, contaminating, and damning. Look at the 500,000 red-handed criminals who rob, murder, and wreck the innocent. Look at the unbelievable record of unnamable diseases which killed more young men in our country, according to reports, than were slain in battle during the first year of World War II.

I have before me an article from the daily paper giving an account of a man murdering ten women. He is known as the choke murderer. That was his method of slaying. He said, "I have spells"; and these spells are attributed to reading obscene literature, drinking, and looking at suggestive nude pictures. But who will be responsible, in the light of eternity, for these horrible crimes? God will hold the man who is responsible for the manufacture and sale of liquor guilty -- also those who use suggestive pictures to advertise their wares. We were sitting in the car downtown recently, waiting for a few minutes, and from where we were sitting we could see and counted twenty-three vile, nude, suggestive pictures of what we suppose is the most popular drink in the world. It is constantly used by most of the best professed Christians. Possibly the pictures of this very drink helped to inspire this choke murderer to these horrible deeds. Will those who partake of this drink be partly responsible at the judgment when this man and the ten women he choked to death meet? The Bible says, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins."

But sin spoils, poisons, and damns. It has spoiled the world, the nations, many homes, and multitudes of individuals. There is no escape for any; the devil and the angels that sinned, Adam and Eve in the holy garden, minister or Christian have not. Sin has cast down and wounded many. "Can one take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27, 28.)

II. What she did when spoiled.

Something must be done. The effects of sin are felt. There is a conscious pollution, loss, condemnation. King Saul felt it when he said, "I have sinned.... [and] played the fool, and have erred exceedingly" (I Sam. 26:21). All who sin play the fool and err exceedingly. David felt it when he sinned. Hear him, "For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me" (Psalms 51:3). He had sinned against Israel, his family, and his own soul; but most terrible of all, he felt he had sinned against God, for all sin is against God. And David wails, "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Psalms 51:4). Peter sinned and he felt it. When he thought on these things, "he went out, and wept bitterly." McBeth sinned and then washed his hands; but the cursed spot will not come out, and he cries, "All the waters in Neptune's ocean will not cleanse this filthy witness from my hands." Sin brings guilt and remorse, and the sinner feels something must be done to atone for the tragedy. We here notice the efforts this harlot makes to do this.

1) She clothes herself with crimson. "Though thou clothest thyself with crimson." She thinks beautiful, flashing, external clothing will atone for internal loss of purity. The harlot has an attire peculiar to herself, all her own. At least, it was that was once. The Bible so declares. The wise man said, "I looked through my casement . . . in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:" and saw a simple "young man void of understanding.... and, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot." Then he gives the fearful results. "He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death" (Prov. 7). But her attire was one of the methods by which she trapped him.

We know if one mentions attire now he is classed as a fanatic. Well, God has much to say about it, for He knows how the devil uses the suggestive type to damn souls. Probably the immodest, suggestive, nude craze is damning more souls than any other one thing today. You say, "It is just a fad." No, if it is an effective method of the devil for damning souls. Professors of holiness are not exempt. We saw a professed holiness woman, singing in a so-called holiness church, so nudely dressed that about all hung their heads in shame as she sang. Too bad when professed Christians and prominent holiness professors adopt the attire of the harlot and then brazenly come into holiness churches and flaunt their nudity on the congregation! Jesus said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). She may profess holiness, but as she thus parades herself she is a menace to society and will probably damn more souls than the liquor monger; and unless she repents, those she has damned will meet her in hell and curse her forever. We know a few of the "broad-minded" will sneer at this, but the judgment will cure them of that. God save us from the attire of the harlot. Looks like a substitute for some loss. The Bible says, "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold" (Psalms 45:13). This refers to an internal experience, but there is a suggestion here of the outward. Some claim the outward has nothing to do with the inward. Well, that is not true, for outward adornment feeds carnal pride. But surely the inward has much to do with the outward. A clean, holy, humble heart will not seek nor enjoy the attire of the harlot. She will adorn herself with modest apparel as women professing godliness (I Tim. 2:10).

2) She decks herself with ornaments of gold. "Though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold." To deck is to array, to dress elegantly. An ornament is "a mark of distinction, decoration." "She clothes herself with crimson, as if she were rich, and decks herself with ornaments of gold, as if her treasures were as full as they had ever been." The Lord seems to put more significance on ornaments than many seem to think. When Israel had discarded God and substituted the golden calf and the Lord declared He would no longer go with them, and they were grieved, the Lord said, "Therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb" (Exodus 33: 5, 6). The stripping of themselves of their ornaments seemed to have been an indication of repentance and humility. When the heathen become Christians, they discard their ornaments and put on clothing; but it does not seem to make any change in this country now. We can remember when people professed the blessing of holiness that they made a clean sweep of all their jewelry, but not so now in most places. Even the brethren are becoming about as bejeweled as the ladies. At the rate we are going now the brethren will soon have to keep silence about the sisters. If the people professing holiness would strip themselves, as Israel of old and as holiness people formerly did,

and cease to feed their pride with such unscriptural adornments and give the price of all this for missions, we would have a sufficient amount to support many missionaries. God says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10: 31). Is this jewelry craze a mere effort to satisfy carnality and atone for some spiritual loss? The woman in the text substitutes gold for virtue. But gold is a poor substitute for either virtue or God.

3) She rends her face with painting. "Though thou rentest thy face with painting." To rend is to tear, to crack, to mutilate. The great Bible expositor, Matthew Henry, says: "She rents her face with painting, puts the best colors she can upon her present distress and does her best to palliate and extenuate her losses, sets a good face upon them." "But this painting.... really rends it; the frequent use of paint spoils the skin, cracks it, and makes it rough; so the case which by false colors has been made to appear better than really it was, when truth comes to light, will look so much the worse." That is the comment of this great commentator.

Will you let me make myself real clear just here? We have conducted services, often in the slums, from Maine to New Orleans, and there was a time when only the harlots used make-up. That was their distinctive mark or badge. That was the sign or token. Now we do not say that all who use this mark are prostitutes, for they are not; but we do say they have adopted that which once was the one distinguishing brand of the harlot. Why should Christians, and even holiness professors, persist in "wearing" this brand of the fallen woman? Jezebel, the most notoriously wicked woman of the Bible, as far as the divine record goes, started this abominable craze. "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window" (II Kings 9:30). But, notwithstanding her painted face and brazenness, Jehu commanded her to be thrown down, and her blood was sprinkled on the wall and she was trodden underfoot. "And they went to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands." And Jehu said, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel" (II Kings 9:35, 36). We would not want to follow the style set by this woman, so cursed by God and continued by harlots.

III. Effects of all her efforts to atone for her loss.

She clothed herself with crimson, she decked herself with ornaments of gold, she painted her face till it was rent; and yet it was all in vain. She was still polluted and spoiled. "In vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life." Her sham, hypocritical substitutes were all in vain. She was hated and despised. Her lovers sought her life. The world hates hypocrisy-hates it in the citizen, the church, or the individual professed Christian.

A little time back a man went down the street crying, "Big, rich, sweet, juicy, ripe strawberries!" and they were selling well. We purchased a box, and the first layer was up to par; but after that they were small, green, sour, and half rotten. That was a hypocrite.

IV. A few examples of modern dressed-up

1) Saloons. We well remember the days of the old saloon. We spent a large part of one night visiting these doleful places at the request of a mother in Memphis, Tennessee, seeking to find her husband and to bring him home to his dying child. Wickedness and vileness indescribable!

We located him toward morning, but learned some things that night. The days of this monster have gone, and the new package house has taken its place. You do not now see the big man with white apron pouring out damnation to the customers. All outward appearances have changed. The closed front with swinging doors has gone. Now the wide-open doors, the neon sign, and the genial gentleman or bewitching barmaid will greet you. But it is the same old debauched hag, just dressed up. God says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink." That puts the curse of God upon every king, president, lawmaker, or citizen who has any part in it. Formerly when one was intoxicated he was just a common drunk, and often ridden to the police station in "Black Maria." But now he or she is taken in some fine car to some hotel or brown-stone front; but anyway they are just plain old common, ordinary drunks. Just dressed up!

2) Harlots. Once they were shunned and looked upon as a menace to society. In the cities they were confined to the red light district; but now they fill many fine homes, live in the best hotels, ride the finest trains, and this sin has become so common that the stigma is about removed. I remember when I was a boy there lived a woman near town who had the reputation of being a harlot. I was almost afraid to pass the home. When I saw her, I looked upon her as a monster. Recently I was in a city where friends put me in the largest and best hotel. There was such revelry that it was about impossible to sleep. About two o'clock in the morning I phoned down to the office and asked the clerk if he could give me any relief. He was kind but said he feared it was impossible. I was, I think, on the tenth floor of the elegant hotel. After getting no relief from the office, I opened the door and looked down the corridor of the hotel. Horrible! There were the rich and respected of the country, but they were just plain, adulterous sinners. Just sin dressed up!

3) Smoking. We will not dwell here. This is too well known. It is said that the tobacco trust plan a cigarette in the mouth of every man, woman, and child in America. Looks as if they have not so far to go. Pitiful to hear these subtle, fiendish falsehoods over the radio! It is so mild, smooth, soothing, nicotineless, and invigorating. One man we heard of said, "I am quitting. It is too sissy to smoke." We were on a bus some time back going from Chattanooga to Anderson, Indiana. I thought they would smoke me to death. We saw the smoke and tobacco evil as we had never seen it before. We found ourselves shivering and shuddering as people besmirched the air with smoke. We saw women had lost all sense of modesty and refinement They would smoke and throw ashes and stubs on the floor around them until it looked worse than a pigpen. We saw mothers with babes on their laps smoke and blow the smoke into the faces of their helpless babies. Some of the babies looked very pale and sick. One mother smoked constantly for about two hundred miles. She was very thin and pale. She looked almost like a skeleton. She had a small baby on her lap that cried nearly all the time. It made the strangest noise when it cried, sounded like a rat squealing. When it would cry, the passengers would turn around to see what it was. The smoking woman would take violent coughing spells. Someone asked her what was the cause. She replied, "Cigarettes." They asked, "Why don't you quit?" The answer was, "I can't" Poor slave! We see little children, boys and girls, smoking. We know they claim it is nice and popular to smoke now, but it is the same old destructive habit, only dressed up.

4) Atheism. It is a fact that atheism has no great champion now like Bob Ingersoll and others. The old-fashioned, blatant infidel, with his foul, blasphemous ravings about God and the Bible, was looked upon as a dangerous monster. To doubt and ridicule the Bible was looked upon as fearful. To question the virgin birth and the deity of Christ was blasphemous. But how different

now! We now have the new school of infidelity. It is in the public schools, the homes, and the pulpits. The devil no longer needs a great champion. He is doing the job more effectively, often through professed followers of Christ. We have an article in which a prominent churchman agrees with another writer where he makes the God of the Bible a monster. He insists that a God who would send judgments upon men is a bully and should be hated. But while many profess to believe in Christ, it is the same old infidelity and atheism that damns in hell-just sin dressed up.

We have become accustomed to sin. Nothing is bad any more. A friend told us the other day of a soldier who said, "I am going to get drunk when peace is declared." His friend said, "You should not do this; you should go to church." The soldier replied, "Why, man, I will do both! I will first go to church and then I will get drunk." That expresses it. Sin has done something to about all of us. You have seen sin down at the factory, shop, store, and everywhere till sin has lost its wickedness. Smoking, drinking, cursing, vulgarity, and unnamable sin! It is really popular to smoke, curse a little, step out a little, drink a little, and serve the devil as about everybody else does. But God says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Standards have not been lowered, but thrown to the wind. But God has not changed, and sin in the sight of God is just as damning as ever. Sin is all dressed up, but it will sink one into a waterless, bottomless lake of fire as deeply and eternally as ever.

It must never be forgotten that the empty, vain counterfeits of the world can never satisfy. "Be not deceived." At last sin "biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." It is related that a man went to consult a doctor about his health. He stated that he was nervous and suffered from overwhelming depression that was almost unbearable. After the examination the doctor insisted that what he needed was some lively amusement and entertainment, and suggested certain thrilling novels; but the man shook his head as doubtful of the prescription. Then he mentioned some popular shows to be given at the theater, but again the man shook his head. Then the doctor said, "I suggest you go and see the great clown, Grimaldi, who is in the city and is drawing great crowds with his merriment; and if that fails, I am unable to help you or make further suggestions." But again the sad, nervous, and greatly depressed man shook his head and replied, "Man, I am that clown." Better discard the hypocritical vanities of the world, and come to Christ, who can satisfy.

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02 -- FLICKERING LAMPS

In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, in Matthew 25:1-13, we have the statement, made by the foolish virgins to the wise, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." The Revised Version says, "For our lamps are going out." There are two theories relative to this parable. One is that the wise virgins represent the Christian, while the foolish represent the unsaved; but this will not hold. All through the Bible the virgin stands for the saved, the harlot for the unsaved or backslider. All ten of these were virgins, Christians. They all had lamps; they all had lamps that were burning; they were all waiting for the bridegroom; they all trimmed their lamps; they all went to meet the bridegroom. The sinner has and does none of this. We would notice a few thoughts from this parable.

I. First, symbols of some things mentioned here.

Webster says, "A symbol is something that stands for something else, an emblem." Here we have several

1) Lamps. In Isaiah 62:1 we read, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace.... until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Then in Philippians 2:15 we read, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Here the lamp symbolizes salvation.

2) Oil. Oil throughout the Bible symbolizes the Holy Ghost. We hardly think this would be disputed by any candid Bible student. In the work of regeneration we are born of the Spirit, and in the work of entire sanctification baptized with the Spirit. Birth (we refer to the natural, physical birth) must precede water baptism; so in the spiritual realm, the spiritual birth must precede the baptism with the Spirit. This is the Bible plan.

3) Burning. And the lamps of the foolish virgins did burn, were burning-getting dim, but burning. This would symbolize the grace of God in the heart. The unregenerate has no light and no burning. This burning represents the life, living the life. Rather a poor type just here, but life nevertheless. Abe Mulkey, the old-fashioned Methodist preacher, relates the following: They were having a testimony service and one old gentleman arose and said, "Brethren, I have been converted forty years, and I have got the same religion I got then. There ain't none run out and there ain't none run in. I've got the same religion I got then." Mulkey replied, "Well Brother, I am sure that it is so stale that it has a bad odor."

II. Going out, getting dim, flickering.

Danger! Some would say, "Yes, but they were not out" True, but there is that bold fact that they were going out, were on the way to extinction. They could go out. No less authority than Alexander MacLaren, who is strongly Calvinistic, and therefore biased, here becomes very bold and says, "Let no theological difficulties about 'the final perseverance of the saints', 'the indefeasibleness of grace', or 'the impossibility of slaying the Divine life that has once been given to man', come in the way of letting this parable have its full and solemn weight." I wish they would thus treat all the Bible! Then he says, "Dear brethren, let us take the lesson. There is nothing in our religious emotions which has any guarantee of perpetuity in it, except upon certain conditions,"

Surely salvation is conditional. Provisions were made when Jesus died on the cross by which all might be saved, but only those who meet conditions are saved. We must repent and believe or be damned regardless of the rich provisions of grace. Just so, conditions must be met if we are to be kept

1) Going out gradually. This is usually the manner. Sometimes a sudden gust of wind might put them out, but not often. There are times when a man may be struck by some sudden gale of temptation and go down, but backsliding is usually gradual. I have watched literal lamps go out. There have been many kinds of lamps. Many modern city folk do not know this. First there was the pine torch; then the "grease lamp," an amount of grease placed in a vessel and a piece of material

placed in it and set on fire; then the little "brass lamp" with its wick; then the glass lamp; and on and on to our modern electric lights. In my early days on the farm we had the glass lamp, but we also had the "little brass lamp." It was more convenient for carrying about the place. I have watched that grow dim, flicker, and die. Some indications of its going out were less brilliancy, lowered flame, more smoke, bad odor. Then flickering, and out!

Then I have seen something much worse than that. It was the going out, the dying, the smoldering, the flickering, and finally the complete going out of the spiritual lamp. Here we notice a few symptoms of dying lamps. Indifference is one; little concern; loss of spiritual appetite; late at church; easy to miss; excuses often made; in a hurry to get away; for the preacher to preach one minute after twelve is criminal; then critical; nothing suits; he dislikes the message (often he has been struck) and then the messenger. That is always the case. Absolutely impossible to please, useless to try! Easily offended and takes off up the miff tree and requires weeks to get him or her down. Then compromise. No harm, he has gotten broad. No, just plain flat. Then resentful. Like the Pharisees of old he just sits, and he is like so much ice. He freezes everyone around him. His lamp, if not entirely extinct, is growing dim, smoking, bad odor, dying, and grave danger. Asleep and resents disturbance. He is asleep and likes it.

2) Cause of going out. We have mentioned a few symptoms, and now a word as to the cause of flickering and dying lamps.

