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**Studies in
THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
From Repentance to Perfection
By LaDette W. Cooley**



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FOREWORD

Nowhere does Satan labor more incessantly than to keep men ignorant of the influence and the work of the Person of the Holy Ghost in the conviction of sin, repentance, sanctification of the believer, and the growth in grace of the soul of men. This is because Satan knows that the Spirit-filled Christian is the most destructive worker of his kingdom of darkness. Satan knows very well that the firstly, secondly and thirdly of the worker of God will be as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal" unless they are Spirit-filled.

Rev. Cooley's remarks in these messages have been Practical, Plain, Pointed, and Personal. The message of truth is sent out with the prayer of the Apostle Paul, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Rev. Cooley was in charge of the Music Department at Penns View Bible Institute for over five years. Those who have been in his classes and have labored with him in Christian work, say without pause, Rev. Cooley has always been an example of the subject he has presented in this book, that of a Spirit-filled Christian, As we write this Foreword, we can say from our heart, "Blessed are those which catch the breathings of the Spirit in which these messages are written."

Rev. Don Hughes
Editor of Bible Hour S. S. Literature

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PREFACE

The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. -- (Eccl. 12:10)

The wise man further stated "Of making many books there is no end."

In each generation God raises up saints who discern truth more deeply than their fellows; rare spirits to whom He opens truths long hidden from the world, and such as are specially needed for the generation.

It is my opinion and belief that Rev. LaDette Cooley, author of this book is such a person. I joyfully add that the comments on the topics, and subjects as set forth in this book have abundantly blessed my own heart, and that I have no doubt but that the Holy Spirit has instructed and influenced the writer.

Rev. Cooley has made another valuable contribution to Holiness doctrinal declarations, as he presents a brief but scriptural exposition of the experience that is so vital in stirring up pure minds and hearts to their need of true Holiness.

To know the author is to love him, for his very countenance speaks his knowledge of the Christ of Calvary.

Lovers of the Word divine will surely welcome these pages. They are full of deep, soul nourishing truth, that will prove a great incentive to prayer, meditation and holy aggressiveness.

It can be said of the author he has done a fine job of remarking the bulwarks, strengthening the signals, and repainting the confusing and faded finger-boards.

It is hoped that many will read these pages to their edification and the to the uplifting of the body of Christ and then go forth to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love with the same spirit and fervor in which the book is written.

Buy several copies and distribute them to your friends.

Rev. Geo. I. Straub
Superintendent God's Missionary Church

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INTRODUCTION

These studies were originally prepared as comments on the lessons in a Sunday School quarterly, but while working on them, I became more and more impressed with the idea that I should have them made up in book form, that they might be available to those who do not use this particular quarterly.

There is not much written from the holiness standpoint in these days, most of our religious books coming from the pens of those who represent the Calvinist viewpoint. Such writers refer frequently to the endeavors of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, but do not seem to find Him successful in accomplishing the task of renovating the heart and life in entire sanctification. Also, the importance of genuine repentance is often weakened or omitted altogether. If any are helped in these or other areas by these comments, I shall be more than repaid for my efforts.

To the glory of Jesus, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" through "the influence of the Holy Spirit" this books is prayerfully sent forth.

LaDette W. Cooley

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1
THE NECESSITY AND CALL TO REPENTANCE
Scripture Lesson: Matthew 3:1-8; Mark 2:17; Luke 13:3; Rev. 2:5

We will begin our study with four chapters on the subject of repentance. How deeply this is needed in our day, when there is so much shallow seeking of God and so little change following. It does not earn salvation for us but helps to remove the things that hinder God from working His glorious plan in us. Our lesson today considers God's call to repentance and some of the reasons for it, as given in His Holy Word, We will do well to give ourselves to this study. May God help us in it and give us open minds and hearts.

First, shall we consider the voice and person in our lesson who is preaching this message. It is John the Baptist, the second cousin of Jesus. We should notice (1) that he was well aware of the responsibility placed on him to declare the call to repentance. This was foretold by the Old Testament prophecies (Isa. 40:3) as well

as by his own father at his circumcision (Luke 1:76). Sunday School teacher, do you realize that for your class you are to be a "voice" calling your students to repentance from every known sin. You are not just to present your ideas but to lead souls toward God. How solemnly you ought to prepare for this task! Pray; search your own heart and then speak from a burning heart to the hearts of your pupils.

We see also (2) the tremendous humility that he had as he spoke; no reference to his physical relation to Jesus or his father Zacharias, but only a voice; not eloquent or learned but "crying"; not even in a pulpit, in a temple or synagogue, but "in a wilderness." Our message is not great or effective because of who we are or what we are but because of the source of it. May the Lord keep us from getting in the way.

Further, see (3) the careful, consistent and well-disciplined life and manner of the messenger (vs. 4). His was not a ministry of "Don't do as I do; do as I say." He who preached "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none" (Luke 3:11) did not wear fine garments but "had his raiment of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins," and the man who insisted "he that hath meat, let him do likewise" did not live on dainties and fine foods but "his meat was locusts and wild honey." We may not preach repentance from sin while we live in sin or do questionable things. Teacher, is your life clear? Does it witness to the truth of what you are saying?

Necessity of Repentance

1. It is necessary because of what it prepares for us -- the Kingdom of Heaven (vs. 2). It is no little thing that we are to prepare for; not a party, a hike, a hunting trip or some earthly business but "the Kingdom of Heaven." It is that which will last through eternity and involves our whole being, And can we take it lightly? Can we dabble as in child's play? Dare we be indifferent or even casual as we prepare for that which shall never end? A kingdom of holiness, of purity, of spotless righteousness, and shall we not use the greatest diligence and care to put away from us everything and anything that would defile us before the presence of the King? Then hear the call. "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

(b) It also prepares us for the coming of the Lord, the King, (vs. 3). Any time a ruler or great personage notifies a community of an intended visit, there is much preparation for his coming. Everything objectionable is removed, roads may be repaired if necessary, flags raised, decorations arranged, suitable accommodations provided and all things readied in expectation of the great event. No wonder John cries out. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." No greater personage than this will ever announce His willingness to come into our midst. How thrilled we should be to make the proper preparations for His coming. How careful we must be to renounce every sin for He sees and knows all and will certainly not be pleased if there are things he hates and we have not repented of them.

2. Repentance is necessary because of the wrong actions of the past (vs. 6). We might think of these in three different aspects. (1) Evil deeds. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" is the statement of the inspired writer (Rom. 3:23). These surely make us an awful sight in the eyes of Him who knoweth all things, and hates sin. We must turn from doing them and from even desiring them. Repentance suggests a change of mind as well as heart. We must turn our whole being against sin. (2) Indifference. Just to ignore the commands of God to us is a frightful sin. How dare we remain indifferent to the things that cost God His well-beloved Son, the things that plunged the world into darkness, and fail to seek the Lord with all our hearts? How can we reject such love that gave heaven's jewel and live with little or no thought of serving Him fervently? (3) Selfish living. Have we not lived here-to-for only for ourselves? Have we not gone where we pleased, done what we liked, worked for our own gain and sought our own pleasure? And is this His plan for us? Did He create us with this purpose (Rev. 4:11). Then surely such selfish living must be repented of earnestly if we would prepare Him a place in our hearts and lives.

3. Also repentance is necessary because of the coming judgment (vs. 7), John told the Pharisees and Sadducees that in order to flee from the wrath to come, they would have to demonstrate their sincerity in repentance by their deeds, which always speak louder than words. Sinful living definitely brings its day of reckoning and we will do well to sincerely repent before that day is upon us.

The Call to Repentance

1. First notice that the call is to sinners (Mark 2:17). They are the ones who are not ready to meet God. They are the ones who are stained and spotted by evil so that they are afraid of His presence. They are the ones whose hearts condemn them, whose consciences are smitten with guilt and who must repent of their evil. But suppose the call were to the righteous, all who have been sinners (who is exempt from this) would be shut out. How hopeless we all would be. But, praise God, He came to call the sinners to repentance. That included me, brother and sister; that included you. So draw not back and despair of your case, but repent. He came for your sake. His command to repent is in itself an offer of hope and mercy. O! how can it be? But it is! Glory!

2. It is the son of God that is calling to repentance. This is not the idea of a man; it is not the reasoning of a philosopher but a call of no less than Divine authority. We ought to hear it with trembling and yet leap to respond to it with great joy and anticipation because it surely speaks of the wondrous mercy and grace that God is affording to every one that will answer the call with deep and heart-felt repentance.

3. A third glorious fact revealed in our lesson (Luke 13:3) is that the call is to all men. This leaves no one out of the wonderful plan of redemption but also excuses no one from the need of repentance. Some have argued that only the Jews

were admonished to repent, but Acts 17:30 makes it clear that "God now commandeth ALL MEN EVERYWHERE to REPENT" and Paul was preaching to Gentiles at Athens at the time. Also, the fact is emphasized that repentance is the only alternative to perishing, thereby re-affirming the necessity of repentance as well as the call to it. Then, friend, you had better be about the business.

4. This final, verse of our lesson (Rev. 2:5) brings the professing church into scope of the call. If wrong is present in your life, let no amount of profession or church work prevent you from an earnest repentance of it. You cannot hope to escape the notice of Him "Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. 2:1) or retain your place among them unless you diligently repent of all wrong as soon as you are aware of it. Then hear the call to repentance, be assured that it is absolutely necessary, then apply yourself to the task most earnestly until faith lays hold of the Divine promise of forgiveness and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

* * * * *

2

INFLUENCES TO REPENTANCE

Scripture Lesson: Acts 16:23-33

A definition for repentance has been given as "That act of an awakened sinner by which, with sincere and godly sorrow on account of his sin, he resolves, God helping him, to forsake, utterly and unconditionally all sin, now, henceforth and forever." Webster's Twentieth Century Dictionary defines it as "such sorrow for sin that leads to amendment of life." Then it is surely an established fact that real heartfelt repentance will and does have an unmistakable influence which was certainly what John the Baptist was referring to when he told the Pharisees to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8).

We are not told much about the past life of the Philippian jailer but in this chapter we do have the record of at least part of his repentance for that life of sin. We might notice the wisdom of God in sending the earthquake which, while causing much fear in the city and to those who had so illegally cast them into prison, also struck fear to the heart of the jailer and brought him to: a great concern for his own soul need. Does it not remind us very vividly that, regardless of how important we may think we are, or how brave, or how strong; or how much authority we may seem to have, when we come into the presence of God, or death, nothing matters as much as the condition of our soul. With prison doors standing open, the jailer thought his life was at its end. When Paul acted quickly with concern, to save his life, all prejudice fled and he prostrated himself before them in deep repentance, and cried out, "What must I do to be saved?"

