

SOWING AND REAPING

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Sowing and Reaping

and Other Sermons

by
W. M. Tidwell



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FOREWORD

I am somewhat reluctant to send forth this book, knowing my insignificance and incompetence, but I do it in the *name of the Lord*. I know it is somewhat customary to state that a book is written at the "insistence" of friends, and before the Lord I can state that I have had many of these requests for many years; but that is not my primary reason for so doing. I am now sixty-five years of age, and well know that my little day will soon have passed. I began in the work of the Lord rather early in life, and can humbly say, I believe, that for the past forty-five years I have done *about* the best I could. The Lord is my witness that I have tried not to spare myself, while absolutely unworthy, but to give all.

Now, after these years, as I look back, *I feel so tremendously that I have done nothing*. And for some few years I have been possessed with one supreme purpose: Do *what I can in every way I can* before going hence. Give every possible dollar; speak to every soul, both in private and in public; write every tract or book possible that may live on and do some good when I am gone. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, *only what's done for Christ will last*." Hence this book. Most of these little messages have been preached here at our church at Chattanooga and also over a good part of the nation.

Regardless of their limitations, the Lord has blessed them to many souls. They were preached and written *from the heart*—not to win applause, but to seek to help dying men and women to prepare for an incomprehensible eternity. We send it out in His name. And if any little good is accomplished, and any souls are won, to the gracious Father, glorious Son, and blessed Holy Ghost shall be all the honor.

Unworthily, yours in His service,

W. M. TIDWELL

ONE

CHRIST NOT SAVING BUT GIVING HIMSELF

In Matthew 27:42 we read: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Of course, they would not have believed Him, but we will call attention to the words, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." These words were spoken in derision by His enemies. However, they spoke much more than they knew. Profound words were they.

We would glance at a few of the closing events of Christ's earthly pilgrimage. First, we notice Him in that "large upper room" with His disciples for that last supper. "Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve." Momentous event. The shadows of Gethsemane and Calvary are deepening. "And as they did eat, he said, . . . One of you shall betray me. They were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say, Is it I?" Judas also said, "Is it I?" Then they sang a hymn—one of the passover psalms. We wonder who led? Was it Peter, James, or John? Did Jesus himself lead? At this point Judas leaves. He had already gone to the chief priests and made the deal (Matt. 26:15). He doubtless had the money in his pocket at that very moment. Oh, the treacherousness of carnality! Who can fathom its diabolical fiendishness?

Recently we discovered something which took place about this time. "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24). Think of it. It seems clear that this *fuss* took place in this upper room or immediately after they left on the way to Gethsemane. Can you imagine such a

thing? But we can never tell *where* nor *how* carnality will manifest itself. It is more deadly than poisonous gas and more dangerous than dynamite. It is a horrible monster even in the heart of the Christian, until removed by the fiery baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Soon they reach Gethsemane. Here we have a sad picture. Jesus leaves the eight out in the edge of the garden. The *edge* is about as far as He can take many of us. There are too many "border" Christians. Anyway, He takes us all as far as we are capable of going. He takes Peter, James, and John, the trusted three, *a little farther*. Here He admonishes them to watch and pray. He was divine, but He was also human. The human, in this tragic hour, desired sympathy. Some say that sympathy does not help. Well, they are mistaken. You can be so burdened, and in touch with some friend who can enter into your sorrows, till part of the load will leave you and rest on the other. Paul said, "Bear ye one another's burdens." Then He falls upon the ground and prays, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." See Him 'neath the old olive tree. "This cup." Such a cup! Sorrow, suffering—physical, mental, and spiritual—loneliness, separation, and death. Yes, such a cup and such a load. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord *hath laid* on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6)—every sin that was committed from the days of Adam till the last sin shall have been committed in this world.

Then we read: "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." How long He prayed we know not. But, finally, He comes to those trusted three, and does He find them praying, watching? *No—sleeping*. How pathetic. He awakens them and very tenderly rebukes them. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" Then He kindly excuses them. "The spirit is *willing* but

the flesh is weak." Then He returns again praying, saying the same words. We also read that He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He prostrates himself. There are times when one might stand or kneel and pray, but there are times when the burden is so heavy that he feels like falling prostrate. Then we read of the saddest picture, with the exception of Calvary, in the Bible. He comes to them the second time. Look at Him. There He stands, with the bloody perspiration on His brow, beholding those sleeping disciples. This time He does not awaken them. *There He stands.* Not a word. He looks and then leaves them. He prays again. Finally, He returns. They are still sleeping. Wonder how He feels in this tragic hour as He beholds His sleeping, carnal disciples?

Then He awoke them and said, "Sleep on now and take your rest." The opportunity is past, but must be done what can be done. "Rise and let us be going." Then they look across the valley and behold the treacherous mob led by Judas. They are coming with lanterns and torches and weapons. Yes, led by Judas. Of course, the one who has known the Lord and goes back becomes the leader. We all have seen that. Judas had given them a sign. "The one that I shall kiss is he. Hold him fast." Yes, he knew the power of Jesus. Oh, that treacherous kiss! Again we see the deceitfulness of carnality.

But Jesus submits and is led away for trial. First, He is taken to Annas who is now old and influential. His sanction had better be obtained. Then He is taken to Caiaphas, where the ecclesiastical trial was conducted. There were two full trials—first, the church or ecclesiastical trial before Caiaphas, and then the civil trial before Pontius Pilate. He fared hard here in this church trial. I will refer to that a little later. At the close of this trial, the church dignitaries said, "*He is guilty of death.*" That was the verdict at this trial. Then He is sent to Pilate. Poor

old backboneless Pilate. He wanted to do right but he lacked moral courage. "If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend." Caesar stood for the world. That was too much for Pilate. Pilate tried many ways to get rid of Jesus. He sent Him to Herod for trial; he washed his hands and said, "I am innocent," but, was he? Then he scourged Jesus and brought Him forth and said, "Behold the man. Is that not enough? Are you not satisfied now?" But carnal hatred cannot be satisfied. It is more cruel and ravenous than wild beasts. It is destructive and ravenous. But nothing would satisfy them. Pilate said, "Take him and crucify him: for *I find no fault in him.*" That was the verdict at the civil trial. The professed church said, "He is guilty of death." The non-professing would have said, "I find no fault in Him."

Just here we mention a few things from which *Jesus did not save himself*. "He saved others; himself He did not save." If He had saved himself, He would not and could not have saved others. No, He did not save himself—He gave himself. He did not save himself from *incarnation*. While He was coequal and coeternal with the Father, He became man. He did not take upon himself the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He who had existed from all eternity, and who, it seems, was the active agent in creation, became the babe of Bethlehem, "God manifest in the flesh." Yes, "In the beginning was the *Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" Marvelous condescension.

He did not save himself from *poverty*. Was there ever a poorer man than He? "The birds of the air have nests, and the foxes of the earth have holes, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Yes, "He became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich." He did not save himself from hunger, or from inhuman treatment. They pressed the crown of thorns upon Him. They

put on Him the old castoff soldier's coat and put a reed in His right hand. They bowed the knee and mocked Him. They did spit in His face. He was scourged. "He gave his back to the smiters" (Isa. 50:6). "His visage was *more marred than any man* and his form than the sons of man" (Isa. 52:14). Some Bible students say the thought here is, "His visage, appearance, was so marred that He scarcely seemed like a human being."

After the civil trial they start for Calvary. He bore His cross for a time. Look at Him. "He bearing his cross." Then we learn that they compelled Simon the Cyrenian to bear His cross. Did His strength fail? Did He fall? Anyway, Simon bore His cross. What a privilege. Would not you gladly have done it? Well, in a sense, you still have the opportunity.

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.*

Finally, Calvary, or the place of the skull, is reached. The cross is laid upon the ground and Christ is nailed to it. Hark! What are those heavy blows we hear? They are the strokes of the hammer that is driving nails through the tender palms of Jesus. Those wonderful hands. Yes, the Jews were the instigators; the Roman soldiers, doubtless, drove these cruel nails; but after all, it was *your sins and mine* that nailed Him to the cross.

Now the cross is lifted and dropped into the place prepared for it. Did this cause the wounds to rend those hands? He is placed between two thieves. There He hangs *for six long hours*—from nine till three. The earth quaked. The rocks rent. The sun went down at high noon. Why not? Its Creator was being crucified. The sun refused to shine. Darkness came. The first three hours

there was light, the last three darkness. We read: "Sitting down they watched him there." Did the Father, in mercy, cover Him with the mantle of darkness to shield Him from the cruel gaze of wicked men? He speaks seven times during those long hours. We cannot mention them all here—just an example or two. The first time He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He was the forgiving Christ. I wish we were more like Him. Then, later on, possibly after the sun refused to shine, *out of the dark* came the lamentable cry, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yes, betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and forsaken by all, but now by the Father. Jesus was not mistaken. He was forsaken. Was the Father cruel? Nay, verily. Christ is being made a sin offering for a lost world. "He was made sin for us." As He bears the sins of the world, the Father's face must be turned from Him and He is left to die alone. He was temporarily separated from the father in order that we might be eternally united with Him. Had it not been for this separation, we would have been eternally damned—eternal separation in hell.

We have never found any adequate illustration here. The following is poor—really scarcely touches it. It touches only the physical side, which was probably the least. Anyway—the little boy must have his limb amputated, and anaesthetics, for some reason, could not be used. The little fellow said, "Daddy, if you will sit by and hold me tight, and look right into my face, I think I can bear it." The operation was begun. The surgeon cut the flesh away and reached the bone. This must be sawed, so they began sawing the bone. This was most painful. It was too much for the father and he turned his face away, and the little fellow piteously cried, "O Daddy, don't turn away and leave me now. This is the most painful of all." But Jesus was left to die alone. "He trod the winepress alone."

But finally the end came. We hear that last cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The human, in this fearful hour, cried out, "Why?" Then it was, "My God"; but now it is "Father." He bows His head and yields up the ghost. No, He did not save himself from all of this. He gave himself. He did not save himself from condescension, from humiliation, from poverty and sorrow, from separation, from death, even the death of the cross.

But the question is, Why all of this? Here we have the answer. It was for us—"Who gave himself for our sins." "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." His suffering was vicarious. He became our substitute. "Who gave himself *for us* that he might redeem us from *all iniquity*." Thank God. From *sin* and *sins*. From sins committed and from that deep, dark inherited principle of sin. From dangerous, deadly carnality. His mission was not a failure. He said, "It is finished." The gulf between a holy God and sinful man had been bridged. The redemptive price had been paid. All were *provisionally saved*. He is mighty to save and strong to deliver. He does not save in sin, but *from sin*. "He shall save his people from their sins."

He breaks the power of canceled sin,

He sets the prisoner free.

HIS BLOOD CAN MAKE THE VILEST CLEAN,

His blood avails for me.

Yes, He saved others, but He did not save himself. He gave himself. If He had saved himself, He could not have saved others. Do we save ourselves? Are we just playing church? Is our service cold, mechanical, and heartless? Shame on us if so.

Recently a friend from Canada related the following sad incident to me. He said that many years ago in a cer-

tain section there were no railroads. Only a few roads that could scarcely be traveled at certain seasons. One was known as "The Stage Road." Along this road, at a distance of about thirty miles apart, there were little camps, or "inns," where the stagecoach would stop. One evening as the darkness came on, a young man, his wife, and two children, accompanied by another young man, came to one of these "inns" and desired to reach the next one that night. It was desperately cold. The innkeeper warned them that it was dangerous and that they should not try it as the wolves were out that night. If they contacted them it meant death, but they felt that they must go, and they started. Three horses were hitched to their vehicle—two back horses and one lead horse. All went well for quite a while, but when they were within about ten miles of their destination, they heard the howl of the wolves. Soon they could see them coming. The wolves looked almost like a dark cloud on the ground. When close enough they fired into the pack and killed some. The wolves then stopped to devour the dead ones. A wolf is one animal that will eat its own kind. But soon they were coming again. This time they cut the "lead horse" loose. He was soon covered and devoured. They heard only one sharp neigh from the horse. They drove rapidly, but before they reached their destination they were overtaken. The young man who accompanied them said, "We all will be devoured. Just one thing to do, and that is for me to give myself to the wolves." By this time the brown, hungry wolves were jumping at the throats of the horses, and with one leap the young man threw himself to the wolves. They drove with all their might, while the pack devoured the young man. They just did reach the place of safety as they saw these hungry monsters coming again. They spent a restless night. They were thinking of the young man who had died for them. He had become their substitute. They were living because he was dead. Next

morning they went back to see what could be found. They found part of one boot of the young man. They found part of one large bone of the horse. All else had been devoured or carried off by the wolves. The family wept. But this young man gave himself for his friends. Jesus gave himself for His enemies.

About nineteen hundred years ago, as a lost race was pursued by the sinful hounds of hell, and there was no other way, with one mighty leap He came from heaven to earth. He ran the gauntlet of hell. He died for us. Don't you think we should love Him and be absolutely true to Him? "I would be a friend of Jesus until my years shall end."

*Five bleeding wounds He bears;
Received on Calvary,
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me;
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry;
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die."*

Two

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

We find an account of this occurrence in Matthew 4:1-11. We will study this scripture. Webster says "to tempt" is to "induce to wrongdoing, to allure, to entice." Think of the holy, divine Son of God being induced to wrongdoing, allured and enticed, and yet that is just what took place. "*He was tempted.*"

I. *The tempter.* Here the record is clear. "To be tempted of the *devil.*" There is a real devil, a *fallen* angel, a fallen spirit. He lost much of his wisdom and power, yet he retained much of it. Some say, "I am going out to fight the devil." Well, I want the Lord to do the fighting for me. He was seen as lightning. With the rapidity of light he could travel around the world many times per second. Think of the damage he could do as he swept around the world even in one second, and he is a busy devil. Michael, the great unfallen angel, said, "*The Lord rebuke thee.*" But this is the devil that tempted Jesus.

II. *The tempted.* We have already intimated that it was Christ. So if Christ was tempted, the best people shall not escape. We have never heard of a reputable person teaching that we get beyond temptation. We can and will be tempted, and we *can* yield, and we will yield unless we watch and pray, but we do not have to yield. Job, Jesus, and the saints of all ages have been tempted, but the grace of God has been sufficient. We keep saved and sanctified just as long as we *resist the devil.*

III. *The place of the temptation.* It was in the *wilderness.* Mark tells us that He was there "in the *wilderness*

forty days tempted of the devil; and was with the *wild beasts*." Matthew intimates that the devil tempted Him at the expiration of the forty days. Mark says He was tempted of the devil *during* the forty days. The devil tempted during the entire period, but made a special attack at the close. Think of being there with wild beasts, serpents, and the devil. What a contrast—"Out of the ivory palaces into a *world of woe*." The place has much to do with it, but that is not always the determining result. Adam and Eve were in Eden, with every need abundantly supplied, in an unfallen world, and the Lord came to see them in the cool of the day, and yet they yielded to this same devil and fell. Christ, alone, hungry, in the waste howling wilderness, among wild beasts, in a cursed earth, weathers the gale and is true.

IV. *But why was He there?* "He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." This was in divine order, and in the will of God. He did not go there carelessly or presumptuously. If we willfully get out of the will of God, we cannot claim protection. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that *fear* him and delivereth *them*." There is just one place of safety, and that is in the will of God. Many times we make our plans and go where we please, and then we expect God to keep us. If one is unavoidably placed in some place of fierce temptation, count on the Lord for sufficient grace. The Lord has various ways of delivering. Sometimes it is to *stand*. "Having done all to stand." Sometimes it is to *flee*. "Joseph fled and gat him out." A good run is better than a poor stand. Joseph lost his *reputation and coat*, but retained his *character*! Look at him in jail, reputationless and coatless with a good conscience and a holy soul. Wherever God sends you He will protect you if you meet conditions. Jesus was led there by the Spirit.

V. *The time of the temptation.* "Then Jesus was led up of the Spirit." When? Immediately after His baptism.

Just after the heavenly voice recognized His divine Sonship. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Often just after one is sanctified wholly there will be a terrific onslaught of the devil. Hell, from various sources, may be turned loose on you—from home folks, neighbors, on the job, in the church. Often, just after you get a special refreshing and some victorious experience, the sharp trial will come. Elijah had just experienced that marvelous victory on Carmel, and the false prophets were put out of commission, and Ahab was pretty well subdued, when old lady Jezebel, the mother of the make-up craze, turned loose on him. He had withstood almost a thousand false prophets and Ahab and the hosts of hell, but "when he saw that [saw what Jezebel was about to do], he arose and *went for his life.*" But all of this just after the blessing. So with Jesus, and it will be so with you.

VI. *Could Jesus have yielded?* Some say that He could not, and it is almost unthinkable. The mind is dazed at the thought. On the other hand, we read, "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4:15). "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest" (Heb. 2:17). Jesus knew whether or not He could have yielded. If it was impossible, then it was just a *make-believe, a sham battle*—it was not in reality a temptation at all. Personally, I believe it was a genuine temptation, a fight between the seed of the woman and the old serpent. Jesus, not so much as God but as a holy man, for He was both God and man, in mortal combat with the devil, in the wilderness amid the wild beasts, fought the devil, won the victory, and is able to succor them that are tempted. Praise the Lord! Yes, while it is bewildering to think what the results would have been had He yielded, He did not yield. In Gethsemane

He went a little farther. He always does. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin."

*Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you THROUGH.*

VII. *The essence of temptation.* The essence of a very large part of temptation of Christians is to seek to satisfy a *legitimate* desire in an *illegitimate way*—a right desire in a wrong way. It was natural for Eve to desire *good food*, pleasant objects for the eye, and wisdom. That was all natural, but she sought to obtain them in the wrong way. She ate fruit off the *wrong tree*. She is not the last one who has thus acted. God gave woman the highest position. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." But now she does not propose to rock the cradle. She has rebelled. She smokes her cigarettes, cuts her hair, dons her trousers, and apes men in general, bids the cradle and home adieu, and just about wrecks the world. Seeking to satisfy a legitimate desire in an illegitimate way, she will ultimately entail upon herself the drudgery and bondage of heathenism. We had better tread softly here. *The ice is very thin.*

VIII. *The temptations.* There were three in number. The rule of satisfying a right desire in a wrong way holds good in each.

A. *Make bread from stones.* "When the tempter came to him, he said, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*" (v. 3), doubtless pointing to a pile of stones lying there. That is "*If thou be the Son of God. Looks doubtful. Here you are hungry and neglected.*" Suggests doubt. Christ had just heard the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son." Tempted to doubt His *own sonship* when He had just heard it from

the Father. Don't be surprised if the devil seeks to make you doubt yours.

But what is wrong with making bread from stones? Christ was able, for He made wine out of water. Christ refused, but why? First, if He had, it would have looked as though He were taking matters into His own hands and *distrusting* His Father. The devil had just insinuated that. Jesus would never acquiesce to any of the wicked insinuations of the devil. Then, Jesus needed no instructions or suggestions from the devil. Sometimes the devil's crowd will generously give instructions, even furnishing some *place* for the services to be held. Some theater, for example, giving the hall for meetings. But, put it down, they always have an *ax to grind*. It will add respectability to their place, make them many friends, and pay in the long run. Jesus refused all the devil's suggestions. We will do well to follow Him. Christ's answer was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Better starve in the will of God than have a royal feast at the suggestion of the devil. It is said that one of the old preachers was beset by some suggestions that did not appeal to him as being right. He turned upon the devil and said, "Thee art a pretty fellow to make suggestions to a Christian. Thee had a good place and lost it by such actions. Now thee would have me lose mine. I'll take no suggestions from thee!" Jesus surely would not. But Jesus was hungry. To desire food was normal, but He refused to satisfy this natural desire in a wrong way.

B. *Leap from the pinnacle of the temple.* Was Jesus actually taken to this place? The Bible says so. The temptation, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." Do something *spectacular—glamorous*. Prove your deity, doubtless, to the throng below, then they will believe in you." Jesus desired that they might believe and be saved. It seems that some of the miracles had that secondary thought

in mind—*first*, to help the poor *victim*. Then he misinterprets scripture. "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." Yes, but not when *presumptuously sinning*. Paul, unconsciously, took up the serpent and God took care, but, beyond question, all of this present-day snake-handling and fire business is actuated by the same devil. "Prove your faith." No, not by presumptuous sin. David said, "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins." Yes, the desire of Jesus was that men might believe on Him, but He would not prove this in a wrong way. Christ's answer was, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This would be a good answer for some today.

C. Third temptation—*worship the devil*. Worse and worse. He took Jesus up into a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time. Then he proposed that if Jesus would just fall down and worship him, he would give them all to Him. The devil seeks to be worshipped. Probably that was his original sin. He sought to usurp the throne of God and get worship unto himself. Well, he has not given up yet. In Revelation 13 (during the Great Tribulation) he calls fire down and deceives the people. "*And they worshipped the dragon.*" This will be largely universal. He claimed ownership or at least *domination*. "'All of these will I give thee,' on one condition—*worship me.*" Devil worship. Can you think of a more diabolical deed? This is the worst. If he thus tempted the holy Christ, don't be surprised when he tempts you. Jesus did not question his domination. John said, "The whole world lieth in wickedness"—the wicked *one*—in the lap or embrace of the devil. The devil did all of this in a moment of time. He is the originator of the movie business. He still operates them.

He proposes this *short cut* to Jesus. "You mean to get possession of them, but it is a long way around. You

mean to go by the way of suffering, crown of thorns, nails, death. Just fall down and worship me and all is yours." We had better watch the short cuts of the devil. There is just one way to heaven. That is the way of the Cross. All this easy, glamorous, popular salvation and holiness is bogus. It is the *devil's counterfeit*. Beware! The devil would quote, but misapply, the Scriptures. He would say, "It is written." Jesus would come back and say, "It is written," or, "It is written *again*." Then Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The desire for the kingdoms was right, for they are *His* by creation and redemption, but He refused to satisfy a right desire in a wrong way. He will come and this old usurper ultimately will be cast into the lake of fire, and Christ will be king over all the earth.

IX. *The final results. "Then the devil leaveth him."* He skedaddled! I don't like that word much, but it is in the dictionary. Mr. Webster says, "It is to *get away in a hurry*." Thank the Lord! That was just what the devil did. It really was time to go. Better go while going was good. He did not know what might happen. We now have the same devil with which to contend, but we have the same Christ to help us. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold the *angels came and ministered unto him*." I think the wild beasts, the devil, and the whole brood departed. That is true after a conflict with the devil now. It will be gloriously and permanently true when the battle is over. Job said, "*There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest*."

But we must "*resist the devil*." "*Neither give place to the devil*." That is where we lose. But *when* does temptation become sin? It is when we adopt them, and make them ours—*enjoy them*. "You cannot prevent the devil from putting his children on your doorsteps, but you do not

have to take them and adopt them." There is the difference in *evil thoughts* and *thoughts of evil*. The devil will present vile thoughts and then say, "You look like being a Christian. Look at you," but often they are the devil's thoughts. Resist him. Don't give place to him. Look to the Christ who defeated him long ago, and He will carry you through!

THREE

SIMON BEARING THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Much encouragement may be derived from the narrative of Simon bearing the cross of Christ. This is given a prominent place in the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all relate it. We would glance at what each one states.

Matthew 27:32—"And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear the cross." We notice it says, "*As they came out,*" out of the gate or the city, "*they found a man.*" Difficult to find someone to bear this heavy load which was also the symbol of disgrace and shame. "Him they compelled to bear the cross." Simon shrank from this. Who would not? As far as Simon knew, it would seem, Jesus was just a common criminal taken out for execution.

Mark relates (Mark 15:21), "And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who *passed by*, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross." He was coming out of the country of Cyrene—just passing by—just accidentally seemingly, but in reality, doubtless, providential. How often it is providential and not accidental. He was there just at the right time. Also we learn that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. We must keep that in mind as we will need to refer to that later.

Luke (Luke 23:26) relates something not mentioned by the others. He says, "and as they led him away, they *laid hold upon one Simon*, . . . on him they laid the cross that he might bear it *after* Jesus." Possibly Simon protested vigorously, but they "laid hold of him."

John (John 19:16, 17) does not mention Simon at all. He says, "And they took Jesus and led him away. And *he bearing his cross* went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha." John states that Jesus bore His cross.

