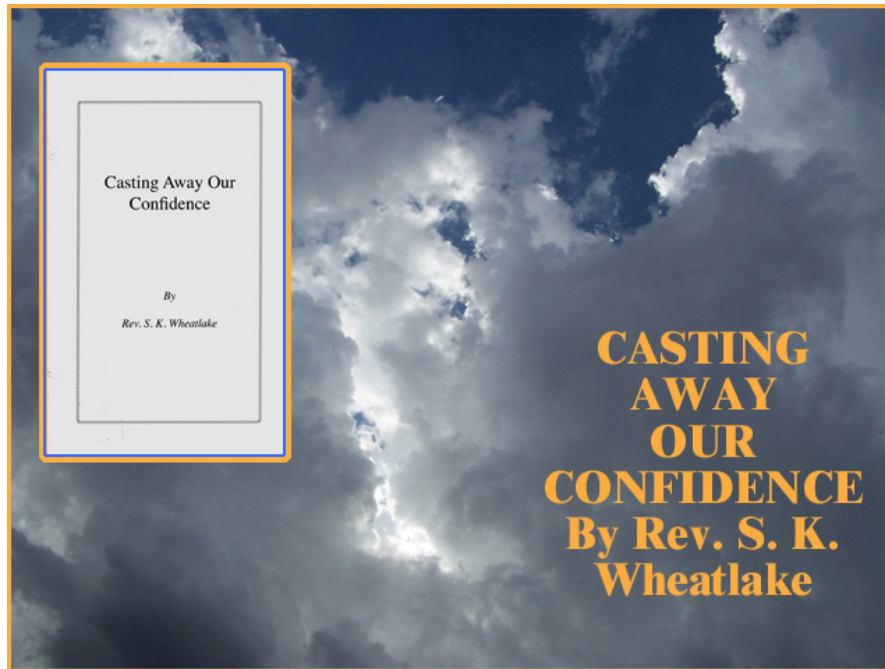


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CASTING AWAY OUR CONFIDENCE
By S. K. Wheatlake



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Holiness Data Ministry
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DEDICATION

This booklet is sent forth in loving memory of my little Welsh mother who fought devils, doubt, debt and the dust bowl days of the 1930's -- who refused to "cast away her confidence" or "draw back" and who now receives the "great recompense of reward" promised by the Hebrew writer.

--Lowell L. Foster 20799 Hwy 78 Murphy, Idaho 83650

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APPRECIATION

I am indebted to Edsel Trouten for the time he has taken to edit this sermon. And likewise to Sue Davenport for the hours she spent typing the manuscript. This booklet is free -- No charge. Anyone, wanting to help in the distribution of the printed edition of this volume may do so by sending funds for postage to Lowell L. Foster, 20799 Hwy 78, Murphy, Idaho 83650

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CASTING AWAY OUR CONFIDENCE

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" Hebrews 10:35

The word "confidence" in this connection is synonymous with the word faith, and therefore to cast away one's confidence is to lose faith. Faith is the base of all religious experience and life, and to lose one's faith is to forfeit all for the time being. The enemy being aware of this, often makes his greatest assault at this point. The matter of being able to withstand all satanic attacks is not always one of honesty, for he will often appeal to one's honesty in the case and insist upon making the matter one of being conscientious. If one is not well informed as to the devices of the devil, he will break with his faith at that very point. One should not only grow in grace, but also in the knowledge of the truth. In doing this one will gain an understanding of the devices of the devil. He is called "the accuser of the brethren". It is said that he would "seduce, if it were possible, even the elect," Mark 13:22, i.e., those who enjoy saving grace. Much of the work accomplished on our campgrounds and in our revival meetings which has often been attended with great expense and self-denial, is lost to the work of God in a few weeks, because honest souls are not properly informed. A man raised in the plains of Illinois took a trip along the mountains of West Virginia. At noon, a conductor entered the car and turned the lights on. The man laughed at the absurdity of needing the lights when the sunshine was flooding the train with light, but while he was wondering as to the matter, the train ran into a long tunnel; fortunately as they entered the dark tunnel, the train was well lighted. There are always tunnels ahead of the newly saved and sanctified, and it is always best to light up the mind and soul with knowledge of the devil's devices by a careful study of the Bible and other good wholesome literature, so that they will know what to do when the test comes. A tunnel, however, is the shortest way to the other side of the hill, so if the Master does not see fit to allow us to climb over or walk around, He will put us through the test of the tunnel. There is not much danger of getting lost in them if we keep well lighted while passing through, for it is encouraging to know that they all have two openings, one where we go in, and one where we will eventually come out, if we keep going in the light.

It is all right for the faithful preacher to often use the divinely appointed surgical tools and proceed to take out fight eyes and to amputate right hands and put the old gospel sword in between the joints and cleave the bone even to the marrow; but after all this the saying is true that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." A skillful surgeon seeks first to prevent an operation, but of course if this can not be done, then he puts his probe to the bottom of the trouble. Then again, just think of what a bad state of affairs would exist in our hospitals, if the surgeons neglected to heal the incisions they had made. So, it is the duty of the preacher to prevent the saints from falling into the trap of the devil by spending much of the time in the pulpit teaching them the devices of the enemy. When it becomes necessary for him to denounce evil he should not forget to offer the healing balm to the wounded. It is impossible to build up a strong Christian character in the use of severe or harsh preaching alone. God says, "Comfort ye my people", Isaiah 40:1. In 2 Timothy 3:16, we learn that the scriptures are profitable not only for reproof and correction, but also for doctrine and instruction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished onto all good works." Sermons of this character should be delivered at the close of camp meetings and revival efforts. They will greatly add to the interest of a survivor after the revival and the tests of warfare come on in the home or business life. The matter of getting saved or sanctified is one of a moment, but the matter of living vital and genuine religion is one of a lifetime.