In further study of this lesson, we see in the life of the jailer exactly what Paul reminded the Corinthians about in their repentance (II Cor. 7:11) "For behold this

selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." A real repentance involves clearing ourselves in all things, May God grant us more of this kind.

Shall we look now at some of the things the jailer's repentance influenced him to do? First notice:

1. It brought him to seek salvation (v. 30). He could be sorry for his sins but how could he find the ability to resist temptation to further sin? Only in the salvation these men were preaching and living. They had what he needed and he is asking for the means to get it. He is not making offers or conditions but is humbly asking what he must do. How many there are who would like to make their own conditions of salvation. They are too late. God has already made them and it is our wisdom to accept them.

2. He listened to instruction (vv. 31 and 32). Repentance whittles our arrogant, unteachable spirit down to where we are willing to be taught, willing to take the time to listen to what God will say to us, even through the poorest messenger. My father, who spent eight years in China as a missionary, used to tell of the "anxious seat" as the Chinese called it. It referred to the practice of a seeking person sitting in one of the front seats in the church where he would be sure to hear every word and be close to the altar because he was anxious to be saved.

3. He brought his family under the influence of the truth (v. 32). He was not going at the job with any reservations but felt his family must also be saved. For years he had led them in sin and failed to give them anything for their souls but now he must also amend this and he sees to it that they get the message too. Fathers, do you recognize your responsibility for the salvation of your family? You are the leader in the family, the head of your household. And do you do all in your power to lead them in ways of godliness? Do you set before them the best example that you can? Do you keep them constantly under the influence of the truth? Paul and Silas told the jailer that his house could also be saved and immediately he brings them into the meeting, though it is the middle of the night. Can't you claim this as a promise (v. 31) for your family and stand firmly upon it until they are saved and kept saved?

4. He took them from their prison cell (v. 33). He immediately became considerate of the conditions of others. They had been in stocks and in the inner prison where it was the darkest and dampest but he took them from those awful conditions.

5. He washed their stripes (v. 33). He not only alleviated their suffering, but worked to undo the damage that had already been done. We are not told that he did

the beating but still he washed the stripes. He is not argumentative but willing to do all he can. So many say, "I don't need to ask forgiveness. It wasn't my fault."

6. He brought them to his house (v. 34). He was now willing to receive them as friends, though they were his prisoners, even as Paul urged Philemon to do for Onesimus. Class distinction was dropped and the "middle wall of partition" was destroyed. They had close fellowship.

7. He set meat before them. Here is seen his readiness to share what he had with others. Are these not wonderful influences to behold? What would society be like today if there were real repentance? The fellowship, the kindness, the easing of suffering, the spreading of the gospel, indeed a veritable heaven on earth.

8. He was baptized (v. 33). Now he demonstrates his willingness to be identified with the people of God and the Name of Jesus, his newly-found Lord and Savior. He is not waiting to see how it works or if he can hold out awhile, but he puts his determination into the matter and is baptized, not willing that anything be omitted which ought to be done. Yea, let every penitent heart say, "Come what may, I want all to know that I purpose to be a Christian."

9. He rejoiced (v. 34). Notice how many things he did to show his purpose of heart before this. He didn't wait until he had the witness to begin to make the changes in his life. I have seen people professing to seek God that would not try to quit the sin business before they got saved for fear they would miss something that they wanted to enjoy as long as they could. What a spurious repentance! But the jailer started moving in the right direction and doing all that he knew and before long the time of rejoicing came.

10. He believed in God. Faith that worketh by love had already been seen to be working in him and testified of its presence. It was not a faith without works but a faith shown by works. It was a faith that reached up by divine help and grasped the mighty promises of God and joyfully embraced them, Glory!

11. All his house believed. What a glorious climax! The honest and deep repentance of this heathen jailer occasioned the salvation of his entire household. And I earnestly believe that if we had more of this kind of repentance in our day, we would see more of our families saved. This might also be applied to many homes that profess to be Christian. Too often parents have lived inconsistent lives before their children and have lost their confidence. Such parents ought to thoroughly repent before God and their children; repent of needless or unkind talk, repent of selfish living, repent of careless attitudes toward the things of God; repent of failure to carry out God-appointed discipline in the home, failure to reprove in love, failure to honor God in reading the Word and family prayer, failure to accept reproof as a Christian should, and perhaps many other things. Such a repentance would gain again the confidence of our children and bring us to a place of contact with God so that we may "be saved and our house."

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3

THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 51:1-4, 12-17; I John 1:7-9

We will have two lessons on the nature of repentance. The Pulpit Commentary suggests that the three steps in repentance are contrition, confession, and amendment of life. In this lesson we want to especially consider the first two. Each of the three plays a vital part in the complete work of repentance, which cannot be complete if one of the three is absent. This is the reason why we have so many shallow experiences in the church today. May God help us to properly represent the need for a real heartfelt repentance as we study this lesson and then put it to work in our soul-saving efforts.

I. CONTRITION

White's Modern Dictionary defines contrition as "heartfelt sorrow for sin." But a pre-requisite to contrition is remorse. Some confuse remorse with repentance but it is only "a deep sense of guilt." This was brought about in David's life by the faithfulness of the prophet Nathan, who was acting under the leadership of the Spirit. Telling David the story (II Sam. 12:1-4) of the rich man who stole the poor man's lamb to feed his guest aroused the sympathy of David, and also his hatred for injustice. Then Nathan makes the application, "Thou art the man" and a tremendous sense of guilt seizes hold upon David. But if he had let it stop there, there would never have been the reconciliation with God that he needed. But, make no mistake, remorse is important. Without it, we will think we have nothing to be sorry for. Our lesson shows his sense of guilt over and over again: my transgressions (v. 1), mine iniquity; my sin (v. 2), my transgressions; my sin (v. 3), I sinned (v. 4), deliver me from bloodguiltiness (v. 14).

Chrysostom has said, "He carried in his bosom a painted picture of adultery and murder." "My sin is ever before me" (v. 3). He was constantly looking at the horrid thing he had done, seeing the unfairness, the selfishness, the heartlessness, the rebellion against God, remembering the faithfulness of the brave soldier he had sent to an untimely death even while fighting his king's battles, and attempting to win him increased honor. In Psalm 32:3 and 4, he was still referring to this time when he said, "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was turned into the drought of summer." How this picture haunted him constantly.

Does not our altar work many times rush through this foundation of contrition and hurry the seeker to what often proves to be a spurious and premature faith in order to get the job done and go home, or a roadside stand where we may feed the body while a soul wanders around in a dissatisfied experience which we

rushed him into? And many times eventually wanders back into a life from which he hardly repented from in the first place. Let him beware, who would prematurely cover the awful picture of sin, lest his work be found to be "wood, hay and stubble," in the day when "the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is" and that "work shall be burned" (I Cor. 3:12-15).

In Augustine (Confessions 8:7) we read, "Thou, O Lord, whilst he was speaking, didst turn me round towards myself, taking me from behind my back, where I had placed me, unwilling to observe myself, and setting me before my face, that I might see how foul I was, how crooked and defiled, bespotted and ulcerous." It is indeed an ugly sight to see ourselves thus, but will it not, afterward "yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto all them that are exercised thereby?"

Too many times people feel that their sins are not really so very bad; many others are doing the same thing; society doesn't frown on it so much any more; it was justified because of what someone else did to us; or the end justifies the means. We need a return to an old-fashioned sense of guilt for wrong-doing. Compare the sin with the holiness of God; with the sinless perfection of the Son of God, when treated worse than you ever have been; with what God requires of you, and you ought to come to a deep humiliation for the awfulness of your own sin. Look at it; think about it; consider the terrible punishment that God threatens for it and hide your head in shame. Jesus died to give you victory over it. God hid His face from His own beloved Son because of it. Then is it not awful indeed? There will not be much sorrow for sin unless you are overwhelmed with remorse.

At first, David's sense of guilt, though it was strong, led him to look for a way to hide it and in this endeavor, he plotted the death of Uriah, But now he moves from the area of remorse to a heart-felt sorrow for sin. O, how he groans over what he has done, There is no way he can undo it. He cannot make a sacrifice that will take the place of this real contrition. It must be a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart (v. 17). A sorrow so deep that it causes him to plead for mercy (v. 1), washing (V. 2), and a clean heart and right spirit (v. 10) so that he will never repeat such an offense. Real contrition lays the foundation for the next step which is confession.

II. CONFESSION

What a wonderful verse of Scripture is included in our lesson from I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." David took this course and acknowledged his transgression (Ps. 51:3) confessed that it was against God and admitted that any punishment God might bring upon him would only be just. (v. 4) . But could God forgive a man who was guilty of such a sin and be just? Surely God was answering this question when He inspired John to write "If we confess our sins, He is . . . just to forgive us our sins. You may not be able to understand the process, but believe it and follow it and it will work. Praise the Lord!

Verse 4 (Ps. 51) has been a puzzle to many so that some have wondered if the heading that connects this psalm with the sin of David and Bathsheba has been misplaced and should be with some other psalm. But let us give it two considerations. 1. David was the king of the land and as such had no one to answer to or to be arraigned before but God. His nation was not a democracy or a republic but a monarchy with the king as the last word of law. He stood then, before the court of God himself, who alone could sit as a judge over his case and deal properly with it and so he says, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." 2. He was making his confession where it counted, where he had sinned, and before the one he had sinned against. No doubt his confession was public to those who were involved but it was especially made to those affected. Some sins should be confessed publicly because of their involvement, but there are some sins that should be confessed to the ones involved and not unloaded on the minds of others who have no part nor lot in the matter. Indeed, it seems that some would rather confess them to others than to the ones they have sinned against. But let them go to God with deep remorse and contrition, yea, with many tears and strong crying, confess to the bottom, with all intentions and willingness to amendment of life, trusting the sufficient sacrifice of a perfect Savior and He will surely be "faithful and just to forgive us our sins AND to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Bless His Name.

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4

THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE

(Continued)

Scripture Lesson: Luke 19:1-10; Leviticus 6:2-4

As we have studied the first two steps in repentance in the previous lesson (contrition and confession) now we turn our thoughts especially to the third step: amendment of life, tears, grief, and other signs of contrition are generally good, but the real and final proof of repentance is to be found in the lasting effects. If the first two steps mentioned do not produce a lasting change in the life, then the work of repentance becomes abortive and even spurious. The story of Zacchaeus is a good case in point, showing a complete transformation, not only in heart, but life as well.