How are these *seeming* contradictions harmonized? The first three Gospel writers say that Simon bore the cross, and John states that Christ himself bore it. One thing we are sure of, and that is that there is no real contradiction in the divinely inspired Word of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." The Holy Ghost never makes a mistake. We are sure that the cross was borne by both Jesus and Simon. The Bible states this positively. It is also clear that Jesus bore it *first*. Then it must have been transferred from Jesus to Simon. Just how long Jesus bore it is not stated, but the implication is that not very far. For as *they were coming out* of the gate of the city, just beginning the journey to Calvary, Simon appears and the cross is thrust upon him. But the question arises, Why was this change made? Why was the cross taken from Jesus and placed upon Simon? One thing is clear, we think, and that is that the change was made not because of *sympathy* for Jesus. Sympathy and pity must have been largely unknown in this bloodthirsty, howling mob who were bent on murder.

Let us now, for a few moments, see if we can find the cause of this transfer. Just a brief look at Jesus. First, in Gethsemane. Behold Him as He lies prostrate on the ground and prays until "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." Much strength and blood lost there. Then see Him as they press the cruel crown of thorns upon His brow and blood trickles down His face. Then He is blindfolded, and they did spit in His face, and they buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands. They said, "Prophecy unto

us and tell us who smote thee." Then for hours He was driven from one place of cruel treatment to another, till the two trials, ecclesiastical and civil, were over. The climax was reached when He was scourged by Pilate. That was a fearful ordeal. Many times, it is said, eyes and teeth were knocked out as the cruel pieces of iron, lead, or bone, fastened in the end of the lashes, fell upon the defenseless body of the one being scourged. The back was bruised and lacerated until often the victim lost practically all of his blood. The holy, harmless stranger of Galilee had just passed through all of this and much more. Thus weak, weary, and exhausted, this heavy wooden cross is thrust upon Him, and they start for Golgotha where they are to wreak their diabolical vengeance upon Him. It may be He was unable to keep apace with this rabble. Possibly they feared He might die before they reached Calvary and they had an opportunity to satisfy their fiendish hatred by actually crucifying Him by driving the nails in His hands and feet and seeing Him writhe in agony as He hung on the cruel cross. Or it may be that He, in His weakened condition, actually fell to the ground under the heavy load. Anyway, this may give some idea as to the reason the cross was transferred from Jesus to Simon. Now we would notice a few lessons gathered from this matter of Simon bearing the cross for Jesus.

I. *Christ in need.* That seems strange, yet it is true. Christ needed someone to bear the cross for Him. On one occasion, when they were preparing for the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His disciples to the village, and said, "Ye shall find a colt . . . loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that *the Lord hath need of him*; and straightway he will bring him hither" (Mark 11:4). Imagine the *Lord needing* a colt, and a wild, unbroken colt at that. He had never been ridden. Thank God for this man. "The Lord hath need of him." That was sufficient for him. Christ is

still in need. He has many needs that are never supplied. He needs money, often spent selfishly and foolishly, to help send the gospel to a heathen world. He needs colts or cars to go out and bring the sick and helpless to the house of God. What a privilege, but we are too tired or busy and He never gets them. He needs witnesses. "Ye are my witnesses." He needs friends—friends who will stand for Him in the shop, factory, store, or office, where it is unpopular—those who will not deny Him by seeking in some way to hide their identity or by mere silence. He needed friends at His crucifixion, but Judas betrayed Him. Peter denied Him, and they all forsook Him and fled. He needs someone to visit the sick and those in prison. He needs watchers and prayers, as He did in Gethsemane; but now, often, we like they sleep.

But you say, "If Christ were here in person, I would gladly give Him anything and all I have." But remember, He said, "I was an hungred and ye gave *me* meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave *me* drink: I was a stranger, and ye took *me* in: naked, and ye clothed *me*: I was sick, and ye visited *me*: I was in prison, and ye came unto *me*." What a privilege to thus treat Christ! Then they said, "Lord, when saw we thee hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, or in prison, and thus ministered unto thee?" And He said, "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." Doubtless He had direct reference here to treatment of His brethren, the Jews in the flesh, but it will include all. Yes, Jesus has needs that only *you* can supply. You are the only one in all the world that is just suitable for administering to some needy soul. *You only* can supply that need. But we are so busy and selfish, and He will have to say unto us, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me." Sad words. The Lord needs first *you* and secondly *yours*. He needed someone to bear His cross, and Simon supplied that need. What if he had not?

II. *The suddenness and unexpectedness of burdens and crosses coming.* Notice how suddenly and unexpectedly the cross was thrust upon Simon. We see him coming out of the country and just *passing by*. Probably knew nothing of the whole affair. He just encounters this mob as they come out of the gate of the city on their way to crucify a man. Probably he had never heard of Jesus. A few think he had, but they have no proof. No explanation is made. They just *lay hold of him* and *compel* him to take upon himself this weighty and shameful instrument of death and bear it. He is given no choice in the matter. However much he might shrink or protest, it is suddenly and unexpectedly thrust upon him. There is no choice or escape. How often this is true of the Christian as he passes through this unfriendly world. Just as he is passing along, as was Simon, some unforeseen, unexpected, and unprepared-for cross or burden is *thrust* upon him. He may shrink and feel it is a physical, financial, mental, or spiritual impossibility to bear it, but there is no escape or choice in the matter. Like Simon he is laid hold upon and *compelled to bear it*. It may be the loss of health. Some painful, incurable disease lays hold upon him or some of his loved ones. The doctor exhausts his skill but all in vain. The victim is slowly but surely wasting away. It is only a question of a few months or years at the most. Or it may be that some mental disorder develops. That is worse than physical. We were called to a home some time back where the father, a devout man, had become practically insane. The faithful wife wept bitterly, and said, "O Brother Tidwell, what can we do?" He is in the asylum now and a death-like sorrow has settled upon the home. But still worse, often it is some fearful sorrow that has come because of sin. Physical burdens and sorrows are bad, mental are worse, and spiritual are the worst of all. There are broken homes and hearts everywhere because

of sin—husbands betraying wives; wives, husbands; and children, parents.

Just now we have a little family in mind here in the city—a father, mother, and child. Recently the mother was stricken with tuberculosis. She is in the tuberculosis hospital now. Doctors say, "No hope." The child is with his grandparents, and the husband is boarding with friends. They had not planned for this. It was just thrust upon them suddenly and unexpectedly. It *laid hold upon them* as they passed along.

One of our good evangelists, who had been faithful for years, was away in a revival meeting. One night his house caught on fire, and his little wife and two children were burned to death—burned beyond recognition. Just unexpectedly and suddenly thrust upon him.

Brother Edward Welburn, one of the most devout men we ever knew, was at his work when an insane man came in and shot him down. His wife was grief-stricken.

When Brother John McKay and his wife, who was my baby sister May, and little Buddy were coming home from witnessing to heathen in India, the car struck a tree, and May and little Buddy were almost instantly killed. This great sorrow came unexpectedly upon Brother McKay. Such occurrences are common in this life. As this experience came to Simon unheralded, so it is with us. But, as we shall see later, if we are true to God, He will work them for His glory and our good. Don't worry and fret, just go on and carry the cross.

III. *The honor of bearing the cross for Jesus.* It was a great privilege and honor to bear the cross of Christ. Who would not gladly have assisted Jesus in carrying this cross? So while Simon was unconscious of it, this was a great honor that was suddenly thrust upon him. This is often true. Many times the unexpected crosses thrust upon us are blessings in disguise.

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace.
Behind His FROWNING PROVIDENCE,
HE HIDES A SMILING FACE.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
With blessings on your head.*

It is said that often birds from frigid Norway are swept away by terrific gales, and they fight and battle the storms but, often, finally give themselves up to it and then find themselves in sunny England. They feel they are being carried to their death, but in reality they are being borne to a balmy clime. We are like Jacob when, in his sorrow and desperation, he cried, "All these things are against me," when in reality God was preparing a way to preserve his life.

You can't get ahead of the Lord. He declares He will honor them that honor Him. He always makes good. Simon, at first, doubtless protested relative to bearing the cross for Jesus, but probably he had not gone far before he saw something in the One whose cross he was bearing that completely changed his attitude. When Jesus was being crucified and was mocked and derided, it is said, "The *thieves* did cast the same in his teeth." They both mocked and jeered at first, but soon one of them saw something in Jesus that broke his heart and produced penitence. First, he took up for Jesus. He said, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Then he confessed his own guilt and prayed. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Jesus replied, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Jesus forgave him and took him along to paradise with Him. He is no longer a thief, but a trophy of divine grace. So Simon at first was compelled to bear this cross; but soon, it would seem, he did it willingly and

gladly. Compulsion at first but soon voluntary. Someone said, "*Curiosity* took Zacchaeus up the tree, but *love* brought him down." A glimpse at this meek and lowly Nazarene is sufficient to change motives.

Simon was honored by this ignominious act of cross-bearing. The whole world honors him for it. It has been told over and over again around the world. He became world-famous for this act. Then it would seem that Simon himself and his two sons, Alexander and Rufus, became Christians. And why not? Who could ever witness that journey as Simon did, and behold the scenes at the Crucifixion and not be saved, unless his heart were hardened beyond redemption? In Acts 13:1 we read of certain prophets as Barnabas and Simeon, the same as Simon. Many Bible students believe this is the Simon or Simeon who carried the cross of Jesus. Then in Romans 16:13 we read, "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." Paul greets Rufus and his mother. Many think, while not proven, that this is the son of Simeon. Also his mother is mentioned. Looks like the whole family is gathered in.

Little did Simon think when bearing this cross that it would bring such honor and blessing. It meant ostracism and reproach to bear this cross for the time being. So it is today. To bear the "old rugged cross so despised by the world" will mean ostracism and coolness by the world and even by the professed church often, but it will pay rich dividends ultimately. We feel sure that Simon, when entering the good world, was given a royal reception by Jesus. Personally, if we will remain true, which, by His grace, we are determined to do, and reach the heavenly world, we hope to meet Simon.

IV. *Christ bore the cross BEFORE Simon did.* Simon bore it *after* Jesus. That means Jesus bore it first and also Jesus went before and Simon followed. Jesus always says,

"Follow me." In Gethsemane He went a little *farther*. He leaves eight of the disciples out on the border of the garden and takes the trusted three farther, but Christ himself goes *farther* into the garden of loneliness, sorrow, and suffering. No matter how complex the problem, how heavy the load, how dark the night, how great the sorrow, how heavy and shameful the cross, He has gone that way before you. "He was tempted in all points like as we are." He is the great High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

A man was imprisoned. The prison was a dungeon. But before being thrust in, a friend said to him, "You can't see me, but there is a place just above your cell where I can get, and I will be there just as much of the time as possible." The prisoner was there for weeks, but he said it helped him so much to know his friend was there. Jesus will be there not part of the time but always. "Lo, I am with you always." He sees and cares. Yes, Jesus bore the cross before Simon. He knew its ruggedness and weight. He still knows. He knows it all.

Jesus is still in need. There are crosses to be borne. The cross was that on which Jesus died. Our cross may mean death, but He went before. He is still in need of someone to bear crosses. Will we supply that need? It will pay. "The heavier the cross, the brighter the crown." It is said that a man was long imprisoned and during that time he was kept in heavy chains. Finally, his captors and persecutors died and his friends came into power. They had his chains weighed and he was given their exact weight in gold.

It is related that during World War I a young man returned from the battle and discovered his pal was missing. He went to the officer and stated the case, requesting that he be given permission to go back and search for his buddy. The officer reluctantly gave permission, stating that he

would likely lose his life and that it would not pay. But he went and found his friend badly wounded but alive. He managed to get him back over the line, but just at this time his friend died and he himself was mortally wounded. But before expiring, he saw the officer who had given permission, and the officer said, "Well it did not pay did it?" But he answered, "Oh, yes it did. He was looking for me. He said he knew I would come. He was counting on me, and it paid." Jesus is counting on us. It may mean death but it will pay.

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.*

*The consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home the crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me.*

*How happy are the saints above,
Who once went sorrowing here,
But now they taste unmingled joy,
And love without a tear.*

FOUR

MARY MAGDALENE

The Bible contains the history of many women, both bad and good. Jezebel is, beyond question, the most wicked. We doubt that in all history, both sacred and secular, a more wicked character could be found. We think her plans, plots, and murderous schemes far surpassed those of Lady Macbeth. So diabolical were these that we read God said she should be eaten by dogs. "And of Jezebel also *spake the Lord*, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the walls of Jezreel" (I Kings 21:23). Then later we read: "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she *painted her face* [the make-up craze was introduced by Jezebel] and tired her head, and looked out at a window . . . And he said, Throw her down: and some of the blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. . . And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. . . And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel" (II Kings 9:30-36). God always keeps His word.

But while there are some infamous women spoken of in the Bible, there are many holy and famous ones, such as Jochebed the mother of Moses, Hannah the mother of Samuel, and a host of others, in both the Old and the New Testament, whose names are in the Book of Life. But we doubt that there is anyone, with the exception of Mary the mother of Jesus, whose history is more beautiful and glorious than that of Mary Magdalene.

I. *Her name and the accusations made against her.*

There was no surname then, and she was simply called "Mary," or "Mary Magdalene," or "Mary of Magdala." This simply revealed her town. Then, there are so many Marys spoken of that they are often confused. She has been confused with some disreputable characters. It is generally thought that she was a bad character. In some dictionaries we read of her: "Mary Magdalene was a fallen woman. She was a reformed prostitute." It is worth noting that the New Testament rarely ever gives the names of such characters. One example: When the scribes and Pharisees brought the sinful woman to Jesus, they simply said, "This woman was taken in adultery." Then, when her would-be accusers had gone, because they were not eligible to cast any stones at her, Jesus said unto her, "Woman, where are thine accusers?" (John 8:3-11).

It is too bad about this wicked scandal being started on Mary of Magdala about 1900 years ago, and especially that it is still going. Truth plods while falsehood flies. Someone has said, "A lie will travel around the world while truth gets its boots on!" Terrible curse upon scandal-mongers. God declares no place in the good world for backbiters or for him who does evil to his neighbor or *takes up a reproach against his neighbor* (Psalms 15:3). It seems that the one who peddles the reproach is as guilty as the one who manufactures it. So, while Mary has been scandalized for 1900 years, the Lord knows it is false, and it will all be clear when we shall know as even also we are known (I Corinthians 13:12). We can afford to leave all with God and wait for that day.

II. Now we would notice a few interesting things about Mary of Magdala.

A. *Her deliverance from demons.* When Christ arose, "He appeared to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" or rather *demons* (Mark 16:9). There is

only one devil but many demons. Just who or what these demons are may not be clearly revealed, at least as to their *origin*. Many theories are given which are very doubtful. Some think they are the spirits of the wicked dead, but that is not true. Others think they are the fallen angels, but that is very doubtful. Fallen angels are spirits and have never inhabited flesh. These demons are loathe to depart from human bodies, and must operate through flesh, even though it be swine (Matt. 8:28-32). This is not true concerning fallen angels.

Anyway, while we may not be sure as to the origin of demons, we know they are a fearful reality. There is a variety of demons—dumb, unclean, fierce, and destructive. We know they are evil creatures of some kind that can wreck physically, mentally, and spiritually. Mary Magdalene was possessed with seven of these demons. The nature of demons is expressed in the effect produced upon the one possessed. We think some today are possessed by a *smoking* demon, a *drinking* demon, a *dancing* demon, a *nude* demon, a *make-up* demon, a *cursing* demon, and a *movie* demon. Seven is the Bible number of perfection, and Mary had seven and was completely possessed. But, notwithstanding this, she was completely delivered. Jesus Christ is the great Emancipator. There are no hard cases with Him. Disease, winds, waves, demons, and even death obeyed Him. "Jesus breaks every fetter, and He sets the prisoner free." Sometimes man is inclined to discount those who have been thus saved, but "what God has cleansed we are not to call common or unclean."

B. *Second glimpse.* Apparently she was a woman of means. In Luke 8:2, 3, we read: "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna, . . . and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their *substance*." Some say they traveled with

Jesus. We doubt this, for Jesus was never imprudent. They did attend His ministry, but we must remember that the work of Christ was largely confined to a very small territory, and they could have attended much of His ministry without traveling with Him. There probably have been more wrecks caused by imprudent association of men and women than for any other reason. We feel sure that Jesus would never have encouraged it. Truly they followed Him, but not in any indiscreet way. But this was a blessed ministry. And while Christ is not here in bodily form as He was then, He did say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Mary Magdalene took advantage of this glorious, holy opportunity and did what she could. Much had been done for her and she loved much.

C. *Third glimpse. At the Crucifixion.* "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. . . . There were also women *looking on* afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene" (Mark 15:37-40). It is said here they were "*looking on.*" Yes, as Mary Magdalene and the others beheld Him, as He suffered on the cross, if there was ever a tender, sympathetic look of love and compassion, this was the occasion. We also read, "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled." Did Mary? She was human, and it may be that under the pressure she, for the moment, fled with the others. But if so, it was only for a very brief period—just long enough to come to herself. She loved Him devotedly and watched Him suffer and die on the cross.

D. *Fourth glimpse. At His Burial.* Luke says (Luke 23:55), "And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and *beheld* the sepulchre, and how his body was laid." Mark says, "And he (Joseph) bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

And Mary Magdalene *beheld* where he was laid" (Mark 15:46, 47). Matthew says, "And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, *sitting* over against the sepulchre" (Matt. 27:61). There she sits, in silence and sorrow, watching Him buried. She watched them as they placed that precious body in the grave and rolled the great stone to the tomb, and she knew that the dead body of her Lord was there. How long did she linger there? Just when did she leave? One thing is sure, and that is the body of Jesus was in the grave one whole night *before the guard was set*. "Now the *next day* [that is, the next day after the burial], . . . the chief priests and the Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, . . . After three days I will rise again, command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away. . . . Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and *setting a watch*" (Matt. 27:62-66). Dr. Morgan says, "Mary stayed all night watching the grave. When the guard came and took charge she went away, but not for long. She stayed there all night. There was no Roman soldier there during the night. There was no disciple there." We are not sure that this is correct. There are some difficulties as to that theory. However, if this is true, this must have been a fearful night—lonely and dark. Maybe all hell, and the demons who had been cast out, as Dr. Morgan suggests, might have returned and sought again to take possession of her.

But whether she remained all night, and went away to procure the spices and rest the Sabbath day, or whether she went away the preceding evening and returned, we do not know. But we know she was there early in the morning. Matthew says, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the *first day of the week*, came Mary Magda-

lene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matt. 28:1). Mark says, "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, . . . very early in the morning the first day of the week, . . . came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun (Mark 16:1, 2). Luke and John make similar statements.

E. *Fifth glimpse. The Resurrection.* While some details may not be clear, we know she returned very early in the morning, the first day of the week, while it was yet dark. When she arrived she found the stone had been taken away from the sepulchre. God had sent the great earthquake; and the angel of the Lord, whose countenance was like lightning, and whose raiment was white as snow, had rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. He greeted Mary Magdalene with these words, "Fear not ye: for I know ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, *as he said*. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:5, 6). Gracious words. Then they, the two Marys, were admonished to go and tell the disciples of His resurrection. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," they came to the sepulchre. This fixes *the day of the Resurrection*. He arose after the Jewish sabbath on the first day of the week (Sunday). Matthew speaks of the angel sitting on the stone. Mark speaks of their entering the sepulchre and seeing the angel clothed with the long white garment (Mark 16:5). Luke speaks of the two angels standing by them in shining garments (Luke 24:5). John speaks of the two angels in white, sitting in the sepulchre (John 20:11, 12). If you will pardon the expression, it seems that the angels were *thick*—numerous—in and around this sacred place.

angels

But let us return, for a moment, to Mary and Jesus. Notice that while woman was first in the transgression, she is first in redemption. Mary was last at the Crucifixion and first at the Resurrection. She was the first commissioned

evangelist. "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." Such love and solicitude. Then Peter and John came to the sepulchre, and saw the napkin and linen clothes lying in such a manner as to convince them of His resurrection—mute but unmistakable evidence of His resurrection. There lay the napkin and the linen clothes, undisturbed. If He had been taken away, there would have been disorder, and burial clothes taken away, but His resurrection body just *slipped out of them* and left them there *undisturbed*, just as they were placed about His body. These disciples "saw and believed." Then they went away to their own home.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping" (John 20:11). Love lingers and weeps after all others have gone. Mary exposed herself to criticism and danger, but love cares not for any of these things. Such a picture. Behold her *standing and weeping*! She stooped down and looked into the sepulchre and saw the two angels who said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She answered, "Because they have taken away *my Lord*, and I know not where they have laid him." Notice she says, "My Lord." True He was dead, buried, and now it seemed stolen away, but still her Lord. She beholds these shining angels, but that will not suffice when *Jesus is gone*.

*How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers
Have all lost their sweetness to me.
The midsummer sun shines but dim,
The fields strive in vain to look gay:
But when I am happy in Him,
December's as pleasant as May.*

So sang the old-time Methodists.

But such tears and such seeking will not be in vain. After the inquiry from the angels, she turns herself back. "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus." Did she *feel* that holy Presence near her? Jesus said, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Yes, Jesus sees and is concerned. She supposed Him to be the gardener, and said, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." She felt equal to the task. "Love is as strong as death." Did Jesus at first speak like the gardener? Now like she had heard him speak many times? Was it that kindly familiar voice? Just one word. Then, "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." That was enough. She knew that voice. She answered, "Rabboni; which is to say, Master." Possibly she was so overcome she was about to lay hold upon Him, but even in a time like this, holy prudence must be recognized, and Jesus said, "Touch me not [Hold me not. Mary, do not detain me nor lose any time]; . . . but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." This reveals the sacred relation between Christ and His own. We doubt that in all history of the Bible such devotion, love, and loyalty can be found.

F. *Sixth glance. Pentecost.* After the Resurrection and just before the Ascension, Jesus commanded His apostles and, doubtless, all His disciples to tarry at Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. While they were Christians, they were carnal Christians. They needed purity and power. They obeyed this last command. "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet" (place of the Ascension), where they went into an upper room. Then a list of names is given of those who were there, closing with these words: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, *with the women.*" And you may certainly count on Mary Magdalene being

there. She loved Him so well she could and *would gladly obey*. Then, if this woman of such unswerving, undying, undaunted loyalty needed the baptism with the Holy Ghost to cleanse and empower, surely we do.

G. *Seventh and last glimpse. In Heaven.* God has promised that He will honor those who honor Him. This surely entitled Mary Magdalene to a gracious reward in the good world. Jesus said, "If you confess me before men, I will also confess your *name* before my Father and the angels in heaven." Someone has spoken of the *expulsive power of a supreme affection*. The affection Mary had for her Lord was so supreme that every other interest seemed to be expelled. She was forgiven much and she loved much. It enabled her to triumph over criticism, danger, and death. Her reward is great in heaven. Just a glance at her in the glory land. Will Jesus recognize her "over there"? Most assuredly. He said so. "I will confess your name." Behold her in all her loveliness, and ask her this question: "Mary, did it pay to stand true amid adverse circumstances?" Listen to her hilarious answer, "It surely does. I am glad I met Jesus, and while demon-possessed, He saw me and cast out the demons and made a place for me in His kingdom. I have been here now for centuries, and He said I would be with Him *forever*." The Christ who thus saved and kept Mary Magdalene has grace for us in these trying times. It will pay to *be true at any cost*.

FIVE

JUDAS

There is something very sad relative to any kind of a *wreck*. To see a car that once would glide so smoothly and grandly at about eighty miles per hour, lying by the roadside covered with mud, all bruised, battered, and mangled, is pathetic. To look at the great, giant plane that once glided through the heavens at about three hundred miles per hour, broken and riddled far upon the mountain-side, is tragic. To view a house, once beautiful but now in ruin, is pitiful. Once the lawn had been kept mown and the building itself kept in perfect order, which was elegantly furnished, where the happy family resided, where beautiful lights could be seen at night, and from which beautiful strains of music could be heard; now the structure is all grown over with vines, the porches are falling in, it is total darkness at night, and instead of the music can be heard the weird, moanful sound of the screech owl. But there is another wreck which is far more deplorable than any of these. It is a human wreck. And we have many of these—physical, mental, spiritual wrecks. Total wrecks. Just glance at the hospitals, insane asylums, and prisons. Just about anywhere you look, in the community, home, or church, they may be seen. The highway of time has been thickly strewn with them from the days of Eden to this good hour. As Jude puts it: "Spots, clouds without water, trees whose fruit withereth, once had fruit, without fruit, *twice dead*, plucked up by the roots; *wandering stars*, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Yes, *wandering stars*—no longer held in place by the powers of gravitation—moorings lost. Wandering, dangerous

wrecks. Apostates! Wrecks! Yes, there have been myriads of these, but Judas is one of the most fateful, possibly the worst. Once an apostle, now a damned soul in hell. Here we would take a few sad glances at him.

