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**CRUMBS FROM HEAVEN**  
**By Jerry Miles Humphrey**

Author Of:  
Spiritual Lessons  
Select Fruits  
Fragments From The King's Table  
Sermons That Never Die  
Daily Guide For The Sanctified  
X-Ray Sermons  
Railroad Sermons  
Lost Soul's First Day In Eternity  
Soul's First Day In Heaven  
Sin's By-paths  
Spicy Pocket Sermons  
Impressive Talks  
Secret Of Unction  
Fifty Ready-Cut Sermons  
Dew Drops  
Convert's Guide  
Ready Arrows  
Divorce Marriage  
Etc.

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By J. M. Humphrey

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**DEDICATION**

This Volume Is Lovingly  
Dedicated To  
Margueritte,

Lula And  
Henry

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## INTRODUCTION

There is so much secular literature circulated these days to engage the attention of the children of God, especially those who move in the business world, that the writer felt impressed to prepare this collection of short sermons, to be read during the lunch hour, and while going to and fro on the cars.

These articles are not sent forth as examples of scholarliness and of the classics, or to attract as the handiwork of a renowned chef; yet they may administer the same comfort that bread crumbs would to a hungry man.

Yours for the good of humanity,  
 J. M. Humphrey  
 January, 1927

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## 01 -- FORGIVENESS

"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"Forgiveness of sins!" O what hope inspiring words! There are none like them in all the world. Let every human tongue take up the theme, until all the sons and daughters of Adam are pardoned and cleansed from sin, through the all-atoning blood of Calvary's Lamb.

God's true nature is seen more clearly in forgiving sinners than it is in creating worlds. Were He not merciful and forgiving, there would not be a redeemed soul in heaven or a pardoned sinner's name in the Book of Life.

Webster defines "forgiveness" thus: "1. To cease to cherish displeasure. 2. To excuse, overlook and restore to favor. 3. To remit and cancel a debt." And in the following we see that this

is what God has promised and does for the penitent sinner: "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me" (Isa, 12:1); "Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever" (Jer. 3:12).

Let the reader notice in the following instances the impartiality of God's forgiveness. In the nineteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel and the eighth, ninth and tenth verses we read of the Savior's graciousness and forgiveness in receiving Zacchaeus, who was chief among the publicans. In the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel we read these gracious words, spoken by the Savior to a harlot: "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee."

Jesus did not confine His forgiveness to publicans and harlots, but we find Him planting the kiss of pardon upon the care-worn brow of backslidden Peter, and lifting up the grief-bowed head of Saul of Tarsus. Glory be to God!

Let us now notice the spirit in which He forgives the penitent sinner.

1. He forgives freely. "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hosea 14:4). "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6).

2. How much sin and disobedience may we expect forgiveness for? "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:28, 29).

3. The genuineness of His forgiveness is the next fact worthy of our consideration. He has promised, not a scanty, but an abundant pardon. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he" will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7).

4. He has promised to bury them miles deep. "He will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

5. Our friends are sometimes willing to forgive our offenses but disinclined to forget them. But God forgives and forgets. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).

6. God not only forgives the offender, but He takes him back into His confidence, into partnership: "I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness" (Hosea 2:19, 20); "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Through whom is this forgiveness obtained, may we ask? "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:30, 31). Also Acts 4:12.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 02 -- WANDERING FROM GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

"O let me not wander from thy commandments" (Psa. 119:10).

In these days of shifting and sifting, many of the people of God are in danger of going to one of two extremes, namely, formality or superficiality; ceremonies or shallowness. Where there are many getting back into bondage by stressing the ceremonial laws of offerings, new moons, Sabbath days, etc., there are others drifting to the other extreme by ignoring the plain commandments which were given by the Lord Jesus Christ. Such laws as loving God with all the heart, and loving thy neighbor as thyself, laying not up for thyself treasures upon earth, etc. These persons argue that they are not under the law but under grace; forgetting that Jesus said, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

In view of the fact that David was a shepherd and acquainted with the consequence of a sheep wandering from the fold, it was no doubt easy for him to weave the verb, wander, into his prayer to Jehovah. Reader, it would not be a bad idea for you to weave it into your prayer, as did the shepherd-boy, David; for these are surely days of shifting, so much so that one cannot depend too much upon any one or anything.

It may be well at this point to define wander. Referring to Webster we find: (a) To roam hither and thither. (b) To deviate from a true course. (c) To depart from a prescribed way. (d) To turn from a course previously followed.

Now in order to avoid becoming a wanderer from the commandments of God, let us acquaint ourselves with some of the many courses and policies which, if followed, lead astray.

1. Becoming careless and non-attentive is a common cause of straying from the right path. The Psalmist said, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep" (Psa. 119:176). In Isaiah we read, "All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6). Jesus cautions, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41), "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37).

Some years ago a huntsman was lost for fifteen hours in a Canadian forest in the winter time, simply because he became inattentive and failed to mark his way. So it is with hundreds of God's children who yield to a spirit of slackness and become careless as regards reading the Word, attending church, praying in secret, and minding the checks of the Spirit.

2. A second course that is apt to lead astray is to separate from the flock. How true are the words of the poet: "The wolf must first divide the sheep, before he can devour." This, no doubt,

was Paul's reason for giving us the following exhortation: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24, 25).

Whenever God's children begin to neglect the prayer meetings, the class meetings, the preaching service, etc., and spend their time at the parks and pleasure resorts with sinners, they are on a course leading astray; they have wandered from the commandments of God (Psa. 1:1 and Isa. 58:13).

3. Becoming confused at the fork of a road has caused many a traveler to lose the way and turn from the right path. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25).

So many of God's children wander from their own church and fold, which is on the straight path, and where the true gospel is upheld. They form a habit of attending different services, many of which are spreaders of false doctrine. As a result they become confused and unsettled in their faith and are turned from the true way.

4. Love of the flesh and of ease causes many to take the path of least resistance, which is not so conspicuous or inconvenient to them, and turn from the right way and wander off into the marsh and tangle of the wilderness. Ofttimes when one church forbids dancing, 'card playing and the attendance of "movies," etc., they will withdraw their membership and unite with a church that permits such things. These poor souls do not seem to realize the fact that the laws of God are as binding in one church as another, in one country as another; that there is only one pathway to heaven. The Word plainly tells us that, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). 5. Another policy that leads astray is that of allowing the mind to become too absorbed in worldly cares and responsibilities. How timely is the warning of the Savior, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34). "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22).

6. "Jack-o'-lantern" light and "fox-fire" has drawn many aside and astray into the dark, marshy swamps of error and fanaticism. "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness" (Prov. 2:11-13).

In the event that we have wandered, what steps shall we take to get back?

(1) Consult the "compass" which is God's Word. "Thy Word," said the Psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).

(2) Turn away, face about, from every sinful thing, and every crooked thing, and every doubtful thing. David said, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not" \* \* \* (Psa. 119:59, 60).

(3) Return to the old beaten path of former light, obedience, consecration and self-denial. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16).

(4) Lastly, take time to be holy. "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (1 Kings 20: 40). "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3).

\* \* \* \* \*

### 03 -- STICKING TO THE WAY

"The righteous also shall hold on his way" (Job 17:9). Job, after speaking in the sixth and seventh verses, of the calamities that had befallen him, added the words of this text. We are to understand the term "righteous" includes every believer. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7).

At a glance the text brings out two facts, namely, (a) what the righteous will do, (b) what the unrighteous will not do. The unrighteous may seem to prosper for a season, but when the cross begins to grow heavy, and the path more narrow, he will turn aside. Matthew pictures him thus: "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or Persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13:20, 21).

The expression, "his way," suggests the fixedness of purpose of the righteous. This steadfastness of purpose may be seen in the following statement by Joshua: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

This fixedness of purpose may also be seen in the testimony of the lion-hearted apostle Paul, when he testified thus: "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

The verb "hold" suggests two noteworthy facts: (a) The necessity for diligence on the part of the righteous in order to keep their grip and remain in the way. Some religious teachers would have us believe that no effort is required to live for God, but that the way is all ease and sunshine. However as long as we find such statements as the following, to the contrary, in the Word of God, we will continue to believe otherwise: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matt. 11:12). (b) The verb "hold" not only infers that it is possible for the righteous to lose his grip, but

it also implies that there will be forces seeking to loosen his grip. The apostle Paul advances this thought in Ephesians 6:11, where he exhorted the Christians to "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

The possessive pronoun "his" definitely modifies or limits the "way" or route referred to in this verse, implying that there are other ways which are not his, which will confront the righteous even as they did Pilgrim in his flight from the City of Destruction."

Furthermore, the text infers that the life of the righteous is not a stationary, stereotyped way or journey, but an aggressive, eventful one. The Word says, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psa. 92:12). "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

With everything in favor of the righteous, and every provision made for his good, the inspired Word is definite and does not say, "he may hold on his way," or, "he will probably hold on his way," nor even, "doubtless hold on his way," but, "he shall hold on his way."

True, some backslide and turn from the way of the Lord, but they do so needlessly. Every provision for salvation has been made, and by the grace of God we can remain in the way, if we will. Jude 24.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 04 -- THE UNFAILING FRIEND

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

The reader is no doubt aware of the fact that Solomon here spoke prophetically of the Lord Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer. He first breaks the news to the world that there exists such a friend, and then he describes this friend by picturing the quality of His friendship.

In describing true, unfailing, undying love, the inspired Word compares it with a mother's love. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. 49:15). In describing the deep, unfathomable compassion of God to the sons of men He likens it to an earthly father's compassion. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Psa. 103:13). But in describing age-abiding friendship He uses as an illustration the friendship of a brother. Generally speaking, brothers and sisters in the flesh are usually the last persons to turn against each other.

"Earth has no deeper joy or richer treasure than friendship. It improves happiness and abates misery, by the doubling of our joy, and the dividing of our grief." "Friendship is the image of eternity, in which there is nothing movable."



The love and loyalty of earthly friends have, to some extent, prepared us to more fully appreciate the friendship of Jesus. Let us notice the surpassing excellence of the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

First, it may be seen in the sacrifice which He made for us. Think of Him laying aside His royal robe, and leaving the presence of His Father, the association of angels and all of the glory of heaven; and coming to earth to suffer and die, to redeem fallen man. Oh, what condescension!

2. The excellency of His friendship is also seen in its unchangeableness. It stands fast while earthly friends and friendships come and go; when wealth is gone, when reputation is gone, when health and beauty have faded and one is cast off into the poorhouse to die. Yes, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Oh, what a matchless friend!

3. The excellency of His friendship is likewise seen in the patience and forbearance which He exhibits toward us. Think of the many times He has forgiven us, of how often He has overlooked our faults and blunders.

4. The quality of His friendship is apparent in the good counsel and seasonable reproof that He gives to us. How often He has thwarted our plans and thus saved us from misfortune and disgrace.

5. The excellency of His friendship is obvious in the attention that He devotes to us. He has told us that our names were engraved upon the palm of His hand, so that the thought of His children is uppermost in His mind -- they are ever before Him. He offers also to carry our burdens and share our sorrows, make a way of escape in temptation, and keep watch over us by day and by night. Psa. 121:3, 6.

6. Lastly, let us note the superiority of His friendship.

He is not only willing but able to help us in every circumstance. This cannot always be said of earthly friends; indeed it can hardly be said of any.

He is not only able to help us, but always knows how best to do so.

Sometimes when we go to the home of an earthly friend, seeking help, we are greeted with the sad news that he has just died. But the friend of whom Solomon wrote and of whom I write, does not die, but "ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Yea, He is the super-friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 05 -- THE MARCH AROUND JERICHO

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour" (Joshua 6:2).

The experience and travels of the children of Israel between Egypt and Canaan typifies the spiritual way and trials of the New Testament believer. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10.11).

Let us notice a few prominent points illustrating this lesson:

I. From the human viewpoint nothing awaited them but defeat, from the fact that apparently every exit was closed and sealed. But just such circumstances are God's favorite working conditions: How readeth the scriptures at this point? "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut asunder the bars of iron" (Isa. 45:1, 2).

II. The next point of interest here brought to light is the fact that the children of Israel were given the victory before they started out to battle. God did not say, "I may give Jericho into thine hand"; neither did He say, "I will give it into thine hand," but "I have given into thine hand Jericho." Would to God that when we are starting out of camp to do service for our King, we would believe and rely upon Jehovah's promises as did His servant Joshua!

III. We notice here, too, that even though the victory was given them before leaving camp, yet its full development hinged upon six conditions, and I might say here that all of God's promises are conditional. Deut. 28:2, 15; Isa. 1:19; Mark 16:16.

Let us notice the six conditions upon which the victory depended:

1. Strenuous, persevering effort was called for on the part of the children of Israel. They were to take a long, hot, dusty march around the city once every day for seven days, and seven times on the seventh day, thus making thirteen trips. This was no easy task. Reader, God does not encourage laziness and indifference in His people. Victory presumes difficulty and struggle. It is reached only when all obstacles have been overcome and surmounted. Paul wrote: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

"Sure I must fight if I would reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord!  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy word."

2. The second condition upon which the victory depended was doubling of diligence. They were not only to do as well and as much as they had been doing, but they must needs do more. On the last day, instead of going around the wall one time, as they had done previously, they were to go around seven times. Self-pity and love of ease doubtless suggested that it was too much, too hard, and unnecessary; nevertheless, such were God's orders, and they must be obeyed. Joshua 6:15.

3. To refrain from all talk, laughter, clatter and noise was the third condition imposed for success. "And Joshua commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout" (Joshua 6:10).

4. Doing that which made them objects of censure and criticism was the next condition upon which victory was dependent. It was quite embarrassing indeed for the Israelites to encircle the walls once every morning for a whole week in silence, while the citizens of Jericho were doubtless jeering and poking fun all the while. This was surely a strong dose for pride and self-importance to swallow, and keep down. Verse 13. If we would have God work and fight for us, pride and self surely must be dethroned. How true are the words of Solomon, "Before honor is humility" (Prov. 15:33).

5. Unity in the fullest sense was the fifth condition necessary for victory (verse 10). They all had to be on hand ready for marching orders at the same time. No one could advance an excuse that he must go to work, or he must purchase a yoke of oxen, or he must look at a farm. Oh, no! every man had to be at his post. Reader, perhaps we as a church would have better success in the work of the Lord" if we were more prompt and punctual in His service. Every Israelite not only had to be present on time, but he must step at the same time and in the same direction. Think of a million people all lifting their right foot at the same time! Think of a million people walking and pulling together! All of one accord! Can it be possible? All must attend daily; yes, be present at every meeting; no excuses were accepted.