A. First, sin. Any sin or any kind of sin will put the light out. Sin will sever the union between God and man. Some say it will affect the fellowship, but never the relationship. Of course this is the same old method of taking care of the "final perseverance of the saints." Well, the Bible is clear that God will preserve His saints, but He does not preserve sinners. We were shocked and grieved recently when we read an article relative to the "sinning saints." The writer insisted that saints do sin and at times drink and sometimes get drunk, and that, while they usually sober up before death, they sometimes die drunk. But he went on to insist that this or any other sin could never affect the relationship with God. Shamefully blasphemous! Die a drunkard and, immediately, appear a saint in heaven! That robs Christ and makes death a great savior. Death did what the Blood could not.

Not only will sins of commission put the light out; but sins of omission, if persisted in, will likewise. You say, "I know I should do thus and so." Well, God says, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). There are degrees in backsliding. Some are more backslidden than others. All are backslidden just to the extent that they are failing to walk in the light. In Genesis 12 there are some striking statements. In verse one we read, "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Then we read that Abraham departed, but he took some of his relatives with him. It seems that they stopped over for some time in Haran, but no further revelation from God. "God had said unto Abram." You say, "The Lord never convicts me about certain things: where I go, what I do, what I put on, or leave off." Well, why should He? He has already done that. The Lord has said this to you. He may never speak to you again. No wonder the writer of the Hebrews said, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Hebrews 12:25). He may speak just once.

B. Neglect. In Hebrews 2:1-3 we read: "Therefore we [Christians] ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" The thought in the expression, "Lest at any time we should let them slip," Bible students tell us, is, "Lest at any time we should let them run out like a leaking vessel." We heard of a boy who went to the spring and filled his bucket with water, not knowing it was leaking. He was interested in the birds and flowers, etc., not paying any attention to his bucket; and when he reached the house and looked into his bucket, every drop was gone! Empty! Good plan to glance at the bucket occasionally! We wonder if these foolish virgins were conscious that their lamps were going out. Were they too busy sleeping that they did not even notice? Was it so gradual that no attention was paid to the dying lamps? It is said that there was a church member who was absenting himself from the services at the church. One day the pastor went to his home and took a hot coal from the fire and laid it off by itself. The coal, of course, began to lose its heat and glow. Then the pastor turned without saying a word to walk away. As he did so, the absentee said, "Pastor, I will be at prayer meeting Wednesday night."

Refueling is indispensable to burning lamps -- a good supply of oil. In order to have this, there must be a filling. On the Day of Pentecost they were all filled with the Holy Ghost -- first the birth of the Spirit, then the baptism with the Spirit, but many fillings. In the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, there was great persecution against the Church. They were threatened, imprisoned, forbidden to speak and teach in the name of Jesus. Then we see they prayed and asked for boldness with which to proclaim the Word. Then we read, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). They had, on the Day of Pentecost, been filled, baptized, and their hearts had been cleansed (Acts 15:8, 9). But now there is another filling or anointing. So it is along the way, amid the burdens and cares of life, we need a refreshing and refilling. Then we must remain in living touch with God. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5). Then that solemn warning, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth [of course, he could not abide unless first in] as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6). Only one meaning, and that is unless we are true, hell is the doom. Some say that all that is necessary is just to begin. You are then sure of heaven. No, "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

In order to keep the lamps burning we must avail ourselves of every possible means of grace. We must have material food for the body or we will sicken and die. Also we must have food for our souls in order to retain soul health and keep the lamp burning brightly. The lamps should get brighter. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). Devotional Bible study, secret prayer, attending the services at the house of God and every possible means should be diligently sought after in order to have brightly burning lamps. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. Waiting produces drowsiness. The Bridegroom has tarried. Drowsiness is everywhere. It is difficult to keep awake. Great need for watchfulness!

III. What became of the foolish virgins?

First they were left. One will be taken, and one will be left. They missed the Rapture that took place then. When the proclamation was made, all the virgins arose and trimmed the lamps. It will be a searching time for all when the Bridegroom comes, a trimming everywhere. But the wise had taken oil in their vessels with their lamps. They took the oil can along. There was just one difference between the wise and foolish virgins. It was only a question of oil. That made the difference. The filling or baptism with the Spirit is a prerequisite for membership in the bride of Christ. The foolish were refused oil by the wise. We will need all the grace we can obtain to prepare us.

But the foolish went to buy, and it will cost some thing to die to sin and be filled with the Holy Ghost "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13:12, 13). To get this oil might mean ostracism from the home, community, or ecclesiastical camp, but it pays when the Bridegroom comes. It is implied that the foolish virgins obtained oil; but when they returned, they that were ready had entered and the door was shut The foolish said, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But the answer was, "I know you not." He does not say, "I never knew you," as in Matthew 7:23, where Jesus said, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." He does not say here, "I never knew you," but, "I know you not as members of the bride." We notice, they that were ready went in, not the crowd a certain gentleman insists went in. He states that there will be many at the taverns, some businessmen in crooked business, some off with some Bathsheba, and the roof of many a picture show torn up by the exit of raptured saints when Jesus comes. Some insist that adjustments will be made at the Marriage Supper. Convenient, but damning! "Be not deceived."

The foolish were not permitted to enter, but what became of them? If they obtained the oil and remained true, they doubtless were martyred by the cruel Antichrist and probably were among the great multitude which came out of the Great Tribulation, and were raptured later (Rev. 7:13, 14). There seem to be at least two or three other companies beside this great multitude who are raptured during the Great Tribulation. If they compromise and receive the mark of the beast, of course they will be eternally lost; for the mark of the beast is the seal of damnation (Rev. 14:9, 10). We must not run any risk. Jesus said, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." He will come when few are looking for Him. They will have joined the scoffers (II Peter 3:3).

This final, personal question. What is my spiritual condition? What is it at this moment? Honest? We can't deceive God. Tragic to seek to deceive ourselves and other people! It will all come out soon. Is my lamp burning brightly? Is it going out? Or has it gone out? God forbid that we should be among the foolish but among the wise, so that when He comes we may open to Him immediately.

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03 -- HOLINESS OR CARNALITY AS SEEN IN THE APOSTLES

Carnality is a fact, a reality. We read about it in the Bible; we see its effects everywhere; we have been painfully and shamefully conscious of it in our own souls. It is defilement of nature,

a soul malady, a heart corruption, a bent to backsliding, a prone to wander. It is more deadly than dynamite, more poisonous than carbolic acid. It is the carnal mind, the old man, the body of sin, the root of bitterness. The unsaved, of course, are carnal. The justified, who are not sanctified wholly, are carnal. The whole Bible is clear here. Just one example: Paul, writing to the Church at Corinth. In I Corinthians 3:1-3 we read: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ I have fed you with milk, and not with meat For ye are yet carnal." They were babes in Christ, they were brethren; but they were yet carnal. They were not backslidden, but had been carnal all the time. As far as we know, every orthodox church in Christendom (a few individuals may not) teaches that we are not wholly sanctified when justified. Only one class in the world who are not carnal-those who have been sanctified wholly and have retained the experience.

We hardly think any fair-minded person would question the salvation of the apostles before Pentecost. They were called, commissioned, and sent to preach by Jesus. We would not accuse Him of sending unsaved men out to win the lost, or impenitent to preach repentance. Christ said they were not of the world even as He was not of the world. They were so unworldly that they were hated by the world. He also said their names were written in heaven. If one will not accept these evidences that they were Christians, then the case with him is hopeless.

I. Carnality and its effects, as seen in the apostles.

1) Fear. They had a man-fearing spirit. They said of the woman who came to Jesus that He might cast the demon out of her daughter, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." "She is attracting too much attention to us." "She is liable to get us into trouble." Then how often did He have to say, "Why are ye so fearful?" Carnal fear is dreadful. In Revelation 21:8 we have a list of the blackest sins. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." You notice this diabolical catalog is headed with fear. Afraid of men, afraid to do God's will, afraid of the world and its customs and fashions! The root of this is carnality.

2) Faithlessness. Over and over again, "O ye of little faith!" They are constantly short on faith. "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Faith is the gift of God, but it is the result of acquaintance and relationship. Carnality hindered their acquaintance and distanced their relationship. They were too far away. They were somewhat like Jacob. When the sons returned from Egypt and informed Jacob that his son Joseph was alive, and was prime minister of Egypt, that they all had a generous invitation to appear immediately, and that they would be nourished from the ravages of the famine, Jacob just could not believe it. "And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent," his spirit revived and he said, "It is enough" (Gen. 45:27, 28). The apostles must see the wagons. But we must not be too hard on them; for, after the Lord has done so much for us, we are not too unlike Jacob. We like to see the wagons.

Rev. C. W. Ruth, of sainted memory, relates the following experience. A man had stretched a rope across the mighty Niagara, which is 167 feet high, and had walked it. He announced the following day that he would put a man in a wheelbarrow and push him across on the rope. Rev. Ruth met the man and said to him, "I surely believe in you. I have faith in you. I believe you can do

it." The gentleman was so delighted and said, "Mr. Ruth, I appreciate this; I am glad to find a man who believes I can -- thus far I have not been able to find one. Now, Mr. Ruth, you must get right in and I will surely take you over!" But he did not get in! These carnal apostles were much like Brother Ruth. They talked a lot, but were slow to get into the wheelbarrow.

3) Slowness to understand. They never, fully, seemed to understand Jesus. Really they misunderstood Him constantly. They seemed tied to earthly things. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16: 12). When He spoke of going to Jerusalem and suffering and dying, they could not understand. Even Peter "took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord" (Matt. 16: 21, 22). The most tragic condition existed after the Resurrection. Jesus had been with the apostles for those three years. He had taught them by precept and example. Over and over He had given the details of His death and that after three days He would rise. But, oh, desperately sad! They were doubting, discarding preaching, going back to the old fishing life, hiding away behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, disbelieving reports that He was alive and had been seen. Then that sad Emmaus walk when they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?"

Carnality has blurred the spiritual sensibilities of the mind and soul. The carnal Christian is somewhat like Lazarus after Jesus raised him from the dead. He had life, but not much liberty or vision. He needed to be loosed and let go. The minister can preach instructive sermons to his congregation; but about all he can hope for, if they are carnal, is that they will "see men as trees walking." The case is largely hopeless unless they can have the touch of the live coal from off the altar.

4) Limited forgiveness. The apostles were a little short on forgiveness. One day the Master had preached a marvelous message on the intimate relationship between heaven and the ministers of Christ on earth. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Heaven ratifies the work of the disciples. Jesus also gave a word about prayer. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Peter, thank the Lord for Peter, did not always do the right thing, but he would do something. Peter was feeling very religious after this sermon, and said, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" Maybe Peter felt that some of the apostles had not been treating him just right. Peter said, "Shall I forgive him till seven times?" Jesus said, "Yes, not only seven, but until seventy times seven." Four hundred and ninety times! That is, as often as he repents and desires forgiveness.

When Jesus was dying on the cross He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Often, we feel that they know pretty well what they are about to do, but carnality makes it hard and slow to forgive. You say, "I just can't forgive!" Well, you just can't go to heaven then. A grudge in heaven would be an embarrassing condition.

5) Self-confidence. Jesus had told the apostles that the Shepherd would be smitten and the sheep would be scattered. Peter answered and said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Likewise also said all the disciples. Jesus said to Peter, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." They were honest and genuinely sincere. They just did not know themselves nor the treacherousness of carnality. Carnality is that hidden

foe, that Trojan horse, that can do more damage than hundreds on the outside. Suppose a robber has got in the house and has hidden himself in the closet. You have discovered that he is there and you are standing on the outside with your gun. He also knows you are there. There are two ways to deal with him. One is to stay on the job and not permit his exit. But that will take all your time and get monotonous, and you can't do much else. You say, "But I will be able to keep him in." Possibly so, but a better way would be to call the officer and have him take the robber in charge. Suppression, self-confidence, and reliance might do; but extradition is much more satisfactory. Carnality is self-reliant, but not trustworthy.

6) Spiritual drowsiness. Physical sleep is natural, and no amount of grace will prevent it. "He giveth his beloved sleep." Then there are times when the physical condition is such that it will produce drowsiness. We have known a few really spiritual people who would take a nap under the soothing sound of the gospel, in spite of all that could be done. Then often the preacher is responsible. It is said that a good man was enjoying a nice nap as the minister preached. He saw the sleeping man and called on one of the brethren to wake him up. The brother who was called upon to perform the task replied, "Wake him up yourself. You put him to sleep!"

But, after all allowances are made, we believe, under normal conditions, that a man full of the Holy Ghost is far more dependable. Peter, before Pentecost, even in Gethsemane, could sleep, and then cut off ears. Much easier to cut off ears than keep awake and watch with Jesus! But there is such a thing as spiritual drowsiness. It is difficult to keep awake today. There seems to be a kind of deadly, stupefying, spiritual drowsiness that is settling down upon the Church. We will have to keep full of the Holy Ghost and watch and pray mightily. We doubt if there is any hope at all for the carnal Christian.

We were in the lighthouse at Jupiter, Florida. They had had a terrific storm just before. We said to the little girl who was showing us around, "Did you have any trouble here when the storm was on?" "Oh, yes," she replied, "the electric wires were blown down, but Father and the men kept these other lights going." I said, "But suppose they had gone out too?" But she answered, "We just could not let these go out, for we would be very poor lighthouse keepers to let all the lights go out."

7) A harsh spirit. Possibly, in the sight of the Lord, there is no greater sin. One day John said to Jesus, "We saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." Then when the time had come that He should leave this world, He sent messengers before His face; and they entered into a village, but the people did not receive them. When James and John heard of this, they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" But Jesus rebuked them and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

A gentleman states that before he was saved, often when he made a fire in the stove and it did not burn well, he would kick the stove. Of course that did not help the fire to burn any better, but just let a little carnality escape from him. He stated that after he was saved the temptation was pretty strong at times to kick the stove, but he never did. Then after he was sanctified the temptation would occasionally come, but no inner fight, and it was easy to resist. The devil will

still tempt on former weaknesses. All might not have an experience just like that, but he did. Anyway a harsh, critical, faultfinding spirit is the child of carnality.

8) Place-seeking. The apostles were constantly seeking the pre-eminence. They wanted to be "big shots," common now even among holiness professors. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1.) Then one day the mother of James and John came to Jesus and said, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." Of course this mother, like all mothers, felt that they were well qualified and eligible in every way -- really the best qualified. But I think James and John were back of all of this and just hiding behind their mother. Shame on these good preachers! (See Matt. 20:20-24.) But they are not the last preachers who have sought to use others to obtain a place for them. The facts are, if we will be true, we believe the Lord, regardless of everybody, will see to it that right now in this world we will have just about the place we are qualified for, and we are certain He will in the other world.

But we see the saddest case of place-seeking just before the Crucifixion. Right in that Upper Room, during that Last Supper, or just after they left this sacred place on the way to Gethsemane, there was a fuss among the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest. Judas had just left and gone to the high priests to consummate the arrangements for the arrest of Jesus, and they are in the very shadow of the Cross, and yet the disciples quarrel about greatness (Luke 22:14-24). In a few hours all will forsake Him and flee, and yet who is the greatest! O deceitful carnality.

II. The cure for carnality.

Is there a remedy now in this present world? About all admit the need. Some say the cure is education, others growth and development, still others say death, and our good Catholic friends say "purgatory." But these just do not do the work. The Bible is clear. God says, "Be ye holy." That is now. No, it is not in the above mentioned. We must not forget that death does not, in any wise, change the moral nature. Just as we die, so we meet God. Holiness is the one qualification for heaven. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Paul describes the man, in Romans 7:24, who says, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" -- this dead body, this corpse? this old carnal nature? Then he answers, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is crucifixion. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6). If the justified will make a complete consecration and then by faith trust God, he will receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which delivers from carnality and sanctifies wholly. Then if he will walk in the light and resist the devil, he will have constant victory till he enters the pearly gates.

Carnality means death. "To be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8:6). Carnality must be slain or it will destroy the one who has it. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8: 7). It is an outlaw and cannot be pardoned. It must be put to death by crucifixion. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6). When Christ was crucified, provisions were made by which this monstrous outlaw might be destroyed. It is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

One of our good evangelists related the following experience. A man who was saved but having a fearful struggle with carnality came to the camp meeting. His sanctified wife also came. He was under awful conviction for holiness but seemed unwilling to pay the price. But one day he seemed concerned and went into the tent to pray. His wife and friends were so happy. They 7 prayed earnestly for him. He could be heard agonizing. After some hours he came out of his tent with a fearful look of agony on his face. He said, "Wife, hurry up and get your things together. I am leaving this most awful place." She said, "Why, Husband. we thought you were going to get the blessing." He replied, "No, I am not. I have had an awful struggle with the Holy Ghost, and I have won. Hurry and let's get away from here." He left and soon after died an awful death. Yes, carnality must be put to death or it will damn in hell.

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04 -- THE FOUR APPEARINGS OF THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER

In I Peter 4: 17, 18 we read: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Solemn hours may seem long in coming, but they finally arrive. "The time is come." A dying man said, "I have thought of death, have dreamed of death, have dreaded death, have shuddered and almost choked to death at the thought of death; but it is now here." Jesus said, "Father, the hour is come." Here we read, "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."