I. His *early life*. See that proud, hopeful look on his mother's face as he lies upon her lap. See him as he leaves home that first morning for school; and as the years pass, he proudly shows his mother his report card. Her hopes rise. She sees in him a great banker, doctor, lawyer, statesman, or possibly a renowned minister.

Glance at him after school days—fine young man. One eventful day he met Jesus. He liked Jesus. He was drawn to Him. The call came for apostleship, and he accepted it. He made the choice—the right choice. Great things we will expect.

II. His *spiritual status*. This is seriously questioned by many good people. There are difficulties here. There are two theories relative to Judas. One is that he was never saved—never a Christian. The other is that he was, at one time, genuinely saved—a real Christian—always carnal, never spiritual, but nevertheless a Christian. We are to notice from a scriptural point these two positions.

First: That he was *never saved*—scriptures used as proof. Jesus said, "Ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." Many Bible students hold the position that the latter verse explains the former. Jesus knew who *should* betray Him. Not that he was a traitor *always*, for there was a time when he was not a traitor, for the "devil . . . put into the heart of Judas to betray him." Then, he is spoken of as "the son of perdition," "a child of hell," "a thief," and "one of you is a devil." Often one of these scriptures is added to. They say, "Judas was a devil from the beginning." No, the word "beginning" is not there. But we do read, "After the sop Satan entered into him [Judas]."

Of course, there was a time when he was out or he could not have entered. Judas was the treasurer of the Twelve. He had this office by the *appointment* or *permission* of Jesus. The apostles must have believed in him, but they could have been mistaken, but Jesus *knew*. We will notice some of these scriptures more fully a little later; but, as far as we know, these are about all of the scriptures used to prove that he was never saved.

Second: Now we will look at the position that he was at one time a *real Christian*. Just a few thoughts before we come to the scriptures. First, he was *called* by Jesus, and Christ does not call sinners to preach. There was a clear, definite, and unmistakable call, and to this divine call Judas responded. But not only was he called, he was sent, commissioned, by Jesus to preach. "These twelve Jesus sent forth." Judas was sent just as definitely as Peter, James, and John. They were to preach repentance. Would it be consistent to send a man who had never repented to preach repentance? They were to cast out devils. To say that Judas was a devil at that time would be to charge Jesus with gross inconsistency. If Judas was all along what some charge him with, then Jesus sent a *thief*, a *devil*, and the *son of perdition* out to preach and get folks saved. We would not want to make such a blasphemous charge. When the seventy were sent out to preach, and came back and reported that even the devils were subject to them, Christ said, "In this rejoice not, but rather rejoice that your names are *written in heaven*." Certainly that was true of the twelve apostles also. Then, in John seventeen, Jesus, speaking of the apostles, said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. . . . I have given them thy word; and the *world* hath *hated* them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Wonderful relationship. Then the climax: "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name None of them is lost, but the son of perdition." He

had kept all but one. He lost one. That was Judas. Unanswerable.

Then we read: "Judas by *transgression* fell." We know some say he simply fell from his ministry and apostleship, not from a saved relationship. Well, if that is true, we are again confronted with that same charge of Jesus being inconsistent and guilty of sending a thieving, devil-possessed sinner to preach. No, unsaved men may go and preach, but we are sure that *Jesus never sent one*.

III. Now, for a few moments we would look a little more fully at *his fall*. Yes, he fell, but how? He fell the only way anyone ever fell—by *transgression*. "Judas by *transgression* fell." Lucifer, Adam, Saul, Judas, and everyone who has ever fallen fell just this way, but how strange that Judas should fall. He was with Jesus, heard His words, beheld His miracles, felt the touch of the holy personality of the Man of Galilee. But just here lies a great danger—unless we watch and pray. Lucifer fell from heaven, Adam from Eden, Demas from the fellowship and ministry of Paul, and Judas from the high and holy circle of the Twelve—yes, from Jesus himself. But how could he? Did he permit holy things to become *commonplace*? Did he just get used to the teaching and miracles, yes, of Jesus himself? Did he permit covetousness to enter? Were offerings poor, and was he dissatisfied with the meager sum? Did he love money? This is dangerous. "They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which *drown* men in *perdition*." He did not say that those that were rich, but those that just *would be*. Are we all free from this danger? Someone called it "Isca-riotism"—the love of money. Anyway, he fell, and sin was at the bottom of it—some covetous spirit, some root of bitterness, some harbored sin.

The great eagle swooped down and picked up the small weasel. Higher and higher the mighty bird soared, seek-

ing the crest of some high mountain where it could light for its meal. The weasel was held close to the body of the eagle—close to the very breast. Just then the weasel began to suck the blood from the very heart of the eagle. The eagle, which was being watched by a man, became *unsteady* in its flight. Suddenly it began to drop, and was soon prostrate and dead on the ground. The gentleman examined it, and there was the weasel still held fast in the talons of the eagle. Yes, it was small but it brought him down. Just some little sin, so-called, harbored will bring us down—just a little compromise, a little unlawful affection toward someone of the opposite sex, a little covetousness, a little ill feeling or bitterness. This may go on for months or years unnoticed by the world in general, but it is there, sucking, eating, and weakening. Finally, unexpectedly, suddenly, there is a crash. All are shocked. Yes, the outward crash was sudden, but the inward cause had been doing its deadly work for a long time. Oh, the insidiousness of sin! Yes, his fall was fearful. He became "*guide* to them that took Jesus." He led the mob. The last state is worse than the first. This is always true.

IV. His *acknowledgment*. His confession.

He acknowledged the innocence of Jesus. "I have betrayed the innocent blood." Did Judas believe Jesus would, in some miraculous way, deliver himself from the mob? He had done this on other occasions. But he confesses that Jesus had done no wrong. "I am guilty, He is innocent."

Then, in the second place, he confessed that he had *sinned*. This is difficult to get many to do. He did not say, "I have made a mistake, I was a little unwise," but, "I have sinned; I did it; I am to blame. The devil tempted me, but I yielded. I did not have to yield. No, I was not forced. I was not a victim of circumstances."

Then, he confessed the power of Jesus—"Hold him fast." Yes, he knew Christ. He had seen Him cleanse the leper,

raise the dead, and calm the storm. "Watch Him; hold Him fast." Yes, he knew Him, but not fully. He could have had twelve legions of angels at His side immediately if He had seen fit. But Judas does admit much—more than many will.

V. Now for just a moment we notice his futile efforts to *undo what he had done*. Sin will make you do what you *cannot undo*.

We have heard of the incident of the mother who murdered her babe and threw it into the hedge. She got saved, but would have spells of despondency; and when asked the trouble, she would reply, "I hear the cry of the babe in the hedge. Will I always hear the cry of the babe in the hedge?" Yes, even salvation will not always undo the results of sin.

Judas goes to the priests with the thirty pieces of silver. They look so different now. At first they were so shiny, and they jingled so musically, but it is different now. He casts them down. Remember the *two aspects of sin*—how it looked when being committed, and then later. "At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Better keep that in mind.

What did the priests say? Did they say, "Judas, we are sorry we helped to get you into this. The deal is all off. We will help you out"? No, never; but they did say, "What is that to us? See thou to that." [You look after this now. You have served our purpose. We have no further use for you. Be gone!] This is like a cruel world. Young man, young woman, this old world will readily give you a market for your wares, but after that, it will be through with you. How many have sold their virtue or manhood for a mess of pottage and then have been flung aside as a filthy rag! Some have wondered just what would have taken place if Judas had gone to Jesus and confessed to Him instead of these cruel priests, if he had gone to Him on the way to

Calvary, or even as He hung on the cross, when He saved the dying thief. Those are questions, but there is a difficulty just here. The question is, *Could he?* No man can come unless he is drawn by the Holy Spirit. Had Judas betrayed the innocent blood so willfully, so deliberately and *premeditatedly* that he had *crossed the dead line*? Had he sinned away his day of grace? Did he hear only the rumblings of outraged love and a guilty conscience till he could not come? We fear so.

VI. Now just a word as to the climax of this most horrible tragedy. Yes, *he went out*. He went his way. He is still doing that. He rejects *the Way* and he goes his way. *He departed*. Such a departure! Departed from love, fellowship, Christ, and heaven. "He went and hanged himself." Behold him. See that look of grimness and despair. He seems to be looking for something. Is he looking for a rope with which to suspend himself? Well, it is secured. See him as he fastens it to some limb or beam. There he hangs. Something takes place. Did the rope break or slip? Just two statements here—"He hung himself," and then, "Falling headlong." The whole verse reads: "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out" (Acts 1:18). Such a gruesome sight. Behold him if you can! Behold it! That mass of mangled humanity! But what is it? Who is he? Oh, that is Judas, one of the Twelve. That is the minister of Jesus who sinned and by transgression fell. Such a field he purchased with the blood-tainted money. They could not put it in the treasury. They purchased the field of "Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood."

"Then he went to *his own place*. Some, who hold the position of *unconditional eternal security*, that is, once saved always saved, declare that he went to heaven, that he was once saved and therefore could not be lost. Not so!

No, he went to *his own place*. The only place for which he was fitted. That is where we shall all go. Hold two birds in the hand, a live bird and a dead one. Relax your grasp, and both will go to their own place. The dead bird will fall to the ground, the live one flies to its native element of air. Look at Judas in hell. Hear him as he wails, "I was once so near, but now I am so far. I betrayed the innocent blood. I am guilty. I am lost, eternally lost. I am damned, eternally damned. I sold my future for the present. It is night here. It will be night forever. There is no hope."

God help us to be true at any cost, and not like Judas, sell the future for the present and be damned forever.

Six

HOLINESS, OR A BIBLE REVIVAL

We have an account of this most remarkable revival in the eighth chapter of The Acts. Doubtless a genuine Holy Ghost revival is the greatest blessing that ever came to a community. Probably a fake, sham revival is about the greatest curse. This revival was a real work of the Holy Spirit—little human manipulation. Just the faithful, uncompromising preaching of the Word of God on the human side, and God did the rest.

There were just *two definite things* that took place in this revival. First, the lost were genuinely saved, and then right away those who had been saved were sanctified wholly by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. No one is ever sanctified except by this method. All who have the Baptism with the Holy Ghost are sanctified, and *all* who are sanctified have this baptism. It is this baptism that sanctifies. The Bible does not teach that there is just *one* work of grace. It teaches *not three* works of grace, but *two* works of grace. There are two kinds of sin—*inherited and committed*. Justification frees from sins committed, and sanctification frees from sin inherited—two works of grace by which we are thus saved. "Be of sin the double cure, save from *wrath* (justification) and make me *pure* (sanctification)." Sanctification is an instantaneous work of divine grace. Holiness is the state of the heart after having been cleansed by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost.

I. *The revival in which they were saved.*

A. *The evangelist was Philip.* "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached." Philip was one of

the brethren who were chosen to look after some business matters in the church. The Grecians felt that their widows were being neglected. They chose seven men to look after this. They were to be full of the Holy Ghost. This is the Bible qualification for *any position* in the church. Sometimes we have decided that talent, position, and so forth might be sufficient, but we usually *suffer* for violating God's divine rule. But Philip made good in this position, and soon developed into a full-fledged evangelist. God will see to it that we have the place for which we are qualified.

B. Then, in the second place, we notice the meeting was held in *Samaria*. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria." Stephen had just been killed, and there was great persecution against the church at Jerusalem. Saul was making havoc of the church, imprisoning men and women. Some say that Paul was so wrought upon as he saw Stephen die that he never got over it till saved. But as far as the divine record goes, he simply "got a taste of blood" there, and he did all of his deadly work after that. He continued till struck down on the Damascus Road by the power of God, and would have *continued* this murderous persecution had God not thus miraculously intervened. But Philip preached at Samaria.

C. *Philip's theme was Christ*. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached *Christ*."

It is said that Mr. Spurgeon was under conviction and decided to visit various churches till someone would instruct him just how to be saved. He went to a large church one Sunday, and the minister announced his theme as "Astronomy." He did not go back, but went to another church the next Sunday, and the preacher announced his subject as "Geology." The next Sunday found the young man still under conviction at another church. The pastor had just gotten back from his vacation, and he arose and announced his topic as "The Pyramids of Egypt." Think of

it! "Astronomy," "Geology," "Pyramids." "Great subjects," Mr. Spurgeon said, "but not much help for a lost sinner." The following Sunday he started to another church, but the weather was so bad he never reached it, but turned into a little Primitive Methodist chapel. He said, "The weather was so fearful that the pastor was snowed up, snowed in, or snowed out." Anyway the pastor did not arrive; so a tall, slender exhorter got up and took his text "Look unto me and be ye saved." He said he could not branch out much on "firstly, secondly, and thirdly," but just stuck to his text and quoted it often. He said, "I sat on the front seat, and finally that Methodist exhorter pointed that long finger right at me and said, 'Young man, you look awfully miserable.' Well," he said, "I was, but not usually told so in such a personal way. Then," he said, "he looked right at me and cried, 'Young man, look, look, why don't you look to Jesus?'" Just there he was saved. But why? Because he preached astronomy, geology, pyramids? No! Because he preached *Christ*. Philip preached Christ.

D. Now, we will notice the reaction of the people to this preaching. "And the people with one accord gave heed." Thank God for people who will take heed. There is hope for them. Then we read, "for unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, *came out of many* that were possessed with them." Praise the Lord for a salvation that will get the *devil out* of folks. That is the need. Most anybody can stir up the devil, but it takes grace and God to get him out. Sometime back I saw an old colored drayman, whose horse seemed very angry and was kicking the front boards from the old wagon bed. I said to the old drayman, "What is the matter with that horse?" He replied, "De debil am in him!" I replied, "I did not know the devil got into horses." He looked at me rather sternly, and said, "He sho am in this one." Well, something was surely in him.

Then we read, "And there was great joy in that city." They had grounds for rejoicing. They had given heed, the unclean spirits had been cast out, and they were happy. God has a salvation that brings joy. They persuaded a young man to join the church, and someone asked him about his experience. He replied, "They tell me I got religion, but if I have it at all I have it *mighty light!*" But we can have a good case and can sing, "Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away." The man who wrote that song had done more than sign a card or join the church. He had met the Lord. Then we read, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, . . . they were *baptized.*" They are eligible *now*. The devil has been cast out, and they are happy and genuinely saved, so they are baptized.

Now, just a word of review to see if they are now saved, born-again, real Christians. Philip was the Spirit-filled *evangelist*, the meeting was held at *Samaria*, the people *gave heed*, the unclean spirits have *been cast out*, they have *great joy*, and now they have *been baptized*. Of course, any fair-minded person must admit that if anyone was ever saved, these are. Now you will recall that at the beginning we proposed to show just *two things*: First, that these folks were saved, and then just *after that* they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. We believe the first point has been proved, and we will now proceed to the second.

II. *Filled or baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God [heard of Philip's revival at Samaria], they sent unto them Peter and John" (v. 14). Sent Peter and John to whom? To these new converts at Samaria. But for what *purpose* were they sent? Not that they might become Christians, for they have just been gloriously saved, and they had not backslidden. Here is the answer, "Sent unto them Peter

and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for *them*, that *they* might receive the *Holy Ghost*" (v. 17). Prayed for these new converts, who just had been so blessedly saved, who had just been born of the Spirit, that they might be filled or baptized with the Spirit. When we are justified we are born of the Spirit, and when sanctified we are *baptized* with the Spirit. Birth must *precede baptism*. Regeneration is a *birth*, and sanctification is a *death*.

Then we read, "For as yet he [the Holy Spirit] was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." That is they had received Christian baptism as an outward testimony of an inward work of grace. Now the climax, "Then laid they their hands on them, and *they received* the Holy Ghost." Who received—was filled or baptized with—the Holy Ghost? These new converts at Samaria to whom *Philip had preached Christ*, out of whom the unclean spirits had just been cast, who had *great joy*, and who had just been baptized. This ends the two propositions made at the beginning—that they were first saved, and then immediately were filled or baptized with the Holy Ghost. And we believe the Bible teaches conclusively that they were sanctified wholly subsequent to regeneration, as a second divine work of grace.

A few concluding thoughts. Here we have God's plan, an order throughout this dispensation. This was in the grace dispensation, sometime after Pentecost. What was God's plan and will then is God's plan and will now. And this was not just for the apostles and the Early Church. On the Day of Pentecost, when Holy Ghost conviction was upon the people, and they came to Peter and the rest of the apostles, and said, "Men and brethren what must we do?" God was there. It was not just a cold, lifeless, formal service. That breeds unbelief and infidelity. Then Peter instructed them to get right with God, get their sins removed, become Christians, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Only those are eligible whose sins

have been removed, who are really saved. Then Peter said, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that *are afar off*, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:37-39). So it is for us all today.

And it is *not* just *optional*. In Acts 1:4, 5, we read: "And, being assembled [Christ] together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for *the promise* of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Of course, He was speaking to His apostles whom He had called and commissioned to preach His everlasting gospel. They obeyed this command, and on the Day of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled. Suddenly they were transformed from cowardly shrinking Christians to bold fearless witnesses. Look at Peter for just a moment. He had followed afar off, and had sat with the wrong crowd. He cringed before a Jewish maid and denied his Lord. "I do not even know the man." Finally, he cursed and swore, and backslid, and he had to go out and weep bitterly and get reclaimed; but now look at him as he *stands up* and *lifts up his voice* and *proclaims*, "You have crucified him, but God raised him from the dead, and *we are witnesses* of these things." What an instantaneous and miraculous transformation. What has taken place? Just what Jesus, in Acts 1:8, said would take place: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me."

The first dispensation rejected the divine Father; the second rejected the divine Son, and now this last dispensation is, largely, rejecting the divine Holy Ghost. The professed church is weak, sickly, and helpless. The Holy Ghost and His program have been largely discarded. All kinds of abominable *substitutes* have been adopted. Christendom, like Samson who went to sleep on Delilah's lap, has been largely shorn of her power. She is weak and like

others. In many places her eyes have been put out, and she is *bound, blind, and grinding* while a *world makes sport*. Christ must be grieved as we reject this one and only provision for a clean heart, internal victory, and power to do His service. The apostasy is on—looks like we might be in the shadows of the oncoming Great Tribulation; but we are still in the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and if we will still pay the price, we can still have the blessing and have Bible revivals.

SEVEN

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

There has been much speculative and unscriptural teaching concerning the return of Christ, but that is good reason for sincerely seeking the truth. It has been stated that about one-twenty-third of the New Testament refers to this truth. We are told "to preach the *Word*." We believe, after careful observation, that there is even more erroneous teaching relative to the blessed Bible doctrine of holiness, but we must not discard this great doctrine, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." To deny His return is to join the *scoffers of the last days*. (See II Peter 3:3-4.) Yes, this is a glorious Bible doctrine. Paul ever held it up as an incentive to holiness, service, and reward. "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" (I John 3:2). Paul declared there was a crown of righteousness laid up for all *who love his appearing*. Almost all the Book of Revelation refers to some aspect of the return of Jesus; and a special blessing, a lot of modern-day scoffers who sneer at this book to the contrary, is pronounced upon all who read, hear, and keep the things written in the Book. (See Revelation 1:3.)

I. *The Millennium*. The word "millennium" simply means a thousand years. Any thousand years is a millennium. But the Bible speaks of *the Millennium*—a special thousand years. In Leviticus 25:8-16, there is much about the Jewish sabbaths. "And thou shalt number seven *sabbaths of years* unto thee, . . . and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Then shalt thou cause the *trumpet of the jubilee* to sound . . . *throughout all your land*. And ye shall hallow the *fiftieth* year, and proclaim *liberty* throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a *jubilee* unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his *possession*" The Jews had six days and then the sabbath, then seven sabbaths of years, and then a sabbath of jubilee. Many Bible students believe that this, taken with the Bible as a whole, indicates that after around six thousand years there will be the Millennial Sabbath. That does not mean any setting of dates, for there are so many ways of computing time that this is about impossible and the whole date-setting business is *unscriptural* and *dangerous*, but it is a broad hint that this glad day will be ushered in after this manner. Anyway, we know there will be a special reign of Christ on the earth. In Revelation 20:6, we read: "Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: . . . and they shall reign with him a *thousand years*." Revelation 5:10 states where this reign will be—"And hath made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall *reign on the earth*."

There are two classes, and probably three now, relative to the Millennium. *First*, the postmillennialists, who believe the world will get better and better under the preaching of the gospel, and then Christ will come. *Second*, the premillennialists, who teach that the world as a whole *will wax worse* and worse till Christ comes; that the gospel was never promised to save the world, but was to be given as a witness; and that through the gospel the bride of Christ would be prepared and a people taken out, but there will be no reign of millennial righteousness till Jesus comes. (See Acts 15:13-17.) And now there has arisen a very large school, which is the offspring largely of postmillennialism, which denies that there will ever be any special millennial reign. Dr. J. A. Seiss says, "The prevailing modern doctrine that the world is *progressing* toward a golden age

of righteousness and peace is contradicted by all scriptures. It was not found for the first fifteen centuries of the church. Daniel Whitbey, who died in 1726, who mainly brought it into vogue, offered it only as a *hypothesis*, which he considered *new* in his day."

Some say that premillennialism retards and discourages the work of the Lord, but this is contradicted by all scripture and observation. Christ said, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come . . . but if that *evil servant* shall say in his heart, My Lord *delayeth* his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken," it will be sad for him. Then He speaks of the faithful and wise servant, who was looking for his Lord, who was given meat in due season, who would be blessed. Many of the higher critics now admit that the Bible, the apostles, and even Christ did positively teach premillennialism, but they boldly assert that they were all *mistaken*. Of course, this fits in with their blasphemous denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures and the deity of Christ. However, we appreciate their honesty in admitting that the premillennialists *have the Bible and Christ* on their side. Yes, the return of Christ is the Bible incentive to faithfulness in the work of the Lord. It is, "Occupy *till I come*" (Luke 19:13). Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper it is to remind us that He is to return. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come*" (I Cor. 11:26). Shame on those who sneer at and belittle His blessed return. Also, we can say that the most strenuous, tireless workers we have ever known, or about whom we have read, have been largely those who were looking for their Lord.

An article, written by a good man, lies on my desk just now, which says: "My personal opinion is that our world right now is being prepared providentially for a world-wide revival." Well, that will be the first one. All the revivals

that have ever been, have been more or less local. This good man preaches very little. He just *talks* of the great revivals of the past and waits for the *Lord to send another*. We believe we must be in the *world's Saturday night*, when hell is rampant; and that while there is no scriptural warrant for a world-wide revival, *we can and must still have revivals*. We believe that we must pray *more* and work *harder* than ever before; that efforts and methods that were sufficient in other days are insufficient now. The two scriptures—the one referring to the pouring out of the latter rain and the other which speaks of the pouring out of the Spirit in the last days—have been perverted. The one which speaks of the latter rain is *literal*. God has withheld the latter rain from Palestine because of Israel's sin; and when Christ returns during the Millennial reign, this will be restored. The other was fulfilled at Pentecost, and continues through this Holy Ghost dispensation, for Peter said, in referring to this very scripture, "*This is that which was spoken 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*" (Acts 2:16-17). The charge that they bring against the premillennialists is not true. There may be a few pessimistic fatalists to whom this might apply, but there are renegades in all spheres.