6. The last condition required was active faith and great faith. They were exhorted to shout before any sign of victory. In other words, they were required to claim and rejoice in a victory which, from every visible point of view, they did not possess. But when they believed God and put their faith into practice, by shouting as they were commanded, the walls came tumbling down. "And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, shout; for the Lord hath given you the city" (Joshua 6:16).

It is encouraging to remember also that God was with them and ordered the battle, even during the testing times and long, hot, dusty marches.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 06 -- SIN'S SOLICITATIONS

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Prov. 1:10).

The advice or admonition here given is to thwart and head off the seductions that arise from sinful associates.

We are now living in a time when Satan has many apparently innocent attractions with which to snare the children of God, namely, religious plays, sacred dramas, educational moving pictures and scheming inventions. People who would not think of going to the theater on any other occasion, will allow themselves to be decoyed and snared by Satan in this way.

In this chapter I shall attempt to give a few reasons why enticements to sin in every form should be withstood at first sight.

1. Every solicitation to sin addresses itself to a nature in us badly warped in that direction. We dare not trust or put confidence in the flesh. Phil. 3:3.

2. In giving attention to a solicitation to sin we put ourselves in the direct road that leads to that particular sin. In this same manner the prophet Balaam grieved God and got out of divine order (Num. 22:5-22). God positively forbade Balaam to go with the men (verse 12). There and then he should have taken his stand, and absolutely refused to go, no matter who else Balak might send. But this Balaam failed to do. Even after God had positively forbidden his going with the men, Balaam manifested a desire to go by entertaining the men over night, while he prayed for a different answer from God (verse 19). Balaam is not by any means the only one who has allowed Satan to delude and side-track him at this point. What else can people expect but to get in error when they deal with light and truth in this slipshod way?

3. For any to dilly-dally with sin's solicitations brings them into contact with merely the pleasing, attractive side of sin. They only hear sin's musical voice, see its delicate form and enchanting smile; but fail to see beneath the honeyed kiss a deadly hook, the heartaches, the shame, the remorse, and the frowns of God.

4. A fourth reason why sin's, solicitations should be resented at first sight is because flirting with sin weakens our moral power to resist it. Solomon's advice was, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23:31, 32).

5. By trifling with sin's solicitations a person tempts the Holy Ghost to withdraw His protection from him. The Holy Spirit only keeps those who are willing to be kept; those who heed His checks and warnings and profit by His reproofs (Isa. 63:10).

6. Still another reason why solicitations to sin should be withstood at their first approach is because to associate with them gradually awakens unholy desires in the soul. There were no unholy desires in the heart of Mother Eve to begin with, but when she commenced to be attracted by sin's seduction, they immediately entered her heart and she thus became easy prey for the tempter. "Humanly speaking, there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. Now, in so far as you suggest temptation to a man, you do him an injury, and if he is overcome, you share his guilt, so strong is the power of suggestion. The time for reasoning is before we have approached near enough to the forbidden fruit to look at it and admire. He who has no mind to trade with the devil should be so wise as to keep from his shop."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God" (Jer. 42:6).

The text is a part of the testimony of a people who had experienced to their heart's sorrow the result of disobedience. In connection with this word lies the secret of all misery, sorrow and disgrace; while associated with the word obedience we find the secret of all true happiness.

In this brief discourse I wish to write on the subject of obedience.

Noah Webster defines obedience as follows: (a) Complying with the law. (b) Submission to command. Obedience is a virtue which teaches us to readily embrace and diligently put into execution whatever is commanded us. God prefers obedience above all sacrifices that we can offer him: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).

God used obedience to test the fidelity of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2:16, 17).

The Lord Jesus made obedience love's test: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

When obedience is at the helm of our will it swings all of our actions Godward and heavenward; when disobedience guides our will, it swings all of our forces fleshward, sinward and hellward.

Obedience was the chief virtue in the Bible worthies that caused them to choose death rather than life. It was obedience, joined with faith, that made Abraham the favorite of God. But the great pattern of obedience was He who "came to seek and to save that which was lost." All the thoughts, words and actions of His mortal life were the fruit of obedience; they were all bent on doing His Father's will and obeying His commandments. "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6:38). And shall not this great example of the Son of God Himself inspire us with an ardent desire of living and dying in the arms of obedience?

Our happiness or misery for time and eternity depends upon this virtue, for it is through obedience that all is won or lost. It was through obedience that Saul of the New Testament won all; through disobedience, Saul of the Old Testament lost all. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword" (Isa. 1:19, 20).

Let us notice some of the fruits of obedience: (a) Obeying God heals the deepest wound that sin has given man, namely, self-will. We all like to have our own way and be our own boss, but on having to take a stand against ourselves and line up with the will of God, this foul wound is healed. (b) In having to obey and live up to God's law our passions are kept regulated and under subjection. (c) Obedience produces the inward peace, boldness and confidence toward God. We

all feel clear, sweet and clean when we are conscious of the fact that we have obeyed God to the best of our ability. It is this that makes the deathbed softer and sends the soul bounding through death's valley with an assurance as clear as a diamond.

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## 08 -- ELIEZER AT NAHOR

"I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Gen. 24:27).

This chapter is brimful of choice gems, but the text contains the brightest of them all; chiefly so because it outlines to us clearly how to obtain minute, divine guidance. Eliezer did not say, "I being in a way," but, "I being in the way." Much time is lost by many of God's people waiting at the wrong place, and awaiting His guidance when they are not in the right place. It is well worth while to take pains and be concerned about getting "in the way."

Let us now study the conduct of Eliezer and become acquainted with some of the ways of obtaining divine guidance.

1. He was in the way of duty; that is, as far as he saw and understood, he was performing the will of his master. This is the chief and only way we may expect to obtain divine guidance and is also the only place where we can retain God's favor. The person who is shirking duty is not a Christian but a backslider. The Word says, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. 10:38). Eliezer had received a commission from his master and was faithful in endeavoring to perform it.

Reader, are you faithfully following the Spirit's previous instructions regarding walk, talk, dress, where to go, and with whom to associate? Have you performed the last duty which He gave you? Have you walked in all the light that He has shown upon your pathway? If not, you are by no means in the way of duty.

2. We notice, too, that Eliezer did not pray to the Lord for special guidance until he had done all that was in his power (verses 13, 14). It is fanaticism for us to pray and expect God to do what we should do. It is at man's extremity that God takes hold.

When at the grave of Lazarus, Jesus told the people to remove the stone. He could have removed it as well as raise the dead man to life. God works with man and not independent of man. 1 Cor. 3:9.

3. We learn through the conduct of Eliezer that the path to peace and soul-rest lies through the performance of that which we are already certain. In other words, "our conduct must be abreast with our conscience." If our conscience bears us witness that we are living in the center of God's will, to the best of our knowledge, we can then with confidence pray and expect God to guide us.

4. In studying verse fourteen we discover that it does not displease God for His children to test Him by putting out a fleece. Notice how it, and the preceding verse read: "Behold, I stand here

by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass before he had done speaking" (Gen. 24:13-14). Also see Judges 6:36-40).

5. Eliezer did not pray for God to answer his prayer some time in the distant future and the sweet by and by, but said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day." No doubt the reason why many of our prayers are not answered is because we pray at too long a range and set the stakes of our faith too far in the future. "Now is God's time." He does not give us any promises for tomorrow, but says, "As thy day so shall thy strength be."

6. We also gather from Eliezer's experience here that God wants us to bring the most insignificant things, the smallest details of life to Him in prayer. Nothing that concerns us is too small to submit to Him for counsel and guidance. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

7. The last thought brought to our mind through Eliezer's experience is that if in following God's leadings we are brought into a place of perplexity and confusion, He is faithful, and will lead us out. He will in no way take the advantage of us. Truly, as one has said, "God will not be a debtor to any one." It is true that in obeying orders Eliezer was brought into a place of confusion and perplexity, but God soon came to his rescue. Likewise He will be with us when we are brought into similar circumstances.

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## 09 -- EVERY-DAY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8, 9). Also 2 Cor. 6:9, 10.

God seemed to make the life of Saint Paul a sample and an example of the content of the every-day life of a Christian. Of all the Bible worthies, the life of St. Paul is the most completely rounded-out, inclusive and the most-suited as a model for all Christians. In other words, there was something in the experience of Saint Paul that, in a varying degree, is experienced by every follower of Jesus. Saint Paul himself declared, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1:16).

Let us paraphrase the text:

I. "We are troubled on every side"; that is, we are annoyed, we are inconvenienced, we are worried, we are grieved and afflicted. Now notice the counterbalance that grace supplies -- "yet

not distressed." 1. Not agitated to the extreme. 2. Not provoked and impatient. 3. Not growing sour and bitter.

II. "Perplexed," confused, embarrassed, harassed and tormented. As opposed to, "But not in despair"; not discouraged, not despondent and not hopeless. "God lives, sail on, sail on."

III. "Persecuted" by sinners, by hypocrites, by backsliders, by false brethren, by loved ones, and by the devil -- "but not forsaken." 1. He still had the fellowship of the saints. 2. He still had angels encamping round about him. 3. He still had the government of heaven behind him. 4. He still had the All-wise, All-powerful, Omnipresent God of the universe enthroned in his breast.

IV. "Cast down" by society, by friends, by loved ones, by the "Odd Fellows" and the "Even Fellows," "but not destroyed."

V. "As unknown and yet well known."

VI. "As chastened, and not killed."

VII. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

VIII. "As poor, yet making many rich."

IX. "As having nothing and yet possessing all things."

What a victorious life! Reader, is this your experience?

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## 10 -- AN IMAGINARY TRIP TO HELL

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17).

"It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell" (Mark 9:43).

I am simply using these two texts as the authority and foundation for my theme. These and other passages found in both the Old and New Testament tell us that somewhere in God's vast universe there are two great spiritual cities. The Word of God calls these places respectively Heaven and Hell. Furthermore, we learn through the experiences of Stephen and Judas that when people depart this life they go to one or the other of these places. See Acts 1:25 and Acts 7:55-59.

There is hardly a person to be found upon earth who has not a friend or loved one in hell; either a father, mother, brother, sister, distant relative, playmate or acquaintance. In this brief discourse I want to take the reader on an imaginary trip to hell, to visit that loved one or friend.



There is only one passage-way leading from time to eternity, namely, the well known Valley or Subway of Death. We will now close our eyes, be lost to the world, and sweep through this gloomy valley, standing on the margin of eternity. Let us enter sin's smooth, spacious highway which leads straight to the gates of hell. On and on we sweep, through giant folds of shadowy mist. On and on, past jagged rocks, frowning cliffs, and continents of desert gloom. Behold a dull, ruddy glow tints the gloom ahead! What does it mean? Oh, we are nearing hell! Listen to the thunders, booming hell's slogans. Hearken! 1. "Here man's war with God and truth is over." 2. "Passive submission is the law of hell." 3. "All has been done to redeem these souls that infinite wisdom and boundless grace could devise -- and all has failed." 4. "Who comes this way, behold and fear to sin." 5. "Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not." 6. "The hand that holds the scales of destiny has locked these fiery gates, therefore, there is no way of escape."

On we sweep through the adamantine portals, in search of our long-lost friend. "Night reigns sole monarch here." Still on and on we press, past howling demons, cursing fiends, sneering imps and writhing human souls, who are "forever wasting yet enduring still; and dying perpetually, yet never dead." Oh, behold that hideous, demon-like being sitting yonder in a dungeon of unfading fire, with infinite contempt branded on his brow. That is your long-lost friend, who has been absent so many years.

1. Notice the desolation surrounding him. There are no blushing flowers, no nodding trees, and no singing birds; he is in a world that is shrouded in night's blackest pall. There are no homes, no churches, and no friends.

2. Since leaving you that sad morning, gloomy afternoon, or lonely night, years ago, he has not had one moment's relief from pain. Rev. 20:10. See the undying worm, with poisonous fangs, flashing eyes, forked tongue and deadly breath feeding upon his conscience continually. Mark 9:44.

Behold him, in breathless pursuit of death -- death who on earth was the "king of terrors," but in hell, worshipped. Were it possible for lost souls to die, hell would hold a jubilee and every black valley would echo a Shout of triumph. Rev. 9:6.

3. He wrings his hands, tears his hair and gnaws his tongue as he retrospects finished time, with its numberless opportunities. He stands palsied with horror on the brink of a lake of fire, ere he plunges maddened into its seething bosom. Rev. 20:15.

Hear his loud, long, lamentable groans, "Woe! Woe! Woe!" (Rev. 12:12). Hearken to his unending soliloquy, "At last I am in hell, in spite of all my resolutions not to come. I am here to suffer the just demands of a broken law. Death and judgment are passed. The time of repentance has slipped away. Mercy's door is forever shut. I would not heed the warning voice of God, though it thundered in my ear night and day from the cradle to the grave. I sold my immortality for death. Death is now my immortal recompense."

Here we leave him, and rise through the lurid atmosphere to the flaming vault of hell. On through the iron portals, on through the dark ravine of midnight gloom, and up the mighty highway leading back to earth and light, life, hope, grace and opportunity.

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## 11 -- FOR THE SAKE OF TEN RIGHTEOUS

"And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (Gen. 18:32).

The reader no doubt is aware of the fact that the text is a part of God's reply to Abraham when Abraham interceded for Sodom. When properly considered, this text is one of the greatest faith stimulants in the Bible.

I invite the reader's attention to some points of interest found in the text:

1. We are given a faint conception of the respect and high regard in which the Lord holds His people. Truly, as the Psalmist has said, "The Lord loveth the righteous" (Psa. 146:8).

2. The text also shows what power and prestige we on earth have with God in heaven. It hardly seems possible that a puny mortal can drop down on his knees and change Jehovah's mind and bring Him to his terms (so to speak). Joshua did so when he prayed for the sun to stand still. Joshua 10:12, 13.

3. In studying the text at a closer range, we are brought to the knowledge of the fact that God will hardly refuse to answer intercessory, prevailing prayer. He may defer the answer for a while, but He will hardly fail to send the answer. Jesus advanced this thought in the parable of the man who went to his neighbor after he had retired for the night, for three loaves of bread. Luke 15:5.