This is the Bible order. There are two future judgments. First, the judgment of works at the Marriage Supper. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5: 10). All of these will be Christians -- "We." This is God's payday for His servants, the day of rewards. Then there is the Great White Throne Judgment, at the close of the Millennium, as we shall notice later, for all who are wicked. But judgment begins at the house of God.

And this is God's method now. When God would chasten, He usually begins with His own. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6). God is doing His best, according to His plan, for every soul under heaven. He is not willing that any should perish. He convicts the sinner and chastises His child who is in danger. He uses every possible means to draw us back to God-first gentle methods, moves upon by His Spirit; then more drastic means. It may mean, if other methods fail, the loss of job, property, position, friends, loved ones, health, and all. We know a woman who testifies that the only thing that woke her up was a little white casket, hearse, and grave on the hillside. We say, "Amen. Anything, Lord." God will do one of two things. He will wake us up or give us up. He will exhaust the resources of heaven to wake us up; and if this all fails, He will abandon us. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Let anything come, but don't let God give us up. Desolate when God departs! Christ began His ministry with His own people. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Rejection; nevertheless He began with them. This is His method.

Then we have these solemn words, "If it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" "What shall the end be?" There is something solemn about the end.

That last time to walk over the old farm, down to the old spring, the last day at the shop, that last day in the old house where we have lived so long and there have been so many joys and sorrows! "This is my last day here; must move tomorrow." Something solemn about that last day of the year! But something more solemn, and that is the last day on earth. "This is my last day to see the sun rise or set." Oh, the solemnity of the end!

But what shall be the end of whom? Two classes here. The ungodly and the sinner. What is the difference? The Bible has much to say about each. In the first psalm we read, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Three classes. Bad, worse, worst. The ungodly has his counsel, the sinner his way, and the scorner his seat. Here is also progress in sin. The ungodly may not be such an out-broken sinner, but he is godless. He does not have God. The sinner not only does not have God, but he commits overt acts of sin. He might be a professor or church member; nevertheless, if he is willfully, knowingly, and deliberately breaking the law of God, he is a sinner just the same. The liar is one who lies; the drunkard, one who drinks; the thief, one who steals; the murderer, one who murders; and the sinner, one who sins. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (I John 3: 10). "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" (I John 3:6). God can save and keep as long as we "trust and obey." Unconditional, eternal security declares we are sinful, and there is no deliverance in this life; that we sin constantly, but when saved we were forgiven of all we ever did or ever could do, and are as sure for heaven as if already there. But it is the devil's easy way to damn souls.

If the righteous scarcely be saved, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? The great gospel feast, at an awful cost, has been prepared. But some neglect it, others ignore it, others prefer something else to it, while still others reject it. But all disobey. What will the reaction of the King be toward such obstinate conduct? This wonderful gospel of good news was not given for mere entertainment, but to be obeyed. The essence of this gospel is salvation, not in, but from, sin. The glorious proclamation by the angel was, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). What shall the end be of those who deliberately reject all, and make no profession, as well as those "sinning saints" who profess but deny His power to cleanse and keep? What shall the end be of the professed sinning religionist, the nonprofessing sinner and ungodly, and all who disobey? Where shall they appear?

I. The ungodly and the sinner shall appear on a Christless deathbed -- that is, if they shall have a bed when this exit comes. We may be nearer eternity than we know. A gentleman states that as he walked through a little country cemetery he saw this epitaph, "READER, STOP AND THINK. I AM IN ETERNITY AND YOU ARE ON THE BRINK." He said it was like a voice from the other world. Perhaps we are much nearer heaven or hell than we dream. Anyway, whether it shall be in some home on some bed, with loved ones standing 'round, or on some lonely highway some dark night, all must come to the place of death. All are making strenuous efforts to avoid this, but it is all in vain.

It is related that a young man was at home on his vacation from school, and as he was leaving his parents spoke to him about the Bible and his soul. His answer was: "I will never be guilty of founding my hopes on such a mess of trash and lies as that you call the Bible. Talk about its being divine! Why, a half-wit child could have told a better story. I would rather go to hell, if

there is one, than to believe in that impostor you call Jesus Christ." The parents' hearts were broken and they said: "Beware, my son. While God is merciful, many have been cut down by such blasphemy." His answer was, "I'll risk all the cutting down that can come to me for this. Let it come; I'm not scared, and I know what I am doing." He immediately left for the train. The train had gone only a short distance when there was a wreck. As fate would have it, it seems, he was passing between the coaches when the wreck took place. His limbs were crushed, his skull was badly fractured, and he was terribly mangled. He was the only one hurt in the wreck. He was brought back to the old home where he had just so fearfully blasphemed God. The parents were grief-stricken, but the physician said, "No hope." His body was mangled but his mind was strong. Some of his classmates arrived before his death. When he saw them he raved and cursed them and said, "You helped to bring me to this. You helped to damn me." He sought to reach them, as he gnashed upon them as if to tear them to pieces, and wailed, "May the curses of God rest upon you forever." Then he cried: "O Mother, I am lost, lost, lost, damned, damned, damned forever. O Mother, Mother, get some water to quench this fire that is burning me to death. The fire that shall burn forever has already begun. O Mother, the devils have come to take me. Mother, take me in your arms and don't let them have me." As she drew near, he sought to bury his face in her bosom, and with a shriek cried, "They are dragging me to hell," and he was gone. Not all judgments fall so quickly, and all deathbeds may not be so fearful as this, but all must appear at the river of death.

II. They must appear in hell. The Psalmist said, "If I make my bed in hell." Fearful bed! Death is simply this separation of spirit and body. That is all. "The body without the spirit is dead." When the Christian dies, the spirit goes immediately to paradise, which is now in heaven. "Absent from the body, and . . . present with the Lord." Then those that sleep in Jesus, He will bring with Him when He comes (I Thess. 4:14). When the sinner dies, his spirit appears immediately in hell. The rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments (Luke 16:22, 23). This is not a parable. Dives died, was buried -- that is, his body was; and in hell, right away, he cried for mercy and water, but all in vain.

No soul sleeping is taught in the Book of God. Those who propagate this pernicious heresy take scriptures that refer to the body and make them refer to the spirit. Dives was dead and his body buried but he was crying, suffering, praying, and remembering-but all too late. The grave is not hell. The body does not cry, suffer, and call for water in the grave; but the spirit does in hell. Fearful appearing! The young man who committed a crime and was tried and cast into prison threw himself upon the concrete floor and wailed, "I never thought I would come to this." So with the damned in hell.

III. Third, they must appear at the Great White Throne Judgment. We have an account of this in Revelation 20:11-13. We repeat, when the lost die they appear in hell, there to remain till the second resurrection. Here we have the jail and the penitentiary. The criminal is cast into jail to await trial and sentence; if found guilty, then sentenced to the penitentiary. Hell is the jail, as it were, and the lake of fire the penitentiary of the universe. In Revelation 20:13 we read: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it [that is, the bodies]; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" -- not tried, in the ordinary use of the term, but sentenced. No necessity for trial now, as they have already been in hell, at least many, for millenniums; but simply the books opened, and deeds revealed. Sentenced!

Sad appearing this will be at this Great White Throne. John said, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" (Rev. 20:11). Great throne, white throne, and occupied throne. Here the ungodly and the sinner must appear in his damnation body. The body is brought from the grave and the spirit from hell, and united, forming the damnation body.

IV. The fourth appearing, as suggested, will be in the lake of fire. The sentence at the Great White Throne will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Fearful sentence! Then in Revelation 20:15 we read, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Behold this mighty throng of lost, doomed, and damned as they take up this forced march from the Great White Throne to the lake of fire. But it might be asked, "If all are lost and damned who stand before this Great White Throne, why the book of life there?" Simply for the reason that there might be some who were not so out-brokenly wicked, and they might claim their morality.

The moral man came to the judgment,
But his self-righteous rags would not do.
The men who had crucified Jesus
Had passed off as moral men too.

No, morality is not enough. The name must be in this book.

Lord, I care not for riches,
Neither silver nor gold;
I would make sure of heaven,
I would enter the fold.
In the book of Thy kingdom,
With its pages so fair,
Tell me, Jesus, my Saviour,
Is my name written there?

What shall the end be of the disobedient, the ungodly, and the sinner? There is no answer, for there is no end. It will be the end of sinful pleasures, the end of liberty. You say, "I will go where I please, and it is not the business of anyone." Well, you may now, but not long. There will soon be the grim walls of damnation out of which none shall ever be permitted to wander. It will be the end of mercy and hope, but not the end of existence. There was a time when we were not, but there will never be a time when we are not. Thus we have the four appearings of the ungodly and the sinner: first, on the Christless deathbed; second, in hell; third at the Great White Throne; and last of all, in the lake of fire. Thank God, the door is still open. The man was lost in the darkness, among the mining shafts. He was afraid to take another step. He stopped and cried, "Lost, lost!" A man heard and came to his rescue, and he was standing on the verge of a shaft. Another step would have meant death. Don't risk it. Call now.

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05 -- CROSSING THE DEAD LINE

In Genesis 6:3 we read, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." These solemn words were spoken concerning the wickedness of man and God's decision to do something about it just before the flood. Men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, and there were unholy and unlawful relations between the sexes. As a result of this, God was grieved that He had made man and declared He would destroy him. Had it not been for one good man, the race would have been wiped out. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." He saved the race. Only the salt of the earth today is holding back, to some extent, the destructive judgments of God. However, the time will come when the light and salt will be raptured (taken to the Marriage Supper); and then the Great Tribulation judgments, described in Revelation, chapters 6 to 19, will break loose.

But this is a very solemn subject. We never like to speak upon it unless sure the Lord is directing, lest some morbid soul concludes that he has sinned away his day of grace and crossed the dead line when he has not. There are two deadly dangers just here. One is to decide you have reached this fearful state when you have not; and the other equally hazardous position is to decide there is no danger -- just can't be done -- and trifle with the Holy Spirit and be damned eternally. Here we will seek to get the truth.

Possibly better stop a moment here to ask, "Who can cross the dead line?" We are pretty well all agreed that the sinner can. This we will see in this message. But we should not forget that the justified and even the sanctified are in danger here. In Hebrews, the third chapter, we read, "Wherefore, holy brethren . . . To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Then, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Then he says to these same holy brethren, "Let us therefore fear" (Hebrews 4: 1). Then in Hebrews 10: 26-29, we read: "If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy . . . of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Fearful warning to the saved and sanctified! Better be true, lest, after having been so gloriously blest, we do despite to the Holy Spirit and grieve Him away forever. Thus we see that both the unsaved and the saved can cross the dead line.

What is meant by the Spirit striving and not always striving? Mr. Webster says, "To strive means to make an earnest effort." "To contend." "To struggle with." Thus we see by the Spirit striving is meant that He makes an earnest effort. He contends and struggles with. He woos, warns, calls, and convicts. God is doing His best to keep us out of hell But the Holy Spirit can be grieved, quenched, and resisted, pushed back. But while He does strive with man, He will not strive always. "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." We notice a few further thoughts on this.

I. God calls all. The Spirit strives, contends with, struggles with every one. Every one gets a call from God. Christ said, "When he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of

sin." That is, He will convict, convince all of the sinfulness of sin. He will strive with all, give all a definite call for salvation. Not a single soul will be able to stand before God and say, "I never had a call; the Holy Spirit never strove with me."

There are some good people who teach that all cannot be saved. They divide the race into two classes, the elect and the non-elect. They claim if you are of that elect number God will, in some way, whether you make any effort to come or not, bring you in and save you, that you cannot resist Him. On the other hand, they claim if you are not of that elect number there is no salvation for you. You may seek all you will, but you were predestined and foreordained to be damned, in the mind of God before you were born -- yes, from all eternity. We believe this is a monstrous doctrine. It is not the doctrine of the Bible. In Acts 17:30 we read, God "commandeth all men every where to repent." To say that God commands us to repent and be saved, and at the same time knows this is an impossibility and damns us for not doing it, would be to make God a tyrant and despot. But He is a gracious and true God. Man can do anything God commands. It is said John and Charles Wesley were conversing and John said to Charles, "Charles, if God commanded you to fly, what would you do?" Charles replied, "Well, I would trust God to give me some wings and then I would fly." Then Charles said, "John, if God commanded you to fly, what would you do?" To this John hilariously answered, "Now look here, Charles; if God commanded me to fly I would fly, wings or no wings." When God says, "Be holy, be clean, be ready," that is a guarantee that it can be done. Yes, God has provided salvation full and free for all who will pay the price. All were provisionally saved when Jesus died. And "whosoever will may come." Of course, man cannot believe till he repents. God will not forgive an impenitent soul. That would be dangerous. But all get a definite call.

II. He does not always strive. The question is often asked, "Does God ever give anybody up?" You say, "What do you believe?" Well, we are not to rely upon my belief. The question is "What does the inspired Word of God say?" Some time back we went to a foundry for a service at noon. We got there a little early and looked over in one corner and saw a pile of old, worn, battered, and discarded hammers. We counted forty-seven of them. I looked at the anvil. It looked like a new one, so bright and shiny. The blows from the hammers had thus affected it. I said to the smith, "How many anvils have you used to wear out such a pile of hammers?" He replied, "Only one; the anvil wears out the hammers." Then I thought how the higher critics, skeptics, infidels, and atheists have hammered away at the Word of God. (Here we could name some of them, but we forbear.) And when the last one has taken his last sarcastic fling at the Word of God and has gone to the scrapheap of hell, the old anvil, the Bible, will still be here. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

So the question is, "What does the Bible say about the matter?" Does it teach that God does, after long striving, ever give anyone up? In Romans 1:24 we read, "Wherefore God also gave them up." Then we are told the fearful things to which He gave them up. Also in Romans 1:28 we read, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." God gave them over. God gave them up. Not the preacher, but God. Then in Hosea 4:17, "Ephraim is joined [glued, stuck, fastened] to idols: let him alone." He has made his choice. Idols are preferred to God. And whatever is first in your heart and affections is your god--your house, car, land, money, or some human being. Not all the idolaters are in Africa or China. You will never know how tightly you are glued, stuck, or joined to your idols till you

undertake to forsake them. The situation is hopeless apart from the great Emancipator. The young lady saw the live wire hanging down and said, "I will just touch it and see if I get a slight shock." But she could not let go and was almost burned to death before she could be set free. You will get hold of the devil's live wires and can't let go. God is the only hope. Then in Jeremiah 11:14 we read, "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me." Then in Proverbs 1:24-26 we read, "Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." Sad scriptures! Given up by God. Given over by God. Joined to idols and let alone. "Pray not for them, for I will not hear." This scripture in Hosea is fearful! "Let him alone." "Let him alone, angels, good people, gospel messenger, Holy Ghost." Someone might say, "I just will not go back to these meetings; they will not let me alone." Well, I would not resent it, but just come on; for unless you repent and get saved, you will soon be let alone forever. In hell no one will disturb you. You will be let alone through an incomprehensible eternity.

Yes, the Holy Spirit strives but not forever. "The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive." We were conducting a meeting in west Tennessee. Many were touched but one young man, with a hard face, never seemed moved. I sought him out and said, "Mr. _____, why is it that you never seem moved?" He said: "Brother Tidwell, as you know, my father is a minister and when I was quite a child in his meetings the Holy Spirit strove with me, but I said, 'Not now.' This continued for years, but finally my heart seemed to turn into a stone and I have no inclination to come. I have no drawing, and I feel that I have crossed the dead line and am lost forever."

A young woman was in the revival. She was greatly moved, touched, and drawn. But she had other plans, with which salvation would interfere, and she continued to turn down the Holy Spirit. The meeting closed and soon she was taken down with a malignant case of typhoid fever. Finally the doctor said, "There is no hope." They asked her to pray but she said: "The feeling is gone. There is no striving now as I was so conscious of during the meeting. Oh, if I could only have that feeling again!" Then she requested her shroud be obtained and placed on her. This was done, but she said, "The feeling is gone." Then she requested her coffin-not casket, but an old-fashioned, country, wooden coffin with glass top. She said, "Maybe this will bring the feeling back." But this failed, and she died declaring the Holy Spirit had gone. No, it is not shrouds and coffins that produce conviction, but it is the Holy Ghost. No man can come except he is drawn.

A gentleman had a pet dove. The dove is the type of the Holy Spirit. One day the man gripped the dove and relaxed his grasp. The dove flew up into a tree and sat there for an hour or more. The man called and coaxed long before it would return but, finally, reluctantly it did. This was repeated again and the dove remained away longer, but after long calling returned. This was repeated the third time. This time the dove flew up to the topmost bough of a tall tree and sat there with drooped wings and head. The man called and called, but all to no avail. Finally the dove slowly lifted its head and spread its wings and flew away, never to return. The Holy Ghost may be so treated that He will take His flight forever.

We have one encouraging word to say just here. Are you drawn? Do you feel that gentle striving, convicting, drawing of the Holy Spirit? Then that is proof that you have not sinned away

your day of grace and crossed the dead line. Don't trifle. Don't delay. Thank God for His striving.
But there is danger in delay.

There is a time we know not when,
A place we know not where,
Which marks the destiny of men
For glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen
Which crosses every path;
It is God's boundary
Between His patience and His wrath.

