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SERMONS

REVIVAL SERMONS

by Reverend B Carradine

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REVIVAL SERMONS

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CHAPTER 1

REVIVALS

“Wilt thou not revive us again.” — Psalm 85:6.

David is asking in this verse for a revival. He distinctly specifies the character: “Wilt thou not revive us.” He wanted a Divine work as opposed to a mere human effort and result. Something not worked up, but sent down.

Several reflections may be drawn from this Scripture.

1. ALL OF US SHOULD BELIEVE IN REVIVALS.

Most of us have been brought to God and into the church through the instrumentality of the revival. Even where this is not the case we have been refreshed, renewed and in various ways benefited by genuine revivals of religion. Some historians say that English society was saved by the Wesleyan Revival of last century.

The Methodist Church certainly ought to believe in them. She was born in one, cradled and rocked in others, and made strong by ten thousand more. Like the animal Daniel saw in his vision she has advanced North, South, East and West just as she has pushed along this special line of spiritual effort and Divine blessing. Nothing can stand before her when putting on the garments of salvation and with revival power in her heart and revival song and sermon on her lips, she turns upon the powers of darkness. Sinners and sinful institutions alike go down before her. Here is her glory and power. Other churches feel that they have other things of which to boast in the shape of rituals, rank, wealth, splendor of showy form and massiveness of Cathedral buildings. These things are their glory, but the glory of Methodism has ever been the revival. If she forfeits that, she has lost her peculiarly distinguishing feature as well as true work and noblest heritage, and becomes poor indeed. Giving up this she will cease to be blessed in herself and a blessing to others. There are few more painful sights than the spectacle of a Methodist congregation patterning in various ways after some cold, worldly, ritualistic church. It argues the forgetfulness of her origin and training, the ignoring of the secret of her past success, and the laying down of her mighty weapon of glory and victory.

All churches ought to believe in revivals, if they believe in the Bible. There they are mentioned again and again as the result of the people turning to God with repentance, faith and prayer. There were revivals in the time of Moses, David, Jehosaphat, Elijah, John the Baptist and the Disciples of Christ. All of them were remarkable in their wide reaching results and were accredited by the presence and power of God. As for the Saviour, His course all through the entire country was marked by revivals. Women lifted up their voices under his preaching, saying, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breast that gave thee suck." Unclean spirits cried out under his presence and sermons; defrauders rectified the wrongs of the past; unholy Magdalenes became pure; multitudes hung on his words; many shouted aloud his praises, and many others forsook all and followed him. What was all this but a sweeping revival. Let only a few of these scenes take place in a pastorate and instantly a letter would go forward to the church paper declaring that God had visited his people and a time of refreshing had come.

The spiritual movement of the church reminds one of the flight of a bird. Close scrutiny reveals that the bird does not fly in a straight line where every point is equally distant from the earth; but rises by a rapid movement of the wings to a higher altitude and then slides down a plane of atmosphere. Then it flutters again, rises again, and slides down again as before. The rapid beat of the wings overcomes the law of gravitation. Then as the movement is discontinued the earth asserts its power and brings the bird down. The study of any church will reveal this to be its similar course. It rises into higher experience and holier living through increased observance of the means of grace, which is a flutter of spiritualness. In the force gathered, it not only rises, but rushes forward with accelerated and easily recognized momentum. Then comes after awhile a downward inclination and movement to the world. After this is held another protracted meeting, there follows a revival rise, a rush forward, and another letting down.

Many suppose this is a normal and proper state. But what is right in the bird is not the best flight possible to the church. An annual flutter of the church's wings in the shape of a revival is a great deal better than no flutter at all. But what the church wants is a continuous flutter. The bird is not going to heaven, but the church is; so let the wings of Zion be constantly in motion. The day is coming when the life and progress of the church shall be marked, not by an undulating course, but by a straight line that

does not bend anywhere to the world. Better still, the end of the line that once dropped earthward, will be raised heavenward, and there shall be an increasing force and accumulating life and glory all the while.

In the last days, John says, there shall be seen an angel flying through the midst of the heavens having the everlasting gospel to preach. That angel is the church, for no one but men and women can preach the gospel. Moreover the church will be so full of love that it will look like an angel and so full of desire to reach all men that railroads and steamers will be too slow, and so it will invent swifter modes of travel and appear fairly flying.

The revival should remain in the church. The idea of saving men in July and August and not in the other ten months is simply fearful. A great many sinners die in January. The idea of the church ever letting down its holy life and work of winning souls! There is a bird called the Paradise Bird, that is never known to alight. Shall God's Church be outstripped by a bird.

The Apostolic Church after the Baptism of the Holy Ghost added daily to their number such as should be saved. It was not an annual, monthly or weekly work with them, but every day! So when the church shall see that the blessing of Pentecost is a distinct work of the Holy Ghost qualifying us for such a life and work, and when it shall be sought as a separate blessing, then shall we enter upon an unbroken revival in the church. Conversions will take place at every service, sanctifications will occur while the preacher presents the doctrine, great rejoicings will fall upon the assembly, and we will enter upon toils and triumphs that some would confine to history and the Bible, but which, thank God, can be seen in these present days.

2. THE SIGNS OF THE ABSENCE OF A REVIVAL.

These are many and unmistakable. They are always the same. In John the Baptist's time, in Luther's time, in Wesley's days, as we look we behold churches grown cold, preaching mechanical and professional, the Bible neglected, the Sabbath desecrated, sin defiant, sinners not sought after, and the houses of worship half empty.

Nor are these all the tokens of spiritual coldness and deadness. Stiffness between the people is a sign. Do we not all know, and have we not all seen how social frigidities and class petrifications melt away under the breath

and touch of the Holy Ghost! The Apennines sink out of sight between France and Spain and the Atlantic dries up between Europe and America when Christ descends and fills all hearts.

Lack of spontaneous singing is a sign. A revived congregation cannot keep silent, they must sing and will sing. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of song and the inspirer of praises; so when He is present He makes Himself known in that way through the lips of the people. So set it down as a fact that the absence of spontaneous and general singing declares the presence of spiritual death. The dead sing not. The tongue of a corpse is silent and motionless.

Dressiness is a sign. We are not here advocating a fanatical undress system, but speak of that richness and gaudiness against which the Scripture clearly speaks. A rule is that just as people recede from God do they emphasize dress, and the measure or grade of spiritual condition is clearly revealed externally. Nor is this all, but the farther down we go amid the ranks of the ungodly, the more we are impressed with the increasing stress laid upon dress. It is well known that sparkling ornaments, striking colors, and general gaudiness mark those that are farthest from heaven. While on the street the flashy style shows the abandoned woman, and the showy dress of the sport and gambler is equally significant.

Church entertainments is another sign. When God's people have to be coaxed by food and amusements to give to His cause, then are they spiritually in a bad way. The church entertainment is a mistake all around. It is a social mistake, for it nearly always produces misunderstandings and ruptures. It is an ecclesiastical mistake, for it brings the church into contempt before the world. It is a financial mistake, for such proceedings dry up the fountain of liberality, and prevent the spontaneous and sacrificing giving that God desires and demands. It is a religious mistake, for it will produce deadness in any church that undertakes them. When a genuine revival comes how these things disappear. Christ in spirit overturns the tables and banishes the merchandise again as He once did in Jerusalem.

Absence of conversions is a final sign of spiritual weakness and death. God says when Zion travails then sons and daughters are born unto God. Travail we know is an agony. It requires this upon the part of the church to bring about the salvation of sinners. In true revivals this is always seen. When a church is without it there may be accessions but no conversions.

Look around and see if this travail or agony of soul is upon the congregations you know. Look at the faces in pulpit, pew and choir. Listen to the people talking on their way home from church. Who is in concern. Look in closets for forms bowed and eyes weeping over men falling into hell. What Nehemiah is there who surveys at night a desolate Jerusalem with tears? What Moses is saying, "Save these people, Lord, or blot my name out of the book"? What Fletcher stains his walls with the breath of prayer, and what Knox falls upon his face with sobs praying, "Give me these souls or I die?"

Cannot anyone see why the altars are not lined with weeping penitents? Why should they be there? What is being done to bring them? What is there in our words and lives and appearance to make men smite their breasts and say, what must we do to be saved?

Are not all these signs of lost or absent power? Something is lacking or something is gone. Samson can shake himself, but he cannot overwhelm the Philistines. Oh, for God's people to humble themselves, fall on their faces and weep before God! How soon the sound of a going in the trees of life would be heard, and salvation sweep the land like a cyclone. Alas, there are no lack of signs of spiritual coldness. There are too many if anything.

Some one was once looking at a row of small houses on a cold winter day. Every one had snow on the roof but one. It needed no Solomon to give the reason. The snow-roofed houses had no fires burning inside. The exceptional dwelling did, and so the warm atmosphere within had affected even the shingles, and the icy mantle had slipped off. So there is no trouble today to tell what churches are spiritually fireless. Frost in the pulpit, snow in the choir, and icicles in the pew, tell the sad story that the holy fire burns low or has gone out. It is vain to call the congealed condition of things "decency and order" and dignity. God knows better and the world knows better. All can see that the Holy Ghost fire has been quenched. The snow is on the roof. Or to change the figure the sun is down, winter has come, a polar night has settled, the old ship of Zion is caught among the floes, icebergs are grinding all around, and the best hope is for a Relief Expedition in the shape of a revival in order that some may be saved.

3. THE TRUE REVIVAL IS THE SOLUTION OF EVERY CHURCH PROBLEM.

There are problems in the church. No thoughtful person will deny that they are numerous and of grave character. The souls of many of God's children are burdened with them; the tongues, pens, brains and hearts of scores of the most gifted in Zion are busy in suggesting, devising and executing in order to bring about a happier state of affairs. But the problems seem to defy solution.

One is the social problem. How are we to bring people of different classes together in Christian fellowship? The rich and poor have but one Maker, how are we to get them to believe this and act according to their faith? How are we going to make diverse classes feel they are brethren and melt them with a common love and fire them with a single purpose. Can Christianity accomplish this? If not, then must the gospel be counted another one of the great failures of mighty efforts projected on this line. If the religion of Jesus can do it, and has not yet, then is there some grace or blessing in the Divine system not yet generally known by the followers of Christ.

Then there is the feud problem. We have people in the church is every stage of coolness toward each other from the Temperate through the Frigid Zone up to the North Pole itself where the ice never melts, where everything is frozen solidly through the entire year, and Inaccessibility sways the icicle scepter over the snowy region. How can the people who dwell in these different zones be brought together in kindness and love, and this reproach upon the cause of Christ be taken away? They have been visited, talked to and prayed with. Every new minister tries his hand on them. He sails to the Northern regions where they live, walks over ice fields that are ten, twenty and thirty years old, and searches in vain for the parties who are responsible for this dazzlingly white, shiveringly smooth and cuttingly severe state of things. They of course are never to be found, and finally he is rescued himself, nearly frozen to death, by his pulpit successor.

There is the financial problem. This I find to be general. Preachers, stewards and deacons everywhere are wrestling with it. The church may be small or large, in village or metropolis, it matters not; the same anxious question is before them all: How can we meet one thousand with five hundred, and five thousand with three thousand, and ten thousand with seven thousand? Money seems always to be tight and hard to come at according to the Monetary Boards of Zion. Each new member is taught in

a single meeting to carry on his brow the mournful interrogation "How?", and on the second meeting to say with the drooping mouth "We cannot." A friend of the writer once labored in a church that was groaning under a fifteen hundred dollar financial problem; and yet there sat before him nine men whose aggregated wealth was over ten millions of dollars. In an official meeting to consider the debt, they were all bowed down in spirit with the question, "How can we raise fifteen hundred dollars?"

There is the missionary problem. How are we going to win the world for Christ? There is and can be no more important question. And yet at the rate we are going how far off does the solution appear to the thoughtful man. Over one hundred millions of heathen children are born every year. How many converts does the church make? What if the heathen children are born faster than the people become Christians!

There is the problem of great evils in the land. I mean the presence of wrong institutions, of demoralizing and corrupting agencies in our midst, the gambling den, saloon, club, and house of shame and death.

There is the empty bench problem. Few churches but have them. Some have more than others. Some have more benches unoccupied than occupied. I have seen twenty filled and forty unfilled. I have seen two filled and sixty without a soul in them. What is the matter? What shall we do with these empty benches? How shall we fill them with men, women and children?

There is the salvation problem. The church was sent out by Christ to be a Saving Institution; not to amuse, entertain, with mongrel features of restaurant and theatre and lyceum. It is to save souls and bring the world to Christ. This is its one business, and the when and how has long ago been told to her by the Saviour Himself. Is it not strange that the church should be sending here and there for men to help us do, or teach us how to do what every Christian congregation in the land ought to know and ought to be doing continually? And yet the problem is before us today, and never has the question gone up more frequently, How shall we get men converted to God and fully saved?

I repeat that there are problems in the church; and I repeat that there is a blessed way of solving them. God has a grace and blessing that if sought and obtained will immediately give the triumphant answer to every one of these questions. The pity is that men will not go to God in this matter,

and in the way He lays down; and so time is lost and failure is protracted and perpetuated by the substitution of human wisdom and methods for a Divine plan that has never been known to fail.

Look and see how wise and even good people are trying to meet the troubles I have mentioned.

The social problem is handled by parlor receptions at the pastor's home or at the church. Looked at from a distance it seems to be a success, but after all is over the various sets and circles retire to their respective zones. It is also afterward remembered that the cordiality and friendliness seen was exchanged between parties already friendly. There were long lines of human icicles that bordered the walls, and great lumps of chilly material that formulated in groups or froze in icebergs of various size. True, some noble spirit who did much to bring about the "Reception" and whose own heart was warm will say it was a glorious occasion; but in after days he will recall that he did all the running. He ran to the congested groups, the groups did not run to him. In fact he ran so much and was so melted himself that he thought everybody else was running and everybody else melted.

The feud problem is undertaken and managed with like success. The offending parties are told their duty, of which they were perfectly aware before. The guilty one is sought after but cannot be found. Both are innocent. Everybody is right. What is wanted is the Searcher of hearts! God coming down in mighty power upon the soul. Then would each one cry out: "I have sinned," and each one say, "I am the chief of sinners."

The Christian work problem is likewise undertaken. Each preacher thinks he has the secret. The pet scheme is to form new bands or start some fresh societies. Whenever a preacher fails to obtain a revival, he organizes a society of some kind. If his ministry is not spiritual or remarkable in winning souls to God, he will either form a Chautauqua Circle in his church or create a Chautauqua Institute in the neighborhood. Especially does the organizing mania possess him. It looks like life, real life had entered into the inactive body, especially during the election of the President, secretary and Treasurer. But the movement was not born of real life, it was simply an electric shock that moved the limbs and raised the eyelids for a second, and all was still again. It was a rocking chair and not a steam-car movement. The delusion with some is that organization

produces life, when nature and grace both alike teach that life produces organization.

The financial problem is grappled with. And this is the way it is handled. Laymen are sought after who understand finance. Merchants, lawyers and bankers are coveted for the church and when secured are promptly put on the official board. Preachers who know how to lift a collection are sought after far and wide, for pastors. Especially the minister who knows how to get money out of outsiders is felt to be beyond price. The brother who has a new and good method for raising church funds is like an angel from the skies. The man who invented the weekly envelope system is worthy of being canonized. And yet in spite of all these bankers, lawyers, preachers and inventive geniuses with cards and envelopes, the problem remains unsolved. The bankers themselves give it up.

The missionary problem is grasped. Two or three new secretaries are thrown into the field, and the gaze of the people directed in horizontal lines that end in man instead of the vertical that lifts the eye to God. Little savings banks are distributed among the people. Surely this device will succeed, especially if we write the words China or Brazil on the little clay or iron toy. Suddenly some one suggests that the women and children be organized into missionary bands and societies. All the men are enthused with the idea. The bankers and merchants think it is the very thing. Certainly! let the women and children help the struggling, suffering men.

Another cry is made and this time we are told that the hens of the barnyard ought to be a mighty factor in settling the missionary question. At once "missionary hens" abound. The women and children are forgotten for a few moments while the church turns a distracted gaze at the motherly old hens clucking over the land. If ever hens had a burden upon them, and a great moral obligation to lay eggs rapidly, it was when the church to which we belong, representing hundreds of millions of dollars, fell on its knees so to speak before those aforesaid hens and turning its agonized eyes upon them, said, "Lay us eggs for the missionary cause or we are undone."

The empty bench problem is taken in hand. This is variously worked at through the medium of stately edifices, carpeted aisles, cushioned seats, paid choirs, and talented, drawing preachers.

The salvation problem is undertaken. How shall souls be saved? At first it was thought to be difficult, but there were some who assured the church

that the whole matter was very easy, that it consisted simply in raising the right hand. Numbers were thus saved. Truly it appeared easy and was all very delightful and astonishing; but when it was noticed that there was no change in the face at the time and none in the life afterward, some doubted this plan still there were other methods. One consisted in standing on the feet until the heads were counted. Another was going into a room to be talked and prayed with. Many went into the room to see what was going on, and some who were conversed with had been Christians for forty years. Yet they were all counted as new converts by the manipulator of the meeting. If these methods fail, then the next effort is to get them to join the church. By and by the preacher and people become accustomed to and contented with this arrangement. Listen to the reports made at Conference where the number of accessions and amount of money collected is emphasized and rung out, and scarcely anything said about conversions.

Evidently, none of these things spoken of are able to meet the difficulties that exist in the church. Constant failure through the centuries ought to convince the most skeptical.

Something else is needed: And that something is the subject of this discourse. The Revival as taught in the Gospel and epistles, and as seen in the second chapter of Acts, is the true solution of every problem in the church. We want the abiding presence of Christ, the descending sweep of the Holy Ghost, the overwhelming power of the Triune God. Let such a revival come and every question will be answered and every problem immediately solved.

There will be no trouble to bring the people together. There will scarcely be any necessity for introductions, and no need to beg people to visit other people. They will come together with a rush, drawn by the tremendous attractive power of Jesus Christ, suddenly implanted or set up in each.

The individual family and church feuds will end as suddenly as they began. Faster than the deer casts his antlers, the snake his skin, or the warm roof slips off the snow, will all these bickerings and animosities disappear. They will feel as did a certain man when suddenly filled with all the fulness of God—"O for an enemy in order to forgive him and love him."

If you have quarrels in your churches, aim at once for a revival. Nothing else will destroy them. I once saw five different family feuds settled in as

many minutes when the Holy Ghost had fallen in power on a morning service.

There will be no trouble in raising money. When the disciples had a genuine revival the Gospel says they sold all they had and no one was allowed to suffer. The various denominations have drifted so far from that apostolic spirit that they seem unable to appreciate that beautiful act. Men call the sacrifices of love of that day socialism and fanaticism. But is it not wonderful how the Holy Ghost fell on those so-called socialists and fanatics. Chrysostom says that the church at Antioch supported fifteen thousand dependent persons! While some congregations today groan if they have eight or ten needy individuals on their list. I remember once a board of stewards who for years grumblingly allowed four dollars a month to a poor widow. The cause of this difference seen here was that the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch had a revival, the very thing we need all over the land today. When that revival comes the financial problem will be solved, and not till then.

The missionary money question will be settled when the Pentecost Revival comes. Before it arrives what begging and arguing, what demonstrating and what running around is required to secure some contemptible amount. Who is not familiar with the humiliating and painful spectacle of one man standing in the altar facing a crowd, while the oft-repeated and unreplyed to call "Who will give five dollars," falls upon the ear with the regularity and monotonousness of the voice of an auctioneer.

Let the true revival come and such a scene as this will take place. A quiet statement by the preacher that so much money is needed for the Lord, a simple pointing to the altar table near by, a calm invitation to come—and then lines of people will move down upon the table and streams of money will be heard pouring on its surface. I have repeatedly seen this take place. At one time there had been a revival. Money was called for on church questions, and it rained, rattled and poured on the table until it rolled off on the ground. The sum needed was given and one thousand dollars over. In another place and in the midst of a revival blaze, the missionary call was made, and the immediate and rushing response was gold, silver, bales of cotton, and a note from a gifted woman, saying, "I give myself."

Brethren, let us eat up all the missionary hens in the land, give the little earthen jugs and savings banks to the children for toys, and have a grand,

glorious, overwhelming revival. If it comes, as certain as God lives and reigns the missionary problem will be solved.

The revival will also settle the matter of Christian work. A preacher will not have to point out work to the people and beg them to do it. Neither will they have to come to the preacher to find out what to do. They will suddenly discover and make work for themselves. When the Holy Ghost fills a man—mind you I fills him—that man has a fire in his bones and cannot keep quiet. Can you sit still with a fire burning your body? Neither can you rest with fire burning in your soul. When the holy fire came upon Isaiah he cried out, “Here am I, Lord; send me,” and sprung to his life work. When the Baptism of Fire fell on the disciples, from that time to the day of their death they fairly flew to do the bidding of God. This is the blessing we need, one that will be like fire in the bones, such a burning as will lift people out of their late morning beds, and out of their easy rocking chairs, and drive them out from their pleasant parlors and libraries into the roads of the country and the streets of the city to save souls and bless mankind. A genuine revival will kindle that fire. We need no more organizations, no more church machinery; we have enough today to bewilder a church of twice our size. What we want is fire! Lord God of Heaven, send it down everywhere on the church as it once fell on Mt. Carmel, and afterwards on the day of Pentecost.

The Revival will solve the empty bench problem. The apostolic revival means that Christ has come in unclouded glory and in fulness of salvation. When Christ comes, the people come. He said long ago, “If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me.” The church seems not to have realized the blessed truth. If we want the people to come, we must first get Christ to come, and when He is lifted up and felt to be there—the audience will be there.

A revival means a good time and good things for the church. Let the world see that we have something better than they possess, and it is in human nature to come at once and see. The people cannot be kept away when we are happy in the love of God. Let us show that we are glad, blessed, overflowing with the grace and glory of the Redeemer, and a great hunger and thirst, a mighty desire will come upon the people to obtain what we enjoy. There will be no need to ask them to come and fill the empty benches of the church; they will come without being asked, and there will be no empty benches to fill. You will not be able to keep the crowd away. A man might as well try to sweep the waves of an incoming tide back into

the sea with a broom, as to keep people from coming to a church or building where a real revival is going on. The Sanhedrin might as well have tried to beat back the north wind with the palms of the hands, as to prevent the inhabitants of Jerusalem from rushing toward the Upper Room when the Holy Ghost fell and a genuine revival swept down out of heaven into the souls and lives of the people of God.

Who cares to visit a church to see a few lines of people all stiff and frozen sitting all upright in their pews with no more warmth and response than is beheld in a set of statues. I can see stiff lines of people in the street cars or in fashion plates, but when I go to church let me look on something different. And when there is something different there, when hearts are warm and souls are glad, and faces shine with the light of salvation, the world will rush to church as they did at Pentecost.

The revival will solve the salvation problem. It requires a certain atmosphere of prayer, a certain spiritual warmth or heat in the church before conversions can take place. Let that condition prevail and the salvation of souls will be frequent, beautiful and clear as I have seen grains of popcorn suddenly expanded burst forth into forms of snowy whiteness through the heated air of the oven. No need to ask such people if they are saved; they will announce the fact themselves in tones and with words that will thrill every heart. There will not only be individual cases, but penitents will come through the gate of mercy in rejoicing bands; the Spirit will mow down lines at a time. The altar will be swept from end to end, filled again, and emptied again by the mighty pardoning and cleansing power of God. The faces of the converts will be epistles upon which will be seen the unmistakable handwriting of God. Their cries of rapture and shouts of joy will pierce the hearts of the backslider and sinner, other and deeper convictions will take place, and salvation will roll on with the majestic accumulating force and irresistible power of an ocean tide.

What the church wants today is not a shower of blessing, not even a down pour;—but a torrent, leaping and dashing down the hills of heaven upon us; a resistless tide of salvation that shall wash away all forms of sin from the streets of Zion and leave her clean and beautiful; a perfect Noah Deluge of grace and glory that will overtop the mountains of sin, bury worldliness out of sight, while the redeemed, shut in the ark of Christ Jesus, sail triumphantly over the dead forms of iniquity far beneath them.

What the church wants is a revival, deep, broad, profound, far-reaching, heart-searching, life-changing, permanent and Pentecostal. Such a revival would settle at once every difficulty, and solve every problem. We are simply wasting time and energy in trying to do anything else until we secure that. We are making no progress. We are trotting hard all day in the shade of one tree. We are climbing up ten feet one day and slipping back nine feet and twelve inches the next day. Sometimes we slip still lower. We are beating the air.

It would pay the church to turn its attention from every enterprise in its walls and borders and go to seeking a revival. It would pay the church to shut up stores and offices, leave boats and plantations, give up money-making and money-saving, let the missionary work alone for a year, let everything alone, forget almost to eat and sleep,—and falling on its knees and face pray God importunately, continuously, persistently and inconsolably for a revival, and do this if needs be for a year.

O, how it would pay! How the world would stand in awe. How Christ would come as John saw Him on Patmos. How God would bend the heavens. The Holy Ghost would rush upon us with the sweep of a storm and speak to us through living tongues of fire, while sinners would cry out for mercy, saints rejoice in the fulness of salvation, money be poured out like water before the Lord, every work and enterprise of the church bear the smiles and blessings of heaven upon it, and Christ's kingdom become the reigning, triumphant, overshadowing kingdom of the world.

O Son of God, O blessed Jesus, send us the revival of Pentecost! May all the people say Amen.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO OBTAIN A REVIVAL

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.” — Matthew 3:3.

The Lord Jesus has not only come to the world, but is willing to enter the individual heart. This coming is what is needed above all things! It is what the nations need. It is the desirable thing for the community and the family. Above all it is everything to the soul.

When Christ comes it is at once recognized. There is no need to enter into an argument to prove that the Spirit of the Lord has fallen upon a congregation and fills the church. The instant this takes place it is known. I recall once in a revival meeting that on the fifth day the Holy Ghost fell on the audience, and the house was filled with glory. A gentleman leaped to his feet with the thrilling cry—“Jesus has come!” He only spoke what every one felt and knew.

In like manner when Christ enters the soul, the fact cannot be concealed. As the Scripture said of Him that when He entered a certain house He could not be hid, so is it still; to enter the heart with His blessed grace and glory so illumines the face, softens the heart, sweetens the spirit and fires the life, that all can see that Jesus has come.

In a great revival conducted by Dr. Finney, in a New England town, an unconverted man felt the presence of God one mile beyond the corporation lines. In First Church, St. Louis, during the gracious six weeks' meeting I held, a number of persons said that they felt the Divine presence not only when they entered the building, but even before crossing the portal. He that drew a line around Mt. Sinai, and made it to come to pass that whoever crossed it was shot through with a dart, still draws the marvellous circle and manufactures the same flaming arrows that penetrate the most callous with a sense of the Divine presence.

The coming of Christ means salvation we all know. But it also means blessedness. One cannot secure Christ without being blessed; whether nation, community, family or individual it is all the same; the presence of Jesus and blessedness go together.

The interesting thought is how to secure that coming and presence. That is the important inquiry of this sermon.

1. THE FIRST STEP IS THAT CHRIST MUST BE INVITED.

It is true that He has a right to come, and His coming brings a blessing, but such is His nature and such is our nature, that He will not come until He is asked to come. It is curious to see how we wait for invitations before going to certain places, and yet look for the Lord to force Himself upon us. I notice that even the kings of earth expect and tarry for invitations to visit cities and nations. So does the King of heaven; He never comes to dwell with us until we ask Him.

2. THE SECOND STEP IS THAT CHRIST MUST BE DESIRED.

We all find it a very difficult and oftentimes an impossible thing to go where we are not wanted. The fact that we are longed for and expected makes for us a sunlight of happiness and generates an atmosphere in which the soul is perfectly free and at its best. There are places where some of you are so desired that you feel actually drawn as by a magnet to the individual or circle.

It is well for us to remember that we are made in the image of God, and that He has transplanted or reproduced in us certain sensibilities and motions of the Divine breast. It is evident that the Saviour is much freer in some churches and in the lives of some people than in others. He is not able to do mighty works in certain hearts and localities, being tied up by unbelief.

So He is powerless to reveal His most delightful features, or even to show Himself at all to some persons or places because He is not wanted. Christ does not propose to come where He is not yearned for. In fact He cannot do so. The reason can be found in our free agency, and also in the sensitiveness of the Divine love. But only let us sigh for His presence and yearn for His companionship and lo, He will suddenly and gladly appear in our midst. He is the desire of the nations already in being what we need for salvation, happiness and usefulness, but He must also be desired with ardent longings of the heart if we would possess this "Chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely."

3. A THIRD STEP IS TO "PREPARE HIS WAY."

We read in history that when earthly potentates determined to visit a town or province that the people prepared the roads for his coming. Sometimes a special highway was constructed; and always work was put forth on the thoroughfare along which Royalty was expected. Even in the reception of our friends we see a preparation of this sort in the sweeping of the yard and front steps, the removal of every unsightly thing and the putting in place still other things that would serve to grace the occasion and please the eye of the visitor. So we must prepare the way for the Lord.

If there is no preparation, He will not come. This fact explains why some men are today unconverted and others unsanctified. They have not done the things that the Lord desires and demands. It is also well to state that some preparation is no preparation. I recall certain protracted meetings that were projected on a grand scale in regard to dimension of hall, number of chairs; thickness of sawdust, and lines of electric lights. There was also a broad gallery for the best singers in the city, and a deep platform for prominent workers and preachers. Everything was furnished but the one essential thing, the falling fire of the Holy Ghost. Every preparation had been made save the indispensable one of humbling the heart and prostrating body and soul in the dust before the Lord. This was never done, and so the gigantic material preparation came to naught. What does God care for chairs, sawdust, electric lights, drilled musicians and general ecclesiastical display! If He gave the victory under such circumstances men would suppose that the great platform and big workers did it.

Some preparation is no preparation. All of us are getting to see this. I saw once in one of our largest cities the walls placarded with flaming posters telling the public that all the ministers of the city had united in a certain meeting; that all the choirs of these churches had joined together; and that a most successful national evangelist would lead the battle! This famous meeting dragged its way along for a month and ended as it began, in wind. In still another city forty churches combined to get up (?) a revival. The forty pastors sat on a great platform with leading laymen, and the greatest orators among them vied with each other night after night to see who could over-shoot or out-blaze the other. As a test of forensic excellence it was a success, but as a Holy Ghost revival it was from start to finish an utter failure. It lasted about forty days, and afterwards the people were ahungered. The papers announced at the beginning that these forty clergymen were going to have a revival, and columns were devoted to the

first few services, but something was so evidently lacking, that the press finally quit reporting the wretched travesty of a revival, and the human spurt ended its feeble and short life without a mourner and without an obituary.

Some preparation is no preparation. What are carpets and chandeliers and carved pews and trained singers to God! Does He care for these things? Can He who hung out sun, moon and stars for lights, and painted the Western sky, and carpeted the earth, and put melody in wind, wave, and throats of myriads of birds be bribed into coming to us by our tawdry ecclesiastical finery and platform yelling? He dwelt once for centuries in a tent, and filled the log meeting houses of our forefathers with His excellent glory. Evidently He wants another kind of preparation.

Some preparation is no preparation. Saul got ready for Him in his way. Alas for the King of Israel that it was his way and not the Divine way. He even became so impatient to have the Lord to come, that he offered the sacrifice with his own hands; but the skies were locked, and there was no response. He afterwards said about it with a bitter wail, "He answereth me no more; neither by prophets nor by dreams." God was both silent and invisible. He will only come in His way.

Some preparation is no preparation. The prophets of Baal slew their sacrifices and placed it on the altar and cried from morning until noon. They even cut themselves with lancets until their blood gushed, but there was no answer from the skies. The great vault above was as empty, still, and echoless as if there was no God.

Men are finding out that some preparation is no preparation. The sooner all discover it the better. The church that waits unavailingly on God for days and nights without answering fire from heaven, may reasonably feel alarm. And the man who declares he is seeking God and cannot find Him; who says he has done all he can and Christ does not come into his heart and life, may know once for all, that he has overlooked some heavenly condition, neglected some essential duty; in a word, he has not prepared the way of the Lord.

We are told in Isaiah 40: 4 what this preparation is. It is repeated in Luke 3: 5.

"Every valley shall be filled."

This was what was done in constructing a highway for earthly kings; the valleys were exalted or filled up. The spiritual meaning is that if we desire the Saviour to come into our lives the great vacancies and hollows of life standing for neglected prayer, omitted Bible reading and other forsaken duties must be attended to. There are many such ignored and despised obligations. Like valleys they yawn before us, and how deep they are. They must be filled.

“Every mountain and hill shall be brought low.”

This was necessary to make a road worthy for a king to travel upon in the olden times. It is what is done today to give us the iron thoroughfares of commerce; the valley is filled up and the hill is cut down. It is what we are to do to get Christ to enter our churches and hearts with glorious power pride is a mountain; unbelief is a mountain. There are many high things that have to come down before the Saviour will ever sweep into our souls.

“The crooked shall be made straight.”

I visited the Appian Way when I was in Rome and observed that it ran as straight as an arrow. If earthly monarchs desire straight highways upon which to travel, how much more does a holy God. Christ will not come to the soul upon any other than a straight way; He will not travel upon a crooked route. Before He saved Saul of Tarsus He made him move on a street called “Straight.” And on that same street we all have to live if we would know Jesus. We must do the straight thing, get straight with everybody, and determine to live the straight life. The instant a man does this the Spirit rushes into him. The moment a church gets right with God the Lord enters.

Men ask God to straighten them, when this is our duty and work. The command is to us, to “prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

I have never failed to notice, that if a man will straighten his outward life, God will straighten the inward nature. This is not a salvation by works, but that rectification of conduct and life without which God will not look upon us, much less fill us with His glorious presence,

Now, let us look at this straightening, which is the preparation Christ demands as the condition of His coming unto and into us.

First, of course, is repentance.

This is not only in the order, but in the very necessity of things. We must grieve with a godly sorrow for what we have done or left undone toward God. Just as the hand is not extended nor smile given by the parent if the child shows no compunction; so are the heavens like impenetrable brass and God is silent to the impenitent soul. Let the heart swell with grief, let the lips say, "I am sorry," and ere the tears can fall from the eyes, the angels are rejoicing in heaven over the scene. They know what it means; that the skies are opening, the Spirit descending and salvation rushing to that soul.

In Ezra we read that the Jews trembled before God at the remembrance of their transgressions. The rain fell upon them as they stood in the street, but they endured every discomfort that they might find peace with God. Of course the Divine blessing came.

When I saw the Jews in their Wailing Place in Jerusalem, I had a vision of the luxury and blessedness of tears. Oh, that the people everywhere would begin to weep before God. Oh, for melted hearts and wet eyes in every pew of the church as well as around the altar. These very tears would be as telescopes to the penitent soul to see into the heavens, and as a mighty influence to bring the Lord down into our hearts. A weeping or grieving child draws the parent instantly to its side, and so, thank God, it is the same in the spiritual life.

Another preparation is the forsaking of every known sin.

It is utterly vain to expect Christ to take possession of us while there is committed sin in the life. The face of the Lord was turned from His people at Ai because of a single transgression. Until the golden wedge and Babylonish garment buried under the tent was dug up and burned, the Divine countenance remained averted, and Israel blundered about in darkness, confusion and galling defeat. If I regard iniquity in my heart, says David, the Lord will not hear me. Think of a clerk asking forgiveness of a merchant with stolen money in his pocket. And what if the merchant knows it. How can one ask and the other extend pardon. The thing is morally impossible. The Bible distinctly states that it is our iniquities that

separate us from God. If this be so, then the giving up of these iniquities must be the condition of restored Divine nearness and favor. As I have heard people repeatedly affirming the impossibility of living without sin, I have wondered at the ignorance shown in such speeches of the Word of God. So far is it from being impossible for a child of God to live a blameless life, the Bible distinctly states that the unconverted man himself must cease sinning before God will pardon him. In Isaiah 55:7, we read, "Let the wicked forsake his ways, 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."

A third preparation is restitution.

This indeed is included in the previous thought, but deserves a distinct notice. It is wonderful how careless some people are here. They give up the ball room and theatre at the demand of the gospel, and yet slur over or forget certain wrongs of the past that should be rectified. The Saviour Himself distinctly tells us when we come to His altar with our gift and remember such a wrong, to hunt up the aggrieved brother and make all right with him first, and then come to the altar. Zaccheus had the matter right when he exclaimed, "If I have taken anything from any man—I restore him four fold."

Recently a ministerial brother told me of a man whom he had met in the West, and who had become deeply convicted in his meeting, went repeatedly to the altar, but could not obtain the grace of pardon and salvation. Various were the charitable explanations upon the part of the audience, among which of course figured "intellectual difficulties." But one day while walking with the evangelist, he made the confession that some years before while driving his cattle over the plain, a stray cow got in his drove, and he sold her along with the rest. "Now," he said, "when I come to that altar I see that cow dashing before my eyes, and she fairly fills the landscape." The preacher replied, "You must return her value to the owner." "This," the man said, "I have determined to do." And he did so, and as he did, the joy of forgiveness swept into his soul. The animal was only worth twenty dollars, but it was everything to Him who has identified Himself with every wronged individual on earth, and who is preparing a world for the pure and true and good.

A fourth is seen in Reconciliation.

The importance of this is seen in the words of the Saviour, "If you forgive not men their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses." Surely no reasoning, or argument is needed here to show the necessity of this transaction. Christ will not come into an unforgiving soul. But how gladly will He show mercy to the merciful.

One of the greatest revivals I ever witnessed began with five or six public reconciliations one morning in church. A woman impelled by the Spirit of God arose and openly begged pardon of another lady in the audience. In twenty seconds they were in each others arms. A grown daughter flew into the arms of her mother from whom she had been estranged. Two other persons stood up and asked the pastor to forgive them for having talked about him. With tears running down his face he extended his hands to them telling them he had not a doubt but he deserved criticism. Two gentlemen met each other in the aisle, locked hands, and while one confessed the other forgave, and in a moment they were embracing with happy smiles and shouts. So it went on, and heaven came down, and the glory of the Transfiguration Mount seemed to fall on the whole assembly. I have beheld many wondrous scenes of grace, but for tenderness of Spirit, melting hearts, flaming love and pure heavenliness, I have scarcely ever seen anything that surpassed the history of that morning. The revival broke out that very hour, and swept on for two years afterward. It is only another way of saying that Jesus came down and took possession of the church.

Fifth there are certain duties and obligations to God.

There are such Divine debts and duties. Religion is not to be confined simply to human relations. There are two tables of the Law, and the first had reference entirely to what is due the Lord. We owe things to men, but we also owe things to God. We pay the butcher, baker and doctor; we need also to be right with God on the financial as well as on other lines. It is amazing to see how men keep their accounts straight with their fellow men, and yet are careless in their contributions and obligations to the church, which is the abode of their God. If we look at the dwellings that by thousands line the streets of our great cities you will find that the vast majority have the rental account paid up to date, but over against that is the sorrowful and amazing fact that with the exception of one or two endowed buildings, there is not a church in all the land but has or has had a debt upon it. Deficits in the Missionary Treasury, deficits in the

preacher's and sexton's salary, and debts unsettled for coal, gas, and past services.

Meantime the church wonders why everything feels so spiritually barren and dead. They are serving a God who calls Himself a jealous God, and yet wonder why He does not bless them and make them overrun with spiritual life and gladness, when He sees every debt but His own paid, while reproach gathers thereby on His servants, His house and His cause.

In a certain large Southern city a protracted meeting had been going on for over a month without any drops of mercy from the skies or "sound of going in the trees" of salvation. The best of preachers were holding forth, and the most eloquent of prayers, and finest of singing echoed along the arched walls and stuccoed ceiling; still the fire did not fall, and Jesus would not manifest Himself. One morning a gentleman belonging to the church requested other male members to meet him in the lecture room. On assembling he said:

"You all know, brethren, that we have been trying to secure a revival here for weeks, and we seem no nearer to it today than we did a month ago. The question is what is the matter? That something is the matter all can see. Has it occurred to you that the trouble is that we have been carrying a church debt of fifteen thousand dollars for over ten years? And has it also occurred to you that we as a congregation are amply able to pay it? It is my firm belief that God will never come down and fill and bless our church until we settle this obligation. I, for one, will give one thousand dollars, what will you do?"

In less than fifteen minutes the debt which had been for years a thorn in their sides, a reproach to their church, and a grief to God, was paid. The same evening in the next service the heavenly fire fell, and the power of God came down. The revival that followed saw hundreds of souls swept into the kingdom.

4. THE FOURTH STEP OR CONDITION OF CHRIST'S COMING TO US IS THAT HE MUST BE BESOUGHT TO COME.

See the order; invited, desired, prepared for, and besought. Even after having been invited, and prepared for, He must be entreated to come. It is not enough to ask and desire His coming. He must be importuned. The simple invitation is not sufficient.

Here is the explanation of the failure of many. Numbers have said to me, "I have asked Christ to come in; why does He not do so. I have done all I can." How carelessly they spoke about the matter. No wonder Christ did not come. If the Syrophenican woman had stopped with her first request, she never would have received that gracious look and heard the thrilling words "great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." She swept past the realm of careless invitation, got to begging and conquered.