4. Reading between the lines we discover that there is a possibility of God's people losing their hold and giving up in prayer too soon. No doubt had Abraham held on a little longer he might have had the whole city spared for the Lot family's sake. God did not tell him to stop praying, neither did He show any inclination to refuse Abraham's requests, but He rather encouraged him to "pray on." For every time he prayed, God answered. What more could any one wish, or expect? So many victories are lost as a result of God's people growing weak-kneed and faint-hearted, and not holding on in prayer. Doubtless, Jacob never would have won favor with his brother and obtained the "sunrise blessing" if he had not held on in prayer. Elijah no doubt would have missed the downpour of rain had he not held on in prayer.

5. The next valuable thought that presents itself as we scan the text is the inestimable value that a few righteous people are to a community. Is it true that God will spare a city with a half million population for ten people's sake? Can ten praying people roll back the avalanche of destruction from a half million persons? Yes! "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13).

6. The text reveals the fact that the influence of a few righteous people is a great blessing to a community, even when there are no visible results. God's people many times grow discouraged and think that they are not accomplishing much because they do not see results of their labor. We can never know how much good we accomplish until the recording angel opens the record and reads from it our works while in this brief world of shadows.

Therefore, "let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccl. 11:6).

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## 12 -- VAIN GLORY

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 6:1).

The heart is so deceitful and carnality so treacherous that it is impossible to fully describe it in one sermon or to locate it in one meeting. However, my object in this chapter shall be to describe but one trait, namely, "vain glory."

In the preceding chapter the Savior spoke of inward holiness, i. e., meekness, heart purity, peacemaking, etc. In this chapter He describes the purity of intentions.

The text is a general caution against vain glory in our religious work -- performing to be seen and heard. "This was the vice of the scribes and Pharisees, who did all their works that they might be honored and esteemed by men. Therefore their alms, their fasting, their prayers, and other good works availed them nothing in the sight of God, because vain glory corrupted them all. Reader, beware of this pernicious evil; watch and pray against it continually. No doubt when we get to eternity where we can see things from God's viewpoint we will discover that a large per cent of the acts of piety performed by men on earth was tainted by this baneful plague. Vain glory has for its object, first, imaginary excellence in the way of being known, talked of and praised by others; second, fearing what others may say or think. Let us notice in the following a few of the symptoms of this abominable plague:

1. It is quite evident that one is a victim of this deadly plague when he will allow public sentiment to bias his intentions as regards what he shall do or what he shall leave undone. Jesus said, in speaking of the Pharisees, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). He asked, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44).

2. Another symptom of vain glory is forwardness in displaying one's talents and attainments. Hezekiah was sharply reproved by the prophet Isaiah for displaying this same weakness. "At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, what said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me,

even from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 39:1-6).

3. A feeling of superiority to others is also a sign of this deadly malady. To feel that nothing is done correctly unless we do it or have a hand in it; to esteem our counsel, advice and opinions above that of our associates and co-workers. The Word exhorts us as follows: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-5).

4. It is only another way of saying, "Glory be to me!" for a person to publicly or secretly compliment himself and not give the glory to God when he has attained some great achievement or won some great victory. This plague caused Nebuchadnezzar to be sent out in the meadow to eat grass like an ox for seven years. Notice how he in an indirect way gave glory to himself, rather than to God. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beast of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:30-32).

The remedy for vain glory may be found in the following scripture verse: "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" (1 John 1:7). This, of course, includes the sin of vain glory.

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### How to Prevent Vain Glory

1. Put it in the same class with lying, stealing and adultery, and also look upon it with the same contempt.

2. Remember that it was vain glory that ruined Satan and quickly transformed a legion of holy angels into devils.

3. Remember that instead of being rewarded for the good we perform under its influence, vain glory brings upon us a curse. In other words, it poisons our best actions and exposes us to eternal punishment for those very works for which we expect to be rewarded. Matt. 6:1.

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"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (Psa. 42:11).

This text is brimful of help for the children of God during seasons of pressure and dejection. Such seasons, of course, are among the Christian's most unpleasant experiences.

At first sight two valuable thoughts are suggested by the text:

1. That even the strongest and most spiritual Christians do not remain in the same mood, spiritually, all of the time. Even Paul, the great apostle, spoke of being pressed. He wrote: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Cor. 1:8). At one time the Lord Jesus spoke thus: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38).

2. The next thought suggested by the text is that when we feel strangely dejected and cast down in spirit, we should demand a reason for it. For often much of the pressure that settles upon us is from Satan, and circumstances not of the Lord. Hence an inquiry, similar to that of the Psalmist, would cause Satan's false condemnation to vanish like mist before the sun. It would not be a bad idea if we should ask our soul such questions as the following when cast down and depressed. And if we fail to receive a lawful reason for such, we should reject and withstand it.

1. Have I willfully disobeyed the Lord since the last time I felt His blessing on my soul? Remember, reader, it takes a willful transgression for us to lose favor with God. The cooperation of the will is required in order to obtain salvation and it also is necessary in order to lose salvation. Therefore, if you are not conscious of disobeying God at any point, stand fast in the faith and do not cast away your confidence, neither accept Satan's pressure and false condemnation.

2. The next question that it would be well to ask your soul before submitting to dejection and pressure is, Am I willing to do whatever God makes plain to me as being His will? Am I willing to refrain from doing anything that I am now engaged in, should He make it clear to me that He wants me not to do so? If this is true, you have no right whatsoever to put up with Satan's gloom and false condemnation. What saith the word? "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21).

3. Ask your soul the following question: Is this pressure the result of condemnation for sin, or is it because of the lack of harmony and fellowship between myself and the unsaved loved ones in my home, with whom I am compelled to associate? We must remember that the unclean spirit of an unsaved companion will at times almost press the life out of the husband or wife. The contact between a clean, holy soul and an unclean, unholy one causes friction, unrest and depression. The spirit of an unsaved husband will at times almost press his saved wife to death even though he utter not a word. This is also true of the saved person who is surrounded by sinners in his daily work. It requires much prayer indeed. Christian people many times call themselves into question and condemn themselves because of feeling this pressure. It is to be remembered that even the spirit of

the Lord Jesus was so pure and sensitive to evil that the spirits of the unsaved troubled and burdened Him at times. Mark 3:5.

4. When a cloud of gloom and pressure suddenly settles down upon your soul, it would be well to ask, Has this depression settled upon me because I have in some way offended the Lord, or is it because I am censured and criticized by my brethren or friends? Reader, do you know that you may be as clear as heaven in your soul and as free as a bird in the air in your spirit, and yet, if you are reprimanded, censured or criticized by some brother, friend or enemy, it will cast a gloom upon you and press your spirit? It is possible for people's opinions, ideas and convictions to bind your spirit and overcloud your soul even when you are as clear as a bell in the Lord. It is surely a great art to know how to avoid becoming depressed by people's false condemnation. So well does the writer remember times in his own experience when he was as clear and free in his soul as an angel, but some unwise Christian brother or sister would approach him abruptly and say, "Young man, I've got some reproof for you! I want to see you after the meeting is dismissed!" Immediately all of the writer's clearness and freedom was gone, and a cloud of pressure settled upon him like a pall. This pressure was not from God at all. It was cast upon him as a result of the other person being displeased with him. This pressure was false, satanic and not from the Lord; therefore, all such pressure should be resisted and withstood.

5. It might be well to ask your soul this question also, Is this pressure upon me because I am not keeping at "concert pitch" with the true people of God? If you are not walking in the light and keeping out and out for God, you will not feel free and at home when you worship with them. Their songs, prayers and testimonies will grate upon your nerves and depress your spirit. It is difficult for a person to feel at home with God's people unless he is right with God and living in the clear.

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#### 14 -- TOUCHING ELISHA'S BONES

"And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they east the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings 13:21).

This, as all other Bible truth, contains soul food and helpful information for all believers. Let us put this narrative upon the table and briefly study it from various angles.

1. We learn here by reading between the lines that affliction, old age, oblivion and even death does not end a Christian's usefulness. Praise God!

2. We also learn from the text that like Samson our masterpiece of work for the Lord may be performed in our dying hour or after we have been buried many years.

3. We also gather from the text that the gospel arrows sent by way of song, prayer, written word, or exhortation that were given out at the highest period or tension of our Christian experience are still flying down the highway of time and making good for God. Like unto a lighted

torch being passed down a long line of men is the light, views and convictions of the gospel worker passed from one generation to another. Glory be to God!

4. The next truth revealed by the text is that it is not always the big thing, the attractive thing, or the sensational things that we do that accomplishes the most for God, and' endures the longest. This one act on the part of the prophet's bones immortalized his name to a greater extent than any act that he performed during his pilgrimage. Take heed, reader, remember God seeth not as man seeth. Small acts count for much in His sight. It was the testimony of the "little maid" that caused the great warrior, Naaman, to become a worshiper of Israel's God. It was through a little lad revealing a secret that Paul escaped the bloodthirsty mob.

5. In studying the text at closer range we discover that every Christian that has ever lived upon earth, though deceased, is still playing his part in the "drama of redemption." Abraham's faith is still at work. Job's patience is still playing its part. David's varied experiences are still a source of encouragement to all generations. Paul's epistles are still transforming lives. Wesley's sermons are still being preached and Watts is still inspiring us with his immortal songs. And so it is with every Christian that ever lived. "Oh, what a band we belong to!"

Just as every key on a piano is necessary to complete it, so is every believer, from holy Abel down, necessary to complete God's plan and the harmony of redemption. Reader, are you playing your part well? Be sure to do your best! It must some day be inspected.

6. A final thought suggested by the text as we study it from a spiritual view-point is that one of our surprises in heaven will be meeting people there who were led to Christ through our influence, many generations after we had been dead. People whom we never saw, and people whom we would not have been able to reach, should it have been our privilege to have lived in their day. It was the effect of a song that we sung, or prayer that we offered, perhaps a sermon that we preached, or even a tract that we gave out, or the missionary money that we sent to the foreign fields. Oh, what profound surprises! Oh, joy too deep for words!

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## 15 -- ABRAHAM'S SIX STEPS

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. 22:1, 2).

Many times in proving His people, God's object is to bring to the surface their good or bad qualities, just as He did with the children of Israel. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no" (Deut. 8:2). The more responsible the place that He has for us, the more severely God tests us, as in the case of Joseph and Paul,

In viewing Abraham's test from a human standpoint it was decidedly unreasonable. Nevertheless, God ordered it, and it was for Abraham's good, even though he could not realize it at the time. However, in complying with the demand, he did not reach its consummation at a single bound, but it took six successive steps.

As the reader notices the six successive steps that Abraham made before reaching the top, he will observe a similarity to these steps in the life of every believer who goes through with God.

1. Abraham prepared the fire and the knife and got everything ready for the sacrifice (verse 6). In other words, he harnessed up all of his forces to take a stand and make war against himself; that is, against his choice, against his affection and his will. It requires quite a struggle in the life of us all to pass this point. The poet advances this thought in the following lines:

"Lord, drive the nails, nor heed the groans,  
My flesh may writhe and make its moans,  
But this the way, and this alone--  
I must die, I must die."

2. Ascending the mount (verses 2-8) was his second step. Reader, can you with the eye of imagination see him, weary, worn, and heavy-hearted, ascending the mount on his way to "complete surrender"? Believers in every age of the church have found it up-hill work to subdue the flesh and line up with new light. However, God's grace is sufficient to help us make the grade. Praise the Lord!

3. Abraham's next step was erecting the altar (verse 9). The altar is the place where sacrifices are made. Therefore, from a spiritual point of view it suggests the devotional life. This must assuredly be kept in repair or we will not be able to stand in the hour of God's testings. So many of God's children fail in the hour of trial because of not keeping the devotional life in order. This is usually the first place where souls begin to lose out.

Remember, reader, when confronting new trials and testings, don't forget to add more prayer and fasting to your devotional life. Pilgrim, when passing through "the Valley of Death," laid aside every other weapon but "All Prayer." By wielding it skillfully and constantly he came out victorious.

4. Laying the wood in order (verse 9) was Abraham's fourth step. He not only placed the wood, "but laid it in order." This suggests technicality and accuracy. This same expression is used in 1 Kings 18:33 when the prophet Elijah was repairing the altar. In doing business with our fellow men he may allow us to be slack and careless in our transactions, but God is technical. He will not accept us, nor what we do, unless we "come clean, straight, upright and honest." He will not tolerate any trickery, dodging or deception. The Psalmist has well said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18). This may account for the difficulty that some people have in getting their prayers answered. The men of Bethshemesh awoke to the fact that Jehovah was particular and technical. Notice what the record has to say about it, "And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men" (1 Sam. 6:19).



Uzzah, the son of Abinadab, discovered to his eternal sorrow that God was particular and technical. "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it [a thing that God had forbidden]; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (2 Sam. 6:6, 7). Ananias and Sapphira, too, awoke to the fact that God was particular and exact. Acts 5:1-10.

When a person is drawing nigh unto God, everything light, careless and flippant in his conduct must be laid aside.

5. "Binding Isaac" was the patriarch's fifth heartrending step (verse 9). The verb "bind" suggests the act of making fast, securing. When we make resolutions to God to do this or that, and to go all the way with Jesus, the stakes of our vows and resolutions should be tightly driven down and made sure, or else when the test comes and the enemy tries us, we will jump the track.

6. Stretching forth his hand to slay the lad was the final and master stroke (verse 10). In fact, Abraham really performed the act in his heart, and God accepted and rewarded him as doing so. Many times the surrendering of our will is all God wants; yet, it may require some severe struggles inwardly to bring this about.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 16 -- WHAT DAMNED DIVES

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day \* \* The rich man also died and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes" (Luke 16:19-23).

Inspiration has made some statements that reveal the fact that it requires more to get to heaven than most people think. The following passages of Scripture have aroused our suspicion on that point. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22, 23). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).

There is not a narrative in the whole Bible that should arouse us to action as the story of this rich man. Our chief concern should be to know what landed him in hell, since the Lord Jesus did not charge him with having done anything that the generality of people, even church members, consider a sin. There is no charge made against him of having been a drunkard, or a gambler, a liar, or a Sabbath desecrater, an adulterer or murderer. He is only charged with dressing nice and

eating a plenty. Is it possible that such an innocent pastime will damn a soul? Furthermore, he is not accused of having been envious, jealous, impatient, deceitful, prejudiced or a holiness fighter. And yet he landed in hell.

Reader, let us look into this matter with the honesty of an angel and the seriousness of death and find out if possible what damned this man.

We gather from verse 19 that his sins were chiefly the sins of omission. It was not so much what he did that ruined him, as it was what he did not do. The apostle James is good authority at this point: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Let us study this man at a still closer range, and thus bring to light and find out definitely his sins.

