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A BUNDLE OF ARROWS

*by Rev. Mr. Beverly Carradine*

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# A BUNDLE OF ARROWS

**BY**

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE NAME OF JESUS

The Savior had many names given him by reason of his greatness and many sidedness. Through various images and figures as well as titles the Spirit of God endeavored in the Word to present the inexhaustible Christ to mind as well as heart, that men might obtain some approximate conception of the magnitude and amplitude of the Redeemer of the world.

The name Jesus brought by the angel out of heaven and delivered to Mary seems to be the dearest and most precious to the human soul of all the appellations and descriptions given him. It means Savior, but has also become the verbal embodiment of all the graces and virtues as well as powers of the marvelous man of Galilee.

In spite of all that it stands for however, in the line of love, sacrifice and redeeming grace, we have to notice

First. There has never been a name as much reviled and as shockingly handled.

Some of us are wonderfully sensitive about what is said about us; but if we multiply the scurrility, slander and accusations a billion fold that is directed against the most prominent and hated of religious teachers, and workers, still we are not even in sight of the vidette line of the great body of abuse that is uttered against the Holy One of God.

No being so vile, but has a way of speaking of Christ as if he was viler. No age, or sex, or business, or walk in life, or social grade is free from this language of profanity and blasphemy. From the boot-black to the merchant; from the sailor to the admiral; from the general to the soldier; from the judge in the stand to the jockey on the horse; from the editor in the office to the newsboy on the street; everywhere we hear the sacred, holy name of Jesus connected with horrible oaths and blasphemous imprecations. Men who respect the names of earthly rulers and kings of nations, have no regard or reverence whatever for the name that Paul says

is above every name, and that belongs to him who is King of Kings and is the Ruler of the Universe.

A second fact is, that there is no other name so generally and bitterly hated.

Christ said himself that the world hated him. None of us can say that. Some can count up a dozen active foes; and others enumerate possibly several hundred enemies. But the Savior has the whole unregenerate globe against him, according to his own words.

Then there is a hatred springing up towards him among his own people. He said he was wounded in the house of his friends; and the hand which betrayed him was with him on the table.

Moreover, when he preached the deeper truths of his gospel, great numbers of his disciples left him and followed him no more. This remarkable aversion springs up even to this day, when we see people professedly loving Christ and yet abominating some of his words, shunning many of his people, and ridiculing and fighting his own peculiar distinguishing work, the purifying of the soul by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire.

As religious people we are disliked by a certain number of people, and often with provocation. But the Savior was hated by the many; and without a justifying reason. As he said in speaking of such an unnatural and unpardonable spirit and conduct, "They hated me without a cause."

A third fact about the name of Jesus is that none other commands so great a following.

Alexander had his phalanxes, Caesar his legions and Napoleon his armies, that followed their leaders to death. They swept upward in numbers toward several millions. But what about the multitudes that believe in, follow faithfully, and would cheerfully, gladly die for Christ! All the kings of earth together could not assemble an army anywhere or at any time like that which would spring to the front at the name of Jesus. Moreover, this marvelous fact is seen to exist in all the countries, and through all the centuries. The day of Alexander, Caesar and Bonaparte is over. They have no army or following now. But Christ is the contemporary of all the ages,

and is felt to be a conscious presence, a crowned personality, and an almighty influence and power in any and every one of the centuries.

The King of England would have a hard time raising an army in the United States. The Czar of Russia and the Kaiser of Germany would meet with as great a failure. But Jesus could get a multitude in every nation in any year, on any day and at any moment of time.

Out of palaces, hovels, colleges, farms, shops, stores, offices, hospitals, prisons, ships, armies, navies, mines, forests, and the depths of the desert itself, here they would come, a vast following of people, outnumbering all the standing armies, home reserves, civil, political and fraternity processions of earth, a hundred thousand and a million fold times over. There is surely no name like the name of Jesus.

Fourth, there is no name as much beloved as that of Jesus.

There are terms and titles exceedingly precious to the human heart, like sister, wife, mother, home and heaven; but far above all as to depth of love and intensity and eternity of affection, gratitude, loyalty and devotion towers the name of Jesus. The apostle said truly it is above all others.

If a vote should be taken as to the dearest and most prized appellation on earth, the unregenerated unilluminated multitude would doubtless cast in their ballots for certain localities and for individuals in the social and home circle. But the Christian world would without hesitation agree on the name of Jesus.

The writer of this article bent over his dying singer, Prof. Rinehart, and said, "Do you know Jesus, my brother?" and the very name called the man back from unconsciousness, and looking upward with a gush of tears and countenance all ashine, he cried, "Yes, thank God! Yes, thank God!" and went back in another moment into the gathering shadows of Death. It was the only word that could have brought him back; for it is the name above every name.

Fifth and finally, it is above every other name in the realm of salvation.