In the matter of living salvation, we will often need to draw some very distinct lines or frequently relapse into darkness. In so doing we will have to distinguish between a willful sin and a mistake. A 'sin' proceeds from an evil principle in the heart, but a 'mistake' is due to the lack of understanding, and it is classed with our infirmities. There is a wicked choice and a bad motive behind every sin, while neither of these exists in the case of a mistake. We can judge motive only by action, so "by their fruits ye shall know them", Matthew 7:20. But God is pleased to reverse this order and judge's action by motive.

Motive, then, gives character to action. If God should judge us by our actions, independent of our motives, we would all be lost, for we make enough mistakes to damn every one of us. Christian obedience is not a legal one, but rather a loving obedience. Hence, love is the fulfilling of the law. Perfect lives, in a legal sense, and perfect hearts differ in that we may have perfect love in our hearts and mistakes in our lives. God has only seen two persons whose lives were legally perfect. One was the first Adam before he fell, and the other was the second Adam, His only begotten Son. A legal obedience will not admit of any mistakes, but holds us to the strict letter of the law. A loving obedience may be maintained amid a multitude of errors, due to a lack of light. God seeing that we love Him and would not knowingly offend Him, winks at our ignorance and beholding our good intent is pleased to bless us notwithstanding our infirmities.

No doubt that for this very reason the first commandment was to love the Lord with all our heart. God knew that it would be impossible for us to keep the

following commands without love. So, "The end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart", I Timothy 1:5.

A father forbids his son from climbing trees, but he is no sooner out of father's sight than he is disobedient and falls to the ground and is permanently injured in the hip joint and becomes a cripple for the rest of his life. The former obedience on the part of the boy and the loving relations may be perfectly restored between the father and the child, but the boy nevertheless can not run as swiftly on errands for the father as he could before he fell. So, man in his fall in the Garden of Eden, so injured his mental and physical powers that while the love for God lost in the fall may be perfectly restored, yet his obedience will be more or less imperfect in a legal sense. In fact it will take the resurrection from the dead to remedy and restore us to our primitive physical and mental condition. This is the perfection that Paul did not claim to have attained to in Phil. 3:10, 12, and 21.

A mother returns to her home after several weeks of being absent. Her little son is overjoyed to greet her, and after several kisses, he began to think of some more practical way of showing his love for her. It occurred to him that she greatly loved flowers. He thought of two fine beds of geraniums in the yard, and not having any instructions that it was wrong for him to pick them, and being impelled only by the thought that his mother loved flowers, he rushes out and soon a couple of chubby hands are effecting the ruin of one of them in a frantic effort to secure a fine bouquet of flowers for her. Every pull that renders the bed of flowers more and more a hopeless wreck, is caused by the purest kind of filial love. While presenting to her the flowers he discovers his mistake and sheds tears of bitter sorrow. Would a wise and loving mother think for one moment of punishing her affectionate child for a deed of that nature? She would clasp him in her arms and kiss his tears away. She then proceeds to give him the needed instructions pertaining to the care of flowers. The next day she discovers him pulling flowers out of the other bed of geraniums. Now a whipping would be in order. The first act was a mistake and the second was a willful sin.

As in the case of the flowers a mistake may do a great deal of harm, and yet the unconscious victim may be blameless, for a fault pertains to our infirmities, and being to blame pertains to our responsibility. It will require the resurrection to present us faultless before God. See Jude 24.

So a mistake may be of such a nature as to hurt the feelings of one's brother or even injure the work of God and one's influence in the community, and yet the offending party be perfectly free from doing a malicious wrong in the case. Often one wakes up to the fact that a mistake has been made and the enemy taking advantage of the unenlightened soul charges them with the loss of their experience, telling them that no one will have confidence in them again after doing what they have done. Hundreds of good, honest souls have thus been induced to cast away their confidence when they should have paused a moment to ask themselves this question, "Did I intend to do wrong?" If the motive in the case was good then the

act was a mistake and I should hold my ground in the favor of God. As soon as the mistake is discovered it should be humbly confessed and this will go a long way in the matter of declaring your motives in the case, and in restoring confidence and healing the feelings of the grieved brethren. The person who refuses to make such a confession has a serious reason for doubting the genuineness of his experience. In fact, the person who never makes any confessions because he professes holiness comes close to professing infallibility. The humility connected with the experience will prompt all to most gladly confess their mistakes. A provision has been made in the atonement for what might be called the unwitting sin. Under the old dispensation they offered a sacrifice for the sin of ignorance. In Num. 15:24-29 we read, "Then shall it be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor unto the Lord, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord and their sin offering before the Lord, for their ignorance. And it shall be forgiven all the congregations of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them. And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him." Christ having become our sacrifice for the sin of ignorance offered once and for all, is a wonderful provision for all such sins. Under the cover of this offering the infant, the idiot, and the honest noncombatant heathen and all of our infirmities are overlooked in God's sight. We bring to God this sacrifice in Christ in the use of the Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors", Matthew 6:12. In all probability the Christ-rejecting sinner will suffer in hell for all of his mistakes in that he has knowingly rejected the sacrifice offered for them in Christ.

It is well for us to pray every morning as did David, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults, Psalms 19:12-13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." Secret faults differ in this connection from presumptuous sins. Secret sins are called errors which he did not know of at the time they were committed, for he says, "Who can understand his errors?" Psalms 19:12. The presumptuous sins were actual transgressions. A mention is made of such sins in Num. 15:30 following and in contrast to the rule pertaining to the sin of ignorance. "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people."