I. The man Zacchaeus (vv. 2, 5).

A. His name tells us he was a Hebrew, as do also the words of Jesus in vs. 9. He therefore was in the Abrahamic covenant and as much entitled to the salvation that Jesus came to bring as was any other Jew.

B. He was the chief or the head among the publicans. That is, he was in authority over a number of tax-collectors, which was quite a position, since Jericho was a chief city on the way from Perea into Judea and on to Egypt, being a border

city, and would be responsible for collecting considerable taxes from commerce as well as local people.

C. He was rich. His very position would bring him wealth, even if he were not dishonest, which verse seems to suggest he was by the reference to "false accusation."

D. He was little. There wasn't much impressive about his appearance and he had to resort to other methods to gain his point or accomplish his desires.

III. His earnest purpose (vs. 3 & 4)

A. He had a strong desire to see Jesus. What a grand ambition, if it be with right motives, rather than Herod, who longed to see some miracle done by Him (Luke 23:8). While Herod simply waited for Jesus to be sent to his court, Zacchaeus seized upon what opportunity he had and put forth the effort to see him.

B. He ran. When the chance came, he quickly responded and, not worrying as to what others would think of him, he ran, He was not going to take a chance of missing this long awaited privilege. There was no dragging the feet or lazily shuffling along to see to the salvation of his soul but running. The use of the word "before" indicates that he did not wait until it was almost too late, but started out a little ahead of time to be sure.

C. He climbed. His height was a natural setback to him so he found a way to compensate for it. The crowd was in his way so he climbed above it. o that people would learn a lesson from Zacchaeus here. So many people are hindered from getting to Jesus because they let people stand in their way, but if they would only climb, climb, and keep climbing until they rise above the hindrances they would see Jesus and with their eyes fixed on Him would lose sight of all else besides. "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground." What he did was not very dignified, to be sure, but he got his eyes on Jesus, and that's what mattered to him. How about you?

III. The Appeal of Jesus (vs. 5)

A. It was personal. He called him by name. Zacchaeus! What care! What concern! What interest! Of all the people there were, He takes the time and trouble to call him personally. Isn't it wonderful that He, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings wants to fellowship with me. Though I am small, insignificant, unworthy, and unlovely, He calls me. Then I ought to hear and heed that glorious invitation quickly.

B. Make Haste, He has been hurrying. Don't stop now. The coveted goal is in sight. Keep traveling in the right direction and fleeing from the world of sin and you shall soon reach the glorious Refuge in the Rock of Ages.

C. Come down, He had done well thus far in coming to Jesus. Now Jesus gives him the next directive. He must come down, But he has already laid aside his dignity to get this far and it is not much more for him to do to come down. It's the coming down that stops many seekers, There is too much humiliation to this matter of repentance for them. They want to maintain their rights and dignity and refuse to "come down" in order to receive Jesus.

D. Today I must abide at thy house, Will he open the door of his house to this one who thus "stands at the door and knocks"? This one who may make many demands of him? this one who may change all his plans and revolutionize his life? Will he bring him to sup with him? But that is exactly what He asks, That is what it means. He must take Him to abide. For "he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

IV. The Response of Zacchaeus (vs. 6 & 8)

Notice how exact he was to do all that Jesus bade him do. Make haste: and he made haste. Come down: and he came down. Today I must abide at thy house: and he received Him joyfully. I can almost hear him let out a whoop and see him "skin the cat" to get out of that tree in a hurry. What is his dignity worth at this point? He has an invitation from the King and who should not make haste to do as He commands. Down he comes, rejoicing and hardly able to contain himself. He thought but to see Him and now He is to dwell with him. Glory! He climbed the tree like a boy, perhaps came out of the tree like a lad, and receives the "kingdom of God as a little child." For again God has chosen the foolish things to confound the mighty.

B. He pledged half of his goods to feed the poor. How charitable he now becomes. Before he lived for himself but now the coming of Jesus changes the whole picture and he begins to live for others.

C. He makes a fourfold restitution. Here is evidence the amendment of life that true repentance involves. How many he may have cheated, overcharged or taken advantage of in some other way, but his repentance leads him to restore not only the amount he had taken, but fourfold. "What clearing" of himself this wrought and demonstrated to all about him that he was a different man than he was before. Who can deny such a conversion? Let those today who seek God make so earnest a repentance from all sin and it will not be hard to convince a gainsaying world that there is something in this great salvation.

V. The criticism. v. 7.

The self-righteous crowd (probably containing many priests since Jericho was a city of priests) immediately finds fault with Jesus, for this man was not only a sinner but a publican at that, and He chooses to dine with such a one when there are so many others who seem to them better company, especially the priests. So

many times the cold professors of religion being convicted by the warm and earnest obedience of new converts to the commands of Christ, will put up the harshest and most unkind criticism.

VI. The pronouncements of Jesus vv. 9-10.

A. "Salvation is come to this house." Let the crowd criticize and look on in wonder and amazement. Let them think what they will. Jesus declares salvation has come. The glorious witness is borne to him by the Savior of men. All who truly love Him will rejoice together.

B. "He is a son of Abraham." Jesus takes up his case and defends him before all. When we turn our situation over to Him, He will care for us and protect us from all the onslaughts of the enemy.

C. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus clearly states His divine mission in coming to the earth. It was not to merely add another religious idea to the ones already existing; not to merely champion a cause, not to merely heal the sick, raise the dead, or cleanse the leper. These were all wonderful, but the main reason was to seek the lost and save them from all sin. Probably every false religion can be detected by its attitude toward sin. They will endeavor to excuse it, diminish it, ignore it, distort it, or do away with the punishment for it. But the whole truth of the Word of God and the coming of Jesus Christ centers around the glorious deliverance from it, He was manifest in the flesh to take away sins (I John 3:5), to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8), to put away sin (Heb. 9:26), and to condemn sin (Rom. 8:3), and anything that diminishes this truth is not worthy of the Name of Jesus or Christianity.

VII. The Old Testament on amendment of life. Lev. 6:2-4.

The doctrine of restitution is clearly taught in this Old Testament passage. "Because he hath sinned and is guilty, he shall restore . . ." I knew of a man who returned to apologize to another man for taking wrong advantage of him for several hundred dollars but made no offer to restore it, There was a sense of guilt but no repentance. We should have a return to the preaching and practicing of this old-fashioned restitution for it is all in the nature of true repentance.

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5

JUSTIFICATION AND REGENERATION

Scripture Lesson: Romans 3:24-28; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; Titus 3:5-7

We have been studying the truths connected with repentance, now it is next in order for us to consider that which repentance leads up to. It would be well for us to notice that justification and regeneration are two different aspects of the same

work of grace; justification referring to the clearing of our account in the record books of heaven and before God while regeneration has to do with the transformation that is wrought in us. As in the nature of repentance, each phase of this work of grace is important and if we try to do away with either one, we shall have an unbalanced idea of the work of God in us and as a result not press our case for all that God has for us.

A good definition of the word "justification" is given in Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary as "remission of sin, and absolution from guilt and punishment; an act of free grace by which God pardons the sinner and accepts him as righteous, on account of the atonement of Christ."

I. The need for Justification.

In the verses preceding our written lesson, we have the proof that Paul offers to show that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (v. 23). The law must acquit those who have perfectly fulfilled the law. But who has? "All have sinned." And even one sin destroys all possibility of acquittal this way. It is impossible now to get to heaven in the way of spotless innocency, That passage is blocked off. Therefore only by some other substitutionary satisfaction of law, can man be justified.

II. The basis of Justification (vv. 24-26).

Staring in horror at the blunt fact that "all have sinned" and that there is nothing we can do in ourselves that would justify us before God (for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight v. 20), we are tremendously relieved and greatly thrilled to read, in verse 24, of the privilege and possibility of "being justified freely," if not by the law or anything we can do, by what then? "By His grace." Amazing! But through what means? "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation," or atonement. "We are in the presence of a mystery that we may not analyze too closely. In Christ, God and man are one, and therefore the sacrifice of Christ represents a sacrifice of God and a sacrifice of man. In Him, man expiates (makes satisfaction for) his own sin; and yet "in Him, the Infinite Love stoops and suffers and dies, It was a real atonement of the race; it is a real atonement for the race." And yet, "it must, in the nature of the subject, remain to us a mystery. It may be enough for us to believe that whatever need the human conscience has ever felt of atonement for sin, whatever human want was expressed by worldwide rites of sacrifice, whatever especially was signified by the blood required for atonement, in the Mosaic ritual -- all this is met and fulfilled for in Christ's offering of Himself, and that in Him and through Him we may now 'come boldly to the throne of grace' (Heb. 4:16) having need of no other." (Pulpit. Comm.) "being justified freely by His grace." Glory!

III. The Justness of God declared. (vv. 25 & 26).

If the law required a definite dealing with sin, the question arises "What about sins that were committed before the atonement was made, or before it was taken advantage of by faith?" Verse 25 shows "His righteousness for the remission (or passing over) of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." He could do this because of looking forward to the time when there would be an atonement made, and now that the atonement has been made, it proves the merit of His forbearance. It was worth waiting for, And He can be absolutely just in "being the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (v. 26).

IV. The faith for Justification (vv. 27 & 28).

Who is it, then, that is justified? "Him which believeth in Jesus." Boasting is excluded by the law of faith. We cannot boast of our actions or deeds, (not even our repentance) for they no more made us worthy of salvation than does a beggar's reaching out his hand make him worthy of the gift that is placed therein. It is by believing what He says, trusting in Him and His finished work that a man is justified (v. 28) and not by "the deeds of the law." Praise God for such a salvation. He demands the atonement, and then provides it.

V. The peace of justification (5:1)

This can be compared, in a measure, to the satisfaction and relief of clearing off a debt of long standing, combined with the sweet sense of reconciliation with a long offended friend, added to by the thrilling knowledge of being acquitted of a capital offense, and the joy of facing the new day with a clear record. Glory! And this is just the justification side of the first work of grace.

Now we turn to the consideration of the truths of regeneration. Justification clears the past record; regeneration transforms the heart so that, with new affections and desires, it is possible to live a holy life and not return to the sins of the past.

1. A New Heart (Ezek. 36:26). The old heart -- the stony heart -- was unresponsive to God and His appeals. Sympathy and goodness were not only foreign to it but made little impression. It was hard, rebellious, uncooperative and self-centered. It was not natured to love God or to appreciate His goodness or commands. Hence the need for a re-generation, a new birth, that would produce a heart that would have the tendencies that God planned for us. And so He offers what is needed -- a new heart.