To cross that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth.
It may not pale the beaming eye
Nor quench the glowing health.

But on the forehead God has set
Indelibly a mark, by man unseen,
For man as yet
Is blind and in the dark.

He feels, he says, that all is well,
That every fear is calmed.
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell,
Not only doomed but damned.

How long may men go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end and where begin
The confines of despair?

One answer from the skies is given:
"Ye who from God depart,
While it is called 'today' repent
And harden not your heart."

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06 -- THE RETRIBUTION OF SIN

In James 1:15 we read, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Mr. Webster says retribution is "the act of requiting; especially the infliction of punishment." "To repay." "To recompense." "Punishment." We speak of "retributive justice." All of this simply means that we must reap what we sow. Sin becomes its own punishment. When sin is committed, that is not all. It

will return, repay, and punish. "Chickens come home to roost." "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." In Australia they have a curved wooden missile used by the natives that, when thrown, will return to the thrower. They call it the boomerang. Sin is a boomerang. The Bible says, "Be not deceived." Don't get any idea that you can sin and get by. There is an inflexible law that sin is retributive. It will return and repay the sinner. The retribution may not be immediate, but it will come. We are to study a few thoughts on this most solemn and awful subject.

I. The retribution of sin as seen in this life, right here in this present world. Notwithstanding the greatness of salvation, it does not always fully deliver from the effects of sin in this present life. We know there is a lot of singing about "the sea of God's forgetfulness," but there is no such expression in the Bible. I would not want to spoil any good song, but there is no such sea mentioned. According to the teaching of Matthew 18:23-25 even forgiven sins may be revived. Jesus tells of the man who owed ten thousand talents, possibly ten million dollars. He was hopelessly in debt. His lord commanded himself, wife, and children to be sold and a payment to be made. He fell down and asked for time and promised to pay all. Of course he never could, but his lord was moved with compassion and forgave him the whole debt, clean slate. But the same man had a fellow servant who owed him an hundred pence, possibly ten dollars. This man who had just been forgiven of the large sum laid hands upon his fellow servant and took him by the throat and said, "Pay me that thou owest." But his fellow servant said, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison." Then we read the fellow servants were sorry, and came and told their Lord. Then his lord said, "I forgave thee all that debt . . . shouldest not thou also have had compassion . . . even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." The whole debt of ten million revived. We had better be forgiving.

We know many now who are genuinely saved and sanctified, but are reaping what they have sown. The retribution of sin may be seen in the body of the sinner. Look today at the unnamable diseases because of sin. We saw a man recently who was dying by inches because of sin. Sin kills physically. The retribution of sin may be seen in the offspring of the sinner. Recently we were visiting a large institution known as "The Home for the Feeble-minded," near Nashville, Tennessee. We think that this was the saddest sight we have ever witnessed. Such a sight! Hundreds of victims! Many of them were there as a direct result of the sins of parents. We saw some with horrible diseases, some with heads an unbelievable size -- four times as large as normal. Some would crow like roosters, bark like dogs. It was warm weather when we were there. Those in charge would herd them like animals, only they were not so intelligent as animals. Many were tied to trees.

Looks like we would see the results of sin and be careful, but not so. Sin blinds. "I must do a little social smoking, drinking, and have a little illicit affair. Others got caught, but I will get by." Yes, the retribution of sin is seen in this life. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?"

II. The retribution of sin as seen in death. About the saddest sight in this world is the Christless death. People are often doped off now, so as to render them unconscious. We have known several cases where the family could scarcely remain without this. The cries and screams were about unbearable. Look at the pale face, glassy eyes, and frightful expression. All is changed

now. The drinking, dancing, movies, and affairs do not appeal now. The thing that was entrancing is now hideous. "At the last it biteth like a serpent." Oh, the sting of sin at the last! The miser, and also the person who has been taken up with good things but crowded God out, feels differently now. The honors, pleasures, and treasures of earth have lost their glamour on the deathbed. Hear Voltaire when dying, as he wails, "I am abandoned by God and man." Listen to the infidel Hobbs, as he moans, "I am about to take an awful leap in the dark." Hear Queen Elizabeth as she piteously says, "All my possessions for a moment of time!" Look at Alexander as he is dying, drunk, and weeping because there are no more worlds to conquer. Behold Caesar as he is stabbed by his best friend and dies in shame. See Napoleon, who caused blood to flow like a river, as he dies in exile. See Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general, who filled five bushel baskets with jewels taken from slaughtered knights and then died in disgrace and misery. Look at the cruel, blood-thirsty war lords and war mongers of today as they die in mortal fear.

We have seen so many of these tragic deathbed scenes. Some of them have vividly lingered for years. One pitiful backslider when dying would cry, "The devils are here and they are after me." He had strength till the last. He would leap from the bed and scurry under it, and look out from under the bed and cry, "You can't get me here!" But they evidently did. He died in agony. Some years ago we were conducting some services in a Tennessee city, and while there some friends related the following experience to me. They said there were a Mr. and Mrs. _____ who were very active in spreading the no-hell doctrine. They would testify and distribute this pernicious literature and did all possible to propagate this doctrine. But, finally, Mrs. _____ died. They were going to embalm the body, but discovered a strange, warm condition about the heart. She was dead, absolutely, as far as the physicians could tell, but this condition remained. Burial was postponed. Many came to see this unusual occurrence. They said the fourth day from the time she seemingly died, just at noon, as many were there, Mrs. _____ gave a most unearthly shriek and scream. She called her husband and to him, as the crowd assembled, she preached for some hours. She said, "Husband, we have been deceived. We have taught that there was no hell, but I have been dead and in hell for four days. Yes, there is a hell. We have taught lies." She warned the people of the deadly danger of this doctrine; but after thus exhorting and warning for some hours, she suddenly ceased and was dead. The body was kept for some days, but the warm condition had gone. She was finally embalmed and buried. Often the retribution of sin is seen on the deathbed.

III. The retribution of sin as seen in eternity. That is a sad verse in Matthew 25:41 which says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." That word depart is a sad word. All through the Bible we have the word come. Beautiful word! God said to Noah, "Come." Isaiah said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come." Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then in the last book of the Bible and almost last verse we read, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." No mistake. "Whosoever will." But they have refused the gracious invitation of a good God. They would not come, and now He can justly say, "Depart." But worse and worse, "Depart from me, ye cursed." It does not matter so much about the frowns and curses of the world if we can just have the smile of God. But, oh, the curse of God! Now the climax, "Into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." what hell fire is I do not know, nor do I ever want to know. God says fire, and we just leave it there. It is called "hell fire." God save us from hell fire. But it is everlasting fire. No annihilation, no second probation. It is salvation now or damnation forever.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22: 11). Solemn words! Fixedness of character! "And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. 11:3). Just as we die, so we meet God and spend eternity. Be not deceived; everlasting fire, burnings, contempt, destruction-these are Bible expressions. I am now sixty-five years of age and have read and studied the Bible constantly since nine years of age. Let me testify here as a dying man to dying men: "I have never found one single verse that teaches annihilation or second probation-that is, that the spirit will cease to exist, be blotted out, or that there will be another opportunity after death."

The retribution of sin through eternity is a fearful thought, but not so awful as the reality of it. You say, "I can't bear to think of it." Well, how will you endure it? No Christians in hell, no good songs, no revivals. Oh, the horrors of that lost world! Oh, the remorseful agonies of the lost! "After all, I never thought I would come, but I am here." "My opportunities have passed; no more songs, no more revivals, no more sermons, no more invitations." "The harvest is past and the summer is ended, and I am damned forever." "Life is past, death is past, the judgment is gone, and I am in hell." "The fruits that my soul lusted after are gone forever." "No more dancing, no more booze, no more movies, no more unnamable sin." "I can never smile, joke, or laugh again. The grimness of hell is upon me. Hope has fled, and I am guilty. I am to blame. I rejected the call, and now the white-winged angel of mercy has stretched her wings and flown forever. Oh, how can I bear this suffering! whither can I flee for rest? "But I remember there is no rest in hell. "But how long till morning? When will light break?" And then I remember that this is hell. Morning will never come. Heaven is a day without a night, and hell is a night without a day. "I did not believe in the retribution of sin in yonder world, but I know it is true now. I feel the intolerable weight of sin upon me.

A young man was dying -- it was past eleven o'clock. He was aroused and, looking around, said, "It is awfully dark here. My feet are on the slippery edge of a great gulf. Oh, for some foundation!" He stretched out his hands as if feeling for the way. Someone spoke of Christ but he said, "Not for me now. I shall fall; I am falling." Then he gave a shriek and was gone to endure the retribution of sin. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Don't trifle. Multitudes are in hell, who must endure the retribution of sin forever, who would like to pray. Seek the Lord before it is too late.

O sinner, remember, though fair be life's day,
There is only one step to the tomb.
Thy life like a vapor will soon pass away;
Then cometh eternity's doom.

On the edge of perdition now blindly you tread.
Its fires, how fearful they gleam!
Ah! soon you will be with the numberless dead,
Where Jesus can never redeem.

The Saviour is pleading; there's mercy today.
'Tis Jesus invites you to come.

Then flee to His bosom, and walk in His way;
'Twill lead to the heavenly home.

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07 -- SANCTIFICATION AND WHAT FOLLOWS

We can afford to be mistaken about many things, but we must know we are right with God. To miss heaven is to miss all. The Bible states clearly that we may have assurance. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed" John said we should know. Yes, God can reveal himself consciously to His children. But while we agree that we must know, not all may agree how we may know. One sincere man said, "I must know that I am sanctified just like I know I see a house or any other object." Another said, "I know if anyone pinches me, and I want to know I am sanctified just like I know that." Still another desired to know it just as he knew two plus two equals four. And still another insisted that he must "feel carnality burned out." One good man stated that when he was sanctified a ball of fire struck him in the head and went clear through his body and came out at his feet. We surely have no word of criticism for him. If that was the way the Lord saw fit to manifest himself to him, it would surely please us; but it would not be wise for others to doubt they had the blessing because they did not have a similar manifestation.

Now while we are to know Jesus sanctifies, we believe some of these good, honest souls have a mistaken idea as to the nature of this knowledge. The assurance of which they speak is that which comes by sight, or by physical sensibilities, or by mathematical knowledge.

This is foreign to the beautiful assurance of which the Bible speaks. God declares we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1); that we are sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18); that we stand by faith, overcome by faith, and that our hearts are filled with all joy and peace in believing.

We have heard good people sneeringly say, "They only took it by faith" Well, if they ever take it at all, that is exactly the way they will obtain it. There is no other way. No one was ever justified or sanctified before he believed, but when he believed. We know there is a vast difference between a mere historical faith, or mental assent, and real faith inspired by the Holy Ghost. Yes, at the end of a complete and eternal consecration it is easy and natural for the hungry child of God to reach up and lay hold of his Father for the promised blessing. (God will not mock His needy, hungry child. Jesus said, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" Then He said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11: 11-13.)

I. How We May Know.

First, we may and will know We may know when the consecration has been made. We may know when that "last yes" has been said. "Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold ' Then we may rest assured that God accepts the consecration made by His earnest, hungry child. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.' Then we

know the altar sanctifies the gift. "Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy." God said it. The devil our feelings, and some good people may suggest otherwise; but a good God, who is greatly interested in His child, says it is so. I prefer to believe God. We know it because a God who cannot lie said it. We feel perfectly comfortable and safe resting upon His promises. If earthly parents know how to give bread, fish, and eggs to their children, how much more does our Heavenly Father know how to give the Holy Spirit to His needy child! Here is definiteness. One asks for the Holy Spirit -- not just a mere blessing which will enable him to be "more consecrated"; but our Heavenly Father is both able and willing. Praise the Lord! We are fully persuaded He will keep His promises. They were never known to fail. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Earthly parents will not give their children a stone to mock them, or a serpent to bite or a scorpion to sting them. Never! Neither will our Heavenly Father. Your god may mock, disappoint, and tantalize; but the God of the Bible will not. We know the work is done because a covenant-keeping God has declared it. Hallelujah! The very thought of it blesses us.

In the second place, we know we have the blessing by the witness of the Holy Spirit himself. Heb. 10:14, 15.) The Holy Spirit will witness with the human spirit that the work has been accomplished. Just here we need to be careful lest the enemy, who is determined that we shall not have the blessing, should sidetrack us. The outward manifestation of this witness will not be the same to all. Such fiery billows of glory have come upon some, and continued so long, that they were made to cry to God to stay His hand, lest the physical should not be able to bear it. To many others He manifests himself by giving a deep, settled peace -- "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding" -- a wonderful sense of God and divine things. God, heaven, and salvation are far more real than ever before. As a result one loves God, His Word, and lost souls as never before. There comes a spirit of compassion for the needy of earth hitherto unknown. Some have called it "the rest of faith."

He has a holy boldness and has become established in holiness and his heart is fixed. He knows all was put on the altar and it is still there. We know our Father has promised the blessing, and therefore we know we have it. To all of this the Holy Spirit witnesses. If one has never had the blessing, he should at any cost obtain it. If we have had the blessing and lost it, we should cry mightily to God for restoration. But if we have met Bible conditions and they are still being met, we should not cast away our confidence in Him because of our feelings, Job's comforters, the devil, or even good preachers. To get a large number of the most devout, conscientious, but rather sensitive souls, who may be morbid, to abandon their faith, come to the altar, and get it again, may make a good showing at the altar service. It may mean a large number of seekers to report, "counting them as they came"; but it will be a very expensive proposition entirely too expensive.

II. Dangers to Be Avoided

A certain type of "mountaintop" experience may be held up, and one may get an idea that there is a blessing that will make him practically immune to the temptations of the devil, the fiery trials, and the burdens and sorrows to which every child of God is subject. Because one does not seem to be measuring up, he casts away his confidence, gets his eyes off the Lord, and on some experience or notion, and then begins to doubt. He goes to the altar to get a blessing like the preacher or someone else has emphasized, one that will deliver him from problems with which he has been beset. One devout young man desired a blessing that would make it easy all the time, and

fix him up till he could not get impatient! Others seem to have that experience, but he must resist the devil and make a fight; therefore he could not have the blessing! The minister, correctly, pictures the wonderful and instantaneous experience; and we thank God for the mighty, instantaneous baptism with the Spirit which makes the heart whiter than snow. But he insists that "we can know that we know that we know" that we have it. He states, "If we do not know that we know that we have it, then we have surely been deceived." Just here the devil, whose business it is to hinder and wreck the faith of God's children, slips in with some unscriptural notion as to how we are to know and causes one to doubt God and seek to know in some way other than God has planned. He abandons his faith, gets the blessing again. Of course he meets the same difficulties, unless he resists the devil, and finds he is just where he was.

But he is on dangerous ground now. He has begun to doubt. He may be a candidate for almost anything that comes along, and a prey to every false doctrine and prophet. He has abandoned his scriptural position and has become a seeker after manifestations and signs. Someone with a glib tongue and strong will may preach and relate how he was saved and later surely sanctified; but after that amid sorrows he went back and agonized and prayed a long time. This placed him in a realm of spiritual hilarity which delivered him from trials. Now he surely knows. The doubter has been cut loose from his anchor of faith and is liable to become a seeker after this new experience, and the devil may confuse him and lead him into some "damnable heresy." There is no deliverance from sore trials in this life. God says, "If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (I Peter 1:6; read Isa. 50:10).

We know some will say, "Bless God, if any man can disturb them, they never had it and should be disturbed." Yes, we know some will vociferously say this, but we also know what they say is unscriptural and untrue. Our contention is that to continue to upset one's faith, to pull him up and set him out over again, even though it is in our meetings, is to hinder spiritual progress and possibly discourage him permanently.

III. What Follows Sanctification

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" Truth bears inspection. Holiness is the fundamental doctrine of the Bible. Man was holy. Through the fall he became unholy. If he ever gets to heaven, he must be made holy in this life. Sanctification is the instantaneous cleansing of the heart of the Christian. Holiness is the state that follows. Sanctification and holiness sustain a similar relation to the operation, for some affliction, and the good health that follows. Christ is a sin Specialist. He never fails. Sanctification is an act, the operation, whereby the heart of the believer is entirely cleansed from sin. There are some things that the sanctified should remember that follow.

1) First he should know that sanctification is not the end but the beginning. Truly the old nature has been crucified, and as far as sin is concerned his soul has been restored, and the Holy Ghost has been enthroned; but he must not imagine that he has sufficient grace stored up to take him through. No, he has crossed the Jordan, but he must go on and possess the land.

2) He should remember there is a difference between purity and maturity. A pure heart is one thing one thing and a mature character is another. The plant or shrub has been sorely wounded.

The horticulturist performs the operation and removes all the affected part, but the plant still may be badly warped. Sanctification makes the heart clean, but there may be many mental or spiritual warps that must be corrected. If the newly sanctified discovers some of these, he must not decide he failed to get the blessing, but press on toward a mature character.

3) The newly sanctified should distinguish between carnality and humanity. Adam was a man, and a normal one, before he fell. Sanctification delivers from the carnal mind, but we remain human beings with legitimate desires. We think of one was fond of beefsteak before he got the blessing he would continue to like it. However, we believe that if he indulged before that, the enthroned Holy Spirit within would now enable him to keep his body under and be temperate.

