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*Holiness Writers*

# **COALS FROM THE ALTAR**

By

*Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

**Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis**

Author of

Solitary Places Made Glad

Perfect Happiness

The Shining Way

Modern Miracles

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." -- Isaiah vi, 6, 7

Office of God's Revivalist  
Mount of Blessings  
Cincinnati, Ohio

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## **PREFACE**

God has laid it on me to write; and I am very glad of it.

I expect to preach through my books long after I have gone to heaven. My pen, as well as my tongue, is Wholly consecrated to God. I write for His glory only.

I send this book forth with the earnest prayer that it may lead many souls to Christ and heaven.

**H. T. Davis**

Lincoln, Nebraska,

April 10, 1902

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## CONTENTS

Preface

1

Joy In Heaven When Sinners Repent

2

The Value Of The Soul

3

What Shall The Harvest Be?

4

Time To Seek God

5

God's Infinite Love

6

The Pulpit And The Pew

7

The Out-And-Out Christian

8

Prevailing Prayer

9

Christian Certainty

10

Fruits Of The Holy Spirit

11

The Ideal Christian

12

Paul's Great Prayer

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## Chapter 1

### JOY IN HEAVEN WHEN SINNERS REPENT

"Likewise, I say Unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." -- Luke xv, 10.

Years ago, in a densely-timbered part of Ohio, a little child wandered away from her cabin home, and was lost. The parents, brothers, and sisters went out in search for the lost child. Hours passed, but the search proved vain. Then the neighbors were notified. They came from far and near. All night long they wandered through the forest, and all the next day, and all the next night. On the evening of the third day the child was found, faint, famished, and almost dead with weariness and terror. With songs and shouts they bore back in their arms the little girl, swift runners going before, and crying, "Found, found!" The entire neighborhood was stirred by the glad tidings, and broke forth into thanksgiving. All participated in the happiness of the parents, and, although there were a hundred children in the settlement, more joy was felt that night over the one little wanderer rescued from death than over the ninety and nine that had been exposed to no danger.

Far more deeply are the angels in heaven interested in the salvation of lost souls than the parents and friends were in the finding of that lost child. Greater than was the joy that thrilled the hearts of the fond parents and friends when that child was found, is the joy that moves and stirs all heaven when sinners repent. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The text is connected with the parable of the lost sheep: "What man having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost."

On this parable was founded that wonderful hymn, sung with such marvelous power by Mr. Sankey:

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold.  
But one was out on the hills away,  
Far off from the gates of gold.  
Out in the desert He heard its cry --  
Sick and helpless, and ready to die."

And hearing that cry, the Shepherd ran, nor did He stop until the lost was found.

"Then all thro' the mountains, thunder-riven  
And up from the rocky steep,  
There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,  
'Rejoice! I have found my sheep!'  
And the angels echoed around the throne,  
'Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!' "

I. Let us look for a moment at the characters spoken of in the text.

1. The angels. "There is joy in the presence of the angels." The angels, who are they? Created intelligences. How old are they? We know not. Long before this world was created they existed. For untold ages they have ranged with delight the fields of immortality, and have been going forth from God's throne carrying His mandates.

The angels are revealed to us as having great power. "They excel in strength." They have great wisdom. David was said to be wise according to the wisdom of an angel. (2 Sam. xiv, 20.) Then they are said to be holy and perfectly happy.

Angels are messengers. A messenger is one who carries messages for another. The angels are God's messengers, carrying messages from Him to different parts of the universe, and carrying messages back to heaven from distant worlds. These messages, from different parts of the universe, are carried by the angels up to heaven, not that God may be informed of what is going on -- for He knows all things -- but for the benefit of the inhabitants of the heavenly world, angels and redeemed spirits.

All the angelic hosts are employed in the service of God. There is not one idler in all the ranks of glory. So there should not be one idler in all the ranks of God's people on the earth. I love so well to be God's messenger here on earth that somehow I feel that, when I reach heaven, God will send me off to some other world to preach some sort of a gospel.

There are bad angels as well as good angels. St. John the Revealer speaks of "the angel of the bottomless pit." (Rev. ix, II.) Jude tells of the "angels which kept not their first estate." (Jude 6.) These fallen angels are the messengers of Satan, carrying his messages to the children of men, and using all their influence and power to lead men down to hell. Our subject has to do only with good angels.

The Scriptures very clearly teach that there are gradations in rank in the hierarchy of heaven. There are different grades or orders, one rising above another, rank above rank. David tells us that these angels "do God's commandments." (Psa. ciii, 20.) They are ready, and willing, and anxious to go upon any mission to any part of the universe that God may see fit to send them. And as ministers and members of the Church on earth, God's messengers here below, we should be ready and anxious to go on any mission God may see fit to send us.

The seraphim are among the highest ranks of the heavenly mean seraphim is "fiery ones." These fiery ones burn with intense love to God, and with an intense desire to carry God's burning love to

others. It indicates also the fervor of their zeal. They are all zeal for the glory of God. These seraphim are the messengers of God's love to men. Seraphim denotes love; so we read of "seraphic love," burning love, love superior to all other love.

The cherubim are the messengers of God's judgments. God sends angels forth from His throne on errands of love; these are the seraphim. He sends angels forth from His throne to execute judgments; these are the cherubim.

When David sinned by numbering the people contrary to the will of God, he was permitted to choose one of three evils. "Seven years of famine; flee three months before his enemies; or that there be three days' pestilence in the land." David chose the latter, and God sent an angel, a cherubim, and in three days seventy thousand of his brave men were destroyed. It was a cherubim that slew all the first-born of the Egyptians and raised a nation's wail. When Sennacherib, King of Assyria, was marching against Jerusalem, Hezekiah prayed to be saved from his devastating army, and God answered his prayer, saying: "He shall not come into the city, nor shoot an arrow there. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city." That night God sent an angel, a cherubim, and one hundred and eighty-five thousand fell dead, his army was demoralized, and Sennacherib returned the very same way that he came. An angel can destroy an army, sink a navy, overthrow a nation, and blast all the plans of ungodly men. God sent a cherubim and smote Herod, and he was eaten with worms. (Acts xii, 23.)

From these incidents, and many others that crowd the Scriptures from lid to lid, we have an idea of an angel's mighty power.

Angels have had a deep interest in the affairs of this world from the very beginning. Job tells us that when God laid the foundations of the earth, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job xxxviii, 7.) The morning stars and the sons of God are the angelic hosts. An angel announced to the shepherds upon the plains of Bethlehem the advent of the world's Redeemer: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior." (Luke ii, 10, II.) At the close of Christ's forty days fast in the wilderness, having repelled every fiery attack made by Satan, "angels came and ministered unto Him." (Matt. iv, ii.) When in the garden of Gethsemane, bending beneath the weight of the world's sins, sweating great drops of blood, an angel came from heaven and strengthened Him. (Luke xxii, 43.) And, as angels ministered to Christ in the wilderness, and strengthened Him in His agony in the Garden, so, all along the ages, angels have been sent to minister to God's faithful children. And by the strength imparted to them, they have endured what they otherwise could not.

Julian, the Roman Emperor, called the Apostate, after he had renounced Christianity became a great persecutor of Christians. He put to extreme torment a Christian by the name of Theodorus, and finally released him when he found that he was unconquerable. Afterwards a friend said to Theodorus, "When you lay upon the rack, full of sharp iron spikes, was not the pain insufferable?" He answered, "At first the pain was terrible; but after a while there seemed to stand by my side a young man in white, who, with a soft and comfortable handkerchief, wiped off the bloody sweat from my body, bidding me be of good courage, and giving me such comfort that it was a real

punishment rather than a pleasure for me to be taken from the rack." When the tormentor was done, the angel was gone.

David says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psa. xxxiv, 7.) Elisha, at Dothan, saw the mountain round about him full of horses and chariots of fire, presenting an impassable barrier between him and the Assyrian army. Armies of angels encamp round about the followers of the Lord God Almighty. An angel descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher when Christ rose from the grave. And when He ascended to heaven, did not

"Cherubic legions guard Him home,  
And shout Him welcome to the skies?"

Angels are actively engaged in looking after the welfare of all God's children. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i, '4.) So intensely interested are they in the welfare of men that they rejoice whenever a soul repents. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

II. The second character mentioned in the text is the repenting sinner. "Over one sinner that repenteth." A repenting sinner thrills all heaven with delight.

1. The first essential to repentance is conviction. God, by His Spirit and in various ways, irresistibly convicts every man of sin. We need not say to any unconverted man, "You are a sinner and need pardon, or you will be lost forever." The Holy Spirit has told him that many and many a time. No man living but what has been convicted of sin. Conviction does not necessarily lead to genuine repentance. Millions are convicted who never repent. They throw off conviction, repel all the hallowed influences of the Holy Spirit, and all the drawings of ministering angels, the kind entreaties of relatives and friends, ministers of the gospel, and the Church. They harden their hearts, and at last they are cut off, and that without remedy. In spite of all the warnings of conscience, and all the drawings of the Holy Ghost, and all the wooing of angels, and all the restraining influences of the gospel, they make their way down to hell.

2. The energizing force of genuine repentance is sorrow for sin. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Cor. vii, 10.) It is heartfelt sorrow for having offended the dearest and best Friend man ever had. A criminal on his way to the place of execution cried out, and continued to cry out to the very last, "O God, I am so sorry I have offended Thee!" Not sorry that he had been caught, nor that he had been convicted and condemned, but sorry that he had offended God, his best and dearest Friend. That was one of the best and clearest evidences of a genuine penitent.

3. The final effect of genuine repentance is renunciation of all sin.

[The author speaking as if he were -- DVM] I am a great sinner. The Holy Ghost tells me so. My own conscience tells me so. I am sorry I have sinned against God, my dearest and best Friend. I will quit sin. I will face about. I will turn my back forever upon all that is wrong. "Let the wicked forsake

his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (Isa. lv, 7.)

Now, when a man is convicted of sin, feels that he is lost forever unless pardoned through the atoning merits of Christ, has deep sorrow for sin, renounces all sin, and says in his heart, I will never sin again, that man is a genuine penitent, and is very near the kingdom. One step more and he will be in. I think very few, if any, go that far and stop. Having taken all these steps, they are quite sure to take the next, which is that of faith in Christ.

When the angels see one who has all these elements of repentance, they rejoice; because they know well what that soul is just ready to enter the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and, knowing this, they rejoice. A cord of joy is struck that vibrates throughout all the realms of Glory.

### III. Why do the angels rejoice when sinners repent?

1. They rejoice when a sinner repents, because the image of Christ has been restored to his heart, and that he will now go out to work for the salvation of others. They see not only what he has become himself, but what he will be to others; a wave of influence for good has been started that will roll on forever, hence they rejoice.

2. They rejoice because of the sufferings the sinner has escaped. From the descriptions given us in the Bible the sufferings of the lost must be great. The angels of heaven know something of hell. Not that they have ever been in hell. But they remember when a third part of the heavenly hosts rebelled, and the right hand of the Jehovah was wrapped in thunder, and they pursued Lucifer and his cohorts to the battlements of heaven, saw them hurled over, caught a glimpse of the bottomless pit, heard the wild shriek of the lost, and saw the smoke that ascendeth up for ever and ever. So when a sinner repents, the angels rejoice; for they know, far better than we, the awful sufferings he has escaped. The sinner suffers much here, from doubt, uncertainty, anxiety, and fear. When he repents he escapes all this present suffering. Doubt, uncertainty, anxiety, and fear take wings and fly away, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding fills the soul. Hallelujah! This is a great salvation. No wonder the angels rejoice when sinners get it.

3. Another reason why the angels rejoice when a sinner repents is, they know that another soul will for ever participate with them in the joys of heaven. The angels know all about heaven. For untold ages they have ranged with the plains of glory. They have seen its beauty, realized its unearthly joy, and have joined in the rising, swelling anthem of praise to God and the Lamb. Not a sigh has ever escaped their lips, not a tear has ever dimmed their eyes, not a sorrow has ever pierced their souls. No wonder they want the inhabitants of a sorrowing world to be made partakers of these heavenly joys. No wonder they are glad when a sinner is tired of sin, and wants to break away from its fetters and get free.

"We talk about pearly gates, and golden streets, and white robes, and harps of gold, and crowns of amaranth, and all that; but if an angel could speak to us of heaven, he would smile and say, "All these fine things are but child's talk compared to the reality." "Thine eye hath never yet beheld its

splendors; thine ear hath never yet been ravished with its melodies; thy heart has never been transported with its peerless joys." You may talk, and think, and guess, and dream, but you can never measure the infinite heaven which God has provided for His children. Therefore, when a sinner repents, the angels clap their hands and shout; for they know all these joys are to be his forever.

A poor, neglected little boy, in ragged clothing, had run about the streets for many a day. Tutored in crime, he was on his path to the gallows; but one morning he passed by a humble room, where some men women were sitting together teaching poor, ragged children. He stepped in. They talked to him. They told him about a soul and an eternity -- things he had never heard before. They spoke of Jesus and of the good tidings of great joy he had brought to men. He went another Sabbath, and then another, his wild habits hanging about him; for he could not get rid of them. At last his teacher said to him, "Jesus Christ receiveth sinners." That little boy ran, but not home. He ran, and under a dry arch, in a wild, unfrequented corner, he bent his little knees and cried, "Lord, save me, or I perish." The Lord answered. The little boy was saved; and up from that old arch, that forsaken hovel, there flew an angel, glad to bear the news to heaven, that another heir of glory was born to God.

Away up in a garret, where the stars could look between the tiles, on a bed of straw lay a poor woman, racked with pain and scorched with fever. Many a night she had walked the streets in her merriment; but now her joys were over; a foul disease, like a demon, was devouring her life. She was dying. No one cared for her soul. But there, in that lonely attic, she turned her face to the wall and cried, "O Thou that didst save Magdalene, save me! I am sorry I have sinned. I repent." No bells rang in the street. No trumpet was blown. No sound of thanksgiving was heard in the great congregation. No one on earth rejoiced, for she died unseen. But mark! There was one standing at her bedside who noted well that tear; an angel who had come down from heaven to watch over this stray sheep, and mark its return; and no sooner was her prayer uttered than he spread his wings and soared to the pearly gates of Glory. Heavenly guards came crowding round the gate to hear the news. And as he told the story of the wanderer's re turn, all heaven echoed and re-echoed with their rapturous shouts of joy. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Glory to God for ever and ever!

We learn from this subject the worth of the soul. It must be of inestimable value, or it would not be desired by all that are in heaven and all that are in hell. A heaven wants it. All hell wants it.

1. God the Father wants the soul. He is intensely interested in your welfare. He longs for your salvation. Hear Him: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" (Ezek. xxxiii, ii.)

2. Christ wants the soul. He, too, longs for your salvation. He left heaven that you might be saved. When

"Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,  
We wretched sinners lay,  
Without one cheering beam of hope,  
Or spark of glimmering day,

With pitying eyes the Prince of peace  
Beheld our helpless grief;  
He saw, and, O amazing love!  
He flew to our relief.

Down from the shining seats above,  
With joyful haste He sped,  
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,  
And dwelt among the dead."

His sorrowful life, His agony in the garden, His crucifixion on Calvary, His entering into the grave -- all this suffering that you might escape a burning hell and gain a glorious heaven. His tender and pathetic appeal, as He looked over the doomed city of Jerusalem, gives us a faint idea of His great interest in our welfare: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee. how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii, 37.)

3. The Holy Spirit wants the soul. He is at work, always and everywhere, reprovng of sin, warning of danger, wooing the unsaved.

4. The angels are interested, intensely interested, in your salvation. They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

5. All the good on earth are interested in your welfare. Faithful ministers, devoted Christians, loving fathers and mothers, -- all are solicitous, intensely anxious for your salvation.

And now we ask, Shall God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and the angels, and all the good on earth be interested in your soul's welfare, and you alone be indifferent?

"Angels now are hovering round us,  
Unperceived amid the throng."

They are watching you. They are waiting for you to surrender, that they may bear the glad news to the skies, and electrify with joy the angelic hosts. O, decide this matter now! Stay, ye heavenly messengers, a little longer; wait a moment more, until those who are hesitating shall decide. Let the decision now be made. I will be a Christian. Let the news now fly over the hills and plains of glory, "The dead are alive, the lost are found."

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## Chapter 2 THE VALUE OF THE SOUL

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" -- Matt. xvi, 26.

When Christ was upon earth He appealed to the hopes and fears of men as motives to purity. In the text, as in many other passages of Scripture, He appeals to the fear of loss and the hope of gain. "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

In all business circles profit and loss is the question that rises above all other questions. It is the great and all-important question, and before this one question all other questions drop out of sight. When a man is about to engage in any business enterprise whatever, the first question he asks is, "Will it pay?" "Shall I lose or gain in the operation?" The cost is carefully counted. He weighs with exactness the probabilities of success. He takes into careful consideration everything that in any way bears upon the subject, in order that he may ascertain, if possible, whether he will lose or gain in the operation.

And is it not strange, passing strange, that men are so careful to ascertain the loss and profit touching things of minor importance, and so careless, and seemingly utterly indifferent, touching those things which are of the greatest importance? The loss or gain of the soul is a subject that rises in importance infinitely above all other subjects. The eternal gain of the soul is a treasure the value of which can not possibly be estimated, and the loss of the soul the most dreadful and appalling catastrophe in the wide universe. The loss of the soul is an infinite loss, the gain of the soul an infinite gain.

Christ appealed more to man's fears than his hopes as an incentive to duty. He dwelt more on the dangers to which men are exposed than on any other one subject. His cry everywhere was, Repent! "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He taught everywhere, and all the time, that men were in danger, great, awful danger. He taught that men were in such great danger of falling into wreck and ruin that it was absolutely necessary to put forth every possible effort in order to be saved. Hence He cries out to the people of His day, and of all ages as well, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" or, as the margin translates it, "Agonize, agonize to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." (Luke xiii, 24, 25.) Many will seek to enter heaven, but will never get in; many will wish and earnestly desire heaven, but will be eternally shut out. A wish will not take us there; an intense, earnest desire will not lead us there. If we would gain heaven we must "agonize," bend every energy, strain every nerve to its utmost tension, and sacrifice, if need be, every earthly object.

The same idea is brought out in Matt. xi, 12: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Only by violent earnestness will the kingdom of heaven be gained. If we are not absolutely determined to gain heaven at any cost and at all hazards, I am afraid we never shall get there.

The question in the text suggests the value of the soul. It suggests that in value it rises infinitely above silver and gold, houses and lands, stocks and all worldly honors. All these things belong to time, and will soon pass away.

I. The value of the soul will be seen if we notice for a moment its duration.

Both reason and Revelation unite in declaring that the soul is immortal. Job says, "There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." What the Bible clearly reveals, men everywhere, and in all ages, have believed. Go to the inhabitants of the islands of the seas, go to the most benighted people on the globe, go down into "darkest Africa," and you will find that the people everywhere feel and believe that death does not end all, but that they are to live forever. God has indelibly stamped upon every human heart the great fact of immortality. Addison asks:

"Whence Comes this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?  
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror  
Of falling into naught?"

'T is the divinity that stirs within us;  
'T is heaven itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man.

Again says Addison:

"The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;  
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
Unhurt amid the war of elements,  
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

We have entered upon a career that shall run parallel with the existence of God Himself, that may go on brightening forever. So where is the profit if we gain the whole world and lose the soul? The world with its vast possessions belongs to time. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away." (I John ii, 16.) Better have nothing here and everything hereafter, than have everything here for a little while, and then be a pauper through all the ages of eternity. Better infinitely to beg, as did Lazarus, the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table while on earth, and be a millionaire in glory, than be clothed in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day while here, and at last lift up our eyes, and forever cry for a drop of water to cool our tongue.

Mr. Moody speaks of "long-sighted and short-sighted men." Abraham was what you might call a long-sighted man. He was not tempted by the well-watered plains of Sodom, for he had his eyes fixed on the city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God. Lot was a short-sighted man. He saw only the things that were near by, and right around him that he thought good. Abraham had glimpses of the Celestial City. Moses was a long-sighted man. He left the palaces of Egypt and all the splendors of the Egyptian court, and identified himself with the people of God, who were a nation of slaves, because he "had respect unto the recompense of reward." He was looking for something infinitely better away out yonder. Today, as in every age, there are long-sighted and short-sighted men. In every community there are the long-sighted and the short-sighted men. The shortsighted are content with the things of this world alone. The long-sighted are building for themselves homes beyond the stars. The poet has well said:

"He builds too low  
Who builds below the skies."

A minister visited and preached for a brother minister. He took for his text, "Not slothful in business." After services were over the pastor said: "We do not want that kind of preaching in this city. The people here are all diligent in business. You made a great mistake. All exhortations on that line is work thrown away. You ought to have taken the latter part of that verse for your text, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' The citizens of this city need no exhortation on the line of 'diligence in business.' In this matter they are awake. They are all energy and zeal; they are abreast with the liveliest city of the land. What is needed is not more diligence in business, but more 'fervency in spirit in serving the Lord.' "

If men were just as "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," as they are "diligent in business," it would not be long until a sorrowing world would dry up its tears, and complaint would everywhere give place to praise.

II. The value of the soul will appear if we consider its capacity to suffer or enjoy.

The capacities of the soul, like its duration, are infinite. Its capacity to enjoy is infinite; its capacity to suffer is infinite. The loss of the soul is the loss of enjoyment. The loss of enjoyment is suffering. God only knows how much a human heart can suffer. Many a one, to cut short his sufferings here, has put an end to his life. The suicidal graves all over the land tell too plainly of the soul's capacity for suffering. Sin is the cause of all suffering. Sin brings sorrow, pain, and remorse. Sin fills our jails, penitentiaries, and asylums. Sin digs suicidal graves, and sends thousands without a ray of hope into eternity. What untold suffering has sin brought into the world!

On the other hand, God only knows how much a human heart can enjoy. Let all sin be eradicated from the heart by the power of Divine grace, and there comes into the soul a joy that is absolutely indescribable. Paul says it is "unspeakable and full of glory." In spite of all surroundings and all bodily sufferings, it arises in its majesty and power, and asserts its supremacy.

A soldier on the field of battle, with both of his legs shot away, said to his chaplain, "Last night, as I lay here looking up into the stars, I prayed, and Jesus came to my side, and it was the happiest

night of my life." Just think of it, both of his legs shot away, death staring him in the face, and yet happier than he had ever been in all his life before! That only shows the capacity of the soul to enjoy, no matter what the pains of the body may be.

A lady, an invalid for years, said to a friend, "The work of some is to preach the gospel, the work of others is to give of their means for the support of the gospel, the work of others to visit the sick and relieve the suffering; but my work is just to lay here and cough, and I am perfectly happy in my work." Glory be to God forever! The capacity of the soul for enjoyment in this world is so great that it scorns all earthly surroundings.

If, then, its capacity for enjoyment is so great that it enjoys in spite of all the pains of body and mind while here on earth, what will it be when it sweeps infinitely beyond the realm of sin? The thought is a grand one. Granting, for the sake of the argument, that the world brings to the heart perfect enjoyment, real pleasure, all admit that this great joy must terminate in a very little while; for life is short, so short that it is compared to the "passing cloud," the "morning dew," "the shadow upon the wall."

Where is the profit, therefore, of bartering away enjoyment that is eternal in its duration, and infinite in blessedness, for enjoyment that is only momentary, and not in itself perfectly satisfying? Is that a good trade? That is not the way the business men of this world barter. When men make trades here, it is for gain. Why not be as wise in spiritual matters as in temporal? Christianity is not unreasonable. It is not in opposition to sound judgment and common sense. Christ appeals to our common sense and good judgment. He wants us to be guided in this matter, as in every other, by sound business principles. Hence He raises the question, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Thirty years ago, on a cold December day, I left my home in Lincoln for Butler County, where I was to hold quarterly-meeting. About three o'clock in the afternoon, when on the high divide between David City and Oak Creek, a heavy storm came on. The wind began to blow, and it blew harder and harder; the snow began to fall, and it fell faster and faster; and the weather rapidly grew colder and colder. I saw the road was filling with snow, and in a little while would be entirely lost to view; and I knew very well that, to be caught out overnight on that high divide in such a storm as was then raging, would be hazardous in the extreme. Silently I lifted my heart to God in prayer. A few minutes afterwards I saw a dim road leading to the right. I took that road. It led down a deep ravine, and, following it about a mile and a half, I came to a log-cabin standing on the bank of Oak Creek. I drove up to the barn, where the man of the house was unloading hay, and said to him, "Can I stay all night with you tonight?" "Yes, sir. Get out, get out, and go into the fire, and I will take care of your team." I found the man and his wife to be devoted Christians, and members of the Baptist Church, and I never was more royally entertained than in their humble home. I had hardly got warm when the good woman said:

"We have just returned from the grave of one of our neighbors."