2. A New Spirit. David, when groaning over his sin which caused the defilement of Bathsheba and the death of Uriah, cried out, "Renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). This new spirit would be necessary to govern and regulate the new heart so that it would not become hard as the other had been. A right spirit would be ready and willing to heed the instructions that God would give it, and thus aid in preventing a return to the paths of sin.

3. I Will Put My Spirit Within You (v. 27). What a constant and awful battle there would have been if God had done this before the heart was changed. But now with a new heart and a new spirit, there is a readiness to obey the divine will, and God gives His Spirit to guide that new heart and spirit. This is still within the realm of the first work of grace for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). He comes in a greater and fuller way in entire sanctification but He certainly has much to do, not only in saving us but in keeping us and guiding us till we come to the point of sanctification.

4. "And Cause You To Walk In My Statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Some people have the erroneous idea that a person who is not yet sanctified is not quite so responsible to obey God as one that is. But you cannot keep any degree of grace over known disobedience. You must keep His commandments and do His will in order to be eligible for sanctification. Otherwise, you need to seek His pardon for sin.

Conclusion (Titus 8:5-7)

Here in these verses we have the whole thing in a nutshell. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy HE SAVED US." Praise His Name! And it involved "the washing of REGENERATION" and "being JUSTIFIED by His grace." The "renewing of the Holy Ghost" brings it all about "through Jesus Christ our Savior," "that we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." By the time God has finished the first work of grace in us, we are well on our way to the experience of heart holiness, to which He has called us (I Thess. 4:7).

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6

ADOPTION AND WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Scripture Lesson: John 1:12, 13; Romans 8:14-17; II Corinthians 6:17, 18; I John 5:9, 10

We are still dealing with the first work of grace -- the phases of adoption and the witness of the Spirit to the work wrought in the heart, and to the clearing of the record in heaven, There are some truths regarding salvation that are best illustrated by the comparison of being born into a family, while others are more clearly revealed in the thought of adoption, The new birth (regeneration) carries with it the idea of receiving a new heart, a new spirit and receiving the nature of the father, but adoption covers the thought of having been once in another family (the devil's) and having the nature of that connection, as well as having lived according to its ways. It also can take into consideration the fact of our will and choice having something to do with our salvation.

I. THE PRIVILEGE OF ADOPTION (John 1:12)

In the natural, a person has no choice in the matter of his birth but here He gives power to become the sons of God "as many as receive him" and "believe on His name." We may choose to leave the old family of Satan with all the deceitful lusts and wickedness and be adopted into a family of far greater worth. Satan will withstand it and fight against it and do all in his power to defeat it but Jesus gives a greater power to bring it to pass. If we will it to be so. Praise the Lord! This will to be so is a gift of God, but we may resist it until it is lost, and live and die without the power of adoption.

II. THE PRIVILEGE OF REGENERATION (vs. 18)

Now we revert to the comparison of birth to show that our salvation does not lie in our bloodstream. We do not get it from Christian parents by birth. The flesh does not plan or make a way for it. It rather leads us away from it. Man cannot provide it for us, nor can the church, except as an instrument in God's hand, it is of God. They who are adopted are regenerated and they who are regenerated are adopted.

III. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE ADOPTED (Rom. 8:14-17)

A. They are led by the Spirit of God (vs. 14). This is one thing that attests their adoption. What safer road to travel than that in which the Spirit leads. It is always "away from the mire and away from the clay." It is the path of the just "that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day," where "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His son, cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:9).

B. They receive the spirit of adoption (vs. 15) in place of the spirit of bondage. What a glorious exchange! There was a helpless response to the wishes and temptations of their old father, the devil, but now there is a wonderful freedom to serve a loving Father and a delight to do so. It is a spirit that truly makes one to feel the new relationship, which is hard to do in a natural adoption, That sense of relationship causes a spirit of prayer and supplication to this new Father, so beautifully suggested by the phrase "Abba, Father."

C. They receive the witness of the Spirit to that adoption (vs. 16). The leading of the Spirit (the change of outward living), the sense of adoption, and the witness of the Spirit all agree that the transition from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son has been made. Jesus spoke of two witnesses that every word might be established. How important the witness of the Spirit is, for the Word can tell me what I must do and what God will do if I do my part, but it, in itself, cannot tell me when I have done it. But when the Spirit beareth witness with my spirit, and my life matches, I may be assured that I am not merely traveling in that

"way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12) but that "this is the way; walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21).

D. They become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (vs. 17). What could be more indicative of being accepted into the family than this. All that the Father holds in store for Jesus, He likewise holds in store for these who are adopted into the family. That will involve some suffering "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we also may be glorified together," but it will not be "worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (vs. 18).

IV. THE CHALLENGE TO THE ADOPTED (II Cor. 6:17, 18)

A. "Come out from among them." It is to be voluntary. God does not force our service to Him. He will have a willing and glad obedience. He does not drag us out. But there must be a coming out, a leaving behind of the old life and the old associates, as far as fellowship and close relationship goes. And it must be a continued separation. "Be ye separate." This reflects back on the unequal yoke mentioned in verse 14. Marriages, business partnerships, oath-bound societies and lodges should certainly be considered in the light of this scripture.

B. "Touch not the unclean thing." Sin is unclean. It separates from God (Isa. 59:1, 2) for God is holy. Also His Son Jesus is holy. And if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we, ourselves, also are found sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid." (Gal. 2:17). There is no place in the family of God for a "sinning religion." We may not touch the unclean thing.

C. "I will be a Father unto you . . . ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The Father-son relationship is proved by our actions. This is also affirmed by the words of Jesus in John 8:39-47. "Ye do the deeds of your father" (v. 41). "Ye are of your father, the devil" (v. 42). Jesus even gave the Jews the liberty of judging him by the same method (John 10:37) "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." Then does not the same truth apply to us, who are only adopted through Him? The promise set forth in v. 18 is only in force if we comply with the requirement in v. 17.

V. THE FAITH FOR THE ADOPTION (I John 5:9, 10)

Again we are reminded that the key in the matter of our salvation is faith. Let us never forget the prominent place that faith has in our deliverance. A. It is suggested that we accept the witness of men without much difficulty. We often find it easy to believe what we really want to believe, especially an evil report. We read the papers, listen to the radio or receive information from some other source and pass it on with little question as to its reliability.

B. The witness of God is greater. Then how much more should we accept what He says of His Son without question. Man can and often does falsify, and even

at best may be honestly mistaken, but God is Truth and cannot err and yet do we hesitate to receive His witness as absolute fact?

C. God testifies to the sufficiency of faith in Jesus. He says it will produce the witness in us. If we are obeying His Word, we then must turn our eyes away from our efforts and put our trust in the glorious finished work of Jesus.

D. Failure to believe God classifies Him as a liar, These are words difficult to comprehend, but they are true, no matter how we may try to excuse our unbelief. It is a serious offense against God. It is not a matter of the head but of the heart. Then beware "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).

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7

THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture Lesson: John 3:5, 6; Acts 1:4, 5; I John 2:27; Ephesians 5:14-18; 1:13, 14

It is with a deep sense of reverence that we undertake the study of the office work of the Holy Spirit, We are talking about the third Person of the Godhead, of whom Jesus said that "whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. 12:32). We are living in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and He is the last resort of the Godhead to reach a lost human race, and if He is rejected, there is no hope. Therefore let every teacher pray that he may have the help of the Spirit in expounding this lesson, and every student, that he may give diligent attention to grasping all that he can about the work of this faithful and mighty Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament God spake unto us and did it through the prophets. In the gospels, He spake unto us by His Son. But in Acts and the Epistles, and ever since that time He speaks to us and works in our behalf through the Holy Ghost. Every means of contact that we have with God is through this medium. But how sufficient it is, for He is able to amply represent the Godhead everywhere at all times. May lie guide us now as we consider at least six areas of His work.

I. THE REPROVING OF THE HOLY GHOST. John 16:8 (not written).

This is the first step in bringing the sinner to God. He needs to be deeply aware of the guilt of his sin and in spite of every effort of men to accomplish this, it is never really accomplished until the Holy Ghost does it. Only He can cause a man to feel, with Paul, that he is the chief of sinners, to be willing to accept the full blame for the sin he has committed and take his eyes off everyone else's involvement. God give us more of this kind of conviction.

II. THE BIRTH OF THE SPIRIT. John 3:5, 6.

Verse 6 shows the inability of the flesh to bring forth a spiritual birth, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." If a man were to be born of the flesh the second time (reincarnation) he would still not have a spiritual birth. It is only "that which is born of the Spirit" that "is spirit" and so it is no marvel that Jesus said unto Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." As definitely as a man must be born of the flesh in order to enter the kingdoms of this world, so must he be born of the Spirit in order to enter into the kingdom of God. And it is the Holy Spirit that watches over every phase of this work, striving to bring forth a healthy child, encouraging, eventually breathing the new life into the new-born babe and witnessing to its entrance to the family of God. Praise the Lord!

III. THE BAPTISM WITH THE SPIRIT. Acts 1:4, 5.

The birth of the Spirit gives life, but the baptism of the Spirit gives life more abundantly (John 10:10). The birth of the Spirit gives power to live, but the baptism of the Spirit power to influence a needy world for God. And Jesus told His disciples to wait for the baptism which was the promise of the Father. He had sent them out to preach and heal, but had restricted them from going to the Gentiles (not depart from Jerusalem) and from preaching that He was the Christ of God (Luke 9:20, 21) though he did himself. These were two points that the disciples would receive the fiercest persecution on and they were not ready for it until they had been baptized with the Spirit (cf. Matt. 10:5; John 4:4; Luke 4:22-29; Acts 22:21, 22; Acts 9:20-23; Acts 7:56-60; Acts 5:30-33). They could say that He was a good man and emphasize others of His teachings and not get too much opposition, This is still true today. People don't mind so much for you to say that Jesus was a great teacher and moralist, but when you insist that He was the Son of God and that His gospel is the only way to heaven for people of all religions, you are classed as a bigot and the time is not very far off when you will not have the courage to say it if you are not filled with the Spirit. Self-interest, fear of man, desire of position, and a host of other things that the baptism of the Holy Ghost removes, will betray you into the trap of the enemy.