4) In the next place we should know that there is a difference between death to sin and death to self. Death to sin is instantaneous. It is an act. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ." But death to some forms of the self life is a process. In Galatians 2:11-14 we have an account where Paul "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed." There may be many things in our lives which, while not sinful within themselves nevertheless are not like Jesus. Paul spoke of "perfecting holiness" We have known devout people who, because of finding these conditions, became discouraged and gave up. Job surely had the blessing. Nevertheless, God permitted him to be placed in the furnace of affliction in order that he might die to himself, and he declared that when it was all over he would come forth as gold.

5) Finally, the question is often asked, "Do sanctified folks ever sin" Well, we would answer they certainly should not, and they need not. God says, "My grace is sufficient." No, there is no necessity for sinning. The facts are that from the moment one is justified, to say nothing of sanctified, it is not necessary to sin. From the time one is saved until he shall pass the pearly gates, it is not necessary to sin. God is able, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. But while it is certainly not necessary for one to sin, we all know that he can sin. Yes, we feel in the very depths of the soul that we will sin unless we watch and pray mightily. Then the question arises, If a sanctified person should be overcome, what is his spiritual condition and what must he do to be restored? Fortunately, the Bible is clear on this point. If one sins and continues to sin, of course, he becomes a miserable backslider; and in order to be restored he must first get reclaimed and then sanctified. On the other hand, if the moment the Spirit reveals to him he has grieved the Lord he will confess and trust for forgiveness, he will be restored. Confess, of course, to God and also to the person or persons, if he has wronged anyone. This frequently is next to impossible to get people to do. We believe this is due to a mistaken idea. They feel that, if they have grieved the Lord and confess it, either they never have had the blessing or have entirely forfeited the same and must go back and get reclaimed and then sanctified. This, as we have already stated, is necessary under certain conditions, but not always. First John 2:1 reads, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." This is God's will for us. "Sin not." However, He knew the possibility of His children being overcome and further declared, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." We are glad He said, "Any man." This is no plea for the devil's sinning religion, but the gracious provision of a good God in case His child is overcome. We know some very devout and conscientious souls who get sanctified in about every meeting. They do not ever seem to get established and are, often, not understood by those who do not have the blessing. Our only hope is to be absolutely true and walk in the light We retain the blessing only as long as we resist the devil. It is not enough to turn on the switch and fill the room with light and then cut it off.

No, the connection with the powerhouse must remain. May the Lord not only enable us to make the consecration and receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, cleansing and sanctifying the heart, but may He ever fill us with His divine light and glory. There will be constant victory and no room for sin.

While we walk with the Lord,
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

* * * * *

08 -- WHEN JOHN THE BAPTIST DOUBTED JESUS

There was a very intimate relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. Their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth, were cousins. Zacharias, the father of John, was a very devout priest. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous, walking before God in all of the commandments of the Lord and blameless. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to announce the birth of John. His birth was to be supernatural. He was to be a wonderful personage. Many were to rejoice at his birth, and he was to be great in the sight of the Lord. He was to be full of the Holy Ghost from birth, and through him many would be turned to the Lord, and he was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. He was the herald of the coming Christ.

He was to preach in the wilderness. He came unannounced, but preached repentance with such unction, power, and pungency that there went out to him Jerusalem and Judea and all the regions round about Jordan. His raiment was camel's hair, and his meat was locusts and wild honey. But not only were his clothing and food plain, but likewise his preaching. When he saw those religious pretenders coming to his meeting to be baptized, he insisted that he did not baptize everyone, but only those who met conditions. He said to them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." Prove that you have repented by fixing up matters. Such a preacher and such a revival as John had! But, notwithstanding all of this, a sore trial came to him and he was greatly perplexed. We notice a few thoughts here.

I. What John knew and preached about Jesus.

He declared he was a witness, a voice (John 1:6-23). "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light . . . He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." when the Jews sent from Jerusalem to ask him, "who art thou?" he "confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ." Then they further questioned him as to his identity, saying, "Art

thou Elias or that prophet?" And he said, "No." Then they demanded just who he was, that they might give an answer; and John said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness."

Then we notice what John said of Jesus in his preaching, his public testimony concerning Christ in his ministry. Marvelous it was. He said, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Paths must be straight if Jesus is to travel them. "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees." No chopping off branches here and there, but must get at the very heart, the root of the matter. "Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Christ will soon appear, and unless one bears good fruit, hell is the doom. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." His fan will make no mistake about the wheat and the chaff. Hypocrites will then be detected. It is said that in the Bank of England there is a machine through which all money must pass, and that it never makes mistakes. All that is not up to standard is thrown out. Well, this machine might fail, but no mistake about God's fan. All shall go to their own place. Just two places, heaven and hell. Also John said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" -- or with Holy Ghost fire. John was to baptize them as evidence of their repentance, but Christ was to baptize them with Holy Ghost fire, which was to purify and sanctify their very natures. This was fulfilled at Pentecost. John certainly eulogized the work of the soon-coming Christ.

Then, as John was baptizing, Jesus appeared and requested baptism (Matt. 3:13-17). "But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus said to him that it was becoming them to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And when Jesus was baptized, John saw the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Jesus, and John heard a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Wonderful testimony John heard from the Heavenly Father! We note the Spirit came in the form of a dove upon Jesus. He was the sinless, holy Christ. When the Holy Spirit came upon those saved but carnal disciples at Pentecost, He came like fire, purifying, cleansing, and consuming. We need a lot of consuming now. Thus we have a little conception of what John knew of Jesus. Intimate relationship!

II. John's imprisonment.

In Matthew 14:1-12 we have an account of the imprisonment of John. He had preached the truth, uncompromisingly, and Herod had him put in prison. Quite a different environment now from the large open country and free air of the wilderness. to which John had been accustomed. It seems God speaks through nature, and it is much easier to commune with God and resist the devil under conditions like these than in the busy rush of the city, and especially in the confinement of a dungeon prison. Think of the vile, wicked prisoners with whom John was thrown. Then he may have been chained or bound in the stocks. Feel the depressing prison atmosphere. Striking contrasts between this and the babbling brooks, singing birds, and cooling breezes of the wilderness of Judea!

III. John's doubt.

That seems unbelievable. After seeing what John knew of Jesus, we could come to only one conclusion, and that is John could never even be tempted to doubt Jesus. Some claim that there was no doubt, but this is surely a mistake, as we shall see.

1. The cause for this doubt. There may have been two reasons for this. First, John and Jesus were so intimate; and now John was in prison and, as far as the record goes, Jesus never went to see him. We know there was a good reason or else Jesus would have gone. Sometimes He delays, and sometimes He may not appear; but "when the mists have rolled away" it will be seen that He doeth all things well

But the cause for John's doubt is clearly given here. "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" It was the work of Christ, what Christ was doing, that caused the perplexity in the mind of John. What Christ was doing was entirely different from what John had thought and what John had preached that He would do. John had preached that Jesus would lay the ax at the root of the trees, cut them down at the very roots. He would come with His fan in His hand. He would separate the wheat from the chaff and burn the chaff with fire. Radical, drastic, cyclonic actions! But now His work seemed very opposite. He was gentle, kind, long-suffering, and healing all with whom He came in contact. John was in doubt.

But was John mistaken in his conception of the work of Christ? He was not. Only John overlooked the two aspects of His coming—that is, the two comings: His first and second comings. At His first He was to come as the meek and lowly Lamb of God: born in a borrowed manger, riding a borrowed donkey, eating in a borrowed room, and finally being buried in a borrowed tomb. He was poorer than the birds of the air and the foxes of the earth. He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But when He comes the second time, He will come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will ride upon the white steed of heaven, and out of His mouth will go a sharp sword with which He will smite the nations (Rev. 19: 11-16).

John overlooked this clear explanation given in Isaiah 61:1-2. Here we read: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." All of this down to the expression, "And the day of vengeance of our God," was fulfilled at His first coming. He did preach good tidings to the meek. He did proclaim liberty and set the captives free. At His second coming He will proclaim the day of vengeance. Then He will plead with fire and with the sword, and the slain of the Lord will be many (Isaiah 66:16). This will be literal. This verse has been wrested to mean those saved in revivals. The verse reads, "For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" -- that is, many slain in millennial judgments.

So Christ's not coming to see John in prison, and then doing just the opposite of which John had spoken, gave the enemy an opportunity. All John preached was true and will be fully realized at the second coming of Christ; but John, like many prophets, spoke more than he fully realized.

This was the day of sore trial for John. The Bible speaks of the "fiery darts" of the devil, and the "evil day." Did John say, "Well, I thought I heard a voice saying, 'This is my beloved Son.' I thought I saw the Holy Spirit like a dove rest upon Him. I did think He was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. I did preach to the people that He was such (John 1:29). But after all, was I mistaken? Go, disciples, and ask Him if He is really the Christ or shall we look for another?" Almost unbelievable! Fearful temptation! But we remember Jesus was tempted to devil worship. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Think of the holy Christ falling down before the devil and worshipping him. If this fiend would cause this mighty prophet to be in such doubt as to Christ and tempt Christ to devil worship, we need not be surprised at any blasphemous temptation he might suggest to us.

IV. Christ's answer to John (Matt. 11:4, 5).

1) First, we see the long-suffering and tenderness of Jesus to this tempest-tossed servant. Jesus said, "Go and shew John again." We never thought, as intimately as John knew Jesus, it would be necessary to reveal to John any further evidence of the deity of Jesus and that He was the very Christ that was to come into the world. But we must not overlook the weakness of humanity. Even the mighty John was still human and not exempt from the temptations of the devil. It is related how one day John Wesley said to his most intimate and trusted preacher, John Bradford, "John, will you post this letter right away?" Bradford replied, "Yes, I will just after the service." But Mr. Wesley answered, "I want it posted now, before the service." But Bradford came back at him and said, "There will be plenty of time after the service and then I will post it." But Mr. Wesley again came back at him and said, "You mean you will not post it before the service?" To this Bradford replied, "That is just what I mean." Wesley said, "Then our friendship ends." "Very well," said Bradford, "that suits me." Wesley preached and Bradford listened. After the service they retired, neither resting so well. The next morning when they came from their rooms, Bradford said to Mr. Wesley, "Will you apologize?" Wesley replied, "No, I will not, for I was right." Bradford said, "If you will not, then I will. I am sorry and I was to blame. Will you forgive me?" Wesley generously did so, and they were ever afterwards the best friends. We all have this treasure in earthen vessels and, Uncle Bud said, "Many of them are cracked." Anyway we are all human and need to be told again. We have been so blest that we felt it would be about impossible for us ever to need any further encouragement, but God has had to tell us again.

2) In the next place, we notice the report Jesus sent to John. "Shew John again those things you do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." That was just the opposite to the drastic deeds of which John had spoken, but it was truly wonderful. And then Jesus closes with these wonderful words, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." John was about to stumble or be offended in Jesus. In these words there was a very mild rebuke as Jesus rebuked the disciples in the garden when they slept, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." A woman prayed for her brother and he was suddenly killed, and she said, "I can never pray again." She was offended. No, do not become offended. Do all possible and leave all with Him.

V. What Jesus said of the man who was doubting Him (vv. 7-11).

This is a genuine test of character and salvation. Our attitude toward those who disagree with us and doubt us is a pretty sure test. Here John doubts and questions, and Jesus commends him. Jesus did not praise John to his face and criticize him at his back. This, often, is man's method. It seems Jesus did not mention the eulogy of John till the disciples of John were gone, not even in their presence. "And as they [that is, the disciples of John who came to make the investigation] departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes." He praised John to the multitudes.

Now we notice what Jesus said about John, "what went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." There were David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Elijah; but none greater than John. Really, he was more than a prophet. John was the connecting prophetic link between the two dispensations. John really lived in the old law or dispensation. And the new, or Holy Ghost, dispensation is so much greater that the least in it is greater than the greatest in the old. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Strange that they were to do greater works than Jesus did! We know it is true because Jesus said so. We do not think this is true in the physical realm. Jesus fed the multitudes, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, walked on the water, calmed the sea, and raised the dead. However, we read when Jesus departed and the Holy Ghost came that, in the spiritual realm, the disciples did greater works than Jesus. Thousands were immediately saved at and immediately after Pentecost. Pitiful now how the Holy Ghost has been set aside and the Church is powerless! Great opportunity and great responsibility! But beautiful the way Jesus praised John while John doubted Him.

But the climax was reached a few days later, when Herod sent and had John beheaded in prison, and his spirit took its flight to the good world. All was clear there. Soon his divine Lord finished His earthly ministry, and the everlasting doors were opened and the King of Glory came in. Here John, who so strongly and uncompromisingly stood for Him here, met Him; and then John knew even as also he was known. So whether it is light or dark, let's go on and serve the Lord. "who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:10). Here is a man that is trusting the Lord and obeying Him, has a good experience, and yet it is all dark. What must he do? Give up? No, trust in the Lord and stay upon God.

If all were easy, if all were bright,
Where would the cross be, where would the fight?
But in the hardness God gives to you
Chances for proving what He can do.

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09 -- A STRANGE AND WONDERFUL HEALING

In Mark 7:32-35 we read: "And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and

looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain."

This scripture contains a number of strange and very unusual truths. Jesus had just departed from Tyre and Sidon, where He had heard the earnest plea of the Syrophenician woman concerning her demon-possessed daughter. Just previous to this He had fed the hungry multitudes and then entered the land of Gennesaret, where they brought the sick and laid them in the streets, and besought Him to touch them, and as many as touched Him were made whole. Yes, He went about doing good. He would walk many miles, through the heat, to help one poor fallen woman. He came to seek and save the lost. He had one all-consuming, overmastering purpose and that was to help a lost world. He gave himself.

The old gardener was cutting down the century plant. The lady saw him and said, "why are you cutting it down? Won't it bloom again after it has rested for a while?" He answered, "No, it's done for now. It might have lived on much longer, but now that it has bloomed it's sure to die. But really, madam, since it has bloomed it has given pleasure to hundreds who never saw such a sight before. And was it not better to bloom and die than to live on and not bloom? For, according to my way of thinking, a blooming death is better than a no-account life." Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

But now we would notice a few thoughts from the unusual healing of this man.

I. The man himself.

He was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. Deafness is a very sad condition. Just think of the inconveniences and dangers incurred by this condition. How unthankful we are for what we call the common mercies of life! But he was not only deaf, but had an impediment in his speech. Blindness is fearful, but someone has said "This calamity of deafness, existing from birth, shuts up the soul of the sufferer in a perpetual prison house with no outlet of communication with his kind, until, wearied with treading the same cycle of never-extending thought, he sinks into a condition of utter mindlessness."

We read here, "They bring unto him." what a glorious deed! He, likely, would never have come and would have remained in this sad state through life if they had not brought him. It would be interesting, beginning with the little maid that waited on Naaman's wife and told her mistress of the prophet in Samaria who could deliver her husband from that dreaded disease, and coming on down through the Bible, to see what those nameless heroes and heroines did. All we know here is that they brought him. But there is a day coming when all of this will be revealed. Many now seem to desire their names and deeds emblazoned abroad. Jesus said, "They have their reward."

Multitudes today are, spiritually speaking, deaf and dumb, and have been so all their lives. They are shut up in a prison house of dismal darkness, in this life, and blackness and darkness forever, unless someone brings them to Jesus. And this very thing is the mission of the Church and the Christian. Sad to say, too often the professed Church has turned from this holy calling of soul saving to all kinds of national and world betterment, while the spiritually deaf and dumb grope

their way to hell. The mission of the Church, as such, is not social, industrial, or political reform; but it is moral regeneration. The holy mission of the Church as a whole, and individual members in particular, is to bring the lost to Christ. Praise the Lord for these, though nameless here, who brought this helpless man to Christ.

II. This unusual and strange healing.

Usually Christ healed suddenly, instantaneously. It was a divine act. He spoke and the work was done. With an exception or two this was always the case. The leper came and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The answer was, "I will; be thou clean" (Matt. 8:2-3). To the one sick of the palsy, He said, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way. Of the mother-in-law of Peter, it is said, "He touched her hand, and the fever left her." To the man with the withered hand, He said, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other." Hitherto he could not do this, but at the command of Christ he could. God always furnishes grace and power to obey His commands. To the dead girl, He said, "Maid, arise," and she arose. To the man who had been dead for four days, He said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he obeyed. Someone said, "He had to specify Lazarus or there would have been a general resurrection." Every dead man in that cemetery would have gotten up.

But, while His healing was usually instantaneous, here it was slow, gradual, various steps taken. But there is always a reason. "He doeth all things well." The country where this miracle was performed was largely heathen. There was little or no faith in Him, as He was little known. Then the man himself knew little, if anything, of Jesus; and it seems these steps were calculated to increase his faith. For it is always, "As thy faith is, so be it unto thee."

III. Steps to his healing.

1) Jesus took him aside from the multitude. We have one other similar case where He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of town before restoring his sight. Uncle Bud Robinson said, "The Lord could not do much in town." Sin and unbelief hinder faith. Doubtless this multitude of unbelievers was a great hindrance to the faith of the man. That is why we are often fearful of general, public healing services. The Bible says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him." Get away from the curious, unbelieving throng. Then we read, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Fervent praying by righteous men!