"Was he a Christian?" I asked.

"O no; anything but a Christian. He was the wickedest man in all this region of the country. He professed to be an infidel; worked on the Sabbath just as on any other day, and seemed determined to be a rich man. All he thought of was making money. He would not allow his family to go to Church or Sunday-school."

"Well," said I, "how did he die?"

"Awful," said she. "It was the most terrible death that was ever witnessed by any of those that were present. When the doctor told him that he could not live, he said: 'Doctor, I can't die; I am not ready to die. You must not let me die.' The doctor said to him: 'If you have any business to transact, do it at once, for you can only live a little while. You are almost gone now.' Then he called his wife and children to his bedside and said to them: 'O, if I only had my life to live over again, how differently would I live! Don't live as I have lived. Go to Church and the Sunday-school every Sabbath, and don't throw your lives away as I have done,' and died."

It was the old, old story, -- the story that will go on repeating itself, we fear, as long as the world stands, a life of sin and a death of despair. "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

A young man graduated with the highest honors of his Alma Mater. He was brilliant. He was the finest mathematician that had ever walked the halls of the great university. Soon after graduation, a minister, who had known him from boyhood, met him and said: "I understand that you are celebrated for your mathematical skill. I have a problem I wish you to solve."

"Tell me what it is," said the young man, "and I will try."

The clergyman answered, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The young man walked away in silence, saying to himself, "It is a great problem." The question rang in his ears, by day and by night. Everywhere he went it seemed to sound louder and louder. "What if I gain the world and lose my soul?" Finally he said, "I will solve the problem." He weighed the matter carefully. He looked at the problem in a business-like way, and said to himself, "There is no profit, if I gain all the pleasures, and all the wealth, and all the honors of the world, and lose my soul." He at once surrendered himself to God, accepted Christ as his Savior, and afterwards became an eminent minister of the gospel.

The soul; its value; who can estimate it? The poet tried and failed.

"Behold this midnight wonder, worlds on worlds,  
Redouble that amaze; add twice ten thousand more;  
Then weigh the whole, one soul outweighs them all."

Yet this soul, rising in value above all worlds and all systems -- this soul, infinite in duration -- men barter away for the vain, chaffy, fleeting, and unsatisfying things of earth. Everything earthly

must be laid down at the door of the grave. Beyond this no earthly object can be carried. Get honor; you must lay it down at the door of the tomb. Get earthly pleasure; you must bid them all an eternal farewell at the mouth of the grave. Get wealth; you can not carry it with you through the tomb. A dying man looked at his shroud and said: "There is no bank in my shroud." No, nor pockets either. He could not put his money in his pocket and carry it with him. All had to be left behind.

A man of great wealth died. Success had crowned his unwearied efforts, and a large fortune was the result of a life spent in the accumulation of earthly goods. He died in the morning, soon after the sun had risen, and all through the day men were commenting on the event. "He died rich;" "He amassed a handsome fortune;" "He was successful in business;" "He left a large property;" and so the comments ran. Finally a poor man spoke up, "Yes, but he had to leave it all."

Men may heap to themselves the wealth of worlds, and gather around them all earthly riches; but they must all come shoulder to shoulder in the march of life, lay down their armor, their burdens, and their treasures at the door of the tomb, and together enter and explore the mysteries of the spirit-world. There is only one thing we can carry with us through the darkness of death, -- a hope of heaven through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ. This priceless treasure is something of which the grave can not rob the soul; for it is not of earth, it is of heaven.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. (1 Peter i, 3, 4.) See to it, my dear friends, that this inheritance is yours. Don't barter it away for a trifle. Don't make any mistake here. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Some twenty-five years ago I held quarterly-meeting at Firth, Nebraska. I was entertained by an excellent Christian lady, and a leading member of the Church. An uncle from Ohio, a man about eighty years old, was visiting her. He was not communicative, but morose, and gruff in his manner. I tried several times to draw him out in conversation, but failed. Saturday night I invited him to go with us to church. He cut me off very short, saying, "I don't want to go to church." Sunday morning I gave him another kind invitation to go with us to Church. He cut me off about as short as he did the night before, and then said, "I am perfectly willing to take my chances of getting to heaven on being a good Mason." I made no reply. We went to Church, and he remained at home. At the dinner-table I sat right in front of him. I looked him squarely in the face and said:

"Brother, you made a remark this morning I have been thinking about."

"Well," said he, "what was it?"

"You said you were 'perfectly willing to take your chances of getting to heaven on being a good Mason.' "

"Yes, that's what I said, and so I am."

"Well," said I, "my dear brother, you don't want to take any chances touching the salvation of your soul. Your soul is of too much value for you to run any risk or take any chances with regard to its salvation. Besides, you need not take any chances. It is your privilege to know now, with absolute certainty, that you are a saved man." And then I handed over to him promise after promise, as the Spirit gave them to me. I said to him : "Christ says, 'If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine;' 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;' And Paul says, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with bands, eternal in the heavens.' "Now," I said, "you can't afford to take any chances touching the salvation of your soul. There is too much at stake for you to run any risk whatever." From that time on he was very communicative, and seemed like a different man.

The next morning, when train-time came, he took my grip and carried it all the way to the depot. It was quite heavy, and I tried to have him let me rest him, but in vain. When we reached the depot we talked together until the train came. When the train came I took him by the hand to say good-bye, when he said, with great emotion, "I am very glad I met you." I replied, "Don't take any chances touching the salvation of your soul. Give your heart to God at once and become a Christian." He made no reply. But the warm grasp of the hand, and the tears glistening in his eyes indicated to me that he would do as I advised. I never saw him again, but somehow I felt that he would follow my advice.

Now, here was a man, eighty years old, just on the verge of the grave, taking his chances of getting to heaven on being a member of a human organization. No wise man will take any such chances. No man living can afford to run such a great risk as that. No wise man will do so. "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 3

### WHAT SHALL THE HARVEST BE?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." -- GAL. vi, 7, 8.

What shall the harvest be? This is a question of the highest moment; a question of the utmost importance to every man and woman and child that walks the earth; a question fraught with interest high as heaven, deep as hell, and lasting as eternity.

What shall the harvest be? Shall it be one of wealth, or one of poverty; one of joy, or one of sorrow one of hope, or one of despair? Shall it be heaven, or shall it be hell? One or the other it must be; which, depends upon the kind of seed we sow here. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The importance of sowing good seed must be apparent to all. Everybody knows that, in the natural world, the harvest always partakes of the same nature of the seed sown. If you sow wheat, the harvest will be wheat; if you sow oats, the harvest will be oats; if you sow barley, the harvest will be barley; if you plant corn, the harvest will be corn. This is one of the immutable laws of nature. It never varies. It is as unchangeable as God Himself.

The same is true in the intellectual world. If the boy is untiring in his studies, in the school, the college, the university, the harvest will be a cultured mind -- an intellect stored with useful knowledge that will fit him for the highest positions of honor and usefulness in the world. On the other hand, if the boy is lazy and indolent, and plays hooky at school, goes into his classes with lessons unprepared, the harvest will be an empty head and a mind unfitted for any of the responsible, lucrative, and useful positions in life.

Two boys of the same age, living in a western county in Nebraska, attended the same school. One of these boys lived in the country, four miles from the school; the other boy lived in the village, right by the side of the schoolhouse. The boy living in the country never missed a day in four years, never was tardy, always had his lessons, and at the end of four years graduated with the highest honor from the high school. He went to the Nebraska Wesleyan University, graduated with honor from that institution, then took a graduate course in the State University of Wisconsin, came back to Lincoln, and taught a year in the public schools of the city. At the close of the school year I met him and he said:

"I want to talk with you."

"All right," said I.

"I have felt for a long time," said he, "that possibly it is my duty to preach. I am perfectly willing to do so if it is my duty. But the ministry is such a high and sacred calling, I would not for the world undertake it unless I knew with absolute certainty God had called me to this work."

He told me his experience, and when he had done I said to him: "I have not the shadow of a doubt but that God has called you to preach. My advice is, take license at once and join the Conference this fall."

He did so, and for five years has been a successful minister of the gospel, highly respected, loved, and honored by all who know him, and has a brilliant future before him.

The other boy, who lived right by the side of the schoolhouse, was lazy and indolent, played hooky, and went into his classes with lessons unprepared. Two years ago the minister went back to visit his old home. He met his old schoolmate. He found him living in a little shanty at the outskirts of the village making a living as best he could, working here and there by the day when he could get a job. They sat down and talked together for a long time. Finally, the one living in the shanty said to the other one: "Roscoe, I had the same opportunity of making a man of myself that you had. I had the very same advantages and privileges that you had. You improved yours; I neglected mine. If I had only improved my privileges as you did yours, I might have had just as bright a future before me as you have." And then, in a melancholy voice, he continued: "You have a brilliant future before you; I have nothing to look forward to or hope for."

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." On every hand we see this immutable law. If a man is lazy, indolent, and trifling, the harvest will be poverty. If he is industrious, energetic, and frugal, the harvest will be plenty. This law holds good in the moral world as well. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The flesh here means sin; the Spirit means purity. If you sow sin, the harvest will be misery. If you sow a life of purity, the harvest will be happiness here, and eternal glory hereafter.

The farmer has in view all the time the harvest. If he sows wheat he selects the best seed. If he plants corn, he selects his seed early, and he selects the very best. I have gone into the barn of the thrifty farmer in the fall of the year, and have seen the long rows of seed-corn hung up by the husks on poles. The farmer has selected his seed-corn for the coming spring. He has his eye on the harvest. Why are not men as wise in spiritual as in temporal affairs?

The mystery of all mysteries is, that men all around us regard the less and disregard the greater. They are all energy and zeal so far as their interest in this world is concerned, but perfectly indifferent and unconcerned touching their future and eternal interest. What is this life compared to eternity? And where will you spend eternity? What shall the harvest be? That's the question. It's the mightiest question of the age. It's the question that concerns you and me and everybody. What shall the harvest be? Where shall I spend eternity?

"Be not deceived." The arch deceiver of the world walks the earth today with deceptive words, graceful smiles, and artful cunning. Satan today, as in Christ's day, is deceiving one here, and another there, and another yonder. That young man, as he goes into the saloon, is deceived. That young lady,

as she whirls in the mazy dance with lecherous arms around her, is deceived. That man and woman, as they sit at the card-table hour after hour, murdering time, are deceived. That man who stealthily creeps into the house of the silly woman whose steps take hold on hell, is deceived. The brothel, the saloon, the mazy dance, the fascinating cards, are all traps laid by Satan to catch the unwary. Satan spreads these alluring snares, and is taking in men and women by the thousand.

A dying girl, just blooming into womanhood, called her mother to her bedside, and said: "Mother, you taught me to dance; you said it would introduce me into the best society; now I am dying, and I am going to hell, and you are to blame for it." The mother and daughter sowed the dance, -- hell was the harvest. O what shall the harvest be?

Our acts are seed. How carefully, then, should we act! Every act is a seed sown, and it will germinate. and grow, and ripen, and the harvest will be like the seed sown, but it will be far more abundant. This is another one of the immutable laws of nature. We reap more than we sow. The harvest is greater than the seed.

Plant one grain of corn, and you will reap eight hundred grains. Sow one seed of oats, and you will reap hundreds of grains. A man in the western part of Nebraska paid fifty cents for a pound of millet-seed; the harvest was fifteen bushels. We reap more than we sow.

Eve took the forbidden apple, dropped this little seed, and it has filled the world with woe, misery, and death. The dark, slimy trail of that one sin is more than six thousand years long. The sighs it has produced would make a whirlwind, the tears it has caused would make an ocean, the bones of its slain would make a mountain towering to the skies.

Sow saloons; the harvest will be drunkards, blasted hopes, blighted prospects, desolated homes, starving children, broken-hearted wives, mothers, brothers, and sisters. O, the devastation of the saloon! What shall the harvest be of the saloon-keeper? What shall the harvest be of the aiders and abettors of the saloon?

Years ago I went down to Humboldt, Nebraska, to hold a quarterly-meeting. A brother, who was to entertain me met me at the depot. He was always loquacious, but this time he had nothing at all to say. I was surprised at his reticence. We walked several rods without his saying a word. Finally he broke the silence by saying: "We have just returned from the grave of the leading saloon-keeper of our town. The citizens and friends took turn watching him during his last illness. He would not allow them to leave him alone for a single moment. The lamps had to be kept brightly burning all the time during the night. If the room was dark for a moment, he seemed wild with fear. Just as the last breath was leaving him, he threw up both hands and exclaimed, 'Oh!' and his hair rose and stood straight on end. We tried to comb it down, but could not. We wet it with water, and then tried, but in vain. We oiled it, then used comb and brush, but could do nothing with it. We placed him in the casket, and his hair stood out straight like porcupine quills." I have do doubt at all but that unfortunate man saw, just as his spirit was leaving the body, the awful hell into which he was about to plunge.

Sow cards; the harvest will be gamblers. Dr. Holland, the author of many excellent books, says: "Card-playing is the universal resort of the starved intellect. Culture may embellish, but can never dignify card-playing. I have this moment ringing in my ears the dying injunction of my father's early friend: 'Keep your son from cards. Over them I have murdered time and lost heaven.' "

Our words and acts are seed. Holy Ghost, burn this thought into the hearts of all who shall read these pages!

Rev. E. Davies, of Illinois, gives an account of an infidel who had spent his life in disseminating his infidel doctrines. Wherever he could influence a young man to doubt the Bible he did so. He took in shaking men's faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures. He would sneer at the Bible, sneer at ministers, sneer at Christians, sneer at the Church. This was the kind of seed that he sowed while living. What was the harvest? Mr. Davies tells us. When that man lay on his dying bed he said to friends who stood by his bedside: "I am damned, infinitely damned. I feel as if I were in a globe of fire, and that it is pressing upon me on every side. To live is hell; to die is a thousand times worse. It is too late to pray. My doom is sealed." In this awful state he died. He sowed the wind; he reaped the whirlwind.

David Hume had a most excellent Christian mother, and he determined to overthrow her religion. He succeeded. One day a postman handed him a letter. He opened it. It was from his mother. She said: "I am dying, and your philosophy gives me no comfort. I am in great sorrow. Come to me and comfort me, my son David." David Hume can never undo the wrong done his mother. His awful deeds will echo in eternity, and his guilty conscience, with its scorpion stings, will lash him forever.

There is an old Eastern fable that tells of a celebrated slave by the name of Luckman. His master told him to go and sow wheat in a certain field. Luckman sowed oats instead of wheat. One day the master went out into the field, and he saw the green oats coming up. He called his slave and said:

"I told you to sow wheat; why did you sow oats?"

The slave answered: "I sowed oats in the hope that the harvest would be wheat."

"Foolish man!" said the master. "Did you ever hear the like?"

Luckman replied: "Yes, I have. You yourself are sowing a life of sin, and expect to reap heaven. I thought, if this were true, I might sow oats and the harvest would be wheat."

The master felt keenly the rebuke, but at the same time admired the sagacity of the slave. So ashamed was he of himself, and so astonished at the wisdom of the slave, that he gave Luckman his freedom. The harvest will be like the seed sown. What kind of seed are you sowing?

Well, if you have been sowing bad seed, by your acts and words during all the past, and will stop now, and from this time on sow good seed, the harvest may yet be grand and glorious.

One night a man, staggering through the streets of Chicago, noticed the people entering a large, lighted building. Ignorant that it was the Tabernacle, wherein Moody and Sankey were holding religious meetings, he staggered in and sat down near one of the posts which supported the roof. In a sort of drunken stupor he leaned his head against the post. Something roused him. The happy faces of the people disturbed him. "This is no place for me," he said to himself, and arose to go out. Just then Mr. Moody gave out the hymn, "What shall the harvest be?" The first strain arrested the man's attention. He sat down and listened. With a thrill of emotion he heard the lines

"Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,  
Sowing the seed of eternal shame."

"That's me!" he said to himself. "That's what I have been doing, 'sowing the seed of a tarnished name.' My name is gone, and now I am sowing the seed of eternal shame!" He was so disturbed that, as soon as the singing ended he went out, determined to drown out those convicting lines with rum. He entered a saloon, called for a drink, took the glass in his hand, then sat it down, left the saloon, and ran home. The next day found him at the Tabernacle. He told his experience. Said he: "Last night when Mr. Moody announced the hymn, 'What shall the harvest be?' I felt I was a lost man. I left the Tabernacle, ran into a saloon, called for a glass of liquor, took it in my hand, and was about to drink it. Just then I happened to look up, and I saw, in blazing characters on the ceiling, 'What shall the harvest be?' I turned, and on the wall of the saloon I saw in burning characters the same words, 'What shall the harvest be?' I ran home, and all night, as I tossed to and fro on my bed, I saw on the walls of the room, 'What shall the harvest be?' " They prayed with him, and he was converted. Then he became a great soul-winner. That man will have a glorious harvest.

Some years ago a minister was called to see a little girl seven years old, who was dying. She lived in a back street. When the minister got there a woman showed him where the child was, and he sat down to talk with her.

"What do you want, darling?"

"Well, sir, I wanted to see you before I died."

"Are you dying?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would you not like to get well again?"

"I hope not, sir."

"Why not?"

"O sir, ever since I became a Christian I have been trying to bring father to church, and he won't come; and I think if I die -- you will bury me, won't you?"

"Yes, darling."

"Yes, I have been thinking if I die, father must come to the funeral; then you will be able to preach the gospel to him, and I should be willing to die six times over for him to hear the gospel once."

She died, as she expected, and just before the time she was to be buried, the minister was himself taken sick, and could not attend the funeral. But some time after a rough-looking man called upon him, and held out his hand.

"You don't know me?"

"No, I don't."

"I am the father of Mary -- the father she died for. I heard as how she said she would die for me six times if I could hear the gospel once. It nearly broke my heart. Now I want to join the inquirers' class."

He did join, and became a true friend of Christ. That little girl will have a glorious harvest. With a father, saved through her instrumentality, she will walk forever the plains of light and glory. Not a sigh, not a tear, not a sorrow will ever mar or dim her eternal glory and bliss.

"He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." What a glorious promise this! We begin to reap here some of the harvest of the good seed sown. The harvest of the good will be beautiful, grand, glorious.

I never shall forget the triumphant death of one of my first converts. On the second circuit I traveled in Indiana God gave us a glorious revival. In two weeks seventy souls were converted. The converts ranged from little children to gray-haired fathers and mothers. A father and mother, about sixty years old, were converted, with their three sons and one daughter. Ten months afterwards, Martha, the daughter, was stricken down with that fell destroyer, typhoid fever, from which she never recovered. Her sickness was characterized by patience, resignation, and great joy. The last visit we made we found her very near death's door. She had not spoken for twenty-four hours, and the power of speech seemed forever gone. For some time she had been delirious. We knelt down by her bedside and prayed, and as we prayed,

"Heaven came down our souls to greet,  
And glory crowned the mercy-seat."

When we arose, she broke forth in a clear, sweet, heavenly voice, and sang:

"When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies,  
I'll bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eyes."

She sang the hymn through, and in a few minutes afterwards her pure spirit went up to join the angelic throng.

In 1862 I had the privilege of witnessing another most triumphant departure from earth. I stood for a little while in the antechamber of the skies. The poet has truthfully said:

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate is privileged beyond the common walks of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

On Saturday afternoon I went out to hold a quarterly-meeting at Union, not far from Nebraska City. I reached Brother Beatty's, where the meeting was to be held, at two o'clock. Before entering the house a friend said to me, "Laura Beatty is lying very low with fever, and wishes to see you as soon as possible." She was at her sister's, about two miles away. I said to my friend, "I will go and see her as soon as the afternoon services are over." The services ended, I hurried over to where she was, and on entering the room felt, it seemed, as Jacob did at Bethel when he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place." On her face rested a sweet, heavenly smile. The room was pervaded with a most hallowed atmosphere. The fragrance of the skies had been wafted to that humble prairie home; it was good to be there. She made every one in the room promise to meet her in heaven; then she sent for neighbors and friends, that she might talk with them touching their soul's salvation. She spoke of the beauties and glories of heaven, glimpses of which she had seen. Just before her happy spirit took its upward and eternal flight, she exclaimed in an ecstasy of joy: "The angels are coming; don't you see them? O how beautiful! There is mother with them! And there is Jesus, my Savior." And shortly after, her enraptured spirit joined the heavenly throng. How these wonderful scenes speak, in language that can not be misunderstood, of heaven, the eternal "home of the soul!"

Then there is the eternal harvest the good will reap beyond the stars. What a harvest Mr. Moody will have! What a harvest Thomas Harrison, William Taylor, and all who have spent their lives sowing good seed, will have! I have often thought of the abundant harvest of John Wesley. For nearly seventy years he wrote, preached, labored, and suffered to make men better. He is now harvesting some of his fruit, and the harvest will go on forever.

Once more we ask, "What shall the harvest be?" Holy Spirit, burn this question into every heart: "What shall the harvest be?" Shall it be one of joy, or one of sorrow; one of pain, or one of pleasure; one of triumph, or one of remorse? Shall it be heaven, or shall it be hell? Remember, the harvest will be of the same nature as the seed. You will reap what you sow.

"Sowing the seed by the daylight fair,  
Sowing the seed by the noontide glare;  
Sowing the seed by the fading light,  
Sowing the seed in the solemn night:  
O, what shall the harvest be?"

Sowing the seed by the wayside high,  
Sowing the seed on the rocks to die;  
Sowing the seed where the thorns will spoil.  
Sowing the seed in the fertile soil:  
O, what shall the harvest be?

Sowing the seed of a lingering pain,  
Sowing the seed of a maddened brain;  
Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,  
Sowing the seed of eternal shame:  
O, what shall the harvest be?"

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## **Chapter 4** **TIME TO SEEK GOD**

"It is time to seek the Lord." -- Hosea x, 12

In the days of the Prophet Hosea, seven hundred and forty years before the Christian era, the Israelites had sinned; they had sinned greatly; they had sinned against light and knowledge, against God and high heaven. They had wandered far away from the Almighty, and had become gross idolaters. Hosea did not prophesy smooth things unto them. He was not silver-tongued. He made no attempt to whitewash their sins or hide their deformities. He poured forth upon them a torrent of burning truths. "Ye have plowed wickedness," and what has been the result? "Ye have reaped iniquity." "Ye have lied," and what has been the result of your lies? "Ye have eaten the fruit of lies." "Ye have sown the wind, and ye shall reap the whirlwind." (Hosea viii, 7.) National, family, personal disasters came upon them for their wickedness.

The results of sin are the same today as they were twenty-six hundred years ago. Sin always has a reflex influence. Commit a sin of any kind, and it will come back to you in a form of evil. Lie, and sooner or later you will reap the bitter fruit of that lie. Deceive, and as sure as the sun shines in the heavens, deception, with all its brood of evils, will overtake you. Deal dishonestly, and you will feel keenly the rebound. Sooner or later you will suffer for every sin committed. If you go on sinning until death snaps the brittle thread of life, and you drop into hell, conscience, with its scorpion stings, will lash the soul forever. "There the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

If you have been sinning, it is time to stop. "It is time to seek the Lord." It is time to seek God, because you have sinned long enough. Sin never benefits. It is always and everywhere an injury. The longer you sin, the greater the injury you do yourself; therefore, you have sinned long enough; you have been injuring yourself long enough. It is time to stop.

I. It is time to seek the Lord, because of the person against whom you have sinned.

In sinning, whom do you offend? God, your best Friend, your Creator, your Redeemer, your Preserver; God, who has never wronged you, has never in any way harmed you. but has always been kind and good to you. From your infancy to the present, He has lavished blessings upon you without number. It is time to quit offending the best Friend you ever had, or ever can have in this or any other world.

II. It is time to seek God because of the hardening tendency of sin.

Sin hardens the heart and sears the conscience. The longer a man sins, the harder the heart becomes. Sin, if persisted in, has a lulling, a soothing effect. So, by long continuance in sin, a man finally reaches the point where he thinks he is not very bad, after all. He may be low, he may be the

vilest of the vile; but somehow he has reached the place where he does not realize his awful condition. A man does not become profane at once; he becomes so by degrees. A very profane man said: "I remember the first oath I ever uttered. When I uttered it, I was startled. I trembled all over. I thought I should drop into hell the next moment. But now I can use an oath in every sentence I speak without feeling any compunction of conscience whatever. The fact is, I swear all the time without knowing it." The profanity demon had lulled him, and left him asleep in his sin.

A man does not become a drunkard at once. The man whose appetite has gotten the complete mastery of him never dreamed, when he took the first glass, that he would ever become a drunkard. And if you had told him then that he would, he would have laughed you to scorn. He would have said: "I am a man. I can control my appetite. I can drink, or I can let it alone." But that first glass called for the second, the second the third, the third the fourth, the fourth the fifth, and every glass he drank the demand for another became more and more powerful, and before he was aware of it the coils of the still were wrapped so tightly around him that no human power could possibly free him.