The careless invitation is not regarded anywhere. Suppose you try it on some one, or let some one try it on you. Let some person with an absent minded look and heedless manner say, "Come down and see us sometime." Do you go? Have you not had thousands of such invitations, and to which you paid no attention afterwards. But suppose the invitation is after this style, "You must come down and see us. Wife often speaks of you. The children constantly ask after you. The whole family told me today to be certain to bring you. Now when will you come. Do not put it off until tomorrow. Say you will come today, that you will go with me now. I cannot let you off. Won't you come?" Of course you go. How can you help it. And then it was so pleasant to be thus constrained by people who loved you and whom you loved.

Do you know that God can be constrained, and that He loves us to press our suit upon Him. Jacob never uttered more delightful words to the Almighty than when in that midnight wrestle he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Just afterwards the Word says, "And He," that is, God, "blessed him there." And right "there" in such a spirit and determination and importuning and waiting we will all be blessed.

I have had people to tell me that their idea is to tell God what they want at once, and then let the whole matter alone. These persons have not read the Bible understandingly; and certainly they do not know yet the secret of victory in prayer. Abraham secured the angels by running after them. The disciples obtained the risen Christ by pressing Him to sup with them at Emmaus. The woman from Canaan got her entire request by hanging on to Christ in spite of three distinct rebuffs. The Capernaum nobleman invited the Saviour to come down and heal his son. The reply would have discouraged many whom you and I know; but the nobleman turning his tear-filled eyes upon Jesus simply said: "Come down, Lord, ere my son die." He begged, and Jesus went.

Have you invited Christ to come? That is not enough. Do you desire Him? The land is full of people who desire, but do not get Him. This also is not sufficient. Have you prepared the way for Him? Yes, you say but still He does not come. Then the explanation is that you have neglected the beseeching and importuning. You do not understand why that should be done. Never mind about understanding it, only do it, and you will soon have reason to praise God for having done so, forever and ever!

This I have found that he who prays most, knows most of God, and possesses most of the Spirit of God. Men who like Luther, Wesley, Brainard and others prayed three hours a day, not only obtained the mind of Christ, but also the deepest secrets of heaven. I have also found that importunate and persistent prayer will cause Christ to enter any life, and descend upon any church or community. The question is who can bring this about. I answer:

Any town, city or nation can bring the Lord down upon the people. Nineveh clothed itself in sackcloth and turned to God with lamentation and prayer; and the Almighty rolled away its iniquity and smiled in pardon and peace upon the troubled inhabitants. Again and again the Jews as a people and nation would humble themselves before God in time of defeat and affliction, and the Lord would descend with mighty power, scattering their enemies and filling them with songs of praise and shouts of victory. It can be done today. If the people of any country would assemble in their churches and call on God with repentance, turning from sin and looking to Christ; heaven would answer in grace and glory; and no matter to what that nation had drifted or sunk, it would be lifted up from that very hour in honor, prosperity, happiness and blessedness above other nations.

But some will say we could never get an entire nation thus to wait on God, so the suggestion is vain. If this be so then I reply:

A congregation of believers can do it. This was what was done at Pentecost. One hundred and twenty souls, praying for ten days brought the power of God down upon Jerusalem. The same thing can be done today and is being done. This is what I aim for in every one of my meetings, to get the church to praying. After a few days the result is unmistakable in the general conviction on the town, and the clear cases of free and full salvation at the altar. Many times I have seen whole communities stirred and swept as a wind moves a wheat field, and the

power come down from heaven in answer to the tears and cries of God's people sent up day after day in the special hours set apart for prayer. It is in the power of the church today to put the world on its knees and face. Let the churches everywhere be filled with men and women pleading for the salvation of sinners, and the God of heaven and earth would answer as He only can by direct influence on mind, conscience and heart, and the ranks of the unsaved would be swept with cyclones of conviction and repentance, and the slain of the Lord would be everywhere.

But some one says suppose we cannot get an entire congregation to thus unite?

Then two believers can do it.

What says the Bible, "When two on earth are agreed as touching anything, it shall be done."

Dr. Finney of evangelistic fame remembered this and never rested until he had one other person agonizing in prayer with himself for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon his meeting. At one place he had a particularly long struggle. One night after midnight while on the floor praying for God to come, he heard the sounds of a voice in interceding prayer in the room about him. Going to his door and listening, he discovered that it was the voice of a godly woman in the house, and heard her sighs and sobs and petitions that God would send down the grace and power of salvation on the town. Dr. Finney with a happy smile closed his door and returned triumphant to his room saying, "We have the scriptural number of two, and shall have the victory." It came the next day in great power.

This blessed fact saves us from despair when we find we cannot get one hundred and twenty or even a less number of the church together to pray down a revival. Two can do it. Christ says so. If any two agree on having a revival, and keep praying, it shall be done, says the Son of God. But suppose that two such people cannot be found?

Then one believer can do it.

What does the Saviour say here? "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

How the Bible and life itself have proved the truth of those words. Elijah locked and unlocked the heavens with a prayer. Elisha prayed the dead back to life. Joshua prayed the sun and moon into stationary positions for hours, and on another occasion prayed departed victory back to the ranks of the discouraged children of Israel. Knox kept praying to God, "Give me Scotland or I die," and God gave him the land he prayed for.

Fletcher would never go into the pulpit unless he realized the Divine presence and felt the assurance of victory. So he stained the walls of his study with the breath of his ardent supplications. One Sabbath day the hour of preaching had arrived, and he was not in the pulpit. The audience waited for awhile and then some one was dispatched to his study to see what detained him. The messenger returned saying that Mr. Fletcher was evidently engaged in his room with some individual, for he heard him say to him, "I will not go unless you go with me." By and by Mr. Fletcher appeared with his face shining. The One he had been talking to, had come with him. All could see that. Who wonders that a steady revival flamed and glowed in his church.

A woman in Kentucky prayed fifteen years for a revival that would upheave the town in which she lived. It looked to some that the prayer would never be answered. Doubtless many smiled over that oft-repeated supplication, "Revive thy work, Oh God in this place." But she held on in faith. God heard the prayer, and by a most remarkable chain of circumstances prepared the messenger, and at last sent him to answer the prayer of that faithful heart. She saw the town moved as it never had been before, and hundreds converted, reclaimed and sanctified. The speaker before you conducted that wonderful meeting.

An elderly lady in one of our largest Western cities craved to see a genuine scriptural revival. The church which she belonged to would not pray for it. Neither could she find another person like-minded with herself about the matter. She determined to pray alone. She remembered the promise: "Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done." Obtaining a key to one of the rooms in the basement of the church she began her regular morning visits of an hour, to be spent in lonely but not the less faithful and fervent prayer. She had been going some days when a gentleman acquaintance saw her and asked her where she had been. She replied, "To meeting."

"Did you have a good one," he innocently asked.

“Yes,” she said, “We had a splendid time.”

“Who was there,” the man asked.

“The Lord and myself,” was the surprising answer.

In a few days a more general attention was excited by the lonely visitor, and as the fact came out that she was there praying God to send a revival upon the church and community, others smitten in conscience melted in heart and drawn in spirit, joined her. The room was soon filled, the power came down, and a great revival swept through the church.

Is it not enough to make your hearts leap and souls begin to burn to think that any one of you now listening to me can pray God’s precious, beautiful and all powerful salvation down upon worldly communities, lifeless churches, and the sorrowful, heartbroken and lost nations of the earth.

Think of it! Immortal souls can be saved through us. Hell and Satan can be defeated, and heaven peopled through our prayers. Let us be up and at it! To your knees oh people of God. Down on your faces with sobs, tears and cries. Who will pray. Who will keep on praying and looking and expecting while God answers! O for a spirit of prayer such as Moses and Paul had. O to pray all night like Jesus did. Lord, increase our faith. O Christ, hear our prayer. O Son of God, answer by the Baptism of Fire.

CHAPTER 3

SIN AND SALVATION

“There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” — Romans 3: 22, 23, 24.

One of the world's hobbies is the erection of class barriers and social distinctions. We hear of blue blood as opposed to and superior to the red fluid that flows through the veins of the multitude. We hear of the classes over against the masses; and of “upper tendom” and the “five hundred.” One would suppose from certain extreme views that there must have been a plurality of races, and instead of one Adam there were four or five.

There are times when these differences so studiously preserved and contended for will disappear. One is the Judgment Day. Titles, ranks, dignities, caste and all go down together in that hour when the mountains crash even with the plain and the skies are all aflame. No one will think of contending for these arbitrary and evanescent creations of men when nature is groaning in death throes, and the race is required to possess but one thing and that character.

Another time is a period of common peril. All of us have seen the great leveling power of a general danger. Men look and act like brothers on the street who have not spoken before, and the woman of wealth holds anxious converse over the garden gate with her poor neighbor as though both had been rocked in the same cradle, and warmed at the same fireside, and no social gulf had ever rolled between.

A third time is seen when the gospel comes down in power upon the community. Under its light and wondrous influence, all classes and ranks feel their marvellous likeness in moral weakness and spiritual need. As the gospel teachings take hold upon the congregation how wonderfully alike all become.

So with these hints to begin with we advance the thought that in spite of all our boasted dissimilarities in the social and intellectual life, yet in certain all important things, there is no difference among us.

1. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN OUR BEING BORN WITH A BAD HEART.

We have been born in different kinds of houses, from a palace to a hovel and some are princes and some beggars; some see the light with a gold spoon in their mouths, some with a silver, some with an iron, and some with no spoon at all. Yet all are born with this bad heart.

Of course there are those who protest here, and argue and deny; but I must believe God rather than man. The Book says we are “born in sin and conceived in iniquity,” that “the whole head is sick,” “the whole heart faint,” that the heart is like “a cage of unclean birds,” etc., etc.

In confirmation of this thought, we ask where does the wickedness of the world come from. Not from the air or water. Christ says, “Out of the heart.” Furthermore we observe that people do not have to get old to become wicked. The ghastly crimes of this century have been committed by young men. The vast majority of the convicts in the penitentiaries are young men. In disturbances at religious meetings it is the rarest thing to find elderly people guilty of misdoing, but nearly always the misconduct springs from those in their teens. The heart is evidently born bad.

In rebuttal of this, men say to me, that they know some people who have never been converted, and are not religious, and yet are kind, nice, and lovely altogether.

The answer I give to this is that there are several ways to account for these lovely, respectable and well behaved sinners. One is the absence of favoring circumstance. They have not yet had the peculiar conditions surrounding them that will sap their fancied strength in a moment and show them how ignorant they have been of themselves. Another reason is the fear of conscience. There are people today who would gladly sin, but they are not willing to endure the mental agony that they know is certain to come as the result. So they behave themselves. A third reason is fear of public opinion. And a fourth, the dread of civil punishment. In a word there is restraint upon them. See how it works.

Did you ever look on a city prison or penitentiary and notice how well behaved and orderly the convicts were? What is the matter with them? The answer is Fear! If they do not behave they will be loaded with chains and dumped into the dark cell with bread and water. So look at the people

on the street. How well behaved these unconverted people are. What makes them so nice and law abiding. The fact is they must do right or be punished. I have looked at a large venomous reptile in a glass box. How mild and well mannered he was. But we all knew if he was out, what stings would be given by his fangs, or what cracking of bones there would be under his twisting folds. The box made him orderly. So have we all seen the cobra-gleam in the eye of men and women who would sting and crush if they could, but the glass box of public opinion or civil punishment kept them orderly and harmless.

But that is not the case with me says some one. Then there are three explanations to be given, one is that you are sanctified and the heart is pure. Or as a regenerated man you are living in prayer and keeping down the dark nature in you; or third, if you are an unconverted man the declaring circumstance of your life has not yet come.

Something of the deep inborn depravity of the heart, and its terrible possibilities is seen in the lives of Hazael, Robespierre, and Tamerlane. The first of these three was much shocked when Elisha with prophetic vision told him how he was going to desolate the land and murder the people even to the women and children. But he lived to see the day when he did all the dreadful things the prophet said he would.

As for Robespierre we read that in his early manhood he resigned a certain municipal position because he was required to pronounce sentence of death on the guilty. In ten or fifteen years from that time he was an incarnate devil and the guillotine in Paris was constantly falling on the necks of people at his command. As for Tamarlane we are told in history that he was like other youths in the beginning of his life, at one time weeping over a dead bird, but the inborn devil arose in his heart and through his power over a million people were slain.

In the early part of their lives there was seen no greater sign of wickedness than is seen in most children and youths. The peculiar ferocity and devilishness that made millions to mourn had not yet appeared. There was no call for it. It slumbered on. But the favoring circumstance at last came, and the full inward blackness and badness sprang forth to the horror and mourning of multitudes.

A horrible thought is that when this latent evil comes forth in any of its myriad expressions it appears full grown! Did any of you ever notice that

when a certain provocation came to you and you fell into some kind of wrong doing, that the sin was full grown. That when you got angry, it was no case of evolution, but you were mad all over at once. The passion or fury did not develop but leaped out of the heart, and from eye to lip, full fledged, completely armed or entirely grown as the case may be. You had no infant on your hands requiring care, but a giant altogether managing you.

And yet only the day before you had made the remark how gentle and kind you felt toward everybody. You were patting yourself on the head so to speak and smoothing yourself down when suddenly the arranged hair stood on end like bristles, and instead of being a cooing dove you recognized in you the growl and claws of a catamount. The arousing and declaring circumstance had come.

S. S. Prentiss was once delivering a political speech from the top of a cage belonging to a menagerie. The audience stood before him, encircled with the rest of the cages containing the wild beasts. At a certain point in his speech Mr. Prentiss discovered an auger hole in the top of the cage on which he stood. At the moment he was saying that "If the opposition should do what they propose doing, it is enough to make all the beasts of the field to howl in fury"—he suddenly ran his walking cane through the hole and sharply prodded a lion. The great brute leaped to his feet and roared, and it seemed to be the signal for a general outburst from the whole menagerie, for in five seconds every animal was on his feet and the air fairly trembled with the combined throat thunder.

I have recalled this scene more than once, and thought this is the way with the dark nature of which we are speaking. It lies as quietly within as did the slumbering tigers in their cages. When lo, the unexpected circumstance like the walking stick stirs up the resting or dozing sin, and the man to his amazement finds he has a roaring menagerie of evil inside. Some of you had better not congratulate yourselves too soon. The only reason you are quiet, and have thus far gotten along so well, is that the walking stick which is to reach you in the most sensitive place has not yet been thrust at you. The devil knows where the auger hole is, and he is looking for the walking stick. Look out! my boasting, well satisfied brother. In the providence of God you will yet find out that you have a slumbering lion within you. How I pity you the day the walking stick reaches him, and he roars and shakes the human cage.

Some years ago one of the petty kings of New Zealand visited England. It was said by one who wrote up the visit and described the barbarian chief that he was of a very kind and gentle nature unless some one crossed and provoked him; then he became beside himself. On one occasion he caught a man who had worried him, in his hands, swung him high above his head, shook him in the air and brought him down with a crash on the floor. How many people you and I know who are like the New Zealand chief. Let them have their way in all things and they are just lovely, but just provoke or cross them and then come experiences of an earthquake or cyclone order.

2. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN ALL HAVING SINNED.

The text puts this beyond all question, “for all have sinned.” The explanation of course of this general sinning is to be found in the universal inheritance of a bad heart to begin with.

What is sin? The accepted definition is that it is the voluntary transgression of a known Divine law. Suppose we take the ten commandments that in a federal way cover every kind of wickedness. Who has kept them inviolate? They forbid idolatry, profanity, irreverence, Sabbath desecration, dishonor to parents, killing, stealing, adultery, coveting and false witnessing. If any person before me has not broken one of these laws I would be glad to have him stand up. Suppose we wait a minute to see if such a person is here, one who has never broken one of the Ten Commandments.

I remember once hearing a preacher request any one in his audience who had never stolen or taken anything that belonged to another to arise. One gentleman arose, when the preacher in a significant tone asked him if he had been a soldier in the late war, when suddenly the man sat down, while a general smile went around.

An evangelist once asked all in his congregation who had never told a lie to arise. Two individuals stood up when the preacher requested the audience to kneel in prayer for the two biggest liars he had yet seen in his life.

All smiling aside, where is the person who has not broken the letter itself of one of the Ten Commandments. In a word all have sinned.

But some will say I do not remember to have offended against the letter of the law. Very good, then take the spirit of the law and see who escapes. The Saviour long ago showed the spiritual side of the Commandments, and said that to be angry is as murder, and that to look upon a woman improperly was adultery. Idolatry is the elevation of some creature into God's place, and coveting is theft unfledged. As we learn these facts from Scripture who is able to lift up his head and say I have not sinned.

Nor is this all, for Christ says if we offend in one of these Commandments we have broken all. Truly if a man is willing to sin against God in one respect, he certainly will in another. Moreover the result is one of general woe. Suppose for instance, as one has said, you were suspended over an abyss by a chain of ten links, and one should be broken I Would you not go down just as certainly and swiftly as if three or five or all the links had been sundered?

Somehow there is a conviction abroad that if a man can willingly violate one commandment of heaven, he will not require much urging to break another. In illustration I remember years ago to have read of a gentleman sitting in a hotel one Sabbath morning. Near him two other gentlemen were playing cards. He endured the painful spectacle a while and then suddenly called out to the hotel waiter to run quickly to his room and bring him certain valuable articles he had left on his table. One of the card-players had the curiosity to ask him why he made such a request. The gentleman with great emphasis replied that when he saw persons around deliberately breaking one of God's laws in Sabbath desecration he did not know when it might please them to break another law, say for instance as to stealing, and so he thought it wisest to secure his property.

Certainly men do not see themselves. They do not stop to think. Alas for it, that every one who will speak the truth is compelled to say that in the sorrowful past he has sinned.

I do not mean to say that we cannot be washed and sanctified and by the indwelling grace and presence of Christ be kept from sinning. That, thank God, is true also. We only mean to say that in the past, all, save Jesus Christ, have at some time or in some way, sinned against God.

3. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN ALL HAVING COME SHORT OF GOD'S GLORY.

There can be no question of this, for the statement of the text is plain; all have come short of the glory of God.

There is a great difference in regard to the possession of man's glory. Gladstone and Bismarck, Grant and Lee obtained it, while you and I have failed. If some men came to our city, the streets would be crowded with welcoming thousands, houses would be illuminated, rockets ascend and cannon thunder. But many of us might come and go and the community would be none the wiser.

Some have succeeded in obtaining the glory of men, but when it comes to the glory of God all alike have failed.

What is the glory of God? Many have been the answers. Some say it is eternal life. Others say heaven. Still others affirm that it is the perfect, flawless character, such as is drawn in the law and requirements of the Bible. A fourth answer is that it is the honor which God gives as a reward on earth and in heaven, based on individual merit and faithfulness alone. A fifth explanation is that it is the holiness of God Himself.

Evidently it is difficult to tell what it means. The heart knows better here than the head. The soul feels at this place what the lip cannot express. But let the term glory of God stand for all we have mentioned, eternal life, heaven, Divine honor, flawlessness of life, God's resplendent holiness—concerning this galaxy of shining blessings we are all bound to say, that standing in our own strength and wisdom, unhelped by Divine grace we all come short of the glory of God. Any one of them is the glory of God, and who of us without Christ could have measured up to or obtained them.

The expression "come short" is powerful. I see an arrow shot at a target, but falling this side of the mark. It came short. I see a man endeavoring to leap a chasm. He misses the other bank and goes crashing down into the canyon. He came short. So has the human race in itself tried to reach heaven, attain character, and be clothed with the honor and rewards of God. It was a great leap they thought they made in their moral philosophies and life sacrifices, but they came short. History said so, God said so, and they felt it.

But one person says I did not fail as much as another did; and one age and country did not sink as low as another. True, but all come short of God's glory, and so the catastrophe is wonderfully similar.

Let us see how this is the case. Here is a call in military ranks for men who measure exactly six feet. Some applicants are only five feet six, others five feet eight, still others five, ten and eleven, and some are within half an inch of the standard. Yet all are rejected, and the man who is five feet eleven inches and a half finds himself in the rejected company of those who fell short six inches. They all came short.

Suppose some of us had to jump n chasm six feet wide in order to save our lives. One leaps only four feet, another five, a third five feet six inches. All go crashing down the precipice together. It took a six foot leap to make the safe landing, and no one covered the distance.

So we say to the entire human race, fall into line. Kings and peasants, princes and beggars, generals, statesmen, citizens, soldiers, preachers and laymen all get into line. Now then let every one, whether he be clothed in silk or rags, strike his breast with his hand and cry out, “We have all come short of the glory of God.”

Are we all in the dust? Well, that is just where God wants us; and where we must all get before Christ can save us.

4. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THERE BEING PARDON FOR US ALL.

The text says there is no difference—”being justified freely.” Of course this does not mean that every one in the world does secure pardon, but can if he will.

It is so free that it is for all just as much for the tramp on the road as for the king on his throne; just as truly for the poor man as for the millionaire. It is for the young and the aged, the illiterate and the philosopher.

It comes just as swiftly to one as the other, and just as freely and abundantly. It never stops to examine the house in which you live whether it be a palace or a hovel. It asks no questions about the kind of clothes you wear whether silk or jeans; nor on what alley, street or avenue you reside, nor what may be the amount of your income. There is no difference, all are justified freely who will accept pardon.

Is it not wonderful that men should doubt this blessed Bible truth. The trouble is they make God such an one as themselves. Affected by material circumstances they would make the Almighty partial, and a respecter of persons. Listen to the Word, ““God would have all men believe and come to the knowledge of the truth;” “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Now look at His gifts of air and sunshine. They are as much for one person as another, and are symbolic of the like freedom and fullness of His grace and salvation.

I have noticed that the telephone wires in our cities go to large and fine looking houses; none to hovels. But the lines of Divine grace and love are sent to any and all houses, and to the humblest as quickly as to the lordly residence. I have noticed that certain lovely tints and colors are peculiar to the mansions of the rich; but God has a crimson stain that came from Calvary, which He places on the lowliest abode on the obscurest street; and when He applies it to a palace it is the same scarlet color; He has nothing better in heaven.

I started housekeeping in a very humble way. Rather than go in debt, our first center table was a dry goods box, and our two arm chairs we made ourselves out of barrels, cushioned with straw and covered with red calico. I live today in a three story house with pleasant and comfortable furniture made at the factories. But the Lord came a# quickly to bless my soul when I lived in one room as He does now when I keep house in ten.

I have seen altars filled with all kinds of people seeking forgiveness of sin. There were the blonde curls of childhood, the grizzled locks of middle life, and the gray hairs of old age. The faded coat or dress was by the side of rustling silk or shining broadcloth. The poor tradesman was next to the scholar or professional man. I noticed at the same time that the silk and broadcloth secured more ghostly counsel and attention from their fellow creatures than did the obscure and less favored in face, person and purse. But I also noticed that heaven was rigidly impartial. That God came as quickly in response to prayer and faith to the unrefined as to the accomplished, and to the poor as to the wealthy. In a word, there is no difference; we can all be justified no matter who we are, what we have done or left undone. The debt has been paid, the door of heaven is open and the cry to the whole world is come, and take of the water of life freely.

5. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE WITH US IN REGARD TO THESE FULL BENEFITS OF THE GREAT REDEMPTION.

The text says, “The redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” What is this redemption? He who regards it as simply the pardon of sin has failed to take in the meaning of the word. He who makes it to be escape from hell and the gaining of heaven has not grasped the fullness of the salvation of Christ.

The word redemption has in it the idea of a complete recovery. It means repurchasing or ransoming, and overflows with the thought of rescue.

The illustrations of the meaning of the word are even more striking. A field that for years has been lying out untouched by hoe or plow, covered with weeds and brambles, and then afterwards fenced in and made to smile with a beautiful and profitable harvest is a field redeemed.

A preacher was once approached by a boy carrying a cage filled with birds. He desired to sell them. The preacher’s heart felt strangely moved in behalf of the little captives and bought them all. After paying the money down in the lad’s hands, the new master of the birds opened the cage door and let them all fly out. With wet eyes but warm heart he saw them flutter away through the air, and he said as they flew off into the sky they were all chirping and singing and they seemed to say, “Redeemed—Redeemed.”

A still more remarkable illustration of the word has been seen in connection with certain occurrences in the days of Slavery. Now and then a Slave owner being pressed by debt or some kind of obligation, would be under the necessity of parting with one or more of his servants. In certain towns and cities there was what was called a Slave-block, and the man or woman to be sold was placed upon it and auctioneered off to the highest bidder. It was a scene never to be forgotten when the husband and father thus stood, and heard the bids made upon him. The circle of rough-looking Slave buyers about the Block, felt the muscles of the Slave, asked his age and regarded him as merely a piece of goods or chattels. The wife and children of the man thus being sold, stood or crouched a few yards away and witnessed the sale with voiceless lips, but streaming eyes. In a few minutes he is to be “knocked down” to the highest bidder, and will be carried away to end his days on some far distant plantation of cotton or cane in Mississippi or Louisiana. They will never meet again on earth. It all comes to him as stealing a hurried glance at his loved ones, he hears the

words of the auctioneer; whose pitiless they sounded; “One thousand dollars is offered” — “Twelve hundred dollars.” “How much more am I offered?” “Are all bids in?” “Twelve hundred dollars.” “Going—going, gone!” Yes, truly, it is—gone. And the man now amid the loud wails of his family goes off with his new master, to return no more.

But suppose that just as some coarse, dark-featured man has bidden the twelve hundred dollars, and as the trembling Slave takes in the cruel visage before him and a horror of despair begins to fall upon him, that a benevolent-faced gentleman in the crowd, not only wealthy but a benefactor of his race, trying to do good at every opportunity, suddenly bids twelve hundred and fifty, and still higher as his competitor raises the amount. Suppose this kindly heart, who has done the like thing often before, should bid beyond the reach of every other man, and for the sum of eighteen hundred dollars has the Slave turned over to him. It is not to retain him as a slave, however, but to set him at liberty from that hour. He tells with shining face, the joy-intoxicated man “you are free. I have redeemed you.” Suppose in addition to this act, the wealthy gentleman purchases the family of the man and then sets them all free together; now then you have some idea of the deep, sweet meaning of the word Redemption.

So were we on the Slave-block of sin. The world and the devil were bidding for our souls. You know well what bondage to them means; what separations, tears, labors and death. Right in the midst of this bidding came one wearing a crown of thorns and saying, “I will bid for him.” To the question what will you give, He answered: “I will give the gold of my blood, and the silver of my tears. I give myself for him.” And thank God, we were struck down to Christ. There was no one who could outbid Jesus. There was no price in all the universe equal to what He paid down at Calvary. And so we became the Lord’s property, and in becoming His were set free; Free from sin, the world and the devil in a word Redeemed.

Paul says in Titus 2 a4: “He gave Himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” Here now we have it. To be redeemed from all iniquity is to be made holy. Christ’s salvation was never intended to stop with pardon, but to sweep on farther, and to go down deeper, giving us a pure heart and settling us in a holy life.

The Bible shows us what “the redemption in Christ Jesus” is by a reference to certain characters in its pages. I mention only one, and that one Peter.

As a rough fisherman without God, he must have been a most unattractive individual. When he was converted and in his impulsive way following Christ there was a marvellous change. Still, however, he was fearful and hotheaded. But after the baptism of the Holy Ghost, with his heart purified and soul and tongue on fire boldly preaching, patiently suffering and humbly yet triumphantly dying for the Saviour, it is like looking on another man, and in itself tells louder than words what is “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

It was a redemption from haste of speech, religious narrowness, dread of man and fear of death. It was the power to face a frowning world, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, and to live daily as he wrote in one of his epistles, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”

Look at the Demoniac filled with ten thousand devils tearing and cutting himself and wandering with fearful cries up and down the banks of Lake Galilee in order to see what the bondage of the devil is. Then to know Christ’s redemption, see the same man with the unclean spirits all gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and afterwards sent back to his home and community as an evangelist to tell what great things the Lord had done for him.

Life is full of illustrations and commentaries upon the word Redemption. A few months ago I saw a man who under the demon of intemperance had been sent twenty-seven times to Inebriate Asylums. All had failed. Then he came to Jesus, and Christ with His blessed releasing power, saved and sanctified him, and the man is today one of the most useful Christian workers in the land.

I have seen backsliders who had drifted far from God, and had been in coldness, darkness and hardness for years, suddenly arrested, broken, melted, reclaimed, refilled and refired, and from that time became the gentlest, humblest, purest and most zealous among the servants of God. This also is the redemption of Jesus.

Some of you know what this redemption has done for you. Justification secured your pardon; regeneration made you a new creature in Christ Jesus, but there was something left in your heart that gave you much trouble. There was a dark nature or principle within that brought you days of defeat and gloom. You had love, but it was not perfect. You had peace, but it did not abide. At last you were told that Christ had a work of grace that would meet every spiritual need, and richly satisfy every longing of the soul. You sought the blessing for hours or days. And it came. O, how thankful you are that it came. Since that moment you know what heart repose and life victory mean. You feel every instant that the blood cleanseth, and a tender quiet joy bubbles like a pure spring up in the heart. You feel kept by the power of God. In a word, you are justified freely, sanctified wholly and preserved blameless. This is a part of what is meant by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Why do not the people come to Him and find out what He is, and has, and can do for them. The Bible says there is “riches of grace” in Christ; yet many of His people would never impress you that they were rich, but rather poverty-stricken and bankrupt. Why should there be sadness and defeat in our hearts and lives when He Whom we serve has all mercy, all love and all power?

There is no end to the redemption that is in Him; and this redemption is for any and all. There is no difference. All are welcome. The humblest and weakest person here can drink as deep of the fountain of salvation as did Paul. You can live as near the Lord as did John. You can be the best of earth and rise as high in heaven as the loftiest archangel! Who will accept what God has for them? Who will help himself? May God grant that the last one of you will arise and enter upon the privileges and boundless possibilities of grace and blessedness provided by the Saviour for every child of man.

CHAPTER 4

SONSHIP

“Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” — 1 John 3:2, 3.

There are three great truths taught by this passage of Scripture. The first is evident at a mere glance; the second is just as truly taught but not as quickly seen; while the third is buried still more deeply, and yet is the most important of the three. To the question of surprise why this should be so, the reply is that the God of Grace and Nature is the same God, and He who hides certain ores under the surface of the earth, and buries gold, silver and gems farther down, acts consistently in the spiritual kingdom, when He secretes precious truths under the meaning of the word, and still more sacred mysteries still deeper.

I call attention to the three great lessons of the text: and first

1. THE FACT OF SONSHIP.

This prominent thought of the text is suggestive of other truths which illumine and glorify the first great fact. I present them as they arise in my mind.

First: If we are Sons of God then there must have been a spiritual birth.

There is no way of obtaining entrance into the kingdom of God except by birth. You cannot grow into it, nor reform into it, nor improve into it, but you must be born into it. Just as there is but one way of getting into this materiel world of ours, viz. by birth, so there is but one way of finding entrance into the kingdom of grace. We must be born into it. A physical birth for the physical world, a spiritual birth for the spiritual world. The Saviour's words are explicit here, “Ye must be born again.” “Except ye be born of the Spirit, ye cannot see the kingdom of God.” Just as distinctly John in his gospel affirms that this birth is “not of blood,” i. e., it is not an inheritance. Our parents are powerless to transmit grace to us. “Nor of the will of the flesh;” surely no one believes that it is in man's power to regenerate himself. “Nor of the will of man;” not only can no individual

bring this heavenly birth about by any mental or physical energy of his own, but neither can any collection of individuals. No church although in possession of the Ark and Oracles of God has power to make the moral Ethiop white. Every one of the denominations might assemble together and with all the pomp and show beheld in some ecclesiasticisms bid the weeping sinner to be born again and there would be no result save one of disappointment to him and mortification to themselves. It takes the power of God to effect this marvellous work.

The Almanac date of our conversion is pleasant to recall and quote; but some through various reasons are not able to state the exact hour. Still the fact of the spiritual birth is not less true and important.

I have heard some speak lightly of this wonderful time and occurrence; and such comparative disparagement I could never understand. To me the day in which I was born of God has ever and will ever be a most precious and sacred date. The day and place of our natural birth have a curious power to stir our sensibilities, but it ought not to move us as much as the memory of the hour when born of the spirit we wept, laughed or shouted and our heart and lip cried out for the first time, "Abba Father," and "My Lord and my God."

Second: If Sons of God there should be a family resemblance.

If a man should come to you saying that he was the son of an old-time friend and acquaintance, you would at once look for certain corroboratory signs, and there would always be such if he was the child of that friend. There would be features in the face, accents of the voice, carriage of the body, mannerisms, not to say peculiarities, that would bring at once the friend of other years to mind. I never saw a child yet but would bear one or more of these signs. With the brow and eye of the mother there would be a motion of the hand, a toss of the head, an utterance of the lip that would declare the father beyond a doubt.

So it is impossible to become God's child without the fact being evident. The resemblance must and will be there. The new light in the eye, the purity of speech, gentleness of manner, love in the act, and spirituality of life all declare the family above to which the man belongs.

I remember once to have known two ministers of the gospel who lived in the same town, but belonged to different denominations. One was a

blustering kind of man, loved publicity, sought prominent seats on the platform and in the synagogue, and when coming down the street fairly monopolized the pavement. Somehow there was nothing to remind one of Jesus, and there were numbers of people who doubted that he was a child of God. The other preacher was one of the humblest and gentlest of men. On the street he gave way to everybody without appearing cringing. He did not shrink from duty, but cared not for prominence for its mere sake. His words were always kind and his life heavenly. To see him anywhere was to think of Christ, and all who knew him felt he was a member of the Divine family.

Third: If Sons of God there should be love for the rest of the family.

The spectacle of a divided household is always painful, and regarded as unnatural. Some of us have beheld such sights and were made to deplore the trouble itself and the unhappy consequences which flowed therefrom. I have seen two brothers refusing to speak for years. I have seen two sisters, the only surviving children of the family enter into a lifelong separation and hatred of each other. But no matter how many such instances we behold we never get accustomed to them, but continue to deplore and condemn. The very unnaturalness of the thing forever prevents it from being looked upon with approval. In the quarrels of little children old nurses have been heard to say to them. "You will get along better when oceans roll between you." Just as vividly the speech of a Confederate Colonel rings in my ears today, when in trying to reconcile two estranged brothers, he said, "Nothing my brother could do would ever make me refuse to speak to him."

Here then is the standard adopted by the world for the family circles of earth. It is one of mutual love. Shall there be a lower standard for the heavenly family? In Antioch the fact of the love of Christians for one another proved who they were; "See how these Christians love one another," they used to say.

This love should prove the Divine relationship today, and does so. For we may prate as we will about past experience and conscious acceptance with God, but if we have feelings of bitterness and estrangement to God's children we are ourselves in the gall and bondage of sin. If any man says he loves God and hateth his brother he is a liar, says John.

There had been nothing that has blocked the progress of Christianity more than the strifes, dissensions, jealousies and warrings of the different denominations and churches. Oftentimes the preacher and evangelist will labor unavailingly for a revival for days and weeks, and at last find out to their surprise that there has been division and enmity among God's people. Of course God would not come down upon such divided congregation. In one of my revival services in a Southern city; I was made to marvel at the absence of the Spirit in the congregation. On the eighth day I asked if there could possibly be any estrangements among them. A steward replied that the church at that point was like a loving family. Six hours later not less than three grave church quarrels were brought to view and it was developed that this same steward's family was not on speaking or visiting terms with five other families in the congregation. One elderly lady remarked that while she felt no enmity to other church members, yet there were several about whom she must candidly confess that she preferred to have them walk on one side of the street while she stayed on the other. Here was a revelation indeed. I could but think what if Gabriel in heaven would say that while he felt no particular ill-will toward the Archangel Michael, yet he preferred him to stay on one side of the Throne while he remained on the other.

Let no man deceive you, brethren, for "he that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness," and "if a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar;" while Jesus says, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love to one another."

Fourth: If Sons of God there should be devotion to our Father's interest.

Here the son is at once recognized. Strangers and outsiders are not concerned about the state of a man's property, and can see wrong done to it, and lose no sleep. But the son is not and cannot be so indifferent even though he has already received his own inheritance. Suppose for instance a man's store should be rifled by a rabble. Many would regret the occurrence, but would say it is none of my business and pass by. But suddenly a gentleman appears on the scene who gives an astonished look, utters an indignant outcry hurls himself upon the marauders and pilferers, and sweeps the store of their presence. That man is the son of the owner of the store.

God has a cause on earth. His interests in many respects and in many places are totally neglected. Numbers of people shake the head and say

what a pity certain things are not done in the church. What a pity that salaries are not paid, the church painted, and a parsonage built. What a pity that certain Missions and Houses of Refuge could not be kept up. And so they relieve themselves in sighing, and lose no sleep or money over the needs of Zion. These people are not God's children. If they were, they would act differently. Their hearts would melt, and eyes fill at the sight of the languishing work of the Lord. Their hearts would burn to help, their feet would fly, and their money be gladly given to meet the need and remove the distress.

Two scenes widely different in character, but springing from the same spirit often come up to me when I think on this point of devotion to God. One was connected with a church in a small Southern town. The people were backslidden, and the fact could be seen in the forlorn appearance of their place of worship. Broken window panes, missing shutters and crazy doorsteps told the story from the outside. Inside the building, the ragged aisle carpet and discolored pews and walls were mutely eloquent. Just back of the pulpit hung a piece of damask fifteen feet long and eight feet wide that was once handsome and ornamental, but it had faded, become dusty, and was now fallen away from some of its fastenings. There moved to this town a young married woman who, in her first attendance at church took in the situation. There were other ladies who seemed not to care for the spectacle I have described, but her eyes filled with tears. Next day in passing the church I heard the sound of a tack hammer, and quietly entering the door saw the young woman standing on a stepladder at work on the damask curtain, arranging its wide borders and causing it to fall once more in graceful folds. She was alone, and her hands had been busy all over the house to its decided improvement. It was the form of one of God's daughters that I saw in the subdued light of the closed building. She was in her Father's House. She did not care to be seen or known, but loved her Father and was glad to minister to Him and to His Sanctuary. I looked at the scene with melted heart and misty eyes for a while and went away, but the picture has often returned to memory. The young woman is now in her grave, but He who said that a cup of cold water given for Him would not lose its reward, has long ago blessed her for her devotion to her Father's house.

The second scene took place in New Orleans in a church that had been heavily burdened with debt for years. Most of the members seemed to be contented to bear the reproach heaped upon them for this financial obligation. There was one man among them who continually grieved over

it, and finally requested a dozen of the abler members to meet him in the pastor's study. There he got them upon their knees and talked to God about what He was to them, and what He had done for them. Tears soon began to flow; when suddenly rising this devoted son of the Father said that he would give a thousand dollars to lift the debt, when lo! in ten minutes the whole amount had been met. All of this was brought about by one who was such a true child of God as to be devoted to His interests. Fifth: If sons of God we are being educated.

The general rule and practice seems to be to send our children off to school. In distant cities and colleges they lay the foundation and acquire the knowledge that is to fit them for the duties and conflicts of life.

So God has put us to College. We are far from the Father's house and from the final home of the soul, on the planet earth going through the University of Life. We are being educated and trained for the heavenly state, and fitted for companionships, angelic and divine. A wonderful Faculty is over us whose names are Sorrow, Poverty, Sickness, Disappointment, Prosperity, Adversity—under whose teaching we are made to forget much and learn much. Over them all is the great Teacher Himself, who employs them to impress the truths He would have us learn. What strange text books are placed in our hands, and how we make their pages wet with our tears before we master the volume! A new arithmetic is studied in which we find that to lose one's life for God is to gain it. A new Logic in which love and kindness are the major and minor premises, and happiness the conclusion. A new Astronomy in which the Star of Bethlehem wheels into view and Heaven with all its glories becomes visible.

What lessons we learn; and how hollow some things are found to be that we once thought solid. How every pleasure out of Christ soon cloys upon the spiritual palate, and comes with ever diminishing power to the soul. How the cackling mirth of thoughtless youth gradually disappears, and a sweet seriousness of spirit and manner takes its place. How sin is hated and shunned, and purity and piety sought after and prized instead.

Sixth: If Sons of God we are in communication with those at Home.

The great consolation when absent from our earthly home is the reception of letters. In the time of my college life how I loved the days that brought a letter from home. Connection was thus kept up and the distance was in some way bridged. So should we be in communion with our Father in

heaven if we are indeed His children. I wonder how many of you receive communications from Him, and when you heard last. When a week elapsed without my hearing from home when I was at school I grew alarmed; and so should the Christian who has days and weeks to pass without spiritual communion and Divine messages to the soul. There is an Experience where there is a delivery a number of times through the day, and heavenly telegrams continually flash their way into the soul. Some of us can say this moment I hear His voice, and there have been fifty dispatches received since the hour of worship began.

Seventh: If Sons of God then we are sustained by those at home.

I remember I gave myself no worry about my college expenses. They were considerable it is true, but certain loved ones had promised all necessary funds for support should come, and they did.

If we are God's children He will take care of us. The remittance of relief will arrive, the supply will come, for He has promised it. Some of us could give thrilling incidents of empty flour barrels, and depleted pocket books, and the help that came at the hour of greatest need from unexpected quarters. It is our duty to study and work on in this University of Life, and God will provide for and sustain us. When I entered the ministry a preacher slipped a folded piece of letter paper in my hand, saying, "I have no money to give you, but here is something far better than I can do; read it when you get to yourself." An hour later on the guards of the steamboat I read in the fading light of the sunset the words, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed." It was God's promissory note. I have never parted with it. It has been good these twenty years, and heaven has honored it every time I presented it.