We have often seen this demonstrated in altar services. There is the crowd of sinners or unbelievers. The gospel plow goes deep, and the Holy Spirit is faithful, and a number of sincere seekers come to the altar, the penitent form, or mourners' bench, as it was formerly known. They seek and pray, but little progress is made. The curious spectators sit back and look on, often critically. Many times we have found it helpful to suggest in a tactful way that these go home and get some rest, in order that they may be able to return the next night. Then have the congregation rise and be dismissed, telling the seekers to remain and inviting all who will to come forward for a season of prayer. Often when this fringe of unbelief and ice has gone, the glory will soon fall and the seekers obtain the victory.

2) He put His fingers into his ears. It was his ears that were to be opened. That is where the difficulty relative to his hearing lay. Jesus always goes right to the root of the matter. The trouble with the rich young ruler was his great possessions. They were his idols. They were first. It is impossible to be a disciple of Christ and not put Him first. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." John the Baptist said, "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees" (Matt. 3: 10). Christ does not cut off some branch or the topmost bough, but He lays those blows at the very root and hews down the tree. Christ put His fingers into his ears, as if to remove any difficulty, and thereby encouraged the faith of the man. Doubtless as he felt the warm, tender touch of those wonderful fingers, his faith rose and he felt greatly encouraged. It is said of Jesus, "He shewed them his hands." Praise the Lord for those wonderful hands and fingers! Oh, that He might touch many who profess to know Him today, in order that their spiritual deafness might depart. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Many have ears, but they hear not.

3) Touched his tongue. We read, "And he spit, and touched his tongue." There is where the second difficulty lay. He had an impediment in his speech. Doubtless, He spit upon those same, tender fingers and then touched his tongue, as if to moisten his mouth and relieve the condition. Not that this would contribute to the healing, but it encouraged the faith of the man and thus prepared the way for the divine work.

But here is a needed lesson. Jesus' fingers were placed in the man's ears. The fingers moistened with His own saliva touched the tongue of the man. Personal contact is the thought. Too much of our work is too long range. It is by "remote control." Jesus did not remain in heaven. Looks as if some means might have been found by which He might have done His work without His incarnation. But no, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." But not only did He come to earth, but He came in personal contact with distressed, diseased individuals. He put His hands upon them; He put His fingers in their ears; He touched them. We are afraid of contamination or defilement, but not so with Jesus. Doubtless if many of us so-called Christian preachers and workers would get down off our stilts and, with a heart of pity and compassion, go out and contact the needy, there would be a great change.

4) Looked to heaven. "And looking up to heaven." He not only looked toward heaven, but He looked all the way to heaven. while He was himself divine, as a human being He always looked to and recognized the Father. Of course, there was the divine fellowship also between the Father and himself. Also He would recognize that all was from above. when there was some unusual task to perform, He would go out into the mountain and continue all night in prayer to the Father. The man here could not hear nor speak plainly, but he could see. And as he saw that holy face of Christ looking heavenward, that would be an encouragement to his faith. I think (I can almost see) by this time, after having felt those holy fingers in his ears and those tender fingers moistened with the Healer's own saliva touching his tongue, and now beholding this wonderful look, that the poor man is so blest and his faith so strengthened that he is on believing grounds and just about ready to lay hold of the needed blessing. We may not always be able to retire to the side of some great mountain and spend the night looking to heaven, but we can at least go into the closet and, if we will take time to shut the door, get strength and wisdom for the problems with which we are constantly confronted.

5) He sighed. "And looking up to heaven, he sighed." You notice He looked to heaven before He sighed. Mr. Webster says, "To sigh is to lament, to yearn strongly for." This was characteristic of Jesus. At the grave of Lazarus, we read, "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11:33). Then we have that shortest but one of the most significant verses in the Bible, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Lazarus dead and in the grave might represent a world dead in sin. Then when Jesus looked over Jerusalem, we read, "He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known."

Thus we see Jesus wept, groaned, was troubled, and sighed. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. Here is a timely lesson for us. Just as He looked to heaven before sighing, we must. As a human being, He obtained strength and power for the task before Him. It is dangerous to contact a suffering world without first looking to heaven. The human body and mind cannot long stand the strain without help from above. It is said that Robert Pollock, as well as many others, died, humanly speaking, a premature death because of the sufferings of this world and the solemnities of eternity resting so heavily upon them. But, after all, that is much better than to live a life of ease and aloofness and accomplish little; for if we lose our lives for His sake, we shall find them. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." But we may live longer by looking to heaven.

But we wonder why Jesus sighed. Was it because the case was too hard for Him and He was baffled? Certainly not. We read (Matt. 17:14-18) that just after the Transfiguration, when Jesus came down from the mountain, among the multitude, there was a man who had brought his lunatic son to the disciples and they had failed. Christ said, "Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him." There were no hard cases for Jesus. He simply spoke and the work was done. We think this was a sigh of pity and sympathy. Christ knew what a holy, happy, and wonderful creature man was before the fall; but now he is such a deaf, dumb, contaminated, and miserable wreck that he brings forth this heart sigh from Jesus. Some think that this sigh was produced as Jesus thought of the temptations to which the man would be exposed from being able to hear and speak, that he had better remain deaf and have an impediment in his speech than to hear and speak well and not do it for the glory of God.

6) The climax. After these various steps, and the faith of the man was increased, Jesus said, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." Thus we see that after all of these strange occurrences, taking him aside, putting His fingers in his ears, touching his tongue, Jesus looking up to heaven, and this deep sigh of pity, the work was done. There was that command, "Be opened," and deafness was gone and the impediment disappeared. Surely the man must have been profoundly grateful. Then we read, "They were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well." Isaiah said, "He shall not fail." Then there is a glorious millennial promise made by Isaiah. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom, as the rose. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness" (Isaiah 35). Such spiritual blessings Christ gives now, but all of this will be literal when He comes the second time. He may seem slow in bringing all of this about, but He cannot fail, and we can rest upon His promise and wait for its fulfillment. The glorious

Nobleman, who has gone to the far country, will come and set up His kingdom of righteousness and peace, which shall subdue all other kingdoms and stand forever. May that blessed day be hastened!

* * * * *

10 -- SEEING JESUS

In the Book of Revelation 1:7 we read, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him." This has reference to the time when He shall come from the Marriage Supper to reign on the earth for a thousand years. All on the earth shall see Him then, but every human being that has ever lived on the earth shall see Jesus at some time.

In this first chapter of Revelation John tells us that he was in the isle that is called Patmos. He also tells us why he was there. He states he was there "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." He was banished to this lonely island because of his loyalty to the Word of God and his testimony for Christ. But it would be better to be thus exiled and see what John saw and hear what he heard than to be a time-serving compromiser and be pastor of the "first church."

Also John says, "I was in the Spirit." But we are not surprised to find him in this rapturous state, having gone through the experience he had. He also stated, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." while this expression seems to refer to the first day of the week at times, it does not seem to here. All through the Bible we find the expressions "the day of the Lord," "the day of God," and "the Lord's day," used in the same sense. This period is quite inclusive. It seems to include the Rapture, the Great Tribulation, the binding of Satan, the Marriage Supper, the revelation of Christ with all His saints when coming for the millennial reign and the Millennium itself, the battle of Gog and Magog at the close of the Millennium, the Great white Throne Judgment, the purification of heavens and the earth, and the coming down of the new Jerusalem to be located in the air above the earth. God seemed, in some sense, to translate John down into these wonderful times and show him in panoramic vision all of this, just as if it were taking place then. All of this John calls "the Lord's day."

So John in this rapturous state on the isle of Patmos states he heard a great voice and, being turned, he saw the glorified Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks or the seven churches. And we had better keep Christ. You can have a club or lodge without Christ, but not a church. He is the indispensable One. Then John tells us how this glorified Christ looked when he saw Him. He states that He was dressed in the priestly robe and that His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow. Does this indicate age? No. Holiness! "And his eyes were as a flame of fire." Love to His own and vengeance to His enemies! He states that His feet were "like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters -- and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" -- the dazzling, noonday sun. This is Christ in His deity. This is the way He will look when we see Him. Now a few thoughts concerning seeing Him.

I. We should like to have seen Him when He was on earth. We should like to have seen Him in Bethlehem's manger; we should like to have seen Him at the age of twelve in the Temple;

we should like to have seen Him when He turned the water into wine. You say, "Is it all right to drink wine?" Yes, the kind Jesus made. We should like to have seen Him when He fed the multitude with a few loaves and fishes; we should like to have seen Him when He delivered the demoniac boy; we should like to have seen Him when He walked on the water and calmed the storm. We should like to have seen Him when He raised the widow's son and called Lazarus from the tomb. We should like to have seen Him when He came to the Temple when they were buying and selling. Look at Him! His eyes flash with holy indignation as they prostitute His Father's house into a place of trade. Behold Him as He picks up some pieces of "small cords," doubtless used in bringing the animals in. See Him as He makes a scourge-whip, if you please. (God making a whip!) You say, "Drastic!" Yes, but a drastic situation. When the whip was finished, He drove them all out. He turned over the tables and said, "My Father's house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." God's house is a place for worship. when we prostitute it into a place of merchandise and social recreation, we are bringing the wrath of God on us. Jesus broke up the abominable desecration. He was hard on funerals and rummage sales! He broke up every one He encountered. We should like to have beheld this scene. We should like to have seen Him on the morning of the Resurrection; we should like to have seen Him when He got back Home and "the everlasting doors" were lifted up and the King of Glory came in.

II. But while we missed seeing Him, and all of this, we shall yet see Him. But while all shall see Him, all shall not see Him at the same time. There will be at least six periods when He will be seen. (1) All who have died in Christ have already seen Him. No soul sleeping in God's Book. Paul said, "Absent from the body, and . . . present with the Lord"; also, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." No sleep in the ground. And then, those that sleep in Jesus He shall bring with Him. He is in heaven. How could He bring them with Him unless they were there? (2) All the raptured saints living on the earth shall see Him when He comes again. Of course, they will join the resurrected saints, whose spirits shall be brought from heaven and their bodies from the grave. Here the spirits and bodies will be reunited, glorified human beings, and they, with the living ones, shall not die but be changed, shall in one mighty throng rise to meet Jesus in the air at the Marriage Supper. (3) Then gleanings who shall be saved during the Great Tribulation, under the very reign of hell, shall see Him. (4) Then all who are on the earth when He comes from the Marriage Supper to reign shall see Him. (5) Then all who shall be born on the earth during the millennial reign shall see Him. No war and raging diseases then, and the earth will be populated during the Millennium as never before. (6) Then all the wicked who have ever lived on the earth shall see Him at the Great white Throne Judgment. Thus all shall see Him, but not all at the same time.

III. But now, again, we glance at the way He will look when we see Him and how it will affect us. We have already mentioned how He looked: His head and hair as white as snow; His eyes like a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; His voice like the sound of many waters; and His countenance as the sun shining in His strength. when He was here, he was God manifest in the flesh. His deity was veiled by His humanity. But when we shall see Him, "we shall see him as he is" -- His deity no longer veiled. It will be unveiled, outshining, scintillating Deity.

Here we pause to see how this vision of the glorified Christ affected John. And we must remember who this John is. He is the disciple John who heard the call to "follow me" at the Sea of

Galilee. He became one of the twelve apostles. He was the intimate John who leaned on the bosom of Jesus. When some secret was desired, Peter said, "John, you ask Him." Those who are close to Jesus get secrets others know nothing of. Also he was the John who, among others, tarried at Pentecost and was sanctified wholly. So he was the disciple John, the apostle John, the intimate John, the holy John. And yet John says, "when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." Think of it! This holy, intimate John falls like a dead man. Say what we will, but we will need holiness when we see Him, real holiness-not mere imputed holiness, not positional holiness, fictitious holiness, mere professional holiness, sham holiness, but real holiness. Eternal, imparted, intrinsic holiness! Heart holiness down where no one sees but God!

But as we see John fallen like a dead man he said, "[Christ] laid his right hand upon me [the hand of power and authority], saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and last." "I was here first, and I will be here when all are gone. John, I was here before the devil arrived in Eden. I was here before old Nebuchadnezzar got here. I was here before Alexander cut his wide swath through the old world. I was here before Napoleon got here. I beat Hitler here. I was here before old bombastic Mussolini got here. I beat old Joe Stalin here. I will be here when they all are gone. I am the First and the Last." Daniel saw the stone cut out of the mountain without hand, and saw it strike the great image of Nebuchadnezzar (which represented the political powers of the world) upon the feet, and drive it away like chaff. The stone is none other than the divine Christ. One day this smiting Stone will come and fall with fury upon the powers of the world, and all will be driven away, and this Stone will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. This will be Christ's glorious millennial kingdom.

"Yes, John, I have the keys. I am the solution of every problem. Don't be afraid." Yes, this blessed, glorious, holy, divine Redeemer is coming, coming in glory. When He was here, He was the poorest of the poor: born in a borrowed manger, rode a borrowed donkey, buried in a borrowed tomb. But when He comes again, He will come on the white steed of heaven in power and great glory. No one will dare deride Him, spit in His face, crown Him with thorns, or crucify Him. He shall come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And every eye shall see Him. True, the Bible declares, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Of course, no one shall see him in peace without holiness. That is the prerequisite for seeing Him in peace. But every eye shall see Him. May we have on the wedding garment and be ready, and not be ashamed in His holy presence. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). I want to see Him, don't you?

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11 -- THE CONDEMNED ROW

In John 3:18 we have this solemn statement, "He that believeth not is condemned already." For this little message either of the following subjects would be appropriate, "The Condemned Row" or "Alert Pertaining to Material and Temporal Things and Indifferent Concerning Spiritual and Eternal Values." Mr. Webster says to be alert "is to be watchful, anxious, on the lookout." We should be alert, we should be concerned as to the material things of life; but they should not take first place. We should be more alert pertaining to spiritual and eternal things. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." By the condemned row, as we

shall see, we have reference to the mighty lost, condemned throng who are rushing to eternity, about whom we seem little concerned, as well as our own eternal welfare.

Suppose we were on some island, camping, just there for a few days. Then we would be compelled to move to one of two places. Suppose further that when we move--and move we must -- it is within our power to determine to which of these two places we go. Also we must keep in mind that there is a vast contrast between these two places. One of them is a land of fruits, flowers, fertile soil, balmy air, and gracious inhabitants. The other place is a land of rocks, barren soil, malaria and the inhabitants are low, vile, and wicked. Now I think we should be concerned about the camp, but not too greatly concerned, as we are to be there only a few days and then must go to one of these two places. It seems reasonable that the primary concern should be to meet all requirements, since the departure is only a few days hence, so that we shall go to that good land. Now, we are all on this island of time. The Bible says, "The time is short." This is a fleeting world. We are making a fight to remain on the island, but it is a losing fight. Others have made a strenuous fight to remain, but they departed. The place that knows us now will soon know us no more forever. Mr. Wesley was right when he said,

Nothing is worth the thought beneath
But how I may escape
That death that never, never dies
And when I fail on earth secure
A mansion in the skies.

That is, when we leave the island go to that good place. And heaven and hell are both places. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." And the man in hell called to Abraham across the great gulf and said, "Send him [Lazarus] back to my father's house: for I have five brethren; lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27, 28).

Now in order to get at the truth we are seeking to emphasize we would ask a few questions.

I. Anyone hungry in your home or community?

I mean, now, hungry for material bread that satisfies natural hunger. Suppose no food in your home and the family were suffering. Or suppose you heard some of the neighbor's children crying for bread. The mother said, "Children, go to bed now"; but they piteously said, "Mother, we are so hungry we can't sleep." Would you be anxious about this? Of course you would do something. You would be abnormal and cruel if you did not. But you say, "No one hungry in our home, neither are any of the neighbors." But now another question, "Are any hungry for the bread of life," that bread without which the soul must starve? The facts are that in our homes, often, and all around us are those who are starving for the bread of life, but how does that affect us? Not much concerned usually. The material and the temporal stir us, but the spiritual and eternal very little.

II. Anyone sick in your home or community?

I mean really sick; humanly speaking, incurably sick. The doctor has exhausted his skill and shaken his head, and said, "I can't do any more." I refer to these fatal diseases: cancer, t.b., plague, etc. How concerned we are! And rightly so. The place where that sick loved one lies is just about the center of the universe to you, in that home or hospital. That is where your thoughts and affections center.