1. He lived an idle life (verse 19). (a) Idleness is one of the prevailing sins of the world. Idleness was one of the sins that caused the downfall of Sodom. "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness" (Ezek. 16:49). (b) Idleness, sloth and indifference are triplets. (c) Idleness is temptation 's pioneer and the "hotbed" in which immorality grows. As a result of remaining home from battle, and being idle, King David fell into sin with Uriah's wife. 2 Sam. 11:1,2.

2. In scanning the life of Dives from various angles the next sin which we find him guilty of is that of withholding that which belonged to another. He seemed too blinded by the gods of this world to realize that all of the changes of apparel above what he actually needed did not belong to him, but was the property of the poor. Instead of changing raiment every day, he should have looked up the poor and divided his living with them. Luke 3:11; 1 John 3:17.

3. His next sin was employing his talent against God and righteousness. The wealth that he possessed was not his own, God only made him a steward; and instead of using his money for the salvation of souls and to advance the cause of righteousness, he used it to encourage pride, increase vain desire and to foster self-love. Reader, how do you stand at this point?

4. On examining him more closely we discover that he continued to trifle with the pleasing side of sin; that is, fleshly lust and self-indulgence, until its treacherous undercurrent swept him into the pit.

5. We also discover as we study the life of Dives carefully, that he did not set the right example before the members of his household. For we notice that, on his arrival in hell, among the first things that he wanted to do was to send a message to his five brethren not to follow his example, which of course would lead them to hell. Luke 16:27, 28.

Reader, when you meet your friends and associates in eternity, will they bless or curse you for the advice you gave and the example which you set before them?

\* \* \* \* \*

## 17 -- WATCH ONE HOUR

"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. 26:40).

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus in the garden before His arrest. It was a gentle reproof, not to His well-wishers and distant relatives and friends, but to His inner-circle friends -- those who had pledged themselves to stand by and go with Him the last round.

He wanted them to keep watch while he struggled with the burden of the sins of the whole world. He wanted their undivided attention for one hour. Not for the assistance they might render, but for the profound lessons they would learn.

In the following lines will be seen some of the lessons which He wanted them to learn in the gloomy school of Gethsemane:

1. Himself being the forerunner and pioneer saint, He wanted to teach them what to do when the burden was heavy, their heart sad, the night dark, and the world against them. Pray, pray, pray! Yes, when all else failed; to get alone with God. Since that dark night millions have proved and found it true. It has never failed, and never will. Jacob proved it at Jabbok, David proved it at Ziklag, Jonah at the bottom of the sea, and Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail.

2. Furthermore, He wanted them to realize the degree of earnestness and sincerity necessary on the part of the church to get souls saved. Not until Zion travailed did she bring forth. Isa. 66:8. It was a sad hour when gospel workers accepted the idea that they could sing and coax sinners through at the altar. It is no wonder that the church is filled with a lot of baptized, consecrated sinners who have never been born again and received the witness of the Spirit. The truth of the matter is that they were sung through and coaxed through rather than prayed through.

3. His next reason for wanting them to watch, no doubt, was that on beholding His tears, strong cries, bloody sweat and inexpressible anguish, they would awake to the fact that it required no small effort to undo the effects of sin. He wanted them to realize that sin was no small foe, and that it required Omnipotence to subdue it.

Reader, since worldly cares are encroaching more and more upon our time of devotion to God, and almost every one living in such a whirl, I want to ask you to devote at least one hour out of the twenty-four in prayer and meditation. If you find it difficult to devote a whole hour at one time, divide it up into two half hours. During this time I want you to dismiss all worldly cares and thus give yourself wholly to prayer and meditation. It is to be remembered that the Savior won His greatest victories in secret prayer. It was also there that He received new strength for duty. Matt. 14:23.

It is impossible for us to realize to what extent we are affected by our frequent association with the unsaved and the things of the world.

Notice some of the many ways you will be benefited through this quiet hour of prayer:

1. It will keep off the rust and revive and invigorate your spirit.
2. It will quicken your conscience, regulate your conversation, bridle your tongue and keep your will passive in the hands of God.
3. This frequent intercourse will keep faith active, hope bright and love on the increase.
4. After conversing with Jesus for an hour each day you will find it easier to labor for God, carry your cross, bear the scornful smiles of the world, and overmatch the strategy of the devil.

Reader, may you hear each morning before plunging into the whirlpool of worldly cares the soft voice of the tear-bathed, blood-stained, lowly Man in the garden, pleading with you for one hour of uninterrupted communion.

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## 18 -- SOMEBODY TOUCHED ME

"And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46).

The spotless Son of God, here thronged by four classes of people, viz., the critic, the well-wisher, the seeker and the disciples, strikingly represents the Christian on life's highway.

Since the Savior has exhorted us to take upon us His yoke and learn of Him, let us carefully scan this narrative and thus learn the helpful lessons taught here.

1. The first lesson we learn is as follows: If we are right and true, God will cause somebody to have confidence in us, no matter how we are blamed and misunderstood. Aside from the disciples, the sick woman seemed to be the only person present who really had confidence in the Savior.

This should surely be a source of encouragement to the Christian worker who labors faithfully and yet is so grievously misunderstood. Jesus was as much in divine order when misunderstood as when He was applauded.

2. Furthermore, we learn here that no matter how many people may throng about us, we are powerless to help them if for any reason they have lost confidence in us. This is why Satan tries so hard to kill a minister's influence and get the people to lose confidence in him. There were numbers of people all about the Savior, even rubbing up against Him, but the sick woman was the only one in the crowd who obtained a blessing. She was the only one who had her cup right-side up. It could rain a month and not fill a thimble, provided the thimble was turned bottom-side upward. In order to obtain God's blessings, our spirits must be in a certain attitude.

3. The lesson teaches us, too, that no matter how holy we are, or how far advanced in the things of God, we must live in reach of the dullest, dumbest and most unpopular soul. Notwithstanding Jesus being the high and holy Son of God, yet He was where He could be touched by one of the poorest and most homely persons in the community.

Some people go out to do missionary work clad in silk and gold. They look too nice to be "touched," and they are afraid to be touched by the outcasts along the highway for fear of vermin and disease germs. Such people are no more fit for missionaries than they are to be angels. What they need is to go to the mourner's bench and pray, fast and seek God until He comes and saves them and takes this pride out of them. For they are as much fallen as the people they are trying to help.

4. This incident also reminds us of the power of "reciprocating faith." Jesus said, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). The sick woman's faith touched Jesus' faith and the work was instantly done. Luke 8:48.

5. Verse 47 reveals the fact that it takes our testimony to complete, to put the finishing touch on the blessing that God bestows upon us, whether it be pardon, purity or healing. In order to retain it, we must confess it. We notice in verse 47 that the woman had to publicly testify to what Christ had done for her. "And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately" (Luke 8:47).

John Fletcher lost the blessing of holiness five times, for the simple reason that he neglected to testify to it. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

6. Generally, when God is using us to help others, there is a corresponding witness realized in our own heart. We can tell when virtue is going out of us.

Many times hungry souls are disappointed; for instead of receiving virtue from some people, they receive a frown, a snarl, and a rebuke.

Reader, what do they receive from you -- short talk, slurs, buffets, or virtue?

\* \* \* \* \*

## 19 -- PAUL'S COURAGE

"But none of these things move me" (Acts 20:24).

The Bible is a "compendium" of every-day wants for the children of Adam. It contains a remedy for every spiritual malady. When losing patience, we may be stimulated by reading the book of Job. When drying up on the praise line, it is well to read the Psalms of David. When becoming careless, it is helpful to read the book of Proverbs. And when persecuted, read the life

of Paul the apostle, for he seemed to have been called to suffer more for the cause of Christ than any other Bible character. Acts 9:16. But instead of growing faint-hearted and discouraged, he grew bolder and bolder as the days went by. In order that our courage may be increased, let us notice some of the things that were befalling him, which may easily come under the head of the pronoun "these."

1. As soon as he was converted, many of his best friends turned against him and tried to destroy his life. "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him" (Acts 9:23).

2. The next stupefying blow that he received after being converted was when he attempted to join the church. The saints not only were void of confidence in him, but were afraid of him. "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26).

3. Before getting very far up the religious highway, he was slandered, disgraced and put into prison. "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely" (Acts 16:23). "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft" (2 Cor. 11:23).

4. He was shipwrecked and floated a day and a night in the deep. "Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep" (2 Cor. 11:25).

5. He suffered frequently from hunger and cold. "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:27).

6. Had to carry around day by day an afflicted body that God refused to heal. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:8, 9).

7. He was stoned and left for dead. "And there came hither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead" (Acts 14:19).

Did Paul feel like backsliding and giving it up? Listen to his testimony:

(a) He called them "light afflictions." "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

(b) He received them joyfully. "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7:4).

(c) He said he was more than conqueror over them all. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

(d) He said he was not only willing to suffer but to die. "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

(e) He kept the track all the way to glory. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Reader, Paul made it through, and so can you and I, by the grace of God.

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## 20 -- THE WISE MEN

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:1, 2).

Just as all streams lead to the ocean, so does all scripture point to Christ. In the conduct of these wise men is exemplified all of the necessary steps for the sinner to find Christ. Let us notice them briefly:

1. They were led to Christ by a star (verse 2). A star is a symbol of God's word, which if obeyed will lead the sinner unerringly to the King of kings and Lord of lords (2 Peter 1:19). A star is also a symbol of "hope," so is "day" and "morning." The apostle Peter called the Lord Jesus the "Day Star" (2 Peter 1:19) and Saint John in Revelation called Him the "Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16). Every soul who finds Christ is "begotten unto a lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3); yes, a hope beyond the grave. Praise the Lord!

2. These wise men left their friends, associates and every earthly pursuit and went on a diligent search for Jesus. Every seeker who would find Christ must go on this diligent search. The word says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, and I will be found of you, saith the Lord" (Jer. 29:13, 14).

3. We learn from verses 7 and 10 that the wise men on turning aside to consult King Herod lost sight of the star for some little time. It is so in every case when seekers for Christ turn from the word of God to consult human reason and new thought. If one would find the Child, upon whose shoulders the government rests, they must stay in the old, well-beaten path of the Word. Otherwise, they can not but lose their way.

4. The circumstances and conditions in which they found Him suggest the attitude of spirit the seeker must reach to find the "Babe of Bethlehem." "And they found him in swaddling clothes lying in a manger," i. e., in lowly circumstances. It requires a humble and a contrite spirit for one to find Jesus. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51:17). The king of Nineveh struck the right key to obtain the favor of God

when he repented, laid aside his royal robe and covered himself with sackcloth and ashes. Jonah 3:6.

5. On finding the child Jesus the wise men, filled with joy, fell down and worshipped Him (verse 11). We do not have the least bit of confidence in the tame, dry-eyed, hopeless, peaceless, joyless, witnessless conversions that we see in many places nowadays. I declare unto you, reader, when people find Jesus, they know it and they also tell others about it. They not only tell others, but they rejoice over the fact themselves. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13).

Their threefold gift, namely, gold, frankincense and myrrh, suggests the threefold consecration we all have to make after we find Jesus.

(a) "Gold" is representative of treasures. All earthly treasures are herein included. Rev. 3:17, 18.

(b) "Frankincense" was a dry substance used for making perfume. This from a spiritual angle means the "affection." "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?" (S. S. 3:6; Col. 3:2).

(c) Myrrh was a fragrant but bitter herb. We consecrate to God for both bitter and sweet, ease or pain, loss or gain, sacrifice or service. Nothing less than this will meet His approval. The ancient Jew when eating the Passover lamb, had to always have on his bill of fare a bunch of hyssop. This was a very bitter herb, yet he was commanded to eat it with the roasted lamb. Exodus 12:8.

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## 21 -- THE NEST LIFE

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest; fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings... so the Lord alone did lead him" (Deut. 32:11).

"He shall cover thee with his feathers" (Psa. 91:4).

These two texts carry the idea that God's people are not always in hard and difficult circumstances, but sometimes in a feathered nest.

We gather from this picture that there are two distinct periods in the life of every Christian, namely, the "nest" life and also the "wide world" life. The "feeling" life and the "faith" life. The "trace" life and the "trust" life.

The shifting of gear from the former to the latter often brings quite a bit of confusion to those who are new in the way.

I shall now attempt to paraphrase the two, using the eagle's life for my model.



1. In the nest life, God always shows His face and keeps the newly converted soul full of joy and ecstasy.

2. In the nest life the convert does not have the burden of the work upon his heart, but like the small chick follows his spiritual mothers and fathers and picks up the blessings as they scratch, pray and dig them up.

3. In the nest life, the convert is kept in a huddle and sheltered from all severe storms and headwinds.

4. The nest life convert knows nothing of storming forts and capturing spoil; but ere he has gone very far up the highway of piety, God thrusts him out of the nest into the open heavens. Notice a few facts about the wide-world life:

1. The Christian is put out on his own resources, to wind his way through the trackless firmament on the wings of prayer and faith.

2. He becomes a creator of his own environments. He no longer has to be nursed and dandled by the gospel fathers and mothers, but learns to make his own way through the heavenlies.

3. In the wide-world life, he finds a higher altitude and soars through it on the wings of faith and prayer.

4. As he thus mounts up on the wings of faith and prayer, his vision becomes clarified, and he discovers deeper truths in the Word of God. He mounts up beyond sectarian and denominational' bounds and floats upon the sea of "perfect love."

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## 22 -- CONTRARY WINDS

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary" (Matt. 14:23, 24).

There are some passages of scripture which, like a diamond, reflect different colors as light falls upon them. The text here chosen is of this type, from the fact that it contains a fragment of cheer for every one.

Let us now proceed to obtain from it a few helpful spiritual lessons:

1. We learn here that ever now and again the Lord leads His followers up to new tests of faith and fidelity. He ordered the disciples to feed five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes. And at the close of the feast He sent them away on the dark sea alone, while He tarried in

the mountain to pray. We learn here that there are times when Jesus apparently withdraws His presence from us and lets us walk by faith.

2. The text also informs us that these tests usually succeed great spiritual uplifts. It was so with Elijah. 1 Kings 19:4. It was also true in the experience of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul. Matt. 3:17 to 4:1; 2 Cor. 12:7.

3. The lesson tells us also, when we may expect the contrary winds -- when Jesus apparently has withdrawn His presence from us and we are walking by faith. Matt. 14:24.

4. In John 6:19 we find a word of encouragement, for there we learn that by constant rowing, victory will be achieved. If we steadily hold on to God by faith and prayer we will be brought out of any difficulty. Psa. 91:15.