The liquor-dealers of this nation know well the power of appetite; hence they are working hard to create appetite for their wares.

A gentleman in Ohio dropped into a liquor-dealers' convention. One of the officers of the convention was making a speech. Among other things he said: "Gentlemen, the success of our business depends upon the creation of appetite. Men who now drink liquor will, like other men, die, and if no new appetite is created our counters will be empty as well as our coffers. The open field for the creation of appetite is among the boys. Here is the field for missionary work. Nickels spent in treating the boys will, when the appetite is created, come back to our tills in dollars. By all means create appetite." Can anything be more diabolical than that? When Rev. George R. Stewart was preaching in Kentucky one Sabbath, an intelligent lady came walking down the aisle wringing her hands and weeping bitterly. When she reached the altar, just in front of the pulpit she exclaimed, "Mr. Stewart! Mr. Stewart! the saloons have got my boy!" The preacher stopped for a moment. His heart ached, and the congregation was greatly moved. Then said the preacher: "How many mothers here today can, from experience, sympathize with this mother? All who can, raise your hands." Hands went up all over the congregation. Some of them were in kid gloves, some of them were pale white hands, and some of them bore the marks of labor and toil. The minister continued; "Gentlemen of Kentucky, I do not know what kind of stuff you are made of, but I am of that kind that will do all I can to help these mothers save their boys from the clutches of the saloon."

It is estimated that one family out of six in every generation in Christian America must furnish a boy to the saloon. Shall he be your boy or my boy? O whose boy shall he be? He will be somebody's boy, a boy whose parents loved him as deeply and tenderly as you love your boy. One hundred thousand go down to drunkard's graves every year. O the devastation of the saloon! A man does not become a murderer at once. He begins by committing a very small crime; this leads to the commission of another; and this in turn to another, until at length he can use the assassin's knife as coolly and deliberately as you can sit down and eat your meat at the table. A man was hung at Minden, Nebraska, a few years ago, for murder. He had murdered a number of persons at different times. The last crime committed was the murder of a whole family. After he was tried and sentenced to be hung, he was taken to the penitentiary at Lincoln for safekeeping until the day of execution.

While there, I visited him twice. Among other things I said to him, "Mr. Richards, will you tell me the first step you took in your downward career?" He answered me very promptly: "Yes, sir. Playing cards in my father's parlor for amusement. That led me to desire to play cards for money. Then I became a gamer, fell into vile company, went from bad to worse, until finally I committed the crime for which I am now under sentence of death." Playing cards for amusement in his own father's parlor was the first step that started Mr. Richards whirling down the inclined plane to ruin. Do not say there is no harm in your children playing cards in the home simply for amusement. That is where gamblers and murderers are made.

The most alarming tendency of the human race today is the downward drift. Men all around us the young, the middle-aged, and the old -- are drifting, drifting with fearful rapidity toward the rocks of despair. They are like the toboggan. At first it starts slowly, but the farther it goes, the faster it goes. A boat in the Niagara River may start very slowly at first; but it soon gets into the suck, and then no human power can stop it; with lightning speed it sweeps over the foaming cataract, and is dashed to pieces. A young man who yields to the vices of the age will soon find himself in the suck, and then no human power can save him. He will be at the bottom in a very short time.

Graduates of Harvard, Yale, and other universities are found throughout the wild West, and some of them are coarse, ugly, horribly profane, and physically low in their tastes. It is estimated that there are five hundred cowboys on the frontier that are graduates of first-class Eastern universities. Don't imagine that these cowboys out on the plains are all ignorant, stupid fellows. Many of them are bright, keen, and the ripest scholars. They yielded to sin and its evil influences, and they reached the lowest level in a very short time. "There is no descent so low as that which drops from the greatest height."

A stage-driver in a Western Territory was on his death-bed. He kept moving his foot from one side of the bed to the other. His wife said to him, "What is the matter?" "O," said he, "I am on an awful down-grade, and I can't get my foot on the brake." If you continue in sin, in a little while you will find yourself on the awful down-grade, with no power whatever to stop. Better stop now, before you reach the awful down-grade, when it will be impossible for you to stop. "It is time to seek the Lord."

III. It is time to seek the Lord because of your influence on others.

"No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." We are exerting an influence every day for good or for, evil that will tell upon the destinies of men forever.

A colonel on the field of battle was overwhelmed with the fear of death. He was wonderfully impressed with the steadiness of several Christian soldiers when under fire, especially with a corporal, who, after several standard-bearers had been shot down, seized the flagstaff, and, as he bore it to immediate death, calmly said to a comrade, "If I fall, tell my dear wife that I die with a good hope in Christ, glad to give my life for my country." "I can never forget that," said the colonel. "Never had anything influenced me like that. I want to become a Christian." He gave his heart to God, and made a public profession of the religion of the Lord Jesus.

Our influence, -- what a wonderful thing it is! What a mighty power we carry with us! This mighty power we can't shake off; we can't get rid of it. It clings to us, and will cling to us forever. Drop a pebble in the center of a lake, and it starts circling waves that widen and will roll on, and on, until they break upon the distant shore. So, by our words and acts and looks, we start waves of influence, for good or evil, that will roll on forever.

A woman who had circulated a slanderous report about a neighbor made a confession to her priest of what she had done. He gave her a ripe thistle-pod, and told her to go and scatter the seeds by the wayside. She did so, and then went back to the priest, and told him that she had obeyed his order. "Now," said the priest, "go back and gather up the scattered seeds and bring them to me. Overwhelmed with amazement, she said: "That is an utter impossibility. I scattered them by the wayside, and the wind has carried them I know not where. I never can find them." Said the priest, "Neither can you stop the evil influence of the false report you have circulated about your neighbor."

A dying man whose life had been spent in sin said, "O that my influence could be gathered up and buried with me!" But that was impossible. His body might be shrouded, and coffined, and buried, but not his influence. It walks the earth today like a raging pestilence, and will go on until arrested by the hand of the Almighty. Our influence is a light to illumine or a tempest to destroy.

IV. It is time to seek the Lord, because of the final results of sin. The power of sin is terrible in its results. Sin destroys faith; it destroys love, the most beautiful thing in the world; it destroys hope; it destroys the body; it destroys the soul. "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "There the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Hell, therefore, is eternal. Our lost friends are lost forever. Lost parents are lost forever; lost children are lost forever; lost husbands are lost forever; lost wives are lost forever.

When I was attending school at Greencastle, Indiana, in 1854, two men got into a quarrel in a drugstore, and one stabbed the other. I saw the poor man just after he fell. He lay upon the floor, weltering in his own blood. He had been a Christian, but was a backslider, and very wicked. His wife was a devoted Christian. As he lay there, life rapidly ebbing away, he said, "Send for my wife; I want to see her once more." A messenger was dispatched. In a little while she was there, and I saw her fall upon her knees by the side of her dying husband and utter a piercing cry that I never shall forget. "O who did it? Who killed my husband?" The dying man took his wife by the hand, and uttered but one sentence; that sentence he repeated over and over again, as he grew weaker and weaker, until in a faint whisper the words died away upon his expiring lips. That sentence was, "Farewell forever! Farewell forever!" He knew that the separation was an eternal separation. O the sad thought! Lost friends are lost forever.

Dr. Chalmers once called upon one of his parishioners, and found her in great trouble. On inquiry, he learned that she was in great distress of mind because of an unconverted daughter. Said she, "I talk to her all the time about religion, but I can't get her to become a Christian."

"Suppose you turn your daughter over to me," said the Doctor.

"All right," said the mother.

In a little while the daughter came in, and the mother rose and left the room. The Doctor said to her:

"Is not your mother giving you a great deal of trouble by constantly talking to you about religion? Suppose I say to her, 'Do not say one word to your daughter about religion for one year.' "

"Well," said the girl, "I might die before the end of one year."

"True," said the Doctor, "you might. Suppose I say to your mother, 'Do not say one word to your daughter about religion for six months.' "

She studied for a moment, and then said:

"I might die before the end of six months."

"That is so," said the Doctor, "life is very uncertain. Suppose I say to your mother, 'Do not say one word to your daughter about religion for three months.' "

Again she replied thoughtfully:

"I might die before the end of three months."

"Yes," said the Doctor, "you may die before tomorrow morning. Don't you think you had better give your heart to God now, and become a Christian?"

"I expect I had," said the girl.

"Well," said the Doctor, "get right down upon your knees."

She fell upon her knees at once, and the Doctor knelt and prayed, and, while he prayed, salvation came to her soul, and she arose rejoicing in a Savior's pardoning love.

My unconverted friend, you may die before the end of this year; you may die before the end of six months; you may die before the end of three months. Ah! you may die before tomorrow's sun rises. Don't you think you had better give your heart to God now? "Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." It is time now to seek the Lord.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 5 GOD'S INFINITE LOVE

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." -- John iii, 16.

We come to you with the old, old story of God's infinite love manifested to the children of men in the gift of His Son for the redemption of the world. This old, old story is always new, and always fresh, and always inspiring. The most beautiful thought in the world is love. There is no theme in all the wide realm of knowledge or fancy on which the mind can muse so inspiring, so uplifting, and that brings to the heart such perfect bliss, as love. We never tire hearing of love, or reading of love, or talking of love, or thinking of love. Did you ever love? Were you ever loved? Then you know something of the rapture of love; a bliss, a joy, a rapture no language can describe.

Henry Drummond says, "The greatest thing in the world is love." Eloquence is a great thing; the power to sway an audience at will. We have seen a great audience swayed under the power of the gifted orator, just as the trees of the forest are swayed in the midst of a mighty tempest. And yet, as great as eloquence is, love is greater. Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Prophecy is a great thing: the power to foretell future events. But love is greater than prophecy. "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing."

Faith is a great thing. We have all read of the wonderful achievements and victories of faith. And yet as great as faith is, love is greater. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing."

Love is greater than martyrdom. "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." (I Cor. xiii, 3.)

John says: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away." (I John ii, 16.) All these things will pass away. But when they are all gone, there will be one thing left, and that is love.

Love is not only the greatest thing in this world, but it is the greatest thing in all other worlds. John In his Epistle says, "God is love." (I John iv, 8.) Love is God's nature. The essence of the Almighty is love. God loves because it is His nature to love. It is the element of His being. He can't help but love. God loves to be patient with men, to wait for them, to pour His benevolence upon them, because that is His nature.

Why does the musician sing? Because it is the very nature of his organization to sing. His mind loves music, and it is as natural for him to sing as it is to breathe.

Why does the painter love to paint? Because painting is congenial to his organic nature.

Why does the orator feel the joys of speech? Because his whole nature is attuned to that operation.

Why is it, when you go into some homes that you see the children gathered around the aged grandmother, as she sits in her chair with her frilled cap, as white as snow on her head, and her spectacles lifted upon her brow? Why is it that the children are all drawn to her? Because she makes them happy. Why does she make them happy? Because her thoughts are all serene. She does not do it on purpose. She just pours out of herself the music of harmony, and it fills the child with joy. It is her nature to do so.

Why do the birds sing? It is their nature to sing. Why do the flowers bloom? It is their nature to bloom. Why does the sun shine? It is his nature to shine.

And why does God love? Because it is His nature to love. Why is He patient? Because it is His nature to be patient. Why is He forgiving? Because that is His nature. Why does He love you, though you are unworthy of His love? Because that is just the way the mind of God acts. And that this might be made manifest, He made the most sublime evidence of it in the gift of His Son, who came down into this world to live, and love, and suffer, and die for our salvation.

We sometimes make a great mistake by thinking we must do something to make God love us. We begin to look at ourselves, the little good we have done, our weak faith, our blunders, our infirmities, our mistakes and shortcomings, and with discouraged hearts we cry out, "God never can love such a faithless, blundering, sinful person as I am." How many make this mistake! It is a snare of the devil to keep us from going up to the loftiest heights of salvation.

Two little boys were playing together. One said to the other, "We must be good, or father won't love us." The father overheard the remark, and he called the boy to his side and said:

"Do you know what you have just said?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy.

"Well," said the father, "it is not true, my boy, not a bit true."

"Isn't it?" said the little fellow, very much surprised.

"No," said the father, "it's far from the truth."

"But you won't love us if we are not good, will you?" said the boy.

"Yes," said the father. "I can't help loving you. I shall love you for ever and ever, because I can't help it. When you are good, I love you with a love that makes me glad; and when you are not good, I love you with a love that hurts me; but I can't help loving you, because I am your father."

Well, God is our Father. And He loves us because He is our Father, and He can't help it.

I. God's love is great.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. lv, 9.)

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so is God's love higher than man's love. Human love is finite; Divine love is infinite. God has not only revealed Himself unto us as a God of love; He has not only declared that His very essence is love, but He has proved to the world, beyond even the shadow of a doubt, this great fact. He has given to the world a manifestation of His love so grand, so wonderful, so overwhelmingly glorious, that it will stand out before men and angels, not only through all time, but through all the ages of eternity. That manifestation was in the gift of His Son to die, that our ruined race might be lifted up out of sin and eternally saved.

Paul says: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." (Rom. v, 7.) The best we can expect from an earthly friend is, that he will give his life to save his friend. Christ says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv, 13.) This is the utmost extent of human love. It never goes beyond this. But God's love sweeps infinitely beyond all human love. God becomes incarnate, and dies, not for His friend, but for His enemies. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (John iv, 10.)

"He saw us ruined by the fall;  
He loved us notwithstanding all."

"Down from the shining seats above  
With joyful haste He sped,  
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,  
And dwelt among the dead.

O for such love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Savior's praises speak."

Guthrie, the eloquent divine, draws this picture of God's love in redemption: "Suppose a man lying in prison under sentence of death. The gallows and death are before him. He sends to the king a petition for pardon. He awaits the answer with anxious suspense. One day his ears catch rapid steps approaching his door -- they stop. The bolts are drawn, the key is turned, the door opens, and a messenger stands before him. The criminal turns ashy white, and with breathless silence listens to

hear his fate. The messenger says, 'The king pities the criminal, but can not pardon the crime.' The poor criminal wrings his hands, his brain reels, and he cries out, 'Then there is no hope; I must die.' The messenger draws near, and, laying his hand kindly on the poor fellow's shoulder, tells him that there is one way by which he may yet escape. If the king's son would change places with him, put these fetters on his own hands, and die in his place, that would satisfy justice and set him free. The king give up his son? The son, the prince royal, the heir of this great kingdom consent to die for a poor, guilty wretch like me? there is no hope but this, then there is no hope at all. But imagine, if you can, his astonishment and the joy that thrills his heart when that messenger says to him: 'I am the king's son. It is my own wish and my father's will that I should die for you. For this purpose am I come. For this purpose I left the palace, and have sought you in your dreary prison. Take the pardon, give me the fetters, the door opens, you are free.' Such love as that has never been known in all our world's history."

But just such love as that was manifested by God in the gift of His only begotten Son. It was the Son's wish and the Father's will that Jesus should die in our stead. He takes our place, He takes our manacles, He dies in our place, the prison door opens, and the portals of glory fly wide open for a lost world.

A lunatic was taken from his cell. On the wall of his cell were found these words:

"Could I with ink the ocean fill,  
Were every blade of grass a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God to man  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor would the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky."

Again: the greatness of God's love is seen in the forgiveness of sin. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi, 34.)

God does not forgive as man does. Men sometimes say, "I can forgive, but I can't forget." I am so glad that God does not forgive in that way. God forgives, and then He forgets. He remembers our sins no more forever. Our pardoned sins are as though they never had been. Glory be to God for ever and ever!

On the 4th day of March, 1853, God for Christ's sake forgave all my sins. Shall I ever forget that day? Never. The period of my conversion is fresher in my mind today than ever. The scenes of that wonderful event stand out before me more vividly now than ever. The greatness of that wonderful work becomes more and more luminous as the years go by. That was the day of all days to me, -- the day of my conversion to God. No event in all the history of my life is so great, so grand, so glorious as that. God then took me into His family, adopted me as His child, gave me the kiss of pardon, and placed His signet-ring upon my hand. Then we sang a new song, a song we had never sung before:

"My God is reconciled;  
His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for His child;  
I can no longer fear;  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And, 'Father, Abba, Father,' cry."

Another phase of God's love is seen in the lofty spiritual height to which promises to lift His children. This high plane is brought clearly to view in Paul's profound prayer for the Church at Ephesus: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. iii, 17-19.) In this wonderful prayer we have an idea of what God is willing to do for every one of His trusting children. He offers first to pardon, then to sanctify, then to fill with all the fullness of God.

God's dispensations all along the past have been graded. Each preceding dispensation has been better than the one last past. The world had first the Patriarchal, then the Mosaic, then the Prophetic, and then the Gospel Dispensation. Each new dispensation became better, brighter, and more and more luminous. So the steps of Divine grace are graded, one step rising above another, higher, and higher, and higher. First pardon, then purity, then grace upon grace. Then on, and up, and out through all eternity. If we live up to the light God gives us, there will be a constant unfolding -- an opening out into newer, richer, grander experiences forever.

A benevolent person gave Rowland Hill a hundred pounds to give to a poor minister, and, thinking it too much to send him all at once, Mr. Hill forwarded five pounds with simply these words in the envelope, "More to follow." In a few days he sent another five pounds with the same words, "More to follow." In a day or two after came a third, then a fourth, then a fifth, with the same words, "More to follow," and the surprised minister became familiar with the cheering words, "More to follow."

Every blessing that comes to us from the Almighty comes with the same cheering words, "More to follow." "I will forgive all your sins, but there is more to follow." "I will sanctify you wholly, but there is more to follow." "I will give you victory over every spiritual foe, but there is more to follow." "I will uphold you in the hour of death, but there is more to follow." And when you land in glory, I will restore to you the loved ones that long ago slipped away from you, and with them, hand in hand, and soul inwrought with soul, you may walk and talk and rejoice, without a tear, or a sigh, or a sorrow to ever dim or mar your glory; but there is more to follow. And never, in all the ages to come, will we reach a point but what there will be more to follow.

"More and more, more and more,  
Always more to follow."

II. God's love is unchanging. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Everything earthly is changing, but God remains the same from age to age. He says Himself, "I am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. iii, 6.)

Love being God's nature, His very essence, love therefore, in Him, can not change. Human love is often fickle, but God's love never. Earthly friends are not always reliable, but the friendship of the Almighty can always be relied on.

As long as you have plenty of money and are in prosperity, your earthly friends will cling to you. But let adversity come, and your money take wings and fly away, and your earthly friends may forsake you. If it is popular to be your friend, your friends will stand by you; but if it is not, they may betray and forsake you. Of course, there are noble exceptions. There always have been, and always will be, friends like Damon and Pythias, and David and Jonathan, and such only are true friends.

But God's love and friendship are unfailing. God never forsakes, never changes, never betrays. In the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah God asks a question, and then answers it: "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Mothers have been known to forsake their children, wives their husbands, and husbands their wives, but God has never been known to forsake His children. All others may forsake, but God never will.

Sinners sometimes think they are forsaken of God. But that is a mistake. God's love follows them down to the very last. As they go down in sin, step by step, lower and lower, if they would only listen they could hear the mild and pleading voice of God saying: "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?"

A few years ago, at an Epworth League Convention in Wahoo, I was royally entertained at the home of Brother Steen. Mrs. Cassell, a daughter; whose home was in San Antonio, Texas, was spending the winter with her parents. She was a devoted Christian, and loved to talk on the subject of religion. The day before I left she said to me, "Brother Davis, I want to tell you of the most wonderful conversion you ever heard of." "All right. I shall be glad to hear it." Said she: "Two years ago our pastor was holding revival services in our little church in San Antonio. There was a madam who had the largest and finest mansion in the city, and she had just put on an addition costing \$8,000. The building throughout was furnished in grand style. Well, the madam came out one night to our meeting, just to make sport and have a gay time. She took a seat near the door. We had a wonderful meeting. The power of God filled the house. Near the close of the meeting she arose, pale as death, and, trembling all over, said, 'O, will the members of this church pray for me?' The pastor assured her they would. She fell upon her knees in her pew, and in ten minutes was powerfully converted. Her conversion was so clear that it was manifest to everybody. Her face beamed with heavenly light. She went home, called her girls together, and told them that she had become a Christian, and from that time on she intended to live a different life, and all who would follow her and reform might remain, and she would see that they would never want for anything; but if they were not willing to give up sin, they must leave at once. The most of the girls left, only a few remained and changed their lives. Then she converted that fine mansion into a Rescue Home, and went to work rescuing the fallen. Every Thursday afternoon she had a general prayer-meeting, and

the most powerful prayer-meetings I ever attended in my life were in that mansion. She had a husband; but, of course, they were not living together. He kept a ranch up in the mountains. The secular papers gave an account of her conversion. They announced in large head lines, 'Madam Blank converted, and her fine mansion converted into a Rescue Home, and given to the Methodist Episcopal Church.' One day the husband took up the daily paper, and read with interest and surprise the thrilling story of his wife's conversion. He took the first train, and, on reaching the city, went directly to his wife's mansion. She greeted him with a smile, took him into her sitting-room, and gave him an account of her marvelous conversion. Then she asked him to let her pray for him. He knelt down, and she bowed at his side, and, with the open Bible, read and prayed for two hours, when he was just as powerfully converted as she herself had been. Then he paid off a large mortgage on the building, and joined his wife in the rescue work. That woman and her husband are highly respected by everybody in San Antonio, and there are no two persons in all that region of the country that are doing more good than they are doing."

That woman had been forsaken by her parents, forsaken by her relatives, forsaken by her husband, and was an outcast in society; but she was not forsaken by God. His love followed her, and the very moment she said, "I will quit sin and accept Christ," that very moment she was saved. O the wondrous love of God! It is like an ocean, without a bottom or a shore. Hallelujah!

I know it is often said, "God is too good to send any one to hell." God don't send men to hell. He never did. He never will. But men send themselves there. God is doing all He possibly can to keep men out of hell. But God can't save men unless they repent and accept Christ as their Savior. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life." If men are lost, it is because they will not come unto Christ and be saved.

During his first evangelistic tour through England, Mr. Moody became acquainted with a young man by the name of Moorehouse. The young man became very much attached to Mr. Moody, and one day said to him, "Mr. Moody, when you go back to America, I want to go with you." Mr. Moody was not prepossessed with the young man's appearance, and did not care to have him return with him to America. So when he got ready to sail he said nothing about it to the young man.

Some months after Mr. Moody reached home he received a letter from Mr. Moorehouse, saying, "I am in New York City, and will be in Chicago next week and will preach for you." The next week Mr. Moody was called away from home. He told the officers of his Church about the young man, and requested them to let him preach when he came. Mr. Moody reached home Saturday night. He was nervous and anxious to hear about Moorehouse. His wife said: "He is a splendid preacher. Everybody likes him." So Mr. Moody invited him to preach the next day. Mr. Moorehouse arose, and announced his text, third chapter of John, sixteenth verse: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." A smile went all over the congregation. When they reached home Mr. Moody asked his wife why the people smiled when Mr. Moorehouse announced his text. "Why," said she, "that was the same text he preached from last night." Mr. Moody was delighted, and thought he had never heard a better sermon in his life. He invited the young man to preach the next night. The next night he arose and announced his text, third chapter of John, sixteenth verse: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And for seven nights in succession he preached from the same text. Said Mr. Moody: "I never heard anything like it. God's love stood out before me in a light I never saw it before. It seemed to me there was nothing else in the whole Bible but God's love."

The young man closed his last sermon by saying: "I have been trying to tell you for seven nights, now, how Christ loves you; but I can not do it. If I could borrow Jacob's ladder and climb up to heaven, and could see Gabriel there, and ask him to tell me how much God loves me, he would only say: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' " It seems to me, as it did to Mr. Moorehouse, if men could only be convinced of God's infinite love for them the whole world would be saved.

What influence should God's love have upon us?

I. It ought to produce in our hearts gratitude. God's love so wonderfully manifested to us should make our whole lives a song of praise and thanksgiving.

2. God's love for us should produce a willing obedience to all His commands. Christ said to the Father, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." (Psa. iv, 8.) It was the Savior's delight to leave His home in glory, come down into this world, suffer and die, that the will of the Father might be accomplished, and a lost, straying, fallen world rescued and brought back to God. The Father willingly gave His Son, the Son willingly came upon His mission of disinterested love and benevolence.

My unconverted friend, all this was done for you. Should not this love -- love unbounded, love unparalleled in all the wide world's history -- be returned by a willing obedience to every one of the divine commands? God is now saying, "Give me thy heart." "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." God is now saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yield to these inspiring invitations; make the surrender now. Take Christ now as your Savior, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding will flood your soul.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## **Chapter 6** **THE PULPIT AND THE PEW**

Our subject is "The Pulpit and the Pew," and we have selected two texts. The first you will find in Ezekiel, third chapter and seventeenth verse. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me." The second you will find in Second Thessalonians, third chapter and first verse: "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified."