Take an illustration. In a very wealthy Southern home a young man was dangerously ill with a most malignant case of typhoid fever. The father loved his son devotedly. He secured the most skillful physicians that could be obtained. He employed three of the most faithful nurses that could be found. He said to them, "Be faithful. Do your best; never mind about expense. Save my boy." The doctors were efficient; the nurses were devoted and alert; God had mercy, and after a number of weeks the boy was well. The doctors and nurses presented their statements, and they ran up into the thousands of dollars. They rather apologized, but the father said, "Why, don't apologize; I am so happy! You have saved my boy. I would freely have given much more." And he gladly and hilariously paid the bills. You say, "Was that wrong?" No, that was normal and right. But in the same community there was a spiritual dearth. Multitudes were going to hell, and nobody seemed concerned. But a few became burdened. It does not take so many. They began to fast and pray. A good evangelist and some singers and workers were called, and God gave a glorious revival. Many found God, and among them that fine young man who had been almost miraculously raised from the dead. Those who sponsored the revival were raising some funds with which to care for the expense of the meeting. They went to this father whose son had recently been raised up and said to him, "Mr.____, we, as you know, have had a gracious revival and many found the Lord and among them your son, and we thought you might assist us in the expense." "Yes," he said, "I will," and handed them a poor little one-dollar bill! Shame! Wicked! He gave thousands, willingly, gladly, to save his son's body from the grave and a one-dollar bill to save his soul from hell. That is what we are talking of -- alert pertaining to matters temporal and indifferent as to things eternal.

III. Anyone kidnapped in your home or community?

That is a terrible thing. You say, "Certainly not anyone kidnapped or I would not be here. I would be seeking to do something about it." Some of you remember some years ago when the papers were filled with articles about the Lindbergh baby being kidnapped. The world was stirred. Also another case where the little boy in a Western home had been kidnapped. The note came to the wealthy parents from the kidnapers, demanding that \$50,000 be placed at a certain place. The parents consulted the officers and they said, "You just must not do this. If you will cease to pay, they will cease to operate." But a second note came, also one enclosed from the kidnapped boy, written in his own hand, well-known by the parents. This time the kidnapers said, "You are too slow. If the money is not at a certain place by a certain time, we will punch out the eyes of your boy." The officers said, "You must not do it"; but the parents said, "He is our boy." That makes the difference, and they bundled up the \$50,000 in cold cash and complied with the instructions and secured their boy and they were happy. They felt the money had been well spent. They had gotten value received.

Suppose someone were kidnapped in your home or community. But now is anyone kidnapped by sin and the devil? The fact is multitudes are. We formerly sang, "Where is my

wandering boy tonight?" Well, we may continue to sing that but can now also sing, "Where is my wandering girl tonight?" Look at this mighty, godless, diseased, smoking, dancing, cursing throng, slaves to the devil and sin, as they rush on toward hell. But just how much are we concerned? Many young men furloughed home were wined and dined, but little effort was made to get them to God.

IV. Anyone lost?

That is a sad word. Lost. Sad to be lost on the plain, desert, mountain, or ocean; but the saddest of all is to be lost in sin. Anyone lost in your home or community? You answer, "No, not any one of my loved ones or neighbors lost." Well, maybe not, physically; but anyone lost in sin? Doubtless many are, but just how much am I distressed? "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

A few years ago there was a boy lost at Cartersville, Georgia. The state was stirred. The whole country was alarmed. Citizens searched, soldiers searched. We passed through Cincinnati during the time. We secured the big daily. On the front page there was something about Hitler, Roosevelt, and the war; but the big headlines were, "Boy Lost In Cartersville, Ga." Fearful to be lost! It moved heaven.

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold.

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night
When the Lord passed through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.

V. Anybody dead in your home?

What a change it makes when death comes! We lived near a home where they reveled and forgot God, but one day death came so unexpectedly and suddenly. What a transformation! Quietness and solemnity! You say, "No one dead in our home." Well, if not physically, what about spiritually? Own husband, wife, child, brother, or sister? Talking, eating, walking, and yet a spiritual corpse? Associating with a corpse? The Bible declares all are dead who have not been quickened by the regenerating grace of God. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). A corpse is cold, lifeless, indifferent, and dead. You may seek to interest the unsaved in the things of God, but all in vain. He is blind, and as far as Christ is concerned, "There is no beauty that we should desire him." He is just a "root out of a dry ground." When our loved ones die, we are brokenhearted, and rightly so; but multitudes of them are dead and we have little concern.

VI. Anybody condemned in your home?

Some time ago we were being shown by the warden through the penitentiary at Nashville, Tennessee. As we walked down the corridor, we saw a big white line chalked off on the floor marking off eight cells. A man sat by them with a gun, guarding. The warden informed us that that was the condemned row. They had all committed first degree murder and were to be electrocuted. He pointed out one cell and said, "This young man is to pay the penalty next Friday." He gave me permission to talk with him. We prayed with him and told him of Jesus the best we knew how, and left him in that sad situation. As we came away, we thought of that other condemned row of which Christ spoke. "He that believeth not is condemned already" -- not condemned to the electric chair, but to the lake of fire. Not going to be condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment, but is condemned. Condemned now. Jesus did not say those who lie, steal, curse, murder, etc., are condemned, though of course they are; but he that believeth not. It is clear that every person in this world who has come to the years of accountability, and received a call from God, and refused is in the condemned row.

A gentleman who spent some years in Europe in the Catholic countries and then other years in Latin America, after having made a careful study of Catholicism and Protestantism (which, according to his research, is largely apostate), said, "I do not believe that more than 2 per cent of Christendom is really Christian." Christendom, you know, is the professed Christian church, including the Roman and Greek Catholic churches (if they may be called a church at all) and apostate Protestantism. Such a vast difference in the Church and the professed church. But such a startling statement! Two per cent of Christendom really Christian! Probably there are about 600,000,000 in Christendom. Then 2 per cent of that Christian! I hope his figures are too low, but it gives us some little conception of the gigantic throng in this lost, hell-bound condemned row. More than 2,000,000,000 people in the world, and this meager per cent Christian!

Anybody condemned in your home? You say, "Surely not." But anyone condemned spiritually? Anyone in that condemned row? I was called to a home here in Chattanooga. When I arrived an old lady with white hair, stooped form, and wrinkled face said, while tears flowed, "O Brother Tidwell, can you do anything for me? My only boy is in the penitentiary and is condemned to die in the electric chair." Then again, "Can you do anything? Can you see the Governor? Can you write him? Can you do anything? Do not ask for justice but mercy. Tell the Governor he is my only boy. Have mercy for my sake." I wrote Governor Browning the best letter I could write. The Governor replied and said, "I understand it is an aggravated case, but I will investigate and do my best." But about the next day the young man had got a piece of blanket and hanged himself. But I shall never forget the pathos of those words, "Can you do anything?" Her boy was in the condemned row.

Just how many of our loved ones are there now? I would not hurt you, but I would arouse you if I could. Mother, father, Sunday-school teacher, everyone knowing right from wrong and not saved is in that row now. One of the hardest things we have had to do, as a pastor, is to preach the funeral of some fine boy or girl who had refused the call of God. The revival is on and the tide rises. Others come, but Johnny and Mary are stubborn. They shake their heads. They turn Jesus down. They resist the Holy Ghost. Then death comes suddenly and the funeral must be conducted. But you say, "You know they have gone to heaven, for they were good and came to church and Sunday school regularly." But have they gone to heaven? Jesus said, "He that believeth not is condemned." They have rejected Christ and turned down the Holy Ghost. In heaven they all fall

before the throne and worship God and say, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom.... and power, and might, be unto our God." But if Johnny and Mary refused to worship God here, they would there. If they shook their heads here, they would there. Embarrassing in heaven! We must never forget that death does not, in any wise, change the moral nature. Just as we die, so we meet God. "He that believeth not is condemned." How many of our own dear loved ones in that row now?

There are two difficulties now to having revivals. One is the swiftness of the current to hell. The mighty flood tide of iniquity is so swift and powerful that it is difficult to get the unsaved out. The other difficulty is the indifference of the professed Christians. We know these things but we do not feel them. The 50,000,000 heathen who die every year, the 137,000 who die daily, the 5,000 that die every hour, and the 5 who die every breath we draw, do not affect us much. We know these things, but we do not feel them. We are alert relative to the material and temporal things, but we are indifferent pertaining to things spiritual and eternal.

Workmen were boring the well; and the machinery, which had gotten out of order, had been taken out, leaving the empty hole about thirty feet deep in the ground. The little girl, playing around, fell in and went to the bottom. The parents were horrified. Soon a rope was let down and the father tenderly called down and said, "Darling, take hold of the rope and we will draw you up." But the plaintive little voice came back from the bottom of the well, "Daddy, I can't get hold of the rope. My hands are jammed down between the walls and myself and I can't get them out." But she was told not to be excited, that they would soon have a way. So quickly some hooks were arranged and let down by the rope. They were carefully worked and seemed to be holding. They began slowly to pull her up, very carefully and tenderly, almost afraid to breathe. All was going well. She was now in sight as she was being drawn up from this dark hole. But, horrors, the hook slipped and she sank again to the bottom! They called, but no response. They worked frantically all night. The ground was very loose and sandy. Good speed was made, but no sound from the bottom of the well all night. About the time the morning began to dawn she was visible, but she was dead. The mother temporarily lost her mind. It was enough.

What would we do if some of our loved ones, now, were in the well? You say, "But they are not." But there is something worse. It is the well of sin. David said, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit." What are we doing? Are we just playing church? What are we doing for those in the pit and the condemned row? "Can you do anything?" Are we doing what we can? Are we doing our best?

Soon will the season of rescue be o'er;
Soon will they drift to eternity's shore.
Haste then, my brother; no time for delay,
But throw out the life line and save them today.

* * * * *

We have an account of the death of Moses in the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. This has been a favorite target for higher critics, infidels, and skeptics in general. It was written, of course, after the death of Moses; and they, sneeringly, say, "How could Moses write his own obituary?" Well, that is easy for the one who believes in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." God revealed to Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Nahum, and others events that were to take place centuries or millenniums in the future.

Two infidels, it is said, were talking and one said to the other, "There is just one thing that troubles and disturbs me, and if it were not for that I would be perfectly happy." "Well, what is that one thing that disturbs you?" asked the other. The first one answered, "I am afraid that the Bible might be true." Since the Bible is true, this gentleman really did have grounds for worry.

I. Ascending the mountain to die.

In verse one we read, "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho." He had just been instructed by the Lord to do this. "And the Lord spake unto Moses . . . saying, Get thee up into this mountain . . . Nebo . . . and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people." Moses obeyed. Christ was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Better die obeying the Lord than live a thousand years and disobey.

Lord, obediently we will go;
Gladly leaving all below.
Only Thou our Leader be,
And we still will follow Thee.

Behold him as he bids Joshua, Eleazar, and all the brethren farewell. Thank the Lord, there is a land where they never say good-by. Did he say, "You tarry here while I go yonder and die"?

Then we see him as he begins the ascent of old, rugged, steep Nebo. He must go to the highest point, Pisgah. His step was steady. He needed no assistance. Often when criminals must face the gallows or electric chair they must be assisted. They may have been defiant, but immediate death strips them. Not so with this mighty man of God.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy sup ply.

Yes, this holds good even in the path of death. God would not have His servant die in the plain but on the mountain, as near heaven as possible. Heaven is spoken of as up, and hell as down.

II. Canaan viewed (verses 1-4).

Having reached Pisgah, Moses is given a view of Canaan. "And the Lord shewed him all the land." Canaan was probably about 160 miles long and 60 miles wide. And while Moses' eyes

were not dim, and he was on the top of the mountain, it is likely that the Lord gave him a little supernatural vision. Doubtless the Lord often does this near the end of the journey. The veil, we believe, is pretty thin between the two worlds to the true child of God. Sometimes it just about lifts. Multitudes have so testified. The delectable mountains come into view.

But why could Moses not enter? The answer is found in Numbers 20:2-12. There was no water, and the people chode with Moses and said they might better have died with their brethren. They said, "Why have ye brought up the congregation to die in the wilderness? Why have ye made us to come out of Egypt to die in this evil place? It is no place of seeds or figs or vines or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take the rod . . . and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water." Rocks are not very responsive, but about as much so as some hearts. But we read, "Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod smote the rock twice; and the water came out." The Lord could not afford to withhold the water, for that would have made bad matters worse with those murmuring rebels. But Moses grieved the Lord. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me . . . ye shall not bring this congregation into the land." Yes, Moses was the lawgiver, and the penalty for sin is death; and even Moses, the saint of the Lord, was not exempt. We will never get to the place where it will not be necessary to resist the devil. The sin of Israel was unbelief. Did Moses, to some extent, enter into their sin in acting as he did?

This announcement greatly grieved Moses. "And I besought the Lord.... saying I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me . . . and the Lord said unto me.... speak no more unto me of this matter." That settled it. Moses became resigned. Christ said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" Moses was a great man of prayer. God heard his prayers. Almost invariably the Lord acquiesced in what Moses sought. As far as we know this is about the only time he failed. He thought the Lord would reverse the sentence, this time, but not so. Even prayer did not change it. God will not answer, now, but sometimes answers are delayed.

III. Moses' death.

Pisgah having been reached and Canaan viewed, the final moment has come. The final hour may seem slow, but if Jesus tarries it will arrive. Jesus said, "The hour is come." We notice just a few particulars relative to Moses' death.

1) Moses, the servant of the Lord, died. Yes, no amount of devotion or service will render one immune from death. "It is appointed unto men once to die." But "the sting of death is sin." If we are the Lord's, it is so different. God said, "I will put a division between my people and thy people." This was referring to the Hebrews and the Egyptians. But there is difference, not only in life but in death, between the sinner and the Christian. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," the Christian dead. Neither is the death of all precious in His sight, for He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but it is the death of His saints.

Yes, Moses had made his choice long ago and had been preparing for this a long time. Many, like Balaam, want to die the death of the righteous but are not willing to live the life of the righteous. Moses was 120 years old when he died, three forty-year periods-forty years in

Pharaoh's palace, forty years as a shepherd, and forty years as leader of Israel. So the servant of the Lord died, but that does not mean that his service ended. In Revelation 22:3, we read, "And his servants shall serve him." Glad, happy service!

2) When did he die? "According to the word of the Lord." "At the mouth of the Lord." In other words, when the Lord called. That is the best time. I like to think if we are the Lord's we will not just slip off accidentally. He notes the fall of the sparrow, and how much more His redeemed child! It has been said that men die when they run out of life. That is doubtless true of the sinner, but not the child of God. Moses had not run out of life. He had a good supply on hand. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." He went at the call of the Lord.

3) How did he die? As far as human beings were concerned, he died alone. The path to the place of death was lonely, and so was the place itself. No matter how intimate we may be with loved ones, we must die alone. They can go to the brink of the river, but there they must stop. Mother, father, minister, husband, wife cannot go with us. Is there anyone who can go all the way? Yes, God was there. That is enough. A few months ago when one of our good men was dying in the hospital, his wife sat on one side of the bed and I on the other. We thought he had about passed over, when suddenly he opened his eyes and spoke out clearly and said, "I'm so glad, I'm so glad, I'm so glad!" His wife said, "Honey, what are you so glad about?" He replied distinctly, "I'm so glad, I'm so glad God is here!" That is worth it all. David said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Moses was alone but not alone. He died in the best company, God and probably angels.

IV. His burial.

He was buried. Even the bodies of the saints of the Lord are precious in His sight. For "it is sown" and "it is raised. The body that is buried will be resurrected. Yes, risen, resurrected, changed, glorified, but the same body. "Sown in weakness raised in power." "Sown a natural body raised a spiritual body." Were there any gravediggers? Did the ground just miraculously open in the form of a grave? Was he buried in some cave? Did the angels prepare the grave? Well, we know, "He buried him." The Lord. That is enough. The Lord turned undertaker. He is sufficient for every emergency in life, death, or eternity. Are you poor? Don't worry too much about the burial. The Lord is still alive and doing business.

Where He buried him. He buried him in a valley. "But no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day." No man, but God knows. He knows them all. We saw at Arlington Cemetery the grave of "The Unknown Soldier." That is not true. God knows them all. He knows where-mountain, plain, or ocean. If they were the Lord's, He will bring them forth at the first resurrection. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16). Yes, a thousand years before the wicked (Rev. 20:4-6). If Moses died on Pisgah, how could his body have been removed to a valley? Oh, God had charge! The God that piled up mountains and scooped out the seas and "hangeeth the earth upon nothing" could easily manage that. (See Job 26: 7.) Yes, the body of Moses was important. Heaven and hell contended over it. "Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses" (Jude 9). Wonderful burial!

V. His greatness.

In verses 10 and 11 we read, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt" There was a holy intimacy that existed between God and Moses hitherto or since unknown. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so . . . with him I will speak mouth to mouth" (Num. 12:6-8). He knew God. God was indispensable to him. We would not accept even an angel as substitute for God.

We suggested that practically all his prayers were answered. One exception. Not permitted to enter Canaan. But that finally answered. Just delayed. At the mount of Transfiguration. "There talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias." Where was the Transfiguration? It was in Canaan! There he is. He had to go around by the way of heaven to have this prayer answered, but it was finally answered. We believe every legitimate, Holy Ghost prayer will be answered sometime, somewhere. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalms 37:4).

Say not that God hath not heard thy prayer.
You shall have your desire, sometime, somewhere.

If Jesus tarries, the death summons will soon come to you and me. God grant that, like Moses, we may be ready and triumphantly respond to the call from on high.