5. We are also encouraged to learn (verse 19) that Jesus is never late, but always appears on time. Yes, when the night is the darkest, the burden the heaviest, and the winds the most contrary. Praise the Lord!

6. We learn, too, that all difficulties vanish as we get a new glimpse of Jesus. John 6:21.

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## 23 -- HEAVEN'S ARISTOCRACY

"... of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38).

The text is one of the richest expressions in the Bible; chiefly so because it sets forth so clearly the high valuation which God places upon His saints. Their circumstances in life do not affect His love and appreciation in the least; but the sick Jobs, the homeless Lazaruses, and penniless widows are all alike to Him. For this reason the text should be a faith stimulant to every believer.

Let us briefly note some of the reasons why the world was not, and is not worthy of the saints of God:

1. Because of their royal birth. They are not only children of a King but children of the King of kings and Lord of lords. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be" (1 John 3:2). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

2. The world was not worthy of them because of the power with which they were entrusted. (a) Power to stop the sun. Joshua 10:12. (b) Power to lock up heaven that it rain not. 1 Kings 17:1. (c) Power over all diseases. Mark 16:16-18. (d) Power over all evil spirits. Mark 16:17. (e) Power to unlock death's gloomy portals. Acts 9:40.

3. Not worthy because they were: (a) Too upright for its fraud and falsity. (b) Too pure for its polluted society. (c) Too virtuous for its vice. (d) Too deaf and dead to its allurements. (e) The joys of the world too commonplace. (f) They were so much like God that the worldlings could not endure their presence.

4. The world was not worthy of them because of the striking contrast between the two. (a) It was wealth in contrast with poverty. (b) Light, with darkness. (c) Faith, with unbelief. (d) Buoyant hope, with gloomy despair. (e) Abundant life, with loathsome death.

5. Not worthy, because they were citizens of the Royal City -- the metropolis of the universe.

(a) The King is the All-wise, All-mighty, self-existing Jehovah. (b) The inhabitants are saints and angels; robed in white, crowned with gold, and shod with wings of fire. (c) Its law is Love; its industry, Praise; and its day, Eternity.

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#### 24 -- WITH TWAIN THEY DID FLY

"Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:2, 3).

This is one of the most inspiring and sublime word pictures found in the Bible. The seraphims are said to be the highest in the rank of heaven's magnificent hierarchy. The word literally means "burning ones" -- all afire with God's glory.

It seems that through the devotion of these high-class beings, God showed the prophet Isaiah what He expects of sanctified people upon earth. This is reasonable from the fact that the entire vision leads step by step up to the prophet's sanctification. Notice the various steps:

(A) Just preceding the prophet's sanctification, it is recorded that "King Uzziah died." It is so, in every case. Just before a man or woman gets sanctified wholly, the "old man" of sin dies. (Rom. 6:6.)

(B) The prophet is awakened to his need by a striking contrast. He saw the seraphims all aflame with God's glory. This of course caused him to realize his deadness, his dryness, and his impurity. If we can succeed in getting people into a red-hot holiness meeting, it will not be difficult to at least convince them of their need, whether they are honest enough to acknowledge it or not.

(C) The next step was the fiery touch and the commission. Let us with the eye of imagination behold these beings clothed in light and "with streamers thrown luxuriantly out in all the wantonness of winged wealth."

We will study them and more perfectly inform ourselves of what God expects of us on earth.

1. The first lesson we learn from these beings of light is, that they lived in the immediate presence of God, and kept filled and aflame all the time. This is what God expects of every believer. His word exhorts us to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). Many Christians are out of touch with God about half the time. And before they can be used of Him, they have to be thawed out and warmed up. This is about all that is accomplished nowadays in a ten days' revival or camp meeting.

2. It was not simply their crying "Holy, holy, holy," that convicted the prophet of his need, but their ardent devotion. Preaching and teaching may be ever so good, but unless it is accompanied by a holy life, it will only breed contempt.

3. We learn from the seraphims covering their feet, that even the legitimate self-life must be kept in the background if we would keep all aflame, and in the presence of God. The apostle Paul made the following remark, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27).

4. "And with twain he did fly." This expression teaches us that the Spirit-filled life is one of activity and progress. (a) When the brook is dammed the water grows stagnant. (b) When the widow's vessels were all exhausted the oil stayed. (c) When David yielded to idleness and went not to battle, he lost his hold upon God.

5. Furthermore ò We notice that the testimonies of the seraphims were explicit. They did not call it "Old Time Religion," "A big blessing," "More Grace," and such terms, as some people do nowadays. But they cried aloud, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts."

6. We notice, too, that though the seraphims were greatly gifted, highly anointed and wonderfully blessed, it did not destroy their humility, and holy modesty. "With twain they covered their face." (a) "Humility is the highest when it stoops the lowest." (b) "Humility is the base of every virtue -- He who goes the lowest, builds the highest." (c) "Humility is the root from which all heavenly virtues spring." (d) "Humility is such a frail and delicate flower, that if it sees itself it dies."

"To be humble to superiors is duty; to equals, is courtesy; to inferiors, is nobleness; and to all, safety."

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## 25 -- FISHERS OF MEN

"And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17).

The greater part of the Savior's days were spent in instructing His disciples. From the fact that He associated catching men with catching fish shows that there is an existing similarity somewhere.

To find this similarity we will have to run the keyboard of the rules for catching fish. This, no doubt, will prepare us to some extent to become fishers of men.

1. Fish go in schools at different hours of the day. There are times when the river seems not to contain a single fish. It seems impossible to catch one for love or money. But at an earlier or later hour of the same day, at the same place, scores may be caught with ease. So it is with having revivals and getting souls saved. There are times when it is much easier to get them saved than at others. The lack is not always due to the preaching not being good or the church not being right; it just seems to be so in the providence of God.

2. It requires lots of patience to catch fish. It is a matter of impossibility to hurry fish to bite. So it is with getting people converted. It is a work that cannot be rushed. We have seen workers trying to rush a seeker through, who chanced to tarry until a late hour at the altar. But almost invariably, every time they did it they made a hypocrite. They got him to professing religion before he prayed through and struck fire.

3. On catching a fish, it must not be held too tightly, but given lots of line, or else it will break the line and get away. When souls are converted and unite with the church it is well not to try to rush them too fast, by forcing too much light and truth upon them. It is better to give it to them in broken doses. Many a convert has become discouraged and left the church because some unwise, pessimistic, "gnat-gagging" member of the same church has constantly henpecked and nagged him about this or that thing. They were trying to force their twenty or thirty year experience on the convert in two or three months, and by so doing, discouraged him and caused him to leave the church.

4. We have noticed, too, that the same kind of bait will not catch every kind of fish. So it is with catching men. If one would be a successful soul winner he must diversify his messages. He must not hobby-ride any one theme or subject.

5. Self, too, must be kept out of sight. Fish will shy and not take the hook if the fisherman is too prominent. Oftentimes it is necessary for him to get self out of sight altogether. In catching men, the fisherman must be humble and non-pretentious. If he in any way appears to be conceited, important, stiff, and reserved, the people will not take to him. We were once associated with an evangelist who was somewhat of this type. After preaching his first or second sermon at a certain place, a boy was heard to make the following remark: "That fellow has got the big head." So, reader, you see how much it means to keep self out of sight.

6. To successfully catch fish one must be careful not to throw stones in the water. In preaching, one must be so careful not to throw clubs, make insinuating remarks or personate any one. In doing so, one is so likely to get the ill-will of his hearers and thus fail to impress them.

7. We have discovered, too, that fish are scarce wherever water dogs lurk. In the writer's work as an evangelist for many years, he has found it difficult to have a revival and get any one saved in a community where there were a lot of professing Christians who did not live the life.

8. To catch fish, the fishermen must be quiet and orderly among themselves. If they are boisterous and noisy it will frighten the fish away. Ministers and gospel workers must be agreeable among themselves and avoid firing at and contradicting each other in the public meeting. At best it is hurtful and does not do the worker or the people any good.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 26 -- THAT NIGHT

"Then they lose up, and went away that night" (1 Sam. 28:25 ).

The writer is especially impressed with the words, "That Night." In both profane and sacred literature, "night" has a striking signification. "Night whose sable hand hangs on the purple skirts of dying day."

Night seems to be the mother of crime and irretrievable woe. Belshazzar was slain under the cope of night. Peter denied and Judas betrayed the Son of God under the black pall of night. Christ was arrested, tried and condemned to die beneath the black wings of night. O Night, who can unfold the many secrets that lie hidden in thy black bosom.

Night is also used by Inspiration as a symbol of death. John 9:4.

Let us notice some events that made "that night" the most prominent one in the life of Saul, the pioneer king of Israel.

I want you first, to see him disguising himself, and going in search of help. 1 Sam. 28:8.

1. That night revealed to him the fact that there was an end to a life of luxury, ease and splendor. Remember, reader, the brightest and most prosperous day has a sunset.

2. On that night, he found the words of warning true which he had been ignoring and turning a deaf ear to for years. So will you, sinner, if you do not repent and seek the Lord.

3. That night awoke him to the fact that there was a "dead line" which crossed the path of human conduct upon earth, and that he himself had crossed it. Oh, awful hour!

4. He awoke to the fact, too, that the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace" was false. He knew very well that he had been soundly and clearly converted forty years previous (1 Sam. 10:6-9), but was in midnight darkness on "that night."

5. He also found out that night that God did not forget or fail to punish disobedience, even though he had deferred it for years. Prov. 29:1.

6. That night convinced him that there was a life beyond the grave and also that his career on earth was coming to a close. Verse 15.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 27 -- THE DECEPTION OF SIN

"Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).

What a strange word for the inspired writer to associate with sin. The word sounds all right when used in connection with Satan or human beings, but a little strange when associated with sin. Nevertheless, the text is true in its statement that sin as well as Satan is deceptive.

In the following lines will be found some descriptions of sin's deceptive effects upon a human soul.

1. Sin is like a heavy gale steadily blowing upon a vessel, and sweeping it off its course.
2. Sin is like the malaria-infested air of the lowlands, which destroys strength and vigor and paralyzes its victim.
3. Sin is like the bewitching charm of a serpent. The reader has no doubt seen a serpent with its slimy folds, bounding head, gaping mouth and flashing eyes, charming a bird or frog. He who has seen this, has seen a picture of sin overcoming the sinner.
4. Sin is like the overcoming, soothing power of gas, which steals upon its victims slowly and chokes them to death without a struggle.
5. Sin when entered upon is like the deceitful quicksand which, when stepped upon by the thoughtless traveler, swallows him alive.
6. Sin, when pursued, is like the enchanting, alluring mirage of the desert. It lures its victim on and on, step by step, until he is overcome with thirst.
7. Like a cyclone, sin increases continually in power and momentum until it (so to speak) sweeps everything before it.
8. Sin begins small, like leprosy, but continues to spread until it has eaten its victim alive.
9. Sin, when admitted into the life, is like a leak sprung in a boat at sea, which continues to grow until the boat is flooded and sinks to the bottom, to rise no more.
10. Sin admitted into the heart is like a spark dropped in the forest among the leaves which continues to spread until the forest is one mass of flames for miles around. O Sin, thou enemy of God and destroyer of man!

\* \* \* \* \*

## 28 -- WEIGHTS TO BE LAID ASIDE

"Let us 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1).

We are exhorted by the text to lay aside two classes of hindrances; namely, weights and sins. The text infers that weights hinder progress as well as sin.

In the life of many a professed Christian there is a "one thing" that hinders, and gives him more trouble than any other. This hindrance is not always visible to others, nevertheless it binds and prevents him from making the God-intended progress.

I shall now try to help you locate the weight that is hindering you, by dropping a hint here and there.

1. That thing at which you look back to the most frequently and try to legalize is hindering you.

2. That thing which beclouds your spiritual sky and takes away your freedom the most frequently is surely a weight and needs to be discarded.

3. That indulgence for which you receive the most reproof of the Spirit, is also hindering you, and unless gotten rid of, may cause you to lose the race.

4. What is that secret indulgence of yours which you are trying to hide from others? Or in other words, that which you do not want others to know about? Brother, sister, that thing is a great hindrance and needs to be discarded this very moment.

5. That indulgence of which you are in doubt is also an obstruction to you. I mean that thing, which, after you have yielded to it, you feel doubtful and smitten. Remember, the word says, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

6. That which brings you under its power against your will is also a weight and needs to be laid aside.

The question may here arise, What shall we do with the weight? Consecrate it to the Lord? Oh, no, brother; lay it aside.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 29 -- JEALOUS HAMAN



"Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai sitting at the king's gate"  
(Esther 5:13).

Let us scan Haman's brief career and thus more perfectly acquaint ourselves with red-headed Jealousy-the full-blooded sister to Envy.

1. The first lesson we learn from the jealous character before us, is that no amount of wealth, honor or prominence can quench the fires of jealousy. Esther 3:1.

2. We also learn here that jealousy fills its possessors with groundless fear, suspicion and uneasiness. Verse 13.

3. We discover the fact here that the surface joy of a jealous person can instantly be turned into wormwood, by some one individual. Reader, who is that certain person who appears on the scene occasionally, who causes you to feel so strangely within? Who fills your heart with suspicion and uneasiness?

4. We discover (verse 10) that a jealous person will sometimes cover his inward feelings with a pleasant face and honeyed words in order to accomplish a certain end.

5. We learn here, too, that jealousy is cruel and impulsive, having no sympathy or pity. Verse 14. It will destroy the object of its love. It is fiercer than famine, war or pestilence; baneful as death and horrible as hell.

6. Verses 10 and 14 betray the secret that jealousy's greatest field of action is in secret and underground. It does its dastardly work in the dark and behind the curtain.

7. We must learn (verse 13) that jealousy can find grounds for suspicion in the most innocent act. Mordecai was not doing one thing; only sitting in the gate.

8. Lastly, we learn here also that jealousy must not only be crucified and put to death, but often plans its own death.

"My flesh may writhe and make its moans  
But this the way and this alone,  
I must die. I must die."

\* \* \* \* \*

30 -- CUT IT DOWN

"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shall cut it down" (Luke 13:7-9).

In the word of God, both saint and sinner are compared to fruit trees. Psa. 37:35; 1:3; Matt. 3:10. In the text we have a true description of the way God deals with the unsaved.