The matter of doing wrong by force of habit demands attention at this point. One may practice a bad habit so long and often that he has no thought as to what he is doing. I have heard some one illustrate it on this wise. A man driving through a town for the first time comes to an intersection; he can go straight or turn to the

right or the left. He takes the matter into consideration and resolves to turn to the right. After doing this for several days he makes the turn to the right with no thought whatever as to what he is doing. But if there was a moral in the case and the wrong one, God would hold him responsible for the last time he considered the matter and the baneful effects the habit had on himself, and others.

Again we will often have to make a distinction between a "temptation to doubt", and "a doubt", if we would retain our experience. The enemy will often take the advantage of a low state of feeling which perhaps may be associated with physical exhaustion, weakness or illness, to tempt us to doubt and then proceed to charge us with doubting. If it were a temptation to steal we could better judge in the matter. "The temptation to doubt" and "the act of doubting" are mental affairs, and it is not always easy to determine the difference between them. When one is tempted to doubt one's salvation, he or she should comply with the divine injunction, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." II Cor. 13:5. Enter into a close class meeting with your soul as did David when he said, "Why are thou cast down, O my soul? And why are thou disquieted in me." Psalms 42:5. David was not being able to give a reason why his soul was disquieted. So encouraged himself by saying, "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Psalms 42:11. Take time to do a moral inventory, and endeavor to carefully diagnose your case. Never go out with haste, but take time to establish your moral attitude toward God. He says, "My people doth not consider," Isaiah 1:3, and again, "Come and let us reason together." Isaiah 1:18. Consider and reason on this wise: The blessing of God is his way of saying, "you are still mine!" In this testimony time ask yourself: Have I consciously done any wrong or felt any uncleanness in my heart? If not, then you need not doubt and thus cast away your confidence. Begin at once to declare that you are the Lord's and to praise Him for His keeping power. Do this right in the face of the enemy and his temptations to doubt. Praising the Lord always inspires our faith. Abraham's faith was strengthened while on his way to Mt. Moriah to offer up his son Isaac, for it is said of him, "He was strong in faith, giving glory to God," Romans 4:20. That is, when tempted to doubt, he praised the Lord.

The writer held a meeting years ago in the farming neighborhood in Ohio in which many of the farmers were converted. The services, for several Sabbaths after the revival closed, were attended with much of the blessing of the Lord. One exceedingly hot Sabbath morning at the close of the first week in wheat harvest they gathered as usual to worship the Lord, but after a week of hard work they were exhausted. After singing and prayer they were perplexed in that the usual degree of rapture was not manifested in the service. The leader arose and said, "We have all lost our religion in some way during the week," and suggested that they all go to the altar and seek it again. They were all about to do this when one of the young converts said, "Wait a minute, I remember once when I was a lad my father gave me a whipping. While it was going on I had a big feeling, but after a while the feeling past away, but I knew I had the whipping. I was greatly blessed last Sabbath and had a great amount of feeling and it has for some reason passed away; but I have

not knowingly done wrong since then. The Lord gave me religion to keep, and He will not take it away from me and the devil can not take it away from me unless I let him. If the Lord will not and the devil can not take away my salvation, then I have it yet." Suffice it to say the "fire fell." If, however, you discover that you have not been doing your duty then you have good reason for doubt, and you should repent at once.

The difficulty often with such is found in not being able to locate what might be called normal in pardon and purity, i. e., their lowest state of experience. Normal in pardon is peace. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God", Romans 5:1. Peace with God is just the opposite of condemnation. This, so to speak, is sea level and like the waves of the sea our emotions from this level will rise and fall, but when they subside they, like the waves, will not go below sea level, namely, peace with God. No one should doubt his acceptance of God until under the light of His word he is condemned for wrong doing. When wholly sanctified the normal condition is raised to rest. This is a rest from inbred sin. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God", Hebrews 4:9. But you may ask, "Did I not have this rest with my peace? No, for the justified often feel the uprisings of anger and impatience, called "roots of bitterness," which spring up and trouble us. The uprising and the outbreaking of sin are different. No one should entertain doubts pertaining to his experience of holiness until he feels uncleanness in his heart. If the enemy can succeed in establishing a false test in the mind he will appeal to our honesty until we conscientiously cast away our confidence. He will suggest, for instance, that holiness is power. Often for some unknown reason they who have clean hearts have seasons when there does not seem to be very much power in their sermons, prayers or testimonies. The enemy will take the advantage of their apparent lack of power and demand of them to settle as to whether they have holiness or not, as he calls their attention to such occasions. While it is a fact that there is a spirituality connected with the experience of a clean heart not found outside of the blood of cleansing, yet we must not make this the unfailing test.

Again the devil will often take the advantage of a feeling and make us believe that cleanness of heart must be accompanied with a great degree of uninterrupted rapture. But it must not be forgotten that even the wholly sanctified are often "in heaviness through manifold temptations", I Peter 1:6. Hundreds of souls while passing through such ordeals have yielded to the temptation to doubt and lost the blessing of God. It is a fact that there is a more constant flow of rapture associated with heart purity yet it can not be made the unfailing test of purity of heart. If after all such considerations you can not satisfy yourself that you are right with God; if your consecration is still intact, go to Him in frankness and humility and tell Him all about your confusion of mind. Then no longer debate the case in your mind as to whether you have the experience of holiness. Let "bygones be bygones" by telling the Lord that you are fearful as to professing the blessing in view of displeasing Him, and yet you are reluctant about giving up the blessing for fear of needlessly casting away one of His most precious gifts. End it all by casting yourself out on the blood and taking Him as your sanctifier then and there. If you did not have the

blessing, this will fully remedy the matter, and if you find that you did have the experience and you were only under temptation, there is no harm done. A present faith in the blood of Jesus robs the enemy of all of his arguments. If you have been disobeying God you have just grounds for your doubts and you should repent of it before the Lord.