* * * * *

13 -- THE MAN GOD CALLED A FOOL

In Luke 12:20 we read, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" The entire account of this tragedy is found in Luke 12:12-31. Christ had just been speaking of some of the most solemn facts. He had just stated that there is a day coming when all the hidden things of darkness will be proclaimed upon the housetops; that men should not fear them that kill the body, but fear Him who is able to cast both soul and body into hell. He had also spoken of the dreadful danger of blaspheming the Holy Ghost

But a strange thing happened. It seems He had scarcely finished this most solemn discourse when there was a blunt, if not discourteous, interruption. A man came right up and said, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." Shame on him! He was at the meeting bodily, but not mentally. That is not uncommon. You can be at the service and at the same time not there. What did he care about heaven and hell and the blaspheming of the Holy Ghost? He was interested in his inheritance. He was the type who would be more interested in beef roast than the Holy Ghost. The minister must not run over one minute, or he will leave. His appetite is stronger for material than for spiritual things. This must have grieved the heart of Jesus.

Then in the answer Jesus gave him we see a rebuke. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" He did not say "friend" or "brother," but just "man." See the look of

disappointment on the face of Jesus. Then Jesus states that He had not come to be a judge or divider. No, Christ was not a social reformer, but a heart transformer. He knew we could never live right till our hearts were made right. The mother said to her little girl, who had been naughty, "Susie, why don't you be good?" She immediately responded, "Mother, how can I be good when there is not any good in me?" You say, "Can't I live right if I try hard enough?" I do not think so, if you are not a Christian. Oh, I think some of you can do better, but not fully right. Jesus said, "Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Then Christ gives a word of warning when He said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "Beware of covetousness." Material possessions are not the main thing. "Beware." Danger here. God does not determine the value of a man by the size of his bank account, but by his spiritual assets, his Christlikeness.

There are rich poor men and then there are poor rich men. It is spiritual values that count.

Then Jesus gives the parable of the rich fool. The fool speaks of his wonderful crop, and how troubled he is about what to do with it. Most men are troubled about too little, but he was worried because he had too much. His problem was to take care of his abundance. We will notice a few lessons from him just here.

I. The independence of this fool.

You notice over and over again he said, "I will." "I will pull down my barns." "I will build larger barns." "I will store my fruits." "I will say to my soul." He did not say, "If the Lord be willing, I will." No, not this fool. Independence is one of the sins of the age. We know not what a day will bring forth. We will do this or that if God permits. It is said an infidel defied God during a fearful storm, by baring his bosom and looking upward, shaking his fist at God, cursing and saying, "If there is a God, I dare Him to strike me!" Did God do it? Oh, no! He would not waste His lightning on a fellow like that. When he ceased his blasphemous ravings and started into the house, he sucked a little black gnat down his windpipe and choked to death. Just a gnat to care for him. He was just an independent, blasphemous fool.

II. This fool left God out.

He is not charged with out-broken wickedness, but he was godless. "He thought within himself." He looked over his broad acres of waving grain, then at his insufficient barns. He was anxious by day and restless by night. He was thinking, wondering, planning. But it was all godless. Today the world is saying, "We by our wisdom and might will have a world bank, world court, world police force, etc., and will usher in a new day of peace and safety." But God is left out, and all of this is doomed to failure. God is being left out of plans, business, homes, and even churches. The most startling statement was made by one of our leading gentlemen. We heard him make it at Nashville, Tennessee. His exact words were these, as fully as we can remember, "If God died, 95 per cent of our church program would go right on just like nothing had happened." Think of that! Ninety-five per cent of the church plans, energy, and program just human. No God! The godless homes of today are pathetic. In multitudes of them are cards, dancing, booze, and revelry of every kind. Then the majority of professed Christian homes are, practically, godless. No devotion, no prayer, just one endless mad rush. The little girl from a godless home was visiting in a home

where they had thanks at the table and took time for real, not just sham, family devotions-reading the Bible and prayer. When it came time for her to leave and go home, she cried bitterly and said, "I don't want to go home." When asked why, she replied, "There is not any God in our home." Yes, God has been largely discarded today. Poor children, born with abnormal appetites, almost half-damned, and then reared in godless homes!

III. The fatal mistake of this fool.

This is found in verse nineteen, "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." His mistake was that he thought that goods would satisfy his soul. No wonder God called him a fool. To think that a human soul or spirit, created in the image of God, could thus be satisfied! This is a common mistake. Some husbands think that a good car, a fine home, plenty of money, and all material objects will satisfy a wife. No, she desires the affections of a husband. Many a wife thinks that a clean house and cooking will be all a husband desires. No, he desires the fellowship that only a true wife can give. Many homes have gone on the rocks because of failure to recognize this.

Material goods will not satisfy a human soul. We do not know this from experience, but from observation. We spent nine months, when we were quite a young man in school, in a very wealthy home. They invited us to spend the school year in their home. The colored liveryman, in the fine carriage, would drive me back and forth. Think of it! I was used to riding in wagons and on mules and plowing with old Beck. But they liked me and insisted that I stay with them all free for the year. They hardly knew what they were worth. They gave a nephew \$70,000 as a Christmas gift. But I learned one thing while I was there. They often called me into the living room and talked to me of their problems. They were worried to know where to invest so as not to lose. I had never had any such trouble! But I learned one thing, and that was that goods do not satisfy. Christ alone can satisfy, but He can. He is the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, and the fairest of ten thousand to the soul.

He lived for time and not eternity. Poor deceived soul! Recently we were called to conduct the funeral of a wealthy but godless real estate man. It was a cold, dark, rainy day. The funeral was at his elegant home. Only a few were there. He was not to be buried at one of the regular cemeteries, but at a little country graveyard some miles out. This burying place was begun, we were told, by the Indians, back on a hill near a great mountain. When we arrived at the grave, the gravedigger was bailing the water out of the grave. We quickly lowered the body, and of course it was floating in water in a few minutes. The men filled the grave as quickly as possible. A few flowers were placed on the grave. We immediately left and started down the hill for the cars. As we did so the autumn rain fell, and the wind set the pine trees to moaning, as if rendering some sad funeral dirge. We thought of the rich fool in the Bible. He had lived for time, and this was the end as far as this present world is concerned. He was a real estate man, as mentioned, but now needs and occupies only a small amount.

IV. The end came and came unexpectedly.

"But God said unto him . . . this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Just when the goods were laid up for many years! Everything in readiness to live, eat, drink, and be merry! "Thy

soul shall be required of thee." What does that mean? Required, demanded, claimed, called for, but by whom required?

First, death. Death will get you. You may say "No" to mother, loved ones, the minister, and the Holy Spirit; but you will respond to death. "Death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces" (Jeremiah 9:21). Death will get in. You can't bar him out. We may cross the seas, climb the mountains, or hide in some deep ocean cave; but he is inescapable.

Second, God. God calls in many ways, but man can refuse the call of God for salvation. "Because I have called, and ye refused" (Prov. 1:24). But when God calls in death we must answer.

Third, the devil. Death will require your soul; God will require it; and also the devil will claim the soul of his servant. He who willfully serves the devil now will be compelled to remain under his domination through eternity. It is said of the redeemed, "His servants shall serve him." This is also true of the lost. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" and so shall be through eternity.

Then this call came unexpectedly. No preparation for eternity. It had just been large crops, larger barns, and goods laid up. Now suddenly, unexpectedly, he is called away from them. He might have said, "Here, Death; take my houses, lands, stocks, bonds, goods in the barn instead of my soul." But, no! it is the soul that is required. Poor, lost, dead, condemned, and now damned soul. "This is the time you must go." "Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" What will become of all this wealth that is laid up? No trouble there. Relatives, as is often the case, can go to the law and to hell over that.

The millionaire in New York died. The wealthy gathered around, beholding the lifeless body, and one said: "How much did he leave?" Another answered, "He left it all." Who is a fool according to the Bible idea? Not necessarily a man who has some mental deficiency, but a man who lives for the world, neglects God, and is taken up with the material things of earth and dies without God, takes a leap in the dark, and spends eternity in hell. That is the man God calls a fool.

During the days of slavery there was an old colored man who was not normal mentally. One day he did something very foolish. His master handed him a cane and said, "Sambo, you are the biggest fool I ever saw. If you ever find a bigger fool than you are, give him the cane." The years went by and the rich, godless master was dying in agony. Old Sambo came and handed him the cane and said, "Master, you told me if I ever found a bigger fool than Sambo to give him the cane. Master, to live as you have lived and die as you are dying means that you are a bigger fool than Sambo. Master, take the cane." God save us from the folly of this fool, and may we give God the first place, so when it is all over here we may have an abundant entrance into the eternal home above.

THE CALL OF DEATH

What is this that I can't see,

With icy hands taking hold of me?
"I am Death; none can excel.
I open the doors to heaven and hell.
"I'll fix your feet so you can't walk;
I'll lock your jaws so you can't talk;
I'll shut your eyes so you can't see.
This VERY HOUR come go with me."

"O Mother, come to my bed."
She placed a cold towel on his head.
"My head is hot; my feet are cold.
Death is putting shackles on my soul."

"You heard God's people sing and pray.
You would give no heed, but you walked away.
You would not give your hand and bow your knee,
But now you MUST come and go with me."

"O Death, consider my age.
Please do not take me in this stage.
My wealth is all at your command,
If you'll just lift your icy hand."

"The old, the young, the rich, the poor,
They all alike with me must go;
No land, no silver, no wealth, no gold,
Nothing satisfies me but your soul."

"O Death, how you are treating me!
You are shutting my eyes, so I can't see.
You are stretching my limbs; you're making me cold.
You are robbing my body of my soul."

"Oh, yes, I come to get your soul;
To rob the body, and leave it cold;
To drop the flesh from off your frame.
The earth and worms both have a claim,"

"Too late! too late! to all farewell.
My doom is fixed, I'm forced to tell.
As long as God in heaven shall dwell,
My soul, my soul, shall burn in hell."

* * * * *

The history of this pitiful transaction is found in Genesis 25:27-34. Esau, in some respects, had a wonderful father, and a most illustrious grandfather. His father Isaac was quiet, submissive, patient, and long-suffering, but he lacked initiative. His wife Rebekah was the stronger character and had good success in manipulating her husband. Jacob and Esau were also quite different. "Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau but Rebekah loved Jacob." Divided affection in the family is always dangerous.

I. The birthright.

What was it? We are sure that there was some special significance attached to it because of Jacob's desire for it. The eldest son was to have a double portion of the parental possessions (Deut. 21: 15-17). Then, in the second place, there was a future, spiritual significance connected with this birthright. It seems that he was to be the family priest with the special paternal blessing upon him, which would have, possibly, even some further reward. But keep in mind that, whatever advantages it had, they were all future.

II. The fatal day.

Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint." There is often, in about every life, some fatal day, some crucial time, place, or circumstance. All the future for time and eternity is determined by that day, by the action you take then and there. It is said (that was some years ago) there have been just five decisive battles in the world. Some of us remember some time, place, and experience which cause us to shudder, when almost lost. Some did lose.

In John 6:66 we read, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Jesus had just preached that profound sermon on eating His flesh and drinking His blood. This was a prerequisite for discipleship. Of course, He meant feeding on His very being and having real fellowship with Him, and not that they were literally to eat His flesh and drink His blood; but that was too much for them. "From that time." It was the sermon that did it. They "went back, and walked no more with him." That was the last walk. And they were real disciples -- not just professed disciples, as some teach, but disciples. God said they were, and these are not the last disciples who have been thus offended. Often when some message comes clear, convincing, and pungent the carnal disciples will take offense. They become resentful. They resent the message and despise, if not hate, the messenger. They climb the miff tree and do not go back any more. Or, if they go back, they sit often with a downcast look, and scowl enough, if the minister took them seriously, to knock all the preach out of him. They greatly hinder the service. But just forget them, as far as possible, and look at some good, warm amen brothers!

But that was a fatal day for Esau. He came home from the field or long hunt weary, thirsty, faint. Jacob was cooking pottage. Something on the order of modern chili. My! That was enough to appeal to the ravenous appetite of hungry, faint Esau. It looked good, smelled delicious, and surely was appetizing! The time, place, and conditions have much to do with the force and danger of the temptation. Some might yield at certain time, place, and condition, when in other circumstances

they would not; but this is true always. The first Adam yielded in Eden, with all that meant, and abundance all about him, while the last Adam stood true, hungry, and alone in a howling wilderness. God has grace to make us stand.

But Esau's appetite was strong. That was not wrong. The sin came in satisfying it in a wrong way. The essence of temptation, often, is the satisfying of a legitimate desire in an illegitimate way. This manner of satisfying a right desire in a wrong way was back of every onslaught the devil made on Jesus during the three attacks. Jesus was hungry, and the devil tempted Him to despair of the goodness of the Father and take matters in His own hands and make bread out of stones. It was normal and right for Jesus to desire that the people should believe in Him, but not by committing the presumptuous sin of leaping from the Temple, in the presence of the multitudes, to prove it. It was legitimate for Jesus to desire the kingdoms of the world, for they will ultimately be His; but He would not obtain them by avoiding the God-given path of suffering, and by worshipping the devil. But this is a test for Esau.

III. The bad transaction.

Esau was a good prospect. Esau said, "Feed me . . . with that same red pottage And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright." Well, if he will ever sell it, it is now. He is hungry, appetite clamorous. Pottage steaming hot!

But just what was the nature of this deal? It was buying present gratification at the expense of future blessing. It was bartering the unseen for the seen, the spiritual for the carnal. Esau, like most people, was a now man. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Certainly we are of the earth, earthly. It is next to impossible to tear us loose from the present, the temporal, and the material. This is one of the most effective weapons the devil has to damn souls. That is why God is forgotten and men plunge on in sin. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. 8:11). If men knew the very next time they blasphemed God, or committed any other sin, that hell would immediately open up and they would drop in, they would be a little more careful. But that the sentence is not immediately executed does not mean that it never will be. They are only treasuring up "wrath against the day of wrath." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth.... and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccles. 11:9).

Also Esau did some bad reasoning. "And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" He forgot that immediate death, being true and in the will of God, is better than to live a thousand years out of the will of God in sin. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." This statement was made by Samuel to Saul when he took matters in his own hands and broke with God. Maybe Saul finally learned this, but if so it was too late. That is too often true.

"And Jacob said, Swear to me this day [he will do it today]; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob." The deed was done. Then we read, "And he did eat and drink." Look at him! "What are you doing, Esau?" "I am satisfying my appetite. I have what I want now. For the time being the future is forgotten. The present physical gratification stifles the fear of future remorse and loss of blessing. I am having a good time now. One world at a time for me."

But here is a picture of the multitudes of earth. Not all sinful, carnal gratification, but gratification nevertheless. It may be the legitimate things of life, but it is material and temporal; it is not God. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." But too many times it is the sinful. What are you doing, drunkard, gambler, reveler, movie fiend, world fashion devotee? What are you doing? Satisfying the present, fleeting, carnal appetite at the expense of the future, giving heaven for hell. What are you doing, husband, wife, when engaging in just a little illegitimate, undue familiarity with the opposite sex? going just a little too far and enjoying it? You are taking fire into your bosom, and getting to yourself a disgrace that will likely never be erased. There are possibly more wrecks just here among good people than at any other one point. You say, "Esau was a fool." Well, whatever he was, he has a host of followers. He sold his birthright for a mess of pottage: but just what are multitudes selling their manhood womanhood, virtue, their souls and bodies for today? We forbear to name. We leave that for you. Permit one or two examples: selling soul and body for a few "cokes," beers, and an automobile ride. Cheap indeed! Maybe just engage in a fit of anger and use harsh, retaliatory words, thus losing the peace now and endangering the soul eternally.

IV. The final results.

We read, "He [Esau] did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright." He lightly esteemed it. We have just seen him as he ate and drank. Then he rose up and went his way. The gratification was short-lived. It was soon over, but his stomach was full. Paul spoke of those whose god was their stomach. Probably there is more to this than we have thought. Look at the multitudes, even of professed Christians, who would rather have a beef roast than to have the Holy Ghost. They would not be five minutes late at that Sunday meal to get forty folks saved and get their own souls refreshed. They will run off on Sunday -- even Sunday-school teachers are not exempt, at times -- on the pretext of seeing some relative who is not well, whom they feel they should see. They will go off to some home-coming, there often to hear some smoking parson preach, and sing a few old songs, to give it a religious tinge, and think they are fooling the Lord. No, they are only fooling themselves. Like Esau, and those of whom Paul spoke, their god is their stomach. Well, that will all come out in the white light of eternity.

But Esau was satisfied now. That was a very good deal (if one were not allowed to stop and think) for the present, but a very bad one for the future. But there is another day coming. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it. . . . by fire." Then conscience may slumber till awakened in the other world, but often it is aroused here. Gratification may be charming, but "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Esau rose up and went his way. He is still going his way -- not God's way. In Hebrews 12:15-17 we read: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of [or fall from] the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator [fornication here seems to include spiritual idolatry], or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Sad words, "Afterward. . . . he would have inherited the blessing," but no blessing now. "He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." A mess of pottage! Present gratification, but

future tears. Is Esau in hell? Is he still seeking? No! No hope in hell. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world [much less, a mess of pottage], and lose his own soul?"

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THE END