IV. THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT I John 2:27.

Here the Holy Spirit is referred to as the authoritative teacher of the saints, That John was not deprecating Spirit-filled teachers is evident by other scriptures (I John 4:6; 1:3, 4; Col. 1:28; Rom. 12:7; Matt. 28:19). He is warning them not to accept teaching that does not meet with the approval of the Holy Ghost dwelling within them. Jesus said that when the Holy Ghost would come, He would "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26) and again "He will guide you into all truth, He shall not speak of himself, . . . He shall glorify me" (John 16:13, 14). How, then, does this scripture fit in with the so-called "Jesus only" teaching? If the Holy Ghost were one and the same with Jesus, then He would be speaking of himself when He glorified Jesus, His ministry is not a self-exalting ministry, but one that exalts Jesus. It is one

person speaking of another, And in His teaching us, He reveals to us glorious truths regarding the person of Jesus. How we need this teaching! There are so many false ideas in circulation today, Men are heaping to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and these teachers are "understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (I Tim. 1:7). With all these new doctrines flooding the atmosphere all around us, how wonderful to have a "built-in" teacher to guard us from the onslaught of the enemy, for "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19).

V. THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT. Eph. 5:14-18.

Not only is it necessary to be baptized with the Spirit, but it is equally important to continually "be filled with the Spirit" (v. 18). This will enable us to (a) be spiritually awake (v. 14). The enemy would desire to stupefy every Christian to the realities of the day. Let evil go on unnoticed, let the world creep into the church unhindered, let children slip through our fingers into the world, and the church be shorn of her power and glory, while the Christians numbly fumble with programs, pomp, "rose-water essays," and selfish interests, and decry the "troublers in Zion" that try to arouse them, But the indwelling Spirit will inspire us to life and to battle against the forces of evil and help us to "snatch brands from the burning." (b) walk circumspectly (v. 15) to live a consistent life. How many souls are slain on the altars of inconsistency. We are to live so that "he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say" (Titus 2:8). (c) redeem the time (v. 16). The time is slipping by so rapidly with so little being accomplished, that only the mighty workings of the Holy Ghost will ever be able to make up for the loss of time. (d) be understanding what the will of the Lord is (v. 17). The Holy Spirit can give us direction in the will of God so that we may use our time, energy, and finances to the best possible advantage.

He puts emphasis on the being filled with the Spirit by contrasting it with the injunction "be not drunk with wine." We look at the thought of drunkenness with disgust and horror and then think little of not being filled with the Spirit. We would not try to preach, sing, or testify in a drunken condition, but we would try it without being filled with the Spirit. We're not saying, "stop" but "be filled with the Spirit."

VI. THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT. Eph. 1:13, 14.

The seal of those times was often the stamp or imprint of a special symbol which denoted possession or authority. (Mordecai's letter, Esth. 8:8; the lions den, Dan. 6:17; Christ's tomb, Matt. 27:66) The Holy Ghost in us is the seal of the Father's possession and authority in us sealing us unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30) saying to the devil, "This is my property. Hands off!" and saying it with authority. Glory! The Holy Spirit is also our pledge or earnest of our inheritance until we make it through. Even as the earnest was a sample pay and guarantee of the final, so the Spirit, with all His gifts, fruits, and benefits, demonstrates to us a sample and guarantee of our future rewards.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er shall come,
We'll taste e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of our eternal home.

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8

MAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Scripture Lesson: Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 5:1-4; I Thessalonians 5:19;
Matthew 12:31, 32**

Previously we were studying the work of the Holy Spirit and the various ways in which He helps in the plan of salvation, But now we turn to the consideration of man's response to that work. We know that God is sovereign and can make His own decisions, completely independent of us. But in that sovereignty, He has chosen to allow us a freedom of choice, by which we may reject certain of His plans and take a course of our own choosing. Since this is true, all of the gracious workings of the Spirit may be hindered or entirely negated as a result of an improper attitude toward Him. Therefore, we should carefully examine our attitudes in the light of these Scriptures.

I. Quenching the Spirit. I These. 5:19

The Holy Ghost is typified by fire, especially when speaking of His fullness (Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:3). Then quenching may be considered as anything that cuts back or checks the fullness of the Spirit and His working. Failing to pray at the suggestion of the Spirit, or to testify, or to witness to some one, are a few of the things that thus quench the Spirit. Some feel that this should only be done in a service, but how much more important is it to pray with a needy soul, or tell some one what the Lord means to you, personally, especially a person who does not come to church. We in the Holiness churches are quite weak, when it comes to speaking for the Lord outside the church, and then we too often think we must blister people for their wrong-doing rather than tell how much we love Jesus, or how He meets our needs. Or perhaps the Spirit would have us stop our work at times and go to prayer for a particular need. Let's not quench the Spirit.

II. Grieving the Spirit. Eph. 4:30.

Some commentators feel that this is the same as quenching, but perhaps quenching does not go as far as grieving, for Paul suggests that the grieving may result in the Spirit's slipping unwanted, from our heart to leave us to our own persistent desire. This has often been illustrated by the story of the man who had a tame dove and wanted to see how often he could disappoint it before it would leave. So he called it to him but when it

began to light on his hand, he quickly drew it away. The dove fluttered to keep from falling and flew to a perch a little ways away. He tried it again and the dove answered his call again but he treated it the same way with the same results. By the third time, it was more reluctant to come, and the fourth or fifth time, flew away never to return. The devil will push and force and drag you to serve him but the Holy Spirit is of a different nature, He will only stay where He is wanted. We do not have to obey him like a chained slave. If we are a slave to Him, it will have to be a love-slave for He will not force himself on us. How sweetly He urges over and over again to do the things that are pleasing to Jesus, but if we continually refuse Him, He eventually will slip away without a big fuss, and leave us to realize later how much we really need Him. And yet, even then, if we seek Him diligently and with our whole heart, He will be entreated of us and return to take up His abode within us. But the more we do this, the more we find that we not only wound Him deeply, but we also damage our own faith faculties so that it becomes more difficult to trust Him to come back and take the control which we have wrenched from Him so often.

The reason Paul gives for not grieving the Spirit is that He is the one who seals us unto the day of redemption. He guards us from wrong desires and practices, watches against wrong attitudes and so many other pitfalls which the enemy would put in our path. How careful we should be not to grieve Him, so precious and indispensable a guest.

III. Resisting the Spirit. Acts 7:51

This is, undoubtedly getting into a more positive reaction than quenching or grieving the Spirit. Here a downright pitting of man's energy against the working of the Holy Ghost is seen. How irresponsible, almost unbelievable, and yet it is so. The Holy Ghost is anointing a man to declare the counsel of God to them, and reveal the need of their hearts, if, perchance they might repent and recover themselves out of the snare of the devil and they are openly resisting His every effort. They had rejected the Father, they had crucified the Son, and now they are resisting the last one of the Trinity working to bring them to salvation. What hope can there be for them beyond this. Yet we see people today following their ways and casting off every Divine effort put forth in their behalf and plummeting on downward to their own eternal destruction. In Stephen's day the Jews were not able to answer the arguments and reasoning that he put before them, so instead of yielding to it, they closed their ears and hearts and schemed to silence his voice (Acts 6:10, 11). We still have those who, when they do not find any reasons for rejecting the truth, silence the voice of the messenger by simply staying home from church or going somewhere where the truths they dislike will not be preached. Such people are on very dangerous ground indeed.

IV. Lying to the Spirit. Acts 5:14, 9.

Very few accounts in the Word of God are more frightening than this account of Ananias and Sapphira, We are brought face to face with Divine judgment and are

awestricken in its presence, and well we might be, for it is a clear reminder of the fact that we cannot play fast and loose with God and get by. If they were once saved, then no doubt they had known what it was to quench the Spirit as He tried to make them a blessing, had grieved Him as He sought to lead them in paths of righteousness and away from sin, and had resisted His strong pleading with them through preaching and the voice of conscience, and gone right on with their plan of deception. It was premeditated and agreed to together (v. 9) and who would argue that the faithful Holy Ghost did not do all in His power to prevent them from making such a decision, but they persisted and not only lied to the Holy Ghost, but actually tempted Him to catch them in it (v. 9). But could not He who had striven so faithfully with them over it in the first place, know what they had done? And do you who scheme to cover up hypocrisy with deception suppose that He who trieth the hearts doth not see your scheming and know your sham, and understand your silly excuses? O, turn again to Him now for mercy and make your confession to Him before you have gone the way from which there is no return.

V. Blaspheming against the Spirit. Matt. 12:31, 32.

We have not meant to be dogmatic in discussing these degrees of offending the Holy Ghost, for there are certainly other comparisons that could be made. But in any event let us rather give God the benefit of any doubt for we are considering very serious matters here. There is much disagreement among commentators on the exact nature of the unpardonable sin, On the one hand, if Satan can convince a person he has committed the unpardonable sin, he destroys that person's faith and makes it almost impossible to bring him to any degree of saving faith. But, on the other hand, if he can convince us that there is no danger of committing it, he may lead us into it the more easily. One thing is certain, however, and that is that we need to be very careful as to our attitude toward the Holy Spirit of God. He can be grieved, resisted and blasphemed against until all hope of salvation is gone, whether it be the loss of God's willingness to forgive or the loss of our willingness to seek forgiveness. Blasphemy has to do with denying the work of the Divine and attributing it to the devil. Our God is a jealous God and will not tolerate this, especially when it is directed at His Spirit. It can be accomplished with the tongue, which shows how carefully we should guard our words. It is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34) which shows how carefully we must guard our heart. The surest way not to blaspheme the Holy Ghost is to not quench, grieve or resist Him.

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9

THE CARNAL NATURE

Scripture Lesson: Romans 8:5-8; Hebrews 12:1, 15; Romans 6:6, 7:23, 24

Adam was a sinless human being straight from the hand of God. All his affections and desires were unreservedly toward God. But when he heeded the

temptation of the serpent and Eve, he opened the door to the fleshly (carnal) mind which immediately brought the human race into the bondage of sin and death. Later, when he began to bring children into the world, that nature was passed on to his posterity, "and so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). That carnal nature came to each one of us by birth and we are not responsible for receiving it, but we are responsible for harboring it once we learn of the possibility of being purged from it by the blood of Christ and the fire of the Holy Ghost. Now we are to study some of the diabolical tendencies of that nature.

I. The Contrast Between the Carnal Mind and the Spiritual Mind. Rom. 8:5, 6.

A. In its nature (v, 5). The carnal mind is simply a "minding of the flesh" or a regard to the natural or worldly in place of or apart from God; undue regard to the appeal of the senses; while the spiritual mind is a sub-ordinating all else to the direction of the Spirit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). The natural man lives in a different world, that of the natural, human, and worldly. He respects only the wisdom of man, the opinions of friends, and the desires of his unregenerate nature. He may have a certain amount of respect for the religious or spiritual but only to the degree that they do not cross his own personal ambitions or render him undesirable in his circle of associates, He may be moved to sympathy and even be somewhat sacrificial but he definitely will not abandon his will to the will of God.