Again, we will often have to draw a line between "a sense of loss" and "a sense of need". A sense of loss implies that we have forfeited a holy principle and there is need of a restoration. A sense of need in no way implies that we have sustained a loss, but it is often essential to an advance step in the things of grace, and the wholly sanctified will often be possessed with a profound sense of need. Brother B.T. Roberts used to say he wore out his old blessings in the work of God and that he frequently had to go to the Lord for new ones. There should only be one baptism of the Holy Spirit, but frequent anointings. We must be frequently refreshed, and often these seasons of refreshing will be preceded by a deep sense of need, and we will be constrained to look up for a special anointing of the Holy Spirit and a general breaking up of soul before the Lord. For instance, a camp-meeting is in progress and a good brother is compelled to remain at his work in a machine shop operating a lathe and doing very critical and important work which demands his careful and undivided attention. He is in the midst of tobacco smoke and profanity, but the saints at the camp-meeting are listening to spiritual and uplifting sermons and are giving strict attention to the means of grace. At last on Sabbath morning he is permitted to go to the meeting and instead of going up to the front among the saints, he takes a seat in the back part of the congregation. During the love-feast a wave of victory passes over the saints and there are great manifestations of joy among them. The enemy suggests to him, "Are you as blessed as they are? . . . No," he responds, "I am not." "Is it not plain," suggests the enemy, "that you have lost a clean heart in some way, and had you not better go to the altar and be restored to that experience?" He thus begins to reason with the devil and the temptation to doubt predominates, and he without further consideration casts away his confidence and goes to the altar to seek a clean heart and spends most of the day in great trouble about the matter, and after a hard struggle and a sad day he again breaks through into victory. From the standpoint of a Christian experience he has, however, gained nothing, for he was restored into the very grace he doubted away during the morning love-feast. The whole thing was a trick of the enemy to cheat him of the good that he might have received out of the services of the day. He should have said to himself: "While it is true that I am not as happy as the rest of the saints are, yet they have had advantages that I have not had; but I am not conscious of having lost a holy principle out of my soul, either have I felt anything there which is not of God. I do not believe that the spiritual machine is broken down, but it needs fresh oil and I will get out of this place and take my place up there among the saints and fall in with the order of the meeting." He was soon as blessed as the rest of them. This sense of need should have prompted him to have taken an advanced step, but the enemy made him believe that it was a sense of loss, and he fell into darkness.

Again, often a distinction will have to be made between "a thought of evil" and "thinking evil." The one is a matter of the mind, and the other is of the heart and of moral principle. We would not be subject to temptations without a thought of evil, for every temptation takes the form of a thought of evil. Neither could we be lead to do good without a thought of good. Human probation supposes that the mind is open to thoughts of both good and bad. A thought of evil becomes an evil thought when it is cherished and willfully entertained in the mind. One is as bad as the thought he loves and considers with relish, hence it is written, "As he thinketh in his heart so is he", Proverbs 23:7. Thoughts of evil will come into the purest mind irrespective of choice. They will often come repeatedly, even fiery darts, much to the annoyance of the pure in heart.

We often have dreams during our wakefulness, as well as when we are asleep; i. e. the mind sometimes falls into an involuntary drift and as we awake to a sense of what we were thinking about, the enemy declares that if we were pure in heart we would not have such awful thoughts. So the uninstructed soul, horrified over having such a thought in his mind, at once casts away his confidence and falls into darkness. The more refined and pure we are, the more revolting such thoughts become to us.

Years ago the writer was pastor in a little town in the state of Ohio. There was a brother who belonged to the society who had once been a very licentious man, but had been very clearly converted to God. It seemed impossible for him to keep a clear experience only for a short time. One day while conversing with a friend of his in his home, I said, "There is a vast difference between a thought of evil and thinking evil." Dropping the book he was reading, he looked up and said, "I would give my farm, if necessary, to know the difference." I began to make inquiry as to his trouble and he said, "I was very much blessed yesterday morning and went up town to do some trading. I noticed that the advance men of a theatrical troop had put up some posters across the street. The sight of the semi-nude female pictures brought a swarm of some of the most awful thoughts to my mind of the most revolting nature. No one could have such thoughts and enjoy religion, so I lost all of my peace with God then and there. I said to him, "My brother, did you relish such thoughts as you did when you were in your sins?" "No, indeed, he replied; "I hate them and would not go back to the old sinful life suggested to me by those thoughts for all the world. All within my soul rose up in arms against the idea of such a thing." "What do you suppose, my brother, it was in your soul that repelled such thoughts," I said, "for there is certainly a great change in your soul compared with what would have taken place a year ago." "That is so, I had not thought of that," he said. He then confessed to me that that was the reason he could not keep clear in his soul. I explained to him the difference between a thought of evil and thinking evil, and he became one of the most established Christians in the church.

If you had an apartment for rent and some one knocked at your front door, you would not be to blame for hearing the knock nor for going to see who it was and what was wanted. Suppose it proves to be a gentleman who wants the

apartment, and he satisfies you that he is a respectable man. At this point your responsibility begins, for it is yours to let him in or to reject him. Good thoughts are like the respectable gentleman that appeal to the best in you and seek to be entertained in your soul.

The thought of evil is like a dirty tramp coming to your back door and knocking for admittance. As in the other case it is your duty to go to the door to ascertain who is there and what is wanted. But you are to be blamed if you let him in and entertain him and allow every decent boarder to leave your house. The thought of evil is not yours until you entertain it, and then you are as bad as the thought itself.

All around us are millions of germs. They are in the air one breathes, in the water one drinks, clinging to many things one handles. If one's lungs are in a healthy condition they will throw them off and one will not be affected by them. But if they are in a weak condition they will become infected and one will contract the disease. Just so a pure soul will throw off thoughts of evil and they will not find a lodging place.