The certain man here spoken of is God, and the gardener is the Blessed Holy Spirit. Reader, let us now make a brief application. Say, ten years ago God came to your life seeking fruit and on finding none said to the Holy Spirit, "Cut it down," and you were very ill. But the Holy Ghost plead for ten years to be added to your life, that He might dig about you and fertilize you, that you might bear fruit unto God.

Notice some methods He has been using for the last ò ten years to do this. 1. Not allowing any earthly object or pleasure to completely satisfy your heart. You have resorted to this and that phase of pleasure, but it has failed to impart to you the bliss for which you sigh.

2. The second method He has no doubt been using to stir you up and cause you to repent and bear fruit, was sending misfortune and business failure your way. You have labored hard to make things go, but despite of your best efforts, all has seemingly gone against you.

3. Bringing you in touch with revivals, tent and camp meetings may be still another method the Holy Ghost has been using to get you to repent and bear fruit.

4. Stirring you up with impressive dreams and visions, may also be one of the methods He has been using to awaken you out of your state of carelessness and indifference. The dream that you had some time ago; that you had died and was standing at the judgment or was in hell a lost soul, is not to be ignored and passed up lightly. It may have been the voice of God speaking to your sin-bound, stupefied soul.

5. When the dead wagon backed up to your door and took your loved ones away, and put them in their cheerless bed on the hillside, that was doubtless no more and no less than the voice of God speaking to you.

6. It was the voice of God speaking to you when you felt sad and heavy-hearted after listening to a gospel sermon, prayer or song. That strange feeling that took possession of you then was "conviction."

Remember, the added ten years may expire at the close of this meeting, and the voice of the Husbandman be heard again in your sick-chamber or somewhere on the highway, saying, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

\* \* \* \* \*

## 31 -- COMMENDING OURSELVES

"By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2).

The advice here given is not simply to ministers, but to all believers as well. Some one has made the remark, "that the most degraded man, and most polluted woman upon earth, still retain a spark of Godlikeness. That likeness is found in the little monitor called "Conscience."

Conscience is like the heart of an animal, in the respect that it is usually the last thing that dies. It is the last medium through which the sinner may be reached. Like the reins on a run-away horse, it is the last hope of checking the run-away sinner. When every other avenue has been blocked by unbelief, pride and prejudice, he may be reached by strongly appealing to his conscience. When every other door was tightly closed, Paul reached the heart of proud Felix through the avenue of conscience. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled" (Acts 24:25).

The Word of God speaks of people in various stages of conscience, viz., "good conscience," "pure conscience," "seared conscience," "defiled conscience" and "evil conscience." Notwithstanding this fact, God wants His children to so live, that they can commend themselves to every man's conscience, no matter what stage it has reached. He does not tell us to commend ourselves to every man's judgment, fancy or opinion. This would be impossible. But He tells us to commend ourselves to every man's conscience.

Commonly speaking, the word "commend" means to recommend, to commit with confidence.

Let us notice some of the many ways of recommending ourselves to the consciences of others.

1. When we reprove people about something wrong in their conduct or spirit we ourselves are to be in a place where we can refer them to ourselves as an example on that particular point. If we should find it necessary to reprove a thousand men in one day about different things that were not Christlike in their lives, we should be in a place where we could recommend ourselves to every one of them as an example of how that thing should be done, for which they are being reprovved. What saith the Scripture on this point?

"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, doest thou commit adultery?" (Rom. 2:21, 22).

If the reproof which we administer to others is backed up by a godly life, it is sure to reach their conscience, no matter how carelessly or indifferently they may receive it, or how their conscience may be defiled.

2. The text says this commendation must be done "in the sight of God." That is, we must be so clear on the lines that we are reprovving others that we could call upon God to bear witness to the truthfulness of our statement.

A friend of ours told us of a man he once knew who lifted his hand to heaven and called upon God to bear witness to a false statement that he was making. God did so by striking him dead

on the spot, while his hand remained lifted to heaven. When we call upon God to bear us out in a statement, it would be well for us to know that it is the truth and nothing but the truth. When we take it upon ourselves to reprove others, we should be able to place one hand upon the Bible and lift the other one to heaven, and call upon God and angels to witness to the truthfulness of our statement. This type of reproof is almost resistless by men or devils.

3. When we reprove others we should not be doing anything, saying anything, thinking anything or going any place that every person upon earth could not truthfully and honestly acknowledge as being right, if they were true to God and their conscience, and also could read the motive that prompted you to do it. Let us go a step further: When we reprove others, we should not be guilty of anything that the devils and lost souls in hell could not conscientiously say was right, if they knew every detail of the circumstances surrounding it, and the ground of our motive. When we reprove others, our life and conduct should be as clear as a diamond -- inviting the inspection of heaven, earth and hell.

Notice three conditions which will always justify our conduct before God:

1. Acting according to the knowledge we have received of God's will. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12).

2. Doing that which, as far as we know, we believe God would have us do. "And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3:15, 16).

3. Giving God the benefit of all conduct that becomes doubtful. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

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## 32 -- GOD'S ALL-SEEING EYE

"Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13).

There is hardly a greater restraining power in the world than to know we are being watched. Even an animal knows instinctively when it is being watched. The Christian is by no means an eye-servant, and yet it is an incentive to greater diligence when he knows he is being watched.

In this chapter I want to fortify the reader against becoming slack and also arm you with carefulness, by reminding you of the fact that you are being watched. It is not an earthly detective by whom you are being shadowed day and night, but by all-wise, all-seeing Jehovah, whose penetrating gaze scans three worlds at a glance.

Notice some points at which you are being watched:

1. Your every act, small or great, at home or abroad, both day and night, are seen by God in the clearest possible light. "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day" (Psa. 139:12).

2. Your Maker, Redeemer and Judge is a silent listener to your every conversation, and is keeping account of all your words. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

3. Your Maker is also a close observer of all your thoughts. He sees them as plainly as the sun, and hears them as distinctly as peals of thunder. "For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28:9).

4. The great and holy God is also the observer and analyzer of every feeling that arises in your heart or plays upon the members of your body. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor. 4:5).

5. The Lord knows, too, about every unpaid debt and unkept promise. He also knows whether you have been careless and neglected them or have been unable to meet them.

6. God your Maker sees everything that transpires in your home by night and by day, and knows the whys and wherefores concerning all that is done. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

7. Your Maker, too, carefully overlooks all your mail. You remember how unwilling you are to have any of the family open and read your mail. Well, all-seeing Jehovah can read it without opening it. He also sees all you write or dictate.

8. He sees beneath your actions, and weighs your motives and intentions. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

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### 33 -- OLD SINS

"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:9).

Much admiration is being given nowadays to old relics and antique furniture, pictures, etc. I do not want to speak of those things in this chapter, but speak principally about the "old sins" of the reader.

I desire to put in the form of a question-box, with the hope that the reader will be judgment-day honest.

1. Have you been delivered from all your deception and sly tricks? Are you completely delivered from that old, contrary, obstinate disposition that you used to manifest around home with your loved ones, and around your place of business?

2. Are you really saved from that spirit of stinginess and covetousness that you used to be in bondage to before you professed religion and united with the church?

3. Are you entirely set free from green-eyed lust and unbridled passions? Do you look upon every one, aside from the companion of your bosom, with the same degree of purity that you look upon your whiteheaded mother or aged father?

4. Are you still annoyed with that pride that used to make you like to show off, dress conspicuously and fine, and like to be seen and heard?

5. Are you really delivered from that old, suspicious, jealous spirit that used to annoy you when you were a sinner? That which made you feel so uncomfortable and uneasy when your wife or husband's old lover came around the house or came to town?

6. Do you still nurse hard feelings like you did away back there when you were on the farm, when neighbor A's cattle would get in the grain, or the next-door neighbor's chickens would scratch up the garden, or their yard-dog would destroy a hen's nest? Do you get excited and feel now like you felt then?

7. Have you been delivered from that tattling, talebearing, backbiting spirit that you had before you professed to be converted?

Remember, the text does not speak of having the victory over them, but of being "purged from his old sins."

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#### 34 -- BY WAY OF REMEMBRANCE -- (A WATCH-NIGHT MESSAGE)

"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:13).

In the text the apostle endeavors to remind the people to whom he was writing, of some matters of infinite importance.

"It is said, that at every Egyptian feast there was always one extraordinary guest who sat at the head of the table. He ate not, he drank not, he spake not, he was closely veiled. It was a skeleton which they had placed there, to warn them that even in their feasting they should remember there would be an end to life."

To warn you of this same inevitable fact, is what I shall attempt to do this P. M., as we stand at the bedside of the dying year.

1. The first thing that I want to remind you of as the sun of the old year is setting, is that you are a pilgrim and stranger. (a) A "stranger" means that you are a foreigner and in a strange land. (b) "Pilgrim" means that you are on a long trip and have no permanent abode.

2. There are a hundred billion graves on the hillside, filled with people who once were as healthy, busy and important as yourself. They have been absent a long time, but the world is getting along nicely without them. Where are they?

3. You never before had as little time to live as you have to-night; and from where you set there is a straight path to the grave. You are so near eternity that you should feel its breath on your cheek. Death is standing near with his scythe and muddy spade.

4. The next fact I want to remind you of this afternoon, as you sit here light-hearted and thoughtless, is, that you are here to-night with your lost father, mother, sister, brother or friend's opportunity. A year ago they may have attended a watch-night service and heard the gospel, but failed to yield to Christ, and the opportunity was lost forever. Their opportunity is yours to-night. What will you do with it? O sinner, beware!

5. Remember, you are being led to eternity blindfolded. You cannot see one second ahead of you. How do you know, but you are within five minutes of the jumping-off place -- the precipice that borders death's dark river?

6. Remember, too, the person has not yet lived who was wise enough to find a path leading back to "Yesterday," Yesterday's opportunities, Yesterday's invitations, and Yesterday's despised mercies.

7. Reader, bear this thought in mind; the folly of procrastination and the vanity of the world are not fully realized until men see them by the light of death's lantern.

8. Reader, you may despise holiness and sanctification now, and look upon those who profess it with disdain; but remember, it is the password at the gate of heaven. Psa. 93:5.

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### 35 -- ELEMENTS OF TRUE LOVE

"Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away" (John 20:15).

Sometimes a tiny bit of sand or a drop of oil has led to the discovering of a gold mine or an oil well. So it is many times with a passage of scripture. One little word will often lead to the discovery of a mint of spiritual wealth.

In the words comprising the text are found all of the elements of true love and entire devotion.

Let us study this picture and thereby obtain some new lesson of love and devotion.

1. The first lesson we learn here is that love is first and last in the field of duty. Mary was the first to arrive at the sepulcher and the last to leave.

2. We learn (verse 11) that true love is not easily discouraged. Whereas (verse 10) the disciples had grown discouraged and went away. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping." True faith can see through a stone, but true love can melt a stone. "He that loveth, flieth, runneth and rejoiceth; he is free and not bound."

3. The expression, "I will take him away," shows us so plainly that there are no limits to love's undertaking. Think of a puny, weak woman bearing away a corpse. Truly as one has said, "Love feeleth no burden, weigheth no pains, desireth above its strength; complaineth not of impossibilities; for it thinketh all things possible. It is therefore able to undertake all things."

4. Neither is love easily frightened, but bold as a lion. Ordinarily, Mary, being a timid woman, would have been afraid of the darkness and of the tomb. But the flame of ardent, holy love which glowed in her soul caused her to forget the surroundings and the danger, in search of her Lord. "Love watches, and sleeping, sleepeth not. Being tired, is not weary, straitened, is not pressed; but, like a lively flame it bursteth out aloft, and securely passeth through all."

5. Love, too, is blind to criticism. Mary in her devotion, to her Lord seemed to forget that she was likely to be criticized for her conduct in this matter, but pressed on and held on until she found her Lord. Reader, go thou and do likewise, if thou wouldest be a true follower of Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

6. "Tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away." The adverb "where" brings to light the fact that no object was too precious to part with, and no place too dangerous, distant or solitary for her to go with her Lord. Reader, is any of this material in you?

7. Mary did not rail upon nor talk sharply or harshly to the gardener. We learn here that true love is sweet, mild and even-spirited all the while, even when the test is on. The love of Jesus impelleth to do great things, and maketh things that are bitter sweet and savory. Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, delightful, prudent and longsuffering.

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## 36 -- MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK

"Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water. \* \* \* And Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he smote the rock twice" (Num. 20:8-11).



Reader, I wish to take your imagination back through the misty days of the past, back to the wilderness of Zin. There we will see a million people nearly overcome with thirst. God has promised to give them water from the most unlikely place imaginable. There are no wells, no springs, no creeks or rivers in sight, but a rock.

My object in this chapter is not to study the rock, water or multitude, but Moses and Aaron, the instruments through whom God is endeavoring to work.

1. The first lesson we learn here is that it is not only possible for us to perform a God-ordered duty in the wrong way, but also to perform it in such a way as to bring down a curse upon the performer. God did not tell Moses to strike the rock. He simply told him to speak to the rock. It is true, God did tell him to strike the rock about thirty-eight years previous to this time (Exodus 17:7). But at this particular time He instructed him to speak to the rock. Moses like all other folk who have not been delivered from the "root of bitterness," became impatient and grieved God. Verse 12.

2. We learn furthermore that we are not only to do God's bidding at the right time and in the right way, but in the right spirit. Not in the spirit of John, nor in the spirit of Peter, who struck off the high priest's servant's ear, but in the spirit of meekness. Gal. 6:1; Phil. 2:15.

We notice, too, that a driving spirit not only hurts and bruises God's children, but grieves God. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).

3. The text reveals the fact that God will sometimes bless His people through a minister who is out of the divine order and off blessing-ground himself. Verse 11.

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### 37 -- THE SCARLET THREAD

"Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window" (Joshua 2:18).

My effort in this chapter is to get the readers to look away from themselves, their sins, their lost and ruined condition to the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

In the text and lesson before us for consideration we have in a figure one of the most perfect descriptions of the blood of Christ to be found in the Bible.

Let us study the scarlet thread and its surroundings and notice some of the many ways it represents the all-atoning blood.

1. The scarlet cord was small but powerful. With ease, it let the spies down through the window as safely and soundly as if it had been a steamboat cable. The blood of Christ is small and

insignificant in the eyes of proud and unbelieving men. Nevertheless, when believed and trusted, it can lift a fallen world; it can unite the human race to God and angels. Praise His name!

"There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."

2. The scarlet cord was the only way of escape from the cursed city. The gates were closed. Verse 7.

Equally so were the gates of Eden closed against Adam and his posterity. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 2:22).