The spiritual minded man has a higher sense of values, spiritually speaking, those of deepest respect for the leadership of the Spirit of God. He sees things in a spiritual light. He relates them to the kingdom of God. He looks for the effect of his thoughts, words and deeds on the souls of men and the approval of God on them, while the carnal person will do things and make decisions and never think of a possibility of their having spiritual importance.

B. In its results (V. 6). One leads to death; the other leads to life and peace. You may look at two people, one carnally minded and the other spiritually minded, and not see the difference at the moment, but the general direction they are traveling is entirely different. The unsaved moral man may look the same as the Christian but his motives for being so are not the same. The backslidden professor may look as good as the new convert, or even better, but after you have been around them for a little while, it is not hard to tell that they are moving in opposite directions. And it is not a light thing but the difference of "life and death."

II. The reason for the contrast (v.7)

There is a basic difference. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Enmity is defined as "Ill-will, hatred, a state of opposition. Synonyms: Animosity, hostility. Enmity lies in the heart, animosity, in the passions, hostility, in the actions." (Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary) Enmity leads to animosity, which, in turn,

produces hostility. Because of this "built-in" enmity, the carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God," neither does it possess the possibility of being made subject to it: "neither indeed can be." It is like the warning statement on a can of ethyl alcohol: "Poisonous. Cannot be made non-poisonous."

III. The practical result (v. 8).

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." That is, they that "mind the flesh." It is clear that Paul does not mean that "as long as we are human" we cannot please God, for in verse 9, he says "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," but rather, if we yield to the flesh, we cannot please Him. In Rom. 7:21, 23, evil is not only present with him but brings him into captivity. And this is what does not please God. But when we are in the Spirit, "we keep His commandments and do these things that are pleasing in His sight." (I John 3:22).

IV. Besetting Sin. Heb. 12:1

There may be many different sins that could be classified by this term and it would probably be a different one in each individual life, but they could all be traced to the carnal mind. It is a principle that ferments every kind of sin, The reason it so easily besets us is because it is within (until we are sanctified wholly) and is continually betraying us into actual sins if we do not keep "looking to Jesus."

V. The root of bitterness (v.15).

Here the carnal nature is compared to a root, which is usually below the surface and out of sight, yet, as long as it is there, it possesses the potential to grow, and when it does, it will always be the plant that corresponds to the root. The root here mentioned is a root of bitterness. Many of those who try to keep the carnal nature down, have much trouble with this trait. They may be able to suppress outward actions, but a sharp word, a mistreatment, or a suspicious-looking action will fertilize this root until a feeling of bitter resentment arises and if they do not "look diligently" there shall "many be defiled."

VI. Our old man (Rom. 6:6).

Paul is speaking to those who are "dead to sin" (v.2) and "buried with Him" (v. 4) and refers to the carnal nature as the "Old man" meaning the principle that controlled them in their old life. The "old man" thought, spoke and acted according to the course of the world, making the life "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22). In regeneration he is nailed to the cross. His activity is greatly limited, but he still struggles, cries out against the lordship of Christ, and suggests ways by which we may satisfy self and prolong his life, for he doesn't want to die, But he must be kept there, and not yielded to until he finally breathes his last and dies in entire sanctification.

VII. The body of sin (v. 6).

By this term, he includes the whole bundle of sins and propensities against God -- the whole body, even to "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:5). It must all be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Is not this truly entire sanctification, that for which Paul prayed for in I Thess. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you WHOLLY; and I pray God your WHOLE spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

VIII. Another law (Rom. 7:23).

In contra-distinction and opposition to the law of God mentioned in verse 22. At every turn of the road, this law works against the law of God. God's law says "thou shalt not" but "another law" says, "Go ahead and do it." God says, "Thou shalt surely die" but it replies, "Thou shalt not surely die" (Gen. 2:17; 3:4). The free operation of this law in our members certainly brings us "into captivity to the law of sin." How, then, could this be the case of the saved person, unless it causes him to backslide entirely?

IX. The body of this death (v. 24).

Here it is not only a body that . leads to sin but to death (James 1:15). Small wonder that it produces the wretchedness spoken of in this verse, and causes the man to cry out for deliverance. But what a question -- who shall deliver? But what an answer -- God, through Jesus Christ (verse 25.). Then take heart, whosoever you be, that are tired of this bondage. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, hath prevailed, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony' (Rev. 12:11) and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). To God be the glory!

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10

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Scripture Lesson: Acts 2:1-8, 13-18

The day of Pentecost seems to have marked the beginning of the church age. And what a beginning! As the Spirit brooded over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2) in the beginning of the creation, and the dispensation of the Father, then again came upon Mary and overshadowed her (Luke 1:35) in the beginning of the dispensation of the Son, so now the Spirit again initiates the beginning of a dispensation, that of the Holy Ghost, thus showing that God always works through His Spirit in reaching out to mankind. And does not the Spirit still begin the

workings of God in the individual life, convicting the sinner, leading him to the cross, bearing witness to his justification, instructing him in the ways of holiness and then applying the cleansing blood and the holy fire to the heart, then guiding his footsteps until this life is past.

I. THE SETTING. (v. 1)

A. The day of Pentecost was fully come. Pentecost was a celebration of the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. Pentecost means fifty, and it was to be fifty days from the Passover to Pentecost; it was fifty days from the crucifixion to the coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. How accurate the calendar of God is, the time being fully come, according to God's schedule, even as Jesus came "in the fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4).

B. They were all there. Peter and several others could have been fishing, but they were there; Thomas had missed the first time Jesus met with the disciples because he was elsewhere but this time he was there; Jesus' mother, Mary, whom He had sent home with John; the brothers of Jesus, who had not believed on Him before His crucifixion (John 7:5); Matthias, the new disciple (Acts 1:26); and others, making a total of about 120 (Acts 1:15). Jesus had told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high and they were not going to miss it.

C. They were all with one accord. One accord What a blessed phrase! This must have represented quite a bit of confession and asking forgiveness of one another. No doubt, James and John asked the others to forgive them for wanting to have the seats of honor in the new kingdom; Peter may have apologized for being so impetuous and boasting that even though the rest of them all forsook Jesus, he never would; Thomas possibly asked forgiveness for not believing the others when they told him that Jesus had risen; and after ten days of this along with much praying, they were finally "with one accord." Other ambitions were forgotten, differences of opinion were laid aside, and all were living in constant expectation of the coming of the Holy Ghost. O, may God grant us to seek this kind of unity!

D. They were all in one place. This may have been the temple, for Luke has already told us (Luke 24:53) that they were continually in the temple after the ascension. Also the third hour was the hour of morning prayer and the coming of the Holy Ghost apparently took place just before the third hour (Acts 2:15). However, verse 2 refers to the "house" where they were sitting. Also Acts 1:13 mentions an upper room.

II. The symbols of the Spirit's coming. (vv. 2, 3).

A. The sound as of a rushing mighty wind. Jesus had used the comparison of the wind to the working of the Spirit (John 3:8) and now it is again used.

Indescribable, powerful, unexplainable, but a definite reality, coming in a mighty way, filling every place (all the house) and bringing a sense of awe to all present.

B. Cloven tongues like as of fire. Fire is likewise a type of the Holy Ghost. John the Baptist had made the comparison by prophesying that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Luke 3:16). Heb. 12:29 calls our God "a consuming fire," and refers to Mt. Sinai as the mount "that burned with fire" (v. 18).

It sat upon each of them. Some think this may have been one flame which is suggested by the singular word "it" showing that there was only one source, but tongues branched out from it to sit on each one, so that no one was omitted.

III. The coming of the Spirit Himself. (v. 4)

Whatever symbols and manifestations there might be surrounding His coming, it is His coming that is the important thing. Some people's experiences have varied in the manifestations, since "the Spirit divideth to every man severally as He will" (I Cor. 12:11) but these must not be given precedence over the Spirit Himself. Nothing must be permitted to take the place of His coming. He reveals truth; He sanctifies; He leads; He brings the things of Christ to us; He protects us from the onslaught of the devil; and without Him, all other manifestations are worthless. Sounds, visions, and tongues can all be counterfeited, but what can counterfeit the influence and accomplishment of the Holy Ghost?

IV. The speaking with other tongues. (vv. 4-8).

A. Other tongues, the word "unknown" is not used here. It simply meant languages which they had not previously spoken. Modernists have questioned the possibility of such a miracle, but it is no more miraculous than the confusing of tongues at the tower of Babel. However, it suggests that as sin brought the confusion at Babel, the control of the Spirit of holiness overcame the confusion by enabling the disciples to speak in many languages. God was using this medium to spread the gospel to the many nations from which Jews and proselytes had come to worship at the feasts. If the Holy Spirit were allowed His way more today, would He not remove many of the barriers that hinder us from spreading the gospel?

B. As the Spirit gave them utterance, This is more important than the fact that they used other tongues. They were saying what He wanted them to say with His anointing on it. That was what made the difference. Spiritism uses tongues, and other occults as well, but this was the Holy Spirit speaking through them. The people not only were confounded (v. 6) amazed and heard "the wonderful works of God" in their own language.

V. The opinions of the people (vv. 12, 13).

Some were in doubt. This is understandable, since there were so many languages being spoken and most people could only understand one or two of them. But then there were others who mocked. They were not looking for a spiritual significance, nor were they interested in thinking deeply about the possibilities but quickly took it as an opportunity for fun-making and mockery. One of the most momentous days in history and they think of nothing but mocking. So today, many are given to hilarity, fun, and merriment that they cannot bring their minds and hearts to consider seriously the things that even pertain to their own salvation, We can joke and laugh by the hour but are "prayed out" in five or ten minutes.

VI. Peter's explanation (vv. 14-18).

Whether Peter spoke in another language before or not, now he is speaking in his own tongue, for it is the men of Judea he is speaking to, probably the ones who were doing the mocking, since he takes care to prove that the disciples are not drunken, "as ye suppose." Also, they may not have been as devout as those who traveled long distances to be in Jerusalem for the feast.

Peter declares (and the results show that he was still speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance) that, rather than the nonsense of drunkenness, this is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the "last days" (v. 17). It is interesting to note that he did not compare it to the prophecy of Jesus (Acts 1:5, 8) or that of John the Baptist (Luke 3:15); but remember that he was speaking to the crowd that had rejected both and had just recently crucified Jesus, so he rather appeals to an authority that they would accept.