"In some way or other
The Lord will provide.
It may not be my way,
It may not be thy way,
And yet in his own way,
The Lord will provide."

Eighth: If Sons of God we are going home one of these days.

Just as we send for our children at the end of the school or college session, and here they come trooping home, so will our Father send for us and so will we return.

It is a blessed thought that at any hour the messenger and message may reach us to “come home.” Some of us as little children have been playing in the yard under the trees until the shadowy of evening began to fall, when a servant drew near and said, “Your father says come home.” At once we laid down our playthings of flowers, bits of stick and broken glass, and followed the servant into the house. We had such pleasant homes we were not heartbroken to do this.

God’s messenger sooner or later will find us at our work or play. His name is Death. As his touch falls upon us and we look upon his dark form we will hear the message, “Your Father says come home.”

Some of us will not be sorry to go. How gladly we will lay down the work tools or playthings of this world and follow the messenger upward toward the heavenly mansion that is all ashine and waiting for us.

It is a sweet thought to feel as the world sweeps on that it is carrying us to the home of the soul, that it is speeding through the air in swift flight for the Everlasting City. There are signs along the years that declare unmistakably the approaching end of the journey. We mark them with interest as one would notice the familiar landmarks in an earthly trip. I heard a gentleman once describe his return home after an absence of years; that as he drew nearer and nearer, the well-known curve of the river, the line of hills, the forest, the orchard, the turn in the road, the rustic stile, the clump of trees near the house, and other familiar objects, all uprose one after another to the view, filling him with an increasing breathless interest, until finally as the old home itself stood out on the tree-studded and sloping lawn before him, a torrent of unrestrainable tears gushed down his face.

There are numerous signs of the approaching end of life’s journey, in grey hair, failing sight and hearing, enfeebled powers, weariness of body and that loneliness which comes from having lost many friends and loved ones by the way. They all declare the fact that you are nearly home.

Ninth: If Sons of God there will be a welcome for us.

It is sweet to feel there will be some at the Gate of Heaven awaiting us. I have seen persons standing at the door, or in the front of the house to welcome a long absent traveler. It was an experience never to be forgotten

to look up and see that loving group at the door. Father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children were all there. The joy of that moment paid for all the pain and suffering of the long absence of months or years.

That there will be a company awaiting us at the door of heaven I doubt not. All of you well know who will be there to greet you. The mother whose death left you to stand alone in the world; the little boy in whose grave the sun seemed to go down; both will be there to welcome you; their arms will twine about you and the sound of their well remembered voices will take away the pain of many lonely years.

The president of a church college was dying in Kentucky. He had been for long years a widower. Just as he was taking his last breath he looked up and with a flash of joy in his eyes he cried out, "My wife," and fell back dead. The scene made a deep impression upon the Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar, of Mississippi, and he asked Bishop Wightman what he thought of it. The Bishop replied, "God sent His angels to escort his soul to heaven, and allowed the wife of the dying man to come along with them. As his soul was leaving the body he looked up and saw her; that is all about it."

On my return from the Holy Land after an absence of four months, I witnessed a scene at the landing of the ship that I never will be able to forget. The whole deck was filled with passengers whose eyes were fixed on the pier where we were to land, and which was thronged with a great concourse of people who had come down expecting friends and relatives from across the sea. There was not a sound as the two throngs looked at each other, and with eager eyes tried to separate loved ones from the crowd. While fifty yards still intervened, I heard an elderly man give a choking sob and say, "Yonder is my daughter." A lady stood her little boy on an elevated place and pointing with her hand, while her face glowed and tears dripped, said, "There is your father." Others equally oblivious and careless of being heard would cry out in the same way, wave the hand or handkerchief, and utter with husky voice the name of some beloved one. Others sank back upon seats after the mutual recognition, covering their faces with their hands; still others laughed or wept hysterically, and some few men hallooed across the distance to each other. I heard one cry out from the ship, "I thought we would never see you nor the land again." "Yes," came back a glad shout, "we knew of the storm and prayed God to bring you through."

Finally the steamer touched the wharf, the gang way was run out and there followed a scene made up of handshakes, embraces, smiles, tears and joyous and tender salutations that could not be described. There was no one expecting me, so all I had to do was to view the pathetic scene. My own cheeks were wet and heart fairly ached with the emotions excited within me by the occurrences of the hour. I thought as I leaned against the bulwarks of the vessel, that so shall be the meeting and greetings of heaven. Memorable will be the hour in eternity when the Old Ship of Zion draws near with us to rejoin the bands of relatives and friends who have preceded us. They, I doubt not, will be looking out for us, and you know we will be looking for them. What a meeting it will be! what rapturous shouts and praises! what embraces of lifelong parted friends and loved ones.

“I think I should mourn o’er my sorrowful fate,
If sorrow in heaven could be,
If no one should be at the beautiful gate
There waiting and watching for me.”

Thank God all will have some one looking out for us. And they who have lingered long on the shore of life and can say in view of many burials, “My company has gone before”—will have a goodly throng to greet them as they arrive.

How we love to think of those that have gone ahead; the good and true who fell early in life, and the old friends of your father and mother whom you met and was taught to venerate around the family hearthstone And there is the sister who passed away in girlhood, and the brother who went down in battle. Then the father fell asleep, and after a while the mother went after him. Then the young wife faded away, and the children went up one by one, and left you lonely in he midst of empty rooms and vacant chairs. Thank God they will all be there to meet you.

“While on Pisgah’s top I’m standing
Looking toward the vernal shore,
There I seem to see them banding
Just beside the Golden Landing,
Waiting to receive me o’er,
Precious one’s who’ve gone before.”

Tenth: If Sons of God there will be a family gathering.

I never saw a father yet but wanted all his children home at stated times. They may have married and been scattered everywhere, but the desire of the father is known, the letters of reminder are sent, and here on Thanksgiving Day or in the Christmas Holidays they all come. What a bustle is in the house, what twinkling lights from the windows, what roaring fires up the chimney, what running about of the servants. The lawyer son is there from a distant city. The physician son has fled from his patients in still another city and come. A third son is present with a week's furlough from the army, and a still younger son has run down from college. Then there are daughters married and unmarried, and prattling grandchildren. What a bright, loving, joyous scene it is! And when all are sitting at the long dining table, and the silvery locked father at the head and the bespectacled, smiling mother at the foot glance down the double line of faces, elderly and youthful, grave and gay, all of them their own, and all under the old family roof tree once more; it is a picture so full of gladness, thankfulness, love and content, that no pencil pen, or artist brush could ever do it justice.

There is to be a great family gathering one of these days in the skies. Christ repeatedly spoke of it. In one place it is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. God's children will come up from every country and age and sit down together. They will drink the wine of the kingdom new at that time. What an assemblage it will be of the good, true and pure. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, kings, poets, priests, preachers, singers, in a word all of God's servants and witnesses who have lived, achieved, suffered and died for him will be there. The hymn says:

“Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;
Where the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul.”

No one is able to describe this scene. We have beheld the presence of one good and great man enliven a whole table or company; but think of a feast where all the spiritually great and good of this world are present. Where not only Abraham, David, Elijah and Paul are seen, but Knox and Calvin, Wesley and Whitefield, Payson and Summerfield, Cookman and Marvin.

Some of us doubtless would do nothing but look at these moral giants of the past, but for one face which shines over all, and that is the chief and crowning glory of the hour. No one need ask whose it is; all know the One who wore the crown of thorns for us, and who died to bring us to heaven.

God grant we all may be there. There is nothing like it on earth, and nothing can surpass it in eternity. The poor take rank, the humble are exalted, the last are first, the “Dying Thief “ commands a great audience, and Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany who broke the alabaster box, have as many eyes upon them as one of the prophets of old or the sweet Singer of Israel himself. All these are sons and daughters of God, all feel welcome, and are at home, and all have come to stay.

The second leading thought of the text is:

2. THE FACT OF SOMETHING GREATER AWAITING US IN HEAVEN.

Read the text, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” Sons now, but a glory and exaltation is to come that at the present has not been revealed. Wonderful as is the dignity and blessedness of being Sons of God, yet says the Book it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Is not this enough to stagger the mind, and fill the heart with adoring love and wonder?

Daniel referring to our heavenly state says we shall shine as the sun.” Paul says our bodies will be “glorious,” and the writer of Revelation, on beholding one thus glorified, fell at his feet to worship him, but the shining one said, “See thou do it not for I am one of thy fellow servants.” A fellow servant, and yet he looked divine! The nearest description that John gives of this celestial state and appearance is in the text I am speaking from—
”We shall be like Him.”

By regeneration and sanctification we are made like Him in nature and character on earth; but the likeness here spoken of is something external and corporeal as well. This is certainly very wonderful, for we know that the vision Paul had of Him in glory, and the glorious appearance granted to John on Patmos could not be described by the first, and caused the second to fall prostrate. So when the text says, “We shall be like Him,” the soul is filled with amazement and thrilling anticipations of its own coming glory.

“We shall see Him as He is.” Here is the veritable Christ, only transfigured with the glory He had with the Father before the world was. And we shall be like Him! The redeemed race will look like Gods. Truly the soul should be lost here in wonder, love and praise.

The third thought of the text is:

3. THE EFFECT THAT THIS COMING PROMOTION AND GLORY SHOULD HAVE ON GOD'S CHILD.

The text is clear about it, "And every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure."

"Every one," that is every one who is a son of God; St. John was writing about God's children.

"This hope." What hope is he talking about? The hope of being like Christ in heaven, where we shall see Him as He is, and shall be like Him. The fact of this great unknown exaltation and dignity of the skies awaiting the child of God should stir in him a mighty aspiration or hope for it. It would be surprising if it did not; and yet there are some who are not thus moved. Listen to His words

"Every one that hath this hope in him." The Apostle does not say that every Christian or child of God has this hope, but "Every one that hath this hope in him." Some have it not. They are satisfied with a plodding religion, and the prospect of a bare entrance into heaven. Many have told me that I will be satisfied just to get inside the gate. No burning desire here to rise up high in the favor of God and courts of glory. It is simply the safety of heaven they want and not the likeness to the Son of God as He is to be seen.

There are others, however, who want to stand high in spiritual things; who desire not only to be like Christ as He was on earth, but like Him as He is to be revealed in heaven. This, of course, will produce a certain moral effect on the man. He is not content with simply being justified, and remaining a son of God; "He purifieth himself." So then impurity is left in the child of God. Here is another death blow to Zinzendorfianism.

But an objector says the man here purifieth himself, and hence this is no Divine work. My reply is that this does not alter the fact of impurity remaining in the regenerated man. And again, the man's purifying himself antedates and is always connected with God's cleansing of the soul. God never does His part until the man does his. A man craving the Divine inward purification, must prove it by a human outward purification. Paul says to regenerated Corinthians, "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of

the flesh and spirit,” and this was to be done in order that they might “perfect holiness in the fear of God.” In the Bible we are exhorted to “sanctify ourselves”; but in the same Book we are told that “the God of peace will sanctify us wholly.” There is a human and a Divine sanctification. This is God’s plan, and He never deviates from it. So when a son of God has “this hope” of a great coming glory and dignity in heaven, he purifies himself. And when he does that God comes down upon him in sanctifying fire.

The character and measure of this purity is mentioned in the text.

“As He is pure.”

This one expression shows what has happened. This is no human work. No man can work himself into a spiritual cleanness even with, and like to that of Christ. The words, “As He is pure,” show conclusively that at the end of man’s personal cleansing, the Saviour stepped in and purified him with the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.

O that God’s people everywhere would begin to pant and cry out for this Divine cleansing. O to be pure even as He is pure. How can we be content to live without such a blessing when we are told that it is for us.

The disciples as children of God were so anxious for this purifying that they left homes, family, occupation and everything for ten days, while shut up in an upper room, they waited for the descending fire. It finally came, and afterwards Peter writing about it said their hearts were “purified by faith.”

Caughey wanted it so badly that day after day saw him praying on his face in lonely fields beyond Baltimore. It came, and as it swept with cleansing power through his already regenerated soul, he leaped to his feet and told God he could now go to England with the gospel message. He did, and thousands found Christ as a consequence.

John S. Inskip so panted after it that his every breath became a prayer. For hours he would be on his face begging for the blessing. One Sunday morning while standing in his pulpit, and while uttering the words, “O Lord, I am wholly and forever thine,” the fire fell, his heart was purified and he at once entered upon a work and ministry apostolic in its spirit and worldwide in its result.

Cornelius wanted it so much that he sent his servant thirty or forty miles after Peter to tell him about it. A preacher friend of mine traveled seven hundred miles to obtain instructions how to find this pearl of great price. When I heard of it, I was the first of a large congregation to bow at the altar and sought the blessing unweariedly, pertinaciously and inconsolably until it came.

I thank God it is for every child of God; and when we desire it above all other things it will come. I marvel how any Christian can hear of such a grace and not crave its possession.

O that scores who hear me would rush to the altar now, and be of one mind, of one accord and in one place, begin to besiege heaven for the Baptism of the Holy Ghost which purifies the heart and empowers for service. God grant that you will never cease your importunities and cries until heaven answers, and the same blessing that filled the disciples may fill you, set you on fire, and send you flying everywhere with the tidings, not only of pardon, but of purity, and not only of free, but of full salvation.

CHAPTER 5

CHRIST LOST AND FOUND

“And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple. — Luke 2:43—46

There are many wonderful truths and precious lessons of grace under the surface meaning of the Word of God. I do not say with some that there is a natural, spiritual and celestial meaning to every verse; but I do say there are many blessed facts in the Word of God that will never be seen by the hasty reader. It pays to tarry over Bible paragraphs. Blessed is the man that reads meditatively and prayerfully. The text is an illustration of these hidden lessons of grace. I present you what I have drawn from it. And first

1. THE REMARKABLE TARRYINGS OF THE LORD.

The text says “the child Jesus tarried behind.”

There are many mysterious things about the Divine Being. One of them is the very fact hinted at in the passage, viz., the Lord’s passing by or out of the life at certain times. Again and again it seems to the regenerated soul as if He was about to leave it finally. It has occurred so frequently as an experience, and comes up so strikingly in certain cases in the Scripture that it is enough to arouse thought and diligent search for the reason.

We see it in the case of Abraham when sitting before his tent he beheld three celestial beings passing by, one of whom was the Lord. And it is true that they were going by and would not have turned aside had not Abraham ran after them and begged them to stop. In the instance of Jacob we find that just before he received the great blessing at Peniel and while wrestling with the stranger, the Lord said, “Let me go.” If Jacob had loosed his hold He would have gone. With the Syrophenician woman we see the same treatment. Christ turned to her and said He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Suppose her faith had failed here, and she had accepted that movement away from her as final; then would the world have been denied one of the most heart-thrilling instances of victorious

faith and prayer that is on record. At Emmaus the identical course is repeated, when Christ who had been walking by the side of the two disciples made as if He would have gone on and by. And He would have done so if they had not pressed him to stay.

And here is the same thing in principle occurring in Jerusalem, where it is said the child Jesus tarried behind, allowing those who had been with Him to go on without him. Who has not felt a similar experience in the spiritual life? Christ seems to go by the tent still. He has a way of withdrawing right in the midst of prayer, and of passing by when you thought He would remain. Such an inexplicable feeling as if he was going to leave you has come over you at times. What does it all mean? It is not that Christ has a fluctuating love, nor is fitful in His treatment of us. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, and could not be capricious. What He does is in highest wisdom and in obedience to laws that most Christians do not take time to study and understand.

It must be remembered that there is a jealousy in love. God announces himself as a jealous God. He is worthy of being followed and sought after. Again there is the fact of free moral agency which can never be compelled, but has to be won over by a different treatment altogether. Again there is the fact of spiritual effort being required to develop the soul. The mother moves off from the child to make it walk to her. The Lord withdraws and is silent to make us pursue him and call after him. The victories that follow, the fresh discoveries made of God in these ardent pursuits after His vanishing presence enlarge and bless the soul beyond language to describe. Still again there are grades of salvation on earth and of reward in heaven. It is evident at a glance that under the same gospel and surroundings of all kinds that some Christians drag out a poor existence while others develop into moral stalwarts and become kings and priests unto God. The explanation is that the instant that God in harmony with the law s hinted at withdraws from the heart or life, the first class sit down at once in gloom or despair and let Him go; while the other class rise up at once and follow the retreating Lord, and with importunate prayer and patient waiting constrain him to return and remain. Like Abram they run after the angels. Like Jacob they say I will never let you go. Like the disciples at Emmaus they urge the retiring Christ to stay, and like the Syrophenician woman they with tears say, True, Lord, I am not worthy of the bread, but give me the crumbs. This was why Fletcher's face shone so. This was why Payson and Brainard can never be forgotten in the religious world. They were men who had a way of wrestling with God and would

take no denial. They had a way of looking and calling into the silent heavens until the answer and the King himself would come. In a word they ran after the angels, and if Jesus tarried they would at once seek and find Him.

2. CHRIST CAN BE LOST.

He was lost here according to this Scripture. And he was lost by those who loved him. And lost in Jerusalem and in the Temple! Each successive statement I make increases the wonder. And yet why be astonished when the same thing is happening today. Christ is still lost by his friends, and in Jerusalem and in the Temple.

When the question is put, how was it done; the answers are various, but the solemn fact of a Saviour parted from cannot be denied by certain heavy hearts. The language of the soldier to Ahab is in substance what they say in explanation: "As thy servant was busy here and there, lo! he was gone." Many say, I cannot tell how it happened, but one day I woke up to the fact that the Saviour was no longer with me.

Some lose Him in the bustle of life.

Joseph and Mary were so busy buying, and selling and getting ready for travel that their eyes got off Jesus and they drifted apart. Many have done just the same since. They never intended the thing to happen, but they became so absorbed that it did. In some of these cases there was no flagrant sin, but strange to say while attending to a business or occupation that was legitimate and proper they gradually let go of Christ. They were busy buying and selling, taking care of the children, attending to the husband and running around generally, when lo the loss was discovered. There were hours of laughing and talking, days were consumed in entertaining company, contact with many people distracted and diverted the mind so that one night in going to bed there was no Christ in the heart. They were fairly jostled out of the divine companionship by the multitude; and as a good man once said: "I was hustled out of my spirituality."

Again some people lose Christ in the church.

It is a fearful thought to think that Jesus is parted with in the service of God. But just as Joseph and Mary got separated from him in Jerusalem, it

has often been and still is the case. It was what happened to Eli's sons who became corrupt in the priesthood. It was what took place with Judas who retrograded from an apostle to a thief, betrayer and self-murderer. It is what is happening in a number of pulpits today. Preachers are losing Christ; the dark sad face, hard tone, and ununctionless sermon are unmistakable. It is what is taking place in Boards of Stewards, Ladies' Aid and Missionary Societies, and the pew as well. Numbers of souls are losing Jesus in Jerusalem and in the Temple.

In a great revival God gave me, among many persons at the altar was a preacher from a distant city. The people thought he was seeking sanctification, but he was groaning after a departed Christ and lost salvation. He took me into his confidence and I never have nor will reveal his name.

At another meeting the superintendent of the Sunday-school was on his face before the altar. I never saw a man weep so in my life; he shook with great sobs. I bent over him thinking that he wanted sanctification, when he groaned under his breath to me that he had lost Christ. Here was a backslider in charge of a Sunday-school of eight hundred children.

In the same meeting I was talking with a steward at the altar. The man's tears wet the rail on which he leaned. He groaned and sobbed so that it was some time before I could understand him. Being a prominent member of the church I thought he was at the altar consecrating himself with a view to receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, when between his groans he told me this. He said, "My wife has been at your meetings and is deeply moved. Last night she could not sleep, and woke me up at twelve o'clock crying out, 'Oh Will, I have lost Christ; tell me how to find him.' and 'Oh, Doctor,'" groaned the man, "I was speechless. She thought I had Christ, but I, too, have lost him."

Suppose every man in the church who passes the collection basket, and every usher who seats the audience, and every singer in the choir, and every prominent man or woman in the pew were compelled to stand up and publicly confess their spiritual condition today, what a shock would be occasioned on earth, and what an uproar of merriment would be heard in hell. You little know how many Christians have lost Jesus in Jerusalem, and more still in the Temple.

3. HOW CHRIST IS LOST.

The first answer suggested by the circumstances in the passage before us is that it is done through carelessness. What but heedlessness could have allowed Joseph and Mary to be separated from the Saviour. And the same thing today is the explanation when such a trouble befalls the soul. The Scripture expressly urges to watchfulness. It is while the virgins slumbered the midnight cry was raised; it was while the man slept that his enemy sowed tares in his field. And what I say unto one I say unto all, "Watch."

But how does the thing itself happen? What are the steps of this departure?

Christ is lost gradually. God loves us too much to leave us at once. Just as the light of day dies out of the west, so the divine light leaves the soul. There have been tender, gentle warnings enough, but the man absorbed in other things has not regarded them. There were looks and calls with each retiring step of heaven, but they were not noticed or obeyed. The angle of divergence was made in some neglected duty or some persisted-in questionable thing. It was so small a matter that as a moral angle it would have been called very acute indeed, but it was a divergence for all that from the straight Christ-like life, and meant that in time the man and his Saviour were certain to be parted. It would be a long period before ships thus sailing would disappear from each other, but that day would come at last, and sweeping the wide sea with a glass the companion vessel could not be found; she had dipped finally beneath the horizon. Thus gradually the soul loses Christ. The instant we cease moving on the parallel of a perfectly consecrated life, the fact of spiritual distance and the additional fact of an ever widening distance between us and Him, and the final disappearance of Christ out of the heart and life become as veritable a reality and as patent to other eyes as the spectacle of the parted ships on this ocean.

It seems that not by one great evil act are men parted from the Lord, but it is by a number of little acts, none of which are very grave and alarming. Just as a person does not get off of a high tower by jumping down from the top, but descends by hundreds of steps to the ground; so the Christian rarely ever brings himself down and away from the presence of Christ by one gross sin; but it is by a long line of little things said and done which were unspiritual, objectionable and reprehensible in an increasing degree that the calamity of a lost Christ takes place. One of the alarm signals hung out in the soul is a protracted spiritual coldness. Instead of going at once into a faithful self-examination and prayerful waiting upon God for help,

this signal is made to mean nothing by the statement that the Christian life is a faith life and not one of feeling. It is true the life is one of faith, but it is also one of feeling. The Bible says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength," and Christ said, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." In the Book of Revelation the fault that the Saviour found with a certain church was that it had lost its first love, and in another verse he said he would spew a lukewarm church out of his mouth. A protracted spiritual coldness means that Christ is leaving, and we should at once fly to Him and wait on Him until the clear assurance of His presence is restored.

Another way that Christ is lost by the Christian is by getting the eye off Christ and resting it on church work. This is what happened to the Jews. With all their boasted love of the Lord they let the Temple and Temple work come in between them and the Holy One. Devoted to the Temple, they killed the Lord of the Temple. How busy they were when Jesus stood in their midst silently contemplating them! There was no end to religious ceremonies, the victims were being slain by thousands, the smoke of incense was rising, the priests and Levites were regular in their duties, the Scribes and Pharisees were fasting twice a week and saying long prayers; and yet in the midst of it all Jesus saw spiritual death, and said that the outside was as fair as a glistening marble sepulchre, but inside was corruption and dead men's bones.

The thought is fearful that we can get the eye off of Christ while abounding in His work. That we can lose Him at the altars of Jerusalem and in the Temple. That loaded down with church work, writing business letters, attending Board and committee meetings, keeping the church books and passing around the collection basket, we can become so absorbed in these things as to utterly lose Christ.

The most immovable people spiritually I have ever known have been men and women who belonged to a dozen different church Boards and Societies. They had got their eyes off the Saviour and on their work and become spiritually petrified. This was what had happened to the steward and his wife of whom I spoke. He was the president of the board of Stewards, and his wife was the President of the Ladies Aid Society and prominent in other church work, and yet both had lost Christ. While running around in the name of Jesus they lost Him, and they lost Him in the Temple.

This was what had occurred to the preacher I told you about. He said to me with a countenance full of pain, "I cannot tell you how it happened; but I was preaching, visiting and attending to all my work when suddenly I woke up to the fact that I had lost the Saviour." The explanation was that the eyes insensibly were taken from Jesus and placed on his work.

In a certain large religious denomination there was a preacher greatly gifted in intellect and administrative power. He was chosen at once to preside over church assemblies, and he was speedily thrust to the front as a leader in all church business of great moment. He soon became absorbed in the multifarious duties of his position. He began to think he could not be spared from the world and church, when in the midst of it all he was laid upon his deathbed. A preacher in speaking to him about his spiritual condition was first surprised and then alarmed at his evasive replies. Becoming still more concerned as he saw the state of the dying man, he took a second preacher into his confidence and together they visited and prayed with him. To their amazement they found that the man before them while busied in the Temple had lost Christ. "While thy servant was busy here and there, lo he was gone." Day after day these two servants of God conversed, prayed and labored with this man who had become so great in church affairs and so little in grace divine. After a week's faithful work with him the man said a little while before death that he was reconciled to go. He was saved but saved as by fire.

I believe if we knew how many men and women prominent in the church, how many ushers who are smilingly seating the congregation every Sabbath, how many Sunday-school teachers and members of the choir and preachers in the pulpit have lost Christ out of their hearts, the world would be horrified. We do not mean that they are living immoral lives, but they have been more loyal to church work than to Jesus, and the jealous God is grieved and gone. The dark and sad countenances we often see in the pew, choir and pulpit confirm what I say.

It is never to be forgotten that it is easier to attend windy Board and Society meetings in the name of the Lord than to spend the same hour alone on the knees with Christ. There is much pastoral visiting called the work of the Lord that amounts to nothing. It is easier to pay a social visit than to wait with groanings on the Lord. The jealous God sees how much work undertaken in His name deserves not the name and is simply a sop thrown out to ease conscience.

It is happening today as much as in the times of the Scribes and Pharisees that the Temple is put in the place of the Lord; the House and its services are exalted and the Lord of the House is set aside. Today some of the most active church workers have the most superficial experience; and some have none, having lost it all by placing the work above Christ, and the Temple above the Lord of the Temple.

4. THE MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE ON DISCOVERING THE LOSS OF CHRIST.

The first mistake appears in the sentence “they went a day’s journey” without Him. They were separated from Him, did not see Him, and yet pushed on a whole day’s journey. It is what many are doing today. They lose Christ and go on their way. Here is the first mistake, and it not infrequently ends fatally. The thing to do when we miss the Saviour is to stop everything until we find Him. Let no one think it a loss of time, for when He is in the heart you can speak, write, work and live a thousand times more effectively.

A second mistake comes out in the words, “They supposed He was in the company.” What if He was, He was not with them. A man to be happy must have Christ in his heart as a conscious, personal possession. It is and should be a poor comfort to one to feel that Christ is in the congregation or household and not in himself. There is neither joy nor salvation in this fact. Some husbands shelter themselves with the thought that their wives are religious, but a child could tell them that this alone will never save them. Some children seek a strange consolation in lives of sin with the reflection that their fathers and mothers are prominent in the church and preminent for piety. But this will never save them, and if they do not repent and possess Christ themselves they are as certainly damned as the ungodly sons of the godly Eli were overthrown by the Divine judgments and lost forever.

A third mistake is seen in the sentence, “they sought Him among their kinsfolk.”

This is what Joseph and Mary did, and the result was that they did not find Him. Doubtless they were much shocked. And I doubt not if you did the same thing you would also be shocked. My brother, suppose you try it, and tonight when you go home ask your wife if Christ is dwelling in her

heart. And my sister, do you ask your husband a like question, and I tell you now that many of you will be astonished and made to mourn.

[Transcriber Note: Unfortunately, there were badly blotted words on pages 116-120 of the borrowed book from which this chapter was copied. In some cases, therefore, it was necessary to supply a word, or words, which seemed to fit the context. Such supplied words are indicated in following paragraphs of this chapter by brackets.]

When I commenced seeking religion as a young man, I was living in a country filled with ungodliness. There was no man I could talk with. A lady relative of about fifty was in the neighborhood. I knew she belonged to the Episcopal Church and saw her reading her Prayer Book on the Sabbath. In my great agony of soul seeking light and the Saviour, I went to her and asked her if she could direct me to Christ. I had thought she knew Him and had Him in her life, when to my amazement she told me with a troubled voice and face that she did not have Christ; that she did a [long] time ago, twenty years before, but she had lost [Him.] I turned from her with a groan. I wanted a person who had seen Christ lately, and lo, she had not looked upon Him for twenty years. Like Joseph, I [sought] Jesus among my kinsfolk and He was not there. You think that because your husband or wife are on the church roll that they are all right. You suppose because your son sings in the choir, and your daughter teaches a Sunday-school class that they are safe and religious. Do you ask them the plain question if they love Christ, and their answer will trouble you.

[A] fourth mistake is seen committed by the Caravan or large company with whom Joseph and Mary were traveling. Although Christ had been left behind they never turned back! Jesus was missing, but they went on. I can see the long winding line as they threaded the ravines and pushed across the plain. They camp that night without Jesus, and next morning start out again without Jesus, and so pass away out of Judea and Galilee into the great world beyond and Jesus has been left behind.

With the deepest compassion I see the crowds of this world doing the same thing! They toil and travel all day without Christ; they go home and get [rest] without Him, and push on the next day, and the next, and the next and always without Jesus. They have music, papers, books, pleasures, travel and business, but they do not have Jesus. They do not [seem to realize] the dreadful loss, and so push [on with] life's Caravan talking, laughing, singing, loving, hating, camping, sleeping, arising

again, pushing further and further until we see them go out from [us], and beyond the horizon of our lives and disappear from our view forever. How we feel like calling them [to] come back; telling that they can never meet the [dangers], nor stand the toils, nor live right nor die victoriously without Jesus. And we do call to them; but few seem to turn back. The great mass push on [without] the Saviour whom they have left far behind [forever].

5. THE TRUE WAY TO DO WHEN CHRIST IS LOST.

Here again we are indebted to this wonderful text; the true way is shown in the conduct of Joseph and Mary, — “they turned back again seeking Him.” There is nothing else to do if we would find Christ. If we went away from Him we must return to Him.

Necessarily it is a sorrowful seeking. The thought is quite a bitter one that through our own carelessness and neglect of duty the separation was brought about, [that] we let trifles come in between us; yes, that we [let] anything thrust itself between the soul and its [highest] joy. Some of the saddest utterances I ever [heard] fall from human lips are those that proceed from [seekers] after a lost Christ. It is a melancholy band, [and] even where God is willing to forgive them, it seems [almost] impossible for them to forgive themselves.

[I] have noticed also in many instances that it takes [longer] to recover the Saviour than to lose him. Joseph and Mary lost Him in a few minutes or hours, [but] it was three days before they got him back. This [is not] compelled to be the case, but through the [heart-sadness] and mental bewilderment arising from the [separation], the soul loses much time in finding the [way] of return.

[It] will be a glad seeking, for with all the pain of [recollected] unfaithfulness and all the sorrow of the separation, the thought that he now is going back to Christ [can] of itself be an inspiring and glad thought to the [wanderer]. Sad as his heart may be, his case is unspeakably better than the man who remains wallowing in his sins far from the Saviour. Better far to turn back with tears, like Joseph and Mary, than to go on with laughter and chatter like the Caravan.

Moreover it is to be remembered that Christ is not far away. The Scripture is authority for saying he is not far from any one of us. And in the [case]

before us, when Joseph and Mary turned back [from] Beeroth to Jerusalem to seek Christ they were separated then from him just eight miles. This is [the] exact distance between the two places. In other [words], they were about two hours' journey from the Lord, [and] I cannot help but think that most people are [even less] widely separated from Jesus than this. [I believe] that two hours spent on the face [before] God [in repentance], faith and prayer, would in the [case of the] majority of spiritual wanderers restore them [to the loving] embrace of the Son of God.

Christ is not far off from the saddest, hardest, [and] worst. He walked in the midst of publicans and [sinners] while on earth, and is near them today in [His] great mercy. He is oftentimes much closer than [some] dream. He walked by the side of two heartsick disciples for several hours before, they knew Him, [and He] stood before the weeping Mary in the garden [before] she recognized His voice and form. The very [burden] on the heart is His own begun work. The heart [sadness] that so discourages is the result of the light [that] He has poured in, while the pain of soul shows life and godly sorrow. The dead do not grieve nor feel pain. The living do that. The very shadow that you feel may come from His blessed form bending over you.

It is wonderful how utterly unable one is to judge and understand these phases of feeling and all the phenomena of the soul's return to God, while personally separated from Jesus. The sinner who is convicted [does] not know what is the matter, and the backslider [returning] to God fails to realize that the sorrow which [weighs] him down is one of the drawings of heaven, is [a direct] work of the Holy Ghost, and is no occasion [of despair, but] of confidence and gladness.

[I recall a hymn] which shows this very darkness and despair of the soul just before its salvation or recovery. In one verse are the lines,

“I cried I'm the chief of sinners,
There's no hope for a sinner like me.”

In the next verse the Divine voice is heard speaking; [while] in the third, salvation bursts on the penitent, and [rapturous] joy overflows his lips in the words,

“No longer in darkness I'm walking,
For the light is now shining on me.”

Just so I saw a man sink with a groan on the carpet [before] the altar, saying, “there is no hope” — when [the] very next instant with face blazing, hands clapping and body flying around the room he was shouting the praises of God over the full and blessed salvation that had come. Remember that according to David his “rejoicing” followed a “broken bones” experience. The breaking comes first, the gladness next.

Still another feature of the recovery of Christ is that you will find Him where you left him. It was in Jerusalem they became separated from Jesus, and it was in Jerusalem they recovered him. It is right where you left Christ you will find Him. Certain things were done or left undone, and right there today you must return. You dropped certain duties, and there is Christ waiting for you to resume them. The burden laid upon you by the Providence of God you cast off; the cross of Christ you laid aside for [awhile] and so the glory faded out of your life. The thing to do is to go back where you threw off the cross and burden, and patiently take them up again. You will find Christ there at that place and at that moment. He is waiting for you.

Still again, I notice that the text says that the sorrowing parents found “Jesus in the Temple.” So it will be with you. The house of God is the best of places to find Christ. Many hearts that listen to me today grow warm and tender as they recall the city cathedral or plain country church at whose altars you found Christ. Dear to us all is the house of God from the recollection of many spiritual refreshings and uplifts and from the loving and holy associations of the place. But above all is it precious to a great number because there they first found or recovered Christ.

A lady friend of mine was riding in a buggy with her husband when they passed the old country church where she had been converted as a girl. Requesting him to stop and wait on her awhile, she went up to the old weather-stained house in the clump of trees, pushed open the door and knelt down at the altar where when a girl her heart had opened to receive Jesus as her Saviour. It was an humble looking building, with plain pulpit and altar. The dust was on the floor and the spider web on the window, but a spiritual beauty and glory invested all because of Him whom she had found there. For an half hour she knelt alone the shadowy old church weeping and rejoicing. Finally she arose and went back to her husband who been patiently awaiting her in the buggy. No word passed, for he saw

from the tear-stained cheek and the holy light in her face that she had met the Lord in the old meeting house by the road.

Once my presiding elder and myself were entertained by a devoted Methodist lady at her home, and sent in her carriage to the country church where the first quarterly meeting service on Saturday morning was to be held. The lady accompanied us in the carriage.

Twenty years before she had been converted in the church we were going to; but after a few years of church service had lost Christ. She had become both bitter and melancholy. Her determination to go with us that morning was sudden, and on the way out I observed that she dropped her veil and scarcely uttered a word. The old church stood in a grassy plot, surrounded by a rustic graveyard, and with a few old trees sighing solemnly about it. The presiding elder was one of the godliest men I ever knew, and that morning he preached with great tenderness and unction. At the conclusion of the sermon he invited penitents to the altar, and our lady entertainer who had sat through the entire sermon with her veil down was the first to respond. I noticed that instead of kneeling at the part of the altar which was nearest to her, she crossed over to the other side and knelt at a certain corner. It was the spot where she had found Christ twenty years before. She had come back to the Temple with a sorrowing heart to recover Him whom her soul loved and had lost. It was a most pathetic spectacle, the lonely black-robed figure, the long sweeping veil, the bowed head and form. In less than ten minutes she found him. I felt the fact before she with a gush of tears announced it. When she dropped the veil over her face two hours before we saw a sad-faced woman, when she swept it aside now with trembling and beautiful joy what a face of holy light and love she turned upon us. She only lived two years after this, and is today sleeping in the old graveyard by the side of the church where she first found, and then afterwards re-found her Saviour.

Blessed Temples of God all over the land! How I love to see them with uplifted spires in the city, with belfry peeping above the trees of the village, or with plain modest front turned to the high road. Thank God for the churches with their open doors, and solemn bells, and voices of hymn and prayer. Thank God for the shining-faced preachers in the pulpit, and the godly old brethren in the Amen Corner. And thank God for the altar, where kneeling down in the loneliness and bitterness of repentance, we listened to the cries and shouts around us while the battle was pressed, and struggled on in the darkness after Christ. Thank God for the loving

hands laid on the bowed head, and the words of cheer and direction whispered or spoken into the attentive ear. And above all thank God that at last suddenly through the gloom and storm Jesus appeared to our souls the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. Some of you may have shouted, others laughed, others of you wept as if your heart would break, and still others simply sat motionless and voiceless with the great peace that had come to you. Nevertheless in spite of these different manifestations you all knew this, that you had found Jesus and found Him in the Temple. This was the glorious crowning fact that changed this world to you, and made the house of God the fairest of buildings to your eyes.

I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,
The church our blessed Redeemer bought
With his own precious blood.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given
Till toils and cares shall end.

6. THE WAY TO KEEP FROM LOSING JESUS.

First, keep the eye fixed steadily upon Him. Suppose Joseph and Mary had done this, then the separation which cost them such solicitude and pain would never have occurred. The thing to do is to allow no object come between us and Christ. Keep the eye on Jesus, not occasionally, but fixedly and continually. It can be done, thank God, in the busiest life. So Paul says, "Looking unto Jesus." Not looking to the Temple, but to Jesus. There are some people who are absorbed in the church rather than Christ. And there is no question that if they paid as much attention to Jesus as they do the church they would be saints of the highest order.

Second, keep talking to Jesus. How are we going to lose Him if we preserve an unbroken communion. When silence is realized in the soul, there is reason for alarm, and we should at once re-establish the heavenly intercourse. We read in Genesis that when Abraham ceased communing with God, then the Lord went up from him. It is so still. If we would

retain Christ by our side we must see to the unbroken communion of our soul with His Spirit.

Third, get Christ as an indweller. Many of God's people know him as a visitor, as one who comes and goes, visiting the heart and then leaving it. It is in these conscious absences that so much spiritual hurt is realized, and Satan gets in his work. There is an experience which greatly increases our religious strength and so lessens the likelihood and peril of backsliding. This experience is spoken of by the Saviour in the fourteenth chapter of John where He says if we love Him and keep His commandments He will come unto us and take up His abode with us. In a word, He will cease to be a visitor and become an indweller. He who would keep Christ near all the time should seek this blessing. The wonder with me is how a man can lose the Saviour when he obtains this grace. Finally, keep claiming "the blood." If the slightest shadow and spiritual trouble arises, if there has been any neglect of duty, any word spoken or act done that brings a shadow or feeling of unrest, then fly at once to the blood that cleanses from all sin, and claim its present merit and power. There is such a thing as staying under the blood all the time. He that does that will hardly lose Christ. Thousands have lived this life; ten thousands are living it today; and countless millions will yet do so. God grant that you who have Christ today will never lose Him. It would be better to part with friends, the whole world and life itself, than to give up Jesus. May we hold on to Him at every cost, and by so doing will be gainers both in this world and the world to come.

CHAPTER 6

THE UTTERMOST SAVIOUR

“He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.”
— Hebrews 7:25

The longer I study the hearts and lives of men, and the more I read of the crimes of the day, the more convinced am I that the world needed an almighty and perfect Saviour; that nothing short of a complete ability to save unto the uttermost would do. Some one must be found who can descend to the lowest, move and change the hardest, purify the foulest and establish them in righteousness as they had before been settled in wickedness. For any one calling himself a Saviour, to be unable to grapple with and triumphantly meet with these conditions would be only to mock a heartbroken and sin-sick world with the word salvation. It would be the saddest of delusions and most crushing of disappointments.

Such a Saviour God promised the world in Old Testament times; one who could heal the leprosy of the soul, and no matter how the line of spiritual necessity should be run, could travel its entire length with recovering grace and power, and have spiritual abundance left above all that one could ask or think. The Old Testament world heard the promise, and fell on sleep, but believed that in the fullness of time this promised Deliverer would come. And He did come. But He was so unlike what they had expected, so humble, meek, poor, and with such lowly companions and associates, that when He stood before them as the man of sorrows, and in such contrast to the priests and Rabbi's of a glittering ecclesiasticism, He was rejected. They would not believe in Him. And as faith is the condition of knowing Christ, and receiving what is in Christ, many of them died without discovering that God had been in the flesh in their midst, that the long promised Messiah had come and they knew and felt Him not. Some, however, believed, and that belief unlocked the door, and through it Christ poured into them the fullness of the perfect salvation the Bible talks about and men need.