Personally, we know the Bible is clear that we can have revivals till Jesus comes, and then, a few good folks to the contrary, even right on through the Great Tribulation, under the very reign of the Antichrist; while it will be hard, some will be saved. This will be a time of judgment, but it will be mingled with mercy. There will be a rainbow around about the throne. Dr. Seiss says, "*This first resurrection takes place at different stages.*" "Every man in his own *order*: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:23-24). All that have ever died in Christ and all who are living and ready will be raptured when the call is made. The

Bible speaks of the great multitude which no man could number which came out of *the* Great Tribulation. (See Revelation 7:9-14.) They are probably the foolish virgins, with others, who were not ready when the Christians were taken. They were left to be martyred by the Antichrist. Then there are those who were slain under the fifth seal, who had been saved and whose souls were under the altar, waiting for those who should be saved and slain as they were. (See Revelation 6:9-11.) Then, as Dr. Seiss says, "Yet further on in Chapter 14, still another special company appears, quite distinct from any thus far named." So, while it is difficult today, we are in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and we can still win souls and have revivals. Pardon me, but the Lord is giving us a gracious revival right *now*. The tent was well filled last night, and a number found God. Personally, we feel our little day will soon be over or Jesus will come, and we feel so burdened for a lost world that we can scarcely rest. We must work while it is day, for the night of the Great Tribulation cometh, when no man can work. *Then* God will send the angels across the heavens, who cannot be touched by the monstrous beast, and they will "preach the *everlasting gospel* to them that dwell on the earth." I know some say there is only a proclamation of judgment here and no grace, but God says different. The angel warns against receiving the mark of the beast, for it is a sure mark of damnation; but if they will refuse, and fear and seek God, even then there is mercy. Thank God for angel preachers. God is doing His best for all. May we "*work till Jesus comes.*"

II. *Two occurrences which take place immediately before the Millennial reign.*

A. *The Great Tribulation.* We are not only premillennialists, but we are *pre-Tribulationists*. In Revelation 4:1, we read: "*After this* I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven." Also, John heard a voice, like a trum-

after the Rapture Rev 4
pet, saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." You notice this was in Revelation. 4. There are three *divine* divisions in the Book of Revelation. First division, chapter 1. Second division, chapters 2 and 3. Third division, chapters 4 through chapter 22. "Write the things which thou *hast seen*, and the things which *are*, and the things which shall be *hereafter*." "Things which thou *hast seen*"—he had just seen the glorified Christ walking among the candlesticks or church. "Write the things which are." That is pertaining to the seven churches which are, or were then, in existence. That is chapters 2 and 3, which is the *second division*. Then, "Write the things which shall be *hereafter*." That is after the church age, after the Rapture has taken place. John represents the body of raptured saints. At the end of chapter 3, the close of the church age, the church will hear a voice, as John did. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, . . . and with the trump of God: and the *dead in Christ shall rise first*" (I Thess. 4: 16). Then all the Book of Revelation from chapter *four* on will be fulfilled after the Rapture. That is what God says.

Immediately after the Rapture the Antichrist takes over. The world is being pretty well prepared for that now—so well *numbered* and *signed up* that they will readily receive the mark. This mark, or brand of hell, must be received in order to buy or sell or get a job. We are almost there *now*. We now have the Antichrist system, largely. Then, just after the Rapture, the terrible judgments of the Book of Revelation will be poured out. The red horse of war, the black horse of famine, and the pale horse of death will go forth. Rivers, seas, and fountains of water turned to blood, and the blood of dead men at that. They have largely rejected the blood of Christ, and He will give them blood to drink. Under the pale horse, one-fourth of all the inhabitants of the earth shall be *killed*. (See Revela-

tion 6:8). Then under the cavalry of hell, at one more mighty sweep of judgment, one-third of all who are then living will be slain. (See Revelation 9:13-18.) Think of it! Suppose there are 2,000,000,000 people in the world at the beginning of this Great Tribulation, as we now have. If so, under the pale horse, at this first blast, 500,000,000 would be wiped out, leaving 1,500,000,000. Then the next blow, it is said, one-third of all living, killed. One-third of the remaining 1,500,000,000, would take another toll of 500,000,000. Thus at two mighty sweeps of judgment 1,000,000,000 would be swept off the earth—half of the population. The recent World War II claimed a total of around fifty million persons killed or unaccounted for. But this is very small in comparison with just these two judgments.

The Great Tribulation *closes* with the Battle of Armageddon. At this time the same rider of the white horse, spoken of in Revelation 6:5, comes forth. Some say the rider of the white horse is the Antichrist, but this is impossible, for three reasons. He goes forth *from the throne* (Rev. 4:2-4). The Antichrist does not go from the throne but comes up out of the *bottomless pit*. Second reason, the white horse and his rider "goes forth *conquering* and to *conquer*." He ultimately wins. The Antichrist will not do that. Third reason, because this same white horse and rider are victors at Armageddon. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a *white horse*; and he that *sat on him* was called *Faithful and True*, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11). And then John said the armies of heaven followed Him, and out of *His mouth went* a sharp sword. It is a mouth sword. He simply speaks and the work is done. He does all the fighting at Armageddon. And then we read, "And the beast [the Antichrist] was taken, and with him the false prophet . . . these both were cast alive into the lake of fire" (Rev.

19:20). Thus Armageddon closes the cruel seven-year reign of this monstrous beast.

B. *The Devil cast into hell for a thousand years.* Space will permit only a glance here. Immediately following the Great Tribulation, closing with Armageddon, and the beast being disposed of, we read: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he *laid hold* on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:1-3).

Here the good angel comes down and lays hold of the devil and casts him into the pit for a thousand years. "Satan will be bound a thousand years; we'll have *no tempter then*, after Jesus shall come back to earth again." We can breathe better *now*. The beast and false prophet have gone into the lake of fire, and the devil into the pit of hell for a thousand years, only to be loosed a little season and then be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented forever and forever. (See Revelation 20:10.) *Then* Christ and all the redeemed come from the marriage supper to reign on earth for a thousand years.

III. We will now notice, and it will have to be briefly, a few occurrences during this Millennial reign.

A. *The physical earth greatly restored.* When Adam fell, God said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake . . . thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Gen. 3:17-18). Wonderful earth without thorns, thistles, noxious weeds, and poisonous atmosphere. But how different. Fruits and flowers grew spontaneously, but now they must

be cultivated. Man must earn his living by the sweat of his brow.

But when Christ returns, great strides will be made toward the restoration of the earth to its original blessedness. In Isaiah 35, we read: "The *wilderness* and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." God will then restore the early and latter rain. Some years ago, the W.P.A. seemed to undertake the earth's restoration. They set out millions of trees in the barren parts of the country, but they all *died!*

The climate will be greatly improved by the wonderful changes. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people" (Isa. 30:26). Then there is a similar statement in Isaiah 60:19-20, but this may have more direct reference to the *final state* of the earth after the Millennium. But wonderful steps will be taken toward restoration during the Millennium.

B. *A righteous government and rulership will be instituted.* In Proverbs 29:2, we read: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." That explains the fearful condition of sorrow today. Satan, fallen angels, and largely wicked men rule. But there is a better day coming. The present wicked rulership is not permanent. John, the revelator, saw it. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto *them . . . and they lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Wonderful to have redeemed and glorified saints as rulers of this world. Christ will be king. "And the Lord shall be king *over all the earth: in that day* shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). The laws of the Kingdom must be obeyed or else the offender will be *smitten immediately*. "With righteousness shall he judge the poor,

and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: . . . and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isa. 11:4). We have autocratic, plutocratic, and democratic governments, but then we shall have a theocratic rulership. That is a government of God.

All will not be saved, but all must obey or die on the spot. It will be a *complete change of world administration*. There will be a *dethronement and an enthronement*. The devil and his emissaries will be *dethroned*, and Christ and the redeemed will be *enthroned*. That is the only hope of permanent universal betterment and peace.

C. *Nature of ferocious animals changed*. When man fell, the earth was cursed and the nature of animals changed; but that will not be forever. "The wolf also shall *dwell with* the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling *together*; and a *little child* shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the *lion shall eat straw* like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall *not hurt* nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9). Many have seen the picture of the little child leading the calf, the bear, the wolf, the lamb, and the lion. Someone asked me recently, "Brother Tidwell, will this scene take place in *heaven*?" Certainly not. This is a Millennial scene. Beautiful. We will not mar it with comment.

D. *War ended*. Men are now planning and declaring that by their own wisdom and might they will usher in an era of universal permanent peace; but according to the inspired Word of God, these are only the ravings of probably well-meaning though blind men. "When they shall say, *Peace and safety*; then sudden destruction cometh up-

on them" (1 Thess. 5:3). There was never so much said about peace and safety as today, and there was probably never so little prospect of either. In the midst of this babel, some of these days, the saints will be raptured and destruction will break forth. But Jesus declared there would be wars and rumors of wars till He returns. But His coming will end it and nothing else will. "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more* (Isa. 2:4). *When?* When Christ returns.

E. *Life will be greatly prolonged.* It was not the original plan that man should die. "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*" (Rom. 5:12). Then, immediately after the fall, men lived for centuries—often almost a thousand years. (See Genesis 5.) Men have sinned, and life has been shortened; but when Christ comes it will be greatly lengthened. It is really a question whether the righteous will die at all during the Millennium. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the *child* shall die *a hundred years old*; but the *sinner* being a hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit" (Isa. 65:20-22). So different from now.

F. *The Temple rebuilt.* It seems reasonably clear that there have been or will be *five* temples. First, Solomon's Temple. Second, the Temple of the returned Jews, under Zerubbabel. Then, Herod's Temple—the very fine temple which existed in the days of Christ and which was forty-six years in construction (John 2:20). Then, the Antichrist's Temple, during the Great Tribulation. Daniel describes this. The Antichrist makes his covenant with the Jews and restores the temple worship. (See Daniel 9:27;

Daniel 11:36-38.) In Daniel 11:45, we read: "And he [the Antichrist] shall *plant the tabernacles* of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." The beast will be taken at Armageddon, and doubtless his temple will be destroyed.

Then, Christ's Millennial Temple. In Acts 15:14-17 we have an account of this Temple. "And after this *I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David*, which is fallen down; . . . and I will *set it up*." Not the work of man, by bringing in gradually the kingdom, but "I will *set it up*." We now have only the spiritual kingdom, but when the *Nobleman* returns, having received the kingdom, he will *set up* both the Temple and the Kingdom. Lots of postmillennial talk about "building the kingdom" is pitiful. Christ is the Smiting Stone which strikes the image on the feet and demolishes the whole. The stone becomes a great mountain, government, and fills the whole earth. (See Daniel 2.) "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven *set up* a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). This Millennial Temple will be set up doubtless by a *miraculous act*. This will be headquarters for Christ and the redeemed glorified saints on the earth during this Millennial reign. "*For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" Some will say that is too Jewish and material. Well, we will not worry since we have the whole Bible on our side! God said it, and we *know* it is so.

G. *Great world-wide revival*. This will be the first one, but it will get here. Zechariah 12:10, we read: "And I will pour upon the *house of David*, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of *grace* and of *supplications* [prayer]; and they shall *look upon me* whom *they have pierced*, and they shall mourn for him." Then, in Zechariah 13:6, we read: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with

which I was wounded in the house of my *friends*." There is reference here to the prophet, but the context shows there is a reference to *Christ*. God will pour upon the Jews the spirit of *grace* and supplication, and they will turn to the Lord. It will *then* dawn upon them that they have crucified their king. Blindness will then be taken away and the veil lifted. (See Romans 11.) The 144,000 Jews will be saved during the Great Tribulation. They, in their glorified bodies, with a host of other Jews and Gentiles, will make excellent missionaries during the Millennial reign. After the Temple is set up and Christ takes over and the work begins in earnest, "*The residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles*" (Acts 15: 17). Not all will be saved, but there will be a general, world-wide revival, the like of which the world has never known. You say, "That is putting it off too long." Well, the responsibility is on God. That is just *where* He puts it; but we must win every possible one *now*.

H. *Millennial camp meeting or feast of tabernacles*. In Leviticus 23:38-43, we have a description of the Jewish feast of tabernacles. They were to take the fruit of the land and cut down boughs of goodly trees and construct booths, and they were to dwell in these booths seven days, where they were to rejoice and praise the Lord. This seems to have been a symbol of what shall take place when Christ returns. In Zechariah 8:21-23, we read: "The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to *pray before the Lord*, and to seek the Lord of hosts! I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem. . . . In those days . . . ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: *for we have heard that God is with you.*" This will be a glorious *international affair*. Cities and nations coming to the camp meeting, or feast of tabernacles, at Jerusalem. Christ, Moses, Daniel,

Isaiah, Job, Abraham, Paul, Peter, James, John, and *all the rest attending*. We can't afford to miss that! Holiness will be popular, for it will be upon the posts and bells of the horses. (See Zechariah 14:20-21.) It will be a time of *Millennial reconstruction*. We now have the *spiritual highway of holiness*, but then, it seems clear there will be one grand, literal highway leading to Jerusalem, and it will be known as the way of holiness or the holiness highway. The unclean shall not pass over it, but only the redeemed shall walk therein. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (See Isaiah 35:8-10.) May this glad Millennial reign be hastened.

*Then the sin and sorrow, pain and death of this dark world
shall cease,
In a glorious reign with Jesus of a thousand years of peace;
All the earth is groaning, crying for that day of sweet
release,
For our Jesus to come back to earth again.*

EIGHT

A GOOD START AND A BAD END

Many make a good start and end badly. This is especially true of King Saul. In I Samuel 28:15, we read: "And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is *departed from me, and answereth me no more.*" We doubt that a more pathetic statement ever fell from the lips of mortal man. "*God is departed, and answereth me no more.* He once answered me, but not *now.*" Then those plaintive words, "*I am sore distressed.*" If a human being ever had grounds for distress, it was this man Saul. "God is gone and no longer hears my prayers."

We are to notice two things about Saul.

I. Commendable traits spoken of him in the Bible. All of this is found in I Samuel, hence I will simply refer to the chapter.

A. *He was a choice and goodly young man.* In chapter 9:1, 2, we read: "There was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, . . . and he had a son, whose name was *Saul, a choice young man*, and a *goodly*: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." What a commendation. Little can be added to this. Fine physique, clean morally, noble in character, a goodly person, esteemed by all. It is pitiful now to behold the degraded throng of smoking, drinking, cursing, diseased, and debauched young men, who are eking out a miserable existence, a menace on society, and dropping into hell, but it is refreshing to meet a young man like Saul.

B. *He was an industrious young man.* His father's donkeys had gone astray. He could call his fine son, Saul, and say to him, "Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses." If many a father now would call upon his son for such a mission there would be a lot of drastic refusal. The father would be informed that his son had an engagement at the movie, the dance, or at the poolroom, or that really such service was beneath his dignity. Not so with this goodly young man. He immediately responds and begins, earnestly, upon the search. He was *dependable* and *considerate*. After some days of careful searching and not being able to find the donkeys, we find that he becomes concerned about his father. He said to his servant, "Come, and let us return; lest my *father* leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us." Such thoughtfulness and affection is beautiful. We will expect great things from this young man, Saul.

C. *Anointed of God.* The fact is that the Lord was in all of this lost-donkey matter. He probably had them stray away, and did not permit the finding of them in order to bring Saul in contact with the man of God. Saul learned that there was a man of God in the city, and suggested that they go and see him and, perhaps, obtain the desired information. Generous Saul felt that they should take the man of God a present, which they did. God was working at the other end of the line also.

"Now the Lord had told Samuel *in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel*" (chap. 9:15, 16). Then Saul came to Samuel. First, Samuel tells him to forget about the asses, for they are already found. Then Samuel informed him that the desire of all Israel was upon him. Samuel gave him a fine meal. Then Samuel, Saul, and his servant took a walk, and Samuel asked Saul to have his servant pass on and leave them alone, but,

"Saul, you stand still while I shall show thee the word of God." (See chapter 9:22-27.) Then the climax, "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the *Lord* hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

D. *He was turned into another man.* Then Samuel, as Saul was about to depart, revealed some things that would take place right away. He told Saul that he would come to the plain of Tabor, and there he would meet *three* men. One of them was to have in charge *three* kids, another would have *three* loaves of bread, and the other would be carrying a bottle of wine. *Rather specific!* But God can be specific. After the salutation they were to give him *two* loaves of the bread, which he was to receive. Then he was to meet a company of prophets and a miraculous transformation was to take place, "And the *Spirit* of the *Lord* will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man" (chap. 10:6).

E. *Given another heart.* "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, *God gave him another heart*: and all those signs came to pass that day" (chap. 10:9). Then, in chapter 10:7, we read: ". . . Do as occasion serve thee, for *God is with thee.*" If we have ever seen a genuine case of old-fashioned salvation, this is it. Some say, in order to protect their pernicious theory of *unconditional, eternal security*, that all of this was just pertaining to *official position*. Shamefully wicked. No! He is given *another heart*. When God saves, He takes away the heart of stone that is cold, dead, and lifeless, and gives the heart of flesh, salvation. Sure! "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; and behold all things are become new." Then the Spirit comes and bears witness. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Praise the Lord for the transforming grace of God.

F. *Humility*. Then Samuel called all the people together in Mizpeh for the public coronation, and when they sought Saul he could not be found. If most of us had just a little of what Saul had a great deal of, we would have been easily *located*. We would already have had a *special* sent to the *Herald*. But not Saul. He was humble, and he hid himself. They had to have a special revelation from the Lord to locate him. "They enquired of the Lord . . . and the Lord answered, Behold he hath hidden himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence" (chap. 10:21-23). It is wonderful to remain humble when greatly blessed of the Lord. Sometime back we said to a fine little boy, "Son, you are surely a beautiful little boy." He hilariously replied, "Yes, sir, I *know* it!" Too many seem to have found it out, and it detracts so. Not so with Saul. He was not place-seeking, but he let the place seek him.

G. *Chosen of God*. The climax is reached in chapter 10:24: "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the *Lord hath chosen*, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king." None like him physically, mentally, spiritually—strong body, turned into another man, the Spirit bearing witness to this—and yet he was humble and devout. Wonderful traits of character in this young man, and great things God has done for him.

II. *His fall*. Sad words. Seems too bad the history could not have closed with what we have just seen. Also, this too often is true. From the human standpoint many seem to have lived *too long*. Many seem to outlive their usefulness, and really undo the good they have done, while still others go farther and go down in disgrace and shame. But, we can only leave all with God. We will now notice a few sad facts relative to this tragedy.

A. *Pressure*. Saul began his career with success. Finally a great host of the Philistines gathered themselves against Israel. "The Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand is on the sea shore." Then Saul and the men of Israel were distressed, and hid themselves in caves, thickets, rocks, and in high places and in pits. Samuel was to come, and Saul tarried seven days, and Samuel did not appear. Then Saul, pitifully sad, took matters into his own hand and did the work of the priest, which was out of harmony with God's plan. (See chapter 13:5-9.)

Immediately after this *presumptuous* sin, Samuel appeared, and Saul went out to salute him, but Samuel said, "*What hast thou done?*" God knows all. Saul answered that because the people were scattered and Samuel did not appear within the appointed time, "I forced myself and offered a burnt offering." We have some sympathy for Saul, but there is never any excuse for sin. There was *pressure*—terrible pressure. The host of enemies were near, the people were deserting, Samuel delays, and Saul "put on a program" out of divine order. Dangerous. We know this is an age of *pressure*. National pressure, social pressure, denominational pressure, home pressure, pressure everywhere. Pressure to be like *others*, pressure to compromise and avoid the ostracism and criticism, not to go too far but just enough to evade the *pressure*, just so we will not appear *peculiar*, just enough world conformity to hide our *identity*. Would like to mention some examples here, but leave this to the Holy Ghost and the individual. We know multitudes who could not stand the pressure, and have compromised, and now the last state is worse than the first. Miserable backsliders. But we like to think of some who stand true. We know some in school, at the shop, bank, and store who are standing the pressure, and if they will stand true, in a humble, Christlike way, they will usually

win respect. They will believe in them and their religion. We like to think of Daniel, the Hebrew children, and a host all down the ages who could stand it; but Saul, like multitudes, failed here.

B. *Deliberate rebellion, and rejection by God.* This is found in chapter 15:1-27. The command was definite. "Now go and smite Amalek, and *utterly destroy* all that they have, and spare them not" (v. 3). It was utter destruction of all. The reason for this complete destruction was their hostility to Israel when they came out of Egypt. "*I remember* that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt" (v. 2). "Amalek . . . fought with Israel . . . and the Lord said unto Moses, Write *this* for a memorial in a book . . . for *I will utterly* put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:8-14). "Write this for a memorial in a book." God keeps books and they are correct. "And the books were opened" (Rev. 20:12). Better be careful how we treat God's servants and people. *God remembered.*

The time for this destruction had arrived. Saul was commissioned to do this. "And Saul smote the Amalekites . . . and he took Agag the king . . . But *Saul and the people* spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good . . . but everything that was vile and refuse, *that* they destroyed utterly." Wicked compromise. The command was to destroy utterly, and they only destroyed that which they did not desire. Here is a lesson for modern compromisers. Immediately Samuel appeared, and Saul said to him, "*Blessed be* thou of the Lord: *I have performed the commandment* of the Lord." Listen to Saul as he hilariously testifies about like this: "Praise the Lord, I'm saved and sanctified and running up the shining way!"

But there was a difficulty. Just about that time an old sheep *bleated*, and an old ox *lowed*. Listen! Oh, if these

would just *keep quiet*. But that is the trouble, too often, when some preach or testify. Then Samuel said, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul said, "*The people* spared the best of the sheep and the oxen." Then Samuel rebuked him for his disobedience. Saul was defiant, and said, "*I have obeyed* the voice of the Lord, but the people did it." Then, "Samuel, you do not understand. We have brought these to sacrifice to the Lord thy God in Gilgal." Then Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in *obeying* the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and *stubbornness* is as iniquity and idolatry. Because *thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee* from being king" (chap. 15:15, 23). Sad word. Samuel was grieved, and cried unto the Lord all night. *Rejected*, but sin severs union between God and man. It has all along and still does. In describing the apostates in Hebrews 6, we read that ". . . they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame." Then the writer uses this searching figure of the rain coming upon the earth and it bringing forth herbs, food for man; but there was a miscarriage, and the result was *thorns and briers* which were *rejected*. Poor Saul made some confessions along and *seemed to repent* and be restored, but it seems clear he never really did. *Rejected*. "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul." We all feel like it.

C. *Becomes a spiritualist*. Samuel died, and Saul had put away them that had familiar spirits and wizards. Then the Philistines gathered themselves together against Israel, and Saul was afraid. His heart greatly trembled. But now Samuel is dead, and God no longer answers Saul. Sin will put us where our prayers cannot get through. "If I regard

iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." Then Saul disguised himself and went to the witch of Endor. The woman had some misgivings, and she stated to him that Saul had done away with those that had familiar spirits. He assured her that no harm would come. Then he requested that Samuel be brought. You say, "Did Samuel appear?" The Bible says he did. "And when the woman *saw Samuel*, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul." The woman was *surprised* herself. It seems clear that God, in some unexplained way, had Samuel to appear. God could do that, and there was a purpose. One final rebuke from Samuel. "Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed. . . . God is departed from me, and answereth me no more." Then Samuel said, "Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is *departed* from thee and become thine enemy?" Then Samuel informs him that he will die the next day, and would join him in the world of the dead. Some take this as an intimation that Saul was saved, but not necessarily. There were two *compartments* in the Hadean world in the earth. There was a great *gulf between*—impassable, but it was possible to converse across, as in the case of the rich man and Lazarus. Nevertheless, all in the world of the dead. Paradise, before the resurrection of Christ, was the good side of this, but that has now been transferred to the heavenly world. Jesus went to Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, but now Paul was caught up to the *third heaven* into Paradise.

Saul spends his last night on earth with the wizard of Endor. After this message from Samuel, we read: "Then Saul fell straightway all along the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel." Surely he had grounds for fears and evil forebodings.

D. *Death by suicide.* After this dreadful experience his very life had almost gone from Saul. After some persuasion Saul was induced to eat something. Finally, late that night, Saul rose up and went away. Then in the gray dawn of the morning, we see him as he is about to arrive back at the army in poor condition, weak, frightened, distressed. Last night in this world with a wizard. Poor preparation. Maybe the battle had begun as Saul arrives. The sound of the battle would chill his very soul. Here we read: "The Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled, . . . and fell down slain in Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and they slew Jonathan and, . . . Saul's sons." Poor Jonathan, David's friend. How tragic.

"*And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded.*" Poor, defenseless Saul. No refuge now. God is gone. "*Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee.*" Better not compromise. Better keep God. The battle will be sore without God. Then Saul requested his armorbearer to slay him, but he refused. "Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it." Poor suicide. When the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul dead in Mount Gilboa; and then they cut off his head, and stripped him of his armor, and sent the proclamation of the good news to all their idolatrous temples, and they hung his headless body to the wall of Bethshan. Was there ever a greater and more pathetic tragedy? Look at that bloody, headless body on the wall! But who is that? The doleful answer is, "That is Israel's first king, who was so goodly and graciously blessed of God. That is the man who *compromised* and broke with God, and from whom God *departed* and left him to fight his own battles. That is the man who made a *good start but had a bad end.*" God save us from compromising with sin, lest we share in the doom of Saul.