Again, often saints who are extremely nervous will have to draw a line between "stress of the nerves", and "an uprising of carnal anger." It is conceded that a bad condition of the nerves will be almost sure to affect the mind, and the condition of the mind will often affect the speech and the actions. To illustrate: A pious and wholly sanctified brother whom I know well, at the close of a successful revival had a nervous breakdown. He was a man who was kind and tender toward his wife. At times in spite of all he could do, if she gave the door knob a quick, sharp turn, or would step heavily upon the carpet he would spring up in bed and yell at her, telling her not to do that again. This became a source of great grief to him and an affliction to his wife, who had never been spoken to by him in such a manner. The enemy accused him of losing his purity of soul, and the assault of the devil was fierce. One day, after much prayer and soul searching, he thought, "Do I feel toward my wife as my actions or tone of voice would indicate?" No. He called his wife to his bedside and explained the whole cause was due to his nervous condition. To pay no more attention to his yells, that he did not feel in his soul toward her as his tone of voice would indicate. This was satisfactory to her and notwithstanding the fact that he continued for some time to yell at her, he came out of it all with a sense of purity in his soul. Without proper consideration he would have cast away his confidence and forfeited a clean heart.

I once heard of a preacher who said that if we had the experience of holiness we would hardly know that we had nerves. Such an expression is extremely unwise and even cruel. Take, for instance, a weak, sickly sister at the close of a hard day's work: her nerves are strained. She is exhausted. The children are cross and quarrelsome, and she says things and does things she would not under other circumstances. This all may be due to the weakened condition of the nerves. There may be depravity in the case, however, she is in no condition to judge the condition

of her heart. She needs rest of mind and body more than anything else. The enemy, however, demands that she settle then and there amid the flurry of her nerves and the excitement of her mind as to whether she has the experience of holiness. Under existing conditions she is hardly competent to do so. As soon as possible she should retire to her room and commit herself to God if she can say no more than,

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

Then after a good night of rest and after her work is done, she should take her Bible and go to her room and consider the situation carefully and honestly. Telling the Lord the whole matter and asking Him to lead her to determine her moral state as it is before Him. She is now much better qualified to judge in the case. It would be well, if she is confident that her consecration is still intact, to throw herself over on the blood of Jesus and to explain matters to those who heard and saw her during the trial of the previous day. I have often been classed with compromisers because of the above conclusions, even by some very good people who think that it is impossible while under extremely nervous strains to retain holiness of heart and manifest any excitement, or utter hasty words. But I am more and more convinced that some precious souls, to retain a sense of purity under the conditions we are considering with the wrong notions they have, will have to do one of three things. They will either have to abandon the wrong idea, or have the Lord get up a holiness in keeping with their nervous condition, or give them a new set of nerves. It is an utter impossibility for them to retain the state of heart purity with their present mental and bodily conditions.

I am convinced that the experience of heart purity may be maintained in the midst of the highest state of nervous excitement as surely as it may be retained through a hard case of typhoid fever. The moral condition, however, often can not be actually determined until the nerves subside. We have an instance of this kind in the case of the prophet Elijah. Behold him lying under the juniper tree, utterly exhausted by his hasty trip of one day's travel into the wilderness. He is asking the Lord that he might die, and is practically ordering his coffin. Had his request been granted he would have missed a wonderful ride from earth to heaven. There is nothing in the record that would indicate that the Lord reproved him for this sad condition of affairs. "What is the matter with him?" you may ask. Well, in the first place he panicked over a threat that Jezebel had made as to the taking of his life. This was unwise, but it prompted him to flee from her presence a day journey into the wilderness. Then, again, while on the run the enemy succeeded in getting him to believe that he was the only true prophet God had left, and that consequently the odds were greatly against him. The facts in the case were that God had seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Again the excitement of the occasion and the long run had exhausted his physical and mental energies, and he formed wrong conclusions and wished to die. God sent an angel to watch over him

while he refreshed himself in a much needed sleep, and to recuperate him by providing him something to eat. The sleep and food had the desired effect, and he recovers from his fears and in the days that followed became a great power for good. Rest and nourishment often go a long way in helping people out of their religious difficulties.

We will often have to draw a line between "faith" and "feeling in seeking a clean heart." The writer has for some time thought that this has been a mistake to call the experience of a clean heart a blessing. We as a people believe in getting blessed, and it will be a sad day for us when we believe otherwise. Calling a clean heart "a blessing" has misled hundreds of our people and got them to seeking a rapture instead of a state. Holiness of heart is a state of moral cleanness and does not belong to our emotional nature, although it may affect it more or less. It goes infinitely deeper than our emotion and belongs to our moral nature. The writer has seen hundreds receive the experience who did not have as much emotion as they did when they were justified. It is not a great feeling and to look for anything of the kind will only bring confusion to the seeking soul. God will use His measure as far as feeling may be concerned, and if He is not pleased to turn in upon us a spiritual Mississippi river we will have to be satisfied with the portion He is pleased to give us.

God will not favor us in letting us have our own way in the matter because it would be seeking one of His manifestations instead of Him as our sanctifier. The matter thus becomes our way and must be given up before He can sanctify us. Hence the Word says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts", Isaiah 55:8-9. With some there is such a sudden rush of feeling connected with the reception of the experience of a clean heart that faith and feeling seem to be so intermingled that the person is not able to distinguish between them. Then as soon as the feeling subsides the enemy raises the question as to whether they have lost the experience of holiness. Thus the thought of holiness "being a blessing", the uninstructed soul, unable to determine between a state of purity and the temporary rising of emotions, falls into a state of doubt and darkness. A lady the writer knew sought the experience of heart cleansing at one time while alone in her home and was so overcome by the degree of rapture associated with the same that she was prostrated for some time on her parlor floor. Toward the latter part of the day she was led to drive to M_____ to see two lawyers, old schoolmates of hers, and talk to them about their souls. She was greatly helped of the Lord in so doing, and they were both deeply impressed as to their need of salvation. On her way back home her mind was directed to some matters of importance in connection with some business that must have attention at once. The matter was a perplexing one and demanded careful attention. Just as she arrived at the gate the enemy called her attention to the fact that her great joy was gone, and declared that she must have lost her experience somewhere and somehow between the town and her home. Although years have passed by since then, the last I heard of this sister, she was

still without a clean heart, just because she refuses to believe that she can receive it only as it was given upon that occasion. This idea has become her way and she seems to be almost confirmed in the same. She will never be restored to the state of heart purity until she utterly abandons this false and foolish notion. Strange to say, she is a bright, intelligent woman, but had been under the influence of erroneous teachers. Thousands are being caught in this same trap of Satan.