The same condition of things exist today. The Uttermost Saviour is being presented to the world as never before. Many will not believe that He can destroy the works of the Devil. There are many Christians who will not credit the Bible statement that Christ can make the heart holy and keep it so. Meantime the heavenly condition of knowing and receiving is the same.

“According to your faith, so shall it be unto you,” is the unchangeable Word. Faith is not only the condition of salvation, but the measure of salvation. According to your faith so shall it be. And yet Christians with unbelief in their hearts as to purity of heart and holiness of life, wonder why the doctrine and experience seem shrouded in gloom to them. They fail to see that their unbelief limits the Holy One of Israel and ties the Almighty hands of Christ in their case. The gospel says: “He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief.” So is it still. Not to believe that He can, prevents Christ from doing what He wants to do and is perfectly able to do. Thus we have a melancholy band in our midst who are like the ship’s crew we have all heard about, that were dying with thirst when they were in the midst of the pure waters of the river Amazon that with its swift current rushes for miles out to sea. Fresh water was all around them, and they had only to dip it up to drink and live.

But there are believing hearts who by their faith have touched the Saviour, and believing for the uttermost have received to the uttermost. They know by blissful experience today that Christ can save thoroughly and all the time, that His blood cleanses from all sin, and that He is a complete Saviour.

I want to draw some reflections for our comfort and joy about this blessed, magnificent Christ. If He is an uttermost Saviour then

1. HE IS ABLE TO SAVE THE WORST OF SINNERS.

If He could not, then words mean nothing, and the Scripture itself is not true. If He could not how sorry we would all be for such a man, what sorrowful expressions would fall from our lips over a sinner that was too far gone for Jesus to save. It seems to me that multiplied thousands would visit him and look upon him in deepest commiseration. Here is the man, they would say, that Christ cannot save.

If Christ could not save him, then is He robbed of His wondrous glory as a perfect and Almighty Saviour. It is to His glory that He can and does save the vilest and foulest. This directs attention to Him today and inspires hope in the most abandoned.

Let any one of you who listen to me ask how a physician gets a national reputation and honor? It is not by curing a case of measles or whooping cough. It was his restoration of a man whom all other doctors despaired of,

or by some skillful surgical operation, so that the medical magazines took the matter up and the man became famous.

It is not the winning of a few petty cases in some small county court that obtains national fame for the lawyer, but his skillful and successful management of some great case in chancery, or his wonderful speech in behalf of a criminal, that saved the man's life, when the whole country and bar had considered the case hopeless. So it is that the saving of the worst men brings peculiar honor and glory to the Son of God. Hence He went among the abandoned while on earth, casting out devils from men, converting public defrauders, redeeming fallen women and saving a thief in the very moment of death. The reproach urged against Him that He dined with publicans and sinners, was really to His glory, for as he said, the whole have no need of a physician, and He had come to us that which was lost.

John B. Gough was a great Temperance Lecturer, but he mixed an abundance of gospel with his addresses, and so many sinners were saved under his labors. A lady one day handed him a white handkerchief smoothly ironed, saying with happy smiles: "Mr. Gough, when you came to our town, this handkerchief was wringing wet with tears wept into it over a drunken husband. Under your words he has become a saved man, the handkerchief is dry, and I bring it to you as a souvenir or remembrance of your meeting and the great joy that has come to me."

I thought when I read the incident that the devil is in the business of making handkerchiefs wet with the sorrows that sin brings. Oh, the tears that are being shed today in secret by those who have sinned or have been sinned against! One could wring water out of these handkerchiefs! But thank God Jesus is in the business of drying handkerchiefs, and He is doing so, and will continue to do so by His saving and comforting power until all tears shall be wiped away and every handkerchief wet with these weeping eyes of ours shall be made dry by the warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness and smooth by the pressure of His tender consoling hand.

2. HE IS ABLE TO SAVE THE MOST HOPELESS OF BACKSLIDERS.

Here is another form of sin and condition of misery. It is a peculiar case, and cannot be dealt with as the sinner. The man is in despair over the fact that he has sinned against light, knowledge and grace. He knew better, had

the Saviour with him, enjoyed communion with heaven, and yet threw all away for the beggarly elements of this world. He sees hope for the transgressor, but sees no light for himself. He is fond of quoting what was said about Esau, that he sought the recovery of his forfeited blessings bitterly with tears, but in vain. He refers you in his misery to the words of Paul that if a man sin willfully after receiving the truth that there is no more sacrifice for sins. In a word, backsliders as a rule go on in despair.

The question is can Christ save them. He who went down into the well for the ox that had fallen in, will He not seek the sheep gone astray on the mountains. He who pulled us out of the pit, has He no shepherd's crook, no lasso of grace that He could throw about one and draw him back should he go astray? If He cannot, then there is one kind of sin that Christ has made no provision for, and He is not the uttermost Saviour that the world wanted and looked for.

But I rejoice that the Saviour can recover the backslider. Strange to say that it is not by threats and abuse. I once thought that the proper method was to excoriate and blister all such individuals. The Bible teaches differently; Christ's method is the opposite.

One way is by tender messages. Tell the backslider that "I am married to him." Let the hearer remember that God does not believe in divorces. Married to the soul through grace He wants no separation. Again He says, "Return and I will heal all your backslidings." This shows that the man left God, and God did not leave the man. Still again this tenderness of spirit is shown in Christ's announcement through Mary of His resurrection to the disciple who had denied Him, "Tell my disciples and Peter that I have risen from the dead." I have thought how those two words must have thrilled the heart of Simon; and how he asked Mary are you sure that He said "and Peter?" Yes, she replied these were His very words, "Tell my disciples and Peter." From that moment the man hoped, and so became ready for the interview and restoration on the banks of Lake Galilee.

Another way of reaching them is by the power of beautiful and sacred memories.

This is the secret of the backsliders unhappiness; he remembers the day when God's candle shined on his head and the secret of the Lord was in his tabernacle. The hymn that all of us are familiar with expresses the burden of his soul:

“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their mem’ry still.”

Christ calculates on this very misery to draw the man back to Him. He knows that remembering the beautiful past, the hours of grace, he can never feel peace again until he returns. And I thank God many do return.

A third spiritual power in the recovery is seen in the fact that Christ once having occupied the heart no one else can fill His place. Somehow the walls of the life have been pushed out, and the ceiling lifted up by that coming in of the Saviour. Little things of earth once filled the heart, and the man in a measure was contented; but after Jesus came in and broadened and uplifted, nothing else and no one else can ever fill it again. It is vain for them to try. It is folly and disappointment to have them try.

When I was in Scotland some years ago, I saw a number of tourists sitting down one after another in the chair of Walter Scott where he wrote those wonderful brain creations that won for him the title of the Wizard of the North. The spectacle to me was not without its absurdity as I saw ordinary people sitting where that extraordinary man sat. The contrast was tremendous. They could not fill the seat in the true sense. So the heart once filled by Jesus and now vacated is to be pitied. Many are the persons and things a man introduces in order to get the joy and rest of former years. It is a hopeless endeavor; no one, and nothing can fill the place once occupied by the Son of God.

Christ knows this, and as His Spirit steadily though slowly is able to reveal this to the disconsolate man, the end can easily be conjectured. Sooner or later the heart melts, the feet turn, the voice cries Forgive, and lo! the healing comes, and the backslider is home again from his wanderings.

3. HE IS ABLE TO SAVE FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

Here is still another aspect of the redeeming grace of Christ. He can forgive and restore, but what about the effect of these forgiven sins and wanderings on the character and life. Can a soul ever be the same what it might have been, had not these transgressions taken place?

In reply I would say that if Christ cannot meet the felt need at this point with His remedying blood and grace, then He is not the perfect Redeemer the world wanted. Here would be a time where He would come short and fail, and that, too, in a most important place.

Some take a gloomy view here and regard spiritual lapses as fatal wounds from which the individual cannot entirely recover in soul integrity and moral health and power. It is needless to say that these people have not seen the real Christ, or anyhow, all that is in the Saviour.

A preacher of my acquaintance was addressing a congregation that I had left in a revival blaze, and told them that while he doubted not that they had been forgiven and sanctified, yet they were not to forget that the effect of their past iniquities was in them now and would remain. That part he insisted could not be remedied. To strengthen his position he related a time—worn incident of a sinful boy whose father in order to convict him requested him to drive a nail in a six foot plank every time he disobeyed him. The boy did so, and one day after several months' lapse of time, with his eyes full of tears he brought the board to his father full of nails, each one of which represented a wrong act. The sight really did convict him, and he said: "Father I had no idea that I was such a wicked son; and I want to do better." The father told him he was glad to hear him speak thus, and suggested that every time he did right, to draw out a nail. Again the boy obeyed, and the day came when with a radiant face he brought the plank with every nail gone. The father expressed himself pleased, but with a grave face said, "My son, you have drawn the nails, but look at the nail-holes." So applied the preacher: God forgives our sins, but the effect of these sins on our souls and characters remains; the nails are gone, but the nail-holes are left.

In reply I wrote to the brother who informed me of the episode, and told him that the illustration while striking was poor theology and worse Scripture. That as an illustration it failed anyhow, for I knew a number of carpenters who could plane that plank smooth, fill up the nail-holes with cement and paint it so that you would never know a nail had been in it. And above all I knew of a Carpenter who once lived in Nazareth who could plane the soul smooth, fill up the cavities in our spiritual nature made by sin with the cement of His grace, and so paint us with the crimson of Calvary, that one meeting us in heaven would never know that we had sinned; that it is out of just such weather-boarding He is building the mansions of glory in the New Jerusalem.

Not long after this on glancing at a religious paper published in a Home for Fallen Girls I saw a poem on the first page entitled:

“The bird with a broken pinion
Never soars as high again.”

Each verse ended with these lines immediately I sat down and wrote to the lady manager of the Home that I marveled at her publishing such a soul paralyzing poem; that having lifted the girls out of the depths, she immediately struck out of them the hope of soaring and reaching spiritual heights by this piece of versified falsehood; that as a Mother Goose jingle it was a success, but as an expression of good theology and true gospel it was a decided failure.

In the first place we are not birds to begin with and have no wings to break. In the second place I believe that if both wings of a bird were shot off, He who made the bird could touch its mangled pinions and make if need be, new wings and even stronger to beat the air and lift the flyer above the world. In the third place the application of this melodious jingle to sinful men and women is utterly contradicted in the Bible and life. Truly Mary Magdalene had her pinions broken and she was bleeding on the ground where the archer of hell had shot her. But some One greater than Satan bent over her touched her, and she flew with the message of the Resurrection to the heartsick disciples. She flew higher than she had ever flown before.

John Newton was a fearful character. All the means of grace had failed to touch him, and so God brewed a special storm at sea to awe his haughty spirit. the clouds and waves knotted themselves together, the thunders crashed in platoons, the lightnings poured down in electric cataracts—the scene was one of horror, and the heart of the bold bad man trembled and sank before the Omnipotent God who was flinging His wrath abroad. Falling on his face on the deck of the ship he called for mercy, and God forgave him then and there. Later on in England, he was sanctified and preached with the courage of Paul and wrote hymns with the sweetness of John. Look into the Methodist Hymn Book and when you read a hymn especially beautiful, tender and pure you will find John Newton’s name at the top. I recall a couple of stanzas of one of them:

“I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,

Who fixed His dying eyes on me
As near His cross I stood.

Sure never 'till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death
Tho' not a word He spoke."

As you feel the heart melt and eyes fill under these tender and solemn lines do you think that John Newton, whose pinions had been broken by the shots of Satan, was soaring as high again?

Hallelujah! Our Christ is able to save unto the uttermost. He can undo the works of the devil. He found our hearts black, and made them whiter than the snow. He lifted us up from the pit, and will yet place us above the stars. Hallelujah! Glory! Bless the Lord! Amen!

4. HE IS ABLE TO SAVE US FROM SINNING.

This is one of the plainest promises and statements of Divine grace we have in the Bible. Nearly every prophet spoke of it as a great coming blessing or deliverance in the last days. Ezekiel, Isaiah, Malachi and Daniel all wrote about it. The angel said to Mary that His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. John the Baptist and St. Paul alike preached about it, while Jesus Himself dwelt upon it. The great need of men, and the great promise of God is deliverance from sin. And when we remember that all our trouble comes from sin, what a mockery and disappointment that plan of salvation would be which did not or could not cleanse us and keep us clean from all iniquity.

But I rejoice that Christ is just such an uttermost Saviour. He can undo what Satan has done, and for this purpose was manifested in the world that He might destroy the works of the devil. This accounts for the glad note of promise in the Old Testament, and the hallelujah of fulfillment in the New. Christ can and does save from all sin.

But how does He do it? Men seem to know how we are made sinful, but how is it that we are kept from sinning?

There is a way of explaining it. There is a philosophy in full salvation. A true hearted inquiry will be rewarded by seeing that redemption from sin rests on common sense principles although it is a heavenly revelation.

One explanation is that Christ by a second work of grace takes out of us the proneness to wander or bent to sinning. While regeneration gives us power not to sin, the strange inward inclination is left that asserts itself at different times with more or less power. This tendency arises from the presence of inbred sin, that unpardonable and unrenovable nature or principle left in the soul after conversion. It is this sad inheritance, this carnal mind which is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be, that accounts for the wandering propensities of the child of God. It is this very bias or principle that Christ removes or destroys with the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. The soul thus blessed rejoices in the deliverance from a proneness to wander. The man does not sin, because the inclination is gone. He is still a free moral agent and is in the peril that encompasses every creature on moral probation from Adam and the angels down; but still the old leaning in forbidden directions is gone. He does not sin because he does not want to sin. We hear many attribute the dark fault of transgression to this rebellious movement within; but suppose this drift or tendency is gone, then why should one sin?

A second feature in the deliverance is that the Saviour so fills the soul with the Holy Ghost that there is no room for Satan and sin.

Many overlook the weight of this truth. That it is full of force, the slightest thought will show. If a vessel is filled with one substance how can there be room for another? If a cup be filled with melted gold, what room is there even for air. So fill the soul of the believer with the Holy Ghost and there is no place for the adversary and his works. This is why the command in the Scripture is so urgent that we be "filled with the Spirit." This is why Christ bade the disciples tarry in Jerusalem until they should be filled with the Holy Ghost.

I have noticed that the best way to get a rat out of his hole in the ground is to fill it with water. Immediately he comes forth, and carries not on the order of going. As long as that rat-hole is kept filled with water, its former occupant does not return. He may visit it and look at it, but does not enter. If the earth is allowed to soak up the water, then he returns, but never while it is kept filled with that element with which according to his constitution he cannot adjust his breathing apparatus and general organism.

So the best way to utterly cast out Satan and sin is to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The devil cannot live in the soul replete with holy fire. Isaiah

long ago cried out: “Who can dwell with devouring fire?” and answers in the next breath—”He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly.” Heaven overflowing with the splendor and majesty of the holy God would be torture to Lucifer; and a soul fired, glowing and filled with the Holy Ghost cannot be dwelt in by the adversary. It is not only suffering to him, but its own divine preoccupation and heaven fullness casts him out. As long as that soul remains in this state, Satan cannot enter. He may hang around in the neighborhood and plot its overthrow, but he cannot come in. His only hope is to be found in earth soakage or the leakage of grace that is beheld in some lives. Then it is that the old gray rat of hell returns to his former quarters.

Some profess to be amazed how such a thing can be; how a sanctified soul can ever fall into sin or receive the devil again. All this is answered by the words of Christ who tells of a man who had a field of wheat (not tares), and while he slept his adversary came and sowed tares. He also spoke of a man from whom evil spirits had been cast, but by some lack of faithfulness upon the part of the individual whose soul had been swept and garnished, Satan with other evil spirits came and took possession of him again.

Our privilege and duty is to keep filled with the Spirit. This is our best defense. Satan cannot enter a soul that is always full of the Holy Ghost.

A third feature of the deliverance from sin is seen in the power of a manifestation of Christ to the soul of the believer.

Many have utterly overlooked this promise and privilege, and the wondrous moral effect it exercises upon the life. And yet here it is in John XIV., 18-23, in which Christ tells His disciples that it is a coming and manifestation of Himself to believers. To the man who keeps his commandments and loves him, He says: “I will manifest myself to him.” Pardon is a manifestation of mercy to a sinner, but here is a disclosure of grace to followers. Here is an unveiling of Christ Himself to the believer in such transporting glory that the man ever after feels weaned from earth, joined to heaven, established, satisfied and running over with a bubbling joy. He is settled by a vision, knowledge and possession of Christ never enjoyed before.

Who wonders that so many converts are found straying from the fold into forbidden fields who have not had this entrancing view of the Divine

Shepherd? Who marvels at the wandering affections of God's people who have not yet beheld Christ as the Bridegroom of the soul. It is that vision, that showing Himself to the believer, that manifestation of His personal beauty and ineffable holy charms that the soul fairly intoxicated with love of the personal Christ wants nothing better, and desires no one else. Now for the first time the real depth of certain Bible expressions are understood, and the heart fairly revels in them. Now indeed, "He is the chief among ten thousand—the one altogether lovely."

The difficulty of securing the attention and inspiring the love of a man or woman whose heart is filled with the image, and whose pulses thrill at the name of another, is readily acceded. So Christ can stamp His picture in our hearts, fill our souls with ecstasy at His touch and voice, and cause us to be contented under the loss of all things, so long as we have Him. This is the type of religious experience that is to save the Church from backsliding, and the life that is to capture the world for God.

The Song of Solomon contains the thought I am advancing now. For a long time I failed to see the meaning and realize the force of this small book of the Old Testament. I used to wonder why it was in the Bible at all, and thought it would be better for it not to be there. I thought it was gross, when today I see there is not a more profoundly spiritual book in the volume of sacred writ. The very manifestation and experience I speak of, glows and burns in the song of the wise man. The bridegroom is seen to be with the bride, but she is not all that she should be, and falls asleep, and awakes to and him whom she loved gone. He placed, however, his hand on the lock of the door, and left enough perfume by his touch to inflame her soul for his presence if she needed that in addition to arouse her. She might well reason that if his fingers drop sweetness, then how much more of that fragrance is in himself. So she starts out to find him, and it proves a difficult search. There are ridiculers and opposers. She asks the daughters of Jerusalem, but they have not seen him. She approaches the watchman of Zion with the query "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" In reply they answered with stones, and wounded her. But she was not to be diverted from her purpose, and so still seeking, at last the discovery is made and reunion is seen. All this is told in a delightful chronological confusion, as would be natural in the language of love, and as is also notably seen in the repetitions or going over again of facts in oriental narratives. It would be hard to draw a picture of more perfect delight, contentment and restful love, than in the words of the bride after she has found her love. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner

over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.” The great truth that right here appeals to the reader is, that with such a love and such gladdening presence, how vain it would be to try to w in this happy, contented heart away. She is satisfied.

It was quite a while before I saw in my Bible studies that there is a twofold seeking spoken of; one in which Christ seeks the soul of the lost, and the other a seeking by the believer of Christ Himself. He first finds us, and now after that, we are to find Him in the deep, delightful sense we have been speaking. The Scripture tells in a sentence concerning that latter search, that “In the day ye seek me with all your heart, ye shall find Me.”

In the Song of Solomon is the portrayal how it all happened. When Christ found you, you possessed a delightful experience and great joy for a while. That there would be withdrawals of His presence you did not dream. But the melancholy experience came. Perhaps you slept and let Him slip away. Perhaps He had to leave you to make you ask the question, why does He leave me? This anxious interrogation would bring out the fact of inbred sin. Jesus cannot and will not abide in the soul with carnality or the old man.

Regeneration is made up of delightful visits of the Son of God, but the abiding of his glorious presence and personality is the result of a second work of grace, called sanctification, in which inbred sin is burned out by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. As the believer discovers these momentous facts of the spiritual life, he begins to seek now after Christ himself. It is not a blessing so much he wants as the Blessor. He wants Jesus enthroned, and always abiding in the soul. As soon as the object of his search is discovered, hell opposes him. Ridicule and resistance also meet him in quarters where one would hardly expect such things. The daughters of Jerusalem are asked if they have seen Him, but as they all belong to the Ladies’ Aid Society, with its bustling activity that transforms God’s Church into part kitchen and part theater, they can give the inquirer no help. Then the watchmen of Zion are interrogated, and they answer with stones. One seeking is enough for them. Christ sought them and found them; they want nothing more and nothing better. They got it all in conversion, there is nothing more, is their discouraging statement. Somehow the difference between Christ finding them, and their finding Christ, does not seem to strike them. But great is the difference. Happy is the man or woman who will not be stoned into silence and spiritual inactivity. Blessed the soul that presses on with wounds and bruises of

spirit, toward Him who left enough frankincense on the door lock of a single experience to make the heart pant after the whole Christ. If the fingers are so fragrant, what of Him? If for an hour he was so precious, what must it be to have him in the soul all the time? So on you go, nothing daunted by looks, smiles and blows, until at last, hallelujah to God! you find Him. Was it on a mountain of myrrh you discovered Him? Surely nature itself was like a bed of roses that day, and hillocks swelled into lordly mountains covered with cinnamon groves, and heaven was in full view, whether we looked through sunset bars, or watched a curtain of gold roll up in the eastern sky. The soul is taken now to a banqueting house. It is hungry no more. Flagons of wine and rosy apples, standing for sweetness and exhilaration, make heavenly food. The banner of love is over you. It is no concealed blessing; the standard is lifted for all to see; it is the pennon of holy, heavenly love. Nor is this all—He is there whom the soul loveth and hath found for itself. Sweet, delicious, trembling, blessed discovery. “His left hand is under my head—his right hand doth embrace me.” What a picture of content. It is God’s own sketch of the complete satisfaction of the soul, when Christ becomes all, and in all. It is an Old Testament photograph of perfect love.

“I am sick of love,” said the happy finder of the bridegroom. Not disagreeably sick, and not sick of love in a sense made by the drifting meaning of the preposition; but sick with love, as fever runs along the veins and crimsons the face; so this perfect love strikes in, goes through, shines in the eyes, rings in the tremulous voice, and asks no higher privilege than always to be thus in the arms of Christ.

With such a love, such an upwelling joy, such deep inward content and satisfaction in Him, the difficulty of enticing the soul away into sin becomes more apparent. The establishment in righteousness is seen by the power of a glorious heartfilling manifestation of the grace and glory of the Son of God to the soul.

A fourth explanation of deliverance from sin, is seen in the power over Satan by an indwelling Christ.

I have noticed that our highway tramps are very bold in their demands for food, when they see no man about the house, but only a frightened woman answers the knock. How insolently he orders, rather than begs for food. He wants hot coffee and bread. But what if right in the midst of this blustering he hears a heavy step in the hall, and catches sight of a man’s

hat? Lo, he is gone. Satan is the old tramp of eternity, and can tell at a glance whether Christ is a visitor or indweller with our souls. His boldest demands are made when he sees unmistakable signs that Christ is not in the house. These are the days when regenerated people say and do so many questionable things. All discouraged they spread the table, in answer to the evil one. Christ is not sensibly with them that day, and the Devil knows it. Oh for the grace that makes the Saviour a constant abider in the soul! He is the strength of the house; and when the adversary sees the thorn-crowned face looking out of the window of the soul at him, he can only stand it a little while, and away he goes.

A fifth explanation of the deliverance is seen in the perpetual intercession for us, on the part of Christ. Hear what the text says: “He is able to save them to the uttermost—seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

A man once sent me word that my preaching the doctrine of living without sin, destroyed the advocacy of Christ, for the Bible said, “If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father.” Now then, he argued, if we live without sin, what need of Christ? The message amazed me to see that the man utterly failed to realize that the advocacy of Christ does not exist that we might sin, but to save us from sin; and furthermore, to keep us from sin. Let every one listen to the whole verse again, from which the text is taken: “He is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Here it is plainly stated that Christ makes constant prayer and advocates our cause continually, in order to save us to the uttermost, or keep us from all sin.

Thank God for this tireless advocate of the skies; thank God for the perpetual intercession of Jesus Christ before the throne of the Father in our behalf. Where would we have been today but for these prayers? What sins we have been diverted from, and what falls prevented in our lives by that loving, unwearied pleader in heaven.

5. HE IS ABLE TO KEEP US SAVED ALL THE TIME.

If Christ could not do this he would not be an uttermost Saviour, nor the Saviour that men need and desire. We want not an occasional deliverance, not a spasmodic purity and piety, but an everlasting salvation, even in this world.

If you will notice the marginal reading in the King James version, you will see that the word “uttermost” is translated “evermore.” He is able to save evermore. This is a beautiful and blessed salvation. Think of it, always saved.

You and I know of people who are saved Sunday, but not Monday. God send us the evermore salvation We have seen persons who were religious when in pious company and spiritual surroundings, but the instant they were thrown in worldly circles they would fall into the spirit, conversation, and conduct of the new company. They were like spiritual chameleons. There are Christians who keep God’s commandments in America, but break them in England. There they go sightseeing on the Sabbath, and otherwise violate the sanctity of the day, as if the Atlantic ocean had washed away their obligations to God.

I want a salvation that saves us on both sides of the Atlantic, in all kinds of company, in each hour of the day, in every day of the year, through every season that rolls, and in every changing circumstance of life, world without end. This is what Christ came to do, and does do in many lives. This is why He is called the uttermost Saviour; He can save evermore.

I once read of a devout man, but who was a stranger to sanctification, that when he felt a growing excitement in conversation, would withdraw to an opposite corner of the room, and then utter a whispered prayer, “Lord, calm the spirit of thy servant.” I thought then that this was a remarkable indication of piety, but I have since seen that the man, good as he was, did not know Christ as the uttermost Saviour. Why need I walk to another corner of a room to get Christ to cleanse, keep, restore, or calm me? If He is the Saviour the Bible speaks of, He can save and keep in every corner of every room, of every house, in every land, both now and forevermore. Not only at Jerusalem and Mt. Gerizim is Jesus to be found and His presence realized, but here, there, anywhere, everywhere, and at all times the precious blood cleanses, and the mighty Saviour keeps.

Long before I received this blessing, I became acquainted with an elderly lady who enjoyed this grace. Her money was swept from her, her husband was thriftless, her children trifling, her health failed, and trouble after trouble beat upon her; yet through it all I marked a serenity of spirit that none of these things disturbed. She never fretted or murmured, but through all her sorrows, and sicknesses, and reverses, bore a sweet, patient, loving smile upon her face that did far more than argumentative sermons and

logical books, to prove there was such an experience as entire sanctification. She possessed the uttermost Saviour, and enjoyed the evermore salvation.

6. HE IS ABLE TO SAVE EVERYBODY.

I love to think of the almightiness of Christ. That He is not only a personal Saviour but a worldwide Redeemer. He must be this to be the uttermost Saviour.

Suppose there were classes and nations He could not reach. That depths of moral turpitude embarrassed, and numbers staggered Him. Then would Heaven have sent a deliverer to earth who did not deserve the name. He would not be as mighty as sin, and could not undo with grace the far reaching works of evil. Some men then would have to be lost on account of the weakness of salvation, and some tribes and nations would have to perish, because the salvation of our God could not compass all.

Who believes this? Every heart before me cries out Christ could save all men, and now, if they would let Him.

He certainly did enough to beget faith in us concerning His power. When He healed ten lepers in a single second of an incurable disease, that was to show you what He could do. When He made ten thousand devils come pouring like a black Niagara out of the man, that was to show us He could cast all devils out of all men, if men would allow Him. When He sanctified one hundred and twenty souls in a moment with a flash of holy fire from heaven, and when in the next hour He saved the souls of three thousand men, and next day five thousand, that was to let us know that He could at this moment regenerate and sanctify every human being on this round world who would look up, call on Him, and believe and receive.

Right now, while I speak, Christ is saving souls in ten thousand different towns and cities over our land. Nor is that all. He is saving in other countries and nations as well. Salvation is descending upon the soldier in the army, the sailor on the sea, the farmer in the furrow, the toiler in the mine, the invalid in the sick chamber, the condemned man in the prison. He is omnipresent with the human race as the atmosphere, and would rush as the breath of life into every dying soul, as air into the respiratory lung, if men would receive Him.

He that is such a being, and is doing such a work, could easily save the entire world the next moment, if this world would call upon Him. So far from such an universal waiting upon Him, staggering and overwhelming Him, it is just what He wants. Nothing would please Him better. Long ago He has given the challenge or invitation, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." Happy would it be for the world if it would cast this upward look! A shock of divine glory would make this old earth tremble like that house in Jerusalem shook when the Holy Ghost filled the disciples. Devils would fly like night birds from the blaze of Gospel day, and wear crepe for a thousand years, while dog fennel grew rank over every road and path to hell. The millennium would sweep like a belt of light and fire around the globe, and angels swinging low in the heavens would sing their glad songs over every field and town of the happy, restored planet, not this time about the advent of the Redeemer, but over the perfect, worldwide victory of the Son of God.

Thus far in the history and progress of redemption we have seen the love, grace, wisdom, goodness, and mercy of Christ, but only small measures of his power. "The thunder of His power," is to be beheld in the coming ages of the world. Just now only individuals, and small groups of repenting and believing souls, will allow him to work in them. But the day is drawing near when, under the proclamation of the Gospel, men will hear what Christ is able and willing to do; faith will spring up, glory will come down, communities and cities will be swept into salvation, as thousand acre fields are engulfed by the rushing Mississippi, and kingdoms and nations will be born unto God in a day. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

O the omnipotent forces locked up in Christ today through the unbelief of men! He can do no mighty works, because of unbelief. But faith in Him unties His hands, raises the floodgates, brings down rushing cataracts of salvation, and unlooses from the skies heavenly storms that will blow the foulness of sin away, and leave the atmosphere of heart, home, and the world, pure, sweet, and fresh with the life, love, and glory of heaven.

In Him is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. And all that come; thank God for the Bible proclamation that all can come. He is able to save, not simply a few, or a larger number, but all that come.

But the condition is that we must come to Him. He that stays away from Christ is lost both now and forever. He that comes to Jesus, whether for

pardon or holiness, will be met, welcomed, embraced, loved, blessed, and saved to the uttermost. Oh that every hungry, weary, lonely, sin-sick soul would come to Jesus now. He says: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."

CHAPTER 7

THE UNCONTAINABLE BLESSING

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” — Malachi 3:10

The book of Malachi contains a recognition of the fact of Divine judgment as a result of faithlessness upon the part of God’s people. They had kept back that which belonged to the Lord and were now “cursed with a curse.” Poverty of various kinds was now upon them; and the prophet was showing them the way out of their calamities, and did it most powerfully in the words of the text.

If any one wants to know what spiritual poverty is, what it is to have heaviness of soul, and get into a foggy and twilight-kind of experience, let him take from God’s altar that which was once given to Him. It may be a small thing, but there is nothing little in the eyes of Love; and the fact that it is a mere trinket which has been presented to the friend or loved one and possesses little value, does not make the pang less when it is taken away, for it is the withdrawal of what was once given which hurts. God is a jealous God; He says so, and He cannot look with indifference upon such acts, when we remove from the altar anything once devoted to Him. He would not be true to Himself or to us if He turned the same look on us when we did these things. So to “rob” Him even of the smaller gifts is to bring at once the hazy cloudy feeling to the soul, and persisted in there comes greater calamity.

So the text is an exhortation along this line and coupled with a promise. It is a wonderful promise and covers a very remarkable experience. We notice, first

1. THE EXHORTATION.

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse.”

It is a blessed thought to me that God will accept anything from us. He owns everything, and yet here He is placing Himself in the attitude of a recipient of favors, while we pose as donors. Meantime there is nothing

we bring Him but already belongs to Him. The whole occurrence is wonderful.

Malachi calls the things we owe God, tithes. For a long time I had a very narrow conception of the word. It had but one meaning, but as time passed and the Book unfolded and increasing light came, I saw it had greater lengths and breadths, and that to bring all the tithes to God meant a great deal.

One meaning, of course, of the word refers to the tenth of our substance. This was a law in the Levitical economy and a custom observed by Abraham. There is no hint that it has been revoked. If a Jew loved his God enough to give this amount, we ought certainly to be as devoted to our Saviour. It should be a part of the consecration to which Malachi exhorts us. What a blessing it would be to the church and to us all if we did so.

Again we owe the Lord a seventh of our time. The world has never been released from this obligation, and that same world never practices a poorer piece of economy than when it robs God of the Sabbath or a part of that day. There is no estimating the amount of crime prevented by men going up to church on the Lord's day and coming in contact with the word of God and influences of the other world. Moreover, a faithful observance of the Sabbath is necessary to the Christian to find this great blessing the prophet speaks of. A new covenant has to be made respecting its sacredness, and the things to be done and not done on that day.

Third, we owe the body to the Lord. "I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God". Many have been afraid to do this, but he who does it does a wise thing. No one can take as good care of it as the Lord who made it. It is necessary for the obtainment of the blessing that every member of the body, tongue, eyes, ears, hands, feet and all shall be solemnly given and set apart for God.

Fourth, we must give God the heart. "My son, give me thy heart." This means the soul, with all its powers, capacities and affections. Happy the man who will do this; he will never be sorry for having done so. He who made the soul can best manage it and keep it in order. The jeweler is the proper person to carry your watch to, he can do a better part by it than a blacksmith. So I am glad that in the list of what we are to bring to God, the soul is included.

Fifth, I find still deeper requisition upon us in the Bible, in the words: “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Truly this goes down deep and is all embracing. Whether we rise up or lie down, remain in the house or go abroad, eat, drink or sleep, we must do all to the glory of God!

Many Christians have fairly trembled before this verse. It breathes of a consecration so complete that they were not ready to make it. It actually looked at times like bondage—and yet to the man in the secret of the Lord it is perfect and glorious liberty. The demand may look like a towering stone and iron gate, but inside is a park with beautiful lakes, whispering groves, winding roads, flower lined paths and singing birds. Behind the slashing, cutting swords of the cherubim in this verse is a life and experience as lovely, glorious and blessed as Paradise.

Sixth, we descend still deeper in the Word of God to find that the consecration we have to make to obtain the great blessing Malachi speaks of is a perfect consecration. It must be so to obtain such a perfect blessing. The tithes due the Lord are found to be more than first dreamed of. All must be forsaken, everything must be hated in comparison with the Son of God. It is a hard saying with some, and so they fall away. But others press on, crying, “Lord, to whom shall we go, but unto Thee?” and in the midst of the cry and pursuit they find themselves in the seventh heaven.

Listen while I read to you the sixth tithe: “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me. “

“If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

“So, likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Suppose we look around and see who has paid this tithe. Who among your religious acquaintances has made such a complete consecration?

This demand of Christ, as laid beside the Christian lives about me, used to puzzle me greatly. I did not see any one who hated father, mother and family in the Gospel sense, and who had forsaken all. I saw that they were undoubtedly Christians, but they evidently had not met this great requirement and paid their tithe. For years I could not understand; but after the reception of the blessing of sanctification the light came. I saw at once that here was not the condition of salvation, but the price of the greater blessing of the Gospel, the one that Malachi is prophesying about.

The condition of salvation is repentance and faith; not a word about the perfect consecration spoken of in the passages I quoted. What has a sinner to consecrate? The Bible teaches that the worst sinner that lives shall be saved if he repents and believes. This is what millions have done, and find themselves in the church today, and in grace as well, but ignorant of that complete offering of the life which brings the uncontainable blessing called Purity, Perfect Love, the Abundant Life, the Indwelling Christ, Holiness and Entire Sanctification.

Again, I notice in this sixth tithe passage that Christ said if a man did not do it he was “not worthy of Him.” He did not say worthy of salvation, but “worthy of Me.” There is a great difference. It was long before I saw it; but I saw it at last, and the Bible became a new book.

There is a difference between a gift and the giver. It is one thing for a woman to make and present to a man such things as dressing gowns, slippers, watchpockets, etc., and another thing altogether to give herself to him as his wife. The last is greater than the first; and the man feels it. He has now not only the gifts, but the woman herself, who can make the gifts.

So in the spiritual life. We obtain the gifts of salvation in regeneration; but the Bible plainly teaches a mightier work and greater blessing when Christ himself comes into the soul to abide perpetually. Speaking of it, He said: “We will come unto him and take up our abode with him.” What are the gifts of Christ beside Christ himself? Love, joy and peace seem to come and go in the converted life, but in the deeper experience of which I speak the Saviour stays in the heart all the time. It was to this that Christ alluded when He said unless we did certain things we were “not worthy of Him.”

So there is a profounder grace; one that for sweetness and power transcends anything in the regenerated life. It is given in answer to a complete and eternal devotement of everything to God. There must be a

consecration that has not a single mental reservation. All must be laid on the altar, and the soul must cry, "O Lord, I am wholly and forever thine."

Before this perfect consecration held forth in the Word of God many Christians are trembling and shrinking today. They fear that the step will bankrupt them. They make the remarkable mistake in thinking that they can outgive God; that they can surrender more to the Lord than He is able to recompense them for. In a word, that they can do more for him than He can do for them.

The wonderful proposition of Heaven is that if we give ourselves to God, He will give Himself to us. What a marvellous proposition! What an amazing exchange! And what a blessed experience it is bound to be when the exchange takes place!

I was never a good trader in my life, and remember some most unfortunate transactions that took place in my boyhood and manhood, all of which went to show a certain lacking business faculty; But there was one trade I made eight years ago in which I got a most decided advantage. It was when I gave myself to Christ, and secured Him in even exchange. I can never think of it without smiling and exulting as well. Even now the thought of how I got rid of my poor, tired, nervous self, and obtained in blessed exchange the great soothing tranquilizing Christ, sends thrills of gladness and voices of praise all through my being. I certainly got the best of that business occurrence and the Lord knew it.

I have noticed that many of God's people will not take this step of perfect consecration, this laying on the altar of everything, until a few hours or days before they die. Then it is that finding they must leave the world, they surrender first one thing and then another until all is given up. Father, mother, husband and children, land property and all are at last laid altogether and forever on the altar.

Now there was a law in the worship and sacrifices of the Temple, that when a man brought his gift to the altar, the priest had always to put in an appearance and receive the offering. It is but a type or figure of what takes place in these Gospel days, for when an individual lays himself and all on the altar, Christ, our priest, has to appear, and thank God does appear. He accepts the gift and the fire falls.

Thus it is that when a Christian delays this act of perfect consecration to the death hour; when only two or three days before passing away into the spirit world he brings all his tithes into the storehouse, or lays his all on the altar, Christ in his faithfulness appears, receives the gift, the fire falls, and the dying Christian shouts, rejoices, preaches to all about his death-bed and goes off in a chariot of glory.

Meanwhile members of the family marvel over the scene, wonder why “father” or “mother” had not been that way before, and conclude that this is the “dying grace” they have often heard about, when the fact is there is no such blessing as dying grace. The Bible has no word about such a blessing. The truth is that “father” or “mother” for the first time in their Christian lives brought all the tithes into the storehouse, or laid all their gifts on the altar. The instant they did so the Holy fire fell and they were sanctified.

Just as true is it, that if this is done three years before you die, instead of three days, the same fire will fall. Yes, verily, if a man will put his all on the altar ten, twenty or forty years before death, the power of God will come down, Jesus will baptize the soul with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and the same blessing that made the dying Christian happy will make the living child of God just as joyful all the days of his life.

So much then for the exhortation of the text which covers the condition of the obtainment of the wonderful grace. I turn now to consider the second thought of the text, and that is

2. THE PROMISE.

This promise presents the blessing under several heads or points of description, which taken together show up the very work of divine grace, the discussion of which is agitating the church today.

First, It is a heaven opening blessing.

Read the words, “I will open you the windows of heaven.” To my mind this is a striking figure. A house with doors and windows all shut up is not a very attractive spectacle. It has a forbidding look. It seems to hold us off and say that we are not welcome. When I approach a dwelling to pay a visit, it is always an agreeable sight to see the hall door wide open, the

windows upraised with lace curtains fluttering and mocking bird singing in its cage. The whole appearance is one of friendly greeting and welcome.

Some of God's people know what it is to walk under the sky with a feeling that every door and window above is shut and barred. The upward thought is driven back, and the prayer finds no entrance or admission above. The heaven seems perfectly impenetrable, and lowers like a ceiling of iron or brass so that nothing in the shape of prayer or message gets through to God. Some listening to me know it has been weeks or months since your supplications found admission to the Throne. Just as the palm of my hand now resists all efforts of my finger to get through it, so something above you shuts out and keeps down your prayers. They cannot get through. The explanation is that the windows of heaven are closed.

But the experience this text speaks of is one where every door and window of glory is opened above you, where the very sky is punctured with apertures; and just as I spread the fingers of my hand wide open, and the fingers of the other can now shove through at any point, so can the thoughts, desires, whispers and petitions of your soul leap through space and fly at once unhindered into the immediate presence of God.

Oh, what a luxury, joy and blessedness it is to feel there is no obstruction between the soul and God. To walk under a heaven filled with open windows, through which flows down upon your spirit the very influences that stir about the City of Gold and River of Life. When you can look up and feel there is nothing, not even a cloud the size of a man's hand, between you and God, and your every word of praise or prayer comes instantly into the ear and heart of the Saviour. Truly, if this was the only feature of the great blessing it would pay to get it.

Second, "it is a poured out blessing."