The minister of the gospel is a watchman. He is a watchman by Divine appointment. He receives his message direct from the Almighty, and divers that message to the people. The members of the Church should pray that the word received from God and delivered to them may have free course and be glorified.

The visible Church of Christ on earth is a congregation of faithful men and women, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered. To constitute this Church, two things are absolutely necessary -- an administrator and subjects. In every complete Church, therefore, there is a pulpit and there are pews -- a minister and members.

The minister has great and hallowed privileges; the members of the Church have great and hallowed privileges as well. The minister has duties to perform; so also have the members. Grave and weighty responsibilities rest upon every man called of God to preach the gospel. I tremble when I think of the tremendous responsibilities resting upon me as a messenger of the Most High God. Just as grave and weighty responsibilities rest upon every member of the Church. The duties, the privileges, the responsibilities are no greater on the one hand than on the other. They rest with equal weight upon pastor and members.

The two great elements of the Church's power are the pulpit and the pew. Let us look for a little while at these two great factors of moral power.

I. Let us look at the pulpit.

What should a minister of the gospel be?

I. The minister should be converted. He should know with absolute certainty that his sins are all forgiven. It is a sad and painful thought, yet nevertheless true, that there are ministers of the gospel in the pulpits of the land that are not converted. So, we say, the minister should know, without even the shadow of a doubt, that he is saved from sin. Without this knowledge, the clear and indubitable evidence of his own salvation, he will not know how to sympathize with the unsaved all around him. But if he has this knowledge, his heart will go out in intense, earnest, longing desire for the salvation

of others. And not only will his heart go out in intense desire for the salvation of others, ut he will be ready to get down to right hard work, and make sacrifices in order to save them.

I remember once to have read of a traveler who stood by the cages of some birds that were offered for sale. These birds ruffled their sunny plumage upon the wires, and struggled to get free. The traveler was wayworn and sun-browned. He gazed for some time upon the captives, when tears started in his eyes. Turning to the owner, he asked the price of one, then paid it in strange gold, opened the door, and let the captive go. And thus he did with captive after captive, till every bird was away to the skies, singing upon the wings of liberty. The crowd that had gathered around was amazed at his strange procedure and asked for an explanation. He replied, "I was once myself a captive, and I know the sweets of liberty."

The man who has been brought from moral darkness to spiritual light, from the power of sin and Satan unto God, has felt the serpent's fearful bite, and the awful agony of his venomous sting, and then on the other hand, by faith in Jesus Christ, has had the sting extracted, the fearful bite healed, and has the light, the peace, the liberty of a soul delivered from the thralldom of sin, -- he only knows how to sympathize with those all around him in bondage to Satan.

No angel in heaven is so well qualified to be a minister of the gospel as a redeemed and converted man. No wonder, then, that with burning enthusiasm and untiring zeal he goes forth to liberate the prisoner of sin; for "he once was a captive," and he "knows the sweets of liberty."

## 2. A minister should be divinely called.

God said to the Prophet Ezekiel, "I have made thee a watchman." The tribe of Levi was a tribe of priests by Divine appointment. The prophets were prophets by Divine appointment. The apostles, under the gospel dispensation, were apostles by Divine appointment. They were called, commissioned, and sent forth by Christ to preach His gospel. And every true minister of the gospel today is a minister by Divine appointment. To be efficient he must be God-made. Colleges and universities can not make a minister. They may aid in qualifying him for his work, but they never can make a true minister. There are college-made preachers in many pulpits, but they are not soul-winners. Their churches are like ice-houses, and sinners in and all about them are dropping into hell.

The inward impression is made upon the heart of the young man called of God to preach by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. This is the first call.

The second call is from the Church, and this is Divine as well as the first, for the Church is a Divine institution. So it sometimes occurs that, while the young man on whose heart the Divine impression has been made that he must preach is thinking of what is to be his life work, he is startled by having some good old member of the Church, deeply versed in Divine things, lay his hand on his shoulder and say, "Brother, do you not feel that God has a work for you to do?" He looks up with surprise, and is ready to say, "Why do you ask that question?" Then he opens his mind, and makes the frank confession. The Church takes up his case, and authority is given him to preach. And then, like Isaiah, whose lips had been touched with the live coal from off the altar, he says to God and the

Church, "Here am I; send me." With fear and trembling he enters the sacred desk, and through his feeble instrumentality souls are converted. He has now reached the third stage. He has three arguments, clear, strong, overwhelming, proving beyond the shadow of a doubt his Divine call: First, the inward impression; second, the outward call of the Church; third, the salvation of souls. He now has his diploma, as Bishop Simpson says, signed and sealed by God Almighty.

No man has any right to enter the sacred desk unless "called of God as was Aaron;" unless he feels as did Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Today, as in all ages of the past, God calls, commissions, and sends men forth to preach His gospel. The absolute necessity of a Divine call to fit men for the ministry is clearly brought out by Paul in the tenth chapter of Romans: "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" A man must have Divine authority and Divine unction in order to preach the gospel with success; and without the Divine authority and unction his message will be as the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal."

Paul said to the Galatians: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." There is not a spark of human invention in it, nor the slightest touch of human cunning. No man taught me what I have preached to you. The message came direct from the Almighty. The minister, conscious of His Divine call, goes into the pulpit feeling that behind him is the Lord God Omnipotent.

3. The great work of the minister is to preach, and in order to do this effectively he must study. Paul said to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The pulpit should be the minister's throne of power. It can not be a throne of power without intense, earnest, and prolonged study. Some people think that the office of the minister in a sinecure, and all he has to do is to draw his pay, and loiter away his time in ease and pleasure. They have not the remotest idea of the vast amount of labor devolving upon the true pastor. Many think the preacher has nothing to do during the week, and all he has to do on the Sabbath is to go into the pulpit, open his mouth, and the Lord will fill it. Sam Jones says some preachers down in Georgia believe that, and act accordingly. "They go into the pulpit, open their mouths, and God fills them -- with air. There are a great many little air-guns going around in Georgia." There are some of that sort in the North, as well as in the South. The majority of the people are ignorant of the great amount of labor that is required in order to prepare one sermon for the pulpit. The successful minister must do as Paul told Timothy to do -- "Study."

4. As the minister preaches to all classes, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the young and the old, he should aim to preach so that every one under the sound of his voice can understand him.

When Christ was on earth He taught so that every one could understand Him. The children understood Him. The poor and the uneducated understood Him. Hence it was said, "The common people heard Him gladly." And every minister of the gospel should imitate His example. God, in His Word, has commanded us to preach so as to be understood by all the people. He has positively

prohibited our preaching in an "unknown tongue." That positive interdiction you will find in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air."

I have heard ministers who had the reputation of being profoundly wise and learned, "speak into the air." Not one in ten who heard them understood them. I did not understand them, and I even doubted whether they themselves understood what they were talking about. High-sounding and meaningless phrases in the pulpit are disgusting. Glittering generalities and platitudes from the pulpit are the things that many of our people have to endure from Sabbath to Sabbath. The great and most profoundly wise and deeply spiritual are the most simple, plain, and easily understood.

A working man once went to hear Bishop Tillotson, a learned and popular English divine, preach. After the sermon the man said: "And that is one of your great bishops! Why, I understood every word he said." The bishop heard of it, and was delighted with the high compliment.

I once heard Bishop Bowman say that the highest compliment ever paid him was by an old colored man down in Kentucky. When president of Asbury University he was invited to go down and dedicate a church. After he had preached, an old colored man walked down the aisle, and up into the pulpit, shook hands with him, and said: "Well, Doctor, you are the most ignorantest man I ever heard preach. I understood every word you said." "That," said the bishop, "was the highest compliment ever paid me by any one."

Christ's charge to Peter was intended for His ministers throughout all ages, "Feed My sheep;" "Feed My lambs." The minister should place the feed within the reach of the lambs as well as the older sheep.

5. The minister must visit from house to house. He may be eloquent and preach like an angel; but if he does not do the work of a pastor, his ministry, to an extent at least, will be a failure. The preachers in the primitive Church were pastors. They visited from house to house. Luke tells us that the first apostles commissioned by Christ and sent forth to preach, taught everywhere. "Daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to preach Jesus Christ." Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, "Ye know how I kept nothing back that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house." The minister who can not visit had better leave the pulpit and take up some other occupation.

6. The minister should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Christ said to the apostles, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Just before He ascended to heaven He said to His apostles, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." That command they obeyed. They tarried, they prayed, they believed, until the Holy Ghost in His strange and mysterious power fell upon them. Then they went everywhere preaching the Word, and no one could resist the power with which they spoke. If the first apostles needed that baptism, ministers now need it as well; and if the ministers today are baptized as the first apostles were, then, as the burning words of Divine, truth emanate from their lips, the Holy Ghost will carry them to the hearts of the people, and none will be able to resist their power.

A congregation had assembled for worship. The hour for service had arrived. But the preacher was not present. That preacher was the saintly John Fletcher. He was a man of prayer. History tells us that his knees were callous, and the wall before which he kneeled was stained with his breath from his long continuance in prayer. A messenger was sent to tell Fletcher that the congregation was waiting for him. The messenger returned, and said to those who sent him: "He is in his room talking with some one. I overheard him say, 'I will not go unless You go with me.' " In a little while he came, and the other One came with him. He preached, and the congregation was moved and melted under his powerful and overwhelming appeals, and many were saved. What we need as ministers, over and above and beyond all other things, is "the other One." O God, may Thy ministering servants all over the land never go into their pulpits unless "The other One" goes with them!

7. Finally, the minister must marry the young, bury the dead, visit the sick, comfort the dying, and have poured into his ears the troubles and sorrows of all the people. I have often cried out with Paul, as the responsibilities and burdens of the pastorate with crushing weight have pressed upon me,

"Who is sufficient for these things?"  
'Tis not a cause of small import  
The pastor's care demands,  
But what might fill an angel's heart,  
And filled a Savior's hands."

While the responsibilities of the pastor are grave and weighty, and his labors arduous and unremitting, there is no work on this planet that brings more real joy and satisfaction to the heart. "The lowest pulpit on earth is higher than the highest throne." A happier class of men can not be found anywhere than the faithful ministers of the gospel.

I have thus given a brief outline of what the minister should be and do.

II. Let us look, in the second place, at the other side of this question. What should the members of the Church be and do?

I. The members of the Church should be converted. Church membership alone will not give you a title to heaven. Something more than that is required. You may belong to the Church, you may have been baptized, you may attend the sacrament, you may go through all the rounds of religious worship, and not be saved at all. Thousands in the Churches have the form only, but are without the power of godliness. They have a name to live, and at the same time are dead in trespasses and in sin. In the last great day many members of the Church, and many ministers of the gospel as well, will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" But the Judge will say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." If it be absolutely necessary that there be piety in the pulpit, it is just as necessary that -- there should be piety in the pew. If the minister should be religious, so also should the members be.

If your title is not clear to a mansion in the skies, you had better examine that title. A single link missing in the chain shadows the title. See to it that the chain is without a missing link -- that the title

is perfect. Then you may bid farewell to every fear, and wipe your weeping eyes. If you are converted, and the Spirit of God bears witness with your spirit that you are saved, then you will feel as the pastor feels touching the unsaved all around you. Your hearts will go out with intense, earnest, longing desire for their salvation; and you will be ready to make sacrifices and go out after these unsaved ones. Then we shall have as many preachers as there are members. Every member of the Church will be a flaming herald of salvation.

2. The members should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If it is necessary that the minister be baptized with the Holy Ghost, it is just as necessary that the members have this same wondrous Baptism. Turn, if you please, to that upper-room scene in Jerusalem, recorded in the first chapter of Acts.

Luke tells us that not only were the eleven apostles there, but Mary was there, and other women were there, and the brethren were there, in all about one hundred and twenty. "These all continued of one accord in prayer and supplication;" and all received the same fiery baptism. If it were necessary in that early day for the members of the Church to receive the wonderful baptism of the Holy Ghost to qualify them for their work, it is just as necessary now. Sin and Satan and the world and human nature are the same now as they were nineteen hundred years ago, and the only possible power that can cope with these tremendous forces of evil is Divine power. So if you would be more than a match for your great enemy, you must be clothed with panoply divine.

The promise made by Christ to the hundred and twenty, and fulfilled in that upper room at Jerusalem, is made to us as well. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." And if we comply with the conditions as the hundred and twenty did -- wait, and pray, and believe -- we shall realize the fulfillment of the promise.

It is hardly possible for us to estimate the vast amount of good a Church would accomplish in any community if all the members had this heavenly anointing.

3. The members of the Church should pray "that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." "Brethren, pray for us."

Charles G. Finney gives an account of a pastor who had a revival in his Church for fourteen years in succession; and the reason he had this constant and marvelous revival was, all the members of his Church were constantly praying for him; and in answer to their united prayers every obstacle was swept out of the way, the word of the Lord had free course, and God was glorified.

Dr. Chapman held union evangelistic meetings in Lincoln some years ago. He had been in the evangelistic work but a short time. The last charge he was pastor of was in Philadelphia. The first Sunday he spent in his new charge, he went to the church in the morning two hours before service. He said he was anxious to see the building and the auditorium where he was to hold forth from Sabbath to Sabbath. He walked down the long aisle, went up into the pulpit, and surveyed the large audience-room. Then he walked down the steps on the other side of the pulpit, passed up the aisle, and near the door he met a man, not prepossessing in his looks at all. The man took him by the hand and said:

"What is your name?"

"My name is Chapman."

"Are you our pastor?"

"I guess I am."

"You are a very young man to be the pastor of such a great Church as this."

"Yes, I am young, and I shall not succeed unless I have the Lord Jesus with me all the time," said the Doctor.

"Well," said the brother, "another member of this Church and I have just been praying for you out in the lecture-room; and just a few moments ago we banded ourselves together to pray every day for you that you might be a soul-winner."

"O," said the Doctor, "those words thrilled me through and through. They came to me as an inspiration. I never had anything do me so much good in my life. Two hours afterwards I went into the pulpit, and as I looked over the vast congregation that had assembled to hear me, I said to myself, 'I know that two persons in this audience are praying for me; and I preached that morning, as otherwise I could not have preached.'" Said the Doctor: "The two became ten, the ten became twenty, the twenty became fifty, the fifty became a hundred, the hundred became five hundred. And I know that five hundred men and women are praying for me every day that I may be a soul-winner."

"Well," said I to myself, "no wonder you succeed. No true minister of the gospel could fail, backed by the prayers of five hundred godly men and women."

Brethren, pray for us, that the Word which we preach may have free course and be glorified.

Then, we should remember that we have much to do in answering our own prayers. If the sinner prays for pardon he has something to do in having that prayer answered. He must stop sin, unconditionally surrender himself to God, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christians pray that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, they have something to do in answering that prayer.

A little boy, after hearing his father pray that the wants of the poor might be supplied, said to him:

"Father, I wish I had your corn."

"Well, my son," said the father, "what would You do if you had my corn?"

"I would answer your prayer," replied the boy.

We pray that the heathen may speedily be given to Christ for an inheritance. We can do much in answering that prayer ourselves. If we would have that prayer answered, we must turn a part of our income into the Lord's treasury. So when we pray that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, we should remember that we have much to do in answering that prayer.

First, we may aid in answering that prayer by inviting the people to come to the house of God, where they can hear the message of salvation. Many a soul has been saved by simply being asked to go to Church.

A young man in the city of London was on his way to the theater. A friend met him and said, "We are having a great revival in our Church; come with me tonight and hear the evangelist." The young man studied for a moment, and then said, "I will." Instead of going to the theater, he went to the revival, was convicted, and that very night was gloriously converted, and afterwards became an eminent minister of the gospel. A simple invitation to go to Church saved that young man, and gave to England one of her greatest divines.

The subject of personal work was being discussed at a prayer-meeting in Trinity Church, where my family bold their membership. A lady, one of the leading members of the Church, arose and said: "Years ago I kept boarders. A young lady came to board with me. She was a society girl. She was passionately fond of the theater, the ball-room, and cards. Nearly every night she was out at some social gathering. One night, when preparing to go to prayer-meeting, something said to me, 'Invite Miss Blank to go with you to prayer-meeting.' Then the suggestion came, 'O, she is a society girl; she won't go if you do ask her, and she won't thank you for asking her;' so I did not ask her. The next Thursday night, while preparing for prayer-meeting, the same thought came to me, 'Invite Miss Blank to go to prayer-meeting.' Then the same suggestion came. 'She don't care anything about the Church. Her mind is all on the world, and she won't go if you do ask her.' Then the thought came to me, 'This is the suggestion of the devil, and I won't yield to it as I did a week ago.' So, having finished my toilet, I went down stairs, entered her room, and said, 'Miss Blank, I am going to prayer-meeting tonight; won't you go with me? I shall be delighted to have you go.' She looked up into my face with surprise, and drawing a long breath she replied: 'Yes, I will. I have been wondering and wondering why you did not ask me before.' We went to the prayer-meeting, and after that, every time I went, she went, and in four weeks was converted, and for years she has been one of the most devoted Christians and active workers in the Church I ever knew." The good you may do by simply inviting a person to go to Church, or a child to go to the Sunday-school, can not possibly be estimated. The weakest member of the Church can do this, and, in doing so, will hasten the glad day of the world's conversion.

A friend of mine once entertained Ralph Wells, the great Sunday-school worker, in his own home for three days. While there, my friend said to him, "Mr. Wells, tell me how you became such a great Sunday-school worker." "I shall be glad to do so," said Mr. Wells, and then went on: "The next Sunday after I was converted I went to the Sunday-school superintendent, and said to him, 'Now I have been converted, and I want to do something for the Lord. I want you to give me a class in your Sunday-school.' The superintendent replied: 'I can't give you a class. You don't know enough to teach in my school.' I was chagrined and mortified, and went away feeling very bad. The next Sunday I went back, and said to the superintendent: 'Now, Mr. Superintendent, the Lord has done a great

work for me, and I feel that I must work for him. Won't you, give me a class in your school?' 'No, I will not,' said he; 'I told you last Sabbath that you did not know enough to teach in my school.' 'Well, now, Mr. Superintendent,' said I, 'if I go out and hunt up a class, and bring them here, will you let me teach them in your school?' And absolutely he hesitated for a few moments, but finally said, 'Well, if you will go out and hunt up a class of new scholars, I guess you may teach them in my school.'

"The next day I started out. There was a widow who lived in a fine, palatial residence near the church. She had a boy, and I was well acquainted with him. He was the meanest boy I ever knew. I think he was the vilest wretch in all the city. I walked up the stone steps and rang the bell. A servant opened the door and invited me in. I asked for the lady of the house. In a little while she came into the parlor where I was sitting, and I arose and said to her: 'I have come to ask you if you will not let your boy come to our Sunday-school.' 'No, I won't. Boys learn more meanness in the Sunday-school than anywhere else.' Then I felt very bad, and wished I had not come. I took my hat, walked out the door, passed down the stone steps, and when I reached the sidewalk the door opened, and the lady called me back. I went back, and she said to me: 'Now, if my boy should go to your Sunday-school, who will be his teacher? If he goes, I want to know who is to be his instructor.' It seemed to me, at first, that I could not tell her, if he went to the Sunday-school, that I would be his teacher. But after hesitating a moment, I finally said, 'Well, Madam, if your boy goes to our Sunday-school I expect to teach him myself.' 'Well,' said she, 'if you will be his teacher I will let him go. He will be there next Sunday.' And the next Sunday I had a class in that Sunday-school. I had only one scholar, and he was that boy. I spent the whole hour telling him my experience. I told him how wonderfully the Lord had converted my soul, and how happy the religion of Christ made me; and I told him that if he would just give his heart to Christ, God would save him just as He had saved me, and make him just as happy as He had made me. That Sunday night I saw that boy converted, and from that day to this he has been my co-laborer in the great Sunday-school work. He has led thousands of children to Christ for salvation. My success in leading that boy to Christ made me the Sunday-school worker that I am."

The simple invitation of Ralph Wells for that mother to let her boy go to the Sunday-school started waves of influence for good that will widen and roll on forever. Any man, or woman, or child can do as much as Ralph Wells did, -- invite some one to go to the Sunday-school, and, in so doing, you may aid in answering your prayer, that "the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."

Then, you may aid in answering your own prayers by speaking to the unsaved about the salvation of their souls.

An eminent minister of the gospel tells this story on himself: "When a young man attending college, and preparing for the ministry, I had a room-mate who was not a Christian. One day he said to me, 'There is one thing I can not possibly understand.' 'Well, what is it?' said I. 'You profess to be a Christian,' said he, 'and are preparing for the ministry, and I have been your room-mate for three years, and you have never said a word to me about the salvation of my soul.' I never had such a rebuke in my life. I thought it would kill me. I got down on my knees, the tears streaming down my

face, and asked him to forgive me. Then I talked to him about his soul, and urged him to become a Christian. In three weeks he was converted."

A little girl said to her grandfather, who was eighty years old, "Grandpa, why don't you get religion and prepare for heaven?" The words went to his heart with wondrous power. He at once gave his heart to God, and was converted. Then he said: "I am eighty years old, and no one in all these years ever said a word to me about my soul's salvation except my granddaughter." What a shame!

There are hungry souls all about us, and they wonder why Christians do not speak to them about their salvation. If our religion is worth anything, it is worth personally recommending to others. Talk to the unsaved about their souls. A single word has led many a soul into the kingdom. The best fruit I have ever picked for the Master has been hand-picked fruit. Every member of the Church may do this kind of work, and in so doing will augment the company of the redeemed in glory.

The final glorification of the Word will be, when pastors and members meet on the plains of glory. Paul said to the Philippians, "Ye are my joy and crown." Those won to Christ through his instrumentality would be the crown of his rejoicing in the heavenly world. To the Corinthians he said, "We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." In the last great day, when the world's history shall wind to a close, and the redeemed millions shall gather around the great white throne, then pastor and people will rejoice together. Some you have been instrumental in leading to Christ have gone home, others are on their way, and others may follow. The time comes on apace when you will all meet to part no more forever.

"What a meeting, what a meeting that will be!"

St. John was upon the isle of Patmos "for the word of the Lord and the testimony of Jesus Christ." He was banished to this lonely, rocky island, in the midst of the Aegean Sea, by Nero, because he was a faithful witness of the Lord Jesus. While here he was carried away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, where he beheld the city of the New Jerusalem. I have often been deeply impressed with John's wonderful description of that city. I have often thought of the gates of the city. This golden city had twelve gates. "On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; on the west, three gates." (Rev. xxi, 13.)

The heavenly city has gates on every side. Away over in the east yonder, it may be, some of your spiritual children lie buried. Some of their dusty beds may be in the north and some in the east, some in the south and some in the west. By and by you will be called home, and by and by your children will be called home.' In the last great day, when Gabriel's trump shall call Christ's saints to the skies, those coming up from the -- east will enter the east gate, those from the north the north gate, those from the south the south gate; and those from the west the west gate. From every point of the compass they will come, and enter in through the gates into the celestial city.

Earth is the seed-time; eternity will be the harvest. We may now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, but we shall come again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. We may sow in tears, but we shall reap in joy. To the ill-worn laborer in Christ's vineyard, whether he be a pastor or private

member, the outlook is grand, inspiring, glorious. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii, 3.)

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 7 THE OUT-AND-OUT CHRISTIAN

"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." -- John ix, 25

Early one morning, nineteen hundred years ago, in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus, the Son of God, went into the Temple. Crowds followed Him, and soon that vast building was packed to its utmost capacity with an eager, restless, nervous throng. Curiosity touching the Savior was on tiptoe. His fame had already become world-wide. His startling declarations, His wonderful miracles, His lofty teachings, had stirred all Jerusalem and all the regions round about. All day long He had been teaching the people, confounding the scribes and Pharisees. And when these scribes and Pharisees could no longer hold an argument with Him; when foiled at every attempt to answer Him; when, to every question asked and argument advanced, He completely turned the tables on them, they became indignant, every vile passion was aroused, and as the wicked always do when defeated in argument, resort to abuse, so these scribes and Pharisees, having utterly failed to answer any of the Savior's arguments or questions, resorted to the low methods of the vilest of the vile. They began to hurl stones at Him; but the Savior eluded them, slipped out of the Temple, and was safe.