3. The cord let the men down from a window. A "window" is a symbol of "hope." Gen. 6:16. It was the cord let down through the window that gave the spies "hope." Equally so is the blood, the sinner's only hope.

"The Savior was the rope,  
He was our only hope."

4. The scarlet cord was to be the sign of protection on the day of vengeance. Verse 18. "And when I see the blood I will pass over you.." "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

"Oh, who are these arrayed in white,  
And waving branchy palms  
Before the throne in glory bright,  
And singing victory songs?"

These are they who washed their robes in the blood of Calvary's Lamb.

5. Faith and works were both employed in the grand performance with the scarlet cord. Verse 15. So it is in the plan of redemption. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

6. The final success of the "scarlet thread deed" hinged upon two conditions (verses 19, 20). (a) Abiding in the house. (b) Keeping the secret entrusted by the spies.

The reward that the Savior has promised His followers also hinges upon two conditions: 1. "Abiding in Him" (John 15:7). 2. Keeping the secret. The secret of God is "holiness." (a) In Job 28:7, 8, it is called "a hidden path." (b) In Col. 3:2, 3, it is called "a hidden life." (c) In Rev. 2:17, it is called "hidden manna."

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## 38 -- LEANNESS

"And my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face" (Job 16:8).

In Job's complaint here we obtain a bit of information respective to what is troubling thousands of modern church members and ministers to-day.

Both wrinkles and leanness are indications of decline. They also typify famine and want. Gen. 41:3, 4.

Job, in describing his leanness, personified it and pictured it as holding a conversation with him and reproaching him to his face.

It could be possible that the reader's leanness is doing a similar thing. Shall we make a close investigation and see?

1. Is your assurance of sins forgiven lean, weak and sickly?
2. Is your joy and peace on the wane? How long has it been since you have had a blessing and spiritual uplift? Are the joybells ringing in your soul?
3. Is your victory lean and sickly? Do you overcome in the every-day life with ease?
4. Is your appetite for the Word of God and spiritual things lean and sickly, having no relish whatever for such things?
5. Your charity and brotherly love, is it also lean and threadbare? Do you love everybody like you once did? Do you help and pray for them all, as you once did?

The cause of your leanness may be found in God's complaints against the children of Israel. (a) "They forgot His works," namely, past blessings, past light and past reproof. Psa. 106:13. (b) "They waited not for his counsel," i. e., yielded to a hasty spirit. Psa. 106:13. (c) "They lusted exceedingly" (Psa. 106:14). What are those forbidden objects that you have almost allowed yourself to "desire in your heart"? (d) "They tempted God" by murmuring (Exodus 16.2), i. e., talked out of the Spirit. (e) "They envied Moses also in the camp" (Psa. 106:16).

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## 39 -- WHAT MONEY WON'T BUY

"For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

Would to God that men could see money from His point of view.

The text not only infers that money is ruining more people than any other sin, but also the "love of money. "

Since so many people are neglecting their soul's salvation and making money their god, I want to mention some things that cannot be purchased with money:

1. Money will not purchase one ounce of true happiness. King Saul, the pioneer king of Israel, notwithstanding his throne, his mansion, his fields and gardens, his chariots and horses, his servants and lords, complained thus the last night he spent upon earth: "I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me and God is departed from me and answereth me no more" (1 Sam. 28:15). Money failed to give him consolation at that crucial point.

2. Money will not restore lost health or heal one broken heart.

3. Money will not purchase a good conscience. "Conscience is justice's best minister. It threatens, promises, rewards, and keeps all under control. The busy must attend to its remonstrances, the most powerful submit to its reproof, and the angry, its upbraiding." "Now conscience wakes despair that slumbered, wakes the bitter memory of what he was, what is, what must be worse if worse deeds, worse sufferings must ensue."

4. Money will not remove one sin-spot from the soul. Naaman's 16,500 pieces of silver and 6,000 pieces of gold would not cleanse one spot of leprosy from his body. Neither will all of the silver and gold on earth remove one sin-spot from the sinner's soul.

5. Neither will money purchase one moment of lost time, or redeem one lost opportunity. The queen of the East went out of the world exclaiming, "My kingdom for one moment of time."

6. Lastly, money will not cheer a sinking soul when it stands face to face with eternity.

"After the pleasures of life are o'er,  
And you shall stand face to the shore  
Of the dim land of the evermore,  
Careless soul, what then?"

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 40 -- THE SILENCE OF JESUS

"And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing" (Matt. 27:12).

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Since Christ was our example, the pattern for us to follow, let us notice in particular the spirit He exhibited when under pressure. Even sinners sometimes have enough self-control,

self-respect and good manners to manifest the right spirit when under no pressure, and their wills are not being crossed. But it takes a thoroughly sanctified heart to feel no foe wrangling within when pressure is heavily resting upon the soul.

Reader, behold with your mind's eye this lowly, thorn-crowned man, arraigned before His bitter rival, and surrounded by His enemies. Let us first notice how He is being treated. (a) He is forsaken by every friend. (b) He is surrounded by His bitterest enemies. (c) He is scolded, cursed, slandered and railed upon. d) He is mocked, spit upon, buffeted and scourged. Matt. 27:29-31.

But notice the spirit He exhibits through it all: (a) He did not retaliate once. 1 Peter 2:23. (b) He made no threats. 1 Peter 2:23. (c) He was not boisterous nor argumentative. Matt. 26:63. (d) He did not pray to God to make them refrain from their cruel treatment, neither did He ask God to punish them. e) He forgave and earnestly prayed for them. Luke 23:34.

Now let us make a still closer investigation and find the secret of His conquest. We find it in the following words: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). That is, hath no anger, no revenge, no bitterness, nothing but bottomless, shoreless, topless, all-conquering, never-failing love.

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#### 41 -- THE PRODIGAL'S GOOD QUALITIES

"I will arise and go to my father" (Luke 15:18).

For years we have been looking at the bad qualities of the prodigal son, so in this outline I want to call the reader's attention to some of his commendable qualities -- some that are well worth being imitated by the young people of the present day.

1. He asked only for that which belonged to him. Verse 12. He did not try to cheat his father, nor take away what belonged to his brother. There are a lot of people singing, praying, shouting and preaching who are not as honest and square in their dealing as was this prodigal. How many people can we find nowadays who are too honest and conscientious to try in some way to get hold of that which belongs to the other fellow?

2. The next excellent quality we have discovered in the prodigal is he left home to become unruly. He seemed to have had too much respect for his parents to bring disgrace upon them, by being a neighborhood vagabond and drunkard. He was too honorable to remain in the neighborhood, but "went to a far country" (verse 13).

3. We also notice, notwithstanding his riotous living that he spent only that which belonged to him-not his father's money, not his brother's money, not the firm's money, and not the church's money; but that which belonged to him. If everybody would be as square as was the prodigal there would not be so many people in prison, and not quite so many out who ought to be there.

4. The next commendable act seen in the conduct of the prodigal is this: "When he had spent all" of his money he sought a job and went to work. He did not become a hold-up, a burglar, or a tramp, but a working man.

5. "When he came to himself," that is, when he realized his mistake, he was not too self-willed and stubborn to retrace his steps and seek forgiveness. Some people who profess to possess a thousand times more grace than did this prodigal are too stiff to confess a fault and ask forgiveness. They are willing to do church work, give, visit the sick, but not willing to acknowledge that they are wrong or made a mistake in this or that matter.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 42 -- BLESSING GROUND

"Speak, for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:10).

The writer has read this text many a time, but not until recently did he notice the profound lesson it taught. This child's short prayer contains every element of consecration that was in the prayer of John Wesley.

The ground surveyed by this consecration is the only place one can stand and receive and enjoy the blessing of God. It is what some people call "Blessing-ground." Reader, if you are in possession of the blessing of God this moment, this is where you stand. Let us notice in detail some things implied or rather contained in this child's prayer.

1. At first sight it suggests that the way was open for any demand God could make -- "Speak, for thy servant heareth." He lifts every restraint and throws open every door to the will of God.

2. It also suggests that he had no choice in the matter as to when, where, or how. It inferred that Samuel was free from being swayed by public opinion, free to do anything that he felt God wanted him to do, despite of anybody, anything or any place. How is this with you, reader?

3. The consecration voiced in Samuel's prayer was also free from any interrogation such as, "Can it be done?... Is there any money to take it through?" "Have we enough members for such an undertaking?" etc. None of these things were in his prayer.

4. His prayer, too, suggested an avowed obedience that covered three zones of his life. They are as follows: (a) A willingness to adjust any past offense, of whatsoever denomination it might be. (b) A willingness to meet and live up to any present demand. (c) A willingness to walk in all future light.

Reader, please read this article over carefully and see if you are on blessing-ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 43 -- JONAH'S THREE DOWNWARD STEPS

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa" (Jonah 1:3).

In the conduct of this disobedient prophet we get an illustrated map of the hellward course of every disobedient soul on earth. The prophet, like every other disobedient soul, attempted to throw off his conviction and run away from God. But like Saul of Tarsus, he found it "hard to kick against the pricks."

In his mad attempt to run away from God and duty he made three disastrous steps.

1. Down to Joppa. Jonah 1:3.
2. Down into the boat. Jonah 1:3.
3. Down to the bottom of the mountains. Jonah 2:6.

Let us notice what these three downward steps would mean in the life of the sinner.

1. Down to Joppa. "Joppa was the city of pleasure." This is the point from which the sinner begins his hellward course. He starts downward from home training, downward from religious environments, and downward from purity and innocence. Oh, who can tell where the end will be, when once a soul commences to drift downward!

2. "Down into the boat." This boat represents sin, which is designed to start the sinner out on the wrong course and take him in the wrong direction. See the boat unfurling her black flag; see it rapidly gliding over the dark waters. The sinner does not go a great way on sin's deceiving sea before his pleasure boat strikes some reefs in the stormy waters, namely, disappointment, unhappiness, disease, shame, and disgrace.

3. "Down to the bottom." The time is drawing nearer and nearer each passing day when the sinner must be thrown overboard.

(a) Behold a complication of diseases rounding him up on a death-bed to throw him overboard. They are as follows: Consumption, delirium tremens, heart failure, etc. See them pressing in upon him. See them laying hold of his pulse and his wasted body. Lo, he is thrown off the ship into the sea.

(b) Behold the inky-black clouds and the barbed lightnings. See the finger of terror writing his doom in the turbid, black waters.

(c) Oh, behold the hideous dragon arising out of the black sea of eternity! Behold the flashing eyes, its wide mouth, and its huge teeth. Lo, it has seized the helpless sinner and darts down, down, down to the bottomless pit. Rev. 9:2; 21:8.

"Back, back flies the curtain of darkness,  
Revealing eternity's death,  
Amid all that horror of blackness  
Alone and forever I drift."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 44 -- SODOM AND THE PRESENT CONTRASTED

"And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city" (Gen. 19:15, 16).

The picture called to mind is a life-size photo of God's children and the surrounding conditions in these, the last days.

Satan is concentrating his forces nowadays to cripple the followers of Christ in two ways, namely:

1. By trying to confuse and discourage them over the present condition of the world, i. e., trying to make them doubt away the genuineness of their salvation, simply because they are not able to get sinners saved in large numbers as did the fathers in early days. It would be well for them to call to mind the fact that even the Lord Jesus when upon earth did not succeed in getting everybody saved. There were places where He could not perform any mighty works because of the people's unbelief. Matt. 13:58. The fault was not in Jesus, but in the people. Who among us is willing to say that He was backslidden or did not have genuine salvation, simply because the unbelief of the people prevented them from getting saved? For a man to discount all churches and brand everybody as a backslider simply because they fail to get sinners converted in scores, is quite evident that that man is either a greenhorn or a fanatic.

2. By causing them to doubt the fact that God is with them and is at work. Jesus said to the disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). God does not fail His people because times and circumstances change. "He is the same yesterday, and to-day and forever."

Let the reader now notice the similarity between Sodom and the present day.

1. The first fact that I want you to notice is the striking contrast in the number of the good and the bad, the saints and the sinners. There were only a few believers numbered. Does not this remind us of the following statement made by Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world? "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13, 14). In nearly every community the sinners outnumber God's people twenty to one.



2. The reader will also notice that Lot's convictions, prayers and entreaties were spurned and ignored by the members of his own household. Verse 14. Is it not the same at the present time? It is quite a problem in some Christian homes to get the unsaved part of the family to stop laughing, talking and romping through the house while family devotion is being held.

3. Still another way in which the people of Sodom were similar to these of the present time is, that they had reached a stage of sin and wickedness where not only Lot's prayers and warnings did not affect them, but even angelic ministry did not impress or convict them. We cannot say that the angels were backslidden because the inhabitants of Sodom refused to obey and live. What nonsense!

4. The city was doomed; the black clouds of God's judgment were gathering; the distant thunders of His wrath, the swift winds, and the fierce lightnings were writing Sodom's doom on the black bosom of the sky.

Equally so is this present world doomed, notwithstanding its beautiful cities, evergreen parks, placid lakes, woody mountains and verdant plains. In Rev. 6:12-17 we read thus, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Let us briefly notice the part God played in the drama of Sodom in the way in which He stood by His people.

(a) He revealed to them the secret of the coming destruction. So He is doing to-day.

(b) In many instances God notifies one or two persons of a coming disaster, as He did in revealing the destruction of Sodom to Abraham. Gen. 18:17-19. And also notified Pharaoh of the coming seven years of famine. Gen. 41:25.

(c) He did not leave it to their feeble effort, but carried them out of wicked Sodom and put them on the road to safety. Thus will He do with all of His saints some day. Matt. 25:31-41.

\* \* \* \* \*

45 -- EXAMINE YOURSELF

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5).

This exhortation is not for the half-hearted only, but has reference to the zealous and to all classes of God's people, because it demands an individual examination.

Since in a few brief weeks, months or years we leave this vain world of shadows and appear before the Judge of men and angels, it would be well for us to perfectly acquaint ourselves with our condition before we are called to render up the final account.

If we have not an honest desire to amend our faults, we will not likely want to know them. No religious performance will correct them when we are unwilling to see and know them.

To go more into detail, let us sift the infinitive "to examine" and thus get its true meaning:

- (a) To examine; to inspect and scrutinize with care.
- (b) To investigate thoroughly and critically.
- (c) To overhaul, search, ransack.

This examination was not to see if the Corinthians were religious, but to see if they were "in the faith."

Let the reader examine himself on the following lines:

1. How is your conscience? Is it void of offense toward God and man? Is it decaying? Is it defiled? Is it seared? Are you indulging in any thing that disturbs or unbalances it? Acts 24:16.