C. G. Finney had trouble with his faith on this wise in connection with his conversion. While praying in the woods, he says, "He gave me many precious promises, both from the Old and the New Testament, especially some most precious promises respecting our Lord Jesus Christ. I never can make any human being understand how precious and true those promises appeared to me. I took them one after another as infallible truth and the assertions of God who could not lie. They did not seem so much to fall into my intellect, as into my heart, to be put within the grasp of the voluntary powers of my mind; and I seized hold of them, appropriated them, and fastened upon them with the grasp of a drowning man. I prayed till my mind was so full that before I was aware of it I was on my feet and tripping up the ascent toward the road. The question of my being converted had not so much as arisen in my thoughts. I said to myself, 'What is this? I must have grieved the Holy Spirit entirely away. I have lost all of my conviction. I have not a particle of concern about my soul and it must be that the Spirit has left me.' 'Why,' thought I to myself, 'What is this that I can not arouse any sense of guilt in my soul, as great a sinner as I am?' I tried in vain to make myself anxious about my present state. And yet," he adds "the response of my mind was unspeakable great." His wrong notion well nigh robbed him of salvation.

Many refuse to receive Jesus as a savior or sanctifier because they do not feel that He is such to them. This is salvation by feeling rather than by faith. The Word says, "Believing we rejoice," I Peter 1:8, and not rejoicing we believe. It tells of the "joy of faith," Phil 1:25, and not the faith of joy. And again, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." I John 5:10. It is believing that brings the witness, and not the witness that brings the faith. We must step out on the word of God and put in our claim for what He has promised us.

Somewhere in the West they have a peculiar way of watering their cattle. When they find a spring of water they dig a hole in the ground and wall it up on all sides. They put stringers across it about a foot or so below the water and then float a platform on the water. This covers the water so that it can not be seen by the thirsty cattle. They learn, however, to step out on the dry plank, fully believing that they will find water. So in seeking God for pardon or purity we must often step out on the naked word of God, regardless of existing conditions or our feelings and say, "It is so not because I feel it is so, but because God says it is so," and continue to say it until we feel that it is so. The declaration of faith always helps our faith. Tell God that you know that He is faithful and that you now take Him at His word. Once while inviting people to the altar on an eastern campground I saw a very intelligent looking lady who seemed to be in a deep study. Stepping to her side I said, "Pardon

me, madam. Is it not a fact that the Lord is talking to you?" She answered, "Yes, sir, He is. I am under conviction for a clean heart." I said to her "Are you willing to go to the altar to seek it?" She replied, "I am." I then said to her "Are you fully consecrated to the will of God?" She replied, "I have been looking the matter over during your sermon and I believe that I am." I thought, of what use is it for this woman to go to the altar if God has promised to cleanse her heart here and now?" I said to her, "Why not look up to Jesus now and take Him as your sanctifier? . . . Oh, no," she said, "I do not feel that He is my sanctifier." "Never mind your feelings," I said, "look up at once and tell Him that you receive Him as your sanctifier." Looking up she said, "O Jesus, I need a sanctifier, and I now receive you as my sanctifier." Instantly she broke out into a hearty laugh and began to shake hands with those around her, telling them that the Lord had cleansed her heart. That was taking it by faith. There is need however, of a word of caution at this point. It is very obvious that many take up with a mere theoretical holiness by assuming that they have faith when they do not. They often proceed on the supposition that Christ is the altar and that the altar sanctifieth the gift and they having placed themselves on the altar must therefore be sanctified, and go away with a head holiness instead of heart purity. This method of reason is very well if the faith really lays hold of the promise of God. It must not be forgotten that both the altar and offering are for fire, and if it does not fall upon them there must be something wrong with the offering or the manner in which it is presented. If the all-consuming flame does not fall there will be a very unsavory state of affairs there in a short time. The experience of J.W. Redfield is very helpful as to the matter of stepping out on God's word: "I then saw the way of faith as never before, and I said to myself, 'I have tried every thing else but faith; I will now go out and make an experiment.' So I went out back of the encampment and stood reviewing my consecration, to be certain that all was thoroughly devoted to God in an everlasting covenant. In a moment there appeared to me the image of Christ crucified. I seemed to be standing upon the edge of a fathomless gulf, and Christ stood on the opposite side. The distance seemed too great for me to leap yet it was the thing for me to do. I must trust the crucified Christ to save me from ruin. It seemed to me that if I should make the effort and it proved a failure, I must from that moment bid adieu to all hopes of the world of blessedness and abandon the profession of religion forever. I saw that everything I hoped, feared and desired was now, with all that I expected in the world to come, all, all to be staked on a single act, to be lost or won forever. I was intensely aroused by the thought of hazarding every hope of heaven like that, and I offered this prayer: 'O Lord, Thou knowest all hearts, and that I want to do Thy will. I have tried honestly to know all, and to do all I could to get right, and Thou knowest that I stand to do or to suffer anything imposed upon me by which to secure the great blessing of perfect love. I have tried everything but this single and apparently inefficient and hopeless act of faith, which looks to my reason more like presumption than like an act that can do me good; and now, O God, seeing no other untried way, I will make the venture, and if it fails, on Thee must rest the responsibility. If I am lost for believing in Christ, I can not help it.'