"And as he passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth." He spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, anointed the eyes of the blind man, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The blind man went and washed, and came seeing. The people that beheld the miracle were astonished, and said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said he was; others said he was not. Then they said to him, "How were thine eyes opened?" He replied, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight." Then the Pharisees began to question him, "How did you receive your sight?" The restored blind man said, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." Still they were not satisfied, and they called in his parents, and said to them, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?" The parents replied: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But by what means he now seeth we know not. He is of age; ask him." Then they said, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. The restored blind man replied, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

I. The out-and-out Christian is an implicit in Christ.

Read the history of this blind man, and you will find that he had unshaken faith in the Savior. The language of this man was, "I believe," and this is the language of every out-and-out Christian, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, horn of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day; He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge

the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the one universal Church of Christ, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. I believe there is a real God, a real devil, a real heaven, and a real hell."

But more: the out-and-out Christian has not only this general faith, but he has a specific faith. "I believe in Jesus Christ as my personal, present, perfect, and complete Savior. He saves me from sin, guilt, condemnation, and all fear; and I know that He who now so wonderfully saves me, will ultimately save me forever in glory."

## II. The out-and-out Christian is obedient.

When Christ anointed the eyes of the blind man, and commanded him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, he obeyed. He went and washed. He did not cavil. He did not stop to argue the question. He did not say, as he might have said, "Now, Lord, this is a very unreasonable command. It is much more reasonable that clay should put a man's eyes out than restore them." No; he said no such thing. The very instant the command was given, without one moment's hesitation, he obeyed; he went and washed, and came seeing. Christ is our Teacher, our Guide, our Great Commander. The out-and-out Christian is obedient to every command given. "To obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Sam. xv, 22.)

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii, 21.)

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. xxii, 14.)

"Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (I John iii, 22.)

Christ was obedient to the Father. We are to be obedient to the Father and the Son. Paul says: "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. v, 8, 9.)

The world will never forget that little boy, the son of the commander of the "Orient". Before the battle of the Nile, the captain of the ship placed his little son, only thirteen years old, on duty, and said to him, "Remain here until you receive orders from me to leave." Soon after the father was slain. The boy knew nothing of the fate of his father. The battle raged fearfully. At length the ship took fire, and when the sailors and soldiers were preparing to leave the ship, the boy cried out, "Father, may I go?" No response came from his dead father. The flames were rapidly approaching the noble boy, when again he cried, "Father, may I go?" No response came. When the flames reached him, and were curling about him, singeing his hair and scorching his clothes, he cried out again, "Father, may I go?" No response came. And there the boy stood at the post of duty, and perished in the flames. The obedience of that loving boy, although it cost him his life, has been honored and admired by all the thousands who have read the thrilling incident.

Those who are obedient to every command given by the Great Captain of our salvation will be honored and admired and applauded by God and Christ and the angels and the redeemed millions in glory, not only throughout all time, but through all the ages of eternity.

"My son, give me thy heart." Obedience to that command is the first step in the heavenly pathway. The will, the heart, the life must be surrendered to God.

A traveling man relates the following:

"Soon after taking my seat in a railway car the conductor came along and punched my ticket, marked me with his eye, and passed on. As he was again leisurely passing, I said:

" 'Conductor, I'm a conductor.'

" 'You a conductor?' he said.

" 'Yes, on the Celestial Railway. Have you a through ticket?'

" 'I fear not,' he replied.

" 'You had better get one, or you will be put off the train before you get into the city.'

" 'May I ask you a question?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Do you ever pray?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Does your wife hear you?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'I'll tell you,' he said. 'I've started recently, but in a quiet way. I haven't joined the Church, or been baptized, and don't think I will be.'

" 'But,' I replied, 'that is the order of the General Superintendent of the Celestial Railway, and you can't expect favors on this line unless you obey orders; have to obey orders, or quit be road.'

" 'I guess that's so,' he said, thoughtfully, and added, 'but it is a long, hard struggle.'

" 'So it seemed to me once,' I replied, 'but I have learned better. It is a matter of perfect obedience; at that point the struggle ends. It is all up-grade till we get there.'

"And I was so glad to be able to tell him I had struck down-grade, the struggle was over, and the way bright and beautiful. There was call for a station, and as he turned to leave, as though new light had come to him, with a smile he said, 'I think you 're right.' "

Reader, have you struck down-grade? If not, obey, and you will strike it; then all will be easy.

When the late Earl Cairns was a little boy he heard three words which made a memorable impression upon him: "God claims you." Then came the question, "What am I going to do with the claim?" He answered, "I will own it, and give myself to God." He went home and told his mother, "God claims me. At school and college his motto was, "God claims me." As a member of Parliament, and ultimately as lord chancellor, it was still "God claims me." When he was appointed lord chancellor he was teacher of a large Bible-class, and his minister, thinking that now he would not have time to devote to that purpose, said to him: "I suppose you will now require to give up your class?" "No," was the reply, "I will not; God claims me."

Reader, God claims you. What are you going to do with the claim? Better acknowledge the claim, and surrender yourself forever to God.

III. Being an implicit believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and obedient to every command, the out-and-out Christian is, in the third place, a changed man.

How different this blind man was after he believed and obeyed, from what he was before he believed and obeyed! Before he believed and obeyed he was blind. He had never seen the smiling faces of loved ones, and had never looked upon the beauties and glories of the natural world. After he believed and obeyed, his eyes were opened, and for the first time in his life he was permitted to see; and the beautiful scenes and ravishing splendors that met him on every hand must have been overwhelmingly glorious.

So the out-and-out Christian has met with a marked change. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v, 17.) This change, therefore, is called a new creation. Then it is called a new birth: "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." (John iii, 3.) These are great changes -- marvelous changes; and when they occur, the person on whom they are wrought is sensible of the great change.

Every out-and-out Christian can say with this restored blind man, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." "I know that my sins are forgiven; I know I am a child of God and an heir of glory; I know that, if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I know. No uncertainty here. Reader, do you know? If not, don't rest until you do know.

Now, the evidence of this change does not come to every one in the same way; hence the experience of Christians differs. To some the evidence of this change is instantaneous. It is like the electric flash from the thunder-cloud. They can point to the very day, and the very hour, and the very moment when the change came. With others it is different. They can not tell just when and where the change was wrought. They are like the blind man our Savior took by the hand and led out of the

town. He put His hands on him and asked if he saw. "I see," said he, "men as trees walking." That is, he saw dimly, not distinctly. The Savior put his hands on him the second time; and he saw every man clearly.

One man can say, "On Monday, the fourth day of March, 1852, in the town of South Bend, Indiana, at nine o'clock P. M., God, for Christ's sake, pardoned all my sins." That is my experience, and for me to be able to point to the very day and hour when I was converted is indeed a very great comfort, and will never be forgotten in time or eternity.

But another Christian, just as good as I am, just as clear in his experience of pardoned sin, just as certain that he is a child of God and an heir of glory as I am, can not point to the very day and hour when the change came. While he may not be able to point to the very day and hour when the change came, he can say with this restored blind man, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." And his experience is just as good as mine. So if your experience is not just like some other brother's or sister's, don't be dissatisfied about that.

Every out-and-out Christian has the indubitable evidence of salvation; but every one may not be able to point to the exact time and place when the change came.

IV. The out-and-out Christian is wholly sanctified. God commands us to be holy, "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." (Lev. xix, 2.)

God promises to make us holy. Paul prayed for the Church at Thessalonica, and for the Church throughout all ages as well, saying, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," etc. (1 Thess. v, 23.)

The out-and-out Christian has obeyed the command, and he has the evidence within his own heart of the fulfillment of the inspiring promise. He knows that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth him from all sin."

The first step to entire sanctification is consecration. To get initial salvation, we surrender ourselves to God, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. To get full salvation, or entire sanctification, we consecrate all to God, and believe in Jesus. To consecrate is to set apart. In consecrating ourselves wholly to God, every faculty and power of body, soul, and spirit is forever set apart for the honor and glory of God. "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." (Rom. xii, i.) This earnest exhortation is given to Christians, not to the unconverted. The sinner can not make this "living sacrifice," because all his faculties and powers are dead in trespasses and sin. But when the sinner surrenders to God and believes in Jesus Christ, he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. He is raised from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. And when he is made alive in Christ Jesus, then, and not till then, can he present to God a living sacrifice.

The world has a wrong idea of consecration. Many Christians have a wrong idea touching this matter. In fact, the masses of the people are away off with regard to the true meaning of consecration. They look upon consecration as the giving up of all we have, and when a man makes this

consecration they somehow feel that he goes out into the world a pauper, never again to own anything. That is not the idea at all. True, we have to give up many things, and some things, possibly, that are very dear to us. We may have to part with some things that have been the idol of our hearts for years; and it may seem at the time that it will kill us to part with them. But we never have to give up anything that will be a real benefit to us, or that will in any way help us in life. We should remember that when we make a full consecration to God, although we may have to give up some things that are very dear, some things that cost us the hardest and most painful struggle of life, yet at the same time we get back a million times more than we give. When our consecration is complete, then God does His work, -- cleanses the heart from inbred sin. Man's work is to consecrate; God's work is to sanctify wholly, and cleanse the heart from all sin.

When every faculty and power of body, soul, and spirit are forever consecrated to God, then the Holy Ghost comes into the soul in His cleansing and purifying power, and we just begin to receive, "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."

A friend of mine said: "When I made this consecration, it seemed that the floodgates of heaven opened, and light and joy and glory, such as I had never experienced in all my life before, began to pour into my soul, and they came with increasing floods, more and more, and I thought they never would stop; and they never have." When a person makes this consecration, then he becomes the most abundant receiver in the world. He receives from God as never before, and he never stops receiving.

A more thoroughly consecrated man never lived than John Fletcher. At one time God began to pour upon him His richest blessings. They came, richer and faster, more and more, the mighty tide of rapture continued to flood his soul until he felt that he could bear no more, and he cried out to the Almighty, saying, "Stay Thy hand." And many, like Fletcher, have had to cry out, "Hold on, Lord, or the vessel will break." The noblest blood in the universe courses through the veins of the wholly-sanctified men and women of the Church.

How inspiring is the thought, "I am the child of a King!" It is worth a good deal to a man to know that he belongs to a good family. When the Prince of Wales visited America many years ago, every act and word was chronicled in the public press, and he was watched to see if he comported in every particular as became the son of Queen Victoria and the heir-apparent to the English throne. The out-and-out Christian is higher in rank than the Prince of Wales. He is the son of the Lord God Almighty, and joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ to a part of the entire universe. Hallelujah!

V. The out-and-out Christian is a witness for Christ. One of the greatest calamities that could possibly befall a Jew was to be excommunicated from the Temple. When a person was excommunicated he was no longer a member of the Jewish Church, and scarcely deemed a member of the commonwealth. This restored blind man knew very well that, in confessing Christ as the Restorer of his eyesight, he laid himself liable to this dreadful calamity. But notwithstanding this great disgrace stared him in the face, he boldly confessed Christ, and was excommunicated. "They cast him out."

In heathen lands today to become a Christian means the loss of all things. In some localities, when a man becomes a Christian and is baptized, he is disowned by his parents and relatives, and forever

afterwards is looked upon as an outcast. But with this great disgrace staring them in the face, men and women every day are boldly coming out on the Lord's side, and confessing Him as their Savior.

On the muster-roll of "the noble army of martyrs" are many names of Chinese Christians, faithful unto death, noble as the noblest of them all. Here is a recent instance of martyrdom which shows how a Chinese Christian stands the ordeal of death:

"In the district of Shantung a native catechist was seized by the Boxers, stripped, beaten, and bound. He was then asked, 'Are you a Christian?' The firm answer was, 'Yes, I am.' At this reply one of his ears was cut off, and the question, 'Are you still a Christian?' was repeated. 'Yes,' was the answer; 'I am a follower of Christ.' Then the other ear was struck off, and the question was again repeated. For the third time the faithful soul confessed Christ, knowing well what would follow. A swift sword-stroke was the answer, the severed head rolled on the ground, and the crown of martyrdom was won. By hundreds and thousands the Chinese converts are ready, like this man, to seal their testimony with their blood."

It requires moral courage right here in Christian America to be a faithful witness for the Lord Jesus. A prominent member of the Church, when a friend was visiting him, did not ask a blessing at the table. After the friend left, his wife said to him, "Why didn't you ask a blessing at the table when the doctor was here?". "O," said he, "the doctor is not a Christian, and he don't believe in religion." "I am so sorry," said his wife, "that you didn't ask a blessing." a That man was a moral coward. At the very time he ought to have been true to his convictions and loyal to his Divine Christ, he failed. If ever in the world he confessed Christ then was the very time he ought to have done so; but instead of being true, he was false, and trailed in the dust the colors of his Lord and Master.

Two little girls visited a convent in Baltimore. The Mother Superior met them with a smile, and said to one of them, "What are you, my child?" The little girl folded her arms and replied, "I am a Catholic." "Thank God for that!" said the Mother Superior. Then turning to the other one, she said, "And what are you?" "I am a Methodist, and thank God for that!" said the child. I would place that little girl on the list of out-and-out Christians. Her courageous words had the ring of the right kind of metal. Are you a Christian? Be an out-and-out Christian. Hang your banner upon the outer wall. Fling your colors to the breeze. Let everybody know that you are on the Lord's side.

A gentleman visited one of the large hospitals in an Eastern city. He said to the superintendent of nurses:

"I wish you would give me the most remarkable incident in your hospital experience."

"I can give you the most beautiful and touching incident in my hospital experience," said the lady. "I don't need to think very long for that."

"All right. I should like to hear it," said the man.

"In another city where I was nursing, there was an awful accident, and two lads were brought in fatally mangled. One of them died immediately after he was brought in. The other one had both of

his legs badly crushed. The surgeon examined him, and found that the only hope for the boy's life was to have both legs amputated.

" 'Tell me,' said the brave lad, 'am I to live or am I to die?'

" 'We shall hope for the best; but the case is a doubtful one,' said the surgeon, tenderly.

"As the lad heard his doom, his eyes grew large and filled with tears. He was only seventeen, but he showed the courage of a man.

" 'If I must die, I have one request to make,' said the noble boy. 'I want to do it for the sake of my dead mother. I promised her I would, but I have kept putting it off all this while.'

"We listened, wondering what the poor lad meant.

" 'I want to make a public profession of my faith in Christ. I want a minister. I want to profess myself a Christian before I die.'

"A minister was sent for. He came post-haste, without his hat. The boy welcomed him with a beautiful smile. The clergyman took his hand, and the boy said:

" 'I want to make here a public confession of my faith in Christ,' and then began. 'I believe' -- he faltered, for he could hardly speak above a whisper he was so weak. Resting a moment he began again: 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.' Then his strength failed. Resting a moment, then summoning up all his strength he began again: 'I believe' -- With these blessed words upon his lips he passed away.

"The surgeon laid aside his knife, bowed his head, and wept. We all wept. That," said the lady, "was the most beautiful and touching incident in all my hospital experience."

The most beautiful thing in all this world is a faithful witness of the Lord Jesus. There is nothing that so delights God and Christ and the angels as to see a Christian always loyal to his Lord and Master. Has God pardoned all your sins? Witness to the world that great fact. Has He sanctified you wholly? In meekness and humility, witness to the world this glorious fact, giving to Christ all the honor and all the glory, for "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark viii, 38.)

VI. Once more: The out-and-out Christian is not satisfied by simply being a Christian himself. He wants everybody else to a Christian. Like this restored blind man, he is ready to say to every one: "Will ye also be His disciple?" That wonderful woman, Phoebe Palmer, who led twelve thousand souls to Christ for pardon during her life, and as many more into the experience of entire sanctification, said, "If I have one passion above another -- and I have -- that passion is a love for soul-winning." The out-and-out Christian has this passion.

Mr. Gladstone, the great English statesman, had this passion. Theodore Cuyler visited London. When he returned, he said in a speech in New York City, "With my own eyes I saw Mr. Gladstone bow on the sidewalk in the city of London, and pray for the conversion of a little bootblack." An old man swept the street crossings near the House of Parliament. One day he was missing. He was found by a missionary in a little attic-chamber, sick. The missionary said to him, "Does any one ever come up here to see you?" "O yes," said the old man, "Mr. Gladstone comes up to see me. He has sat on that stool there and read to me the Bible." One of the greatest statesmen the world has ever known, considered it an honor and a privilege to go up into an attic, sit down on a stool, and read the Bible to a poor street-sweeper.

An awful storm was raging off the coast of England. A vessel was wrecked. The lifeboat came in full. The question was asked:

"Did you save all?"

"All but one. Had no room for more."

A young man hearing it said:

"I will go after that man if two others will volunteer to go with me."

His mother, standing by and hearing him, threw her arms around his neck, and said:

"You must not go. One son is already lost, and if you go you will be lost."

He tore himself away from his pleading mother, stepped into the lifeboat, pushed out into the angry sea, and away over the foaming billows he went to the wreck. In a little while he returned with the lost man. Nearing the shore he shouted:

"Tell mother it is brother Will!" He had saved his own brother from a watery grave.

Our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors, our friends, are wrecked upon the stormy sea of sin. They are in awful peril. We should go out after them with the lifeboat of salvation.

A few years ago Chaplain McCabe wrote the following:

"Abraham Lincoln once issued an order to the commander of every one of our great armies that, on a certain day, there should be a 'forward movement.' What a day it was! There was thunder all along the sky. There, was victory everywhere.

"The day is nigh at hand when the Christian Church shall no longer be content to 'hold the forts;' but her victorious banners will be displayed on every battlefield between the gates of hell and the gates of heaven, in the very presence of the powers of darkness and the powers of light. O, that the glorious onset may come in our day! Christians of this generation, what can we do to bring it about?"

It will be a blessed and a joyful memory throughout the eternal years of the heavenly life to have had a part in it.

"One year ago I was sitting in a Kansas Conference. The bishop was calling the roll of the retired preachers -- those not now in active service. He reached the name of Allen Buckner. The veteran stood up. He made a brief address to the Conference, and closed by saying, 'I am now a wounded soldier and a superannuated preacher.' I happened to know his army record, and said, 'Bishop Mallalieu, that man led the assault up Missionary Ridge thirty years ago.' 'Did he?' said the bishop. 'Give me your hand.' The whole Conference rose. Tears fell like rain. Somebody struck up

'My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty.'

The whole congregation pressed forward to grasp the veteran officer by the hand, who thirty years ago, amid a rain of bullets and the bursting of shell, far up among the rocks of Missionary Ridge; had shouted to his soldiers, 'Come on! come on!' That was the most desperate deed of the war. Grant, who was present and looking on, said to Sheridan, 'Did you order that charge?' 'No,' said Sheridan, 'they are doing it themselves.'" Jesus Christ is the Commander-in-Chief of the armies of earth and heaven. If every member of the Church were an out-and-out Christian, then the whole Church, under Divine orders, would move out to capture this world at once for God.

The out-and-out Christian is sometimes called a "Mountain-top Christian." "These 'Mountain-top Christians,' " says one, "are always the first to catch the gleams of the coming day. They tell us something wonderful is about to come to pass. Believe it. Think it. Express it." Yes, something wonderful is about to come to pass. The battle is already on. The highest honor that can come to any one below the skies is to be permitted to take a hand in the glorious conflict. Are you ready for the onset? If not, get ready. Get ready now.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 8 PREVAILING PRAYER

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." -- John xiv, 13, 14

What are the conditions of prevailing prayer? How are we to pray that our prayers may be answered? It must be remembered that there is a great difference between saying prayers and praying. Thousands of prayers have been said that have never been answered.

But no true prayer that has ever been offered to God, from the days of Adam to the present hour, but what has been answered. The answer may not always come in our own way and in our own time; but God in His own way, and His own time, answers every faithful prayer. What, then, are the conditions of prevailing prayer?

I. All sin must be put away. David says: "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." (Psa. xxvi, 6.) Washing the hands among the Romans was considered a symbol of innocence. Pilate washed his hands as a symbol of his innocence of the murder of Christ. In Hindoo temples there is a vessel filled with water at the entrance for the worshipers to wash their hands. They feel that they must be clean and innocent in approaching the altar of their gods. So when we come into the presence of our God in prayer -- when we compass the divine altar, if we would have our prayers answered, all sin must be put away.

Again says David, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." (Psa. lxvi, iS.) If sin is in the heart, and we know it, and harbor it, and are not willing to give it up, our prayer will be in vain. The prayer of the wicked, so long as he is not willing to give up sin, is an abomination to the Lord.

Solomon says, "He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." (Prov. xxviii, 9.)

It is said the lodestone loses all its virtue when besmeared with garlic; so our prayers lose all their influence and power when the heart is covered with sin. Sin is the obstacle that stops our prayers under full sail to the throne. A man may cry in vain for the surgeon to give him ease so long as he is not willing to have the arrow-head removed. So a man may cry in vain for God to hear and answer his prayer so long as he is not willing to give up all sin. If, therefore, you would have your prayers answered, you must put away all sin. Don't hold on to anything that is wrong. God answers prayer only when all sin is at once and forever abandoned.

II. Obey God. John says, "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (I John iii, 22.)

First, put away all sin. Second, do what God commands. Is any duty left undone? Leave it undone no longer. Have you shunned any cross? Shun that cross no longer. Say in your heart: "By God's help, I will discharge every known duty. I will make any sacrifice the Master wants me to make. I will shun no cross. I will evade no responsibility. From this time, hence forth and forever, I will obey every one of the Divine commands."

III. If you would have your prayers answered, you must abide in Christ.

Christ says, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv, 7.)

Abide in Him. How? As the branch abides in the vine.

I. The branch derives its life, strength, and fruit from the vine. So we derive our spiritual life, our strength, our fruit, all from Christ the vine. Sever the branch from the vine, and it withers and dies. Its life, strength, and fruit are all gone. We abide in Christ by a living faith. Let that living faith be severed by doubt or disobedience, and we die spiritually.

2. The branch is part of the vine, one with the vine, and of the very same nature of the vine. The sap, the bark, the fiber, the leaves, the fruit, all are just like the vine. So if we abide in Christ we are like Christ, and are one with Him. We are one with Him in life, nature, strength, and fruit.

An apple branch bears apples, a peach branch bears peaches, a plum branch bears plums; and if you are a branch of the true vine -- the Lord Jesus Christ -- the fruit you bear will be souls. If you abide in Christ, and His words abide in you, you will bear fruit, and you will see your fruit in the salvation of your relatives, neighbors, and friends. If every member of the Church were abiding in Christ, then every member would be a soul-winner.

David prayed, saying: "Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." (Psa. li, 10, 13) More than thirty years ago, a lady, a leading member of a Church in Nebraska, was convicted for heart-purity. Her husband was unconverted. He was a man of the world. She sought and found the coveted prize. Then she saw the danger of her husband and became interested in his salvation as never before. Shortly after her sanctification the Spirit said to her, "You ought to have family prayer." She was startled at the thought, and said, "Why, Lord, I can't have family prayer; my husband is not a Christian." Then she remembered that she told the Lord, when seeking holiness, that if He would only give her the blessing she would do anything He told her to do, and she said, "Lord, I will try." The next morning she said to her husband: "I feel it my duty to have family prayer. Our children are growing up around us, and I don't want them, in after years, to say 'I never heard my parents pray.'" "All right," said the husband, "I am perfectly willing that you should." He sat down and listened to his wife read a chapter in the Bible, then knelt down and heard his wife pray. A peculiar feeling came over him as his wife read and prayed. In three weeks that man was clearly and powerfully converted, and for thirty years has been a leading and active official member of one of the largest Churches in Nebraska.

#### IV. Our prayers must be for the glory of God.

Daniel prayed, saying, "O Lord, hear: O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God." (Dan. ix, 19.) And this must be our plea: "For Thine own sake, O God, for Thine own glory do we desire this."

God is often glorified in a way entirely different from what we expect. So He does not always answer our prayers just as we desire to have them answered.

Lazarus was sick at Bethany. Mary and Martha sent word to the Savior informing Him of the fact. And what was the message they sent to the Master? It was a very brief and a very simple message: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." (John xi, 3.) Nothing could be more modest and simple than this prayer. They simply state the case without making any demand. The argument is indirect; but it is the most powerful, and it shows their unbounded confidence in the Lord Jesus. He is sick. You love him and us, and we know You will not abandon him nor us.

The record tells us that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. He loved them with a deep, tender, ardent, lasting love. But notwithstanding all this, He let Lazarus die, and four days afterwards went to the grave with the weeping friends, and as a He saw their tears and their sorrow, His great heart of love and sympathy and tenderness was touched, and He wept with the bereaved. Here we see His humanity. Then He manifested His Divinity. He said to the attendants, "Take away the stone." The stone was rolled away, and Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." The grave yielded up its victim, and Lazarus came forth bound with the grave-clothes. "Loose him, and let him go," said the Savior. Then there was joy and gladness in that home such as there had not been for many a day. The whole scene was changed, and all their sorrow and mourning was turned to joy. Christ was glorified, and His power and love were manifested as they could not have been had he not permitted Lazarus to die. So God does not always answer our prayers just as we want them answered.