NINE

SIN CROUCHING AT THE DOOR

In Genesis 4:7, we read: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." In this chapter we have a history of many first things: First offerings, first death, first murder, and first murderer. Cain and Abel bring offerings, but why? The question is often asked, "Did Adam and Eve ever repent and get back to God?" The Bible is not clear here, however, in this verse we have a faint hope. Cain and Abel did bring offerings, and were doubtless so instructed by their parents. Just a faint hope that our foreparents might have returned. We hope they did.

In the first place, offerings are brought. "And the Lord had *respect* unto Abel and his offering." What is meant here? We think the answer is found in Hebrews 11:4. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he *obtained witness* that he was righteous, *God testifying of his gifts*"—doubtless, by sending the fire and consuming Abel's offering. Cain brings his offering—the fruit of cursed earth. There was no blood and no death. God does not have respect unto Cain nor his offering, and pays no attention to Cain or his service. God save us from "the way of Cain," from Cain religion and service. God gives it no heed—just leaves Cain's offering unnoticed and untouched—no attention, no fire. Cain was wroth, and his countenance fell. Then the Lord speaks, "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Thank the Lord for that. If we will come in God's way, in spite of earth and

hell, we will be accepted. But "if thou doest not well, sin lieth [croucheth at the door like a wild animal] at the door." Yes, at the door. Very close. Cain had not done well, and sin was lying, crouching at the very door. His sacrifice had been rejected and also himself. Sad to be rejected by God.

Now, in the next place, we will study this text a little more closely. The usual interpretation is about this, "Unto thee shall be his desire and thou shalt rule over him." The desire of the younger brother was to be unto Cain, and Cain was to rule over him. This is held by many, but there is another school of interpreters who believe there is more here than that. They think the reference here is to sin and not to Abel. They say that the original bears out this thought. Maclaren says, "The reference . . . to the sin which has just been spoken of involves, no doubt, a very bold figure, . . . and the words have therefore been supposed to refer to Abel, . . . who would be subordinate to Cain. But such a reference breaks the connection of the sentence, introduces a thought which is not a consequence of Cain's not doing well, . . . and compels us to travel an inconveniently long distance back in the context to find an antecedent to the 'his' and 'him' of our text." If we take sin as the subject, the whole is clear. So the thought advanced by many is that when one sins, that sin becomes a living thing, as it were, and desires the sinner, the one who commits it. He becomes wedded to that sin, and it to him, and there is that mutual desire between the sinner and the sin like the relation between husband and wife. The desire of the sin was to be to Cain, and he was to rule over it.

We may commit sin and think that is the last of it. No! It becomes a part of the very nature. Just as the miles register upon the car, so sin registers itself upon the soul. Men rarely ever commit sin just *one time*. If he drinks once, he is likely to drink again, and then on and on.

So it is with all sins, cursing, smoking, lying, social uncleanness. We say, "I have the habit of doing so and so." No, you do not have the habit. We wish you did. *The habit has you.* Yes, bound hard and fast. A slave, apart from God, hopelessly bound through eternity. And the union between the sin and the sinner seems to become more intimate with each sin. It must be *repeated* more often, and he must plunge deeper. O sin! Horrible, diabolical, fiendish monster!

Yes, it is *your* sin. "Be sure *your sin* will find you out." Not, primarily, that the sin be found out (that is true always sometime somewhere), but that *your sin* will find you out. We have heard the expression, "The sin was laid at his door." How fearfully true. But here we have a fearful picture. Every sin that you have ever committed, unless forgiven, lying, crouching like a wild beast, at your door. Bound to you and you to them. Oh, such a brood! Just look at them, if you can bear it: Wicked thoughts, words, motives, deeds, all tied there at your door. Tiger, lion, bear, wolf sins. Cruel, dangerous sins. Wildcat sins. Screaming, screeching sins. Unclean sins. Monkey, immodest sins. Proud peacock sins, strutting at your door. Horrible brood. No wonder, often, when one sees himself and this brood he is frightened, alarmed, and cries for mercy.

Sam Hadley, speaking of his being under conviction in the old saloon in New York, said, "I saw my sins like serpents of fire creeping on the wall of that old saloon. They were *mine*. I had committed them." And no wonder that often the sinner rejoices out hilariously when he comes to Jesus, repenting, and cries for mercy, and the great Emancipator breaks every fetter, suddenly, instantaneously, miraculously setting him free from this horrible brood. And he can sing:

*Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away."*

Praise the Lord! We can be delivered, and we can love and serve the Lord as the days go by. Yes, we have something different. We can have good deeds. Think of a flock of lambs, doves, and canaries at the door! Is that not wonderful?

Just a word here to show that the above picture of sin *crouching* at the door is not being overdrawn. God said, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Ephraim is *joined, glued, stuck* to his sins. And you will never know just how tightly you are joined, glued, and stuck to your idols until you seek deliverance. The young lady saw the "live wire" hanging down, and said, "I believe I will just touch it and see if I can get a slight shock." But the wire was heavily charged, and she got more than a "slight shock." Her hand gripped the wire, and she could not let go. There she stood, with the heavy volts surging through her body. She cried for help as she was being almost electrocuted. A man came and cut the wire and just barely saved her life. You say, "I will have a good time and sin a little and then quit." No, you will find yourself a slave. We know many now. There they are and cannot turn loose. Christ is the only hope.

On the surface of this text there is little hope. "Thou shalt rule over it." Think of seeking to rule over a brood of wild animals as mentioned above. Ruling over lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, wildcats, serpents—sins of this type. Impossible. Hopeless. But that is the law, and the law is the schoolmaster. It is the mirror that reveals these monsters, but thank God for the gospel, for grace. "What

the law could not do in that it was weak." Yes, too weak to deliver, but God sends His own Son. O Sins! *Committed* sins, monstrous, bloodthirsty beasts. O Sin, *inherited* sin, poisonous, treacherous. Who shall deliver from all this? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No more can you who are accustomed to do evil. But, is there hope? Yes! Full, free, complete, gracious. "Who shall deliver me?" I thank God *through Jesus Christ*. There is the first ray of hope in Genesis 3:15—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, but thou shalt bruise his heel." Yes, the serpent did bruise the heel, the body of Jesus, but Christ will ultimately bruise the head of the serpent. Christ will save from sin now, and one day He will come again, and the old serpent shall be bound for a thousand years and put in the bottomless pit. At the expiration of the thousand years he will be loosed for a little season and then cast into the lake of fire forever and forever. (See Revelation 20:1-10.) We should praise the Lord now and forever for this remedy for sin, for this Deliverer. Heaven is a holy place. It is quarantined against sin. John saw a multitude there who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Salvation from sin is the only thing that will make us feel comfortable in the presence of the redeemed, the holy angels, and a holy God.

The little girl heard the preacher preach about the glories of heaven. She said to her mother, "Let's go to-night." The mother replied, "Honey, we can't go now. We must wait till the Lord calls us." Then the little girl said, "Well, we can be ready and all packed up."

TEN

SOWING AND REAPING

In Galatians 6:7, we read: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Many things we know are true because they are in the Bible, but if we had no Bible we would know this verse is true. This matter of sowing and reaping is universally true. The devil is the arch-deceiver. Possibly deception is his most effective weapon for the damnation of souls. The first time we hear of him, in this world, he was deceiving. In Eden God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt *surely* die." Here they were deceived and believed the devil's lie. All down the ages he has been deceiving. He will be cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years and then loosed for a little season, and immediately he will go out to *deceive*. (See Revelation 20:1-3.) He will continue till cast into the lake of fire at the close of the Millennial reign, when loosed the little season. (See Revelation 20:10.) There are three ways by which we can be deceived. We can deceive *ourselves*, we can be deceived by *men*, and we can be deceived by the *devil*. Hence, the timely exhortation, "Be not deceived." Here we mention a few thoughts about sowing and reaping.

I. *All are sowing*—that is, all moral, accountable beings. A book might represent the life. When given this book, as far as *committed sins* are concerned, the pages are fair. Not a blot or stain on a single page. But, when we arrive at the years of accountability, we begin sowing. You say, "What is written on these fair pages?" The answer is clear. All motives, thoughts, words, deeds. Yes, God is a

discerner of the *thoughts* and *intents* of the heart. (See Hebrews 4:12.) Every motive, thought, word, and deed has gone down in that book, and is there right now, unless forgiven and cleansed by the blood.

II. *All are sowing all the time.* But not only are all sowing, but all are sowing practically *all the time*. All the conscious hours, thinking, speaking, acting. "Thoughts are things." Few realize the importance of the thought life. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). We must differentiate between evil thoughts and thoughts about evil. The devil can suggest evil thoughts, but they are *his* and not *ours*, and they do not become sin *until* we *accept, adopt, and enjoy* them. "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin." Few, doubtless, realize the deadly danger of wrong thoughts and words. "They are as wounds, and go down into the innermost part of the being." You can fight with words as well as machine guns, and often the words are more *deadly*. Then we think of all the dark deeds that have gone down in the book. The deed was committed and forgotten by the transgressor, but it went down in the book. Yes, sowing all the time.

III. *We become like what we sow.* We partake of the nature of that which we sow. Few commit sin just one time. If you curse, drink, lie, steal, or commit unmentionable sin one time, you are likely to again. Often we hear the expression, "I have the habit of doing so and so." No, you do not have the habit, *the habit has you*. The habit is on top, and it has you *down*. We wish you had the habit.

Recently a friend related the following experience to me. He said, "I had been converted and knew that Christians should not use cigarettes. I had quit and had not used one for some days. The battle was on, and as I walked along a little path, there lay a nice, clean cigarette. That was the most charming thing I had ever seen. I

tried to go *around* it, but I *could not*. I tried to step over it, but it was too *large*. I started to pick it up, but something said, 'No, no.' The battle was on and I was about to lose. Suddenly an impulse came, 'Jump on it, stamp it!' This I did, without further parleying, and as I did I said, 'Lord deliver me!' " He declared months later that deliverance came. Just as the miles register themselves upon your car, so your sinful habits register themselves upon your soul. You become like what you sow. Your sin will *crouch* at the door and spring upon you.

IV. *All must reap*. "Be not deceived." The devil will make you believe you can sow and not reap, but that is a delusion from hell.

The baby was constantly fretful. The doctor could not determine the cause. One day during an examination while the doctor was smoking (shame on him), and just accidentally blew the smoke in the face of the baby, the little fellow just smiled. He repeated it a few times, and the baby was *satisfied* and fell asleep. Then he knew the cause, as the parents were both smokers. It was a *marked baby*. Born with that damning, abnormal craving for tobacco.

Another baby, around two years old, died. The little parents were brokenhearted. They said, "Doctor, our baby is dead, and you have never really told us the cause." He hesitated, and they insisted that they had a right to know. "Well," he said, "just to tell you the truth, you have both smoked, you tell me, since you were very young, and babies rarely ever live to be more than *two years old* under conditions like this." Then they wailed piteously, "My God, we have murdered our baby." They thought they could sow and not reap, but they were deceived.

The slogan of the tobacco trusts is, "A cigarette in the mouth of every man and woman in America." Looks now like that will soon be realized. See the *lies* on the billboards—some strong young man or woman, doing some

stunt, because they smoke some *special* brand. So *smooth, mellow, and charming!* No, they are coffin nails. I am told that in Latin America they have Peter and Jesus and Judas pictured on the billboards, walking together, and Peter and Judas smoking some popular brand, and they are made to say, "We would never have *denied or betrayed Jesus*, if we had had this!" Horrible blasphemy! But everyone who *smokes a pack* is guilty of all of this, because he *helps to pay the bills*. God says, "Be not partaker of other men's sins." All smokers are guilty, and will so stand at the Judgment. Yes, all *must* reap. Sin kills, physically, mentally, spiritually, and damns in hell. We were recently called to see a young man who was dying. For days before his death he was not able to speak. He had committed unmentionable sin. Sin killed him. He sowed and he *had* to reap.

V. *We reap what we sow*. "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that shall he also reap.*" This is true in the physical realm. You do not sow wheat and reap oats, nor plant corn and reap potatoes.

It is said that there were two adjoining farms where the owners did not get along well. Johnson grass is practically indestructible. It has almost ruined some farms. One night a young man from the other farm took a sack of Johnson grass and scattered it over his neighbor's farm. But, later he fell in love with the daughter of the man on whose farm he had scattered the grass, and married her. The old gentleman, on whose farm the grass was sown, soon died after he had willed the farm to his daughter, whose husband had sown the grass. He fought Johnson grass as long as he lived.

This law of sowing and reaping is true everywhere. It is true of a world, a nation, a community, a home, a church, and an individual. That explains this horrible predicament in which the world and the nations find

themselves. We have sown to the wind, and we are reaping the whirlwind.

We have sown *legal liquor, legal dancing*, legal, licentious movies, and just about legal hell, and we are reaping a crop of juvenile criminals, as well as older, that are wrecking the nation and baffling all courts. We are sowing nudeness and suggestiveness till all modesty is gone; and stark, unblushing brazenness stalks the streets and public places till good, holy women are made to say, "Sometimes I am almost ashamed that I am a woman." But the reaping day will come. We shall reap what we sow. These prayerless, card-playing, drinking, dancing homes shall not escape.

This law holds in religious circles just the same. The revival was on. They were having the testimony meeting. A tramp who had entered arose, and said, "May I speak a word?" He was given permission. He said, "This is my home town. This is my first visit back in a long time. I came to this church when I was a boy. My Sunday-school class was just *over there*. There were five of us in the class. Our Sunday-school teacher invited us to her home and taught us to play cards. We became gamblers. Two of our number committed murder and were electrocuted. Two are 'lifers,' in the penitentiary for life. I am a fugitive from justice. I am wanted in many places." Then, just as he sat down, an elderly lady, elegantly dressed, arose, pulled her hair, and screamed, "My God, I am that Sunday-school teacher." God save us from worldly Sunday schools, teachers, and churches.

We saw in a daily paper recently an announcement which read: "Snake dance at the ————— tonight." I am told they have as many as three dances in the church, or *parish house*, which is just an addition to the regular "synagogue of Satan," each week. Yes, reap what we sow. Sow cards, reap gamblers. Sow dram drinking, reap drunk-

ards. Sow nakedness, and reap brazen immorality. Sow church socials and entertainments, and reap worldly church members to curse the promoters of such in hell.

VI. *We reap more than we sow.* This is true in both the physical and spiritual realm. Recently we were out in North Georgia, visiting Brother Lloyd, one of our faithful members. He took me out to his barn and very hilariously showed me a stalk of corn which contained seven fully developed ears. We had never seen anything like it. I said, "Brother Lloyd, you planted, of course, one grain to produce this stalk. How many grains do you suppose you reaped?" He replied, "Well, as you see, there are seven ears and almost a thousand grains on each ear." Think of it. Plant *one grain* and you reap *seven thousand grains!*

This is true in both a good and bad sense. Sing a good song, speak a good word, do a good deed, and it will increase and break on the shores of eternity with an increase of a thousandfold. Think of Paul, Wesley, and a host of others who "sowed to the Spirit," and who will reap a glorious harvest. But think of the increase in bad things. A wicked word or deed. Write a bad book. Oh, who can comprehend the fearful reapings! Yes, we reap more than we sow.

VII. *When and where reap?* Reap in *life*, reap in *death*, and reap through *eternity*.

A. Reap in life right *here and now*. We heard of a woman who left her baby at home and went to a dancing and drinking party. She was gone for about three hours. When she returned, the rats had killed the baby, and had eaten out its eyes. Yes, we sin and others must suffer now. A young man would occasionally faint. When asked the cause, he said, "I went to a dance and led a virtuous girl into sin and shame. She was dying shortly after and sent

for me. When I arrived, she looked at me and screamed and said, 'I am dying and I am damned, and you are to blame.' " He said, "Often I seem to see her bony finger in my face and hear her cries and curses, and *that is what makes me faint.*" Well, that was a sufficient cause. Reap now. Reap in your *own bodies*. Multitudes are dying by inches now because of bad sowing. Reap in offspring. Behold the blind, deformed, and diseased children because the parents did some bad sowing.

B. *Reap in death.* Oh, these Christless deathbeds! Too often, now, they are doped-off and are scarcely conscious. We have seen them by the hundreds. Pitiful. Have you heard that death rattle? Not so many have it. The most weird, unearthly sound! The breath becomes shorter, and the grim monster tightens his grip. One wicked young man, grasping for breath and choking to death, said, "Oh, if I could only get breath." Shame on the godless, vulgar, reveling, blaspheming, eternity-bound crowd now using their precious, God-given breath to joke and blaspheme. You will need it one day. Yes, reap in death! An awful harvest then.

C. *Reap through eternity.* Reap in heaven. Reap in hell. Think of the glorious heritage of the child of God.

*There I shall bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.*

Great! Think of taking a bath in a sea of *heavenly rest*. But, oh, the horribleness of the reaping of the lost and damned in hell.

Dr. H. C. Morrison is responsible for the main thought of the following illustration. Imagine that this building is an elevator. We push the button and soon find ourselves in the heavenly world. We behold the glorious,

holy beings as they pass by. One wonderful creature is about to pass, and we inquire, "Who are you? Are you from my world?" She responds, "Yes, I am from your world." "But, pray tell me who you are. Who were you back there?" But I suggest, "Wait a minute, I think I know who you are. You were Hannah, the mother of Samuel." "No," said she, "I am not Hannah." "Well, you are Mary, the mother of Jesus." "Oh, no," she shrinkingly says, "*never*." "Well, I give up. Who are you?" Then she joyfully proclaims, "I am Mary Magdalene. I had seven demons in me. [Some now have a smoking, dancing, drinking, nude, cursing, make-up, unclean demon in them.] But I met Jesus, and He *cleansed me* and made a place for me." "But, Mary, how long have you been here?" "Oh, almost two thousand years now." "But how long will you be here, Mary?" "Oh, from now on. I will reap in heaven forever."

But, sad to say, we press the button, leave this heavenly world, and start for the regions of the damned. Finally, we behold the horrible beings as they pass. We see one *doleful* creature, and we ask him, "Are you from my world?" He grimly responds, "Yes." "But who are you? Are you Cain or Saul or Judas?" "No certainly not." "Then who are you?" He sadly answers, "I was the rich young ruler. I saw Jesus, and I liked Him, but I would not pay the price. I was so *near* then, but I am so far *now*." "But, how long have you been here?" "About two thousand years," he replies. "But how long will you be here? Is there any hope?" Then he shakes his head and hoarsely answers, "Oh, don't *mock* me with the *thought* of *hope*. No, there is no hope in hell. I will be here forever and forever. I am damned, eternally damned."

Yes, you must reap in life, reap in death, reap through eternity. "Be careful, indeed, sow only good seed, *for you shall reap whatsoever you sow*."

ELEVEN

HOW HUMAN BEINGS CAN TREAT THE HOLY GHOST

There is much misunderstanding relative to the Holy Spirit. You sometimes hear the most unfortunate question concerning the Holy Spirit such as, "What is it?" How sad. This reveals gross ignorance. In speaking of your father you would never say, "What is it?" Well, that would not be so irreverent as to thus speak of the Holy Spirit. He is a person and a divine person at that. There is one God, but three divine personalities in the Godhead. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three divine personalities compose the Holy Trinity. "Three in one; one in three." All through the Bible, the Holy Spirit is recognized as a divine person. Christ, speaking of the Holy Spirit, said, "When *he* is come, he will reprove the world of sin" (John 16:8). He will convict the world. Conviction is a divine act of the Holy Spirit. Again, Christ said of the Holy Spirit. "When *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Then, in Acts 13:2-4, we read, "And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the *Holy Ghost* said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Here we see He speaks. The Holy Spirit convicts, calls, and guides.

It is declared that the sons of men shall be forgiven for all their blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme, "but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath *never forgiveness*, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:28, 31). But why more dangerous to blaspheme the Holy Ghost than the Father or Son? Well, the answer is the

Holy Spirit is the executive of the Godhead. Mr. Webster says, "An executive is an official personage charged with the administration of the government." It is *He* who convicts, draws, and warns. In justification, one is born of the Holy Spirit; when sanctified, one is baptized with the Holy Spirit. When He is so treated that He departs, the case is hopeless. There is no other one to administer the affairs of the Godhead, the government.

Some examples of how the Holy Ghost can be treated and their results are:

I. *He can be grieved.* To grieve is to cause anxiety, pain, regret, or sorrow. In Ephesians 4:30, we read: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit." This is Paul writing to the church at Ephesus—to Christians, if you please. Thus we see Christians can grieve the Holy Spirit. There are so many ways He can be grieved. Any disobedience grieves Him. It is He who convicted you of sin, and when you *return* to what He showed you to give up, He is grieved. It seems from the following verse that the Holy Spirit is especially grieved by all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking and all malice. (See Ephesians 4:31.) "We may anger a stranger but we grieve a friend." We seek to avoid grieving our earthly friends, then surely we should be very careful not to grieve this divine Friend.

Anything that we engage in that is questionable, any thought, look, word, lingering handshake, lingering look, undue familiarity between the sexes. The deepest and darkest sin can be committed by *looks*. Jesus said if we had a wrong look we had committed sin in the *heart*. (See Matthew 5:28.) Most searching. What will the Judgment reveal? Someone has said, "We should mind the *checks* of the Spirit."

Dr. Morrison tells how his grandfather guided him with his eye. He said his grandfather would look toward the

barn, and he would go and feed the stock; he would look toward the woodpile, and he would go and bring in wood; he would look toward the water bucket, and he would go to the spring and get water. If we would be thus obedient to the impressions of the Holy Spirit, how much we would be saved from. We must never forget that when the Holy Spirit sheds light upon our pathway, that is *permanent* light. Any failure to walk in this light grieves Him.

It is said that a company of travelers were planning to explore the Alps. One man insisted that he needed no guide, that he could make it by himself. He was warned of the danger of undertaking it without a guide, but he persisted. He left early in the morning before the party with the guide left. When the party had gotten about halfway up the mountain, the guide stopped and pointed to a small, dark-looking little object far off from the path in which they were walking, and said, "There is the man who refused a guide. He has lost his way, and he can never get out of the mountain the way he is going." The guide called loudly, but the man seemed not to hear, and he was never seen again.

II. *He can be quenched.* In I Thessalonians 5:19, we read: "Quench not the Spirit." To quench means to *put out*, to cause to *cease*. There is danger here, for the divine exhortation is to quench not the Spirit. There are four elements in nature: air, water, fire, and earth. Three active: air, water, and fire; one inactive, earth. The first three are symbols of the Holy Spirit; the earth never. He is always *active*.

There are many ways by which the Holy Spirit can be quenched:

A. *By neglect.* The only thing necessary to extinguish a fire is to just neglect it—fail to add fuel to it. Paul wrote Timothy and said, "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (II Tim. 1:6). Peter

said, "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (II Pet. 1:13). We must constantly add fuel to the fire which God had kindled in us, by prayer, testimony, service, every possible means of grace. We must seek, strive, fight, press, run, and never neglect.

B. *By pouring water on it.* So it is with the grace of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Just a little constant compromising with the world will soon extinguish the holy flame. And we must not forget that just as it was with the Christian that grieved the Holy Spirit, so it is with the Christian who quenches Him. Paul said to these Christians in the church at Thessalonica, "Quench not the Spirit."

C. *By smothering.* Putting earth on it. The Holy Spirit can be quenched by suppressing His promptings. He moves us to pray, testify, say "amen" *out loud*, praise the Lord, make some spiritual demonstration, but we quench Him. We know we must differentiate here between the impulses of the human and the devil, but there are also Holy Ghost movings. You say, "If I should give vent to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, I would attract attention, bring criticism upon myself, and injure the cause." Then we know better than God. Dangerous. To thus act means that His movings will soon cease, and He will be silent and leave us in darkness, coldness, deadness, and a spirit of opposition to those who yield to Him. This *active* Holy Spirit desires to fill us with holy activity that will bless the saints and bring conviction to a wicked world. May we not in any wise put out that holy fire God has kindled in the soul by quenching the Spirit.

III. *The Holy Spirit can be lied to.* How can this be done? We have an example in Acts 5:1-11. The Pentecostal fire was still burning. Revival tides were high. Many were selling their possessions, and the proceeds were laid

at the feet of the apostles for distribution. Ananias and Sapphira did likewise, but "they *kept back part of the price.*" Ananias came and turned the money over to the apostles, stating that they had brought the entire amount received for the land. But Peter discerned this, and said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3, 4). At this unexpected rebuke Ananias fell dead immediately and was taken out and buried. After about three hours, Sapphira, not knowing what had taken place, came in and made the same statements her husband had made. Peter asked her how it was that she and her husband had agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord. Just at that moment the young men came in who had buried her husband, and she like Ananias immediately died, and was taken out and buried beside her husband. They lied by claiming that they had given all to the Lord when they had not. There were some deliberate *reservations*. They were deceitful and hypocritical. They made false pretenses. If the Lord immediately slew everyone in every testimony service who makes claim of entire consecration and at the same time knows he is not telling the truth, it would be sad. Dangerous to lie to men, but fearful to lie to God, the Holy Ghost.