The text says. "I will pour you out a blessing" This expression sounded so familiarly to me that I went back into the Old Testament to find it, and at last located it in the book of Joel, where he, in common with other prophets, in speaking of a great coming blessing to the church, said: "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

Taking up the Scriptures and coming forward to see when this promise took place, I find the first fulfillment in the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost fell or was poured out upon one hundred and twenty waiting and praying disciples of Jesus Christ. The instant it took place, Peter sprang to his feet and cried, "This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." He then added that it was not simply for the disciples but "for you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

From that day this new blessing for the church began to descend upon those who sought it aright and paid the full price for it. So it fell upon the Samaritans, and upon Cornelius the Roman centurion, and upon the Ephesian disciples. During the Dark Ages it was scarcely known, but was sought and found by the Quakers under George Fox, and by the Moravians. Later still, under the preaching of Wesley and his lay workers, many obtained the glorious baptism, and the fire spread not only through England but over America. Today there are few but have heard of it, and many are receiving it.

When I heard of the blessing I never rested until it came upon me. For three days I was in an agony of prayer. Suddenly, on the morning of the third day, the blessing came. It was poured! It came down from above just as Joel and Peter said it would. Bishop Hamline said when he received it he felt it touch his head and then go down through him. It is always from above. I never heard of any one saying that it started in the feet and worked up. The feeling is that it comes down from above. It is too sweet and blessed to come from any other quarter.

If you study the principle of a shower bath, you will notice that when a man pulls the cord attached to the lever above his head he will instantly receive a Niagara like dash of water upon him. So let a man pull on the rope of a perfect consecration, and he will get a blessing that he will talk about all the rest of his life.

I have been informed that in the faraway West they have a curious way of watering their stock. There is a platform ten feet square, with a large trough upon it to hold the water. As water is scarce in that region, and the dry winds evaporate the precious fluid rapidly, the platform is so arranged with some simple machinery and a trigger that no water gets into the

trough until the ox stands on the platform. If the animal puts two feet, or just half his weight, on the planks, the water does not come. It takes the whole ox, head, horns, hide, hoofs and all, to get that water. The instant the animal, with his entire weight, is on the platform, the trigger moves, and gush!—here comes the water into the trough shining, sparkling and in greatest abundance for him.

God has a platform called Perfect Consecration. It stands marvelously connected with the great blessing He has for the soul of the believer. It has some kind of spiritual machinery above it that can tell the exact physical and moral weight of the man desiring the downpour of the outpoured blessing. It requires the whole weight of the man to get the blessing. If a man registers one hundred and fifty pounds, it is no use for him to palm off one hundred and forty-nine on God. He knows every pennyweight of the life. He is going to give all, and demands all. It is vain to try to deceive Him. We cannot deceive the weighing scales on street corners and in waiting rooms. The arrow will not point out your weight until you drop your coin in the slot. The Platform of Consecration seems to have no thought, intelligence, design, life or motion about it so long as the man fails to place the whole of himself and life upon it. God seems to be far away and oblivious of what is going on. The heavens look empty. The sky is without answering voice or waving hand. The spiritual slot machine does not record; there is no sparkling, overflowing water in the trough of life.

And yet, in spite of these things, what faithful machinery is in and under that platform! How the arrow points when the price is paid! How delicate, and yet how true and powerful that spring in the moral machinery of His great grace, that the instant it is touched a cataract of glory descends into the soul!

So it has ever proved, so it will always prove, the moment the whole man is on the platform of a perfect abandonment and consecration to God, the trigger is touched, the telegram flashes to the skies “all is on”—and lo! here comes the rushing, sweeping, gladdening, overpowering and yet empowering “poured-out” blessing that Jesus gives, that Joel talked about, and that Peter and the other disciples receiving stirred all Jerusalem with and afterward the whole world.

Brethren have you had the poured-out blessing? If not, then shove your gift through the slot, pull on the rope, get on the platform and never rest

until the Son of God baptizes you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, which is the blessing I speak of.

Third, It is a full blessing.

This is taught in the words: “There shall not be room enough to receive it.” Of course if there is not room in the heart to receive it, when it is a full blessing, and this is the very blessing we all want and need.

I notice that the soul is so constituted that it craves a full blessing. What it gets at regeneration does not satisfy it, I never knew a genuinely converted man in my life who was really growing in grace but desired something more than he possessed. He wants a “fulness,” and so he prays to be “filled.”

This very condition of spirit to my mind is a proof of the blessing. It is the logic of Heaven in the soul. It pleads from the premises of a conscious emptiness and yearning for fullness, to the irresistible conclusion of such a filling. The craving declares the blessing. Just as thirst proves the existence of water, and hunger declares the fact of bread, so the longing for fullness shows there is a filling blessing. Somehow I do not dread the denials and attacks of the skeptical upon the doctrine so long as I find these mighty instincts and appetites in the soul reaching out for the blessing itself. The inward instinct will outweigh in the long run the sneer of the scoffer and opposer.

I have also observed that in the Bible there is frequent reference to a blessing of fulness. Paul writes about it to a certain church, telling them that when he visited them again he was going to come in “the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ” So there is a blessing of the Gospel of Christ, and a fulness of the blessing. The first time he came he brought the good news of pardon and salvation, but when he came again he proposed coming in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

There is a command in the Bible bidding us “Be filled with the Spirit,” as clearly as sinners are told to “Repent.” God never tells a sinner to be filled with the Spirit; he is commanded to repent and thereby obtain the first measure of the Spirit. It is the believer who is urged to be filled.

It was for this purpose that the disciples tarried in the Upper Room ten days. Not to get pardon, or even obtain the Spirit, for He had been

breathed upon them days before by the Saviour, and Christ Himself had said: "He (the Spirit) dwelleth with you." They spent the ten days in prayer and waiting for the filling of the Spirit; and so we read that on the Day of Pentecost while they were all with one accord together in one place, suddenly the Spirit fell upon them, and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

So the instincts and yearnings of the soul find a spiritual correlative in the Bible. The want is recognized and the supply is provided. The command "Be filled" is in exact harmony with the desire of the soul to be filled.

With these two great facts before me of the souls yearning and the Bible teaching, I can never dread the antagonistic writings of men in the church who try to explain away the Great Blessing or deny it altogether. The heaven inspired hunger for heart purity, and the declarations and commands of the Word of God will be more than a match for all opposers of this experience, whether they be laymen or preachers, learned or unlearned, prominent or obscure, powerful, more powerful or most powerful.

There is a blessing that fills the soul. Every room, hall and closet of ones being is filled with love, joy and glory. Malachi talked about it in his time, Peter in his day, Wesley in his age, and please God we who have it will testify to it in the evening of the nineteenth century.

Fourth, It is an Uncontainable Blessing.

This appears in the words, "There shall not be room enough to receive it." Truly, then, if there is no room for the blessing, it must be an uncontainable one.

This is the very kind of blessing the Church wants. She has many blessings already; we do not deny it, and thank God for it. But the trouble is they are all containable. God's people have love, but they have no difficulty in controlling it. They have joy, but it is easily kept under. They have the missionary spirit and the benevolent spirit, but all are easily managed, kept in and kept down. At this rate it is easy to see the heathen will never be converted and the world won for God. What is needed is an uncontainable blessing that will sweep us down upon human want, misery, ignorance and sin, and capture and change the whole world for Christ. We do not want a force and energy that we must create and stir up,

but we want a heavenly power that will come down upon us like a cyclone and sweep us along with it as the storm whirls the leaves in its mighty course.

I am heartily sick of seeing the church “mark time,” as on dress parade. I want to see an advance movement so solid, impetuous and overwhelming that sinners will surrender everywhere, wickedness slink into its hiding holes, devils fear and fly and all hell stand in utter dismay.

I am tired of beholding the horses and chariot of Zion trotting all day in the shade of one tree—an appearance of going, and yet, in reality staying. I am tired of seeing devils roosting on the axletrees, and some even on the seat manipulating the reins. I want such a galvanic battery shock of divine glory to come upon us, that every wrong thing will be knocked off the chariot, and such a hurricane rush of joy and zeal and fire and heavenly power fall upon and sweep us onward that plotting devils and hating men will be left astonished in a cloud of dust far behind, while we are disappearing in the glorious light of the Millennium.

The disciples had this uncontainable blessing, and from the instant it came upon them nothing could stop them, neither men nor devils, kings, armies, stakes, dungeons, wild beasts, seas, mountains or deserts; on they flew, running for God, telling the good news of salvation, warning of the wrath to come, begging men to be saved, until, still running, they struck their foot against their tombstone and fell flat in the grave, broke the bottom out of that and woke up in glory. They had the uncontainable blessing.

The Wesleyan movement had it, and the combined force of church authority, mob violence and public ridicule could do nothing before the unlearned but fire-baptized lay preachers of John Wesley. So long as the Methodist Church retained this blessing its advance was like the tread and sweep of a victorious army.

Moreover, we have got to have this blessing if we are ever to take the world for Christ. We can never win the day with an experience which we have to coddle and manage, but we must have a steady, permanent blessing that will manage us—something like steam in an engine, or, better still, like the force behind the world.

When this blessing does descend on a church or congregation here or there, there is immediately such a stir and commotion that a timid, unthinking,

conservative element in the church becomes alarmed and thinks everything is going to pieces, when only sin, worldliness and formality are going to pieces. There was a great deal of agitation in the apostolic church, and stormy times in the Wesleyan revival, but God was in both movements. The church had something that would not bend, truckle and go down before earth and hell. It had the uncontainable blessing, rode every wave, ran through every troop and leaped over every wall. Lord give it back to us.

To the timid, fearful wing in the church, let me say that God will never send a steed of fire to be placed in the shafts of His chariot that would break it to pieces. In other words, God will never send a blessings that will rupture His church. It may offend and cast out some people who claim to be His church; but God's real church is called the body of Christ and that will never be hurt by the Baptism of Fire or the Uncontainable Blessing.

Fifth, It is a running over and flowing-forth blessing.

Again we read the words, "There shall not be room enough to receive it." The picture suggested to the mind is evident. The overflowing fountain, murmuring on its benevolent way, can readily be seen in the words.

I have seen fountains in our city squares playing into a large marble or iron basin that would hold a hogshead of water. I noticed that when the basin was full, the fountain did not cease to flow, but kept pouring in, and there was nothing for the basin to do but to overflow, while the water streamed forth and carried overground or underground in troughs or pipes went to distant places, nourishing the roots of trees and grasses, slacking the thirst of cattle and thousands of birds, and so becoming a blessing to vegetable and animal life.

In like manner when a man receives the blessing I am talking about today, he is first filled, but as God keeps pouring in more and more of His grace and Spirit, there is nothing for the man to do but overflow. He like the city fountain runs over and flows out. He in a manner radiates. He cannot keep in what he has. It is driven forth by other measures of grace flowing into him. So he becomes not only a daily but a constant benediction. Filled and overflowing with good, he leaves a blessing wherever he goes. It is a book here, a paper yonder, a hand-shake there, a pleasant smile and word in another place, a flower to the invalid, or prayers by the side of the sick

and aged. The very grasp of his hand does good, his smile is contagious, the spiritual brightness in his face clears the atmosphere of home and social circle, and the firm ring of his voice and kindly look in his eyes is like a tonic to drooping faith and an inspiration to Christian life and performance.

Now multiply this man by five hundred, in other words a congregation. Think of a whole church filled with such a blessing, and tell me whether it will be a benediction to a town and city or not. Filled and overflowing they will flow forth in a thousand acts of benevolent and spiritual work. Relief for the human body and salvation for the humble soul will be in their creed. What missions will be started, what prayer meetings and Sunday schools organized, what jails and hospitals visited, and what good of every kind for mind, body and soul will be done willingly and rejoicingly.

God gave me a church where I had several hundred members in the possession of this blessing. The result was that the congregation literally flowed out on the city in deeds of mercy and salvation. The naked were clothed, the poor were fed, strangers were visited, prisoners in the jail were looked after, while the cottage prayer meetings in the houses, Gospel meetings on the streets, and salvation power all the time at the church, made Hell to stand astonished and grieved, while angels camped around about and God kept sending down the Holy Spirit upon us in holy love and approval. Do you see why the Devil does not want the church to obtain this blessing?

In a meeting in a Southern State an old lady of about seventy-five years of age obtained this blessing and at once undertook a missionary expedition up one aisle and down another. In less than ten minutes she had shaken hands with over sixty people and left a track of emotion behind her like a steamboat leaves a wake of bubbles as it goes down the stream. The old lady shook hands right and left, and as she did so, said: "God bless you," while her face fairly shone with holy light and love. The warm handshake, the God bless you, backed up with the shining faces was more than the people could stand, and I saw numbers of men wiping the tears from their eyes. As I looked on the scene I said if the church had what this old lady has, it would go out at once on missionary expeditions in every direction, shake hands in a few months with Europe, Asia, Africa and America, stir them all up with hearty God bless yous, and shining countenances, and have the nations at the feet of Jesus in a little while.

In a California town two girls in the Presbyterian Church were sanctified in a Methodist Mission. The instant they got the uncontainable blessing they began to run over and flow forth. Satisfied with formal church attendance and some perfunctory Sabbath-school work up to that time, now they overflowed the regular banks and backed up to the hills. In a word, they could not keep still and see men going down by scores from their town into hell. So they rented a hall, filled it with chairs, procured an organ and opened a meeting. Neither of them knew how to preach, but they could sing, and give their experience and cry some, and pray and exhort a little. In a few days a gracious revival broke out and scores of sinners were saved. At once they were summoned for trial before their church, the charges against them being "Irregularity." This was quite true. They were very different from what they had been before. A mechanical, perfunctory Christian life no longer satisfied them; they were burning up with love for souls and were trying to keep men and women out of perdition. They were doing what their fellow church members were not doing, namely, saving souls; and so they both looked and were exceedingly "irregular." Fortunately for the girls, the Moderator of the church court or assembly was both a religious and sensible man. As he propounded numerous questions to the young women as to how and when and where and why they did these things, light streamed into his mind, and he secured their acquittal. His final remark to the assembly was noteworthy. He said, "From all I can see these girls have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and it would be a good thing if we all had it. "

Amen! Lord send upon the church the uncontainable, running over and running out, blessing.

Sixth. It is the blessing that fills the church with food for a spiritually starving and perishing world. Listen to the text, "That there may be meat in mine house." This is the Lord talking. He is telling His people how the starvation and death of the nations can be prevented. If they will bring up the tithes, the material substance and spiritual services, the affections and energies, the love and devotion, the body, mind and soul, and consecrate all to God—then His storehouse will be full, and all that a miserable, needy, sorrow-stricken, sin-stained and despairing world wants will be found in the church of God.

The church in this figure is held up in the light of a great receptacle and dispensing place, where everything needed by poor, heartbroken humanity can be found, from material aid up to spiritual light, comfort and salvation.

If God's people will do what Malachi exhorts to here, and God's answering blessing comes down, everything will be found in the church that is needed and that should be there—the cordial welcome, the hearty hand shake, the practical help, the burning love for souls, the unctuous prayer, the melting hymn, the earnest exhortation, the sermon filled with spiritual food and salvation flowing about the church altars at every service.

This is God's plan, thus to fill His church with devoted, fire-baptized, soul-loving men and women as so many servants and waiters; then to line the rafters and load the shelves with all kinds of spiritual food; and after that literally bombard the church with crowds of sinners and backsliders, people undone in reputation and character, lives gone down under appetite, pride and passion, hearts broken and despairing through sin and sorrow; and have them not only met and welcomed but loved, cheered, helped, lifted up and saved as fast as they come. This is God's plan, and this why He urges the uncontainable blessing on His people; because that through its marvellous power this very thing will be done. But God's people are slow to see the heavenly design, and, neglecting the conditions by which the wonderful work is to be brought about, the church is not the spiritual feeding-place, nor the Power House that it should be. Some of us have seen congregations stream out of handsome-looking cathedrals as well as plain-looking houses of worship, and the people did not look like they had been fed. There seemed to have been no meat in God's house that day.

Any one can see how this hurts Christ even more than the church. The unsatisfied soul of the man of the world reasons thus: "I heard this was the church of God; that it was a supernatural institution; that it had supernatural influence; that the soul was fed and men were made to feel the presence and power of the other world. But I have not so found it. It is just like any other gathering to me. What they called the sermon was like a speech or lecture, and I came out as I went in, nowise helped or made better." It is a distressing thought that this is not only the reasoning but the experience of many who go into some of our churches. People who may have gone in for help and light, left confirmed in doubt and skepticism.

When I was a boy I read somewhere that three people went to church one night each in peculiar trouble and hoping that help or deliverance would come to them in some way. One was a man in great agony of mind contemplating suicide, another was a woman who from poverty was

meditating flinging herself into a life of shame, a third was a boy who owed a debt and not being able to pay it was being tempted to break into the cash drawer of his employer and take what he needed. It was a critical hour for these three souls and they had come up to the house of God with a vague hope of being helped or delivered in some way. What a time it would have been for the choir to have sung Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee. But no it was a paid choir and they hemi-demi-semi-quavered and ran the rattlesnake note for half an hour, and brought down no sweetness or unction upon the soul. It was a good time for a prayer which would have lifted a despairing soul up to see the Fatherhood of God and His delivering care, but instead the preacher for ten minutes gave the Lord a great deal of information about what was going on in the world; in fact it was no prayer. Then what an opportunity for the man of God to have selected a text about God being with us in the “seventh trouble,” about Jesus not letting us be tempted above that we are able to bear, etc., etc. But instead the preacher took some curious passage in the Old Testament and for three quarters of an hour talked about The Third Geological Epoch of the World’s History. He fed the people on rocks for nearly an hour. I remember the paragraph read that after the sermon the man went out and leaping over the river bridge committed suicide, the woman flung herself into a life of shame, and the boy went home to rob his master, and in the act of breaking open the drawer was detected and sent to a House of Correction.

The little story made a great impression on me, and when I became a preacher it came back to me and I cried to God and asked Him please to grant that in all my ministry I would never fail to help every broken heart or troubled soul He might send to me for light, assistance or deliverance. If the pulpit and church does not do that kind of work, of what use are they to God.

Some years ago, before I received this blessing of which I am speaking to you, I lost a little boy of eight years of age, named Guy. He was such a deeply spiritual lad, such a John-like, Christlike boy that I have perpetuated his memory in a chapter of one of my books called Pastoral Sketches. He died a very horrible death of lockjaw, and while he was struggling in the peculiar and awful convulsions of the disease for ten days, it seemed that I died a thousand times while sitting or kneeling as a lonely watcher by his bedside.

The morning he died the sun seemed to go down, and the whole world seemed black and empty to me. I did not have the Great Blessing at that time, so that life became a burden to me. I fancied I could hear his voice from the street where other little boys were playing. One of the last times in life I saw him in the days of health, he was swinging on a wind waved branch of a tree and cried out to me as he saw me leave the gate “Good-bye Papa!.” I could hear that same loving call now wherever I went, “Good-bye Papa.” In the pulpit, when I arose to preach, his sweet little face would arise before me and I could scarcely proceed. When I came into my house from my pastoral work about the city and would come across the cap he once wore, the kite he flew, or some plaything his precious hand had made sacred, an agony pierced my heart like a minnie ball, and once or twice I fell as though I was shot through and through by a missile of death.

In the midst of this darkness and sorrow came a telegram from my brother a physician, in New York City, asking me to come on to see him. He had heard of my sorrow. Most kindly and tenderly he tried to divert my mind by taking me to different places. One trip was up the Hudson River to the Catskill Mountains. But everywhere I saw the sweet boyish face, now hidden under the sod of the hills of Vicksburg, and the burden seemed to grow heavier. On Saturday we returned to New York City, and I picked up the paper to see what the preachers were going to preach about next day that I might know where to go. I wish I could recall the topics that for a column and a half literally sickened my eyes and heart. There were political subjects, scientific topics, literary treatises. It was amazing to see how the Gospel had been skipped and Jesus left out. So as I read on I kept saying: “#No No! don’t want that or that—or that.” Some subjects were upon startling occurrences that had recently taken place. Some preachers proposed to answer certain Questions of the Day, and still my heart said: “No, I don’t want questions of the day answered, I am already sick of them. There are heart questions, and providential problems and mysteries about the other world that I want solved. Lord I want this burden to be taken away, I want peace and rest.” So my eye kept glancing down the column until at last I read these words: “On tomorrow at the Washington Square Methodist Church, the Rev. J. R. T will preach at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. His morning subject will be “Soul Rest.” At once my heart cried out: “Yes Lord, that is what I want, soul rest.”

On the next morning I sat in the center of the church and gave most faithful attention to the preacher. He appeared to be about forty years of age.

There were lines in his face that showed he had known great suffering, but there was a light among the lines which revealed he had come through victoriously. His manner was impressive, his voice tender and solemn. He took for his text the words of David, "Return unto thy rest O my soul." For forty-five minutes he opened up the verse and from it poured a stream of inspired thought that was like heavenly oil to the wounded heart. Jesus was held up and brought near. Jesus our best friend, Jesus the lover of our souls, Jesus with us in the storm and in the dark, Jesus making everything work together for our good, Jesus explaining to us in heaven some of the dark, inscrutable things that took place on earth. I saw my soul like a poor storm-tossed bird far out over the deep, and I could see Jesus stretching out his arms for it. I could see it beating its tired way back to Him, feel His hand taking in the wearied flutterer and placing it in His bosom. I never wept so much under a sermon in my life before. The tears came not in drops, but flowed in streams, while the preacher with heaven directed hand poured the oil upon the spirit.

When the service was over I walked forward to the altar and took him by the hand and with a broken voice told him he would never know in this life how much good he had done a heartbroken preacher of the Gospel. As I walked out on the street I begged God to grant that whenever I stood up to preach I would thus bless and bind up the broken hearts He would send to my church. Even then I began to see what the mission of the church was, and if we are not encouraging the discouraged, uplifting the fallen and saving the lost, we are of no earthly use to God.

I held a meeting in a large Northern city two winters ago; and this occurrence took place a couple of weeks before my arrival. A young woman was engaged to be married when her betrothed suddenly died. A strange desperate feeling came over her and in that reckless spirit she entered upon a life of sin and shame. At once remorse set in, and feeling that life was unbearable she determined one night to drown herself in the river that flowed through the city. On the way to the bridge from which she intended casting herself, she passed the church where I afterwards held my meeting. It was lighted up and the sound of singing came out upon the night air. She concluded to go in and hear one hymn before she took her life. She entered and sat in the last seat. The people were all filled with the Spirit, it was a Holiness Church, and one sweet hymn followed another. She had heard four hymns when the speaker of the evening arose suddenly and said, "I will speak a few minutes on the words of Jesus 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.'"

Then followed an earnest, tender, unctuous talk of fifteen minutes, when he concluded by saying, "If any sin sick soul, or and burdened heart would like to come to Jesus tonight, let them draw near at once to this altar that we may pray for them. " At once the girl rushed forward, fell at the altar, and in less than ten minutes was soundly saved. Several weeks later I opened my meeting in this church of which she was now a member. When she heard of the deeper experience of sanctification, the greater blessing I have been talking about, she at once sought it, and in a few days found it. Several times after that I heard her testify, and as I looked at her transfigured face, the perfectly angelic expression upon it, and thought that only a few weeks before she was on her way to the river to drown herself, I blessed God for a church that had the power to stop her mad career and turn her steps from an endless hell to an everlasting Heaven. And I saw once again why God wants to fill His church everywhere with a blessing that will make it a soul saving institution, cheating hell out of a weeping and wailing population, and crowding the streets of Heaven with a multitude that cannot be numbered, plucked from the walks and ways of sin everywhere, and now white robed and shining-faced to glorify God in the skies forever.

Why is it that God's people are so uneasy and suspicious about this blessing. It is not an enemy to the church, but the friend. It is not to strip and rend, but to fill it up with redeemed people and bind all its interests together. It has not come to assail the church, but to show her the way of capturing the world for Christ. It is not to be a burden and affliction, but is the very "power" which Christ promised should come down, and which on coming down makes one man to chase a thousand, two to put ten thousand to flight, makes the church in a word victorious and irresistible at every point and place, while to the eyes of the world it looks "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Lord send down upon us and into us the Uncontainable Blessing.

CHAPTER 8

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:23

The word regenerate means to “beget,” “renew” and “renovate.” It is, in the scriptural sense, to be born again, or born of God. The word sanctify, which is the prominent one in the text, means to “make pure,” “make holy” and “set apart.” You see at once that the words regenerate and sanctify are not synonyms, and that the latter is much stronger than the former. It is also very noticeable that Paul was not speaking of the first, but of the last, and was evidently deeply concerned that the Thessalonians might come into an experience which he calls being wholly sanctified.

This grace must undoubtedly be very important, as we find certain impressive facts and statements made relative to it in the Word of God. One is that Christ prayed for our sanctification. This appears in the seventeenth chapter of John; for, after supplicating thus for the disciples, the Saviour adds, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.” It is through their word that the Gospel has been sent down to us

Again, Christ died for our sanctification. Many people do not seem to know this. They have looked on the death of Christ as a means of escape, from hell, when the Scripture distinctly declares that “He suffered outside the gate that He might sanctify the people.” Remember that sanctify does not mean regenerate.

Still again, Christ’s work is to that end. He has a work. Paul declares it in Ephesians, where he says that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it. The Revised Version here will make you open your eyes, for it says “that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the washing of the water of the Word.” Here are the two works of grace side by side.

Still further, I notice that God wills our sanctification. Having once read that, how can a Christian ever be satisfied and settle down in any state of grace that is less and falls short of what is in the plain word? It seems to

me that condemnation is bound to overtake one who refuses to walk in increasing light and will not possess that which God wants him to have.

I once read of a man who claimed to be God's friend and follower, and yet was neglectful of certain Divine commandments. One evening on coming into his wife's room he saw her open Bible lying on her work-table. She had been reading it on her knees, and hearing him had hastily retired to hide the emotion that was uppermost in her heart as she thought of his course. The man glanced at the Bible and saw a single tear that had dropped from her eyes upon the page. It was resting on this verse in John's first epistle and second chapter: "He that saith I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." The tear and the verse together went like an arrow to his heart and did the work that aroused and saved him. It would be well for some today who hear me if they could see the tears of angels on the verse, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," and ask themselves how they must appear to God, and the world itself, when saying they love God, and yet heeding not what is the declared will of God, and neglecting or refusing to obtain that for which Christ prayed and worked, and even died that they might have.

The text I have selected is full of information concerning this great work of grace. And it is remarkable that the very facts it brings out are the very points that are so objectionable and irritating to a large class of people in the church today. Drop these features and they will join hands with us and agree on the doctrine of sanctification. But to discard these same points is to rob it of its distinctiveness, confound it with growth in grace, make it a mere elongation of regeneration, and thereby strip the blessing of its real spirit essence and peculiar glory. Let us see what this verse teaches:

1. SANCTIFICATION AS A DIVINE WORK.

This is the direct statement of the text: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." How can the most expert reasoner escape from this unmistakable declaration that God sanctifies.

I have noticed that there is a disposition in the world to deny every work of God. Herein is seen not only the unbelief of men, but the same spirit that swept Christ from the earth. To deny God's works is to get rid of God. And we have only to open our eyes and ears to see that every work of God is denied, not by the same class of people, but by different bodies;

and the summing up of all these various negations amounts to the total rejection of God.

I find that the Bible attributes, among others, five general works to God, viz., creation, resurrection, regeneration, witness of the Spirit and sanctification. Is it not remarkable that every one of these are disputed and denied by men? Scientists would displace creation as all act of God, by evolution—a mere blind and unintelligent process. A large class of religious people deny the resurrection. Here two Divine works are swept away. A third body laugh at experimental religion, and substitute church membership for regeneration. Three works gone. A fourth class insists that there is and can be no direct testimony of the Spirit of God to our salvation; that we can only arrive at such a conclusion by a system of deductions, and these deductions are drawn from an observation of certain changes in our lives. The fourth work is gone. A fifth party deride the idea of sanctification being a distinct work of grace in the soul, and confound the word with maturity and growth in grace. I have often wondered if the people who do this, and oftentime they are Christians, are aware that they are in ghastly union with an unbelieving world in robbing God of His glory. For so it comes to pass, by open enemies and avowed friends, that every work of God is denied and swept away. Only review the list, creation, resurrection, regeneration, witness of the Spirit and sanctification, and behold every one is jeered at, doubted and denied. How do you like your fellowship, my brother, as you find yourself in league to defraud the Almighty of His honor?

Thank God the Bible is clear in these matters, and the same Book which says that God created the heavens and the earth declares that God sanctifies the soul wholly. It is vain for persons to try to escape this direct statement by saying that the Scripture tells us to “sanctify the Lord God in our heart.” This is true; we are to have high, holy, elevated thoughts of God, and this it is to sanctify Him in our hearts; and until we do this He will never sanctify our souls; but still the verse remains unmoved—”The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.”

It is also vain to say that the Bible tells us to sanctify ourselves; that this was the command to the children of Israel, “Sanctify yourselves.” This is also true. We have never denied that there is a double cleansing or sanctification, one human and the other divine. The human must always precede the divine. A man must cleanse or sanctify himself before God will ever sanctify him wholly. We are to “cleanse ourselves from all

filthiness” in order to “perfect holiness.” So the text stands like a mighty unconquered fort after all this shelling and crossfiring—it is the God of peace who sanctifies us wholly.

2. SANCTIFICATION AS A SECOND WORK.

Here comes fresh trouble to many. If we would only say that sanctification is a ripening of the Christian graces, a further development of the Christian life, then all would be well with Jacob and the camp of Israel would remain peaceful and contented. But to call it a second work, a work subsequent to and different from regeneration, here is where the excitement is again aroused.

I have often wondered at the irritability manifested by good people toward the teaching of a second work of grace. One would suppose that the first had not been so delightful that they desired another. Whereas in my own case the first blessing was so sweet that I always wanted God to touch me again. Now when in addition to this it is demonstrated both by the heart and the Bible that there is need for a second work, then it certainly seems that every child of God would pant to receive that work. This being the case, the antagonism felt and expressed toward this subsequent grace is quite remarkable. But antagonism or not, the fact remains that such a work is for us.

Moreover, every view taken or theory enunciated of the blessing of entire sanctification makes it a second work. For instance, if purity comes in Purgatory, there the second work is seen; if at death, the fact of subsequency is clear then. If it comes as a result of growth or development, still it is a second blessing. Even the Zinzendorffian teaching, which locates it at conversion, will, if examined, reveal the dual grace. The words “I got it at conversion” are most significant. Do you not see that “it” and “conversion” are different words, and that the man says that when he was regenerated he got something else different from regenerated—that he “got it when he was converted.”

When you come to the true theory as taught in the Bible and Methodist theology, sanctification is plainly upheld as a second work.

The first proof is seen remarkably in the epistle from which the text is taken. Let any one of you read the first chapter of first Thessalonians and note what Paul says about their religious condition, their faith, their joy in

the Holy Ghost, their being an example to believers, etc., and then turn to the text and hear him pray that God would sanctify them wholly to see a second work taught, as clearly as words can make it.

A second proof is in the term “God of peace.” Who is the God of peace? Romans, fifth chapter and first verse, will answer that, “Being justified by faith we have peace with God.” God is not a God of peace to a sinner, but to a justified man. Now then, says Paul, may the God of peace, your justifying God, sanctify you wholly.

A third proof is seen in the word “sanctify.” This, as previously said, means to “make pure, make holy and to set apart.” Regeneration means to “beget, reproduce, born again,” etc. But common sense tells us that the creature must be born before it can be “set apart.” So the word sanctify itself contains the evidence of a second work. A fourth proof is found in many Bible passages which my time today will not allow me even to quote, much less expound.

A fifth proof is in human witnesses. They are today found all over the land, and are springing up by thousands and tens of thousands. I meet them wherever I go. No matter in what country or city I find them they agree marvelously on these very points which awaken such a stir of resentment, that the work is Divine and that it is wrought subsequent to regeneration!

It is true there are many people in the church who deny the reality of such a blessing, saying, among other things, that they never had it. But what does this prove? Simply that they themselves have not the blessing. Can what they say have weight? Are they true witnesses when we come to look at the matter? A witness in the court is a man who testifies to what he knows, not to what he does not know. Suppose a boy should declare that he saw one man murder another, and a hundred men should swear that it did not occur because they did not see it, do we not all know that the testimony of the lad would outweigh the statements of the one hundred men. He was present, saw and knew of the transaction, while they were not there, and so could not properly testify. In this instance one positive declaration of fact outweighs a thousand denials. So in regard to this experience, we have those who say they have the blessing. What, then, does the adverse testimony of laymen and preachers amount to against the doctrine when all they say, when summed up, is that they have not got it? They, in a word, were not on the ground. We were; and, thank God, saw

the “Old Man” killed and buried. In other words, we believed, received, and are today filled and blessed with the joy, liberty and power of the second work of grace.

Some one told a devout old colored woman that a very smart and eloquent lecturer had just said in one of his harangues that there was no Holy Ghost. The person who told her watched her countenance closely as he asked: “Now, Aunt Maria, when such an intellectual and prominent man says there is no Holy Ghost in the world, what are you going to do about it?” The aged head was lifted in answer, the trembling hand was raised, and with earnest tones she said: “He means to say there’s no Holy Ghost as he knows on!” That answer was a Waterloo one and cleared the field. And so in like manner when we hear of people denying the fact of a second work of grace, we say: “Yes, there is none that they ‘knows on’—but there is one just the same.”

The argument is made against us that God does everything in one work; but it is overwhelmingly contradicted by the formation of the world with six different touches of power, the creation of the human family in two distinct works, the two covenants given to men, the blessing of Pentecost coming on saved men and women, and by other instances of divine procedure that I have not time to mention.

According to reason and revelation, and in agreement with other Divine works, and in perfect harmony with human experience, sanctification is a second work.

3. SANCTIFICATION IS AN INSTANTANEOUS WORK.

This third fact likewise arouses the displeasure and opposition of a number of God’s people. Make the blessing a gradual growth or an endless series of developments, and such a teacher will be held in high ecclesiastical favor, and there will be “room in the inn” for him and his teaching. It is the statement of its instantaneousness that seems to exasperate some spirits.

The proof of the immediate nature of the blessing is seen in the aorist tense in which we find the word sanctify in the text. Scholars have told us that the aorist tense will not allow the thought of gradualism or development. It stands for a work accomplished once for all.

Another proof is seen in God's will. When could He will our sanctification but now, in the present moments To say that He wills it a year, month, or even a day hence, would be to destroy the moral character of God. It would be to say that God did not will us to be holy now and was satisfied with unsanctified lives. We cannot believe this a moment. We say "now" is God's time, and if He wills us to be sanctified now then He has a way to do it now.

A third proof is seen in God's commands. Turn to the Bible and see if the word of injunction there does not refer to the present; "Be ye holy!" The call, command and promise throughout the Scriptures agree as to an instantaneous yielding and immediate experience.

If you confound sanctification with growth in grace, the idea of gradualism becomes natural and imperative; but when we see that sanctification is a Divine work and not a soul process, the impossibility of the development theory becomes at once manifest. It is an instantaneous Divine cleansing, and as such we are commanded to seek and possess it.

God's commands do not provide for procrastination and willful delays. They do not read that way, and if we do so treat them it is at our peril. There is no command for a gradual honesty. Think if you can of a man becoming honest after a gradual fashion; that today he steals a horse, the next day a cow, then a calf, then a hog, then a turkey (oh, how he is improving!), then a chicken, and finally an egg. Would any one call that improvement? Would not a child say that the man was as big a thief when he took the egg as when he stole the horse? God knows of no such honesty, and has no such command. Instead of that are the ringing words, "Let him that stole steal no more." An instantaneous honesty! So we are not called and commanded to a gradual and graduated holiness, but to an instant and entire destruction of sin and perfect filling of the soul with the Holy Ghost.

A fourth proof is beheld in the power of God. Ask yourselves how long it would take God to sanctify the soul. He who turned ten thousand devils out of a man, changed the water into wine with a word, and stilled the storm and raised the dead in an instant, how long would it take Him to cast out inbred sin, purify the soul and bring in the abiding presence of the Comforter? Look at God's power and see the answer to the problem. Ask the question if He does not want us to be sanctified now, and get still another answer. Put the supposition before your mind that God can do it

and will not do it, or that God wants to do it and cannot do it, and either one will literally drive you to the true conclusion that God wants to do the work, can do it, and is able, willing and ready to do it now.

This is just what thousands and tens of thousands are saying over our broad country. They sought, prayed, believed, expected and received the blessing instantaneously. There is no other way of obtaining it, and so that is the reason they sought it in that way and found it after that manner.

4. SANCTIFICATION IS AN EXPERIENCE.

The statement of this proposition arouses antagonism and denial just as the other points we have made have been seen to do. The desire with many is to regard sanctification as simply a deepening of regeneration. This of course destroys the individuality of the work, and as a consequence would prevent us from saying that we have a secret of the Lord, an experience that is not known and enjoyed by all the rest of God's people. Such a claim is felt to be boastful and presumptuous. "Master, in saying these things, thou speakest against us." In other words such a claim is supposed to reflect on other Christians. It is needless to say that this is not intended. It is a natural outcry of joy. It is the thankful testimony to a resident inner cleanliness and happiness.

If sanctification is a Divine work, different from and subsequent to regeneration, then it is bound to bring a peculiar experience. Common sense would tell us that, and the experience of a vast, multitude confirms the fact. The very expressions in the text show that sanctification ushers in a new experience to the soul. For instance the words "sanctify you wholly," declare a distinct plane or state of religious life, if any dependence is to be placed upon words, and especially God inspired words. All admit that there is a measure of sanctification in regeneration. This is Methodist teaching. All that possess that partial sanctification in converted life insist that they have an experience, and who of us will deny it. But the point I make is, that if partial sanctification brings an experience, then it should follow that when we are sanctified wholly there must be not only an experience as a consequence, but a different experience. Cartwright said that he was sanctified in spots. But suppose that these spots should run into each other and cover the whole surface, then there must be an experience tallying and agreeing with this changed state of things. Let men reason and worry as they will about the difference existing between "kind" and "degree," the fact remains that there is a

marvellous dissimilarity between love, peace and joy struggling in the soul for foothold and existence, and perfect love, joy and peace abiding unbrokenly in the spirit. This is an experience in itself, and different from the former, as the happy heart and shining face will, and do testify.

The words “preserved blameless” also prove a different religious life and experience. There is no promise in the Bible that we will live such lives that all men will approve and commend. The Saviour Himself did not please many. But there is a spiritual condition obtainable, in which we continually please God, and feel no condemnation. We are preserved blameless and kept by the power of God from day to day, from hour to hour, even unto or against the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is an experience in itself, and when we remember our former Christian life, in which there was so much of stumbling, so much that was to be blamed, and when we did not feel kept but left to struggle on in conscious weakness and solitude, more than ever we see it is an experience.

A lady was seeking this blessing in San Francisco. Just as she was about to receive it, she told me that the Saviour seemed to whisper to her, “How long will you let me keep you?” She said that her unbelief made her shrink back from saying “For all time” and her utmost stretch of faith could only say “For six months.” At once she said the presence of Christ departed, and she was left in horrible darkness. For days she mourned Christ’s absence and begged Him to return. One day she was brought face to face with the same experience and question, “How long will you trust me to keep you?” and with a glad exclamation, she cried “Forever!” and instantly the fire fell and she entered into rest.

He that is thus sweetly strangely kept from moment to moment, and from day to day, is bound to say it is an experience. The utter absence of worry and storm, the elimination of fret and fault-finding, the delicious sense of heart repose in the constant inward presence of Christ is an experience, there is no other name for it.

5. SANCTIFICATION IS WITNESSED TO BY THE HOLY GHOST.

Here is still another fact connected with the blessing that seems productive of agitation, dissension and firm denial with quite a number of good people. It seems that every feature of this beautiful grace of God arouses antagonism somewhere. But we cannot afford to withdraw a single one of

them, no matter how objectionable they may be to certain individuals. To do so is to rob the blessing of its glory and destroy its individuality.

So in spite of doubt and denial here and there, we affirm with great gladness, that the Holy Ghost witnesses to the blessing of sanctification. This truth is imbedded in the text, for the reason that the Spirit witnesses to every work of God; here is a work, and there must be and is a witness.

He who can only recognize the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the fact of sonship, has evidently not thought much on the subject, nor even read the Bible as carefully as he should. So far from one testimony, it is clear that the Holy Ghost witnesses to every state in the spiritual life whether the man be good or evil.

The Holy Ghost witnesses to a man that he is a sinner, and it is this divine whisper that makes him go down before God and men, with trembling knees and hand-smitten breast.

The Holy Ghost witnesses to pardon and sonship. No one hears an audible voice, but the testimony is given within somehow, and the forgiven one leaps from his knees or from the altar, laughing, crying, shouting or declaring that he is saved.

The Holy Ghost testifies to a call to the ministry. He witnesses to the heart that God wants you to preach the gospel. No one hears any voice, no one else in the family has the disturbing and vivid impression that is upon you, and that will not let you rest until you say

“Yes.” Then follows a flood of sweetest peace and ecstasy.

The Holy Ghost witnesses to inbred sin. In fact no one can show it to you but the Spirit of God. I may preach about it but it takes the Holy Ghost to show it in all its sickening shape and movements. When He reveals it and bears witness to it, down you go in an agony like Isaiah, feeling or saying “Woe is me—for I am undone.” No more sermons are needed to convince. The fluent speech is over, the soul is found in the dust, for God the Holy Ghost has spoken. What can man do and say when God speaks?