I once heard Bishop Bowman relate the following touching the death of his little child:

"I remember, when death came into my family, I said, 'I can not spare this little one; she is bound up with my spiritual life and my ministerial usefulness.' I pleaded and agonized for her recovery, and yet God saw fit to allow her to be taken. Now I can look back to that which seemed to be the greatest calamity of my life, as one of the greatest blessings of my life. My ministerial character and usefulness have been extended and exalted beyond my conception by this sanctified affliction through which I was called to pass. My other children as they have grown up have given me pain as well as pleasure; but that one has left only a bright, beautiful, and joyous place in my heart, like to the joy of the upper sanctuary."

James tells us why so many of our prayers are not answered: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James iv, 3.) Here is the reason why so many prayers are not answered. Selfishness is at the bottom of these prayers.

The spirit of selfishness was seen in the elders who went to the Savior in behalf of the centurion's servant. The centurion's servant was sick and ready to die. The centurion requested the elders to go

and ask the Savior to come and heal his servant. What were' the arguments these elders used in order to induce the Savior to go and heal the servant?

First. He was a centurion, a military man, captain of a hundred men. He was, therefore, a man of rank, of dignity, and of honor.

"Second. He was worthy. 'He is worthy for whom you should do this.'

"Third. He is a rich man. Now, Lord, he is not only worthy, and not only a man of rank, of dignity, and of honor, but he is a rich man. 'He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue.'

This same spirit of selfishness crops out at the present day, in Churches and among ministers. "If we can only get Mr. A. converted, he will be a great help to us financially. If we can only get Mrs. B. converted, she will be a great help to us. She moves in the highest circles of society, and if we can just get her converted she will give tone and dignity to our Church." Away with all such nonsense! God never will answer our prayers when offered with such a selfish motive as that in view. Now, we want that rich man converted. I have sometimes thought we overlook the rich more than we do the poor. We want that rich man converted, not for his money, but that his soul may be saved and God honored and glorified. We want that society lady converted too, not that she may give prestige to our Church, but that she may be saved, and know what genuine happiness here on earth is, and be prepared for a higher and happier destiny beyond the stars. When this centurion heard what the elders had been saying, he hurried away his servants to contradict their statement. "Why, Lord, these elders have been making statements to You that are not true. They have told You that I am worthy. That is not true, not a bit of it. I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, but say in a word and my servant shall be a healed." (Luke vii, 6, 7.)

V. Another condition of prevailing prayer is agreement. We must be agreed.

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii, 19.) It is a law in the spiritual realm that two prayers united have more power than one, five more than two, ten more than five, twenty more than ten, and fifty more than twenty. We have seen that exemplified at camp-meetings and in revivals. It was seen on the day of Pentecost. The one hundred and twenty were all of one accord. They were agreed, and the result was, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and three thousand souls were converted and swept into the kingdom in a day. Fifty godly men and women united in prayer and agreed, will shake any community to its center with a heavenly power that will make sinners tremble and quail, and cry, "What shall we do?"

Years ago, while Whittle and Bliss were holding revival meetings in St. Paul, Minnesota, a lady went to Mr. Whittle and asked him to join her in prayer for the conversion of her unsaved husband. They shook hands and agreed that the husband should be saved. In twenty-four hours the husband was gloriously saved.

Some forty years ago there lived in Omaha a noted infidel. His wife was a devoted Christian. This infidel took sick. He grew worse and worse. His wife became alarmed, especially about his soul. She

was impressed that he would not live, and she knew that he was unprepared to die. She sent for two laymen, Robert Lang and J. W. Tousley, to come and talk with and pray for him. I have this incident from Brother Lang's own lips. When they reached the door Brother Lang said: "Brother Tousley, God says, Where two agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done a for them of My Father which is in heaven. Are we agreed that this man shall be converted?" "Yes," said Brother Tousley; and they went in. The sick man received them coldly. They spoke to him about his soul. "How do you know man has a soul?" said he. Then they spoke of God's infinite love. "How do you know there is a God? I don't believe there is," said he. They sang a number of hymns, and then asked him if he would like to have them pray for him. "If you want to pray I shall not object, but you need not pray for me." They prayed, and then they sang again, and when they were about to leave they asked him if he would like to have them come back and see him again. He replied: "I am not particular. Do just as you please about it." As they walked away from the house, Brother Tousley said, "Brother Lang, my faith has slipped." Mine has not," said Brother Lang. "I believe that man will be converted."

The next day they went back, and found him just as indifferent as ever. They sang a number of hymns, then prayed; then they sang again, and talked with him for a long time, and were about to leave, when all at once he broke down and wept like a child. "Why," said he, "I am a sinner. I am an awful sinner. I never a saw it as I now see it. Pray for me. Ask God to have mercy upon me, a sinner." They kneeled down and prayed, and while they were praying the man was powerfully converted. In a few days afterwards he died triumphant -- and went shouting home to glory. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."

About thirty years ago I became intimately acquainted with a devoted Christian family living in Butler County, Nebraska. The husband was a local preacher, and one of the excellent men of the earth. His wife was one of the royal line, and wholly consecrated to God. They had a son who was one of the first graduates from the University of Nebraska. He was a brilliant young man, and graduated with great honor. During his university course he imbibed the doctrines of infidelity, and went home a confirmed infidel. This almost broke the hearts of the fond parents. A few months after Commencement, the mother went East to attend a national holiness camp-meeting, held at Ocean Grove. While there she met Amanda Smith, the colored evangelist. She told Mrs. Smith all about her son; how he had graduated with honor from the university, but had come home an infidel. "Now," said she, "Sister Smith, I want you to join me in prayer for his conversion, and I want you to agree with me that he shall be converted." "O yes," said Sister Smith, "I will." So they agreed that the son should be saved. What was the result? In a few weeks afterwards that son was a penitent at the altar, and was clearly converted, and for thirty years has been one of the most successful soul-winners in the State of Nebraska. Only a few months ago I met that son, and heard him sing and talk and pray. Glory be to God for ever and ever!

Then, God often hears and answers prayer in the physical realm. I might give many instances. I will give but one.

Four years ago I went out to hold quarterly-meeting at Friend. When I left home, on Saturday, our oldest daughter, Allie, was suffering with neuralgia. On my return, Monday at one o'clock, my wife

met me at the door, and said: "Allie has had the severest attack of neuralgia she has ever had in her life. She has not slept any since you, left. The doctor has not been able to give her anything that would relieve her. Hypodermic injections of morphine have no effect upon her whatever." My wife went back upstairs, and I went into the front room alone. Silently I lifted my heart to God in prayer, when a voice seemed to say to me, "This may be for the glory of God." After having prayed and steadied my faith, I went upstairs. Allie was moaning with in tense agony. I opened my Bible and turned to Matthew xviii, 19, and said to my wife: "Ma, here is what God says, 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.' Will you agree with me that Allie shall be relieved?" "Yes," was her reply.

We knelt down, and I offered a prayer about two minutes long, closing with these words: "O God, we ask You, in the name and for the sake of Thine only begotten Son, and for Thy glory, to relieve Allie. You will do it. Amen."

The pain instantly left her, and she fell into a sweet sleep, and slept all the afternoon, all night, and nearly all next day and night. She had not slept any for several days, and it took some time for her to catch up.

After we had prayed, my wife went downstairs, threw herself on the couch, and slept for two hours; for she was completely exhausted from her efforts to relieve Allie. Then she came upstairs and said, "How is Allie?"

I replied, "She has been sleeping sweetly ever since we prayed." I remained in the room all that afternoon, and it seemed to me that I could just feel the hush of heaven, so near was our Divine Christ to us. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." Hallelujah! The great trouble with many is, they don't believe God means what He says. They insult the Almighty by calling in question His clear and positive promises. If men believed that God means just what He says in His Word, there would be answers to prayer like the foregoing right along, and they would not be considered marvelous at all.

VI. If you would prevail with God in prayer, pray a in the power of Jesus' name.

"If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John xiv, 13, 14.)

During the great Rebellion [Civil War] two boys went into the army. They belonged to the same regiment, the same company, and the same mess. They became very much attached to each other. They were almost like David and Jonathan, they loved each other so well. About a year after they had enlisted, one of them got a furlough that he might go and transact some very important business in a village in Illinois. Just as he was about to leave, his chum said to him: "My father lives in that village. I will give you a letter of introduction to him. He is a lawyer, and will assist you in your business." He took the letter, and, on reaching the village, went to the office of his chum's father. He entered the office and inquired for Mr. Blank. "Mr. Blank is very busy. He can't see you nor any one else today," said a young man who sat in the office reading. The young soldier took from his pocket his chum's letter, handed it to the young man, saying, "Will you kindly give this to Mr. Blank?" The

young man took the letter, passed into another room, and gave it to Mr. Blank. Mr. Blank opened the letter, and read something like the following:

"Dear Father, -- This will introduce you to my very dear friend. Please favor him for Charlie's sake.

"Your Son,  
Charlie."

Mr. Blank was startled, rose to his feet, and said to the young man, "Go and tell that soldier to come in." A moment afterwards the soldier was ushered into the genial presence of Mr. Blank. Mr. Blank arose somewhat excited, and, grasping the young soldier's hand, greeted him in a most cordial manner.

"Sit down, sit down," said Mr. Blank. "You are a friend of my son."

"O yes, we are chums. Your son is the best friend I ever had."

Mr. Blank took that soldier to his own home, gave him the best room in his fine mansion, treated him like a prince, and transacted all his legal business for him without charging him a cent, all for his son Charlie's sake.

Would you have your prayers answered? Go to God in the power of Jesus' name, and the Father will grant your requests for His Son's sake. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do."

VII. Once more: Another condition of prevailing prayer is faith. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." (James i, 6.)

"What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark ix, 24.) Faith is the key that opens heaven to the soul.

In the days of the Reformation a crisis came. Luther's friends gave up in despair. All hope left them. But Luther's faith did not waver. He wrestled alone with God in His closet till, like Jacob, he prevailed. Then he went into the room where his family were assembled, with joyous heart and shining face, and lifting both hands and raising his eyes heavenward, exclaimed, "We have overcome! we have overcome!" And so it afterwards proved, that just at that time the Emperor Charles V issued his proclamation of religious toleration throughout Germany.

John Knox was a man of prayer and a man of faith. He had a little inclosure near his house where he was in the habit of retiring for secret prayer. A friend was anxious to hear Knox in his closet; so one night, after Knox had gone to his accustomed place of prayer, this friend quietly followed him, and sitting down on the outside, listened. At length he heard Knox exclaim, "O Lord, give me Scotland or I die." Then all was silent. In a little while the silence was broken by the voice of Knox as he exclaimed more earnestly than before, "O Lord, give me Scotland or I die." Again all was quiet, and again the quietness was broken by the voice of Knox as he exclaimed in an agony, and with

greater earnestness than ever, "O Lord, give me Scotland, or I die!" God answered that prayer, and gave Knox Scotland in spite of bloody Mary and her popish emissaries.

A writer in the *Christian at Work* relates the following: The Fulton Street prayer-meeting in New York brings out some thrilling incidents. A gentleman came into the prayer-meeting when it was about half out, took from his pocket a letter, and laid it on the desk of the leader, and, turning to the audience, said: "I am a Methodist minister, and have just been appointed to a special service in California. My work will keep me there a year or more. A devoted Christian mother, hearing of my appointment, gave me this letter, saying: 'I have a son somewhere in California. I have not heard from him for many months. I fear he has become dissipated, and is ashamed to write to his mother. I want you to take this letter, and when you reach California inquire, wherever you go, for my boy, and when you find him, give him this letter, and tell him it is from his mother.' Now," said the minister to the audience, "I want you to pray that God may help me find that boy, and that this letter may be the means of his salvation." The effect on the audience was overwhelming. Strong men wept like little children, and such prayers as were then offered for the finding of that boy I never heard in all my life before.

"A little more than a year from that time," says the writer, "I was in a prayer-meeting in Philadelphia, when that same minister came in and told the thrilling story of finding that boy." He said he carried the letter in his pocket for many months, everywhere inquiring for the boy. "At last," said the preacher, "I found him. He was at a gambling saloon in Sacramento. He was pointed out to me, and I went up to him and said, 'I would like to speak to you.' 'Wait,' said he, 'until I finish this game, and I will go with you.' When the game was through we stepped out where no one could see or hear us, and I gave him the letter, saying, 'This is from your mother.' The young man turned deathly pale, and trembled all over. 'O,' said he 'I can't take that letter.' 'But you must. I have been looking for you for nearly a year. I can't have a year's work thrown away.' With trembling hands he opened the letter, and as he read he groaned aloud, saying: 'I am ruined forever. I am a drunkard. I have disgraced my mother and disgraced all my relatives and friends, and have disgraced myself. O, what shall I do? I am a poor undone wretch!' 'I want you to get right down on your knees where you are, and sign this pledge that you will never touch another drop of liquor while you live.' He fell upon his knees in an instant, and signed the pledge. 'Now, are you willing to kneel right here and now, pledge yourself to Jesus Christ that you will be His now and forever?' 'Yes,' he answered, 'I am willing.' 'Then, kneel right down beside me, and I will pray first, asking God to lead your mind and heart in all you do in this solemn hour.' We knelt together so close that my shoulder touched his. I prayed. I don't know what I said, but the Holy Ghost was wonderfully poured out upon us. Then he prayed, and this was the prayer he offered: 'O God, hear my mother's prayer, and save my soul.' We arose, and he threw his arms around my neck, and wept like a child, saying, 'God has forgiven me.' Then he wrote his mother all about it, and he is now a devoted Christian."

Such prayer as a mother can offer, and such faith as a mother can exercise, God never will disappoint. In His own time and way, God will reward her faith and answer her prayers. O mothers! mothers! never give up your children. Never leave off praying. Never, never!

A very wicked man was converted. A friend met him shortly afterwards, and said: "How is it that you became a Christian? You are the last man on earth that I would have thought would have

taken such a step as this." "Well," said the man, "the only possible way that I can account for my having become a Christian is, that I have a praying mother. I think she must have got hold of God in prayer, held on, never let go, and something had to give way, and I was converted."

O mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives, husbands, get hold of God in prayer; hold on; never let go. Something will give way, and you will have the unspeakable joy of seeing your loved ones swept into the kingdom. Here, then, are the conditions of prevailing prayer: Put away all sin; obey God; abide in Christ; have the glory of God in view when you pray; be agreed; offer your prayer in the power of Jesus' name, and offer your a prayer in faith, and the windows of heaven will open, and salvation in floods will come to you and to your unsaved loved ones.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 9

### CHRISTIAN CERTAINTY

"That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." -- Luke 1:4

Theophilus was a Greek or Roman of high standing. He had received from others many accounts touching our Savior, but in these accounts there were many inaccuracies. Luke had the most perfect knowledge of the history of Christ from the very beginning, and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost made it known, not only for the benefit of Theophilus, but for the whole world as well. "Having had perfect understanding of all these things from the first" -- namely, the advent, sufferings, miracles, death, and resurrection of Christ -- it was a very pleasant task for him to write the same to his "most excellent Theophilus." And in the text we have the reason given: "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Certainty brings rest; uncertainty brings unrest. Doubt brings anxiety; anxiety fear, and fear takes away happiness. Others may proclaim to the world their doubts; it is for the Christian to proclaim to the world certainties. Others may go through the world burdened with anxiety and oppressed with fear; the Christian goes through the world free from anxiety and relieved from all fear. Free as the bird soaring away to the skies, singing upon the wings of liberty, is the saved soul.

Of what is the Christian certain? What are some of the things about which the Christian has no doubts whatever? What are some of the things about which he is just as indubitably certain as he is of his own existence?

I. The Christian is certain the Bible is the Word of God. It is an inspired Book. It is God-given. Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Timothy iii, 16.) Peter tells us that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i, 21.) Ages and ages ago the prophets spoke just as the Spirit directed them. Afterwards the apostles and evangelists spoke under the same Divine afflatus. What the writers of the Old and New Testaments say is from God. Whether they recite the mysteries of the past, more ancient than the creation, or those of the future, more distant than the coming of the Son of man; whether they speak of the deep things of God, or the tender emotions of the human heart, it is always God who speaks, God who ordains, God who directs; for the Spirit of the Lord God was upon them.

In the South Sea Islands, Christianity swept everything before it, as it is now doing in many heathen lands. Some of these native Christians were asked by the missionary if they believed the Bible and why they believed the Bible to be the Word of God. They were astonished at the question, for they never had a doubt about it. After a moment's pause one of them said, "Most certainly we do."

"Can you give any reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God?"

He replied: "Look at the power with which it has been attended in the utter overthrow of all that we have been addicted to from time immemorial. No human arguments could have induced us to abandon that false system."

Another replied: "I believe the Bible to be the Word of God on account of the pure system of religion it contains. What but the wisdom of God could have produced such a system as this presented to us in the Word of God? And this doctrine leads to purity."

A third replied: "When I look at myself, I find that I have got hinges all over my body. I have hinges to my legs, hinges to my jaws, hinges to my feet. When I want to take hold of anything there are hinges to do it with. If my heart thinks and I want to speak, I have hinges to my jaws. If I want to walk, I have hinges to my feet. Here," he continued, "is wisdom adjusting my body to the various functions it has to discharge. And I find that the wisdom which made the Bible exactly fits with the wisdom which has made my body; consequently I believe the Bible to be the Word of God."

A fourth replied: "I believe the Bible to be the Word of God, because of the many prophecies it contains and the fulfillment of them."

Here, by these simple South Sea Islanders, are presented to our view, in a nutshell, the great arguments proving the inspiration of the Scriptures -- arguments that the wisdom of the unbelieving world has never been able to overthrow.

The evidence we have of the inspiration of the Scriptures is as clear as the sun shining in his meridian splendor. Inspiration is the foundation of our faith, the foundation of our hope, the foundation of all that is good and dear to us here and hereafter. It is the granite rock on which we stand, and, standing here, we feel perfectly secure.

"On the rock of ages founded,  
Who can shake our firm repose?  
With salvation's walls a surrounded,  
We can smile at all our foes."

II. Another thing of which the Christian is certain, is redemption. The Bible, the truth of which we are certain, teaches us that while we are a race fallen, we are also a race redeemed; while we are a race ruined by sin, we are not hopelessly ruined. For sin there is a remedy; for the sinner there is a Savior.

Fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, Job spoke with absolute certainty touching his redemption. He did not say, "I hope;" he did not say, "I expect;" he did not say, "I believe;" but in the most positive language cried out, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Isaiah, on whom the spirit of prophecy eminently rested, spoke with the same certainty: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Zechariah, whose prophetic eye took in the far distant future, saw "a fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness." In this cleansing fountain a sinful world may wash and be clean.

Paul speaks with the same certainty. He says: "We are redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ;" "Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." The Bible tells us there was such a man as Jesus Christ; that He lived a life of spotless purity, wrought miracles, suffered and died for man's redemption. What the Bible teaches with regard to Christ, all history corroborates.

III. The Christian is certain that all his sins are forgiven. "As far as the east is from west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm ciii, 12.)

God's people, all along the ages, have had the certainty of present salvation. For three hundred years Enoch had the testimony "that he pleased God." David was certain of his salvation. His language is positive: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Wondrous words! He saves me, He leads me, He guides me, He protects me; hence all is well.

Isaiah had the same certainty: "O Lord, I will praise Thee. Though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation." Doubts touching his salvation were all gone, and the evidence of his salvation was as clear as the noonday sun.

Paul is positive: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." When the eternal Spirit comes and attests to the heart the great fact of heirship with Christ, then doubts are all gone, fears are all gone, anxiety is all gone, and the peace of God that "passeth all understanding" takes full possession of the soul.

You may believe that it is the privilege of the Christian to be certain of present salvation; but if you would have the experience you must meet the conditions. Franklin believed that lightning and electricity were one and the same physical force long before it was an established certainty. He believed it, but did not know it, because it had not been proved. He prepared his kite, with the iron point fastened to the piece of cedar running through it, to the lower end of which was fastened the hempen cord. He went out on the commons, near Philadelphia, just before a thunder-storm, taking with him his little boy, to whom he told his intentions. As the kite rose he let out the cord. At the lower end he fastened a key; to the ring of the key he tied a ribbon, that he might hold it with safety. Then he watched with intense anxiety. Methinks his heart beat more rapidly than ever before. The thunder rolled. The vivid lightning played above him. The suspense of his mind became more and more intense. At length he saw the hempen fibers near the key bristle and stand on end. He presented his knuckle to the key and received a strong, bright spark. That which he had long believed now was certain; and soon all the world knew it. Meet the conditions as Franklin met the conditions. Renounce all sin; surrender unconditionally to Christ, and believe on Him as a present, personal Savior, and just as certainly as the electric flash from the thundercloud touched the knuckle of Franklin, so sure will the Spirit from the Eternal God touch your heart, and all doubt as to your present salvation will flee away.

IV. The Christian may be certain of his entire sanctification. He may know that he is sanctified just as surely as he knows that he is justified.

Sanctification is a very high and glorious state of grace, and it brings to the heart a peace and joy that no language can describe. Paul says, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' (1 Cor. ii, 9.) Some think this refers to the joys of the saved in heaven; but this is a great mistake, for in the very next verse the apostle says, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" right here and now.

When the Holy Ghost reveals to the heart the great fact that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," then there comes into the heart this unearthly light, joy, and peace. The Word of God gives no uncertain sound touching the certainty of entire sanctification. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. a Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." (Hebrews x, 14, 15.)

V. Another thing of which the Christian is certain is a glorious resurrection. Job had this certainty: "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." David had this certainty: "I will behold Thy face in righteousness." Daniel was just as confident: "Them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Paul had this certainty: "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." John had this certainty: "It doth not appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him."

Our Savior declares: "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth," etc. Christ has not only declared to the world that all who are in their graves shall come forth on the resurrection morn, but He has given to the world a pledge. After His crucifixion and burial He arose from the grave; and after His resurrection "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. After that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles."

Says Paul: "Now is Christ risen and become the firstfruits of them that slept." St. John the Divine was banished to the lonely isle of Patmos "for the Lord of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ," and while there, alone on that rocky, sea-girt isle, he says: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man." That majestic person that stood before John on that memorable occasion was clothed with a heavenly garment, and around Him was a "golden girdle." "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not. I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." The risen Redeemer stood in the presence of John on Patmos. John saw and heard Him, and what he saw and heard he wrote down for the benefit of succeeding ages. It is a matter of history, and we have read it time and again.

"He lives, He lives who once was dead,  
He lives my everlasting head!  
He lives my mansion to prepare,  
He lives to bring me safely there."

"Decay, then, tenements of dust!  
Pillars of earthly pride, decay!  
A nobler mansion waits the just,  
And Jesus has prepared the way.

The Christian is certain he will live forever with God in glory. David says: "Thou shall guide me with Thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory." The infinite longings of the immortal mind find perfect satisfaction in the positive promises of the Bible touching immortality.

"The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who called me here below,  
Shall be forever mine.

"The sun is but a spark of fire,  
A transient meteor in the sky:  
The soul, immortal as its sire,  
Shall never die."

Victor Hugo, the revered poet of France, most beautifully expressed his certainty touching immortality: "I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest which has been more than once cut down. The new shoots are stronger and livelier than ever. I am rising, I know, toward the sky. The sunshine is on my head. You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. Why, then, is the soul more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head, and eternal spring is in my heart. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. It is marvelous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, and it is history. When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work;' but I can not say, 'I have finished my life.' My day's work will begin again next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight, to open with the dawn. My work is only a beginning. My monument is hardly above its foundation. I would be glad to see it mounting and mounting forever. The thirst for the infinite proves infinity."

To Mr. Ingersoll the future was one of joyless gloom. I never envied him nor his deluded followers. I pity them. To the Christian, the future is one of beauty, of grandeur, and of glory. The grave is a "thoroughfare," leading the saved soul up to the gateway of the Celestial City of eternal light and joy.

"Certainty." Wondrous word! What does it mean to the Christian? Certain, the Bible is the Word of God; certain, that Jesus, the Divine Christ, has made an atonement for all my sins; certain, I am standing on the rock of ages; certain, the approving smiles of the God of the universe are upon me;

certain, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; a certain, I have entered upon a most beautiful and delightful career that shall never end, but will go on brightening forever; certain, that in companionship with the infinitely pure and happy, and commensurate with God's own duration, will be my progress upon the path of immortality. These are some of the things of which the Christian is certain. Blessed certainties! They bring delightful rest to the mind, unspeakable joy to the heart, and eternal sunshine to the soul. These glorious certainties every man and woman and child may have, on the simple condition of unconditional surrender to Christ, and implicit faith in Him. Meet the conditions, and doubt and fear and anxiety will take wings and fly away, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding will fill your soul.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## **Chapter 10** **FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians v, 22, 23.