IV. *The Holy Ghost can be vexed.* To vex means to annoy, to cause to suffer grief, to disturb. Think of annoying, disturbing, or causing the Holy Spirit to suffer. But that is the word. In Isaiah 63:10, we read: "But they rebelled, and *vexed his holy spirit*: therefore he was turned to be their enemy." Then a similar statement in Psalms 78:40, 41: "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." They said they could not do what God had commanded them to do. He had said, "Go in and possess the land of

Canaan." They said there were too many difficulties, and they turned back and died in the wilderness. God commands that we be holy and take possession of the Canaan of perfect love, but many say it is impossible—too many difficulties. The result is spiritual death. Dreadful. The Holy Spirit was vexed, and was turned to be their enemy. They revolted against God. They disbelieved, murmured, and made them a *calf god* and worshiped it, and declared this was the God that had delivered them. They actually *appointed a captain to return into Egypt*. (See Nehemiah 9:17.) Thus we see that by disobedience, murmuring, and limiting, we can vex the Holy Spirit.

V. *He can be resisted.* To resist means to oppose, to strive against, to obstruct, to hinder, or to push back. Think of this blessed divine Person being opposed, obstructed, hindered, and pushed back, but that is just what is done. In Acts 7, we have an account of one of the most powerful, pungent Holy Ghost sermons ever delivered. It was preached by Stephen. He was full of faith and the Holy Ghost. He preached the truth in such a way that they were enraged—first at the *message* and then at the *messenger*. He was arrested and falsely accused, but finally he was given an opportunity to speak. He began his sermon by speaking of the Israelites going down into Egypt, of their miraculous deliverance through Moses. He spoke of Israel's rejection of God and their worshiping the golden calf, and how God gave them up. Then he made his message *personal*, and said, "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye . . . ye have been the betrayers and murderers of Christ.*" When they heard this, they were *cut to the heart*, and gnashed upon him with their teeth. They are not the last who have been so cut to the heart by the truth that they gnashed upon the messenger. Then they stoned him to death as he prayed, but he fell asleep as they did it. The main accusation

brought against them was that they resisted the Holy Ghost. He is spoken of as the Spirit of truth. When the truth is opposed the Holy Ghost is resisted. The Christian grieves and quenches the Holy Ghost, but the sinner *resists* Him. He obstructs Him and pushes Him back.

How often this is done and how fearfully dangerous. The Holy Ghost sheds light upon the pathway of every man that comes into the world. "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin" (John 16:8). Stephen said, "Ye do *always* resist the Holy Ghost." That is why men go to hell.

Rev. Rufus Clark relates the following sad experience: He said, "I was called to see a young man who was said to be sick and wished to see me. When I arrived and saw the young man, I said, 'You certainly do not look sick.' He replied, 'I am not sick in body but in soul.' When I asked the cause he said, 'During the recent revival I not only *resisted the Holy Ghost myself*, but I made sport of those who were seeking salvation, and I feel that I have committed the unpardonable sin and am lost forever.' I then spoke to him of the greatness of his sin, but I assured him that Christ died for sinners, and that if he would repent there was mercy for him. But every promise I gave him, he had but one answer, 'Yes, but there is no hope for me.' After praying with him I bade him adieu. Returning the next day I found he had spent a sleepless night, and while strong physically he was in great distress mentally. Again I gave him promises and sought to encourage him in every way, but he had but one thought in mind—that for him the harvest had passed. The third day I went to see him, and I found his mother sitting by him bathing his head in ice water, but his reason was dethroned, and in a few hours he passed into eternity." It is terrible to resist the Holy Ghost.

VI. *The Holy Ghost can be blasphemed. To blaspheme is to speak irreverently or impiously of God and*

sacred things. Solemn thought. Christ declared that all sins wherewith men should blaspheme could be forgiven except those who blasphemed the Holy Ghost. So to blaspheme Him is to speak irreverently and impiously of Him. We think the entire Holy Trinity is being blasphemed now. They speak irreverently and impiously of each of the members of the Godhead. We have traveled some bit these last months on trains. One shrinks from the horrible blasphemies which are constantly heard. Recently we were on the train one night while a fearful storm raged. It would make one shudder to hear the vile and blasphemous ravings as the lightning flashed and the thunders rolled.

It is related how a man who did not believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit came into a service where His personality was spoken of. This blasphemer would get down and look under the seats of the church and irreverently mock and say (speaking of the Holy Ghost), "*Where is it?*" and all such blasphemous remarks.

Rev. C. B. Cox, who was our co-worker at the Denver camp last year, related the following experience: He said a young man, quite a boy, was converted and was then baptized. His father was vile and wicked, and was very much opposed to the stand his son had taken. One day in the presence of others, after the boy had been baptized, this father, in a blasphemous manner, declared that he would baptize his son also. The boy and others begged him not to do it, but he insisted that he would. So he began. He said, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father," and all was quiet. Then, "I baptize thee in the name of the Son," and nothing unusual took place. Then the climax, "I baptize thee in the name of the Holy Ghost." Just as these words were spoken, this presumptuous blasphemer gave a shriek like a lost soul. He cried, "Did you feel that? Did you hear that?" When asked what he meant, he declared that a fearful shock, like death, passed

through him, and that he heard the most fearful sound he had ever heard. His reason was dethroned. Usually God does not send His judgments so quickly, but sometimes men go too far. God help us not to grieve, quench, lie to, vex, resist, or blaspheme the Holy Ghost, lest He become our enemy and depart forever.

*O sinner, the Saviour is calling for thee,
Long, long has He called thee in vain.
He called thee when joy lent its crown to thy days,
He called thee in sorrow and pain.*

*O sinner, the Spirit is striving with thee,
What if He should strive never more.
But leave thee alone in thy darkness to dwell,
In sight of the heavenly shore?*

*O sinner, God's patience may weary some day,
And leave thy sad soul in the blast,
By willful resistance you've drifted away,
Over the dead line at last.*

*Then turn while the Saviour is pleading,
And steer for the harbor light,
For how do you know but your soul may be drifting,
Over the dead line tonight?*

TWELVE

RECONCILIATION

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, . . . and hath committed to us the word [ministry] of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:19, 20).

Mr. Webster says, "To reconcile is to restore friendship, to harmonize, to bring to agreement, to adjust, to settle." That is just what takes place between God and man, and what is contained in this scripture. We are indebted to Paul (humanly speaking) for this beautiful word "reconciliation." He seems to love it, for he mentions it five times in this chapter.

Some teachers insist that this "reconciliation" is on the part of man and has no thought of God being reconciled to man. The Bible, they claim, never speaks of God being reconciled to man, but of man being reconciled to God. They claim that there was no alienation on the part of God, but only on the side of man. Yet we believe this is a mistake. Man's attitude toward God determines God's attitude toward man. God said to Jonah, "Yet forty days Nineveh *shall* be overthrown." But the people of Nineveh believed the preaching of Jonah and thoroughly repented; for the king, himself, abdicated his throne, and covered himself with sackcloth and ashes. He proclaimed a fast that neither man nor beast taste anything or drink any water. All were to be covered with sackcloth; and they were to *turn from their evil way*, and pray mightily to God. They said, "Who can tell but God will turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not." A lot of *individual*

and national praying is only solemn mockery now. God says, "I will not hear: your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:14, 15). But here we read: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10). So, as we shall see, God, through the death of His Son, *has been* reconciled to man, and it *now* remains for man to be reconciled to God.

I. *God and man originally were on good terms.* The best. We have only to glance at man's Edenic home before the fall. Man was the climax of God's creation relative to this world and possibly all other creatures. God contemplated man's needs, and when man came into existence, at the hand of God, God had provided for him a blessed habitation, where every need was bountifully supplied. Provisions were made for every physical, mental, and spiritual need—fruits, flowers, water, unbroken fellowship, with no family jars between Adam and Eve, and then climaxed with divine union, communion, and fellowship. They were perfectly holy and happy—happy because holy. Then imagine, if you can, those divine visits—the Lord God himself, coming to see them in the cool of the day, and walking with them among the trees of the garden. We wonder just how often He visited them? Was it every day and at a certain time each day? Anyway, it seems clear that God did, in some visible form, possibly in the form of an angel, appear. We can imagine Adam and Eve talking, and one saying, "It is about time for the Lord to come." Anyway, they were very happy, and possibly they looked and waited for His appearing, and then they *ran to meet Him*. And a glorious, happy meeting it was. Finally, the time came for the Lord to depart, and He bade them an affectionate adieu, and they waved Him farewell and said, "We will be eagerly waiting His return." This was God's *permanent* plan for His children. Too bad this holy arrangement did not continue. There would never have

been any tears, sorrow, pain, sickness, graves, death, or hell.

II. *Trouble came.* Just how long that blessed state continued we do not know, but it is clear it was only a brief period. One day the tempter came and suggested to Eve some vile and blasphemous insinuations against God. First, he questioned God by saying, "Hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Really God is withholding from you much that is good. He has said that in the day that ye eat of the forbidden fruit ye shall die, but God knows ye shall not die, but ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." Up to that time they were good and only knew good. Then Eve *saw, desired, and partook of the fruit.* God said they would surely die. Satan declared that this was false, and that they would not die but would derive great benefits. But here the tragedy of tragedies took place. They fell.

Then Eve gave also to her husband and he did eat. And their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together for a covering. Innocence had gone and guilt had come. Then they heard the voice of the Lord calling, and saying, "Where art thou?" But they hid themselves among the trees of the garden. When man sins he will always, unless he has grieved the Spirit away, hear this voice, "Where art thou?" Such a question. Physically they were among the trees of the garden, but where were they morally and spiritually? They had died spiritually and morally. They had lost their fellowship and also their *relationship*. Such a change. Formerly, doubtless, they ran to meet God, but now they run and seek to hide from God. Sin will do that.

A breach, a great gulf, and estrangement had come between God and themselves. They are now rebels, full of enmity toward God. They were impenitent and impudent. They put the blame on God. The song says, "The

guilty pair *bowed down* with care," but this is false sentiment. God had been offended, insulted, and outraged, and *justly so*. The law of their great Creator and Benefactor had been so quickly and ruthlessly set aside. God was grieved and was righteously indignant. "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalms 7:11). Often we read that the anger of the Lord was kindled, not only against the sin, but the *sinner*! Not only did Adam sin, but the race went down with him. "By one man sin entered the world" (Rom. 5:12). There sprang from this fallen, depraved pair a race of rebels. "They have all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable" (Rom. 3:12). They have rejected God and His way, and have turned every one to his own way. All are now aliens by *birth* and sinners by *choice*. Adam and Eve were driven from their beautiful home, and the flaming sword was placed there that they might not return.

III. *Fearful condition*. As a result of this fearful Edenic calamity a dire situation came. Behold them. Peace, rest, happiness, holiness, and God gone. They now know evil, which they had never known before, and felt it terribly. There is remorse and the sting of the guilty conscience. They were restless, homeless, and Godless. I imagine I can hear Adam saying, "Eve what has taken place? I feel like a different person. I feel unclean and wicked, blasphemous thoughts in my very soul that I never felt before." And Eve answers, "Yes, I feel the same way." Then Cain is born, and he slays his righteous brother. The first man that was born was a murderer; and the first man that died, died at the hand of a murderer. Possibly by this time, as they beheld the first corpse, they began to realize what they had done and the fearful consequences. But as usual, it was *too late*.

But this holy, sacred intimacy between God and the first pair was gone, and intimacy determines the seriousness of the broken fellowship and relationship. This had

been so blessed in Eden that they must have felt the loss keenly. Shall we dare say that God felt it? We will venture it. We believe that God missed that walk in the cool of the day, to see His holy children. Man was doomed unless something could be done. This estrangement and separation would be *eternal* unless some method of reconciliation could be found.

IV. *The way found and the actual reconciliation begun.* We notice that it was *begun by God and not by rebellious man*. "All things are of God God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Then we read, "We love him because he *first loved us*" (I John 4:19). God is always the active moving cause.

A. *God provides a mediator, ambassador.* He is to seek to bring about the necessary reconciliation. It is, indeed, a very delicate situation. Who can qualify for this task? Not all are qualified for an ambassador. An ambassador should be a man of ability and character, and one calculated to be acceptable to all concerned. But while much depends upon the character and personality of the ambassador, his dignity and importance is largely determined by the powers he represents. For example, an ambassador from Cuba might be more gifted and have a more striking personality than an ambassador from the United States of America, yet he would not be considered of such importance.

Here Christ is *the* ambassador, and He can certainly qualify in every way, both as to His holy character and the *powers He represents*. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." But while He is the principal and divine mediator and ambassador, under Him are human ambassadors. "Now then *we are ambassadors for Christ*." An ambassador should receive great consideration and respect from the country to whom he is sent. To disrespect and insult the ambassador is to disrespect and in-

sult the powers he represents. When we think how the sinless, harmless Lamb of God was treated, how He was mocked, insulted, struck, crowned with thorns, spit upon, scourged, and finally nailed to the cruel cross, we shudder at the thought of the burning, consuming wrath of God and the powers He came to represent. What an awful day when Christ-rejecters and murderers shall stand at the great white throne. Then, the servants are not above their Lord. True ambassadors have been treated somewhat like their Master often. "They were stoned and sawn asunder."

Just a word here relative to human ambassadors who are untrue. This is a fearful situation. Maybe not so many have done this, but some have been unfaithful and treacherous. Imagine an ambassador, from England to the United States, falling into disrepute and sin; not only bringing disgrace and shame upon himself, but also upon the nation he represents. Ministers in a special way, and all Christians in a sense, are ambassadors for Christ. How tragic when one is untrue, and crucifies the Son of God afresh and puts Him to an open shame, and brings disgrace upon the cause he represents. Fearful! Thank God for the one ambassador who ran the gauntlet of hell, and was obedient even unto death, and finished His work here, and today is at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and there continues His mediatorial work. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

B. *The ambassadors at work.* God was not overtaken and surprised. "Known unto God are his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). Someone has said, "When man fell he fell on a promise." Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). We mentioned God coming to visit Adam and Eve after the fall, and their seeking to avoid Him. Here the mediatorial search and work began. It is pathetic. As suggested it is not the condemned ingrate seeking the King for reconciliation, but the offended King seeking the rebels.

Abraham and the other patriarchs were faithful. Then the prophets came on the scene. Isaiah said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow" (Isa.1:18). Ezekiel said, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Jeremiah said, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" (Jer. 9:1). The patriarchs and prophets were all faithful. For centuries and millenniums servants were sent, but some were beaten, some were stoned, and some killed. Finally, the Son was sent, and they said, "This is the heir, come and let us kill him . . . and they slew him" (Matt. 21:35-39).

V. *A further glance at the truths of the text.* Here we have Christ, the principal ambassador, through the subordinate ambassadors, beseeching, entreating, begging the rebels to be reconciled. "We are ambassadors for Christ." In Christ's stead and, it would seem, on behalf of Christ. "As though God did beseech you by us." "God did beg you rebels to lay aside your stubbornness, ill will, bad feelings, and enmity, and be reconciled." Through the vicarious sufferings of Christ on the cross, God is reconciled, and now He pleads with you to be reconciled to Him. God is satisfied. The claims of the broken law have been met. "He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." This may refer to Christ himself, but it certainly includes the Father.

Such pleading. Such condescension. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. He longs for you to be reconciled. He has proved this by His ignominious death, and now He beseeches you to repent and be reconciled." The following illustration is faulty in this connection but it partially illustrates: There was estrangement between the father and son. The son declared he would never return home unless requested by the father.

The father insisted that he never would invite him. The mother was fatally ill. She greatly desired to see her son before death. The father stated that he would write him and ask him to return at the *request of his mother*. But she said, "You know he will never come unless *you* invite him." The father held out, but as his wife neared the end, he finally gave in and wrote his son to return. When he arrived, the father and son refused to speak. But the end came. Both were in the room of the dying wife and mother. Just before the final moment came, while the father was on one side of the bed and the son on the other, the mother took their hands and placed them in each other, and said, "Please, for my sake, be reconciled." This was too much, and hard hearts broke and stubborn wills melted, and across the body of the dying wife and mother they were reconciled. While this is faulty in some respects, in this connection, an outraged, insulted, and an offended God has been reconciled by the death of His Son, and now the ambassadors plead with the rebels to lay aside their enmity, and be reconciled to God. "Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:14-16).

VI. *Man's reactions to all that God has done.* It would require volumes to enumerate this. We would have to begin with the calling One in Eden and come on down through the centuries, including patriarchs and prophets, culminating in the cruel death of Christ and the coming and calling of the Holy Ghost, also the ministry of the apostles and ambassadors till now, with the mediatorial work of Christ at the right hand of the Father. It would certainly seem that poor, weak, ignorant, depraved, helpless, and condemned man would hasten to accept such terms of grace and mercy, and would gladly and graciously be reconciled. But is that the case? Indeed not. Just the opposite. We find man continuing in his willfulness and

defiance of God. Romans 1:29, 30 gives us a picture of fallen man: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, *haters of God*, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents." Then, in Proverbs 1:23-28, we read: "Turn you at my reproof: Behold I will pour out my spirit unto you *Because I have called, and ye have refused*; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." Then comes God's reaction because of this obstinacy, "I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Let us think of a few rebels, who have committed some awful crime, hiding in a cave. Some prominent government official, say the son of the king, becomes interested in them and decides to bear the penalty, and suffers in their stead. Then the king sends a mediator or an ambassador to them who relates what the son has done, and how he loves them; and he intreats them in behalf of what their benefactor has done to lay down their enmity and confess their wrong. He promises complete forgiveness and restoration. But suppose, instead of their penitence, they are defiant and scornful? Almost unbelievable. Surely the son would be greatly grieved and the fierce anger of the king would burn in righteous indignation toward them. But that is exactly the picture of this rebellious world. But even now God is merciful. The world, largely, has rejected Christ. The professed church has put Him on the outside. We have this picture in Revelation 3:20—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Here He is outside the professed church seeking admittance, but is refused. Then He turns to the individual and says, "If *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in." Non-professing world has re-

jected Him, and the professed church has put Him outside, but He turns to the individual, and says, "*If any man.*"

But, regardless of all that a Triune God has done, and all the pleadings of God's ambassadors in seeking man to be reconciled to God, the day of vengeance will come. In Revelation 6:15-17 we have a Great Tribulation scene, which is indicative of what shall be later, with an intensified degree. It reads as follows: "The kings of the earth, and the great men, . . . and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the *wrath of the Lamb*: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" It was not the black sun, the bloody moon, the falling stars, nor the rolling heavens, nor the moving mountains that produced such consternation. They did not pray to be hidden from these, but from the One that sat on the throne and the *wrath of the Lamb*. "Hide us from God." Poor, little, puny, rebellious man, who refuses to be reconciled to God, must one day meet and feel the just wrath of an insulted and angered God. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: *we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*"

THIRTEEN

THE LOOK THAT BROKE PETER'S HEART

In Luke 22:61-62, we read: "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

There is no more interesting human character in the Bible than Peter. He was so human, full of good intentions, impulsive, and full of blunders. He did not always, by any means, say or do the right thing, but he would say and do something. He was not always the best at watching and praying, but he was an expert at cutting off ears. Sometimes he hit the nail on the head, and sometimes he missed it, but he made an effort. Maybe one reason we appreciate Peter so much is that some of us are so much like him as far as mistakes are concerned. We find encouragement in him. If the Lord could take Simon Peter, with all of his impetuosity and crudeness, and make an apostle and saint out of him, maybe there is a little hope for us. Then Jesus knew *all* when He called him. Christ was never surprised at anything he did.

While reading through the Bible, some wondrous sights I see.

*I read of Peter, James, and John by the Sea of Galilee.
Jesus, when He called them, their work was rude enough.
They were precious diamonds He gathered from the rough.*

But now a few lessons from this unusual character, and especially this look of Christ that broke his heart.

I. *His self-confidence.* In Luke 22:31-35, we read: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, [He does not call him Peter the rock here, but just plain, vacillating Simon] behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: . . . and he [Peter] said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." Then Jesus told him that before the cock should crow that very day, that he would three times deny Him. Peter insisted that all men might forsake Him but he never would. He could, at least, count on him. Was Peter a hypocrite? Never. He was genuine and sincere. He meant every word of it. The trouble with Peter was his lack of knowledge. He did not know *himself*. He did not know that deadly, dangerous, internal, treacherous foe of *carnality*. He did not know the power of the *devil*, and the fiery darts that would be hurled at him. He did not know the power of *temptation*. He did not know those mighty fallen world influences that he would encounter in connection with the arrest and trial of Jesus. Circumstances often play a great part in the power of the temptation. Those bloodthirsty priests, those bewitching maids, and that howling mob would produce currents of temptation that would try the souls of men. Peter felt he was equal to the occasion, but he was sadly mistaken.

II. *Peter's denial and fall.*

A. *He fell after he was warned.* If ever a man was faithfully warned it was Peter. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you." Calls his name twice. Solemn warning. Emphasis. But God is ever faithful. We doubt that a soul has ever fallen without first having been warned in some manner. Adam was warned in Eden, and God has never failed. But not only did Satan desire Peter, but he desires each of us. He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But he is even more dangerous

when he comes as an *angel of light*, but God declares we are not ignorant of his devices.

B. *Steps to Peter's fall.*

1. *He slept in Gethsemane when he should have been praying.* "Peter, could you not watch with me one hour?" When a great battle is to be fought, there is previous, constant preparation. To rush out without this would be foolish and tragic. We are in a terrific battle. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, and against the *rulers* of the darkness of this world, the devil, fallen angels, and the hosts of hell. We need to be fortified with prayer and a victorious experience.

2. *He followed afar off.* "And Peter followed afar off" (Luke 22:54). This is very dangerous. This might be done for a short time, but not long. The one who follows afar off, unless he repents and returns, will soon not be following at all. Enoch walked *with* God. It can still be done. Enoch lived in a wicked age, and had a large family to care for, but he kept pace with God.

3. *He warmed himself at the wrong fire.* "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." Think of warming himself by the fire the enemies of Jesus had kindled. If we can warm ourselves and enjoy it at any fire the enemies of Jesus have made, we are on dangerous grounds. The devil and his crowd have many fires today, and the sad thing is that many professed Christians are warming themselves there.

4. *He stood and sat with the wrong crowd.* First, we read that he *stood*, and then later that he *sat*. But that is the way with sin. It is progressive. The ungodly *walks*, the sinner *stands*, and the scorner *sits*. Behold Peter, when

he first timidly approaches this crowd of Christ-haters, later becomes a little more comfortable among them and takes a *seat*. Can you comfortably consort with the world and Christ-rejecters? Then you should be sorely alarmed. If there is the desire for this kind of thing, you have already lost ground. God's people do not have a desire for the sinful pleasures of the world or for the worldly crowd. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

5. *He openly denied Christ.* "A certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man also was with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not." The maid merely spoke to the crowd, in the hearing of Peter, but then a little later another said, "Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow was also with him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest." It seems that this last one who accused him was Malchus, whose ear Peter had just cut off. Maybe Malchus said, "Didn't I see thee in the garden with Him? You almost split my head open, and you did cut off my ear."

6. *He cursed and swore.* "Then began he to curse and to swear" (Matt. 26:74). Desperately sad. Further progress in sin. From sleeping in Gethsemane, when he should have been praying, to cursing and swearing. The way to hell is downward. Sin blinds and deadens the spiritual sensibilities. Think of Peter who, a few hours before, was declaring his deathless allegiance to Christ, now identified with the avowed enemies of Christ, denying Him, lying, and now cursing and swearing. It is truly dangerous to embark on the toboggan slide to hell.