The Holy Ghost testifies to the destruction and eradication of inbred sin, in other words, He witnesses to sanctification. How He does it is not in the province or power of man to say. It cannot be explained. The very

thought how a spirit can speak to a spirit and make that spirit know a thing without the use of audible language, fills the mind with a profound bewilderment. Mr. Wesley says, concerning the witness of the Spirit, that it is “an inward impression wrought in the soul.” Does that clear up the matter? How can a spirit make an impression upon a spirit that shall be intelligible and understood where not a word is spoken. The matter simply cannot be explained, but thank God the fact remains and is daily experienced. The Holy Ghost witnesses to sanctification as He does to regeneration, and the instant he does the man quits seeking what he had found and proclaims with tears, smiles and shouts, “I have it.” Now he is like a rock! Nothing can shake or move him. He knows he has the blessing. The Spirit told him so.

Our fraternal messenger to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, said to that body in his address, that there was no direct witness or testimony of the Spirit of God to the state or fact of sanctification. Many of us read this remarkable statement with smiles, when we remembered how St. Paul differed with the brother. In Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 14 and 15, we have the inspired declaration, “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost is also a witness to us”!

So according to experience, and above all according to the Word of God, the Spirit witnesses to the grace and blessing of sanctification. Like the name in the white stone, no one knoweth it saving he that receiveth it. He that has not the divine whisper will continue to speculate, doubt and deny; we are not surprised at his uncertainty. But Oh! how certain we are who have received the blessing and have heard and still hear the voice of God testifying to the work he has done in the soul.

The outward demonstration may have been different; for some shout, some laugh, others weep and still others do nothing but sit down and luxuriate voicelessly in a measureless and indescribable calm. The inward reception of the blessing may differ to the consciousness of those receiving it. To one it is like a tempest of fire, to another like a deluge of honey. One is tossed on billows of glory, while another is brought into port, and anchored so deep in the love and grace of God, that there seems but one word that describes the new life, and that word—stillness stillness stillness.

Yes the Holy Ghost witnesses to the blessing of sanctification. So I say to all, and beg all, do not think of stopping until you receive it; do not dream of resting in anything but the vivid, thrilling testimony of the Holy Ghost Himself that you are sanctified. When that comes it is wonderful how unshaken and unshakable we are. It is delightful to feel how ridicule and opposition alike fall harmless before us. Great waves may be rolled upon us from the world and hell, but with the witness in the soul, we come safely through it all and are left towering Gibraltar-like far above the spent and broken forces at our feet.

6. HOW TO OBTAIN THIS BLESSING.

It is blessed to see in so many places in the Bible how the way is laid down for us to sweep into the gracious experience. The Saviour in two places in the gospel marks the route. Paul shows it in Romans and Hebrews, while James in his Epistle also reveals it twice. So again and again I have been thrilled to see the steps laid down by prophet, apostle and evangelist, and to notice that always, in spite of verbal dissimilarity or difference in figure used, how they all agree on consecration and faith. These essentials are never left out, but are always found in every presentation of the way we are to tread, if we would come “into the holiest.”

Glancing upward from the text at the verses immediately preceding, I see that if they are faithfully carried out in their teaching, they will lead us into the blessing, just as they lead directly to the text. Suppose we start with the 17th verse, the 6th from the text.

“ Pray without Ceasing. “

If any one should ask me today how to obtain the blessing of sanctification, I would reply, commence praying at once. If you have been talking and arguing, all the greater need to go to praying. Break off talking to men and go to talking with God. He knows all about it, while some men know a little and a great many know nothing about it. Talk with God. Get on your knees and beg for light. Remember that God teaches us through our communings with Him. I would also say, keep on praying; do not stop; let nothing discourage you. If there is no answer from the skies at first, then all the greater need to “pray without ceasing.” It is the importunate prayer that makes such headway here. The little everyday prayer on which you have grown cold and backslidden will not do. The

regulation prayer you have used in the pulpit, prayer-meeting, or family circles will not do. You must get up a new prayer, if it is composed entirely of groans, sobs, cries and ejaculations of “Lord, give me light”—”have mercy,” etc.

I knew a young man who got on his knees one morning and prayed steadily on to dinner time. The congregation left him but he remained at the altar. In the afternoon the people returned to have a prayer-meeting, and found him still praying. They remained an hour and left him the second time to the silence and shadows of the church. But he clung to the altar, and stuck to his knees, and kept calling on God, and at five o’clock, after six hours’ prayer, the fire fell and he obtained the blessing.

“Quench not the Spirit.”

Remember that the Holy Spirit wants to lead you into this experience. If you let Him He will do so? He has guided many thousands into it, and is leading many more. He will bring you in if you will not resist His holy motions and quench the blessed light He introduces.

As Mary told the servants at Cana, so I tell you: “Whatsoever he saith unto you do it.” If He brings something up in the mind attend to it. Say “Yes” to Him no matter what He bids you do. If you will thus follow and be led by Him, He will bring you into the blessing.

“Despise not prophesyings.”

This includes preaching, teaching and testifying. God will send you sufficient to give you all the light you need. Listen and reflect on what you hear about sanctification. Do not be faultfinding, critical, and above all hypercritical. Do not despise a testimony because it is simply given, or is uttered by a plain-looking person. Do not make the blunder of thinking that what is said is untrue because it is beyond you and your experience. Whatever you do, do not despise and condemn the prophesyings of God’s people who have swept ahead of you in divine things. It will only harden your heart and you will have to take it all back before you get the blessing. Oh! the light and wisdom I have seen and heard in these fervent utterances of God’s sanctified children.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

You and I are not bound to swallow down and practice all that we hear even from good people. Prove all things. See if it is reasonable. Test it with the word of God. Reject what is foolish, fanatical, nonsensical and nonessential, and hold fast that which is good.

“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

This verse alone shows that justified people are being addressed. If sinners were being talked to we would have to say, “Give up evil itself,” but here it is the appearance of evil. The holy life will not allow even the questionable and suspicious condition or circumstance.

In a word we are to live the sanctified life before we get the sanctified blessing. This very thing is to prove to God the fact and measure of our desire for the grace. I am to mortify “The Old Man” on the outside, before God will kill him on the inside. I am to sweep down every spider-web before God will kill the spider. We are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit if we would perfect holiness. We are to abstain from all appearance of evil if we would see the glory of God.

Some would think such a life of abstaining from the very appearance of sin would be sufficient; that this is holiness itself. Not so. Listen to the word. It is after we have abstained from all appearance of evil that the text is uttered, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” It is when we do the former that God does the latter. We must give up not only all evil, but the appearance of evil and then the God of peace will sanctify us.

There is no other way of obtaining the blessing. It is the way I got it, and the way others got it. I prayed without ceasing, quenched not the Spirit, despised not the prophesying of God’s people, proved all things, held fast to that which was good whether said or done, and abstained from all appearance of evil with the eyes of the soul looking steadfastly to Jesus. It was then! Glory to God! Hallelujah! O happy day! that God sanctified me. The fire fell, the Spirit witnessed, and I laughed, wept, shouted and praised God all over the room. I knew I was sanctified; my neighbors knew it; the devils in hell knew it; the angels of heaven knew it; and an increasing number of people have been knowing it every year, and please God a still greater number shall know it as the days roll on until breath shall fail, heart cease to beat, the tongue moulder in the dust, while the happy soul in some bright, faraway world shall find some new way and

method of worshipping, witnessing, adoring and praising the Triune God of my salvation.

We hear a number complaining that they cannot obtain the great blessing. In many of these instances I find mental reservations, a part of the value withheld for the pearl of great price.

Some say they do not know what is the matter with them. But there is something the matter or the Holy fire would fall. He who takes the steps we have laid down is bound to receive the blessing of sanctification. Nothing else can happen, for God is true, and never fails or disappoints the honest wholehearted seeker. Hallelujah!

Be sure of it that the thing which keeps coming up in your mind is the thing God wants you to do, and which if you will not do, will prevent the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire from coming upon you. Do it! Rise up today in God's name and say I will do it, and He who is called "Faithful" will open the windows of heaven above you and pour you out such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. It will be the blessing you have wanted all your life: The Baptism of Jesus; the sanctification of your soul; the great soul filling, heart-satisfying blessing which God wills us to have, and which we must have in order to see the Lord.

I heard a minister of the gospel once say that he knew a gentleman of wealth who began to lose his health. On consulting with one of the most distinguished physicians in a large city, he was informed that he had a tumor, and that the only hope for his life was to undergo a surgical operation. He was also told that there was not more than one chance in a hundred for his recovery if he submitted to the operation. Here, indeed, was a dreary alternative. Death certain unless the knife was used; and ninety-nine chances to one against his living if it was used. He took a week to reflect, and very serious were his reflections. But he was a man of nerve and will force. One day he quietly made his will and divided his estate. He arranged everything in regard to property and home for the comfort of his wife. He wrote letters of business and bade farewell to his friends, overlooked nothing along every line that should have been attended to, secured the services of three superior surgeons, and appointed the day himself for the operation to take place. The morning arrived and the surgeons with it. Going into the back parlor the husband had his last interview with his wife. It was tender and solemn. They knelt down and

prayed together. He arose kissed her good-bye, walked into the front room where he had ordered a table to be brought, stripped himself of his clothing, laid himself on the table, folded his arms and looking into the eyes of the chief surgeon said—"Proceed." An anesthetic was administered, the man went off, he knew not how long into unconsciousness. It was three hours! At last with gasps he came back, and opening his eyes, he saw the smiling face of the surgeon, who said, "The operation is over, and it is a perfect success."

Just so some of you feel that you are not well spiritually. It has been a struggle to keep up, and do and be what you would like to do and become. You have felt there is an inward trouble that accounts for you feeble spiritual health and varying religious life. The Bible tells you that the malady is inbred sin. If you do not have it removed you may yet lose your soul. It has already brought you trouble, it may yet bring you a great deal more. I beg you to employ Jesus to take it out. He can do so. Make your will, say good-bye to everything and everybody, stretch yourself on this altar, and looking up to Jesus, the great physician, say, "Proceed. "

It will seem to you that you have had an anesthetic administered, and you will go off. You may forget everything, see nothing and hear nothing for awhile. You may be down in the straw or sawdust or on the floor for minutes or hours, and know nothing of what is going on. But by and by a great surge of life and joy will rush into you, you will open your eyes and look up, and Lo! the face of Christ will be beaming on you, and He will say to your astonished, thrilled and delighted soul, "The operation is over, and it is a perfect success." In a word, inbred sin will be gone, and you will be sanctified.

CHAPTER 9

THE FULL JOY

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” — John 15:11

The world is famous for its misconceptions and general ignorance of the Divine Being. We hear almost daily, passing current, and rarely contradicted, things attributed to God that rob Him of all pity and mercy, and give Him a ferocity and undying spirit of vengeance that can not find a shadow of confirmation in the Bible or in these heaven-blessed lives of ours. It is against these misrepresentations, these perversions of the character of God, that infidels rave today, and think they assail the Lord of the Bible, when they are striking at an awful caricature of the Almighty.

In like manner men fall into mistakes about the Saviour. The popular view is that He was a very sad man, a man of sorrows above all other men; that while He was seen to weep, no one ever saw Him smile or heard Him laugh. All the pictures I ever beheld of the Saviour, and especially the old paintings I viewed of Him in the art galleries of Europe, represented Him with face melancholy, tears and blood-stained, or convulsed with agony.

It is well for us to remember that if Christ had sorrows, they were not for Himself. What had His pure heart and beautiful holy life done that He should grieve? If He was sad it was not about Himself, and if He wept, behold! it was over Jerusalem.

It is also well to bear in mind that if Christ bore habitually the melancholy, agonized look that painters give Him, that His invitations to and sermons on Rest would have been utter failures. Think of a being with a confirmed look of grief, saying, “Come, and I will give you rest.” Who believes that the little children would have stretched out their arms and nestled in His breast if He had the gloomy countenance with which tradition invests Him.

With these opening remarks, I now call your attention to the blessed facts I find in the text. And first—

1. THAT CHRIST HAS A JOY.

Do you remember with what strains of triumph and gladness Prophecy spoke of the coming of Christ into the world? Read anywhere you will in the Old Testament, and whether it is Jacob, Balaam, David or Isaiah speaking, all had the words and accent of a great joy in telling of the advent of the Messiah.

Then what joy the night of His birth. Angels swung low in the sky over the fields of Bethlehem, and the world, as well as the astonished shepherds, has never forgotten the gladness of their song of annunciation, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men.”

Concerning His Kingdom, the Bible says it is one of “Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Concerning Himself the word of God declares, “Thou hast anointed Him with the oil of gladness above all His fellows.”

In confirmation of the fact of His own personal happiness and soul buoyancy, Christ says here in the text, “My Joy.”

So He had a joy. This is not the only time He refers to it, and there were times it so blazed out of His face that men wondered. About His joy I notice several things.

One was that it was of a profoundly deep nature. It was not the noisy brawl of the shallow brook, but would be better pictured by a silent, outspread ocean; I love demonstrativeness in the religious life, but I have seen souls so full of holy joy that the very weight of the glory produced stillness.

Again, this joy appeared in the unlikeliest times. It was when one would think that surrounding unbelief and apparent defeat would bring occasion for sorrow, that suddenly the joy of Christ would come forth greater than ever. Notably was this seen when the Pharisees hardened their hearts against His teaching. Yet it is written, wonder upon wonder! that Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, “Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.” Again, in the darkness and horror of the dying hour on the cross, His joy burst forth again in the cry, “It is finished!” Oh, what was in that dying cry! The work of such a lifetime, the salvation of the world, the way opened up for the return of a lost race—all had been accomplished. No wonder

His last cry was the shout “It is finished!” While others wept, groaned and trembled, Jesus expired with a mighty cry of triumph. Isaiah throws light on it in the words, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.”

Still again, Christ’s joy remained in the darkest circumstances. Judas betrayed Him, but His peace could no man take away. Peter denied Him, but He remained calm and restful. Many turned from following Him at one time, and at another hour the twelve fled, leaving Him bound in the hands of His enemies. But He said in the midst of it all that He was not alone; that the Father was with Him, and left record in that speech of a joy as far above the pleasures known by what is called the multitude or crowd as heaven is above the earth. What a marvelous gladness is that which neither desertion of friend or wrath of enemy or assault of hell could disturb or destroy! And yet this is what Christ had.

A second thought I find in the text is:

2. THAT CHRIST HAS A WISH FOR HIS FOLLOWERS.

First, He wants us to have joy. This is the plain statement of the text, and completely refutes the idea of a gloomy Christianity. There are some people who think cheerfulness is a sin; that to unbend from the severest gravity shows loss of grace and savors of iniquity. I know of people who have that idea of the Christian religion, and will not allow children to play, and when a bright conversational spirit is indulged with smiles and an occasional laugh, will say to one thus offending, “Look out, brother,” “Be careful, my Christian friend.”

I can see how wrong instruction about the spirit of Christianity, and how ill-health, and ascetic times and ages could generate such views. But this does not make it right, and we need to come into the clear, cloudless presence of Christ to be correctly taught about the sunniness of the piety.

I am not standing for hilarity, jocularly or frivolity, but the joy that comes from salvation. There are two kinds of joy unquestionably. The outbursts of merriment among the worldly have no place in the happiness I speak of here. I remember that a gentleman came to one of my meetings, and as he marked the glad spirit, listened to the shouts and occasional laughter of the shining faced congregation, he was at first disturbed and displeased; but in a little while he saw the laugh and gladness was not of the world at all—that it was of heaven, and that worldly people could see

nothing in it and could not join in it. So he sought me out and said, “I take back all I said about this meeting, I see it is of God.” So distinct and separate are the joys of salvation and of the world that I have noticed that when the world laughs the real Christian does not, and when Christians rejoice and shout sinners are silent.

Again, while Christ wants us to have joy, He desires it to be His joy. The text is explicit here—”That my joy might be in you.” This, of course, makes it a holy gladness, and separates it from the unprofitable mirth of the world. As a Christ-like joy, it must be like His in the respects I have mentioned. In the unlikeliest times it must flame out. Just as I once heard a sanctified man shout while listening to an anti-holiness sermon, and just as I have seen bereaved people suddenly rejoice by the side of open coffin or grave. At the very moment others who have not this joy would go down we who possess it must arise and shine. In the darkest circumstances it should beam forth like a star clear and white through rifted clouds at midnight. This was Christ’s joy, and He wants us to have it.

Then He desires our joy to be full. Here must go down all argument for a gloomy religion and ascetic piety. How can such views stand a moment before the words, “These things have I spoken unto you—that your joy might be full.”

Still again, He wants this full joy to remain. He says this in so many words. Where is he who can plead for a variable, fluctuating religious experience in the face of this text? To all who look for occasional spells of gladness and many days of unrest, uncertainty, and even gloom, I call attention to the words of the Son of God, “These things have I spoken that my joy might remain in you.” A full joy in the heart and remaining, seems to settle the question with me about an even religious experience, a constantly shining face and an unbroken victory in the soul. I see no room for moping and melancholy. Of course Christ does not mean that everything on the outside will be straightened up; He is speaking of the inside. He says distinctly, in the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace. There may be war and discord in the world, but peace and joy shall be in the soul.

3. THE REASON FOR OUR POSSESSING THIS JOY.

One reason is that the joyful state is the proper condition of the soul. It seems to quicken and arouse every dormant faculty of the spirit. We have

all seen ordinary people become extraordinary under spiritual rapture, and all who listen to me now can recall times when, under the spell of holy joy, you stood transfigured, not only before your friends, but before yourself. Then arose to the surface gifts and capacities that you scarcely dreamed of; there were depths of love, a sweeping rush of speech, and possibility and ability as well, to achieve and suffer for God and man, all suddenly revealed to you, that filled you with tremblings of a delicious happiness. Joy seems to have the touch of the Prince that wakes up the slumbering beauties and powers of the soul.

Again, it best recommends the service and Kingdom of Christ. One thing you will readily see, that an illy dressed child, a sad and hungry looking clerk and laborer is a sad commentary on the family that claims or the firm that employs them. In like manner a melancholy Christian will but poorly represent a gospel that means Good News, and a Saviour who is said to be anointed with joy above all His fellows.

Recently at a meeting a woman of eighty years of age, and member of the church all her life, came to the altar. Noticing the look of settled gloom on her face and bidding her look to Christ, she replied: "I have been a mourner sixty years!" She evidently intended to impress me, and she did. Think of a soul mourning in the service of God for over half a century! And think of the harm she had done, the low spirits and blue horrors she had generated in others in that time by her very appearance, not to speak of her words. On the other hand, a child of God happy and rejoicing becomes a walking advertisement of the goodness of God and the preciousness of the Gospel.

Again, this joy is attractive.

We need a drawing power in the church. And Christ has supplied it in the bright faces and overflowing hearts of His people. When the holy gladness filled the disciples the whole city of Jerusalem was affected, and rushed down to behold the marvelous spectacle of joy-filled men and women, and from that day to this whenever the church has hearkened to Christ, and tarried for this blessed, abiding experience, the old attractive power and drawing influence has at once been felt. We need none of the wretched make-shifts we see in some places today. We need no games, frolics and church suppers. The Holy Ghost filling us with a holy joy will draw the right crowd and draw them not for amusement, but for salvation.

I am sure that if we were prospecting for a settlement somewhere, and on passing the shores of a certain country would see that all the inhabitants, whether on street or road, in field or on bank of river, were looking healthy and happy, we would feel like casting anchor and driving down stakes with them. On the other hand, if they looked poorly fed, were in rags, and had sallow, cadaverous countenances, we would naturally sail by such a country that was killing the inhabitants by poverty and malaria.

Only let the church get the full and abiding joy of Christ, and there will be a rush from the ranks of sinners to join the happy, singing, shouting servants of Heaven, whose faces, voices and lives all agree in the testimony of having a better time than the world ever dreamed of. It is not mournful songs of captivity by the waters of Babel that will win men to us, but hallelujahs of salvation and perfect spiritual freedom ringing forth on the air. It is not a willow wand we want, but a palm branch. Not a miserere, but a rapturous Hosanna.

“Joy to the world,
the Lord has come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.”

Again this joy convicts.

We all crave for the church the power to smite sinners to the heart. We want to see them troubled so that they cannot eat, drink or sleep, but will fall headlong at the altar, crying for mercy.

In all my round of observation and reading I have never known anything to surpass in convicting influence the sight of a body of God’s people filled with a mighty, holy joy. It was this very spectacle at Pentecost that broke to pieces a multitude in Jerusalem, and made men smite their breasts, crying out, “What must we do?” We have all seen similar scenes many times and in widely separated places, and I have observed that men who can brace themselves successfully against argument, reproof, song and sermon go down in the presence of a genuine general rejoicing of the church. On one occasion I beheld a powerful conviction fall on a congregation, brought about by the loud, continuous laughter of two sanctified people in the audience. They were male and female, were on opposite sides of the church, and did not even know each other, but God filled their souls and overflowed their lips with rapturous laughter. Oh,

how they laughed! and how startled the audience looked! They felt they were being flanked. Then a great awe settled down upon the assembly, and that night the altar was filled.

Here we are looking around for great men and mighty arguments to sweep down the opposition of sin and the world, when if we would only wait on God until we obtained this joy of Christ that is full and that remains nothing could stand before us.

Furthermore, this joy is an inspiration to Christian endeavor and achievement.

I was reading recently of a great fire in one of our large cities. One lofty building was soon doomed, when, on the top floor, a child was seen at a window. A fireman ran up the ladder and tried to enter a room in the story below, but the heat and smoke were so great that he recoiled. Just then some one in the crowd below, marking his hesitation, cried out, "Give him a cheer," and at once a mighty shout went up. It fired and filled the man, and he made a great leap, and dashing through the window into the room staggered through the smoke up the staircase into the upper floor, caught the child and in a few moments reappeared at the window with it in his arms. As he descended the long ladder and gave the child in safety to its distracted loved ones, the shout that followed fairly rent the heavens.

This is what is needed in the church today, and yet what is rarely seen or heard. There are reforms to be made, rebukes to be uttered and deeds to be done in the denunciation of sin or the defense of truth where the preacher, writer or worker needs to be cheered and in every way morally sustained by the people of God everywhere. Instead of this, however, he finds to his amazement that he is lectured for his boldness, told that he is without tact, informed that he is fanatical and extreme and advised to go slow. This comes often from high quarters, where he should have met with encouragement and approval. What wonder that many ardent spirits have been chilled. A divine vocation is transformed into a mere profession, and a flaming messenger of Heaven into a simple pulpit figurehead.

Instead of this if the church was full of holy joy, her cries of faith, spirit of courage and waving banners of victory would gladden, inspire and electrify the hearts of her sons and daughters in difficult and dangerous places; and brilliant deeds and wonders of accomplishment would be seen on all sides, to the astonishment of hell, the delight of earth and joy of heaven.

Lord, give us this great and glad blessing.

4. THIS JOY IS THE RESULT OF A SECOND WORK OF GRACE.

Please read again the first five words of the text: “These things have I spoken.” What things? Read the sixteenth chapter of John from which the text is taken. The things that Christ had been speaking about were the vine and branches. He said that some of these branches which bore no fruit were taken away and burned. Then He said there were other branches which did bear fruit. Notice they were in the vine which is Christ, and bearing fruit. But mark you the Divine Husbandman purgeth or cleanseth these fruit-bearing limbs that they might bring forth more fruit.

This is what a great wing in the church is contending for today; that after getting into Christ, feeling the sap of the Divine life coursing in us, and bringing forth fruit unto God, there is a second and subsequent work of grace which purgeth, cleanseth and purifieth the soul, and from that hour we bring forth fruit more abundantly.

Jesus had been speaking of this cleansing, and so says: “These things have I spoken to you;” that is, all about the purging of the branch in the vine; and to the end that they might have his joy, a full joy and a joy that would remain.

There is no question but that this is the only way to obtain the gladness He speaks of. He who is already in Christ the Vine, and will seek the Divine cleansing or purification of his justified soul, will immediately receive Christ’s joy which is full and will remain.

The very expression, “My joy,” shows a second and subsequent experience. Christ’s joy is not the happiness of a pardoned man. The justified soul has a gladness of its own. Hence we have the two expressions in the text, “My joy” and “Your joy.”

Let “My joy” remain in you and “your joy” will be full, are the words of the Saviour. May they be followed out today. Let every justified man, or branch in the vine, get the purging from inbred sin by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the result will be not only more fruit in the life, but Christ’s joy in the soul; a full joy at that, and one that remains in spite of every circumstance and condition of life.

5. WHAT IS THIS JOY.

It has component parts. It is subject to spiritual analysis. And it actually increases the gladness of the owner to observe the different parts of this complete whole.

It is the joy of purity.

This is what takes place in sanctification. When the baptism of the Holy Ghost fell on the disciples, Peter said their hearts were “purified by faith.” The instant we receive the second work of grace we feel the same purification. This is the first thought that thrills the soul, “I am clean.” It is not the cleanness that comes from pardoned sin, but a purity which has been wrought by the Baptism of Fire. The soul feels that it has been made pure. This is not only a conviction, but a blessed realization. It is this distinct experience and soul possession or heart condition which gives such a buoyancy to the spirit, such a brightness to the face, such a flash and sparkle to the eye, such a thrill to the voice and causes such hallelujahs and joyous songs to flow from the lips.

The instant the soul loses this distinct experience of purity, it droops! the face clouds, the daughters of music become still and the whole life silent and melancholy.

I once heard of a canary bird that was a great singer. He was at it from morning to night as he fluttered about in his handsome cage that had in it every supply for his wants. One day his little glass bowl was broken which was bath-tub or cleansing fountain to him. Immediately it was noticed that he began to droop, sang fitfully and on the second day quit singing altogether. All were alarmed about the little pet and thought he was sick. After nearly a week another glass bowl full of water was placed in the cage. At once the bird flew to its brim and in a flutter of delight began to scatter the crystal fluid and spray it over his feathers and prune and cleanse himself. At the same time the singing recommenced? It seemed that he only sang when he was clean.

So with the soul. Take away the sense of cleanness and it droops and is silent. But as long as it keeps pure with the cleansing blood of Christ it sings, no matter where it is. It is happy and blest with the joy of conscious purity.

Second, It is the joy of obedience.

Do you know there is scarcely a sweeter joy. Many of us have been misinformed and wrongly taught about it. Most of us grew up with the idea that obedience was a kind of slavery which we would gladly throw off when we were grown. Satan also has whispered the falsehood to us that obedience to anyone was a species of bondage, that the law and commandments of God were oppressive and that having our own way and throwing off all authority was the way to happiness. That disobedience brought not only freedom but gladness and delight. Alas, that any of us ever believed him and fell into his snares.

If disobedience brings gladness, why is the disobedient child so dark-faced, sullen and miserable. I recall once having played truant from school. I did so at the instigation of a classmate who told me that if I would not go to school, but let the family think I had gone, I could fill the hours thus taken from tiresome book tasks with joy by playing truant or “hookey” as he called it. I believed him, deceived my mother, stayed from school and tried to frolic away the five or six hours with my young companions in the basement of a large dwelling. A number of games were played and there was a great effort to be happy. But to this day I remember the length of those hours, the dreariness of the games, and the heavy load and sick heart I carried in my breast. I never played “hookey” again. I found out that disobedience was not the way for a boy to find happiness. On the other hand have we not all noticed how bright, cheerful and contented, obedient children are.

Disobedience does not bring gladness to the citizen. Let a man break the law and then behold his wretchedness. Thoughts of jail, the apprehension of officers, writs of arrest and commitments now fill and terrorize his mind. But look at the obedient citizen, how he walks unconcerned by penitentiaries, brushes the very sleeve of a policeman and is full of rest as to that side of life. What and why should he fear? He is keeping the law.

Now take the sinner or refractory child of God. Do we not know that disobedience makes them both miserable? Do I need to prove it when we see their miserable faces and hear their wretched confessions?

It is obedience to God that brings joy. Many of us have found it so; and that while occasional facts of submission brought blessing, that a constant

submission and steady obedience fills the soul with perfect peace. The happiest man that ever lived, the One who was anointed with joy, above all his fellows said, "Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God," and again, "I always do those things which please Him." This Christ-joy, God will put in every believers heart who will seek it as should be done.

Third, It is the joy of sacrifice.

How the world dreads this word and its practice in life. The very terms self-immolation, self-abnegation, crucifixion and death of self fills them with pain. They believe such a life is one of misery. Satan has told them so, and they believe him. They do not know that the purest happiness arises from the spirit and practice of sacrifice or living and dying for others. Feeling as they do that the way to happiness is by self coddling and gratification they avoid the life we speak of in every conceivable way. They clamor for their rights, struggle for their privileges, and live for their own comfort and ease. We have only to glance at them to see they have met with utter failure to find happiness by the route they travel. The most miserable people I ever met are those who always must have and do have what they call "their way." The funeral of their pleasure and contentment was long ago predicted by Christ when He said, "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

We read of one in this Book who never pleased Himself. He emptied Himself for the happiness and salvation of others. His whole life was one long sacrifice. Was He miserable? Read the texts "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you." Study the people who are filled with His Spirit and copy His example and see if they are gloomy.

Did you ever hear of the household drudge. By some kind of tacit agreement or understanding the whole family allow one member to bear the main burden of work. I have seen such things done, and saw a light in the countenance of that over-loaded and over-worked one that was not to be seen in the others.

I was once visiting a Faith Home in, one of our large cities, it was run in behalf of foundlings. One of the nurses was a young woman of nineteen or twenty, Her face was fairly lustrous with that "shine" the Holy Ghost alone can give. I was so struck with the holy joyful light which beamed from her countenance that I asked about her, and found that she was a young lady who had voluntarily entered upon this work of nursing and

taking care of these poor little cast off infants; that she refused all compensation and did it from pure love to Christ and these deeply wronged children. The life of sacrifice brought a joy to her heart and beautiful light to her face that could never be found in the abodes of selfishness and worldly pleasure.

I once had a presiding elder who so loved the work of God and the souls of men, that he would stay away from his home two and three months at a time on his district. He loved his home but soul saving had become a passion with him and he burned up to do good. Several times I slept in the same room with him, and when he prayed by his bedside before retiring I have seen him so under the power of God that he shook and trembled like a man with a congestive chill. The whole life was one of sacrifice and the same joy that filled his Lord was overflowing him as the inseparable accompaniment and compensation of such a life.

Fourth, It is the joy of persecution.

How men dread persecution. They think that when abuse, detraction and opposition comes to the life, joy must go. How is it possible to be happy when everybody is talking about them and in various ways is against them. Hence many thousands carefully avoid saying and doing anything that will bring such a storm down upon their lives.

I once thought that the people who were abused and slandered in the Christian life must be perfectly miserable and unable to eat or sleep. I never made a greater mistake in my life. On coming to know such people I found them radiant with joy, eating well, sleeping quietly, and working for God joyously without any letting up. The miserable people I found were those who were conducting the persecution. Peter slept in the dungeon of the castle while his would-be murderers could not rest. Daniel was quiet and in full serenity of spirit in the den of lions. It was the king who had him put in who “cried out with a lamentable voice,” while Daniel’s voice was strong and courageous as he said, “O King, my God can deliver me.”

Do you know what Christ said we must do under persecution? Maybe you have not read it. Here it is: “When men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake—rejoice and be exceedingly glad!” and in another place He says, “Leap for joy!”

One only need look at the sufferings of the apostles to see that they were much happier than the men who beat them. The Bible says the disciples rejoiced, while their tormentors raged and gnashed their teeth. Stephen had a better time than the howling mob who stoned him to death. When they laid hands upon him his face was like that of an angel, and in the midst of the shower of rocks and stones that were cracking the bones and staving in skull and body, he prayed for them and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," fell gently to sleep. Paul after his stoning, went into town and comforted the disciples. Wonder upon wonder. He did the comforting; the man who had been dragged out of the city and pelted with great stones until all thought he was dead. The martyrs all died rejoicing whether thrown to wild beasts, crucified or burned at the stake. Wesley was happier far than the ecclesiastics who slandered him in print and stirred up multitudes to mob him. And so it has been all along, is now, and ever shall be, the man or woman persecuted for righteousness sake is always happier than the persecutor.

I had a preacher friend who received this fullness of joy or sanctification. From that hour he had trouble with his Conference. In addition to trials and opposition of every kind, he was openly denounced and ridiculed on the conference floor, one preacher saying that he would rather have the devil turned loose on his circuit than this same brother. At this moment a number of eyes were turned toward the corner where sat the abused but silent man of God, and it was noticed that his face had the light of a strange, sweet peace upon it, and that he evidently was the happiest man in the conference room. In a word when Jesus sees one of His servants suffering for Him, He instantly flies to his side and ranks with him. The three in the fire increase to four, and the form of the fourth is that of the Son of God. So blessed and heavenly is that communion, so absorbed is the persecuted man in what Christ is saying that he forgets or neglects to hear what his persecutors are talking about.

Fifth, It is the joy of standing alone for God.

Some of you know the gladness of standing for God in company with others. I grant you that this also is blessed. It always brings a reward to the breast to be on the side of right and truth. But did you know that there was a peculiar rapture and blessedness standing alone for the Lord? Because of the difficulty of so doing there had to be, and ought to be a special reward in spiritual things for the position and life of solitary faithfulness.

If the sight moves us, how must it effect God to see an individual true to Him, though family friends and all men fall away. Do not think of repining because of such a state of affairs. Christ marks the devotion and will bless. He sees His follower unappreciated in the home circle, isolated by the church, and rejected by the world, and yet standing true to Him in face of it all. For such a soul He has the sweetest and holiest joy of the other world for compensation.

You may think some of you that you have great happiness in the Christian life with big conventions, church societies, great union revivals, while you keep step in the rank and file, led by the music of the band. It is all right, I say nothing against it; but I tell you there is a joy in standing alone for God that for depth and purity and rapture has never entered some of your minds to conceive.

I see the Saviour in the Temple Court beringed with Pharisees and Elders trying to entrap and find cause of accusation against him. He stood alone for his Father, and yet that solitary One speaks of a joy that no man could take from him.

I see John in exile on Patmos. But oh the rapture of opening heavens, visions of the golden-paved, jasper-walled city, and the thrilling communion and glorious visible presence of the Son of God. Surely he lost nothing for being lonely for the sake of Christ.

I recall once in my life that I was led of God to uphold a great truth in a large city which brought the newspapers down on me, made my Board of Stewards petition me not to preach on the subject, and caused hundreds of people to turn against me. I saw it all and accepted the loneliness for Jesus' sake, and in my room, before the delivery of a second sermon on the subject I was so filled with the Holy Ghost, that I was unable for several hours to do anything but cry, Glory — Glory — Glory to God! Alone, and yet not alone. On Patmos, but Heaven in full view.

Sixth, It is the joy of constant victory.

The joy of a single victory is great. Men love to recall and speak of the successful combat in boyhood against great odds. They love in old age to tell how they downed after a hard contest the bully of the school. Samson turned aside to see the carcass of the lion he had slain some weeks before.

He found it full of honey and went down the road eating some of the sweet dripping comb. In like manner we love to survey the victory of the past, and it is always full of sweetness. The greater and nobler the victory the sweeter the reflection. And as the mightiest foes are found and greatest battles fought in the moral life, so a victory won on that field is the most blessed of all triumphs and affords the deepest joy. A single victory won there is always pleasant to recall. But what if we obtain a blessing that brings us constant victories over all kinds of foes and at all times. What an experience that would be, a joy made up of a countless succession of joys; and all this gladness springing from perpetual victory over self and sin through the blood of Christ as realized in the grace of sanctification.

In such a life as this, dead lions full of honey are found everywhere, strewn along not only the days but the hours. The soul is flushed, the heart sings, the lips shout over constant and countless triumphs in the spiritual life. Walls crack and fall, seas open, rivers divide, and devils fear and fly. We are not only conquerors, but more than conquerors through Him who loves us and dwells in us. Hallelujah!

There is, thank God, a victory side to our blessed Christianity. Men have been slow to realize it, but they are finding it out at last. There is no need to have a single defeat. Christ is greater than the devil. Grace abounds over sin. Heaven is mightier than hell. The blood cleanses from all sin and keeps us pure as well. Jesus is mighty to save. He is not only the uttermost Saviour but the innermost, outermost and uppermost Saviour. Through Him we can do all things. And so the triumphs take place and we live on "the victory side," and with the victory of course comes the joy.

Did any one ever study the difference between defeated and victorious armies? Who that read the newspaper accounts of the late Turkish and Grecian war but could through the very type see and feel the despondency of the defeated retreating troops, and the joy and enthusiasm of the advancing hosts.

There was once a European war. Two reporters were sent the field, one on either side. One was with the victorious army, the other with the side which was falling back. The letters of these two reporters were studied as to contrasts. Both were passing through the same country, along the same roads, viewing the identical scenery. But one wrote that it was a melancholy looking land, with nothing to cheer the eye or hold in pleasant recollection. The other wrote that the landscapes were lovely, the tints on

the mountains exquisite, the skies blue, the woods vocal with singing birds, and the fields beautiful and gay with wild flowers. The explanation was that the first man was with a defeated and retreating army, and the second was with a victorious and advancing one.

Every day nearly I see these two reporters reproduced in the Christian life. The sad and the glad are side by side in the same family, church or community. If the truth were known, one is falling back, the other pressing forward. The drooping spirits infallibly declare the fact of moral defeat in heart and life. Men and women may plead ill-health and other things as the cause, but the truth is that the soul is not on the victory side as it can and should be.

When we obtain the blessing which as Paul says, “Always causeth us to triumph,” then the whole life is vitalized afresh, the soul is filled with melody, the lips overflow with praise, and the very face in its rested, happy look tells of a great indwelling gladness. We view the same scenes, pass through the same hours, have the same besetments and difficulties, but instead of retreat it is advance with the soul, and instead of defeat there is constant victory. Hence the joy.

Seventh, and finally, it is the joy of full salvation.

There is a Christian life that is notable for its man-fear, irritability and fluctuation. There is another which is remarkable for its sweetness, boldness and steadfastness. The Bible speaks of both, and life and experience tell of both. We find that just as the disciples were metamorphosed on the Day of Pentecost and became like new men, so there is a blessing which purifies and empowers the believer today and fills him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. All who come into this grace, whether agreeing upon terms or not as to its proper title, unite in the belief through a common experience that they possess a full salvation. It is not simply a free, but a full salvation. It is not only enough for those who have it, but they have an overflowing abundance which flows out to others. This full salvation brings a steady peace, an abiding assurance, a mighty confidence in God, a constant reliance on the blood, a continuous victory over sin and Satan, a rejoicing evermore, a praying without ceasing, and in everything a giving of thanks.

This is full salvation. This is what Christ prayed that we might have. And when a man has it, his joy is bound to be full, and better still it will remain.

When the people of God obtain this grace, then will Zion arise and shine; then will salvation be seen in her like a lamp that shines and like a fire that burns. Filled with this holy, quenchless joy, the church will draw the people to her like doves to the windows, nations will be born in a day, continents will wheel into line and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ.

CHAPTER 10

KINDNESS

“And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.” — 2 Samuel, 9:3.

We often hear David ridiculed and sneered at, and yet, with the exception of one act of iniquity, it is hard to find a lovelier character in the Bible. I wonder, leaving out this one great sin of his life, how his critics would look when measured by him and his life which was so filled with beautiful and noble deeds. Where will we find a more courageous man, who feared not bear, lion or giant? Who of our acquaintances ever equaled his liberality? In his one gift to the temple he gave more than all the churches of the United States combined in a year. Then what loyalty to God, what devotion to a friend and what magnanimity to an enemy who was placed in his power! In addition to all these graces of his character, I have been deeply impressed with the kindness of the man. It is this that the text speaks of.

By kindness I mean the outward expression of a heart that is filled with love. It is not only a spirit of interest in people, with a manner of gentleness, but a life filled with deeds of benevolence. The heart is not only pitiful, but goes forth in acts of mercy and help of every kind. Kindness shows itself in deeds of consideration for others, and stands continually revealed in deportment, disposition, language and action.

It is not the practice of saying oily, pleasant things. I have known such people, and their hearts knew not the love I am speaking about, and their lives proved it. The smooth, inoffensive speech of worldly policy is not kindness. Many deeds done and paraded in the newspapers is not kindness. There must be a union of heart and hand for the birth of this beautiful spirit of which I am speaking. Many acts of private and public benevolence claimed to be the offspring of the kind heart will have the veil stripped from them at the last day, and we see that which looked so well outwardly was done through fear, or self-interest, or hope of reward, or for public recognition and favor.

The Bible puts kindness down as a fruit of the Spirit. It is undoubtedly an outflow of the character, and represents the habitual poise and condition

of the soul. There were some striking peculiarities about the kindness of David, to which I call your attention.

1. IT WAS AN EVIDENCED KINDNESS

There is a good deal in this thought. I hear many people saying of themselves and others that they have kind hearts, when there is nothing in the life to prove it. If we must believe the statements made about us, there are more kind hearts than kind lives. As I once heard a young man in my theological class say to the examiner, "I have the answer in me but cannot get it out;" So there seems to be a kindness that abides within and is unable to come forth. Decidedly unlike the life of Jesus, who went abroad doing good.