Our Savior said when upon earth: 'Ye shall know them by their fruits ... Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.'

We judge a system from the effect it produces. Its utility is determined by its results. This is a correct criterion to go by. And for thus judging we have Christ's authority. If the effect is good, the cause which produced it must be good; and vice versa. This is the best possible way to reach correct conclusions touching any system. Take the various systems a of infidelity. What has been their effect? Has not the effect invariably been evil? Infidelity takes, but never gives value received for what it takes. It takes away a peace, a and gives sorrow; it takes away rest, and gives unrest; it takes away certainty, and gives uncertainty; it takes away hope, and gives despair. Infidelity is not a benefactor; it is a destroyer. It destroys all that is dear and precious to humanity. Desolation and woe and despair follow in the wake of infidelity.

Look at Mormonism and Spiritualism; what has been their effect? Evil, and only evil, and that continually. They sow the seeds of discord and discontent in the hearts of individuals, in families, and communities. We are willing that Christianity should be judged by this standard. What is the fruit? What are its effects? Go back to the beginning; trace its history through all the ages of the past; follow it as it has gone among all ranks and all the different grades of society -- among the rich and among the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the prosperous and the unfortunate, the sick and the well, the living and the dying -- wherever it has gone in all the ages of the past it has sent cheer and sunshine, joy and gladness into the hearts and homes of its possessors. The fruits of Christianity are good, always good, and good everywhere. Its utility is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. Its benign effects are seen upon the individual, the family, and the world.

We have grouped together in the text the fruits of the Spirit, the evidences of genuine Christianity. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." Let these graces dwell in every heart, reign supreme in every soul, and sin would lift its dark cloud from the earth and fly away. The text describes a Christian of the highest type, one in whose heart the Holy Spirit abides, and reigns without a rival. It describes a Christian who has gone up to the highest mountain-peak of usefulness and enjoyment. Man loses much in this world by not becoming a Christian. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." So the Christian loses much, far more than he has any idea of, by not going up to the highest plane of religious experience.

The firstfruit of the Spirit is love. In this wonderful cluster of Christian graces, Paul places love at the head of the list. God is love, Christ is love, the Holy Spirit is love. One has said, "Love is the crown of crowns worn by the Triune God."

Love to God is imparted to us by the Holy Ghost. Says Paul, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." We can not believe God, neither can we love God, without the aid of the Holy Ghost. And when we are willing to have our hearts emptied of all sin, and cry out with an earnest, longing desire, "Come in, come in, thou Heavenly Guest," then the Spirit comes in, and "the feast is everlasting love." Then we begin to love God, and we love Him as never before, because we begin to see His love to us as we never saw it before.

The Christian's love to God rises from a sense of God's love to us, as seen in the wonders of creation, the wonders of redemption, and all the arrangements of Divine providence and grace. As we contemplate the rich favors of God; as we trace creation in its beauties, harmonies, and glories, all made to subserve our happiness; as we contemplate the lasting benefits coming to us from redemption -- the blessings of pardon, of purity, of heaven; as we look up to the Great Father of all, knowing that He loves us, protects us, saves us, and will ultimately crown us with everlasting glory, -- our hearts go out towards Him in the tenderest and warmest affection. We love Him. Love is the element in which the Christian lives and moves. It is the element in which the glorified inhabitants of heaven dwell. There is nothing better in religion than love; there is nothing higher in heaven than love.

Joy is another fruit of the Spirit. Says Dr. Hamilton: "Joy is the happiness of love. It is love exulting; love aware of its own felicity; love taking a look at its vast treasures." We must not, however, depend on joy. It is not safe to depend on emotion or feeling.

We should remember always that feeling is not religion -- emotion is not religion. While this is true, there is danger of our going to the other extreme -- of being perfectly satisfied without any joy. Joy is one of the fruits of a genuine Christian, and if we have no joy we may well suspect the genuineness of our Christianity. Joy is one of the evidences of our salvation, and the man who has a knowledge of his salvation has more or less joy all the time. This personal knowledge of salvation is superior to all other knowledge; all other knowledge pales before it. Paul said it was an "excellent knowledge" -- excelling all other knowledge -- and in order to have it he was ready to part with everything earthly. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord." When David backslid and lost his religion, he lost his joy. One of the first things prayed for when he came back to God was for the restoration of his joy. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." Nehemiah said to the Jews, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." A joyful Christian is a strong Christian. A joyful Church is a Church of power.

How shall we get this joy? If we look sharply at the text we shall see, "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." a Get the Spirit, and you will have the joy. God is willing, and waiting, and anxious to give us the Spirit. He is more willing to give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children. Get the Holy Ghost; then with Paul you may "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Another fruit of the Spirit is peace. One has said: "Joy is love exulting; peace is love reposing. It is love on the green pastures and beside the still waters." It is the great calm that comes over the soul when it realizes the fullness of the atonement. God said to His ancient people, "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Look at the majestic river as it sweeps onward to the ocean, with scarcely a ripple upon its surface. Calm and unruffled, it moves on to the sea. There may be disturbing elements on either side of that river. Along its banks cities may be burned; bloody battles may be fought, and raging epidemics sweep away thousands of the people; but the river, undisturbed, calm, and unruffled, moves onward amid these scenes, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

"Men may come and men may go,  
But the river goes on forever."

Beautiful emblem of the peace which takes possession of the saved soul!

There may be disturbing elements all along the Christian's pathway. There may be disturbing elements in the home, in business matters, in the Church, and in the community. But away down in the soul is the settled peace, the great calm; and this peace, this undisturbed calm, flows on amid these disturbing elements, the same, year after year.

"It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts,  
In this dark vale of tears."

The hymn of Isaac Watts also beautifully expresses it:

"The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below;  
Celestial fruit on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow.

"Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry;  
We 're marching through Immanuel's ground  
To fairer worlds on high."

Long-suffering is another fruit of the Spirit; bearing with the weaknesses, the infirmities, the littleness of faith in others; bearing with them if they do not see things just as we do. Paul says, "Charity suffereth long and is kind." What a wonderful thing is charity! It "beareth all things." God is long-suffering, and we are to be like Him. Long did God bear with the antediluvians, that they might have an opportunity of repenting; long did He bear with the wicked cities of the plain; long did He bear with His ancient Israel, and long did He bear with us. "God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness." "The Lord is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" and we are to be like Him.

Gentleness is another fruit of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes into the heart in answer to our earnest prayer, He gives to the Christian this disposition. This disposition is a power the world can not possibly resist. Geologists tell us that the calm and silent influence of the atmosphere is a power mightier than all the noisier forces of nature. Rocks and mountains are worn down and subdued by it. So gentleness -- gentleness and sweetness of disposition -- is a power mightier than philosophy, mightier than diplomacy, mightier than arms to mold, and subdue, and make happy our world.

As Napoleon sat upon the rocky island of St. Helena, and contemplated the wreck of his own power, and all his earthly plans, he said, "With all my power I have only made men fear me; but Jesus has made men love Him for eighteen hundred years." By His gentleness and love, Christ won all hearts, and started waves of hallowed influence that will roll on in widening circles forever. And if we have His spirit -- and we may -- we, too, shall set in motion waves of influence that shall tell upon the happiness of men, not only through all time, but through all the ages of eternity.

Goodness is another fruit of the Spirit. Joy is love exulting, peace is love reposing, goodness is love in a action; goodness is love carrying medicine to the sick, food to the hungry, and the cup of water to the disciple of our Lord. It is love at the hovel of poverty, by the bedside of the sick and dying, speaking words of cheer and comfort to the suffering and the sorrowing ones of earth. It is love going out after the unsaved; going down into the cellars and up into the garrets, out into the highways, the lanes and alleys, everywhere seeking to save the lost. It is love, binding up the broken hearts, wiping away the tears of sorrow, and earnestly toiling to augment the company of the redeemed. He who has this grace, like his Divine Master, is constantly "going about doing good." This grace is described in the General Rules of our Church. Goodness; that is, "doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to a man; to their bodies of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison; a to their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with, trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it."

A most thrilling event occurred at one of our railroad stations between here and California a few years ago. It is given by the doctor who was an eye-witness of the scene.

Some thirty years ago a gentleman who was traveling in the South met a young girl of great beauty and wealth, and married her. They returned to New York and plunged into the mad whirl of gayety. The young wife had been a gentle, thoughtful girl, anxious to help all suffering and want, and serve her God faithfully. But after marriage she had troops of flatterers; her dresses and splendid equipage were the finest in the city. In a few months she was intoxicated with admiration. She and her husband went to London, from London to Paris. In these cities they dressed, danced, flirted, hurried from ball to reception, and from opera to dinner. Many silly girls envied this woman of fashion. Some ten years ago she was returning home from California, when an accident occurred to the railroad train in which she was a passenger, and she received a fatal injury. She was carried into a wayside station. A physician living near was called. Dr. Blank said: "It was the most painful experience of my life. I had to tell her she had but an hour to live." "I must go home," she said, imperatively, "to New York." "It is impossible," I answered. She was lying on the floor. The brakemen had rolled up their

coats for a pillow. She looked around on the dingy room. "I have but one hour, you say!" "Not more." "And this is all that is left me of this world. It is not much, Doctor," with a half smile.

The men left the room, and I locked the door. She threw her arms over her face and lay quiet for some time; then turned on me in a frenzy: "To think of all I might have done, with my time and money! God wanted me to help the poor and the sick! It is too late now! I've only an hour!" She struggled up wildly. "Why, Doctor, I did nothing, nothing, but lead the fashion. Great God! The fashion! Now I've only an hour!" But she had not that, for the exertion proved fatal. No sermon I ever heard was like that woman's despairing cry, "It is too late!"

In the light of present happiness, in the light of your duty to God and humanity, in the light of the great Judgment-Day so soon to confront us all, I want to say to you, you can't afford to lead the fashions. You can't afford to follow the gay and giddy throng of the world in its vanities and frivolities. Life is too short to live for this world alone. It is too short to spend it in any other way save in getting ready for another world, and in helping others to get ready. And if this life is spent in preparing for a higher and nobler destiny, and in helping others to prepare for that higher and nobler destiny, then this life will close in beauty and glory. Our earthly sun, instead of sinking behind a dark and gloomy cloud, will go down in blazing splendor.

Another fruit of the Spirit is fidelity. Faith here means fidelity -- faithfulness in transacting the business committed to us by God, unswerving loyalty to our Heavenly Father. Joy is love exulting; peace is love reposing; goodness is love in action; fidelity is love on the field of battle in the face of the foe. Get the Holy Ghost, and you will have the fidelity of Abraham, of Daniel, of Paul, of Polycarp, of Ridley, Latimer, and Huss. Then, like these ancient worthies, you will be enabled to die on the field of battle with glory in full view.

Temperance is another fruit of the Spirit. I have not time to discuss this topic. Here a wide field opens before me, over which I might travel and talk for an hour. As Christians we are pitted against intemperance in a warfare that shall never terminate until this great evil shall go down and prohibition shall everywhere prevail. For this we expect to unceasingly pray, talk, work, and vote.

This rich cluster of graces is not one of human growth. They do not grow in the natural heart. They are of Divine planting and Divine growth. They are the fruitage of the Holy Ghost. If you want this wonderful cluster of graces, get the Holy Ghost. I am glad to say, on Divine authority, the Holy Ghost is here hovering over us, waiting, ready and anxious to come into every believing heart in all the plenitude of His love and power.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 11 THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." -- Malachi iii, 16.

In every age, from Adam to the present, there have been a few faithful followers of the Almighty. There have been men and women who have turned neither to the right nor to the left, that have not been swayed by any of the evil influences round and about them. As the needle is true to the pole, so they have been true to their God.

Away back in the Patriarchal Age, when the wickedness of man was great, and the thoughts and imaginations were evil, and only evil, and that continually, we find a few faithful souls. Noah and Enoch stood as beacon-lights amid the surrounding gloom.

During the Prophetic Period, when moral desolation everywhere prevailed, and the masses of the people had forgotten God, there were always a few whose faith in the Almighty was as firm as the anvil to its beaten stroke.

In the days of Malachi, the last of the prophets, wickedness reigned almost supreme. Vice in all forms was rampant. The people had wandered far from God, and no longer worshipped Him. The walls of Jerusalem had been torn down, the gates dismantled and burned with fire. The Temple service was neglected. The support of the priests had been cut off, and they were compelled to till the soil for a subsistence, or engage in other secular pursuits. Moral and financial desolation everywhere prevailed. The whole scene was a sad and melancholy one. Amid the awful financial and moral gloom that overspread the whole land, there were a few whose faith in God never wavered, and whose voices were always heard in defense of the religion of the God of their fathers. They feared God. They thought upon His name. They talked of His goodness.

"Then they that feared God spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name."

The text is a graphic description of the ideal Christian. The ideal Christian is not Utopian, existing simply in imagination or fancy. The ideal Christian may be reached by every child of God.

I. The ideal Christian fears God.

That little band in Malachi's day feared the Lord. The ideal Christian today fears God, not as the slave fears his master; not as the criminal fears the officer; but as the loving, obedient child fears the parent. It is the fear of filial reverence.

A little boy was tempted to take some cherries from a tree his father had forbidden him to touch. He hesitated. His companion that was with him said, "You need not be afraid to take them, for if your father were to find it out he would not hurt you." "Ah!" said the little fellow, "I know my father would not hurt me if I took them; but if I took them it would hurt my father; therefore, I will not touch them." That is the feeling of every true Christian toward his Heavenly Father.

Solomon says the first step to true wisdom is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This great and wise man declares that the wisest men that walk the earth are those that fear God, and the most foolish men that walk the earth are those who do not fear Him. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But fools despise wisdom." (Prov. i, 7.) By wisdom Solomon means religion. The fear of the Lord is that religious reverence which every intelligent being owes to his Creator.

Religion is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. This love produces a willing obedience to all God's commandments. Then it is love to man as well as to God; so that he who fears God, not only renders a cheerful obedience to all God's commands, but with regard to his fellow-man keeps the Golden Rule. If all, therefore, feared the Lord, what a world we would have! Nations would learn war no more. Swords would be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning-books. Jails and penitentiaries would be empty. Sheriffs and policemen would have nothing to do. The whole trend of society would be changed, and happiness would reign supreme in every human heart.

## II. The ideal Christian thinks of God.

That little handful of devout worshipers of God in Malachi's day "thought upon His name." The masses of the people all around them had forgotten God. Prayer, praise, song, and testimony were no longer heard by the multitudes. The Temple was not crowded with devout worshipers as in former days. That magnificent and imposing building, dedicated to the worship of God, had become dilapidated, was sadly out of repair, and in a most miserably -- neglected condition. The minds of the majority were not upon God, but upon the world. The circus, the theater, the drama, the gladiatorial arenas were crowded with the multitudes that thronged these places of amusement, while the temple, of the living God was empty.

It is a remarkable fact that the very same amusements that charmed and attracted the people of the world three thousand years ago, attract and charm the people of the world today, -- the circus, the theater, the drama. Gibbon, the historian, who wrote "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," in giving the causes of the overthrow of that mighty empire, mentions, among others, the theater and the drama. These entertainments had become awfully corrupt and terribly demoralizing in their influence. And do not the signs of the times indicate that our own beloved Nation is drifting away from her moral moorings? When we look upon the awful results of the rum-traffic, the dead march to drunkards' graves of one hundred thousand every year, the fearful passion for gambling,

the ball-room, the theater, and the drama, we shudder. Unless we call a halt on these lines, we tremble for the safety of the American Nation.

While the masses of the people in Malachi's day had forgotten God, and He was not in their thoughts at all, there were a few who feared Him and thought upon His name. They thought of His love, His mercy, and His goodness; and as they thought of these things there welled up from the very bottom of their hearts, song, praise, and testimony.

The ideal Christian today thinks of God. God is in all His thoughts. God is more to him than all this world besides. The things that attract and charm the worldly-minded have no charms for him at all. His mind is upon nobler and more enduring things.

III. The ideal Christian has a religious experience, and is always ready to tell it.

That noble band in Malachi's day had a deep, sweet, rich, glowing, and abiding experience. "They spake often one to another." I think more of my religious experience than any other thing. I would not part with it for all the wealth, and all the pleasures, and all the honors of this world. There is nothing I prize so highly as I do my religious experience. The ideal Christian in all ages has had a deep, sweet, rich, glowing, and abiding experience, and has always been ready to tell it.

David had such an experience. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." (Psa. lxxvi, i6.) Paul had such an experience, and he would tell it.

Our Savior declared that every Spirit-baptized Christian should be a witness for Him. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i, 8.) St. John the Divine had a rich religious experience, and he would tell it. Nero, the Rom emperor, got tired of hearing it; and he banished John to the lonely isle of Patmos; Job says, "I was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. i, 9.) He was there because he was a faithful witness for the Lord Jesus. But John went on telling his experience just the same. What a wonderful manifestation of the Lord Jesus John had when on that lonely, rocky, sea-girt isle! He tells what he saw, and heard, and felt, and that wonderful experience has been recorded and handed down for our encouragement and for our inspiration.

Paul, as well as John, suffered because he was a faithful witness for the Lord. He was a faithful witness before kings, and in the leading cities of the world. He went to the great centers of Europe and Asia, and told what the Lord had done for his soul. On his return to Jerusalem from one of his evangelistic tours, he went into the Temple; a mob seized him, drew him out of the Temple, began to beat him, and was about to kill him. In a few moments the whole city was in an uproar. The chief of police was notified, and with a band of soldiers rushed to the scene. He took Paul from the mob, and ordered him taken to the castle. The mob followed, crying, "Away with him! away with him!" When they reached the steps leading into the castle, the bloodthirsty rabble all about them, he asked the privilege of speaking. It was granted. Standing on the steps leading into the castle, he beckoned with his hand to the frenzied mob to be quiet. When he secured their attention, then he spoke; then he made his defense. What kind of a defense did he make? What did he say to that howling mob?

He simply told his experience. He said unto them: "Men, brethren, and fathers, I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect law of the fathers. And I persecuted this way unto the death. While on my way to Damascus, with power from the high priests to seize, bind, and cast into prison Christian men, women, and children, there shone around me a great light, brighter than the noonday sun, and I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, but they heard not the voice that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, go into Damascus, and it shall be told thee all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came unto Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight, and there fell from mine eyes as it had been scales, and forthwith I received my sight. And Ananias said unto me, Thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

Then, when he was taken before Agrippa to answer to the charges brought against him by the Jews, he was permitted to make his own defense. What kind of a defense did he make as he stood in the presence of the king and that august assembly? He simply told his experience, just as he did to that howling mob as he stood on the steps leading into the castle. And as he related that wonderful experience, Festus became so nervous and excited that he could keep quiet no longer, and leaping to his feet shouted aloud, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Paul's answer to Festus proved to that majestic court, and the whole world as well, that he was the most sane man that ever lived. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." And as Paul told the simple story of his conversion, conviction went to the heart of the king upon his throne, and Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul replied, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." (Acts xxvi, 29.)

Then again, when taken to Rome, to appear before Caesar, there at the capital of the Roman Empire, then mistress of the world, he told his religious experience, and testified of Christ's power to save. And there, as on all other occasions, some believed, while others became enraged. Paul's great argument in favor of the truth of the Christian religion was his own personal experience.

In the early history of Nebraska there lived, just west of Omaha, a man by the name of Harrison Johnson. He was a great politician, very intelligent, well read, and abreast with the great questions of the age, but an avowed infidel. He had read all the infidel books extant, and all that Mr. Ingersoll had written up to that time, and he had their arguments against the Christian religion on the end of his tongue, and he loved to advocate his infidelity. His wife and mother were both Christians and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Some twenty-five years ago, or more, Mrs. Van Cott held revival meetings in the Methodist church in Omaha. During these meetings this man Johnson was clearly and powerfully converted, and then he became just as strong an advocate of the Christian religion as he had previously been of infidelity. When I was presiding elder of the Omaha District I became intimately acquainted with him. He often went with me to my quarterly-meetings, in order that he might have an opportunity of talking privately to persons on the subject of religion. He loved to get hold of and talk with hardened infidels. This was his delight. And when he got hold of one of

these he almost invariably succeeded in leading him to Christ. The only argument he ever used in favor of the truth of the Christian religion, was his own experience. The following I had from his own lips:

He had a neighbor who lived on an adjoining farm. They were fast friends. They loved each other as did David and Jonathan. They came to the Territory in an early day, and settled just west of Omaha. His neighbor, as he himself had been, was an infidel. When Johnson was converted, his friend and neighbor was very much surprised. Some time afterward they met, and his neighbor said to him: "Harrison, I want you and your wife to come over next Wednesday and take dinner with us, and after dinner I want to spend the afternoon arguing with you on the subject of Christianity. You may talk a half an hour and I will talk half an hour, and we will spend the afternoon in this way." "All right," said Brother Johnson, "we shall be delighted to accept your kind invitation."

The next Wednesday they went over, and, after a pleasant social chat and a splendid dinner, Brother Johnson said: "Well, Charlie, I think we had better begin our argument. You may have the first half hour, and I will take the second." And during that first half hour Charlie brought forward the strongest arguments Brother Johnson said he had ever heard or read against the Christian religion. It was a magnificent talk. "Now," said he, "Harrison, it is your turn." "Charlie," said Brother Johnson, "when Mrs. Van Cott came to Omaha a few weeks ago I was converted. When I heard there was a woman preaching in the Methodist church I was anxious to meet her. I had a great curiosity to see a woman in the pulpit, and to hear what she had to say, and so, out of mere curiosity, I went to hear her. When I reached the church every seat was taken, the church was packed to its utmost capacity, and I was compelled to stand up by the door during the entire service. Two or three times during the sermon Mrs. Van Cott caught my eye. After she had preached, and invited persons who desired religion to come to the altar, she left the pulpit, and made straight for me. I saw her pressing her way down through the crowded aisle, and she never stopped until she came to where I was standing. Taking me by the hand, she said:

" 'Are you a Christian?'

" 'No.'

" 'Would you like to be a Christian?'

" 'If I thought there was such a thing as religion, I don't know but I would.'

" 'Won't you go to the altar?'

" 'No.'

" 'May I pray for you?'

" 'If you desire to do so, I shall not object.'

"She knelt right down by my side, still holding my hand. Men were standing all around us; and such a prayer as she made, Charlie, I never heard in all my life before. It was the most powerful prayer I ever listened to; and while she prayed, a very peculiar feeling came all over me, such as I had never before experienced. When she finished her prayer she arose and said:

" 'Won't you go to the altar and seek religion?'

" 'Not tonight.'

" 'Will you go tomorrow night?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'All right. I shall expect you tomorrow night,' and back she went to the pulpit.

" Five minutes after I had made the promise I was sorry. I thought about it all the next day, and time and again said to myself, 'What a fool you are for making such a promise as that to Mrs. Van Cott!' But, you know, Charlie, I never go back on my word. I always do as I promise. I went back the next night. The house was crowded. Every available seat was occupied, and again I was compelled to stand up by the door. Mrs. Van Cott preached a sermon of marvelous power. Every sentence went like a shaft to my heart. When she had finished she called for persons who wanted religion to come to the altar; and, Charlie, if the Missouri River had been running between me and that altar, I should have plunged in and gone through. I got to the altar just as quick as I could. I knelt down, and for a little while I never felt so bad in my life. The darkest cloud I ever witnessed settled down upon my soul. It was more dense than Egyptian night. It seemed to me that I was sinking into the bottomless pit. And, Charlie, I just offered this simple prayer, 'O God, have mercy upon me, a sinner, for Jesus' sake. Amen.' The dark cloud lifted, passed away, and there came into my soul a wonderfully sweet peace. It seemed to go all through my body and soul. I said to myself: 'This is strange. I never had such a feeling as this before. What does it mean? I wonder if this is religion. Yes. This is religion, and I have got it. I have got religion!' I said nothing to any one. I wanted the meeting to close; and just as quick as the benediction was pronounced I rushed out of the house, got on horse, and hurried home. I went into the room my wife was sitting, and I said to her, 'Wife, I have got religion.' She arose, embraced me, and gave me the sweetest kiss she ever gave me in her life. Then I went in to where my mother was, and I said to her, 'Mother, I have got religion.' 'O, my son!' said she, and, throwing her arms around my neck, she gave me the sweetest kiss she had ever given me. And now, Charlie, I have no doubts, no fears, no anxiety. My soul is at perfect rest. I expect to live forever with my mother, my wife, and my children. But, Charlie, my time is up. Now it is your turn."

A tear was in Charlie's eye, and he said: "Harrison, you have beat me. I would not be such a fool as to try and answer your argument. I have known you from a boy, and I know you to be a man of integrity. I know you would not say anything that is not strictly true. And, Harrison, the fact is, I would like to have just what you have."