The prophecy was that God would pour out of His Spirit. It was an act of God, not the doing of man. It was the Spirit that was poured out. It could have been judgment, for had they not just crucified God's only begotten Son? But instead of judgment, more demonstration of mercy. How glorious! The Spirit to write the laws of God on the hearts of men, to cause them to walk in His statutes (Ez. 36:27). The Spirit to teach them and lead them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13), the Spirit to empower them to witness to all nations (Acts 1:8). And it is happening before their very eyes. 'This IS that' (v. 16).

It will be on all flesh. None are to be excluded. Male, female, old, young, yea, all who are servants and handmaidens of God are to receive this outpouring of the Spirit. They are to receive revelations of truth (visions and dreams) and to proclaim those truths to all (prophecy). God grant that it might be so in our day.

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There are both inward and outward fruits that are produced by the true Christian, through the working of the Holy Spirit within. We have often heard people say, "You only see what's on the outside; God knows my heart." There is an element of truth in this which we all should consider. But there is also room for serious error. I heard someone say some years ago, "I can see why a wolf would want to wear sheep's clothing, but I never could understand why a sheep would want to wear wolf's clothing." Quite frequently it is so that the heart is in worse condition than the appearance, by the very nature of the thing. A person who is not a real Christian might want to look like one to hide his faults and sins, but certainly a real Christian would not want to look as though he were not one. A study of the fruit which the Spirit brings forth in our lives will help us to see how our inward experience is demonstrated in our outward living.

I. What are the items involved in bearing fruit?

A. A vine (John 15:1). This is the main trunk of the plant on which all other parts of the growth depend. It is firmly rooted in the soil and provides not only foundation but also nourishment for the entire plant. Jesus Christ is this vine, and He is a true vine, the true vine, Israel had been likened to a vine several times in the Old Testament. (Gen. 49:22; Ps. 80:8). In Isa. 5:1-7 the vine disappointed the keeper by producing wild grapes. In Hosea 10:1, Israel is an emptying (margin) vine, taking the grapes to himself and giving the keeper nothing for his labors. But now Jesus comes as the true and faithful vine, to bring forth fruit unto God.

B. A husbandman. Someone to take care of the vine, to watch over it, to protect it, and to see that it is productive. He chooses the land to be planted, chooses the fertilizer, waters the soil, pulls out the weeds, and keeps out the birds and animals that would destroy his work. God the Father is this husbandman. And there could be no better. His knowledge and understanding completely qualify Him for the job.

C. The branches (v. 5). These are where the fruit actually grows. They hold the leaves which drink in the rain, oxygen and sunshine and pass them on to the trunk. They also receive the nourishment from the trunk and carry it to the fruit. We are the branches. How precious it is to be "laborers together with Him; God's husbandry" (I Cor. 3:9).

II. What is the possibility of bearing fruit? (vv. 4, 5).

It can only be accomplished by abiding in Him. There must be more than a mechanical unity. It must be a vital unity. The layers of the branch must line up with those of the vine so that the rain, oxygen, and sunshine can move from the branch into the vine and the nourishment from the soil can be fed into the branch; truly a life-giving flow, This is certainly suggestive of prayer and study of the Word. We must keep a close contact with Jesus if we expect to bring forth fruit. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself. Without me ye can do nothing."

III. Is it necessary to bear fruit? (vv. 2, 6).

What is the purpose of existence if it is not to produce something? How many people's lives are meaningless today because they do not have any purpose in life? The importance of bearing fruit is clearly indicated in these verses. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (v. 2). He is not interested in our just "going along for the ride." If we are not going to produce, we will not long be "in Him." He will take us away. If we abide in Him we bring forth fruit. If we do not abide in Him (v. 6) we are cast forth as a worthless branch and wither. There is no "eternal security" here. This branch did abide in Him and now it is cut off and dries up. Further, it is cast into the fire and burned. Make no mistake, my friend, either you are going to bear fruit or you are going to lose out. And yet, if you repent of your fruitlessness "God is able to graft you in again" (Rom. 11:23). Therefore "take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Rom. 11:21).

IV. Are there different degrees of fruit-bearing?

Several are shown. A. There is first the bare fact of bearing fruit (v. 2). "Every branch that beareth fruit." This is where we start. If we bear any fruit at all, the husbandman will work to develop us further. He purgeth it that it may bring forth (B) more fruit. This involves pruning -- trimming off twigs that are useless, They would drink up the nourishment that is needed and hinder the branch from being at its best. God sees the things that would hinder us and purges us from them. This is especially true in entire sanctification and also in our everyday growth. Some things that are not actually sin will still hinder and they must go if we would be all that He wants us to be.

(C) But He is not satisfied that we should only bear more fruit than we did before, or more fruit than someone else, but "herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." We are not to limit ourselves to such comparisons but to do our best, regardless of anyone else, Not in a competitive spirit or just doing enough to "get by" but as much as we can to His glory and because we love Him.

(D) One more thought here would not apply so much to the quantity than to the quality of the fruit. In verse 16 He speaks of fruit that remains. O, for more of this kind! We so often see accomplishments that do not last, many times as the result of shallow or careless work.

V. Are there different kinds of fruit?

We should like to suggest three.

A. Leaves, These are not only useful for taking in water and air and sunshine, but they provide shade for the weary. You remember Jonah found shade under a vine of a gourd (4:6). These are compared to our good works. How many times,

when a person was weary of the misunderstandings and heated criticism they received, did they find relief and help under the shade of a kind word or deed. How refreshing, when people have been insisting that Christianity was a farce and all were hypocrites, to find someone whose good works testify to their profession of salvation. Jesus said, "A tree is known by its fruit" (Matt. 12:33).

B. Edible fruit, This is what gives nourishment and strength to others. This is what appeals to the appetite. This is compared to the proper heart attitudes -- "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 23). Here is where some people's profession breaks down. They remind me of some fruit I saw some years ago. It smelled so good. It looked so good. It really made me hungry. But when I bit into it, O, it was so bitter, I didn't want any more. You don't find out how sweet anything is until you cut it, press it, or peel it. How sweet are you when you are cut by sharp remarks, or put under extreme pressure, or skinned?

The nine-fold fruit of the Spirit makes us think of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2) with its twelve manner of fruits, borne every month (continually) and for the "healing of the nations," for the fruit of the Spirit is healing indeed, and would soon solve the international problems. Look at them: (1) love: the key fruit -- the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14) the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:10, Gal. 5:14) and the demonstration of our relationship to Jesus and the Father (Matt. 12:33; John 15:8; 13:35; I John 4:7, 8). (2) joy: for strength (Neh. 8:10): for sorrow (Ps. 126:5); full (John 15:11; 16:24); unspeakable (I Pet. 1:8); exceeding (I Pet. 4:13). (3) peace: with God in justification (Rom. 5:1); of God in sanctification (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15); among yourselves (I Thess. 5:13; Ps. 133); with all men (Heb. 12:14). (4) longsuffering: and still kind (I Cor. 13:4); like Christ (Rom. 8:17); with joyfulness (Col. 1:11); revealing Christ (I Tim. 1:16). (5) gentleness: proving heavenly wisdom (Jas. 3:17); as a nurse with children (I Thess. 2:7). (6) goodness: expressing itself in good works (Eph. 2:10); causing others to glorify God (Matt. 5:16; I Pet. 2:12). (7) faith: in God (Mark 11:22), in fellow-Christians (Rom. 14:1); being faithful in carrying responsibility (Matt. 24:45). (8) meekness: as Moses (Num. 12:3); as Jesus (Matt. 11:29; 21:5); to be beautiful (Ps. 149:4; I Pet. 3, 4); in dealing with others (I Cor. 4:21; II Tim. 2:25; Tit. 3:2). (9) temperance: self-control, regulation, moderation (I Cor. 9:25). This is not suggesting moderation in evil things. They must be put away entirely (Eph. 4:31). But even legitimate things must be brought in complete control. Peter tells us to add temperance to the other Christian graces (II Pet. 1:6) so that we might be well balanced in all things.

What a glorious cluster of fruit the Spirit produces in us as we yield to His gentle but mighty working.

(C) Seeds. Without this type of fruit, we would soon become extinct. Someone has rightly said, "The fruit of a Christian is another Christian." Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered . . . God gave the increase (I Cor. 3:6). Others cannot always be eating the fruit of our vineyard, This will enable them to have one of their own. So shall ye be His disciples.

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12

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Scripture Lesson: II Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 3:12-14

There has been much argument and discussion over the term perfection. Many of the problems involved may be solved more easily if we designate the meaning we have in mind when we use the word, We are now to study Christian Perfection, This is not the perfection that angels have, for they are not human. That is "angelic perfection." Neither are we referring to the perfection of God. That is "absolute perfection," nor are we speaking of the perfection which Adam had before the fall, He had none of the effects of the fall at that time. That is "Adamic perfection." We are not meaning a perfection that excludes the possibility of making mistakes, which are certainly imperfections that need the cleansing of the blood. And, finally, it is not the perfection that shall be ours when Jesus comes again and we are made like Him because "we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). That is "resurrection perfection."

When good iron ore is found, it is dug out of the surrounding rock and shipped away from the mine to a plant to be processed. This compares to a sinner being saved. He is taken out of his sins and separated from the old life, When the ore arrives at the plant, it is put in a furnace and heated to separate it from the impurities that are mixed with it and cannot be separated any other way. When the impurities have been removed, it could be called good iron, or pure or perfect. Yet it has not the perfection that it will have when it has been rolled, formed, machined and assembled into a finished product. But it is perfect in the sense that the impurities are gone and it is ready to be used in the making of a finished product. This compares to the saved man or woman being sanctified by the purifying fire of the Holy Ghost. His desires, motive and ambitions are made pure; that which is selfish and sinful is removed; his heart is cleansed from unholy affections and filled with a holy love for God and man and he can be said to be pure or perfect in somewhat the same sense that the iron is when it comes out of the furnace. This is what we call "Christian perfection." He still will be shaped, molded, put under pressure, trimmed, ground off, polished, and otherwise developed, but his basic make-up is perfect.

I. The Negative Aspect of Christian Perfection (II Cor. 7:1).

God has given us a promise that if we will "come out from among them (unbelievers) . . . and touch not the unclean thing" He will receive us (II Cor. 6:17). "Having therefore these promises . . . let us (A) cleanse ourselves." This emphasizes our responsibility in the matter. We must (1) do all that we can toward our cleansing and (2) submit ourselves entirely to God to do that which we cannot do. (B) from all filthiness, God will not allow any uncleanness (II Cor. 6:17; I Thess.