"I seemed now to open converse with the Holy Spirit, and asked, 'How shall I believe, with my head or with my heart?'

"The answer came, 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' Romans 10:10.

"I now made the leap, as distinctly as if it had been in body, and at the same moment I felt myself in the arms of Jesus, who held me safely. I felt that I could risk a world in His hands, for I saw that 'In Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Col. 2:9.

"Oh, how changed did all things seem in that glorious moment! 'Surely,' said I, 'this must be heaven, or like it, for it comes up to my highest ideal of that place.'

"The next moment the enemy suggested, 'This is not the blessing of holiness, for you have not lost your strength, nor have you shouted or made a great ado about it; but on the other hand you do not want to speak loud.' And it did seem as though a single loud word would mar the rich spell which held me captive.

"I took my eye of faith off from the Savior to examine this temptation, and in a moment I was back on the other side of the gulf again, and was as empty as ever. 'Well,' I said to myself, 'I felt all right while believing.' That emboldened me to try again, and with greater daring than before, and with the same happy result.

"Now the temptation, 'You can not keep it' took my eye off again, and again I was back on the other side of the gulf. I then sprang off again when the tempter said, 'No one will believe you,' and again succeeded in robbing me of my witness.

"And so did I alternate between faith and doubt, joy and sorrow, until I learned this fact, that it was not for believing, but while believing that the work was done. I hang upon the atonement, and realize the response of the Holy Spirit assuring me that the work is done. So I now determined to make the leap again, and keep my eye on Christ. This I did, but the enemy asked 'How will it be tomorrow?' I answered, 'I don't know, for tomorrow has not come.' 'Well, how will it be in five minutes?' I answered, 'I don't know nor will I concern myself about it; I believe I am sanctified now.' I now saw the philosophy of faith. I breathe but one breath of air at a time; that is all I need; when I want another it will be allowed. So I do not need a stock of joys of salvation for future use, but take it, breathe it by acts of faith just as I have need. Continuously acting faith brings a continuous supply" (Life of John W. Redfield, page 97).

There is no excuse for our unbelief, and the more we apologize for it the more confirmed it will become. A few years ago the writer held a revival in the State of Iowa. Among those who belonged to the society was a very prominent lady. She refused to seek a clean heart on the ground that it was no use, for she had never been able to trust the Lord, notwithstanding the fact that she had been seeking a

clean heart for the past ten years. I persuaded her to make another effort, and after several days of hard struggle and fruitless seeking she said to me, "It is of no use; I know that I am all given up to God, but I can not believe. I am a natural-born doubting Thomas and my relatives on my father's side of the house are all just like me." I had discovered that she had been almost petted to death by the sickening sympathy of her classmates, as if she was an unfortunate creature, more to be pitied than to be blamed for her unbelief in the case, and that all of this was very pleasing to her and was making matters worse. I saw at once that the case was no ordinary one, and that radical, if not desperate, measures would have to be used to drive her from her false consolation and give her to see that God was holding her, and her only, responsible for her needless unbelief. After much prayer over the matter I said to her one day, "You have no just reason for your unbelief, and to say that you are a chronic doubter is no more honorable in the sight of God than to truthfully say that you are a confirmed liar or excuse yourself for being so on the grounds that your father and grandfather were both habitual liars before you had an existence. How would you feel if for no reason whatever some one would persist in doubting your veracity? How do you suppose the Lord feels to have you thus ignore and doubt His own immutable word? You are acting toward God just as I do toward those who frequently lie to me for I confess that I am very slow to believe what they say to me. One would naturally suppose, judging from your conduct toward God, if they knew nothing of His faithfulness, that He had surely been lying to you about something. But you know that such is not the case and that He has been keeping His word with men for six thousand years, and that no man, devil or angel, has ever known Him to fail in fulfilling any one of all the over thirty-three thousand promises He has made to man. And yet, in the face of all this, for the space of ten years you have refused to believe Him even under oath. If he had sworn by the earth, the heavens, the moon, stars or the sun you might have reason for your doubts, for they will all pass away, but to commend himself to your intelligence and god-given faith-faculty, He has condescended to stoop to the ways of man and swear by no less greater than Himself, the unchangeable "I Am." I have no doubt, my sister, but what you believe in God, but you do not believe Him.

She went home greatly grieved and offended over what she called my unkind treatment. I said to her astonished but sympathizing friends, "If you value this woman's soul, let her alone and never give her another one of your soul-soothing, pitying opiates." She remained home that night from the meeting and spent the night in confessing her unbelief and humbling herself before the Lord; and suffice it to say that she returned to the service the next day happy in the experience of a clean heart, and repeatedly thanked me for dealing with her so faithfully.

While I was holding a meeting in Ohio, a young man who spent the most of his time singing foolish songs, returned to his home and was converted, and got under conviction for a clean heart and after a hard struggle over exercising faith, one day went to his room and said to the Lord, "Lord, I am ashamed of my unbelief, and I now and here give it up just as I gave up my bad habits a few days ago, and

will not have anything more to do with it." The sanctifying fire fell on him and today he is a promising young preacher in the Free Methodist Church.

Some are often in confusion as to the possibility of losing the experience of a clean heart and at the same time retain a sense of pardon. If one who has a clean heart should commit a known sin he would forfeit his justification. But suppose one not understanding the devices of the devil should be tempted to doubt as to enjoying the experience of heart purity, and for fear of professing what he does not possess and for conscience sake he casts away his confidence. This doubt does not involve his acceptance of God and in no sense whatever does it enter into his sense of pardon. He does not doubt his pardon, and as pardon is retained by faith, he may still maintain in a justified relation toward God.