In a few weeks Charlie was just as clearly converted as Harrison himself had been, and then he became as warm an advocate of the Christian religion as Brother Johnson himself. No argument that Harrison Johnson could have possibly brought to bear in favor of the truth of the Christian religion would have been half so powerful as the simple story of his own personal experience. What we want today is not more defenders of the Christian religion, not more advocates of our holy Christianity, but more witnesses to Christ's power to save from all sin. It is not the advocate that carries conviction to the jury, but the witnesses.

An oculist, just from college, went into the city of London and opened an office. He was an entire stranger, without friends, and had no money. He had paid out his last dollar for his education. He had no means of advertising his profession. Days passed, weeks passed, and not a single patient came to his office. He was discouraged, downcast, and gloomy. Walking down one of the streets of the great city one day, he saw a poor man sitting on the curbstone. He stopped, looked into his eyes, and discovered that the man was stone -- blind. He said to him:

"Why don't you have your eyesight restored?"

"I have been doctoring with various physicians for years, and none have ever done me any good. I have spent a fortune on my eyes. I am hopelessly blind. I never expect to see," was the reply.

"Come to my office tomorrow morning at ten o'clock."

The next morning a friend led the blind man into the office of the young oculist. Taking his seat in the chair, the oculist performed an operation. It was successful. The poor blind man was enabled to see clearly.

Overwhelmed with joy and gratitude he said:

"Doctor, I haven't got a dollar in the world. I can't pay you. I am afraid I never shall be able to pay you."

"Yes," said the doctor, "you can pay me, and I shall expect you to do so. I don't want your money. There is just one thing I want you to do, and it is a very easy thing done."

"Tell me what it is," said the happy man, "and shall be delighted to do it."

The doctor replied: "Tell it. Tell everybody you see that you were blind, and who healed you."

The restored man left the office to tell everybody he saw of his wonderful cure. Wherever he heard of a blind man he went to him and said: "I was once blind just as you are. I went to Dr. Blank, and he healed me, and if you will go to him he will heal you just as did me." In a little while the oculist had more patients than he could possibly accommodate. His office was constantly crowded with customers.

Have you been converted? Tell it, and give to God the glory. Have you been a sanctified wholly? Don't argue on this question; that will do no good; but, in meekness and humility, simply tell your experience, giving to God all the praise, the honor, and the glory; then back that testimony with a pure and spotless life.

# COALS FROM THE ALTAR

by

Henry Turner (H. T.) Davis

## Chapter 12 PAUL'S GREAT PRAYER

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." -- Eph. iii, 14-19

A little boy was walking down one of the streets of Baltimore, and came to the foot of a long ladder. He looked up, but could see no one; he heard the voices and hammers of the workmen on the roof above. His childish curiosity was awakened, and he was impelled to climb. Placing his little foot on the lowest round of the ladder, and taking hold of the second with his little hand, he pulled himself up, hand over hand and round above round, until he reached a height that to fall would have been instant death. He became tired, and stopped to rest. He looked down, and was frightened at the great distance. He began to grow dizzy, and was afraid he would fall. Just then a man passing along the street and looking up, exclaimed, "My God! that boy is going to fall." He meant all right, but he could not have done a worse thing. This frightened the boy still worse, and it seemed that the ladder swayed to and fro like the trees in the midst of a tempest. The streets and buildings all seemed to be rocking. He felt himself growing weaker and weaker, and he thought he surely would fall. Just then he heard another voice coming down from above. It was loud, cheery, and full of courage, saying, "Boy, look up." He did look up; any one would have looked up on hearing such a voice as that. "All right now," shouted the man above. "Come on." The boy was dizzy no longer. His fear was all gone, he began to climb, and soon the strong arms of the workman lifted him to a place of perfect safety.

I have thought there were thousands that are climbing the Christian ladder like that boy, midway between the earth and the housetop. They are weary. They do not feel as they did when they placed their feet on the first round of the Christian ladder. The enthusiasm they had then has departed. The joy that once thrilled their souls with rapture is gone. They are looking down and out upon the world around them. They are in danger -- great, imminent, fearful danger. To all such there is a voice coming down from above, saying, "Look up. Come up higher." Above there is perfect safety, perfect rest, perfect sunshine; but below there is storm, and tempest, and danger.

In the text, Paul bids every follower of Christ go up to an altitude where he may be above the clouds and the storms, and where he may bathe his happy soul in the constant sunlight of heaven. In this wonderful prayer we have given us an idea of what God is willing to do for every one of His children here on earth. When Paul penned these words he was inspired. What God inspired Paul to pray for, that He proposes to give. Every prayer in God's Word is tantamount to a positive promise. There is not a single request in this marvelous prayer but what God is ready and willing and anxious

to grant to every one of His trusting children. It seems that no one can read this profound prayer and plead a single moment for the continuance of indwelling sin.

It is really wonderful to what extent God promises to save His children here, to what heights He promises to praise them, and what scenes of rapture He promises to open up to their gaze. This prayer outstrips everything we ever heard, or read, or thought. It is wonderful beyond all description. The mind bends under weight of the stupendous thought it contains.

I. The first thing Paul prayed for was Divine strength for these Ephesian converts: "To be strengthened."

We learn from the second chapter of this epistle that many of these Ephesian converts were from the lowest strata of society. They had been among the vilest of the vile. They had gone down to the lowest round on the ladder of sin, and had become accustomed to all forms of vice. They had been rocked in the cradle of sin, and had grown up amid its impurities.

Paul knew very well that these converts, who, by long-continued years in sin, had become habituated to vice, could not resist the temptations of the enemy, nor escape the wiles of their sagacious foe, nor evade the gilded balls of sinful pleasure, without Divine strength; hence he prayed that they might "be strengthened with might by His Spirit."

This prayer, offered for these Ephesians, was intended also for God's people throughout all the ages. And we all need this strength today as much as the Ephesians of old needed it, and without it we become mere toys in the hands of our enemies. This strength that Paul prayed for was not physical nor intellectual, but spiritual. It was for the "inner man."

The outward man, the body, is strengthened by food and exercise; the intellect by study and close application; but the inward man, the soul, by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. We may be as strong physically as Samson, and as massive and gigantic intellectually as Voltaire, but if we have not Divine strength imparted to the heart by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost, when the enemy comes, and come he will; when the world with its gilded and fascinating charms assails, and assails it will; when unbelief with its sophisms makes its attack, and attack it will, -- then we shall be found as weak as Samson in the lap of Delilah, and as helpless as Voltaire in the clutches of vice.

Babylon and Nineveh and Tyre and the proud cities of Egypt, with all their intellectuality and physical resources, were overthrown, went down, and only live on the pages of history, because devoid of moral strength. Carthage, long the rival of Rome, with all her material and intellectual strength, grew weak, effeminate, and went to ruin, because of the want of moral power. Rome, with her scepter of universal empire, with the intelligence, the material resources, the military prowess of the world, all combined, fell to pieces, went to wreck and ruin; because devoid of that strength that Paul prayed the Church of Ephesus might have.

If you will read carefully the history of the past, you will find that no kingdom, no nation, no empire, in all past history, no matter what has been her material resources, intellectuality, military

proress, or the number of her subjects -- not one, devoid of moral strength, but has sooner or later gone to wreck and ruin.

As it has been with nations, so has it been with individuals. Alexander the Great conquered the world; but his own heart conquered him. At the age of thirty-two he died in the midst of a drunken revel. And as it was with him, so has it been with thousands since his day.

And as it has been with nations, cities, and individuals, so has it been with the Church. Whenever the Church has drifted away from God, lost her spirituality, trusted in numbers, forms, and ceremonies, she has lost her influence for good in the world. We ought to read history aright. We ought to look these facts squarely in the face, and we ought to profit by so doing.

I fear there is one mistake we are making, and it is a very grave mistake fraught with the most disastrous results. It is a tendency to look too much to the outward, and not enough to the inward man; a tendency to depend on culture, large numbers, fine church edifices, forms and ceremonies, and gorgeous paraphernalia, instead of deep spirituality. Culture is all right, forms and ceremonies are all right; we do not undervalue these; but without that internal strength which God alone can impart to the heart, all these are but as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal.

Over and above and beyond all other things, we need "to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."

It is not numbers we need so much as spiritual power. If not strong in God and the power of His might, numbers may prove a hindrance rather than an advantage. They may only be stumbling-blocks in the way of sinners, and clogs in the wheels of Zion. Gideon's three hundred water-lappers, when he came to a hand-to-hand fight with the Midianites, were worth more than his thirty-two thousand men.

There are influences that are being brought to bear against us as individuals and as the Church of Christ, that we can't possibly resist without Divine strength. We can't cope with the combined powers of earth and hell, unless strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man. We can't breast the mighty waves of infidelity that come rolling in upon us from every quarter, without this strength. We can't repel the cold waves of formality that are rolling over and deluging the Churches, unless we have imparted to us this moral power. But if we have this strength, as it is our privilege to have, we shall be able to repel every evil influence; we shall be able to overcome every opposing power; we shall be able to hurl back these cold waves of infidelity, formality, and opposing powers, and send dismay and terror into the ranks of the enemy greater even than that which seized the Midianite hosts when attacked by Gideon's three hundred water-lappers.

II. This Divine strength promised by God is to be according to the ability of the giver: "According to the riches of His glory."

In giving alms, it is a maxim that every one should give according to his ability. It would be a disgrace for a king to give no more than a poor peasant. God give according to the riches of His

glory, according to His own eternal fullness. We start back and stagger at the thought. God proposes to give according to His own eternal greatness. Omnipotent power is pledged to every child of God.

David said, when his enemies were fleeing from him, a "God is my strength and power." Again we hear his victorious shout: "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm xxvii, I.) Backed by Omnipotent Power, he had nothing to fear. God had been with him in the past, and he knew that he would not forsake him in the future. When but a beardless shepherd-boy, God gave him a victory over the proud champion of the Philistine army he never forgot, and ever afterwards he ascribed his success to God.

Looking over his past triumphs, he cries out, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." His strength was in God. His refuge was in God. All he had came from God. He owed his throne, the subjugation of his enemies, his military prowess, his marvelous success, all to God, and for all God received the honor and glory. And then as he drew near the close of life he exclaims, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." This same omnipotent strength imparted to David, God promises to give to every one of His trusting children.

Isaiah says, "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." Don't trust in man for success, for safety, for prosperity, nor in anything earthly; for all things earthly are uncertain, and are not to be relied upon. But trust in the Lord God Almighty, who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, and you will never be disappointed. Paul felt that the outward man was perishing, but the inward man was being renewed day by day. The body was dying, but the inward man was renewing its youth, becoming more and more vigorous, more and more active, rising higher and higher, grasping more and more; the range of vision was becoming wider and wider, the sweep of thought more and more extensive, the inward joy more and more rapturous, until from his martyr death his exultant spirit, like the bird freed from its cage, shot up to the throne, to be forever with the Lord.

And now, with all these broad and sweeping promises before us, how dare any one complain of weakness? We often hear persons say, "I am trying to serve God in my weak way." God doesn't want you to serve Him in your weak way. He doesn't thank you for serving Him in your weak way. God says to all, "Take hold of My strength," and that is omnipotent. Come, then, and be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.

III. Having prayed for strength for these Ephesian converts, and strength according to the riches of God's glory, Paul advances another step, and prays "that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith."

The heart of the Christian, like Solomon's Temple, is built up to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. It is our privilege to have Christ, by His Spirit, to dwell in our hearts continually. We may have Him come, not only to make an occasional visit, but to abide with us, by day and by night, at home and abroad, everywhere and all the time. He has promised to abide with His children forever: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt

not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior." (Isa. xliii, 2, 3.)

Mrs. Anna Whittenmyer was army nurse during the Great Rebellion [Civil War]. After one of the bloody battles she went into the hospital tent. As she passed down the long aisle, on either side of which was a row of cots, on which lay the wounded and dying soldiers, she came to a young man whose shining face attracted her attention. She sat down and began to talk with him. He was cheerful and very hopeful. He said, "The surgeon says when I get well, I shall have a furlough that I may go home and visit my mother and sisters up in Iowa." Mrs. Whittenmyer was impressed that he never would get well. She went to the surgeon and said:

"Can that young man recover?"

"No," said the surgeon; "there is no hope for him at all. He is liable to die at any moment."

She went back, sat down by his cot, and began to talk with him. "It will be very nice," said she, "if you get well to go home and visit your mother and sisters."

"O yes," said he, "I am anticipating a delightful visit."

"But," said Sister Whittenmyer, "suppose it is not God's will that you should get well, but that you should die here in this hospital, what then?"

"He gave me a look," said Sister Whittenmyer, "I shall never forget. It thrilled a me through and through. I shall carry that look with me to the grave. His smiling face beamed with unearthly brightness, and laying his hand upon his heart he said: 'Madam, I have the Comforter. If it is God's will that I should not get well, it is just as near heaven from this hospital as it is from my beautiful home away up in Iowa.' The next morning I went to the surgeon and said, 'How is that young man?' 'He is dead,' was the reply. 'He died just a little while after you left last night.' 'Well, where is he? I want to look into his face again.' The surgeon took me out and showed me a long row of cots on which lay those who had died during the night, and pointing to the last cot in the row, said, 'There he is.' I went up to the cot, drew down the sheet that covered his face, and there was the same sweet, heavenly smile that was there when I left him the night before."

O, my friend, have you the Comforter? If you have, all is well, and it will be just as near to heaven for you from one place as from another.

IV. Having prayed for Divine strength, and strength according to the ability of the giver, and an indwelling Christ, Paul takes another step, and it is a little higher still. He prays that they may be "rooted and grounded in love." Here is a double metaphor, one taken from agriculture and the other from architecture. As trees, we are to be rooted in God's eternal love. Love is the soil in which our souls are to grow.

In 1850, when a mere boy, I went overland to California. In crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains, I saw some of those mammoth redwood-trees, lifting their branches three hundred feet

into the air. These gigantic trees strike their roots deep into the mountain side, and their long roots being interlaced, and interlocked among the rocks of those everlasting hills, they have bid defiance to the storms of centuries. For ages, storms and hurricanes have raked the mountain sides, but there those massive trees have stood, unmoved and unharmed. So our souls, by faith, are to strike their roots deep into the infinite love of God, and, being firmly rooted in the everlasting love of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we are perfectly secure. This is perfect love, and it is the most reasonable thing in the world. God wants us to love Him with all our hearts, and all our minds, and all our strength, and when we get there, we are stable and perfectly safe. Paul knew that these Ephesian converts would have trials; he knew that severe persecutions and bitter disappointments would come; and he wanted them to get where none of these things would move them.

Many Christians, when trials come, when persecutions come, when reverses come, and adverse winds blow, and things do not go just as they want them to go, get discouraged, grow cold, lukewarm, and backslide. Why is this? They are not rooted in God's eternal love. "Grounded:" this is a metaphor taken from a building founded on a rock.

A lighthouse was built on a stormy seacoast. In a little while it was washed away. A second one was built. Old ocean summoned her waves, and it was washed away. An architect was employed to build the third. The first thing he did was to ascertain why the others had fallen. He soon discovered the cause. They were not properly founded. He set his men to work, and they began to excavate. Down they went through gravel, and sand, and debris, down, down, until they reached the solid rock. Then they laid the foundation, and keyed it fast to the solid granite, and on that solid foundation reared the superstructure. In the great tower the lamp was placed. Again old ocean summoned her waves, and hurled her mighty billows against the towering lighthouse; but every billow broke and fell harmless at its base. Neither the winds nor the waves nor the storms had any effect whatever upon that massive building; for it was founded upon a rock. So may the Christian stand if grounded in the eternal love of God. No trial, no sorrow, no persecution, no reverse, can move in the least the man who is rooted and grounded in God's eternal love.

What power there is in a parent's love! How it sustains amid all disappointments! How that love follows the erring child, and never lets go its hold! The child may have wandered away in sin, and gone down, step by step, lower and lower, until standing on the lowest round of the ladder of sin. Friends have lost all hope, brothers and sisters have given up in despair, all others have become discouraged. But not so the parent. That love is still the same. It has followed the erring child in all its wanderings, and still clings to the child when all others have given up and all others have forsaken. And that love sustains, that love comforts, that love fans and keeps alive the flame of hope in the heart. O the wondrous power of a parent's love! Who can weigh it? Who can measure? Who can estimate it? Who can describe it?

And yet, as great and powerful as is this human love, the love spoken of by the apostle, this Divine love, planted in the heart by the eternal Jehovah, is greater. It rises far above all human love. This perfect love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is more potent than the world, the flesh, and the devil; more potent than the combined powers of earth and hell. Other Christians may despond, but he who is rooted and grounded in the love of God is always hopeful. Others may become discouraged, but he does not. The altar-fires of heaven on other hearts may burn low, but

on his, never. This mighty love fans and keeps alive the flame of hope and joy everywhere, and all the round. It does not smother out in the summer, nor freeze out in the winter. It is not only seen on the Sabbath-day, but every day during the year. It shines just as brightly in the domestic circle at home as in the great congregation on the Sabbath-day. It is everywhere and all the time the same.

Are you rooted and grounded in the everlasting love of God? If so, like the towering lighthouse on the stormy seacoast, you may bid defiance to every wind and wave and tempest. Through the darkest cloud and the thickest gloom and the heaviest tempest will be seen the smiles unchanging and ever-present Savior.

V. Paul wants us to go up still higher. He wants us "to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of the wonderful love.

Dr. Adam Clarke says, "These words are so exceedingly nervous and full of meaning that it is almost impossible to translate them;" that we may be able to seize, catch, take in, fully comprehend this wonderful mystery -- the love of God in its breadth, and length, and depth, and height.

The Bible tells us, "God is love." God is eternal. His love, therefore, is eternal. It was without beginning; it shall be without end. This love in its vastness "comprehends all that is above us, all that is below us, all that is past, and all that is to come." This love originated, carried forward, and consummated the great plan of the world's redemption.

We get an idea of this love, we comprehend it faintly, in a degree, from its effects. This love of God, infinite in breadth, and length, and depth, and height, has brought salvation, from sin, and guilt, and death, and hell, within the reach of every man and woman on this round planet. It has opened wide the gates of glory. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come ... and whosoever will" may come, and enter in through the gates into the Celestial City.

It has gone into the hovels of poverty, and sent cheer and sunshine into thousands of desolate hearts and homes. It has gone into the palaces of the rich, and given them that which wealth and royalty and all the fascinating pleasures of earth could not give.

This infinite love, the depth of which no plummet-line has ever yet been long enough to sound, has gone into the alleys and lanes, down into the cellars, and up into the attics, where despair and remorse have seized their victims, -- it has gone to these despair -- smitten and remorse-seized ones, chased away the gloomy specters, brought to them the angel of hope and the chariot of faith, into which they have stepped, and ridden triumphantly to glory.

Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, with a friend, visited a poor, fallen woman, who was lying at the point of death in an attic at Five Points, New York City. They read the Bible, sang, talked, and prayed, until the poor woman was converted, and shortly afterwards died rejoicing in the world's mighty Savior. While there, a poor inebriate, after a night's debauch, came to a well which stood just beneath the attic, for a drink of water. After taking his drink, as he stood by the well, the fierce December winds whistling through his thin clothing, he heard the voices of these saintly women coming down through the window from the attic above. They were singing "Alas! and did my Savior bleed? And did my

Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" The words went with wonderful power to his heart. He said to himself: "Did He die for such a worm as I am? Is it possible that Christ can save a poor, wretched drunkard like myself?" He started in haste for his home. He walked faster and faster; then he began to run, and he ran faster and faster, until he reached a little shanty, the place he called home. He rushed into the room almost breathless and greatly excited. His wife was startled at his sudden and strange appearance. She was preparing a meager meal, hoping her husband would come and share it with her. His unusual look for a moment dazed her. As he looked into the pale, wan face of his wife, tears began to flow, and he said: "Wife, I have been a very unkind husband. I have treated you like a brute. I am unworthy of such a wife as you have been. I want you to forgive me. I am a poor, miserable drunkard. But, wife, Jesus died for me, and I believe He will save me." Then he knelt down right in the center of the room, and said: "Wife, come and kneel down and pray for me. Ask God to forgive me, and I will never touch another drop of liquor while I live." In an instant the devoted Christian wife was on her knees at his side, and while she prayed salvation came to the heart of that poor drunkard, and he arose from his knees a saved man. That was the happiest moment of their lives. In a little while that home of poverty, wretchedness, and sorrow was changed to a home of plenty, comfort, happiness, and supreme joy.

So, we say, when we see some of the effects of this love upon others, how it has given hope for despair, light for darkness, certainty for uncertainty, joy for sorrow, heaven for hell, we comprehend faintly, in a degree at least, this wondrous love, in its breadth, and length, and depth, and height.

But, then, we take it in, we grasp it, we comprehend it more fully, when it has taken hold of our own individual hearts, lifted us up out of the mire of sin, placed our feet upon the Rock of Ages, put a new song into our mouths, even praises to our God, and opened to our view the sublime glories of the heavenly world. When we have thus felt its transforming, uplifting, soul-inspiring power, we get a true idea of the greatness of this love.

VI. Paul does not stop. He goes on. He takes another step. He wants us to rise higher still. He prays that we may "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

What strange language is this? He wants us to know the unknowable. Strange paradox. What does he mean? How are we to understand this? He means just this: This love of God, imparted to the heart by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost, passeth all human knowledge. It is above philosophy, above science, above a knowledge of all the schools; it overtops, oversweeps, and towers far above all human understanding. It is a spiritual knowledge.

What does the sinner know about conversion? Simply nothing at all. He may talk ever so flippantly about the Bible, Christianity, and religion; but he is as blind as a bat so far as a knowledge of salvation is concerned, because "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. ii, 14.) This knowledge lies in a sphere away beyond all earthly knowledge. It is within the domain of the spiritual.

Entire sanctification is in the same spiritual realm, but higher up, and the converted man will never understand sanctification until he gets an experimental knowledge of it. He may have a theory.

It may be beautiful, fine-spun, and very plausible; but it is, after all, only theory, and not knowledge. The knowledge of this perfect love of God lies in a sphere away beyond all theory and all human. It is within the realm of the spiritual. Paul wants us to go up and out beyond all theory, up and out beyond all philosophy, up and out beyond a knowledge of all the schools, up and out beyond all human understanding. He wants us to go up where we may know the love of God which passeth all human knowledge.

And now we ask, Do you know the love of God in His pardoning power? Do you know the love of God in His sanctifying power? Do you know the love of God in His sin-destroying, self-annihilating, soul-uplifting, and soul-keeping power? If not, we say, Come up to this high plain. God says, Come up to this high plain; Christ says, Come up to this high plain; the Holy Ghost says, Come up to this high plain; the angels in heaven and the good on earth say, Come up to this a high plain, where you may know the love of God which passeth knowledge.

VII. Paul takes one more step, and he reaches the topmost round on this ladder. He crowns this profound prayer with the amazing petition, "That ye might a be filled with all the fullness of God." Glorious climax! Soul-cheering, soul-animating, soul-inspiring thought: "Filled with all the fullness of God!" We stagger, and the mind bends under the weight of the stupendous thought: "Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be filled with God is a great thing; to be filled with the fullness of God is still greater; but to be filled with all the fullness of God utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding."

Beyond all question, it is a prayer for perfection in the very highest sense; a prayer for an uttermost salvation; a prayer that the last vestige of sin may be entirely swept from the soul, and the downward drift entirely removed; a prayer that the soul may be filled with all the gifts and graces of the perfect Christian character, and that gives to it the constant upward and heavenly trend.

How any one can read this prayer, and then limit God's salvation, is a mystery. It seems that no one can possibly read this profound prayer, and plead a single moment for the continuance of indwelling sin. If this prayer teaches anything, it certainly teaches that God is willing and ready to eradicate from the heart every form of evil; that He is ready and willing to break every fetter and strike off every chain that sin has forged; that He is ready and willing to give us perfect liberty from every form of sin, and from every evil tendency; so that we may be free as the bird and happy as the lark, soaring away to the skies, singing upon the wings of liberty.

Have you been strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man? Does Christ dwell in your heart by faith? Are you rooted and grounded in love? Do you comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and do you know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and are you filled with all the fullness of God? Area you standing upon this lofty mountain summit? Are you bathing your happy soul in the sunlight of heaven, and are you drinking in some of the bliss of the glorified? Well, there is still more beyond; for God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

You may ask great things of God, but He is able to do more than you can ask. You can think of a great deal more than you can ask. "The think," says Dr. Steele, "is greater than the ask."

Imagination can go out into fields of beauty and pleasure, and open up to the rapt vision scenes of bliss and glory that no language can possibly describe. And yet, after all, God is able to do for you more than you have ever read, or asked, or thought. Glory be to His name for ever and ever! May the answer to this marvelous prayer come to every reader of these pages!