A gentleman who had been much in the world said he had lived in twenty different families, and in only three did he see kindness practiced. Seventeen of them doubtless thought they had it, but believed in keeping it out of sight.

The remarkable feature of David's kindness was that it became visible. When a certain neighboring king died he sent messengers at once to offer sympathy and consolation to the son. When Abner was murdered he even fasted and wept over the untimely death of the great warrior. And here in the text and chapter we see him interested in and helping a poor, unfortunate cripple, the son of Jonathan. His kindness showed itself.

I, for one, say, let me have a kindness that is visible, audible and tangible. Save me from a love that says it exists but stands off and does not reveal itself. Truly such was the pity of the priest and Levite who looked at the wounded traveler, sighed, shook their heads and went on. This world wants, and you and I desire and need a kindness that picks us up, pours wine and oil into our wounds, puts us on the beast, carries us to the inn, and pledges itself to still further assistance in case of continued need and helplessness.

2. IT WAS A KINDNESS THAT SOUGHT FOR OBJECTS.

Hear the text: "Is there not one" whom I can help? Where is he? And then David sends for him.

There is a love in this world that is only stirred when the object of pity is before the eyes. We have all seen this love. It lets men starve and freeze around us, and then sigh over it as we read the morning paper account of how individuals were found frozen to death in garrets, or on door-steps in the street. It allows the heathen to go without the Gospel, when if they could see them this help would be given.

Mr. Beecher, by causing a slave girl to stand by his side in the pulpit, raised over a thousand dollars to redeem her, when the plain statement of the case without the object lesson would have failed. David did not wait for the poor, crippled Mephibosheth to stand before him to give him help, but sent messengers to find him.

I wonder if any of you ever started out some day determined to find and relieve any suffering that might be about you—a regular crusade against misery and trouble? You have heard of people going out for a day of sport, to find pleasure. But think of going forth to discover cares of need and sorrow. It would be a Christlike, though a very unusual proceeding. Listen to me! I have seen people go out to seek pleasure and come back in sorrow, and I have known them to go forth to find sorrow in order to relieve it and return overflowing with joy. This is one of the paradoxes of the spiritual life.

Some one gave Mr. Wesley five pounds one evening. He immediately went out on the streets of London, asking God to guide him to those who needed relief. The result of that evening's walk forms one of the most entertaining passages in the history of the founder of our church. It is all described in his journal. Suffice it to say, among a number of things, he kept a man from being imprisoned for debt and restored him to his weeping wife, and saved a man from dying in a tenement house, where he was rapidly sinking from lack of food and attention. The man proved to be a merchant who had been ruined by a false friend. Mr. Wesley secured him business again, the man prospered, became wealthy, and founded in his old age an asylum for broken-down and ruined business men. Strange to say, one of the first men admitted into it was the man who had caused his bankruptcy in former years.

As we look upon these things we say, Lord, give us a kindness like that of Wesley, and like that of David, who went forth to seek objects of need. Both got their kindness from the Lord. They learned it from Him. In fact, the text calls it the kindness of God.

There is a rocking-chair kindness, which sighs and is so sorry to hear of the want and woe of the world, and wipes its eyes and—rocks on. It is all very nice, but may the good Lord grant a human kindness that, like that of Jesus of Nazareth, does not stop with weeping over Jerusalem, but goes abroad everywhere doing good.

3. IT WAS A KINDNESS THAT AROSE SUPERIOR TO REMEMBRANCE OF PAST INJURY.

Who was this Mephibosheth that David proposed to help. The Bible tells us the direct descendant of Saul, a man who had taken away his wife, driven him from his home, kept him starved in the mountains and had tried continually for years to take his life. All those pitiful laments in the Psalms, those wails over persecution and wrong and violence were extorted from him by the relentless and unreasonable hatred of Saul.

And yet here is David saying, “Are there any of the house of Saul that I can shew the kindness of God unto him.”

My brethren this man lived away back in the world’s twilight, and we are Christians in the full noon of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and yet he is a rebuke to many of us. Men have laughed and sneered at David and yet his example here covers with shame many of his critics and judges. Doubtless some of you before me have been appealed to in behalf of certain cases and individuals, and you said, “No, his family had injured you, his people had talked about you; or their father had hurt your father; or you had helped the man once and he proved ungrateful. So that you washed your hands of the whole matter.”

How beautiful and Christ-like David’s course appears by such conduct: “Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may shew the kindness of God unto him.” The words sound lovelier to me every time I read them. They are worthy of being placed in the living rock.

You and I have heard of such a motto as this, “Never forget a friend or forgive an enemy.” I have heard it uttered by members of the church. I need hardly say that it is worthy of an Indian on the plains, or a Hottentot in his jungle, but hardly fitting from the lips of one saying he knows, loves and follows Christ. Jesus long ago said if we were kind to those who were kind to us we have done nothing more than heathens or publicans; then

added, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect”—and shows the perfectness He is speaking of is love when He says “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil—and sendeth rain on the unjust.”

You have heard some of you the saying that is as true as the Gospel: “To return good for good is human-like; to return evil for evil is beast-like; to return evil for good is devil-like; but to return good for evil is God-like.”

This last was David’s kindness. In fact he called it the kindness of God. He got it from God, and we can do the same, and must do the same if we say we are Christians and expect to see Christ in glory.

4. IT WAS A KINDNESS EXHIBITED TOWARD A PITIABLE AND HELPLESS CASE.

This Mephibosheth whom David helped was friendless, penniless, homeless, throneless, and in addition to all that, a cripple. And yet this poor creature without influence and power, who could never return a single benefit, this almost last descendant of his enemy he takes to his own home, has him to eat at his table and becomes a father to him. Where are you my brethren who have been sneering at David. Do you not see now why God said, “He was a man after his own heart.”

Now please look and see what is considered, labeled and called kindness by people that you and I know.

Here is a wealthy gentleman living in your neighborhood in an elegant home. With his ample means he can command anything he desires, he does not need you or anything you can do and yet hearing of some slight indisposition on his part you go over anxiously inquiring after his health, and say, “Colonel, if there is anything I can do for you, please do not hesitate to call upon me.” He thanks you, but does not call on you. He does not need you, and you go away thinking you have a kind heart. But just the same distance from your house to the Colonel’s residence is another dwelling quite humble and unpretentious. In it is a man who straightened for means and out of work, really needs a number of things you could do for him. But you somehow fail to knock at his door and anxiously inquire after his health, and say, “If there is anything I can do for you please do not hesitate to call on me.” Perhaps you are afraid he will call on you is the reason you do not go over to see him.

Again, here is a wealthy, fashionable lady who has a slight headache from being up too late at an evening entertainment. Over you float, my sister, in becoming attire, with a silver waiter bearing some delicacies that you have prepared with your own hands, and with a face full of solicitude about this society invalid before you. You are admitted into an elegant bed room with thick carpets and lace curtains and sit down in a rose-wood rocker costing fifty dollars. The imaginary invalid with smelling salts at the nostril and buried in downy pillows languidly receives your voluble expressions of concern, and when you leave sends the waiter with what you call delicacies upon it down to the kitchen and the servants eat the “delicacies” or they are thrown into the slop. They have a cook over there that as a caterer and preparer of elegant dishes is far your superior. Meantime you wend your way with a pleased smile thinking you have shown “kindness” when the light of the Great Day will reveal that you exhibited “toadying.”

Just a few blocks from your house, and not as far as the home of the society invalid, resides a woman who is really sick. With a low, consuming fever and constant cough and bare larder and empty purse, she certainly needs help, sympathy, cheering words and “delicacies,” whether brought on a silver or iron waiter. But while you know about the case you do not go. It seems that your “kindness” cannot flourish in a place where the floors are bare, the chairs are rickety and things have a scraped and empty appearance. It does not like untidy surroundings and persons who are really sick. It thrives best when people have not much the matter with them, and where flowers, bird-cages, cushions, ottomans, lace and dumask curtains abound. This kind of kindness is very delicate and cannot survive the odor of hovels and the sight of rags. But we read that Jesus laid his hand upon the leper and those diseased in every way, and went among the abodes of squalor and vice; while David is here seen bringing close to himself a poor cripple. Surely there must be different sorts of kindness, and I cannot but pray for the kind that will stand the test of the Judgment Day.

I have seen this so-called kindness appearing in another form. I have seen certain families in the church greatly given to running after and entertaining Bishops and other prominent men of the church. What royal dinings and feasts were prepared in their honor, while these Christian hosts and hostesses deluded themselves with the thought that this was Christian kindness.

Jesus has long ago spoken on the subject and given particular direction, saying, “when thou makest a dinner or supper call not thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

This is true kindness, while the other is an exchange of civilities and worse still an actual investment with the certain expectation of being repaid in human favor, social influence and other like things.

Christ does not mean to say we cannot entertain our friends and have them eat with us; but he does not want us to be deluded with the idea that this is Christian kindness, and so try to deceive God and fool our own souls.

How many beautifully written and elegantly perfumed notes have been sent to families of wealth and position “expressing hopes” and “deeply regretting” and “always remaining,” etc., etc., and the writers thought the note was a piece of materialized kindness. In a few months these same prominent families have been plunged into bankruptcy and are filled with sorrow and despair. Now is the time for the notes. This is the moment they want human presence and sympathy; but alas, this is also the time those little perfumed notes cease to come; they can only fly to homes where plenty and prosperity reside. Hear a parable said Christ and told of a man who fell among thieves and lay wounded on the highway, and how he was treated by different people. Christian kindness follows up the ruined family and picks up the wounded traveler.

I once saw another form of so-called kindness. A rich man was going North to be absent about a month or so, and left his dog with a family to take care of for him. That dog fairly took the house, he tore up and down the stairs, upset the furniture, and selected the divans and sofas for his beds. Meantime the family praised the dog; he was so cunning, so lovely, so sagacious, so nice and so everything. Sometimes these praises would be interrupted by a crash produced by this same canine mischief maker, and there was considerable skepticism in the minds of visiting neighbors about the degree of devotion to that dog felt by his entertainers. There was a lurking suspicion that no one but a rich man’s dog would be allowed to upset things in that tidy home. And yet they were trying to persuade themselves that it was pure kindness at the bottom of the whole affair.

In the immediate neighborhood, a gentleman picked up a poor little deserted child and carried it to his home and cherished it as one of his own, when lo, this family that entertained the dog were the first to criticize and condemn the proceeding. But which of the two deeds was kindness? The family that entertained the dog knew that his rich owner would bring them a handsome present; while the man who took care of the waif was perfectly aware that there could and would be no earthly pay or compensation for what he did. The child had been completely abandoned and was utterly friendless.

The kindness which God loves and promises to reward is that, where we help those who in their misery and poverty cannot recompense us. It is a ministry to the “poor, maimed, lame and blind.” It is well called the kindness of God, for this is like God. Hence Christ says, Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect who sends the rain on the unjust, and giveth to all men and upbraideth not.

5. IT WAS A KINDNESS EXERCISED IN THE LIFETIME OF THE RECIPIENT.

This is an exceedingly important feature of the grace I am talking about, and is always the mark of real kindness. I notice that David did what he could for the poor, crippled Mephibosheth while he was alive. He did not wait for him to die before becoming interested in him as we have seen some people do.

If ever we are to help broken-hearted people it must be now and here, for in Heaven they have no sorrowing spirits. If ever we are to give material aid and sympathy and comfort it must be on earth, for in the skies there is no lack of bread, and God has wiped the tears from all faces. They do not need our comfort up yonder. The earth, with its widespread misery, and time, with its countless woes and afflictions, is the place and hour for the exercise of the love we profess to have for individuals and the whole human race. The Georgia evangelist, speaking of heavenly recognition, said it was earthly recognition he wanted, and that it must be given now, for when he was in heaven he would be in such a blessed condition he would not care whether he was recognized by people or not.

Everything points to this earth and the time in which we live to prove our love in the exhibition of kindness; and yet some people are letting this one opportunity of eternity go by unimproved forever. It can never be

recalled. This is our only probation. We pass this way no more forever. And yet these classes I speak of are allowing this one chance to do good and be kind to pass by eternally.

Many wait for people to die before suddenly getting interested in their troubles, struggles, reverses and calamities. When the news gets out what a burden the man had, and how he finally sunk under it, oh! the subdued whispers around the coffin, or the remark in the street, "Poor fellow! I would have helped him if I had only known it." Well, why did we not know it? The reason is we have the funeral kindness instead of the kindness David possessed. We wait for the man to die, while David sought the man to help him many years before his burial.

There was once a suicide of one of my church members. He could not meet his obligations, and in despair took his own life. I heard several well-to-do men remark, I wish I had known it, I would have helped him. They suddenly became kind while looking at the silent form of what was once a fellow church member and steward, who, in the weary struggle for bread, could not keep up, and so fell.

I have noticed at the funerals conducted by societies and fraternities that they march around the dead body of their dead comrade, and, each one throwing a piece of arbor vine or cedar into the grave, will say, "Alas, my brother!" I have thought as I witnessed this scene of hollow and belated pity, and looked at the white face in the coffin and the unmistakable lines showing what a struggle life had been to him—I have thought that if these same men had taken the time to have said this to the man when alive, "Alas, my brother!" and grasped his hand in encouragement and help, that likely he would not be in the coffin, but still in the world, the bread-winner and loving central figure of the family circle.

I have known a church to allow its pastor to suffer for the needful things of life, and when his wife and child died from the result of a life of hardship, immediately became kind and paid all the funeral expenses!

I have known a husband to neglect his wife in his pursuit of pleasure or business, and when finally she died he wrung his hands over her dead body, called her his angel wife, said his heart was broken and home desolate, and climaxed the whole by having a very costly funeral and having built over the unconscious body the finest marble monument in the graveyard.

She asked for love and he gave her a stone. And I thought as I pondered over the whole scene that if some of the loving words he was pouring into the dead ear had been uttered in life, and if some of the dollars he had spent on the coffin had been invested in a way to make life and body easier and less toil-worn, she would have been the happy-faced wife and mother of the home circle instead of sleeping alone under the cedars and among the white monuments on the hillside.

What we want is kindness in life and not in death. It is not flowers scattered on her coffin-lid that will make a woman happy, but a bunch of them tied together in the form of a bouquet and given her with the words "I love you." That makes her pulses leap, the crimson come into her cheek, the light into her eye and the warm happy feeling rush to her heart.

We want kindness shown us in life. This is what our friends want; this is what our servants look for; this is what the children need—they crave to be treated gently and kindly in life, not wept over in death. Hearts everywhere, cry "treat me lovingly now." When dead we do not hear the cries of affection around the coffin, or feel the tears dripping from overflowing eyes on our faces. Be kind now.

There are some people who, if they had heard of Mephibosheth, would have said, "Poor fellow!" and that would have been all; and when he died would have spoken again and said, "Poor soul, he is at rest!" But David tried to give him some rest before he went to heaven. He believed in lightening his burdens and brightening his life while he had life to receive and appreciate such treatment.

Some of you have taken notice of the invalid who falters on the street or gets feebly on the cars. Now is the time to speak kindly to him and offer him your hand or arm. He will soon be gone; we had better be quick or it will be too late. You have noticed a sad-looking woman at the church. Offer her some gentle courtesy before she passes out of your life. She is part of a vast procession constantly moving on, and it is now or never with us if we desire to make a heavy heart a little lighter and brighter.

You have an old father or mother at home. Be kind to them. Run and open the door or gate for them. Leap to bring them a chair. Their lives need human cheering. They have seen many sorrows, wept over many dear dead faces, seen the friends of youth disappear, and are feeling lonelier

every year that passes. Be loving to them and brighten their few remaining days; they will soon be gone.

You have a little boy or girl at home. You have been thinking for some time you would be kinder, stay home of evenings, take part in their games, and make their little lives happier. You had better be quick about it, for the little fellows will not be with you long.

I read once a paragraph clipping called "Our Dear Boy." It was a pen picture of a father and mother sitting by the fireside alone listening to the autumn winds outside, while the little boy, who was once the light of the home, was asleep in the cemetery. They used to think he was noisy and in the way, but how they now wanted him back. Oh, if he was only there to tease them for his knife again, or to beg them to fly his kite, or to tie the door-knob up with cords and strings, and track the hall with his little muddy shoes. Sometimes the father would start up with his heart beating, thinking that he had heard the precious voice outside on the street, but would sink back again with a groan, remembering the little grave on the hillside.

There are some men listening to me today whose hearts are going to be wrung this same way one of these days. You do not go home and spend the evenings with your family as you once did. The politics club, the social club, the secret society and fraternity are drawing you away from the family circle that loves you better than any one else in the world. Your little boy often asks for you in the evening. "Where is papa, mamma?" "Will papa come home tonight, mama?" And when he is going to bed, and kneels down to say his prayers, he say "God bless papa," and that night dreams of you.

They will tell you all these things about him when he is dead; how he used to talk about you, sit up with heavy eyelids for you, miss you and go to bed disconsolate without you. Oh, how I pity you, my brother, when these things come to pass in your life and make a burden of sorrowful memory that you will bear the rest of your life!

In the name of God I arraign the saloon, the political club, and the secret societies, lodges and fraternities for the cause of such loneliness on the one side and misery on the other. I accuse them as being the cause of lonely, neglected and deserted homes all over the land.

God help us to be kind to those who have a claim upon our love in this present world. They do not need our attentions in the world to come. God save us from throwing anything of this world between us and the love and duty we owe to our homes and loved ones.

6. IT IS SUCH A KINDNESS AS MAKES BELIEVERS OUT OF SINNERS.

Mere civilities, attentions, and general politeness will impress men agreeably, but never convince them of the truth, presence and power of Christianity. What is needed is more than this. It is kindness, and the text says the kindness of God. That is a kindness like that of God. A loving heart going forth on a life of sympathy; consolation, benevolence and assistance of every kind.

Politeness is of this world, but the kindness I speak of is of Heaven. Men know it intuitively, and God likewise testifies to it. Moreover it invariably impresses the world.

When Stephen, who was being stoned, cried, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge," he did more to convince the world of the truth of Christianity than by all the many sermons he had preached in his ministry prior to this time.

When Robert Raikes gathered the poor and ragged children of his town about him and taught them the Bible on Sunday; when Muller took care of two thousand helpless children in his homes of relief; when Wesley lived on one article of food for many months in order to feed the poor; then these men did more to prove that Jesus had arisen from the dead and was living in human hearts and had all power on earth, than any volumes of Christian evidence that was ever written. God's best volume of Christian evidence is six feet long, eighteen inches broad, and bound in human skin. When this book is filled with kindness it is simply overwhelming in convincing power.

I knew a man who raised twelve orphan children in the course of his life. Somehow it was hard not to believe in Jesus in the presence of such Christlike work.

I know a physician who not only visits the poor and gives free treatment, but leaves five dollar bills under the pillow when he sees signs of financial

distress. Somehow the heart feels that Christ did certainly rise from the dead when this man is around; and his beautiful life and spirit scatter doubt and infidelity before him, like fogs and vapor leave before a clear crisp morning breeze.

Two memories come forcibly to my mind. One man had greatly wronged another. The injured man after a lapse of months had suddenly disclosed to him the corrupt private life of the other. With a few words he could have driven him from his church and family. But these words he never spoke.

Again, we knew of a great injury wrought by one man on another. The injured man left it all with God. In less than two years, the injurer came to the man whom he had wronged, in great distress, and said, "You can help me." The party addressed said, "God bless you I will do the best I can for you."

Verily, this is the kindness of God. This is like the Being who sends his sunshine and rain upon the unthankful and evil. In fact it came from God. It is not indigenous to our nature, but is an exotic from Heaven and planted in the soil of our hearts by the hand of the Lord Himself. If anything on earth will convince men that Jesus was born in this world, died, rose again, and has returned to live in human souls, it will be the kind of life we have been trying to sketch. And verily it does convince.

Recently I heard a gentleman describe a scene that took place on a street of one of our Northern cities. He said a small lad had a basket of apples and oranges which he was trying to sell. He was a pale-faced, delicate looking boy, and as it turned out was the main support of a helpless mother, young and frail looking as he was. He seemed to be having but poor success, and the old-young face had an anxious look on it most unfitting for a child of his years. Suddenly, said the gentleman, a rough looking young man either designedly or unwittingly in passing gave the basket a rude jar, knocked it from the arm of the lad and scattered the fruit on the muddy street in every direction. With a loud laugh the young man went on, while the boy seemed paralyzed with grief while great tears rolled down his cheeks. A gentleman in passing witnessed the whole scene, when instantly he stepped into the street and began picking up the apples and oranges, and after wiping them one by one with his handkerchief, placed them all in the basket, and capped the beautiful act by placing a two dollar bill in the hands of the astonished lad. Then patting the boy on the head he

was turning to leave when the child, with his tearstained face filled with a look of wondering gratitude, and his voice shaking with the contending emotions in him, cried out:

“Sir, are you Jesus?”

I remember how my eyes filled when I heard the incident related, and saw as it seems I never saw before how we can project Christ before men, and secure an instantaneous homage and recognition of Jesus from them by acts and a life of kindness that would be seen in the Saviour if he was still here in the world.

Lord make us kind.

7. SUCH KINDNESS ALWAYS RETURNS TO THE HEART AND LIFE IN SOME WAY.

The Scripture says, “Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shall find it after many days.” It always comes back in some way to body or soul, and I believe always to both.

As for this present world, if we could only know all that is going on, we would see that no man does good without being blessed. So far as the heart is concerned we cannot afford, for our own sake, not to be good and kind to all. The light in the eye, the tender feeling in the heart, the swell of spirit and conscious enlargement of the nature with every noble deed, all agree in saying it pays to be good and kind. Moreover, the temporal benefit is also so frequently seen as to convince us that we are brought face to face with the working of a law, and that we are not contemplating exceptions.

It is told of John B. Gough, that in the days of his intemperance a certain man kept lifting him up from the gutter and carrying him home with a persistent patience and love that was divine-like. The day came when Gough became a redeemed man and was sought after as a lecturer from end to end of the continent. Also the day came when the friend of John B. Gough died, and his family were left destitute. Then the tide of kindness turned the other way bringing the bread with it. This family never lacked as long as the famous temperance lecturer lived.

Forty or fifty years ago, a poor boy came to New Orleans where he tried to make his living. A certain family gave him his start. In the course of

time he became a wealthy man, and owned one of the handsomest residences in the Crescent City. The house and grounds filled one entire square. He never married, and at his death left his large fortune to the family that had befriended him in the days of his poverty. The bread came back.

A Colonel in the Confederate army, whom I knew well, was falling back with his regiment after a signal defeat to our troops. It was a rapid retreat to save life, while the Federal cannon balls were plunging into their ranks. A wounded Federal soldier on the side of the road and burning up with the fever of a gun-shot wound, begged for water. To stop a minute in the wild stampede was equivalent to death or capture, which last meant a long confinement in northern prisons ending in sickness and death. But in spite of all the gallant Colonel stopped, lifted the head of the wounded man from the earth and placing his canteen to his lips let him drink to his satisfaction. Then leaping to his feet he resumed his flight and, strange to say, escaped amid a shower of balls. The wounded man got well, and finally found himself in a prominent governmental position in Washington. It was there years afterward he met the Confederate Colonel, now an applicant for an important and lucrative appointment in the South, and having great influence at the White House, he secured for him the place that otherwise he could never have obtained.

In a large camp ground in the South, there was one man who in point of labor and sacrifice in every way surpassed all the other stock and tent holders. He entertained great numbers of people free; he saw to everybody's comfort; he kept order on the grounds; he contributed liberally to all the temporal demands of the meeting; he advanced by his faithful devoted life every spiritual interest as well; and in a word saw to the general comfort and happiness of all. Here was the bread thrown on the waters and here was the way it came back. There was no one more blessed in soul on the ground than he. His cup was overflowing all the time. Nor was this all, every one of his children were soundly converted to God on this camp ground and stayed converted.

So in some way the good deed always comes back to us. It is not only our duty to do good, but it is wise and best. It pays to be kind and good.

As for the reward in the world to come, the Bible settles the matter beyond all question.

Christ Himself tells us that not a cup of cold water given in the proper spirit shall ever lose its reward.

It will be seen in the Great Day that deeds of kindness have been transmuted into blessings for the soul and shining glory for the body. In the final day of reward it will be seen by all, who was beneficent and philanthropic, and who, like Jesus, went about continually doing good. Whether the life was prominent or obscure, whether the deed became public or remained unknown—yet recognition and the full reward shall be given in the Day of Judgment.

It will be a blessed hour to David when not only his munificent gifts to God shall be declared, but the sympathy and kindness of the man's nature shall be revealed in his message of consolation to a bereaved neighbor, and still more clearly seen in his tenderness and care for a poor, helpless cripple, the descendant of his greatest enemy.

Many of the beautiful surprises of the Last Day will be seen along this line—of mercy given in the hour of victory, coals of fire heaped upon an enemy's head, and persistent kindness shown toward stubborn and immovable natures. Not only God, but the gathered universe will say that such deeds and lives demand a reward, and better still, Christ Himself who is the Judge of that Day, declares that all such souls shall be rewarded.

Surely a man will not regret in that hour that he possessed the spirit of Him who sent the rain and sunlight on the unthankful and evil, and that he had that beautiful divine life which has been so strikingly pictured in the words:

“The patience of immortal love
Outwearying mortal sin.”

8. HOW CAN WE POSSESS THIS SPIRIT AND LIFE OF KINDNESS?

Of course this grace is not indigenous to the heart, but is an exotic brought to us by the Spirit from the skies.

There are imitations, it is true; there is a kindness paraded among men that will not stand the searchlight of eternity. It is not a pure article; self enters in, and double motives and ultimate purposes make an alloy which robs

the act of its value. The genuine article of kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is so realized by the convert, who also wonders why it is not a perfect and perpetual fruit, but that some days he is conscious not only of an antagonistic or hardening power in his heart, but feels a spirit dominant at times that is directly opposed to kindness, a positive uprising of unkindness. The same antagonism is felt occasionally to every grace and fruit of the Spirit in the regenerated heart, and is an internal argument for the Baptism of Fire as a soul-cleansing work after we have become the children of God.

When this great work is wrought we find the internal difficulty is ended, and that we have actually “Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

How easy it is to be gentle and kind now with inbred sin burned out and Christ abiding within all the time! A tender feeling to enemies, a patience with opposers, a spirit of longsuffering toward those of different minds and opinions, and above all a delightful experience of love for everybody now fills and overflows the soul. We have been moved by divine power into the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians; we have obtained the perfect love that John writes so much about in his epistles, and we have received the grace which the bishops so urge upon young preachers at Conferences in the question, “Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?”

Thank God that an ever-increasing number can say today all over the land:

“I have found it, I have found it,
That for which I’ve been in quest;
Satisfied are all my longings,
Now I’ve found His promised rest.”

CHAPTER 11

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

“Ye are complete in Him.” — Colossians 2: 10.

I love the words of the text. They are so reassuring to the heart, and so comfortable every way. They speak of what we need, and better still, of what we can have through grace in the marvelous person of a being called Jesus Christ.

We began life incomplete, and all through the years that followed we have been confronted with the sense and fact of lacking at every turn and stage of our existence. As sinners we feel it powerfully, as regenerated people the realization is still in us, at the portals of the grave who is more helpless than man, and in eternity with this world gone and infinite space before him filled with rushing suns and systems, what can a human being with all his wisdom and strength do. Who will listen to his cry of distress at such a time, what world will stop in its flight to help him over the starry spaces, who will direct him to the throne of God, and who will plead for him when he is there.

It is in the midst of this oppressive conviction of helplessness and nothingness that the words of the text come to us like a voice from the sky full of hope and assuring power, “Ye are complete in Him.” In other words He is everything to us.

Let us see what there is in this sentence.

1. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING IN THE TEMPORAL MERCIES OF LIFE.

Men do not realize it, but the world rolls on today with its seasons and harvests, its fruits and flowers, for the sake of Christ. We have as individuals and a race forfeited every right to a single temporal mercy by our transgressions. Adam turned out of the Garden of Eden, shut out from its beauties and pleasures and kept out by the waving sword of the flaming Cherubim, illustrates what I mean.

It is not for our sake that the earth yields her increase, but for Christ's sake who kept the Law. What have we done to merit anything from God

through nature. Faithless in our stewardship and Justice is ever crying out that we be ejected and banished.

It is for Christ's sake that the world rolls on through space, the sun shines, the winds waft our ships and cool our cheeks, the valleys laugh with corn, the cattle roam on a thousand hills and the fruit drops from the laden bough. The very breath is in the nostril and the heart beats on because of what Christ did for us on Calvary. How few seem to realize these things. How few seem to take in the thought that we are living today because Christ died for us.

2. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING IN THE WAY OF SALVATION.

It is so hard to get men to see this. They are slow to grasp the blessed truth that God has not placed our redemption in a set of laws or maxims, but in a person called Jesus. To accept him is to obtain salvation.

In the early history of the American Colonies, the Mother Country sent out Colony Ships for their relief. In this vessel would be food, medicine ammunition, arms, clothing, and in a word everything that they needed. The Colonists in time of want would stand on the sea banks and gaze over the waves toward England, hoping and praying for deliverance. The day would finally come when the sail of the coming ship would appear like a white spot on the horizon, and no language could describe the joy that filled the hearts of the people at the sight. Everything they needed was on board of that vessel; who wonders they were glad.

Christ is the Colony Ship sent out from Heaven to this starving, dying world. There is nothing we want but can be found in the Saviour. We are complete in Him. He who has gone oftenest to Christ, and he who has drunk deepest at the Fountain of Life and Salvation knows this to be true.

It is true of pardon.

There is no other way of being saved except through Christ. He is our righteousness. He is our justifier; not our works; and not ourselves. Is it not strange that men build hopes on their liberality, on their morality, on their church membership, and on the religious lives of their wives and scores of other things, when salvation is in none of them, but in the person Christ.

It matters not what a man has done or left undone; let him throw the arms of prayer and faith about the Saviour and say, I have no hope but in thee, I take thee as my present Saviour and justifier, and lo, the work will be done and a conscious salvation will stream into his soul. It is vain to look for it anywhere else. It is only in Christ.

It is true of reclamation.

Many Christians fall into darkness and sin, and backslide. It is amazing to see them in their various efforts to return to God treading every way but the right way. It is generally by the route of penance and works they try to come back, while the meaning of the words, "Ye are complete in Him," seem utterly to have escaped them. Jesus Christ, our Colony Ship, brought the blessing of reclamation with Him. If we go astray we will never get right unless we come to Him. If this was not so we could not say we are complete in Him.

We knew a lady who had lost her religious experience as a justified woman. Instead of coming to Christ she tried for years to work herself back by a life full of Christian activity. She especially gave herself up to the work of visiting the sick and poor; but the whole time her heart was like lead. One night in one of my meetings she rushed forward to the altar and sought recovery by faith in Christ, and instantly found it. With a face fairly blazing, she fronted the audience and cried, "This is what I have been seeking for years. I tried to get back to Christ by Christian work, and for three years I have walked my feet sore in seeking rest for my heart, but I could not find it. Tonight I found perfect forgiveness and healing for my backsliding in a single moment in Jesus." We began to see what Paul meant when he said, Ye are complete in Him.

It is true of sanctification.

What does the Scripture say here? "Jesus Christ made unto us—sanctification." Is it not strange that men, after reading in the Word of God that Christ is our sanctification, should persist in the pursuit of holiness by growth in grace or by good works. "O foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you—are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the deeds of the flesh?"

If a store should announce that every article and commodity in it would be sold for a dollar apiece, it would be simply loss of time and folly beside to

go there expecting anything with fifty, seventy, ninety, or even ninety-nine cents in your hands. The unbending rule of the store was one dollar for each article. To break the rule would be productive of endless confusion, and, according to that rule faithfully applied, I would be as powerless to get anything with ninety-nine cents as another with a copper cent.

So what folly and loss of time is seen all about us today in the spiritual life, where individuals are seeking sanctification in ways other than through Christ and Christ alone. How silly and vain to present works and growth as the price of the blessing, when the Bible so distinctly says that Christ has been made sanctification unto us. He is the price. Present Him, and the glorious grace will be put instantaneously in the heart. And, just as in the store the merchant cared not who brought the dollar, he scarcely stopped to see whether it was a man or woman, boy or girl, but whoever presented the price obtained the goods. So in regard to the blessing of which I speak; it matters not who comes, male or female, young or old, black or white, ignorant or learned—whoever brings Christ secures the blessing, and obtains it at once in all its satisfying and overflowing power.

Salvation is in Christ, and not in something or some one else. It is not a part in Him and a portion to be found elsewhere. It is all in Him. No need to go anywhere than to Him who has all that we want in the matter of a perfect redemption. We are complete in Him.

3. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING TO US IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

In this thought I pass from the great epochs of justification, regeneration and entire sanctification to the life that follows these experiences. The man is a child of God, but is still on probation, having much to learn, much to unlearn, much to overcome, being surrounded by conditions of peril and assaulted oftentimes by the dark powers of hell. Sorrow and sickness shoot their arrows, friends forsake and betray, losses befall, disappointments take place and bereavements will spare no one. We are still needy and Christ is wanted as badly as ever. So He comes to us in His wonderful completeness to remedy our insufficiency and supply our lack in all things.

If you will study your nature in its mental, moral and social aspects you will find certain wants and cravings that seem to be universal with the race. Only glance at these needs and see how Christ meets and relieves them.

You need a friend.

Even in childhood you felt this want, and soon found your little confidant and playmate to whom you could tell your whole heart. In youth and manhood it has been the same; people pair off with companions in the social life like birds. We need some one to unburden our hearts to; we crave human sympathy and fellowship. And yet with all this there is a realization that our best friends cannot meet the deep longing of our hearts. They do not always listen to us, or understand us, and oftentimes are powerless to relieve the burdens within. And yet, the longing for such a perfect friend still remains.

Thank God such a friend is found in Jesus. Our very unsatisfied yearnings, and disappointments in others led us to Him. To our exquisite delight He proves to be what we have desired all our lives. He is ever near. He is always sympathetic. He never wearies of us, and never changes. He is always the same. Now it is that with such unbroken divine companionship the old oppressive sense of loneliness and ennui becomes impossible. The very solitude has charms because of the abiding presence of this heavenly friend.

I once landed as a youth in the city of New York looking for a situation or some kind of work. I will never forget the sense of loneliness and helplessness that came over me as I walked the streets of that vast metropolis unknown and without a friend. But suppose that when I came in sight of the twinkling city and stepped on one of the wharfs I had the name and address of a true friend, one who had wealth and influence; where would have been my forsaken solitary experience; what would I have cared for the miles of brick walls and stone pavements and throngs of unknown people? The face of a good loving friend in the city whose heart and home were open to me would have put a warm glad light over everything.

In a much more perfect way can Christ, as our friend, take away not only the solitude of the city, but the loneliness of the desert itself. Some how with His voice at the ear, His hand on the life, and His presence in the heart, this world looks like a new world; and so full of a delightful confidence and assurance, we press on through the years.

You need a physician.

There are many families that hardly feel complete without the doctor. He has been with them in sad hours, saved lives that were most precious to them and been consulted in trouble a thousand times. His very presence often rolled away burdens, and when he would turn with a pleasant smile upon the anxious faced group and say he could pull the patient through; how the heart warmed afresh to him, and you wondered how any family could get along without such a man.

I once saw a young mother trying to thank the old family physician for saving her child. The skill and experiences of the elderly man had, under God's blessing, restored the little one after a struggle of months for its life. The young mother was leaving the city, and called to say farewell to the doctor who had been with her in these and many other trying hours. She took his hand and looking up at him with streaming tears and choking voice said:

“How can I thank you, doctor, for saving my child?”

She broke down in sobs unable to utter another word, while the tender parental look and love of this family friend and physician completed a picture of rare moral beauty and power.

It is said of Dr. Meiggs, of Philadelphia, that he could not walk down certain streets without a number of people flocking around him whom he had relieved and blessed with his skill.

It is also related of the Emperor of Germany, the grandfather of the present Kaiser, that he was always accompanied in the last years of his life by his physician. This faithful medical friend watched every symptom, scrutinized every meal, and unquestionably by his care prolonged the king's life for years.

In like manner we need a physician in the spiritual life. The soul may get hurt, the conscience wounded, the health of the spirit affected. We must have immediate help then or be undone. Again, Christ is seen to be everything to us in this new capacity. He is the physician of the soul. He knows how to cure its diseases, and arrest and expel instantly anything that might injure and destroy it. One of the questions asked in the Bible is why is the health of God's people not recovered? with the additional question, “Is there no physician there?” and “Is there no balm in Gilead?”

Christ is the great physician of the soul, and well for the soul that He is. Such are the perils of the spiritual life, such the manifold diseases that threaten it, such the fiery darts of the wicked one, that nothing short of a heart physician of infinite skill and power would do for us.

What has not Jesus, our physician, been to us and done for us? What prescriptions of grace and tonics of love He has administered that has made health pulsate in the soul, sparkle in the eye and bound in every movement of the life? We have gone to Him with wounds from the tongues of friends and foes, and lo! with a touch, we were well. We have been called to duty with fagged brain, wearied body and sickened heart, when behold! a life-giving, health-restoring, strength-imparting hand was laid on us, and, with a shout of victory in the heart, we leaped to labor and success, to battle and victory.

We need a lawyer.

Many families have one employed all the time. Others have them occasionally. Few of us but will have need of one before leaving this world of wrong and oppression.

It would be difficult to describe the tranquil, and even happy, feeling in a client's heart when he visits in his lawyer's office listening to him untangling his business affairs, or hear him in court with an irresistible logic and eloquence pleading in behalf of his property, or for life itself.

It is not as true that we need a lawyer in earthly matters as that we must have one in the spiritual life. Our case is in bad shape to begin with. We were moral bankrupts every one of us. Then our follies have added to the confusion, entanglement and threatening ruin. The heart is in peril; the soul, left to itself, will certainly be lost. What shall we do? Who will help us? John replies in his first epistle: "We have an advocate (lawyer) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

He has already won our case in the lower courts, and is now pleading for us in the higher. That our cause is getting along well we know from certain remittances of grace we keep receiving, from communications He personally sends us and from spiritual telegrams that keep coming, saying "All is well."

What a comfort and joy it is, when we have made a grave mistake, to carry it at once to Christ and see Him straighten it out; when we have given the devil the advantage, to go straightway to our advocate and see Him quash all the proceedings of hell against us; when Satan has issued a writ for us, and thinks he has us, what a rapture to see Christ sue out a writ of habeas corpus and get us out of Doubting Castle Prison and from the clutches and power of the jailer, Giant Despair! How He has won case after case for us and is still winning them. All that he requires of us is that we confess all, renounce the Devil, keep nothing back and leave the whole matter in His hands. This done the case is bound to be won.

Peter's case was a grave one, but Jesus brought him through all right. He would in like manner have saved Judas, but that unhappy man did not go to Him, but underrating the value of atoning grace and the marvellous ability of the Advocate of sinners, fell in despair and committed suicide. The Day of Judgment will fairly astonish the universe in the revelation of how the Saviour delivered men and women from situations of moral peril and depths of darkest sin. While today many of our hearts are singing because our Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, took our cases in critical and despairing times, swept them triumphantly through every court on earth and in heaven, and has established us in great estates of spiritual wealth, rich and overflowing with the grace of God, with titles to mansions in the skies, corner lots in heaven, heirs to crowns and thrones in the coming kingdom, and now joyously waiting for the carriage and horses of fire that will be soon sent for us to carry us home.

We need a captain.

O, the strange and manifold needs of a Christian. A friend, physician and lawyer is not enough; we want a captain to fight our battles for us. We not only have sicknesses to be healed, and cases to be looked after and pleaded, but we have battles to be fought and victories to be won.

Alas for the Christian who goes as his own general into the spiritual war. Defeat, disaster, capture and death are certain to come to such a man. Nothing short of omniscience and omnipotence is needed to win in a conflict where we war against fallen archangels and spiritual wickedness in high places. Here again is felt our helplessness and here again is seen Christ's sufficiency. He offers Himself as our leader, and says to us what He long ago uttered to Joshua, "As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." If we go out without him to battle against self, men and devils

we have nothing to look for but defeat and failure. If we follow Him, not an enemy will be able to stand before us.

Many were the defeats I suffered until I took Jesus as my captain. I have undertaken protracted meetings in the early years of my ministry, trusting to human wisdom, eloquence, methods and carnal weapons, when I would be routed and captured in some way before the first week was ended. Then I have turned heartbroken to Christ and elected Him captain, when with a shout He would appear, overturn in a moment all the opposition, striking conviction to sinners, terror to the heart of Satan and driving whole troops of devils back to hell.

I remember once when I was a lad of eight years that the bully of the school, considerably older than myself, was beating me on the sidewalk. He was making sure and painful work with me with a cudgel. There was no one near who dared to help me, and I could not help myself. Suddenly my older brother loomed in sight up the street, took in the situation with a glance, and with a cry of fury rushed toward my tormentor Oh how that bully left me and ran. He fairly flew, while my big brother swept like a young tornado after him. Did ever a boy enjoy the sight of a race and pursuit as I did that spectacle. I clapped my hands and laughed through my tears.