But you may say, "The Word says, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and he that doubteth is damned.'" Romans 14:23. Very true, but this doubt in question does not include that part of Christian experience that involves condemnation. Such a doubt takes the form of a mistake and is considered as such in the sight of God. He could no more condemn one for a mistake of this kind than He would condemn us for any other kind of a mistake. There is such a thing as an honest doubt, and God seeing our sincerity will wink at our ignorance and continue to grant us His favor. If one doubting away his sense of purity in this manner does necessarily forfeit his justification, then to regain his experience he will have to repent like any other sinner. But what must he repent of? Must he repent and tell the Lord that he is sorry that he did not go and profess perfect love when he was honestly in doubt as to having the experience? If there was no wrong in the case other than that of an honest, unconscious doubt, and that a mistake made for Jesus' sake, where are the grounds for an intelligent, evangelical repentance? The facts in the case are, there are none. If so, where is the act of rebellion of which such a one should repent? To hold such a one to a repentance in such a case will lead to endless confusion. Repentance is always "toward God," and this person has not willingly departed from God.

Lastly, in seeking the experience of heart purity we will often have to be able to determine between a blessing and the blessing of holiness. When one begins to seek for a clean heart the Lord is pleased to grant him a definite spirit of prayer and burden of soul for that experience. This definite prayer and burden become a means to the end and are to us the same as a kit of tools is to a carpenter. But the workman often comes to a place in the job where it is necessary to secure an additional tool in order to complete his work. So the Holy Spirit who always has the work of soul cleansing under His direct control sees that a blessing is needed for the encouragement of the person and the progress of the work, He then adds, so to speak, this additional tool called a blessing to prayer and burden of soul.

But you may well ask how may we know the difference between "A BLESSING", or this additional "tool", and "THE BLESSING OF HOLINESS." A blessing as a means to the desired end will at the conclusion of its work produce a

definite increase in the spirit of prayer and burden of soul. In fact, it was given for this very purpose. The blessing will bring the God-given prayer to an easy and natural end in praise and the burden of soul to an end in rest. A sense of rest and cleanness will possess the soul and all prayer and hunger and thirst for holiness will be gone. If I was the only person in the country who knew how to build a house and you employed me to build one for you and I came on with my tools and put up the frame work and then took the tools away, I would be guilty of doing you an act of injustice. So when He who gave the spirit of prayer, changes it into a spirit of praise, and changes the burden of soul to rest and assurance and thus takes the appointed means away, if the work is not done then He has defeated His own purposes and committed an act of injustice to us, as He leaves us still under obligation to be holy and no God-appointed means to secure it. He will never do this. When all of this takes place it is time for the seeker to put in his claim and declare that the work is done.

Often souls refuse to do this just because they think that the rapture at the end of the prayer and burden is not sufficiently great to entitle them to a claim of this kind. Consequently they cast the blessed treasure aside and the Holy Spirit is compelled to renew the definite spirit of prayer and burden of soul. Many have been doing this for a number of years, and some of them have become so confused and discouraged that they have lost heart in the matter. This sad state is often due to the fact that both seeker and worker are disposed to regard heart purity more as feeling or a rapture than a state of soul cleanness. God, however, will never concede to such a notion and while it remains heart purity can not be received.

A wrong notion regarding this matter will be sure to defeat us unless it is given up. To illustrate: I once heard of a poor widow who had a kind son who secured a job of work away from home. He said to his mother on leaving home, "If you can make the provisions we have do until Monday I will send you ten dollars." She succeeded in making them do and on Monday morning hastened to the post-office to get the promised ten dollars. The post-master handed her the letter and she eagerly opened it to get the much needed money. But she had a wrong notion as to sending money in the form of postal orders or bank drafts; in fact, she knew nothing about his manner of operation in money matters and fully expected to receive a ten-dollar bill. She opened the letter and read, "Dear mother, find enclosed ten dollars." She at once began to rummage in the letter for the bill, but found a draft for ten dollars and wondered what it was, and went home crying because her son had forgotten to put into the letter the ten dollars he had promised her. She borrowed a postage stamp and wrote him as to his mistake, and declaring her great need. He does not wait for explanations but at once sends her another draft. Once again she finds a strange looking piece of paper in the place of the expected ten-dollar bill. A neighbor hears her crying in her home and calls to ascertain her trouble. "I am hungry," she said, "and John has written me twice, saying, 'Find enclosed ten dollars;' but each time he has forgotten to send it." He calls for the letter and utters a joyful laugh and declares that she has twenty dollars. Why does one cry and the other laugh? Why, simply because the one has a correct idea and

the other does not. It is a wonder that she did not cast the drafts away as useless things.

But you may say, "I am not satisfied after thus praying through and being relieved of my burden." Very true, but you would be were it not for your wrong notion as to receiving it which of itself stands in the way of soul satisfaction. Was the old lady satisfied with the twenty dollars she had in her possession? No, but she ought to have been and would have been abundantly satisfied if she had not entertained the wrong idea. (End of sermon)

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IN CONCLUSION

By Publisher, Lowell L. Foster

Nearly a century ago, 1911, Reverend S.K. Wheatlake preached this sermon, "Casting Away Our Confidence."

The booklet with this message was in my Mother's library -- the pages so brittle with age they break, if bent. Since the sermon is so old, is it still relevant? Oh, Yes! Biblical truth is always relevant. Theologians, persons well versed in Scripture, teach:

What is true is not new;
What is new is not true.

* * *

How well I remember,
In sorrow's dark night
When the lamp of His Word
Shed its beautiful light.

More grace He has given
And burdens removed
And over and over
His goodness I've proved.

* * * * *

THE END