4:7). (C) of the flesh. This takes care of all outward sins (drunkenness, murder, stealing, lying, adultery, etc.) (D) and spirit. This deals with impure desires, unholy thoughts, wrong motives. If we allow these inward or heart sins, they will soon find expression in the outward sins, which will, in turn nourish and strengthen the principle of sin within, Only by being cleansed from both, can we "perfect holiness in the fear of God." When we have cleansed ourselves to the best of our ability, let us wait earnestly before God until He completes the job.

II. The Positive Aspect of Christian Perfection (Col. 3:12-14).

In place of the things we are to cleanse ourselves of, we are to put on some other things in keeping with our standing (elect of God, holy and beloved). (A) bowels of mercies: compassion, sympathy. "Weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15). (B) kindness: doing good, ministering to the needs of others. (C) humbleness of mind: esteeming others better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3). (D) meekness: bearing wrong sweetly. (E) longsuffering: bearing it for a long time. (F) forbearing and forgiving one another (whether asked to or not); refusing to hold any grudge; forgiving in the same manner and with the same mercy and grace as Christ forgave you. If we realize how much and what awful things Christ forgave us, it makes it easier to forgive others. Indeed He says, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:15). (G) Charity. Why? (1) It is "above all these things." It is "the greatest of these" (I Cor. 13:13). It is "the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10). (2) It ties all these things together -- "the bond of perfectness." It covers all the rest like a cap-sheaf (II Pet. 1:5-7).

We see that it is never God's plan to leave us empty. Jesus explained how that the evil spirit returns to the house that is left empty and, with seven other more evil spirits, makes the condition worse than at first (Matt. 12:43-45). Many think that holiness is all in not doing this or that, but we must also be doing what He wants us to do. We must fill the heart and life with good things or enough of the evil will return to bring us under the bondage of sin again.

III. The Innocence of Christian Perfection (Phil. 2:14, 15)

(A) "That ye may be blameless." He does not say "faultless." That will not be until Jesus presents us before the Father (Jude 24). O, how many faults we all have and we should confess them one to another (Jas. 5:16) and humble ourselves thereby. We do not need to sin every day to keep humble. If we recognize our faults, that will do the job. But He will have us blameless -- free of intentional wrong; acting with right motives, even though our lack of knowledge or judgment may cause us to make a mistake.

(B) Harmless. No desire to hurt or "get even"; not damaging the confidence or faith of others; not setting an example that will lead some one astray. Notice the admonition (v. 14) to "do all things without murmurings and disputings." When we

complain of the will of God, we certainly "do harm" to those who hear us. Murmuring got the children of Israel into more trouble than anything else. If your circumstances are not in the will of God, pray, mind God and trust Him for a change. If they are in the will of God, then why do you complain? You thereby show a dissatisfaction with God's plan for you.

(C) The sons of God. Demonstrating your relationship to God by your actions and attitudes. What motive would cause a person to want to relate themselves to God but not their lives? How selfish would such a motive be? Certainly it is not the motives of the sons of God, who is holy and just and loving.

(D) Without rebuke. Like Daniel, who lived so close to God and so carefully that when his enemies wanted to bring an accusation against him, could not find any, so they had to make it wrong to do right (Dan. 6:4-7). Do we not often act carelessly and then glibly pass it off, saying, "So what. Everybody makes mistakes"? Surely we do, but this should not lead us to be careless.

We are "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" and they are watching us to see if we have what we say we have, and some of us are not very convincing. Think of the time when Abraham's and Lot's herdsmen were striving (Gen. 13:7, 8). It says, "The Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land." Abraham would not have them see God's people fussing so he gave Lot the first choice and took what was left and God blessed him for it (vv. 14-17). As the world is looking on, let us "shine as lights in the world" (Matt. 5:16).

IV. The Reason for Christian Perfection (I Pet. 1:15, 16).

(A) To show our relationship to Him "as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy." (B) Because God commanded it -- "Be ye holy." He will have it no other way. "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God (I Thess. 4:8). (C) Because God is holy -- "for I am holy." How could His holiness be satisfied with anything less. He may impute righteousness to us for trusting in Christ for past sins, but He wants to impart it to us for the future, that we might come "to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:3, 4).

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13

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND GROWTH IN GRACE

Scripture Lesson: II Peter 3:17, 18; I Peter 2:1-3; II Peter 1:5-8; Ephesians 4:13-15

Rev. Fred Watson compares our experience in grace to riding a bicycle. "You must keep moving or get off." All the work that the Spirit of God does in us will be lost shortly if we do not do something to establish it and make it permanent. Growth in grace is very important, yea, equally as important as being saved or sanctified in the first place. And how blessedly the Holy Ghost aids in this growth. For, as we

have studied in a previous lesson, He guides us into all truth. He brings all things to our remembrance that Christ has said unto us. Isn't it wonderful that the Heavenly Father has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3).

I. The danger of failing (II Pet. 3:17).

The Bible clearly teaches that this danger exists. Paul knew that even after he had preached to others, it was possible for him to become a castaway (I Cor. 9:27). Judas by transgression, fell (Acts 1:25) even though he was one of the twelve. Demas forsook Paul, having loved this present world (II Tim. 4:10). Some of the Galatians fell (Gal. 5:4), and even Peter fell (Luke 22:55-62) though he repented and was reinstated. No doubt he is still remembering that black spot in his life as he writes these words "Beware, lest ye also . . . fall." What was the "error of the wicked" by which Peter was "led away"? (A) Following afar off. (B) associating with the ungodly. (C) trusting in his own strength. Can you not feel the pathos in his words as he earnestly pleads "Beware"? We must be careful to maintain our steadfastness, but we can only do it in the help and by the grace of God through His Spirit.

II. The alternative of falling (v. 18).

A. "But grow in grace." There are means of grace which we must attend if we would grow in grace. These involve prayer, reading of the Word, fellowship with the saints. and the exercise of grace toward others.

B. "And in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." As we get to know Him better, we begin to realize what He is able to do for us. We learn to trust Him more; we learn to go to Him in every time of need. The closer we watch the perfect pattern, the better we are able to imitate that pattern. Then let us meditate on Him, read of Him in His Word, listen attentively to the voice of the Spirit as He takes of His and shows it to us, so that our knowledge of Him increases day by day.

III. The method of growth. I Pet. 2:1-3.

A. First there is a negative side (v. 1). Laying aside all malice." Malice will stunt, if not completely stop our growth. We may not hold any ill will or grudge in our heart. It grieves the Spirit and greatly hinders His work in us. How could we expect the Savior, who prayed even on the cross for the forgiveness of his enemies, to approve in us a lesser degree of forgiveness (Matt. 18:21-35). (2) "and all guile." This would take in any kind of deception; craftiness, trickery used to gain the desired ends. (3) "hypocrisies." Professing more than you have; putting on a show. (4) "envies." Coveting what others have; developing a bad spirit because of brooding over the fact that someone else has something you do not. "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13:5). Otherwise you will begin to complain and find fault, not only with others, but, indirectly with God. (5) "all evil speakings."

What a snare the devil lays for our feet in this. It may be true, and still be evil speaking. "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

B. Now notice on the positive side (v. 2). (1) As newborn babes, recognizing the need of others, that we do not know it all; that we have a lot of room for improvement; being teachable. Some times we admit, verbally, that we are willing to learn, but then by our actions do not let anyone teach us. (2) "desire the sincere milk of the Word." O, what means of growth there is for us in the Word of God. He who is all-wise has placed there truths that will ever nourish our souls and aid in our growth. There is meat there indeed, but also milk. God has provided for all our needs, whether we are old or young. Something for the youngest child, yet much for the ablest scholar. Only God could inspire such a book. Praise His Name! As you "taste" this milk, you certainly find that "the Lord is gracious."

C. Now Peter gives us some steps to take (II Pet. 1:5-7). As a father takes 'the hand of a little child to help him take his first steps so the Spirit inspires Peter to do for us here. The first step is faith. You cannot begin to grow until you first trust Jesus for salvation. Then you are ready for the second step, for you cannot stop there. It is virtue or moral courage. You will need this to reject temptation, to stand for right, and to do your duty. But if you stop there, you may develop an unwise zeal, not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2) so take the third step -- knowledge, that you may know "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Now you may not stop here or you will become as the Greeks of Paul's day who spent all their time either to tell or to hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). You will need to temper your knowledge with other needful things in order to have a well balanced life to take the step of temperance. Bring all things into their proper place. The next step is important so that you do not get too upset with people who are not as well disciplined as you are. That step is patience. Be sure you don't miss it, for it is a vital part of your growth. Next, you will need something to keep all this elevated above the human -- the idea of simply being a good fellow in the community, so lift your eyes upward as you take the step of godliness, adding much of it to what you already have. When you have fixed your vision of Him and are taken up with His holiness and love, then put it to work in the step of brotherly kindness, bearing with their faults, praying for them, and doing good unto the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). But you have one more step, that of charity, which will not let you be satisfied to hide your influence and good works inside the church but will constrain you to love all men and labor for the good of their body and soul.

IV. The results of growth.

"If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be idle (margin)" (II Pet. 1:8). You will not be sitting around with nothing to do. You will see the many opportunities around you and be busy using them for God. "Not unfruitful." As you use these opportunities for God it is only natural that there will be fruit as a result, according to God's laws and promises, even as, in the natural,

we cannot explain exactly how it happens, but we know that when we plant seed in the proper manner, we may look for fruit.

Again we have a negative and a positive side. Let us notice:

A. The negative side. (1) "No more children" (Eph. 4:14). We eventually grow up. We develop strength and courage. We become men (I Cor. 13:11). (2) "Not tossed to and fro." We gain stability. What is it that may toss us to and fro? (a) "every wind of doctrine." What a multiplicity of doctrines we have on every side, There is hardly an error that can be made, but what someone has found a text to argue from. But being grown, these do not sway us. (b) "sleight of men, cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." A child is often easily confused and led astray, but as we grow in grace, we are able to see through their schemes, especially by the help of the Spirit.

B. The positive side. (1) "The unity of the faith" (v. 13). A solid trust in God that binds us together. (2) "The knowledge of the Son of God." Our understanding of spiritual things is clearer and we are more and more amazed as we look into the very face of our Redeemer. (3) "Unto a perfect man, even the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," so that he may present us "faultless before the presence of His glory WITH EXCEEDING JOY (Jude 24). To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever, Amen." Yes, Amen.

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THE END