2. How about the spirit you manifest when imposed upon, insulted and persecuted? Is it Christlike? Do you remain sweet and patient under such circumstances? Remember the Word says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

3. It would be well also to examine your love for the brethren. Remember the Word says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17).

4. How is your peace? Is it equal in every way to that described in God's Word, which readeth, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psa. 119:165).

5. Lastly, how about your conduct? Is it Christlike? The Word says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

\* \* \* \* \*

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7).

If we were permitted to modernize the text, it would read thus, "Whether we live or die, we affect some one else."

Through this text we are reminded of the power of influence. Influence is that good or bad impression we make on other people.

What the guide post is to the traveler, our influence is to others. We can imagine the inconvenience it would cause the traveler, should the index finger of the guide-post point in the wrong direction.

When the writer was a boy, a playmate of his was sent by his mother to a neighbor to borrow some bluing. On returning with it, the lad stopped by a pond of water and tried to do as he had seen his mother do at home on wash-day. He proceeded to pour the blue fluid into the water and stir it with his chubby hand. Highly delighted when the blue circle began growing wider and wider, he poured on, until the whole pond was blue. The influence of every good and bad person in the world is having a similar effect upon the community in which he lives. We shall never know the good or ill we have done others through our voiceless influence until the day of judgment when the books shall be opened.

I shall now proceed to briefly mention some of the many ways people are hindered by the influence of others.

1. It is almost impossible to realize in this world of shadows the great harm that sometimes results from setting an ill example before a child. The writer's small brother once heard a man swear, and when the boy got alone he climbed upon the fence and began to swear at every bird or animal that came in sight. It was there and then that he broke over parental restraints and gained the right of way to hell.

2. Many times at revival meetings people feel deeply convicted to turn from a life of sin and go to the altar and get right with God; but through the sneer or frown of a companion or friend, they fail. Sometimes it proves to be their last opportunity. Our friends, with a sneer or frown, can push us into hell, but earth and heaven do not contain enough people to pull us out.

3. The interpretation people give God's Word to others sometimes means the damnation of that soul. A lady once felt convicted to seek to be sanctified wholly, but before doing so she consulted her carnal-minded pastor. He did not say much, but enough to ease her conscience and stop her from seeking it. A little later, when on her death-bed she awoke to her great mistake. What else can this minister expect but to find the blood of that woman upon his hands in the day of judgment?

4. To attend a religious meeting where false doctrine is being taught is another way of influencing others in the wrong direction. One man may attend and not be affected whatever, while

a weaker brother might be led to think it was all right through seeing the other man attend, and thus be led astray. It is not difficult to lead people into error; the great difficulty is to lead them out.

5. There is hardly a greater way of hindering others through voiceless influence than remaining backslidden and away from God. Satan has no stronger testimony or greater argument against Christianity than this.

6. A backslidden soul strongly and seriously affects three classes of people every day he spends away from God.

(a) He affects the sinner in the respect that his conduct and influence say to every one who meets him, "There is nothing in Christianity; I have given it a fair, square trial, and have found it to be a humbug. The card table, the dance hall, the 'movies' and such things are far better than Christianity, and for this very reason I gave it up." Backslider, this is the testimony you are giving to those about you every day.

(b) The backslider also affects the newly converted ones; by his example he tempts them to backslide before they have been in the church many days. When Satan whispers to them to yield to sin and temptation he tells them how many times this backslider has lost out and been reclaimed.

(c) The backslider's example makes it difficult for even the most holy man or woman in the world to get the confidence of the public. They think that every Christian will sooner or later do just as he has done.

Therefore, the backslider's conduct puts every good man and woman upon earth under a shadow of suspicion.

A man's influence goes on blessing or cursing his fellow men after he has been in his grave for centuries.

Influence makes a man happier in heaven or more miserable in hell, as the ages go by.

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#### 47 -- ELIJAH AT THE BROOK

"Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan" (1 Kings 17:3).

Inspiration has hung up like a chart the life of various Bible worthies for New Testament believers to study and learn the ways of God. We may learn not only how He prepares us for heaven, but also how He develops our virtues and trains us for service.

For a few moments I want the reader to fix his attention upon a shaggy, ragged but happy looking man sitting on the brook-brink, and learn from him some valuable lessons on the providence of God in reference to your Christian experience.

1. It is true he is banished from society, and all alone, homeless, and without clothing and food; yet he is as much in divine order as an angel in heaven. He is in divine order because he is where God told him to go. Verses 2, 3. To have been in any other place on earth would have meant to be out of the will of God. We ought not always to accuse ourselves of being out of divine order simply because circumstances seem to be against us.

2. From the human point of view God had sent him to a hard place and put him under difficult circumstances. But we learn here that it required a hard place and difficult circumstances to acquaint him with God's unexplored resources. Producing a raven and making it serve as a dining-room waiter was an entirely new thing in the program of God, and in the experience of the prophet. There is danger of us limiting God and setting stakes for Him to work by.

3. Through the God-provided brook suddenly drying up we learn not to place our confidence or lean too heavily upon created things, for they are subject to many a change. Friends change, spheres of usefulness change, spiritual vision changes and widens; even God sometimes changes His method of blessing us. Sometimes He causes to shout, sometimes to run, sometimes to weep, and sometimes to sit motionless. We make a great mistake when we try to confine God to any one method. He is too big for any such straight-jacket.

4. Furthermore, we learn through providence drying up the brook that it is not always the devil that breaks up our nest and interferes with our plans. Many of us would have accused the devil with drying up the brook. But it is to be noted in the book of Jonah the following expressions: "The Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah" (Jonah 1:17). "And the Lord prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief" (Jonah 4:6). "God prepared a worm \* \* \* and it smote the gourd that it withered" (Jonah 4:7). "God prepared a vehement east wind" (Jonah 4:8).

Reader, hereafter always remember that God has a purpose for admitting every apparent misfortune that comes into your life just the same as He did in the life of Joseph, Job and Elijah. Rom. 8:28.

\* \* \* \* \*

48 -- JESUS WEPT

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her... Jesus wept" (John 11:33, 35).

Our acquired knowledge of the solitary cemetery with its funeral-train, broken hearts, and grief-bowed heads, has prepared us to enter into the circumstances surrounding the text.

It is marvelous as well as intensely interesting to notice who it was that wept here. It was man's Creator, man's Judge, man's Mediator, man's Brother.

It is not difficult to imagine Him planting mountains, penciling rivers, calming tempests and whirling suns and systems, but it is amazingly difficult to picture Him weeping.

The text is the shortest verse in the Bible, but is brimful of comfort and consolation for all of the children of Adam. Let us briefly study it and see what it holds.

1. We are here reminded of the fact that God's children are not left alone to bear their griefs, sorrows and burdens, but that Jesus is with them and takes a part in all the dark scenes and perplexing circumstances. Yes, in sickness, in sorrow, in loneliness, in poverty, in trouble and in death. The age-abiding promise is, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

2. Furthermore, we learn from the text that the Lord Jesus is positively "touched with the feelings of our infirmities." What gives us pain gives Him pain; what grieves us, grieves Him; and what burdens us burdens Him. He drank of every phase of human sorrow found between the cradle and the grave. What saith the Word of God on this subject? "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4).

3. We learn, too, through this circumstance that tears, contrition and a bowed-down spirit is the surest way into the heart and compassion of Jesus. It was when He saw Mary, Martha and the Jews weeping that His heart was touched and He shed a flood of tears. It was when the woman bathed His feet with a shower of tears that He said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven" (Luke 7:47). God has placed a high premium on a humble and contrite spirit: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psa. 34:18). "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). The Lord also said to Hezekiah, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years" (Isa. 38:5).

4. Through the Savior weeping we are also informed that "entire sanctification" does not destroy our humanity and natural propensities. Some teach that if we get the experience of entire sanctification it will dehumanize us in many respects. We are glad, however, that Inspiration did not fail to record the facts that "Jesus wept"; "Jesus rejoiced in spirit"; Jesus was weary at the well; Jesus attended a wedding; Jesus had to get some money to pay a debt for himself and Peter; Jesus ate both bread and fish; and lastly, Jesus worked with His hands at the carpenter trade. Reader, do not accept the devil's lies and believe that you are not Christlike simply because you sometimes grow weary, grow sorrowful, need money and have to work, etc.

5. We learn furthermore through Jesus' weeping that being sanctified wholly and living for God does not put our spirits at such a high pitch that we cannot be affected by the sorrows, burdens and misfortunes of our friends and loved ones. No matter how holy, devout or rapt in spirit we may be, there are times when the sorrows and cares of our family and friends will rest heavily upon our spirits and thus becloud and depress us for days.

5. Lastly, we glean further that even should we weep over the dealings of providence, it is not a disproof of perfect resignation. Jesus wept, not only over what God had permitted to happen,

but what He had actually brought to pass. Therefore, we are clear in this respect as long as we remain passive in God's hands and do not find fault with His providence.

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## 49 -- THE FABRIC OF LIFE

"What is your life?" (James 4:14).

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John 19:23).

The apostle James in the text chiefly aimed to remind us of the brevity of life, and my object shall be to enlarge more fully upon the subject.

This question contains a world of meaning; and yet it is not fraught with as much as it will be when we are confronted with the same question at the judgment seat of Christ, after the day of grace has passed. Think what it would mean were He to ask us there, "What was your life on earth?" In speaking of "life" I do not simply mean that short space of existence between the cradle and the grave, neither do I mean the inhaling and exhaling of the air. "Life" is the web of character which we are unconsciously weaving daily, hourly, and momentarily, as we plod along time's great highway. The world is a great loom; the passing moments the shuttle, and our life the garment.

Every saint is weaving a white robe that is without spot, or wrinkle or blemish. Eph. 5:27. Every halfhearted professor is weaving a spotted, speckled garment (Jude 23), and every sinner is daily weaving a garment as black as twenty midnights. Job 18:5, 6. Like the garment of Jesus, the life of every person has four parts, viz., public, home, private, and inner.

In weaving the garment of life, the true beauty or ugliness of the garment cannot be seen in Time's dim light, but can only be properly seen in the unclouded light of eternity.

In order to weave a garment a number of threads are placed upon a shuttle; so let us notice some of the under threads that are being used in composing the fabric of our earthly pilgrimage.

1. The good or evil thoughts that we entertain, like a red stripe in a garment, may be traced all through the fabric of our life. Prov. 23:7. Thought is the forerunner of desire, the molder of character and the hot-bed of actions. The rank, rough thistle of rebellion, murder, and adultery was first a soft and downy seed.

2. The next thread employed in forming the web of life is our cherished desires and wishes. These take the same place and play the same part in our lives that the steering gear does to the automobile. The Lord Jesus informed us that to cherish unholy desires exposed us as much to the wrath of God as any other act of disobedience. Matt. 5:22. Satan by taking hold of the steering

wheel of desire for wealth, honor and fame, has wrecked many a human soul. This has everything to do with the course we pursue in life.

3. Imagination is the next under thread employed in weaving the fabric of life. This is the picture power of the mind, the sketch artist of the soul, the creative, constructing faculty. This is the enchanter who with his beautiful pictures, charming music and luscious fruit, captivates fancy and leads the soul away from God.

What a startling scene it will be on the day of judgment to see this crimson streak traced throughout the fabric of one's life.

4. Our love and affection is the next silken thread that is taking a prominent part in forming the web of life. When the garment of life is removed from time's shuttle and closely examined in the light of eternity, it will be an intensely interesting scene to observe love's entire trail from life's early morning unto its sunset. Yes, to see where love deviated, waned, chilled, and broke. Such an exposure will be enough to embarrass angels and cause them to grow pale.

5. Not only the words we utter daily are being spun into the fabric of life, but the spirit and the tone of voice in which they are spoken. Matt. 12:36.

6. The expressions that daily play upon our face and dance in our eyes are also forming a section in the web of life. As one has well said, "The face is the play-ground for the contents of the heart." All of our smiles, frowns and sneers are making conspicuous, gaudy stripes in the garment of life.

7. The motives that prompt our every act and word; that underlie all we do or leave undone; all we say or leave unsaid; all we give or refuse to give, is forming a part of life's fabric, and will be clearly seen, some day, by an assembled universe.

Reader, the seamless garment of the Lord Jesus was taken off Him at death, and so will yours. Is it to-day without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish? Eph. 5:27.

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## 50 -- THE CLOSING UP OF TIME

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

Reader, with the eye of imagination let us behold the once lowly Man of Calvary, high and lifted up and seated upon a snow-white throne, with lightning in His eyes, terror in His face and thunder in His voice.

Behold the human race spread out before Him like a field of waving grain, ready for harvest. Let us more narrowly observe this motley throng and see of whom it is composed. There



are the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars. Rev. 21:8. They are from every walk of life -- kings, heroes, doctors, statesmen and scholars, parents and their children, rich and poor, of all nations and all tongues.

Every cheek is bathed with tears, every heart is breaking with anguish, every countenance is pale with horror and every form palsied with fear. Listen, listen, listen! while the Judge in thunder tones pronounces the sentence that shakes the citadel of every heart, "Depart from me, ye cursed." At that dreadful sentence saints and angels grow pale and sinners and demons shudder with anguish and terror.

Not only, "Depart from me," but take with you my curse!

1. "Go from my presence into a world draped in night's blackest pall!
2. "Go from the warmth and the beauty of my love!
3. "Go from the society and presence of the redeemed and bloodwashed."
4. Take my curse upon your eyes to behold no more flowers, no more smiling landscape, no more dewy vales, grassy slopes and running streams, no more blue sky, no more sunshine.
5. Take with you my curse upon your ears, to hear no more kind words, no more Bible promises, no more sweet songs and charming music.
6. "Take with you my curse upon your memory, may it ever haunt you with the ghost of lost opportunities, rejected light, and the idol for which you bartered heaven."

"Go!" Where shall they go? Into "everlasting fire," where lurid darkness and hazy light mingle in dusky shades; where smoky flames ooze from a thousand crannies, and flicker and flash from a thousand fissures; where serpents hiss in every gorge, and demons dance on every hill; where specters creep from every rock; where phantoms ride on every wind; where devils sit upon every mountain, and where redoubled horrors mounted upon fiery dragons chase the ruined soul over smoldering plains and gloomy hills.

"Go!" into a lake of unquenchable fire and brimstone, surrounded with precipitous shores of black and beetling crags, over whose surface beat eternal storms, and the fiery waves lash, dash and splash forever." Rev. 20:14, 15.

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THE END