A like experience has come to us all in the spiritual life. Who has not had the Devil to get him down and go to beating him. No one seemed able to help you, and you were ready to despair when suddenly Jesus appeared on the scene with a shout of onset and victory that sent infernal spirits tumbling over each other and falling backward and downward with cries of impotent rage into the dark hell from whence they came. All we did was to laugh, cry and shout as we saw our Big Brother, the Captain of our salvation, win another victory for us, and save us again for the thousandth time.

We need an Adviser.

All of us have felt this want, and seen it to be a common need. On all sides we have noticed people going to others of greater wisdom and experience and riper years asking for counsel. Some of the most touching and beautiful scenes I ever beheld have been on this very line.

My mother was left a widow in early life with a half dozen children to raise. She had property, but was inexperienced and ignorant of the ways and laws of business. There was an elderly gentleman, a relative of the family to whom she always turned for advice. To this day I can see my mother talking anxiously to him and the troubled look leaving her eyes while he with kind and serious face cleared up the knotty affairs of business for her, and showed her what to do.

I have seen a young merchant who had set up for himself in business go over to his father's store and have an office talk with him. Perplexities, complications had arisen, and he wanted advice from one who knew how to give it. It was beautiful to see the shadowed young face grow bright again under the counsel and superior wisdom of one who had been in the mercantile life forty years longer than he had.

I have seen the young wife and mother, burdened with her household cares, not knowing how to make both ends meet, troubled about the little sicknesses of the children, unable to manage the servants, not exactly pleasing her husband, go with that burdened heart to her mother to tell her all about it, and ask what to do. I have seen the two sitting together and the contrast in faces was a study. The young wife with a look of anxiety and first touches of sorrow; the mother near her with the quiet restful countenance whose lines showed victory over many troubles, and a sweet knowledge gained after many struggles and tears. There was a calm, peaceful light in her face that made one think of a quiet evening after a stormy day. She had learned much in that she had suffered much, and now with peaceful manner, and quiet loving words she told the younger woman what to do. When they kissed each other in farewell, the daughter went away with the burden gone, a hope in her heart, a light on her way and a spring in her step she had not known for weeks.

These pictures prepare us to see what Christ is to us in the spiritual life as a counselor and adviser. There are so many difficulties and troubles to tell Him about. There are so many steps to take that we must have light upon. And He has such a wonderful way of showing us what we must do. There are touches, smiles, impressions, drawings and restraining influences that equal a language. There are whispers that are as readily recognized by the soul as words by the ear. Long ago he said, "My sheep know My voice," and we do, and follow Him.

The world's advice will not answer in spiritual things. We must go to Christ. It is said of Talmage that he was advised by friends in his early manhood to give up preaching, that he would never make a speaker. Similar advice was given to Matthew Simpson. He was supposed to be a consumptive, and counseled not to enter the ministry. But both of these men carried the matter to Christ, and He said "Preach." The result in the silver-tongued orator of Brooklyn and the golden-mouthed Bishop of the Methodist Church is now known to the whole world. The first sermons of Wm. Winans were laughed at, and gloomy prophecies were made concerning his ministerial future, but he went to Christ about it, who told him to go on, and he became Mississippi's mightiest preacher and one of the foremost men in the General Conference. Phillips Brooks had an impediment in his speech. If he had gone to men for counsel they would have told him never to enter a calling that required public speaking. But he went to Christ, who told him to preach, and his marvellous sermons have been sought after all over the literary world.

All of us have experiences here. In my own case my call to the ministry was opposed by friends and family, but I took Jesus as my adviser, went to preaching, and have seen multiplied thousands sweep into the light of free and full salvation. A man of high authority in my Denomination counseled me not to have certain meetings in my church, but Jesus advised me to have them, and as a result I saw over a thousand souls in two years' time saved and sanctified, more than half of them being conversions.

A Bishop wrote to a preacher who was in the midst of sweeping revivals, "You will not listen to anything I say; you will not take my advice." How could he do so? He was listening to and obeying the Son of God. That following of the advice of the Saviour resulted in the salvation of thousands of souls.

We need a Comforter.

As planets turn to the sun, so the heart reaches out for the beams of loving sympathy. It craves and must find comfort in something or somebody.

I read once of a little boy who had received an impatient and undeserved blow from his father's hand. The little fellow crept off sobbing and the father tried to resume his reading. It was impossible, and so after an half hour he laid down pen and books and sought the child. He found him lying asleep on the floor in the midst of a few playthings with which he had

tried to console himself and forget his sorrow. They were very simple, consisting of a few pebbles and some pieces of broken glass. He had ranged them in rows and fallen asleep in his sorrowful play. The tears were still on his cheeks, and there was still a little sobbing catch in his breath. The scene, in its very simplicity, was inexpressibly pathetic. Driven from his father, he had sought companionship, sympathy and comfort in his little dumb and lifeless playthings. The father took it all in as he bent over the child with aching heart and overflowing eyes.

It is the same law at work in us when we are grown and get hurt and bruised by the world; we want consolation. But our poor little pebbles of earth cannot give it. Older people have their own sorrows that absorb them, and are powerless to help us as we need. To whom then can we go but to Christ? He, and He alone, can bring what we need to the heart. He said Himself, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you."

I heard Dr. C. K. Marshall, of Mississippi, once say: "Since my mother died I have found a lap where I can now go bury my face and cry out all my sorrows. It is the lap of Jesus." Many of us have found that lap, and felt the mother-like caressing touch of the Saviour on the bowed head. It has kept our hearts from breaking many a time, and well for the world if all men knew the way to obtain the comfort of which I speak.

I have seen a child come weeping to its mother, heartbroken over some mishap in the yard, or some rough treatment received in the street; and I have seen the mother take the little fellow on her lap and the comforting work begin. The soothing word would be spoken, the tender touch given, and the loving kiss pressed on the tearstained cheek. Then would come promises and descriptions of something that the child should see or have on the morrow, until the little fellow had forgotten all his sorrows and was laughing in great glee through his tears.

So have we felt the embrace of Christ about us in time of trouble. How soothing were His words, and tender His touches. Then He began to speak of the great coming Tomorrow. Oh the beautiful, blessed Tomorrow where sin never comes, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." As He talked on to us about it all, behold we forgot all about our troubles, and our grief was turned into singing, smiles and happy laughter.

Paul and Silas were thrust in a cold dark dungeon, their feet were in the stocks, their backs were sore and bleeding from the scourging they had received for preaching the Gospel. Doubtless they could not sleep for the pain they endured; but at midnight Christ began to comfort them. The Scripture says they commenced singing, and I doubt not they laughed and shouted. They woke up an earthquake, and sent an awful conviction to the hearts of jailer and prisoners by the holy gladness that filled their hearts and overflowed their lips. They were far happier than the men who had beat them and thrust them there. So much for the comforting power of Christ.

We need a Rewarder.

The longer I live the more I am convinced that men cannot get justice from one another in this world. The very best of men seem to be unable to render a perfectly impartial judgment in the case of their fellow beings, and to bestow the exact reward one's life may merit. A number of things combine to bring this about; one is that some men do not trumpet their own goodness or victories; some men are better than they seem; circumstances of suspicion are against individuals who are innocent; and then besides this there is that secret envy and repining over the success and public applause of another, felt by and recognized even in good people. So that many noble and beautiful lives are being lived around us, and many heroic deeds and martyr sufferings for Christ are being gone through with, while human observers look coldly on with interrogation points in eyes and hearts, as to whether the whole thing was sincere, and whether it will last any time.

For years, as I have observed, the lack of commendation, endorsement and praise where it was deserved, I have seen the necessity of a great Judgment and Rewarding Day. Long ago I have seen that faithful servants and followers of God will never get the recompense they merit, save from the hands of the Son of God.

A part of this reward Christ gives now, and it is so sweet and satisfying that the man who possesses it is perfectly reconciled not to be understood and honored of men. It is something so much better than newspaper puffs and notices, so much more blessed than to be called "Rabbi" in the market places and courted by the public, that one moment of the experience would outweigh in pure, solid satisfying joy a lifetime of the other.

On the Day of Judgment will come the full and perfect reward. A heavenly recognition and recompense then, that shall be seen in lustrous resurrection, body, crowns, thrones and rulership over ten cities instead of one. I am sure that most of you are perfectly willing to wait until that day, and I am still surer that you will be perfectly satisfied when the complete reward is given.

4. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING TO US IN REGARD TO ADMITTANCE INTO HEAVEN.

Who do you think will be able to sweep through the gates of pearl into the city of God. What plea can man make to get in? What is the condition of entrance? Is it color, or caste, or good clothes? Is it wealth or blue blood? or prominence in State or Church? Is it church membership? Is it the fact that we did something for the Saviour while on earth? Is it the crying aloud in that hour, "Lord, Lord?"

The Bible long ago has answered these questions. None of these things will make the Gates of Heaven fly open to us. They care little for wealth there where the streets are paved with gold. Prominence of office on earth does not mean exaltation in heaven. Church membership is nothing in that hour unless we are born of the Spirit. As for church service, and vociferous crying, the Saviour has long ago described this very scene and its fearful end in the words, "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 have done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you."

What then will open the door for us into the world of glory? The Bible teaches it; the name of Jesus on the lips and Spirit of Jesus in the heart and life! This blessed and all essential union of the professed and possessed Christ in the man will cause any and all of the twelve gates to fly open to him. It matters not how low, humble and obscure on earth the individual may have been, yet if Christ is seen shining in his face the gates will roll gladly back on their hinges and all within the city will say welcome.

6. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING TO US IN HEAVEN.

To me I cannot conceive of heaven without Jesus. He is essential to its glory, happiness and blessedness, and without Him it would not seem heaven.

I have heard people say that when they reached heaven they intended to hunt up certain famous Bible characters and spend a hundred years in looking at Abraham and Job, and another in gazing upon David, Paul and John, and so on. As for myself I want to see Jesus. I can get along without the prophets and apostles, but I cannot stand the absence of Christ. So I will stay near him and let those roam around who desire to do so.

Some say they want to hear the great musicians and singers of earth lead the choirs in heaven; and they desire to see the famous Christian painters who portrayed Christ in the Manger, in the Garden, on the Cross and on the Throne. They say they want to hear Luther and Wesley preach, and Bliss and Phillips sing, and so on endlessly. All I have to say is that if they feel that way they can go, but as for myself I shall remain close by the Saviour.

There are good reasons for this course. Do you see this small New Testament I hold in my hands? It has only a few score pages of things said and done by the Saviour on earth. Yet so wonderful is this little book that, the world never wearies of studying it. It is read by countless millions today all round the world and will be read with undying interest until Jesus comes at the end of time. If these few pages so hold the hearts and minds of men, what will He do personally when we see Him face to face. Who that hears Him speak will care to sit at the feet of the creature and listen.

I want you to think of the melody in the throats of birds, the minor chords in winds and waves, and the floods of music pouring continually from human voices and every kind of musical instrument. Now remember He is the author and inspirer of it all!

I look at the delicate tints of the flowers, and the marvellous colors of the sunset, and remember that he mixed the colors and painted every one. Something of the reason begins to dawn on you why some of us do not feel like leaving Christ to look on such men as Raphael and Guido.

Then Christ possesses all knowledge. The Bible says, in Him is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. That He is the "Wisdom of God," and the "Truth." What need to ask men of learning questions in eternity when the Truth is by us. What need to ask scientists about geology, when He is before us who laid the foundation of the world.

Besides this Christ is the Fountain of all joy. I never cared to go down the stream for a drink when the spring was near me. So what need to depend on human rivulets when the everlasting Fountain of purest joy is by us for our appropriation and enjoyment.

Above all He saved us. No one else could do that. He cast the devils out of us, and brought in the angels. He became our friend and stood by us helping us out of ten thousand trials, difficulties and sorrows, when even our best friends had lost patience and pity and given us up.

All this will rise up in the heart and mind and overflow the lips with tender rapturous praises when we see Him. And so I do not believe that any will want ever to leave Him, or lose sight of him a single instant after they come into His blessed presence. They were just talking. They could not be dragged away.

I expect it will be with us; it was with John when he started to describe the City of God, the New Jerusalem. He began with the walls and gates, and then coming inside commenced describing the streets, saying they were paved with gold; then suddenly lifting his eyes, he said: "I saw a Lamb!" Have you noticed that he never described any more of the City? The Lamb seemed to have absorbed all of his ravished attention. He had eyes and ears and heart and praise for nothing and no one else after that view. From that moment everything seems to be regarded and valued simply by its relation to the slain Lamb, the blessed Son of God.

So shall it be with us when there. I doubt not that Heaven is beautiful, but there is One there who will be its crowning glory. I do not question but it will be blessed to see the good and great of all ages gathered in the Kingdom of God, but there is a person there who will be the "Chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." It will be joy to see Him, rapture to hear Him, bliss to be with Him, and Heaven itself to feel that we will never be parted, but remain in His glorious presence forever. In a word, no matter when, and where we look, we cannot get along without Christ. In both worlds we are only complete in Christ. He is everything to us, not only on earth, but even in Heaven.

CHAPTER 12

THE CERTAINTY OF VICTORY

“Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”
— 2 Kings 6:16

It is remarkable how frequently words similar to these of the text, “Fear not,” are used in the Bible. The church has always been in the minority, the opposition is numerous and powerful, so that such words have been often addressed to God’s people for their comfort and strength.

Christ frequently used the expression in talking to His disciples. When brought before kings and governors for my sake “fear not.” When cast out of the synagogue “fear not.” When they would kill the body “fear them not.” Once, through a storm at night, He walked over the waves to them as they toiled at their oars exhausted and terrified, and said the old, soothing words, “fear not.”

Here again in the text is the expression. The Syrian army had surrounded a city of Israel with horses and chariots. The servant of Elisha was appalled at the sight, and cried out, Alas! master, what shall we do? The prophet, all unmoved at the spectacle of the Syrian hosts and his servant’s terror, said in reply, “Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Then he prayed the Lord to open his servant’s eyes, and at once the man was astounded to see that the mountain on which he and his master stood was “full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

There are two ways of looking at Christ’s cause on earth: There is a purely physical glance and there is a spiritual look. There is a hasty, superficial way of viewing the great struggle going on which leaves the observer terrified; and a calm, faith-piercing, God-anointed gaze that faces things as they are, the victory that is bound to be, and fills the gazer with perfect confidence and joy. This fleshly look perceives the Syrian army, the horses and chariots, and gives up; but the spiritual look takes note that God also has an army close by, that the horses and chariots are of fire and not flesh, and that the heavenly battalions so outnumber the other side that a whole army is sent to surround a single servant of God!

There has been and still is fear with many regarding the great conflict going on. They think there is cause for anxiety and alarm. May the Lord send

upon such people the vision of Elisha. May they see what he saw, and what is as true today as then, “that they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Let us look calmly at the matter and see who are against us and who are for us, and be done with our heaven-dishonoring fears forever. We notice:

1. THOSE THAT ARE AGAINST US.

And first we would mention Satan. Who is he? Men have so exalted him in their minds that one would suppose he was another God. In the might which they in their fancy have clothed him, one would judge he was all but infinite in power and resources, and could never be conquered. But the facts in the case are that he is simply a creature; a great being, doubtless, but still a creature, and so, infinitely less than the Creator. Then he is a fallen creature, which places him on the road to a certain coming overwhelming defeat. Then, Christ has already repeatedly conquered him, and, wonder upon wonders! we are told that if we resist him he will flee from us!

He seems to have under him a large body of evil fallen angels like himself; but again we remember the teaching of the Bible that the number of angels who kept not their high estate were much smaller than those who abided; that already they have sustained a crushing reverse in being driven out of heaven, and, in common with their leader, seem to be in terror of being sent down into the Pit, begging Christ not to do it, while, at the simple command of Jesus to “Come out of him,” we see ten thousand of them pouring like a black Niagara out of the demoniac of Gadara. As you consider these facts hastily mentioned, it seems you would breathe more easily in regard to the Satanic side of the opposition.

Then we glance at prominent infidels. Suppose you segregate them and examining them thus one by one, your fear is certain to go down and your hope and confidence to rise.

You have heard of Tom Paine. To get your eyes thoroughly opened to the utter moral weakness of the man, read Richard Watson’s description of his life in his Apology for the Bible. Read there how he defrauded the English government, betrayed a trust when he was a secretary in one of the committees of our Congress, and broke the hearts of two women who had the misfortune to be his wives. Read of his drunkenness for years, and see

why it was this man fought Christ and why we need not be alarmed at his writings.

In like manner take up Gibbons, Hobbes, Hume and others, and the life and last sayings of these men will show us that they will never be able to keep the Gospel from filling the earth. Many have been alarmed over the influence of Ingersoll. But if God had the least fear of him He would kill him and take him out of the way. He came several years ago to St. Louis, and some of us hardly knew when he arrived or when he left. There was not a Bible given up nor a prayer less prayed. The crowd who went out to listen to him were those who desired to hear him prove that that world did not exist to which they had every reason to suppose they were going. I could but contrast his resultless visit with the work of an Evangelist who went to a town in Kentucky and in a week's time, playing cards were seen torn up in every direction while the receipts of the saloons fell from five hundred dollars a day to eighteen.

Next we enumerate what are called wicked men. But in their study we soon observe that comparatively few are desperately wicked in their lives. Many are sick of sin. Many had Christian mothers and God is using their memory and influence more than others think. Many are praying secretly, and through the Gospel and agencies like sickness, sorrow, disappointment and death, all sanctified by grace, the Lord is continually thinning their ranks.

In addition to all this we look at wickedness itself in its manifold forms and expressions, and it is evident that we are contemplating a mob rather than an organized opposition. There seems to be no concert of action, no recognition of a general leader and ruler. The "Man of Sin" whoever he is, has not yet arisen to sway all the elements of evil in a body against God and His beloved city. We can count thousands of councils, conferences, synods, assemblies and conventions of the Christian church against a few of these slimly attended anti-Christ, anti-religious gatherings. You see we still outnumber them, and then our horses and chariots are of fire!

Besides this what has the side of sin to offer to its followers? It has no possession in Eternity. It does not own the planet on which we see it today. God simply tolerates its presence for awhile. It has no world in the universe it can call its own. There is a world somewhere in outer darkness which is set aside for the final abode of wickedness, but it is simply a penitentiary and not a place of light and beauty. It is for confinement, not

enjoyment. Sin has absolutely nothing to offer in Eternity but misery, and only a fitful, feverish and short-lived delusion in time. I marvel that it can command a following of thinking people. And the truth is they do not think, but go recklessly into ruin and spend Eternity in thinking.

The matter is well described in a conversation held once between two parties. An unconverted young man said he wished he had a great fortune.

“What would you do if you had it?” asked an elderly Christian.

“Oh,” he replied, “I would have a beautiful house and grounds the first thing.”

“What then?”

“I would fill my house with books, paintings and musical instruments.”

“What then?”

“I would live in a whirl of pleasure with my friends.”

“What then?”

“I would go sight-seeing and travel around the world.”

“What then?”

“Oh—I would settle down in my home after awhile and enjoy myself.”

“What then?”

“Well—I don’t know exactly—but I expect I would finally grow old.”

“Well, what then?” said the man of God to the young man who began to wear a puzzled look.

“I suppose,” the young man answered gloomily, “I would have to die like other people.”

“And what then?” said the old Christian with solemn look and still more solemn tone.

This last question was never answered. It was a home thrust indeed. What could he say. How impossible to expect any good or blessedness in the great eternity beyond when the life on earth had been spent in sin and for self and away from God. Reason and revelation alike agree in preventing a man from expecting good after such a life. So at its close the man stands fearfully peering out into the shadows of the limitless future beyond the grave, and to the question “what then?”—can say nothing, and can feel nothing but a dreadful inward foreboding which is itself the shadow of the approaching clouds of wrath and endless ruin. Sin has nothing to offer its followers in eternity but an everlasting penitentiary. This fact itself must at last awaken the deluded millions and turn them to Christ and holiness and heaven.

I mention one other element of opposition against us; and strange to say it is found in the church itself. It is made up of unconverted and backslidden people who make a startling percentage of the membership of every religious denomination.

With spirituality never possessed, or once had but now lost, we have a body in our midst who actually hinder the work and spread of the Gospel at home or in foreign lands, more than the open and armed foes of earth and hell.

With little or no religious experience, their highest conception of Christian work is seen in the church supper, and general entertainment and amusement plan. They believe in a church kitchen but not in the class meeting. They know nothing of their church doctrines, and to them a clear cut sermon on regeneration, its duties and privileges is as distasteful as one on sanctification. In fact, when the text is preached from “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” they think that what is called a “holiness sermon” has been delivered to them. Silent at experience meetings, with little or no missionary spirit, with decided longings and relish for certain places of worldly amusements, such people constitute a dead weight in the race of the church, and a marvelous clog and hindrance to all movements on a deeply spiritual line. It is an experience not to be forgotten to preach to such people and see no answering gleam in the eye or light in the face. Ezekiel called it a valley filled with skeletons, and Solomon said it was “a congregation of the dead.” The very thought of marshaling such a body in aggressive warfare against sin and worldliness is felt to be simply absurd and impossible; and the result is the sight of

preachers paralyzed in faith and hope looking for two hours every Sunday into the face of a congregation of the dead.

2. THOSE THAT ARE WITH US.

First, I notice that Nature is on our side.

Men do not realize it, and sinners do not stop to think of it, but the earth is simply a platform erected by the Lord for the achievement of His plan in the salvation of men. It stands by the Lord and for the Lord. One day he will knock it down. Meantime it is His and as a matter of course and of fact Nature is in sympathy with Him. The stars in their courses fight for His people, the mud in the Red Sea causes the wheels of Pharaohs chariots to drive heavily, while the Jews go through easily. These facts are realized by individuals as well as Nations. The sun, moon, stars, clouds, winds and all seem to be against the soul that is doing wrong; they are in sympathy with God.

Then Nature is obedient to God. Let a sinner try to manage it and see what will be the result. If any notice is taken at all of the puny effort, the winds and waves would say Paul I know and Cephas I know, and God I know, but who are ye; and they would leap on him and tare him. But let the Lord speak, and the oceans roll over the submerged world; the Red Sea covers the Egyptian army; Vesuvius buries Pompeii and Herculaneum in ashes and lava; Sodom and Gomorrah are burned with fire from the skies and sleep today with the Dead Sea over them as a winding sheet.

Death is on our side.

It is a grisly ally but a most important one, and it is always on God's side. It is God's servant and not the devil's nor man's. This moment if God was the least alarmed at the combinations against His Son and Church He could still every heart beat and take the breath from every nostril. The fact that he does not thus slay his enemies shows that He is not afraid of them. He could stop the workings of the laws of birth, but he allows human beings to be born and live on because he is not the slightest alarmed over what they may write and say and do.

Still He uses death in the settling of this world's rebellion. He swept away the anti-deluvian wickedness by a sudden calamity that made men rush to the trees and hills and mountains. All but eight faithful souls perished in

the world of waters that tossed their triumphant billows over every home, city and country, and going over the tallest mountains showed what God could do with men in the way of death when he wanted to.

In the “Tribulation” that is yet to come, the Bible tells us that one third of the race will go down in the frightful wars and calamities of that time. This doomed third will be those who have resisted and hated Him.

Even now death is busy working out some of the dark problems of sin for God. Death is today creeping along the veins of Robert Ingersoll, he will soon be gone with all his blasphemies and false teachings. Death is stealing toward the heart of all the gamblers, liars, adulterers, and Sabbath breakers in the world. They are going on in their mad course, but death is silently stealing up through abused nerves and vitiated blood, and outraged powers. They will all go. A whole generation of them will be gone in the next generation. An army of evil doers will be marched through the portals of the grave into eternity to come back and defile this world no more. A new and better generation will arise to take its place, and so it will be repeated until the glorious dawn of the Millennium.

The funeral is a great factor with God in the moral progress of the world. He had to bury all that came out of Egypt with Moses before He could bring their children into Canaan. He still has to do this. We have cases in the church today that are as stubborn, rebellious and difficult to manage as the Jews who vexed and resisted God in the Wilderness. We have men in the pew and pulpit who are keeping a better state of things out of the church, preventing revivals and actually blocking up the way of God to the hearts and lives of the people. They will have to be buried and God will do it. Many of them say they are God’s people. Many of them are. But with their prejudices, animosities, desire to rule, habits of life, and heart backslidings they cannot keep up with the procession that God is bringing into Canaan. They will have to be buried and another and more spiritual band will take their place in the ranks of Israel. Death is on God’s side.

Conscience is on our side.

There is a power in the human breast that is the representative of God. In its normal state it speaks for God and against evil. As has been said by another, “it makes cowards of us all.” It turns the rustling of a leaf into the steps of coming judgment. It makes one imagine that each eye that is turned steadily upon him, knows the guilty secret of his life, and causes

the simplest and most innocent of speeches to pierce like daggers to the soul.

Conscience is the ventriloquism of heaven. Suppose one side in a war could throw their united voice into the camp of the enemy. What a power that would be. Well, this is what God can and does do. He projects His voice in the form of conscience into the heart of every sinner. He tells him what sin is; He tells him he is a sinner, a hell-bound and hell-deserving sinner. He tells him of the lost world, its dreadfulness, its torment and its hopelessness.

What a power all this is. If one will give the matter a little thought he will see that the force of this inward voice and monitor keeps wicked men quiet and peaceable who otherwise would not be so. It prevents many dreadful crimes, for even sinners are afraid of conscience, and is an additional fact of protection for our property and lives. Truly the wheels of the chariots of sin draw heavily when conscience is uplifting its voice. It is an uphill work indeed, and men have to goad the mind, and fire the body with stimulants to perform certain deeds of evil.

I have been often struck with the upright position of men when they are in discharge of proper acts, and the stealthy crouching and bent attitudes of the thief, burglar and assassin. Conscience gives them much trouble. The mud seems deep in the Red Sea.

Angels are on our side.

That we may know what an element of strength is with us, suppose we count the holy unfallen beings. Have you noticed that when the Bible speaks of them it is not with an enumeration of units, but such words as “thousands” and “hosts,” “a multitude of the heavenly host,” etc. This is all deeply significant. Then notice their strength. The Bible says they excel in strength. The stone of Christ’s sepulcher that a band of women could not stir, an angel with the greatest ease rolled away. One of them, we are told in Holy Writ, killed one hundred and eighty thousand men in a single night. We are told that they love to do God’s bidding. In a flash they rush to fulfill His command. Christ said He could summon a legion to His help if He desired.

The Scripture shows one standing in the sun; another poised with one foot on the sea and another on the land, and with uplifted voice crying that

Time shall be no more. They will be in great numbers at the Judgment, as the officers of God's power, and are seen gathering the elect from the four quarters of the earth at the morning of the Resurrection.

If we could have our eyes open to behold beings in the spiritual world we would see hundreds of angels flashing like meteors through the air in the service of God, and some doubtless at this very moment hovering over us in this building. How glad I am that such glorious and powerful beings are with us in the great struggle going on all over the world.

The Redeemed are on our side.

We mean those consciously saved by the blood of Christ. Part of this host are on earth, and it is a numerous and powerful following. You may say they are in the minority, that the unconverted greatly outnumber them. My reply is that there are two ways of counting, the world's way and God's way. The world estimates by heads, the Lord by character. So counting in one way the world is ahead of us, and in another way we outnumber the world.

God has a blessing for His people that when they possess, He says Himself that one can chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight. Moreover men have repeatedly seen the workings of this strange heavenly arithmetic, where one man is equal to a thousand and two to ten thousand. They saw it in the apostles case, who could not be stopped by the ecclesiastical and civil forces of the world. They saw it in Luther's case who wrought a victory for heaven in the face of millions of opposers. They saw the same thing with Wesley who was more than a match in his Gospel career for magistrates, ministers and roaring mobs who tried in vain to arrest his pen, silence his tongue, and prevent the achievements and victories of his consecrated life.

Similar victories are being won in this very age all around us by individuals filled with the Holy Ghost and who are continually seen to be more than a match for howling devils and opposing men. Let a man feel he is right, God telling him so, and filling him with His Spirit and who can withstand him. I would rather fight a circular saw in full motion or meet a locomotive thundering down upon me on the railway track than such a fire-baptized, heaven-anointed and God-sent man. In the first case my body only would suffer; but in the last, body, soul and life would go down together before God's servant and messenger.

Have you noticed how one determined man will go through a vast crowd of men? Everybody seems to give way to his persistent push and shove. Redemption puts just such a moving force in the soul. Sinners move about with occasional spasmodic performances, but the holy and fully redeemed man is fairly driven along by the mighty divine power that throbs and flows and boils in him.

The papers told us several years since of an Evangelist holding a meeting in a New Jersey town, and at the end of a month every saloon had been closed in the place, and most of their owners had joined the church and were saved men. What is that but a repetition of what God said that one could chase a thousand. Who can doubt the issue of the great fight going on in the world when God's soldiers have such power!

Then there are the Redeemed in Heaven. They have been crossing over for thousands of years since the first one righteous Abel went up. By this time they must constitute an exceedingly great army. In fact John, who had a view of them from the island of Patmos said they could not be numbered. I do not know what part they take in the battlefields of earth now, perhaps none, but then I do know that at the close of time they are going to be turned loose on this world. Jesus, by and by, will be seen descending the steeps of the skies above us at the head of the White Horse Cavalry of Heaven, the Ransomed of the glory world. John, in one of the closing chapters of Revelation, gives a wonderful picture of this irresistible and victorious charge on the astonished nations.

I tell you brethren that the more I count up the forces in God's army, the more I feel that I would not be on the other side for reward or pay of any kind. Think of it; all the good and true and pure of earth and heaven are of the Christian side. Can you doubt the issue of the conflict?

The Truth is on our side.

This we all know is an invincible power in itself. It is bound to win. Owing to its nature, it causes the bitterest opposition, and, owing to the moral freedom of men and the dense spiritual ignorance in the human race since the Fall, it takes time for truth to triumph; but the victory is always certain to come.

This is so of every kind of truth. It is so of deeds involved in darkness, that sooner or later become known. It is so of human lives; the facts concerning them always come to the light, though there may be long delay. It is so of scientific truth, no matter how the first discovery is ridiculed and opposed. The fact itself will not go down under laughter and denial, but pushes its way onward and upward until the world is compelled to give it recognition and place.

So it is with the great truths of salvation. They are not only thoughts and acts of God, but eternal facts and principles. They cannot be displaced; they constitute a part of the moral universe, and we spiritually exist because they exist. The happiness and well-being of God's intellectual and moral creatures depend on the great facts of the atonement, repentance, faith, justification, regeneration and sanctification. They will not down at man's bidding, and they cannot be downed.

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers.”

Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin thoroughly describes it: “If this counsel or work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

Finally, God is on our side.

I sometimes wonder how a man could consent to be on the side against God for a single minute. The thought to me would be unspeakably alarming and paralyzing that my hand and life was opposed to Him who wheels the worlds in mid-air, who has all power, who never had a beginning and can never have an ending. The very thought of such an opponent ought to be sufficient to make any and all throw down their arms of rebellion and cry for mercy. It is said of Nabal that when he heard that David was approaching with six hundred men to slay him, his heart sank within him and he became as a stone. He died with terror. But what is David to Him who has the armies of heaven and forces of eternity at His back? Who could not only roll the oceans over us, but could scorch us with heat, burn us up with subterranean fires, or knock this world to pieces at a blow and let us fall forever through the dead, black infinite space that underlies creation.

It was this very thought of the overwhelming greatness of God that, bore down upon and seemed to utterly bewilder and overwhelm a man. He was a fugitive, and trying to escape from the hands of justice. He seemed perfectly confused. With ample opportunity to regain his freedom, he ran this way and that, and, falling down helplessly at the foot of a large oak, and was recaptured. His explanation was, "I thought every tree was Almighty God."

With these and other facts before us I ask two questions; one is, what can a man do against God?

The Lord has anticipated this question and answered it so thoroughly in the Bible and in daily life that the wildest hope of human opposition must die. The facts loom up everywhere as regard man's impotency. In vain men tried to roll back the billows of the Flood, and equally in vain was their endeavor to build a tower to reach heaven. They could not keep Christ in the tomb although it was sealed with the signets of Roman power, and guarded by a company of soldiers. They could not prevent the Holy Spirit from falling on the Day of Pentecost although the State and Church alike ignored and despised the gathering in the Upper Room. They could not keep the disciples from preaching, nor the truth from spreading nor the people from being saved. If a prophet or disciple was slain, another took his place. If a king with his penknife cut out a part of the Holy Scripture, God had it immediately rewritten and reread to the people. If Christians were slain in great numbers, a greater number immediately sprang up to take their place, so that the saying was born that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.

Men can do nothing against God. It would be easier for a baby to stop the rush of an avalanche, than for sinful men to keep the Holy Ghost from falling on the souls of believers. It would be easier for any of us to stand out some night and stop the stars in their march through the great voids of space above us, than to arrest the sweep of God's blessed truth through this world. It would be easier for us to prevent the sun from rising tomorrow morning than to keep Christ from returning through the air to this world to judge the nations, reward His people and carry them home with Him to the skies.

Oh I am so glad that men can do nothing against God. They cannot reach Him on His throne, He is so far away. They cannot kill Him for he is eternal as well as omnipotent. If they burn His Bible the truth is still left

in the necessities, cravings and dependencies of human nature and in the commensurate supply of grace in Jesus Christ. If they kill His people He will raise them again. They cannot put a stop to the proceedings of the Day of Judgment, nor put out the fires of hell, nor affect in the slightest possible degree the light, glory and joys of heaven.

The other question is in itself full of comfort and reassuring power; what can God do with men?

The answer from the Bible and life says anything and everything. He had only to look out of a cloud at the Egyptians in the Red Sea when at once they became troubled and perplexed while their chariot wheels sank in the mire. He simply spoke to the ground and it opened like a vast mouth and swallowed up the wicked men who had defied Him and his servant Moses. He commissioned the limb of a tree to capture the fiery Absalom, bade some beams of light knock the persecuting Saul on the ground, and sent a few worms to eat and destroy the tyrant Herod. He took the color out of the cheek and strength from the knee of a powerful king by the sight of one of His fingers writing on the wall; and to the rich man boasting of his plenty and coming years of selfish enjoyment He said, "thou fool," and swept him with a mere breath from his vast possessions to be a pauper in the other world forever.

If a spiritual history of this world could be written about the present times, it would be found to read like events narrated in the Bible, and God seen to be busy pulling down, setting up, overturning, overthrowing and having His way with men and devils just the same as ever. What the combined nations of Europe could not do against Napoleon, God did with a soft, noiseless white army of the sky, called snow, which he sent into Russia to meet and overcome the army of the man of ungovernable ambition. The victory at Waterloo was not so much due to Wellington and the arrival of Blucher, as to a heavy rain that prevented certain heavy artillery and thirty thousand men from coming to the relief of the man whom God had determined to humble, and did it with snow and mud.

It is in the power of God today to take the fight out of the strongest of his human enemies with a few bereavements and losses, or by a steady physical pain of a few hours. I have repeatedly seen the hardest of sinners pull down the flag of rebellion, and cry for mercy after an hour or so of crushing sorrow or terrible physical pain.

Now, then, this God is on our side, fighting with us and for us. All wise, all powerful and present everywhere, who can withstand Him, and what can there be but certain victory. He is defending His truth and taking care of His people. The Ark is sure to reach Jerusalem because God is with it and bringing it up.

One of the wonderful evidences of his infinite superiority in this great contest, is that He takes the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. A set of fire baptized fishermen of Galilee are made to overthrow the powerful religions of the world. A band of "Sanctified Cobblers," as Sydney Smith called Wesley's preachers, rolled a wave of salvation to the ends of the earth, and it is still rolling. A man who has never known the colleges is used to bring thousands and tens of thousands of people to God, from the days of John the Baptist, to well known Evangelists of the present time.

Again He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and uses the blunders of devils and men to spread His cause. Herod's persecution of the disciples and driving them from Jerusalem, simply scattered the holy fire. The martyrdom of thousands of Christians in the first centuries taught the world how Christ followers could die, and how the Lord could so sustain them as they burned at the stake or sank under the sword, that they passed away with shining faces and shouts of joy and victory.

Unto this day all the opposition and persecution that has raged against the doctrines and people of God has advanced the cause of Heaven, and made the Truth fairly fly, when before that time it had been merely walking or even standing still.

As far as I can see Christianity did not die with the murdered Huguenots, and was not hurt when the Puritans were driven from England to the wilds of America. God wanted religious people to settle the new continent, and so let persecution furnish the settlers. The doctrine of justification of faith continued to flourish, no matter how Luther was lied against and driven about over the country. The great Wesleyan revival of pardon and holiness was not checked because the founder of the Methodist church was mobbed in nearly every town and forbidden to preach by the clergymen in almost every parish.

I knew of a preacher who was persecuted out of a State, and, thus driven out, came to a city where he led a man into the light of full salvation, who took the truth and swept it into thirty-three States of the Union.

A lady full of the Holy Ghost was so misunderstood by her pastor and fellow members that she was arraigned and tried in the church for heresy. Quite a large concourse of people came to see her expelled, and were prepared to endorse and approve the sentence. But when they saw her shining face, heard her gentle speech and felt her beautiful Christlike spirit, conviction struck into their hearts, and a number were led to seek and soon after obtained the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, the very religious experience for which the lady I speak of was tried.

In one of our Western States a number of churches were locked against the preaching of full salvation, the complete purification of the heart by faith in Christ. At once God whispered to a rich man, "Give thirty tents to my people." And lo! thousands listened to the truth who would not and could not have heard it in the smaller quarters that were locked against the proclamation of a full Gospel.

Christianity driven in the first century to upper rooms, private homes and in the fields; the wonderful revival of last century forced into foundries and mines, into streets and fields; and the spectacle today of full salvation preached in court houses, school houses, opera houses and theatres, under tents and brush arbors, and in the open fields—is the same vision. The dream, O King, is the same. The key to the strange opposition is found in the carnal mind. While the announcement from heaven is that victory is certain to come in spite of everything and everybody.

Just as triumph came in the first century and in the eighteenth, so will it come in the nineteenth and twentieth and all the centuries until Jesus comes. God is determined that men shall know what the Gospel teaches, and what Christ can do for the soul. In spite of the hate of hell, and rage of men, and the resistance of formal and backslidden churches; in spite of ignorance and prejudice, the wagging of tongues and movement of pens, the power of State and legislation of ecclesiastical assemblies, God is resolved that the world shall hear of a free salvation and the church of a full salvation; that Jesus died not only to save men from hell, but from sin; that He not only can pardon, but can sanctify the soul and keep the soul from falling, not simply for a day but for all time.

Of course if God determines on this, it shall be done. Men will hear a Gospel that is Good News indeed. As they hear they will believe, and as they believe they will receive, and Salvation will cover the earth like another deluge in which the nations shall go under, and the highest mountain of human opposition will be submerged.

Finally our perfect confidence in the certainty of victory is seen in the fact that prophecy has already described the end, the overthrow of Satan and sin, and the complete triumph of Christ and His Church.

The official bulletin of the last battle has been indited and published by the Lord Himself. It appears in its completest form in the Book of Revelation. Not an important feature of the disaster and defeat of Sin is omitted, and not a fact of the Divine triumph is overlooked. The Devil and the Beast with the False Prophet are all cast into Hell. The nations that forgot God, go down into the Pit. All liars, drunkards, idolaters, adulterers and whosoever refused the cleansing blood of Christ are shut out of the City of God. Not a vestige or sign of the Great Rebellion is left to sadden and trouble the Universe. It is all destroyed or banished into outer darkness.

As for the Victory, it is described in figures that are gigantic and overwhelming to the mind. The Son of God is seen with many crowns on his head; His followers ride on white horses splashed with blood; the city of God all ablaze with glory is beheld descending the skies; the people of God are caught up in the air to meet the Lord; the Judgment throne is set; Sin banished; the Devil is chained in hell; Holiness is everywhere; Heaven is open, and an Eternity of joy unrolls before the enraptured vision.

Think of the moral effect of a bulletin published and put in the hands of an earthly army before the battle. In it appeared all the incidents of the great victory that was to be won and the overwhelming defeat of the other side. Suppose the side to be conquered could also read the same report. Who could doubt the issue of the conflict. One side would go into the battle flushed with the certainty of the coming victory, and would sweep the field with irresistible power from the beginning; while the other body of troops would be like Saul gloomy with the prophecy of approaching death, and like him would simply go forth to be hewn down and die on the field of battle.

We have the Bulletin published about the issue of this great War of the Universe, which has already penetrated into three worlds, and may have gone into more than we dream of.

The Bible, the bulletin of heaven, says we shall conquer. It says: "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." It declares that sinners shall be saved or banished. Devils will fear, fly, and be put in chains. Sin shall end. Death will cease. All tears shall be wiped away from all faces. The world shall be purified. There shall be a new Heaven and a new Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Jesus shall reign. God will be all and in all, and Heaven everywhere.

How can hope sink, and faith waver, and labor cease, with such a victory ahead of us? Soldiers and followers of Christ! fall into line, wave the red and white banners of justification and holiness, shout the name of Jesus as the real battle cry of the Church, and charge in an unbroken body upon the dark ranks of sin and hell.

Hear it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it! Sickness, Sorrow, Death and Sin shall leave this world. Men shall be saved in countless millions, nations shall be born in a day, continents will wheel into line, Paradise will be restored, and Jesus will appear in the clouds coming for us, to be with us and reign over us forever. Amen.

THE END

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