III. *His awakening.* What was it that brought Peter to himself? "And the second time the cock crew. And

Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." And when he thought on these things, he went out and wept bitterly. Then Luke, while all the evangelists speak of Peter's denial, is the only one who speaks of this *look*. Luke says, "And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter *remembered* the word of the Lord. . . . And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." This was the third denial. Sin was doing its deadly work. But God is gracious. He does not forsake His own willingly. God is doing His best to keep all out of hell. Just here a providence was thrown in the way of Peter which reminded him of his wicked denial. It was the crowing of a *rooster*. You may say it was a small thing, yes, but it did the work. Often insignificant affairs have turned great events. The barking of a dog, the crying of a child, a song, a gust of wind, or the setting sun. It is said that one mighty battle was turned by the cackling of a flock of geese. Here it was the rooster. The shrill cry of that old rooster caused him to remember. Just a few glances at this look:

A. *It was a pungent, convicting look.* It is difficult to determine just the place where Peter was when this took place. Was he back in the courtroom, while the prisoner at the bar was up near the judge? Was it when Jesus was being transferred from one place to another, and passed Peter, that He turned and looked upon him? All this may not be clear, but one thing is sure, and that is He *looked* upon Peter. Not a word, just a look. That was enough. I am sure Peter will forget many things, but not that look. It was a shaft of conviction that penetrated the soul of Peter.

B. *It was a disappointed look.* Jesus knew of Peter's denial; nevertheless, it grieved Him inexpressibly. I think

Peter saw in this all the following and more, "Peter, I saw and heard all you did. I saw you when you were ashamed of me, and followed afar off. I saw you as you *stood* with my murderous enemies and finally took a *seat* with them and seemed to be quite comfortable. I saw you as you enjoyed warming yourself at the enemies' fire. I heard you as you denied me, and said, 'I do not know the man.' I heard you as you cursed and swore to more emphatically prove your position. Peter, I saw and heard it all."

And Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Does He see us, His professed followers, as we thus act? Does He see the minister, when he is afraid to preach the truth, lest he lose his place? The minister that cares more for position than Jesus? A rather prominent minister said, "You preach the truth, but if I did that they would put me out." Well, I would still be in. Does He see the teacher, official, choir member, or any member of the church who is just a little ashamed of Jesus and this narrow way, and seeks to hide the identity and avoid the reproach by being sufficiently conformed to the world as to escape any criticism. Just enough worldly adornment, jewelry, make-up, and the paraphernalia of the world to save ourselves? Does He still see, and if so, how does it affect Him? Is He still "wounded in the house of his *friends*"? (See Zechariah 13:6.) Am I doing this?

C. *It was a painful look.* It caused Jesus great suffering. "Peter, you thought you were just taking care of yourself and avoiding trouble, but you were grieving me. Peter, Judas has betrayed me, and has gone; here I am without a friend, and you were one of the trusted three, and now your denial and cursing and swearing has greatly added to my sorrow." How does He feel now as He sees many going where He would not go, compromising with a world that crucified Christ. He sees and knows it all. Is it possible that any should thus act? Standing, sitting, warming, and denying the One who gave himself for us. He says that if

we are ashamed of Him here, He will be ashamed of us before the Father and the angels in heaven. We will need Him to stand for us when we meet God. How will we feel then? Such anguish, agony, and consternation. Yes, this shameful act of Peter caused Jesus great pain.

D. *It was a tender, sympathetic look.* Jesus is the gracious and long-suffering Christ. In Gethsemane, when the disciples forgot His sincere request to watch and pray, and went to sleep, He kindly rebuked them, but at the same time excused them. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." On the cross one of His dying utterances was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We think there was never a look so fraught with divine tenderness, pity, and pathos as when the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Would to God that we were more like Him. "Love suffers long, and is kind."

IV. *The effect of this look.* It is said of the prodigal, "And when he came to himself . . ." We think Peter was just about beside himself. Carnality from within and the tremendous pressure from without had about overwhelmed him. But that tender, compassionate, sympathetic, disappointed, painful look from Jesus simply melted him and broke his heart. So different with Judas. When he saw that Jesus was condemned and the enormity of his crime began to dawn upon him and the guilty conscience began to sting, he went out and hanged himself. There was this difference, as well as many others, in the sins of Judas and Peter. The crime of Judas was willful, deliberate, and premeditated. Peter, under the excitement and stress and strain of the ordeal, was *overtaken*.

There are two things Peter did. First, "*He went out.*" He *left* the crowd who were enemies to Christ. If you have gone with the wrong crowd and lost Jesus, the only thing to do is to do what Peter did. God says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." And if we get

blessed really good and leave the old crowd, they will certainly leave us alone. One man said he was worried about the old worldly associates, but after he got gloriously saved and sanctified, he never could locate the old crowd again. That look from Jesus caused that warm fire and comfortable seat and all to lose their attraction.

But not only did he go out, but *he wept bitterly*. I can imagine I see Peter out in some lonely place, on his knees, while penitential tears flowed freely, praying and confessing his fearful backsliding and terrible sin to God and asking forgiveness. And, beyond question, *he prayed through*. Oh, what a burden was lifted. I am sure that Peter grieved to his dying day for this crime, but he had the consciousness that God had forgiven and restored him. And surely Christ never held it against him. After the Resurrection, when He appeared to some of them, He said, "Go tell the good news to my disciples and *Peter*. Whatever you do, don't forget Peter. The devil may tempt him to doubt his apostleship, but not so, he is forgiven." Then we remember that just a little later, when Jesus prepared that meal of bread and fish for those hungry, discouraged disciples, He had a special word for Peter. *After* Jesus had fed them, He said, "Simon, son of Jonas [He is still poor, fickle Simon; it will take Pentecost to make a rock out of him], lovest thou me?" He did not say, "Do you fear, reverence, and honor me?" We should do that, but, "Do you *love* me?" That is first. Three times He said, "Do you love me?" He denied Him three times, and three times he must confess his love. He also said, "Do you love *me*?" He did not say, "Do you love my service and cause?" But, "Do you love me?" Christ wants us to love *Him*. He also said, "Do you love me more than these? More than these nets, these fish, these brethren? Am I supreme?" He will be supreme. Peter passionately affirmed his love to Christ, and called on Christ as a witness. "*Lord thou knowest that I love thee.*" Now Peter is fully restored

and recommissioned. Jesus then said, "Feed my lambs and sheep." Jesus will not *trust* the feeding of His flock to any who do not deathlessly love Him. Is that why we often have such poor success today? Are we cold and mechanical in dealing with souls because we have so little passionate love for Jesus?

The command soon was again reiterated to tarry in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, when they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and their hearts would be sanctified or cleansed, and they should be empowered for the work to which they were called. Peter, with the others, obeyed this command, and was suddenly and miraculously transformed into a fearless evangelist. He was still human and made some mistakes even after that. One time Paul had to "withstand him to the face because he was to be blamed." Not any sin, but just permitted some of his Jewish inclinations to get the better of him. (See Gal. 2:11-14.) But he was ever faithful, loyal, and true. The tradition is that when Peter was to be put to death by crucifixion, he requested that he be crucified with his head downward because he was unworthy to be crucified in the manner his Lord was. Praise the Lord for the wonderful look Peter received that day. And Jesus is still looking at His disciple. He needs friends today. Will we deny Him and crucify Him again or will we stand uncompromisingly true? Holiness does not give a perfect *character*, only a clean and *perfect heart*. The obtaining of a perfect character is a process. While saved and sanctified, some human weaknesses may be retained. Personality is not destroyed. Individuality is retained. No two blades of grass are alike. The stars are not alike. You are yourself, and there has never been and never will be another like you.

*I'll be a friend to Jesus
On me He can depend.
I'll be a friend to Jesus
Until my years shall end.*

FOURTEEN

THE LAST JUDGMENT

In the Book of Revelation 20:11-15 we have an account of this fearful transaction. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, *small and great, stand before God*; and the *books were opened*: and another book was opened, which is the *book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and *hell delivered up the dead which were in them*: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

We doubt that there is a more solemn and awful scripture in the Word of God. We often hear the expression, "*general judgment*." By this is usually meant that God will one day bring the saved and the unsaved together before the throne for judgment. The scripture that is used to prove this is the one found in Matthew 25, when Christ comes in all His glory and sets the sheep on the right and the goats on the left and then pronounces sentence upon them. But this refers to the *Judgments of the nations*, and the position they shall occupy, as such, during the Millennial kingdom, rather than to the "Great White Throne Judgment" described here. True, the latter part of this scripture in Matthew seems to rather embrace some individual judgments, but it does not teach the idea of any

general judgment as is suggested. But while there is to be no general judgment, there is to be a *last* or *final* judgment as is described in Revelation 20. It would be unreasonable to bring saints who had been dead and with Christ for centuries, such as Abraham, Moses, Daniel, and Paul before the judgment bar and *try* to sentence them. Here we notice a few thoughts on this solemn subject.

I. *What is the day of judgment?* A careful study of the Bible seems to reveal that, while there is to be final climax, the day of judgment is a period of about a thousand years. To be more exact, it will include the seven-year period of the Great Tribulation and the entire reign of Christ of 1,000 years. Through the Bible we have the expression, "The day of the Lord," "the day of God," "the Lord's day," etc. These all seem to have the same meaning. This expression is quite inclusive. The "day of the Lord" seems to begin when the saints are raptured and close with the coming down of the "new Jerusalem from God out of heaven." It will include the Rapture, the Great Tribulation with all its judgments, closing with the battle of Armageddon; where the Beast and the False Prophet are cast into the lake of fire; the binding of the devil and his being cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years; the glorious Millennial reign of Christ; the battle of Gog and Magog, where the devil who has been loosed for a little season is cast into the lake of fire; the Great White Throne Judgment, and purifying of the heavens and the earth, and the coming down of the new Jerusalem from God out of heaven. This is the *day of the Lord*, the *day of God*, or the *judgment day*. However, there will be a final *day* or *hour* when the climax is reached.

A further word here about the wicked. The Bible is clear that just as the saved, at death, go immediately to heaven, so when the wicked die they go *immediately* to hell. As to the Christian, it is "absent from the body and pres-

ent with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). Then, when Christ comes, He will bring those who have died in Christ *with Him* (I Thess. 4:14). We read that the "rich man also died, and was buried [that is his body was]; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:22, 23). He died; his body was buried, and his soul was in hell. So when the wicked dies, his spirit goes to hell, there to remain until the Great White Throne Judgment. Here the sea, or wherever the body was buried, will give up the bodies of the wicked, and death and *hell will* deliver up the dead, that is, the souls of the wicked, and this spirit and body will be reunited (just as the bodies and spirits of the righteous will be reunited when Jesus comes) and in their *damnation bodies* they will stand before the great white throne to be sentenced to the lake of fire. The righteous will probably be *spectators, but will not be* judged. Thus we see the day of the Lord, the day of God, or the day of judgment is that *inclusive* period of a little more than a thousand years, closing with that final day or hour when the wicked are sentenced to the lake of fire.

II. *The certainty of the day of judgment.* In Acts 17: 31, we read: "Because he [God] hath *appointed a day*, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." This, the greatest of all days, is appointed, fixed, settled in the mind of God. "God hath appointed a day." He knows just when it will take place. God has no surprises. But you say, "This day is contingent upon the actions of man. The acts of man will delay or hasten that day." Well, God knows and foresees all of this from the beginning.

There are two inescapable realities. One is death, if Jesus tarries, and the other is the judgment day. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). The busy man says, "I would like to be a Christian and serve the Lord, but I must make a

living. I must live." Well, in all the Book of God we have never read that we must live, but we do read that we *must die*. God said to Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Men are seeking to keep out of the dust, but it is all in vain. The grave will win. But if death were the end, it would not be so serious. The order is *after death the judgment*.

The wicked, dying man said, "When I am dead, bury me on the top of yonder high mountain, and maybe God will forget me there." No, He will not forget or overlook anyone. John said, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" (Rev. 20:12). Yes, God's omnipotent power will go forth and bring all the wicked, body and spirit, before the great white throne. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that *for all these things God will bring thee into judgment*" (Eccles. 11:9). Yes, the day of judgment is certain, and the wicked shall not escape.

III. *The Judge. Who is the Judge?* It will not be your mother, father, minister, or some human being. They would be incompetent because of their insufficient knowledge or because of their human weaknesses. Sometime back we were at the jail for a service, and at that time there was a young man there for murder. The facts are he had a fearful criminal record. He had shot and murdered several men. While we were there, the old mother of this criminal came in, weeping bitterly, and cried out, "Oh, this is my own precious, darling boy!" To her he was not a red-handed murderer, but just her lovely boy. She would not be a competent judge for him.

But we learn the omniscient Christ will be the judge. "He will judge the world in righteousness by *that man whom he hath ordained*." All shall see Christ at some time.

Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (See Phil. 2:10, 11.) All who die in Christ see Him *immediately*—"absent from the body and present with the Lord." All who are living and ready at His second coming shall be raptured, and they shall see Him. All who are alive in the world shall see Him when He comes with His people from the marriage supper to reign on the earth a thousand years. "Every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:7). Then, all the wicked, who have ever lived in the world from the days of Cain till the last wicked man shall live in the world, shall see Him at the Great White Throne Judgment.

But what kind of judge will He be? He will be an *omniscient Judge*. He saw it all. The song says, "There is an all-seeing eye watching you." There is an eye that never sleeps that is upon us. He is an *impartial Judge*. All shall fare alike there. There will be no distinction. All races and classes will receive the same treatment. There will be no bribing the judge or jury. Influence and money will not count. He is a *just Judge*. "He shall judge in righteousness." You say, "I have been mistreated here. They have never given me justice." Well, don't worry. You are on your way to a place where justice, absolute justice, will be given. It does not matter so much here. It will soon be over in this world anyway. You can count on this just, omniscient, and impartial Judge.

IV. *But for what is man to be judged?* Man is to be judged for all the sins of life—motives, thoughts, and deeds. Man will be judged for sins of *omission*. You say, "I know I should forsake sin, trust Christ, be a Christian, have family prayer, pay tithes, and serve the Lord, but I just do not." Well, the Good Book says, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). The flagman was sent out to flag and stop the approaching train. He heard the shrill whistle in the

darkness of the oncoming passenger train. He saw its headlights as the train came around the curve. He lifted his lantern to give the signal when, to his horror, he discovered his *light had just gone out*. In horror and dismay he stepped aside and permitted the fast train to pass him and to crash into the oncoming train. More than a hundred lives were lost because his light was out. Christ said, "Let your light so shine."

But man will also be judged for sins of *commission*. Not one will escape. Not only sins which were actually committed, but those, which he planned to commit but lacked opportunity. The man with hatred and murder in his heart arms himself and hides by the roadside in the darkness to slay his neighbor as he passes. But he is frightened away or the neighbor does not come, and the actual deed was not committed, but it was committed in *the heart*. He will stand at the judgment a foul murderer just as if the deed had been committed. God says whosoever *hateth* his brother is a murderer.

V. *Witnesses*. Will there be witnesses? Most assuredly. Not only will man be judged for his sins, but they will witness against him. "Be sure your sin will *find you out*." Not only will the sin be found out, but *sin will find the sinner out*. Usually in this life. There are many ways by which sin will be found out or will find the transgressor out in this life. By the offspring, diseased bodies, the law, and scores of ways. But if the sinner should escape in this life, one thing is certain, his sin will find him out, and will be found out, at the judgment day. "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing" (Eccles. 12:14). "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2). What a day of surprises and revelations. "The books were opened" (Rev. 20:12). All thoughts, motives, words, and deeds to be revealed. "All the deeds of darkest night

shall come out to greet the light when I stand before the judgment bar."

I shall never forget an occurrence that took place near Burns, Tennessee, when I was a boy. Two men were traveling together, and they stopped and camped near Burns. One of them, who seemed to have some bit of money, was murdered. His companion was arrested on suspicion. My father would take me to some criminal trial occasionally. He thought it would impress me as to the danger of wrong. I think he was wise, for I have never gotten over some things we heard and saw. He took me to this trial. I shall never forget this scene. I can still, in my imagination, see Judge Grigsby, who was a very large and stern man, as he sat on the judge's bench. Then I shall not forget Attorney General Carter, with his fiery eloquence, as he would prosecute the case. The trial was on. I shall not forget the defendant as he sat there with his downcast look. The man had been murdered by a huge stone which had been crushed into his head, possibly as he lay asleep. I remember a dramatic point in the trial, when General Carter went over and picked up this very stone, all blood-stained, which had been brought there. General Carter held this bloody stone up before the judge and the jury, and said, "Your honor, and gentlemen of the jury, this is the horrible instrument with which the life was crushed out of the man as he lay sleeping. And, gentlemen of the jury, here sits this murderous ingrate (pointing his finger at the defendant), who murdered his companion and benefactor while he slept." The stone, the gruesome instrument of murder, was brought into court as a witness against the man. The defendant confessed his guilt. I shall not forget the look of terror as this man beheld this stone. But this is insignificant in comparison with wicked men and women who shall stand before the great white throne in the light of eternity, in the presence of an as-

sembled universe, and have every sin they have ever committed to meet them and *witness against them*.

It is said that Moffat, the missionary, preached before an African chief, who listened with delight till he spoke of the *Resurrection*. When he mentioned that, the old chief was agitated, and he turned to the missionary, and said, "O missionary, I love you, but do not speak of the rising of the dead. They must not rise." "But why," said Moffat, "must I not speak of the *Resurrection*?" Then the old chief answered, "Oh, I have slain my thousands, and shall they rise and meet me in the judgment? How can I meet again all I have injured and destroyed?" But the recording angel is keeping a correct account, and the books shall be opened; and sins, long since committed and forgotten, will face the sinner as *terrifying and undeniable witnesses*.

VI. *The verdict*. Yes, there will be a verdict. It will be fearful. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire; prepared for the devil and his angels." All along God had said, "Come." God, through Noah, said, "Come." Isaiah said, "Come now, and let us reason together." Then Jesus took up the glorious invitation and said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then, in the last book of the Bible, and almost in the last verse, we read: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come . . . and whosoever will" let him come. But they have rejected these gracious invitations, and now God can justly say, "*Depart*." Fearful word. But not only is it "*depart*" but "*Depart from me*." Depart from Christ. Not only depart from Christ, but "*Depart ye cursed*." But not only to *depart*, and depart from *Christ*, and *cursed*, but they must go into everlasting fire. Yea, fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Then the fearful march must be taken up from the Great White Throne Judgment to the lake of fire. Men have been compelled to march to prison for life, to the

gallows, and to the electric chair, but this is the most doleful march. The lake of fire. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15). Bodies from the graves, spirits from hell to the judgment, then sentenced to the lake of fire. Look at this mighty throng. Christ-rejecters, the fearful, the unbelieving, but all skepticism gone now. There will be no infidels in hell. The dancers, revelers, the unclean, the blasphemers, the idolaters. And all are idolaters who do not give God the pre-eminence. Look at them. The drunkards, the gamblers, the movie fiends, the wicked, hilarious entertainers. But their vile songs and suggestive jokes are all gone now. Behold their grim countenances.

Fearful verdict. Here in Chattanooga we saw a man tried on a charge of first degree murder. The jury brought in the verdict. "Guilty of murder in the first degree." Judge McReynolds asked the defendant to stand while he pronounced the sentence. But before the sentence was pronounced, the judge said, "Will, do you have anything to say?" The man slowly shook his head negatively. Then the judge said something like this, "Will, you have been given a fair trial by an impartial jury of twelve men, and they have found you guilty of murder in the first degree; and I therefore now pronounce this sentence upon you. You shall be hanged in the courthouse yard on Friday—by the neck until dead, and may God have mercy upon your soul." When the verdict was pronounced the defendant bowed his head, without saying one word, and was led away to the prison to await the day of execution. Sad verdict, but not so awful as the one at the judgment.

VII. *No appeal.* Here a case may be dragged on for years and years, appealed from one court to another—from the lower to the higher courts—but not so there. That will be the highest tribunal of the universe. *There can be no appeal.* The penalty will be fixed, and the doom

will be sealed eternally. Hope gone forever. Sometime back we were at Scottsville, Texas. We went out to the little country cemetery, by the side of the elegant little church, where so many of the rich and well-to-do "Scotts" are buried. We had never seen, in any city cemetery, such imposing monuments. Such full and touching epitaphs we had never seen. But there was one that impressed us more than any. It was an image of an angel mounted on a very high and imposing piece of stone. The angel's wings and head were drooped, and on this suggestive monument, after giving the name, date of death, and some little bit of history, there was this sad epitaph: "If love had saved thee, thou needest not have died." The friends who were showing us through told us how in one of the wealthy Scott families there was a profligate young man. His parents loved him, prayed for him, and did all for him possible, but in spite of all that could be done he plunged on in sin and finally died. Hence this pitiful epitaph, "If love had saved thee, thou needest not have died."

This reminds us of that lost and hopeless throng in that lost world. God, the Father, gave His Son; Christ, the Son, willingly and voluntarily gave himself for them; the Holy Spirit tenderly wooed and warned. The minister preached; the people prayed; but in spite of all they plunged on in sin and now are doomed forever. But we think the epitaph might be written on the gates of the damned, on the corridors of every smutty wall of the lake of fire, and on all the fiery billows as they roll through dark and dismal regions of the damned: "*If love had saved thee, thou needest not have been here.*" Thank God, we are not in hell, and the door of mercy is still open. God says, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

FIFTEEN

THE MOST WONDERFUL CITY AND HOW TO REACH IT

We have an account of the first city in this world in Genesis 4:16, 17. Cain was its founder. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden . . . And he *builded a city*, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." But this was not the holy man who was translated. The withering curse of God had just fallen upon him for the murder of his righteous brother, Abel. Cain declared that his punishment was greater than he could bear, that he would be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth, and that all who saw him would seek to slay him. But he submits to the sentence, and then we read: "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." It seems that he forsook God and the family of Adam, and went out on the east of Eden, in the Land of Nod, and independently builded the city. God had said, "A fugitive and vagabond thou shalt be," but Cain, *defiantly*, undertakes this project, possibly to stifle his own guilty conscience and prove to God that he can get along all right *without Him*. But we would notice a few thoughts relative to the Heavenly City.

I. *It is a holy city.* In Revelation 21:2, we read: "And I John saw the *holy city*, new Jerusalem." There is no mistake about it. John saw it, and he saw it was a holy city. Thank God for *one* holy city. Certainly the city that godless, defiant Cain built was not holy. After Cain's rejection of God, he planned a permanent place of abode for himself and his posterity on this earth. Cain had no con-

cern in a heavenly city, and, therefore, sought to construct him one on earth. Too many like that now. We may rest assured that the inhabitants of this city were godless and wicked. We have such an account of what took place right away in this godless community: "And Lamech [the lineal descendant of Cain] said, . . . Hear my voice . . . for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt" (Gen. 4:23). Murder, sin, and vice filled this first city. That has been the history of about all cities since. But there is one holy city.

II. *The origin of this holy city.* Here the Bible is clear. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, *coming down from God out of heaven*" (Rev. 21:2). Thus we see its origin. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a *place* for you" (John 14:2). Beyond question this is it. Again in Revelation 21:10, we read: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem *descending out of heaven from God.*" Thus we learn that this marvelous city, described here in the Book of Revelation, is *not heaven* but comes down *out of heaven* from God. The insignificance or greatness of a thing is often determined by its source, origin. This being true, we know this is a marvelous city.

III. *A few glances at this city.*

A. *It is a walled city.* The great walls of Babylon and China pale into insignificance in comparison with this wall. "And had a wall *great and high*" (Rev. 21:12a). The greatness and highness of this wall is incomprehensible. Too sublime for the conception of mortal man. We will have to wait for the full revelation "when the mists have rolled away."

B. *It has gates.* "And it had a wall great and high, and had *twelve gates*, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes

of the children of Israel. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates" (Rev. 21:12, 13). We notice that there are twelve gates, three at every point of the compass. No matter what section we are from, there will be an entrance if we are prepared.

1. We then notice that each gate is *one solid pearl*. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl" (Rev. 21:21). Heavenly pearls. Strange many get so excited about a few little materials formed about a little, hard, calcareous substance, deposited in layers around some grain of sand, or nucleus, in the shell of some old oyster. It does not require much to excite some people. These twelve gates constructed of one solid pearl each are really exciting. I can not get interested in what they call "gems" down here.

2. Also we see the gates are *guarded*. "At the gates twelve angels" (Rev. 21:12). Then in Revelation 21:27, we read: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that *defileth*." It is quarantined against sin. It is a prepared place for a prepared people. We may get by loved ones, neighbors, church folks, and all, but never by these angels. Also we read that the gates are never closed. "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21:25). It is day all the time, hence the gates are always open.

C. *It is a large city*. New York and London, in comparison, could scarcely be classed as country villages. This city is 1500 miles every way. It is a cube. "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Rev. 21:16). We were in the Empire State Building recently, the greatest building in the world, over 100 stories, but this could hardly be classed as a cage for humming birds in comparison with this. "Here would be street over street, and stories over stories, up, up, to the height of 1500 miles, and

each street 1500 miles long. Thus the City is a solid cube of golden construction 1500 miles every way. The base of it would stretch from northern Maine to southern Florida, and from the shores of the Atlantic to Colorado." Plenty of room, and yet so many have gone, and are still going, it would be wise to *make reservation*. Someone said, "If I just get a back seat I will be satisfied." But there are so many of these "back-seaters," if they all got in, I fear the back seats would be pretty well taken, so you need an *abundant entrance now*.

The wall of the City is jasper, and the foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones. Abraham looked for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Well, here it is. The City itself is pure gold. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass" (Rev. 21:18). Also we read: "And the street of the city was *pure gold*, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. 21:21). I would not like to spoil all the good, sentimental but unscriptural songs that speak about the "gold-paved streets," but they are all wrong. The streets are not just *paved* with gold, but they are constructed of pure gold. God does not have to economize. Many are selling their souls for a little *earthly* gold now, while up there they use heavenly gold for street construction. Walk on it. Fifth Avenue and Broadway would hardly be "Tin-Can Alley." As we went through the Empire State Building, we thought, Would this not be wonderful if all the floors were transparent so you could just look right up or down and see *clear through*. Well, that will be the situation in this wonderful New Jerusalem. The Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof. It will not need any sun or moon or artificial lighting.

Then John saw a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God. Then in the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, he saw

the *tree of life*. We lost the beautiful rivers of Eden and also the tree of life, but they are restored. Earthly paradise was lost but heavenly paradise regained. Beautiful Canal Street in New Orleans, ten miles long, with its beautiful tropical flowers on every side, running from the Mississippi back to the beautiful lake, is wonderful, but oh, to behold this glorious view in Paradise. Think of having access to the water of life and the tree of life. If it could be possible to desire a little refreshing and rejuvenation, just drop around every few million of years and take a drink out of the river of life and pluck a little fruit from the tree of life, and take a *new start*. Now I doubt that this is necessary, but it would be "kinda" nice to do this anyway. Wonderful city.

D. *The location of this city*. John saw it coming down from God out of heaven, but does not there state where it rests. But in Revelation 21:24, we read: "And the *nations of them* which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." It is not stated that it ever touches the earth or rests upon it in any sense, but the clear implication is that it is *suspended* in the heavens, somewhere above the earth, for the light of it shines on the earth. "The nations of them which are *saved shall walk in the light of it*." We have talked of Christian nations, but it is only talk. But here it is a reality. The earth itself is not to be annihilated, but purified. I know Peter spoke of the day of the Lord coming, when the earth and the works therein should be *burned up*, but he went right on to say, "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a *new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (II Peter 3:10-13). Then, in Ecclesiastes 1:4, we read: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but *the earth abideth for ever*." Purified, restored, and added back to its original place of beauty to roll on forever. If

it were blotted it would look like the devil won, but Christ will be victorious. This is God's world.

E. *Some things which will not be there.* "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). "Behold, *I* make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Glorious. Tears wiped away never to return. Human hands are poor instruments for wiping tears away. They will return, but when God does it that is the last. No more sorrow. Sorrow of the heart is the cause of the tears. The cause will be removed. No more pain. This is a world of physical, mental, and spiritual suffering, but it will be over, there. Then, best of all, no more death. "Death robs us all here; but there none ever die." It will be a city without griefs or grave, burdens or sorrows. No hearse will be seen. "No funeral train in the skies." No poverty, want, or need there.

"There will be no poor folks in heaven." No sin allowed in that city. No devil will be there. "For *without* are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15). They are all *without*. Nothing that will hurt, harm, or annoy will be there. Job said, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest" (Job 3:17).

F. *Who and what will be there.* God will be there. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and *God himself shall be with them*, and be their God" (Rev. 21:3). Glorious. God was lost, through the fall, in paradise below through the first Adam, but now through the redemptive price purchased by the last Adam, God has come back to dwell with man.

The holy angels will be there. When God laid the cornerstone of the earth, "the morning stars sang together, and all the *sons of God shouted for joy*" (Job 38:7). The angels got blessed and praised God. Christ speaking of those who should be accounted worthy to reach that good land said, "Neither can they die any more, but are *equal to the angels*" (Luke 20:36). We see they are deathless. Man is to be associated with these.

The redeemed of all ages will be there. There will be Moses from Mount Nebo; Daniel from the den of lions; the Hebrew children from the furnace; saints and martyrs, great and small, known and unknown. Those who died the martyrs' death, and those who *lived the martyrs' life*, and the last will be more than the first. Multitudes who were poor, unknown, and unnoticed, but were devout and faithful, will come into their own. Doubtless many of these will have a much greater reward than some who were praised here. God sees and will reward every man according as his work shall be. *Position* will not count there. "Every man's works shall be manifest." Don't seek position and praise now. In Psalms 1:5, we read: "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor *sinner*s in the *congregation of the righteous*." Mighty, glorious, holy, redeemed, deathless *congregation*. Not a backslider or sinner. "The congregation of the *righteous*."

But how will this throng be occupied through eternity? Here is the answer, "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [this city]; and *his servants shall serve him*" (Rev. 22:3). Glad happy service suitable for all. Moses, the servant of the Lord, will still *serve*; David will be a far better musician there than here; Paul will, doubtless, have some itinerant service that will just suit him. "His servants shall serve him." Holiness, happiness, praise, and glad service will be the order through eternity, and, "The saints are all sanctified wholly, they live in sweet harmony there."

IV. *How to reach this city.* There is just *one way*. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Christ is *the Way*. Not one of the ways or the way show-er-*the Way*. He who would climb up any other way is a thief and robber. (See John 10:1.) Many thieves and robbers now. They talk about the *supreme sacrifice*. Blasphemy. Just one supreme sacrifice. We must keep in mind that death *does not change the moral nature*. Would I feel comfortable in my *present* spiritual condition? Holiness is the one prerequisite for entering this holy city. If there were a city in this world where we would never get sick, grow old, or die, we all would desire to go. We would give the last dollar, make any sacrifice, suffer any privation to reach it. But while there is no such city in the domain of this world, there is such a city. It is cheap at any cost. God help us not to miss it.

*On the happy golden shore,
Where the faithful part no more,
When the storms of life are o'er,
Meet me there.
Where the night dissolves away,
Into pure and perfect day,
I am going there to stay,
Meet me there.*

*Here our fondest hopes are vain,
Dearest links are rent in twain,
But in heaven no throb or pain,
Meet me there,
By the river sparkling bright,
In that city of delight,
Where our faith is lost in sight,
Meet me there.*

CONSECRATION

Someone has said, "Consecration is talked about a great deal, little understood, and less practiced." In II Chronicles, we have a description of the consecration or dedication of the Temple. In this we have some beautiful thoughts, which are quite similar to the consecration of which Paul speaks in Romans 12:1, where he entreats the Christians to consecrate themselves to the Lord. He said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living* sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." We wish to notice a few points of likeness between the dedication of the Temple and the Christian making the consecration.

I. In the first place, we notice that the Temple was God's house when it was dedicated. So it is when one is to consecrate. We have heard people say, "When I was saved I consecrated myself to God." No, this cannot be done at that time. To the unsaved God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way"—that is, give up sin. The sinner must repent, which means godly sorrow for sin, and then believe for salvation. It is the Christian, always, in God's Word, who is exhorted to consecrate. In John 14:15-17, we read: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the *world cannot receive*, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The birth of the Spirit is one thing, and the baptism with the Spirit is

another. The sinner repents and believes, and is born of the Spirit. The Christian consecrates and believes, and is baptized with the Spirit. Thus we learn we must be God's child, just as the Temple was God's house, in order to consecrate.

II. In the second place, we learn that the entire Temple was to be dedicated. Not part of it but the whole. So it is when the child of God dedicates himself to God. The consecration must be full—no reservations. If one should purchase a house, and the owner should say, "I will turn all the keys of the house over to you *except this one key*. This is the key to a small room. In this room there is a serpent, wolf, bear, and wildcat. I am going to give you complete possession of the house except this room. For certain reasons I wish to make this reservation." Would you move in under those conditions? Certainly not. You would say, "If I am to move in, I must have complete possession. No reservations." So it is when making the consecration. If God is to come in, there must be no reservations. Mrs. Havergal said:

*Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.
Take myself, and I will be,
Ever, only, all for Thee.*

The consecration must be full if God accepts the offering.

III. In the next place, we find that when the Temple was dedicated, Solomon prayed. Some people tell us that it is not necessary to pray, if we are the Lord's child, for any definite experience; for He will give us what He de-

sires us to have without this. In II Chronicles 6:13, 14, we read that Solomon made a scaffold of brass, and kneeled upon it, and spread forth his hands toward heaven, and prayed. Then we remember Jesus said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* him." Praise the Lord! Yes, just as there was definite prayer when the Temple was dedicated, so the Christian, who longs for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, in His sanctifying or cleansing power, must definitely pray.

IV. Then, in the last place, we find that when the consecration was made and the prayers offered, they *invited* God to come in. "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place" (II Chron. 6:41). So it is when the child of God is making the consecration. When the consecration is complete, not a single reservation, and earnest prayer has been offered, we must invite God to come in. You say, "But will He come?" Just as surely as conditions are met He will come. He is anxiously waiting to come. We must be willing for Him to come in His way, as far as outward manifestations are concerned. To some He may come like a cyclone or in mighty billows of fire. To others quietly, like the sunbeam or falling dew. Anyway, He will come. This very moment, if you have not done so already, if you will meet conditions, look up, and trust Him, He will come. A young woman, who had been to a service, seeking the blessing, was sitting at a table in a restaurant taking lunch, when she actually invited Him in. As she sat there with a joyous look, she said to her friend with whom she was taking lunch, "He has come!" Her friend, not understanding, replied, "What do you mean? Will you explain yourself." To which she joyously answered, "The Comforter has come." Yes, He will come, if we "consecrate our all, and upon the Saviour call, bless God, He is for us *all today*."

But just as there is a human and a divine side to justification or salvation, so there is a human and a divine side to entire sanctification. The sinner repents and believes, and God forgives, regenerates, and adopts him into His family. The Christian consecrates and believes, and God sanctifies. After the Temple had been dedicated, and God invited in, we notice the results.

In Chronicles 7:1, we read: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, *the fire came down from heaven*, and *consumed* the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord *filled the house*." Yes, God came as He always will. But here we notice the twofold work of His one coming. There was a consuming and a filling. Not two different experiences at two different times, but accomplishments at the one coming. The burnt offering and the sacrifices were *consumed*, and the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. Just so when the Comforter comes to the child of God. On the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples were baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit, the work accomplished was twofold. They were cleansed and filled. And this cleansing and filling took place simultaneously or at the same time. Some would have us believe that one must be saved, then sanctified or cleansed, and then later filled. This is not God's plan. The Bible does not teach three works of grace, but it does clearly unmistakably declare that the sinner must meet conditions and be saved, and then after having been saved he must consecrate his redeemed self to God and receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, consuming carnality, and at the same time filling with perfect love.

But not only did God come and cleanse and fill, but the Temple became the home or resting place of God. In II Chronicles 6:41, we read: "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy *resting place*." The Temple became God's place of abode. In John 14:23, Jesus said, "If a man love

me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our *abode with him*." That is, God the Father and God the Son in the person of the Holy Ghost will come and live in us. The sanctified soul becomes the home of God. Paul declared that we are to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. Blessed and wonderful. Just to think that, notwithstanding our pollution and vileness, God can so work in us, transforming and renewing, till we become the habitation of the triune God. Matchless and marvelous grace!

But not only will He do this, but in II Chronicles 6:20, we read: "That thine eyes may be upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldst put thy name there."

The Temple became a place of special interest to God. He said His eyes were upon this house day and night. Just so it is with God's consecrated and sanctified children. They are the apple of His eye. He declares, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself *strong* in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." God had His Nazarites in the Old Testament times. They were God's consecrated people. The vow of their God was upon them. They were God's peculiar people. They could not do many things other good people were permitted to do. Now, we do not have, in every sense, the Nazarites of olden times, but we do have God's Nazarenes. They have made the consecration. The vow of their God is upon them. They are different. No they cannot, neither do they so desire, to do some things other good people seem to do. Praise the Lord, we have something better. Yes, we have Someone. The Comforter has come. He abides. God's eye is upon us night and day, and we love Him and would not grieve Him.

Then, in II Chronicles 7:2, we read: "And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the

glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house." It was the glory of the Lord that *preserved* the Lord's house. The priests could not enter in. Glory is a wonderful preservative. Thank God! In Jude 1, we read: "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and *preserved* in Jesus Christ, and called." As long as we keep the blessing it will preserve us. The glory will do the work for us as individuals and as churches. There is no substitute for glory. We need none. As long as the individual is glory-preserved, there will be no room for egotism, ill will, self-seeking, or anything of the kind. As long as the church keeps the glory down, all problems are solved. Some may deny this, but we have God's Word on our side. It will solve the financial and attendance problems. On the Day of Pentecost, when the glory came, finances "came easy," and the "multitudes came together." It worked then and still works.

Then, finally, when the people saw how the glory came, they were greatly blessed, and worshiped God. In II Chronicles 7:3, we read: "And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." Indeed, the people were blessed. They were humble. They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground. They worshiped God. They saw God. This is the need today. "Change and decay all around I see; O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!"

*Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
But the scaffold sways the future,
And amid the dim unknown,
Standeth God amid the shadows
Keeping watch upon His own.*

Christ told us that as the age closed, and as we near the coming of the Lord, men's hearts would fail for fear—that there would be distress and perplexity on every hand. But He exhorted us to *look up*, because our redemption draweth nigh. May we consecrate all, invite God in, and walk in the light, and He will bless us and make us a blessing and keep us ready for the time when He shall call or come.

SEVENTEEN

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Of all the beautiful and instructive parables given by our Lord, not one surpasses this one. It is pre-eminently a Second Coming parable. Practically the entire twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is given to this truth. Then, all of the twenty-fifth chapter, down to this parable, is describing the wise and foolish virgins. Their readiness and non-readiness when the Bridegroom came; then the remainder of this chapter (vv. 31-46) graphically describes Christ's judgment of the nations, when He comes in all His glory and all the holy angels with Him and He sits upon the throne of His glory (the millennial throne in the millennial temple), and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall judge them concerning their treatment of His earthly people, the Jews.

The man traveling here is Christ. He is the grand Nobleman who goes into the far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. (See Luke 19:12.) We *now* have only the spiritual kingdom, the church; but when He returns He will *set up* the kingdom, the literal, millennial kingdom. Christ will be King (Zechariah 14:9), and His saints shall reign with Him. This will be a literal kingdom just as much as the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Grecian, the Roman, the English, or any other. The *far country* to which this man or Nobleman has gone is *heaven*. Heaven is a place, and it has a location. It must be the center of the universe. God's presence is everywhere. He is omnipresent, but He is somewhere in particular. God is a person. Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father on high, but He will return one day.

We would now notice a few lessons gathered from the heart-searching parable of the talents.

I. *What is the talent?* The talent represents money, *material possessions*. As to the amount of the talent, it was not always the same. There was the Hebrew talent, the Roman talent, and so forth. They varied in amount all the way from \$500 to \$2,000. But it would seem, taking the Bible as a whole, that the talent not only includes money and material possessions, but spiritual gifts—capacities—capacities for *being, doing, improving, and developing*. It is an inherent or imparted capability that may be used for the glory of God. Whatever it is, it is a gift from God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (I Cor. 4: 7). Thus we see that the talent represents *material possessions and soul capacities*.

II. *Called His own servants*. You notice they were *called*. There is such a thing as divine call and divine distribution. God called Moses, Abraham, the Twelve Apostles, and workers and ministers all down the ages. He still calls. His call is definite, clear, and unmistakable. The call is what holds the worker, minister, and missionary steady amid the vexing and perplexing problems. God will make His call clear, and better not to go till *then*. If so, the devil will have a fruitful field for discouragement.

But not only did He call, but they were *His own servants* to whom He delivered these goods, talents. Don't forget they were His own servants. We will need that later. They represent the Christian. Not just a hypocrite or professed Christian, but the genuine, the real. They were His own servants. They became His stewards. A steward is one to whom goods are entrusted. The goods are not his own, and he is to manage them for another—for the one who

has entrusted them to him. The Christian is God's steward. God entrusts to him His goods, His talents, to manage for Him. As to money or material possessions, we are to pay tithes of these. "The tithe is the Lord's." Then we are to be stewards of the nine remaining tenths. You say, "After I pay my tithe, am I not to do what I please with the remainder?" Yes, if you please to use it all for the *glory of God*. All this must be laid out for God's glory. We must give an account to God for this. But remember these were His own servants.

III. *All given talents*. At least one talent was given all. Certainly every Christian has at least one talent. And if only one, there is no room for discouragement. You say, "If I just had his talents I would do great things." But if we would not improve one talent, we would not improve more. Better use one talent well than two or five wickedly. Facts indicate that most of the work of the Lord is done by those with only one talent. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not man noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (I Cor. 1:26-27). Thus we see that all have one talent, and that is not to be despised. There will be no excuse when we meet the Lord. There is service for all, and all are qualified for something, and God will require this of us in the reckoning day.

IV. *The two who did well*. It is said they *went*. They did not stay or sit down. The Psalmist said, "He established his *goings*"—not his *sittings*. The promise is, "He that *goeth forth* and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126:6). We must sow if we are to reap. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap" (Eccles. 2:4). We must sow regardless of the wind, and reap regardless of the

clouds. They not only went, but they went and traded. The thought here is not that of trading, like that of trading horses, which is often unscrupulous, but that of high-class, legitimate business. Pursuing a steady course, industry. The Christian is a trader. The first and greatest deal he ever makes is when he forsakes the old life of sin, with all of its folly, and in turn receives Christ and salvation. In a testimony meeting one time, we heard a young man testifying, hilariously, and he haid, "I forsook all the sinful pleasures of the world, and obtained Christ, salvation, and a title to a home in heaven." As he sat down an old gentleman in the congregation arose, and shouted, "Well, young man, you certainly got the better of the deal!" He was correct. The Christian trades temporal for eternal values. These two, after receiving their talents, went out and did an excellent business. They both doubled the amount entrusted to them. They improved and increased their talents. Here it was money, material gifts, but it is not confined to that. God may have given the Christian the talent to preach, sing, do personal visitation, and bring the lost to the house of God and get them saved. "To go out into the highways and hedges." That is a wonderful talent. It may be a talent to visit and care for the sick, or to testify and say "*amen*" out loud in the service and boost the minister and the meeting. Whatever it is, the Lord expects it to be improved—developed. These both had more than one talent. That brings added responsibility. Where there is much given there is much required. But these two did well.

V. *The one who did poorly.* Was it because he had just one talent? We hardly think that was the primary cause, unless he was envious or jealous of those who had more. The real cause will be noticed a little later. Here we notice what he did. "He went and digged in the earth." Pitiful sight. Look at him. If he had spent the time improving his talent he did in digging and hiding it, matters

would have been different. But truly, "We are of the earth, earthy." We seem to be earth-bound and earth-tied. The material part of man was formed from the earth, and to dust man shall return, and it is most difficult, even though we are the servants of the Lord, to tear us from the earth. God said, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth." It seems next to impossible to get us to obey this injunction.

He hid his talent. No, not his talent. His Lord's talent. He did not waste it or spend it in riotous living. He was no profligate. He simply hid it. Did he conclude that if he returned the amount entrusted to him that that would be satisfactory to his Lord? There was no gain, but there was no loss. But here he was mistaken. Talents are not given to be hidden in the earth, but to be improved and increased.

VI. *The reckoning day.* Oh, what a day. "After a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them" (v. 19). It may seem long, but that day will come. To reckon means to count, to settle, to close up. Mr. Daniel Webster is quoted to have said, "The most solemn thought that ever came to me is my *personal accountability* to almighty God." Yes, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." There is a solemn verse in Ecclesiastes 8:11, which reads, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore is the heart of the sons of men fully set in them to do evil." If men knew that death, judgment, and hell would follow immediately the next time they swore, got drunk, or committed any sin, we wonder if they would not be a little more careful. But because judgment is not executed speedily does not mean that it will never take place. Let us glance at the reckoning day of these three men who received talents.

A. *The first two who did well.* "He that had received five talents came and brought other five talents [making

ten in all], saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." The one who had received the two had the same testimony. He had received two and had gained other two, making four in all. He came with the four. I think they came very hilariously to give their report. It seems I can see them as they appear, smiling, knowing that all was well. They, we see, received the same commendation. "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many. . . ." Then that incomprehensible statement, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Enter into the heavenly world and share the joy of Jesus. Think of the joys of heaven—peace, plenty, pleasures for evermore at God's right hand, harmony, and fellowship.

*There I shall bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.*

But to hear those words from the Christ who saved us will be reward beyond compare. "Well done, good and faithful servant." But will He say this if it is not true? Never, no never. God cannot lie. But blessed commendation, and from Christ. Let the world deride and scoff now, if we can hear those blessed words then.

*How happy are the saints above,
Who once went sorrowing here!
But now they taste unmingled love,
And joy without a tear.*

Thus we see the one who received the two and the one who received the five had the same words of commenda-

tion, and the third who received one talent would have heard the same had he done well.

B. *Reckoning with the one who did poorly.* Yes, all servants shall be reckoned with. There is no escape. We notice one out of three did badly. Is that the ratio? We doubt if that is the meaning here. There were ten cleansed, but only one out of the ten returned to give thanks. We have already seen that this third one did poorly, badly, and wickedly, but now we notice more particulars. Not only did he dig and hide his talent, but he accused his lord. Yes, he came. He had to. Sad appearing it was. "He which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know thee that thou art an *hard man* . . . and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."

"'Thou art an hard man.' You required too much of me. You did not give me permission to spend Sunday in visiting my relatives, when You knew I was tired and needed a little recreation. You demanded that I forsake not the assembling of myself at Your house for worship. You demanded that I go to prayer meeting right in the middle of the week, when You knew I had worked so hard at the factory, store, or office. You demanded that I go to divine worship on Sunday and get *there on time*. You knew I was so used up on Saturday night from the strenuous week of toil, and then by the time I read the evening paper and got my bath it was midnight or after, and I needed the rest Sunday morning so as to be fresh for my work on Monday. Lord, You were unreasonable and hard, and I knew it. As I thought of all of this I was afraid. I was afraid I would lose what I had. I was afraid of myself, and I was afraid of the people. I was afraid to teach or sing or go out and do personal work. I was afraid to be free in the services. You expected me to be just as regular and on time, rain or shine, at the services

on Sunday as I am at my work through the week. You knew I had to make a living, and You should not make such demands, and You are simply a hard master. I was afraid to say 'amen.' I was afraid of the people. I was afraid that they would think me forward and just putting on. I was afraid to obey the promptings of the Spirit. Yes, I was afraid of myself, the people, and, above all, I was afraid of You."

We wonder just how many such there are today? And this would not be confined to the one-talented person. The one with more could do the same. That will make it all the worse if possible. Afraid to mind God. Compromising and hiding the talents. "I know I should, but I am so fearful I just feel that I can't." But God says, "He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

1. *His condemnation.* "Thou wicked and slothful servant." "*Unprofitable.*" His own servant and yet crooked, lazy, and no account. Contrast between him and the others. That was, "Thou good and faithful servant." Here we notice he lost what he had. "Take the talent from him, and give to him that hath ten." Suppose a man has two farms, and he rents them out to two men. He is to receive part of the crop for his compensation. At the harvest-time it is found that one has been industrious and produced a wonderful crop. The other has been slothful and produced nothing. What would the owner do? Of course, he would take from the lazy farmer and put into the hands of the industrious.

2. Then we have *his doom pronounced.* "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Fearful doom. He was his own servant. Not a mere professor or hypocrite. Yet he is damned in hell. But why? Not for what he did, but for what he did not do. He was fearful and had a wrong

conception of his Lord. He said He was a hard master. He was slothful and unprofitable. Some say that if you are unfaithful you will lose *fellowship* and *reward* but never your *relationship*, but not so here. That is a delusion of Satan which he began in Eden and has used effectively ever since. "Cast him into outer darkness"—into hell. He ceases to bear the relationship of a servant. *Damned, because of unfaithfulness*. Has God given us talents? One or more? Better use them. Better not shrink nor be slothful. *The reckoning day is coming*. If we have done well the Master will say so. If not, His withering, blighting curse of condemnation soon will fall on our defenseless heads.