There is none other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. To mention another is not only mockery, but blasphemy. We can easily conceive the disgust and horror of men, when brought into heartbreaking

conviction over the fact and presence of sin in them, that the name of some fellow mortal should be held up as the hope and deliverance of the anguished and despairing soul. At such a time we look as naturally to him as the disciples tossed on the waves of Galilee fixed their eyes upon his approaching form and cried unto him for help and rescue.

In our early ministry the church and camp meetings abounded and resounded with sermons about Jesus. He was lifted up, exalted, and made not only prominent but pre-eminent in nearly all the discourses we heard. The preachers "Preached Christ." And it was simply wonderful to see the results. Altars would be filled, the power of God would fall, and conversions would be as clear as a bright unclouded day.

The hymn that we heard lined in hundreds of different services and which has not fallen upon our ears in any church, or on any camp ground for over fifteen years was:

*"Jesus, the name high over all,  
In earth and hell and sky;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly."*

The favorite texts in those days were, "The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory." "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forever more, amen and have the keys of hell and of death."

These and similar passages of Scripture were handled not only by the rank and file of the ministry, but by the great preachers who as connectional officers visited the annual conference, or were invited to fill the pulpit at the camp meetings.

As the name which is above every name was lifted up, the Spirit of God would fall on the Word, the preacher and the people, and we have beheld great congregations moved under the divine power as we have seen a woodland or a field of wheat stirred, shaken and bowed under a strong wind from the heavens.



How gravely those preachers used to read the hymns about the Son of Man and the Son of God. How solemnly they held up the sorrowing, the scourged, the rejected, the crucified, the dying, the risen and the ascended Christ. How breathlessly the people listened. How suddenly and overwhelmingly we have seen the Spirit fall! And a shouting, weeping, laughing, crying, praying, pleading, hand-clapping audience would stand revealed to the amazed vision of a great crowd of beholders.

Who could entertain for a moment the thought that any other name could have produced such a scene? Upon what other name could Heaven descend with its mighty endorsement and approving power? The very Pit itself would rise up against another rival claimant, crying out, “Jesus I know — but who are you!”

No, there is no one like Jesus in earth or Heaven. As the Chiefest, Highest and Greatest, all power has been given unto him. He is going to subdue all His enemies, and rule the nations. The whole world shall receive the law from his mouth. And at the closing Day of Time the Bible tells us “that every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.”

## CHAPTER 2

### “ART THOU THE GARDENER?”

The sentence above was the question Mary put in the early morn of the Resurrection to Jesus, whom she did not recognize. In a minute afterward she saw her mistake and fell at the feet of the Lord, crying out, “Rabboni.”

And yet, in a deep and blessed sense she was not mistaken. The Savior is a gardener. The first Adam was one, and the second Head of the Race is a far greater one. The first tilled the soil and cared for the trees in Eden; while the second digs in the soul, plants the Tree of Life, and cultivates the noblest and sweetest of flowers in the soil of the human heart.

The figure is far from being uncommon in the Bible; and as we read as well as feel what Christ has done, and is doing for us, we change the query of Mary into an affirmation on our part, and say, with profound thanksgiving, “Thou art the Gardener.”

He found a desert when he first looked upon our sin-blighted natures. But he knew the energy of the seed and plants which he brought, and saw how, under the dew of heaven and through his labor, that the same wilderness could blossom as the rose, and the wild life waste burst forth with springs of pure and everlasting pleasure.

Nobody seemed to want us but the Savior; and so he bought us, walled us in from the world, blasted the rocks, dug up the briars, inserted the plow and thoroughly broke up the soil.

It would take much time to tell how he fertilized the heart; how he sowed and planted, grafted and pruned, trained and propped, and made the garden beautiful as well as profitable. By and by it became a perfect maze of loveliness with winding walks, clambering vines, clustering roses, bowers of rest and landscapes of wondrous beauty. Meantime the useful was prominent, and many kinds of fruits hung from laden boughs, fountains gushed with cool water, and seats were to be found just where they were most needed.

Men oftentimes separate the beautiful and profitable, as though they could not affiliate, but as they study the Divine methods they change their modes of procedure; for it is observable that God joins together loveliness and usefulness. This is seen from the charming cloud that bears fruitfulness at the same time in its breast for the fields; and beheld as well in the religiously useful man, whose very piety will transform homeliness of countenance into an attractiveness far nobler and more lasting than mere physical comeliness.

The constructor of parks made a great advance when seats were scattered under the trees and children allowed to roll on the grass. There was a time that such places were like hung-up pictures, simply to be gazed upon.

The regular country garden has always appealed to the writer because of this combination of the beautiful and excellent, the ornamental and useful. There were the soldier-like rows of cabbage, beets and cauliflower, together with the scarlet radish, whose growing ripeness cracked the soft, crusty ground and tempted the passerby to pluck and eat. Then came long furrows of tasseling corn, stick barricades of peas, a green, tangled bed of strawberries, and frames of the rosy tomato. On one side was a line of peach trees, on the other some noble bearing apricots and nectarines. In a remote corner was a little thicket of plums. Near the gate was a large pear tree, which shaded perfectly a rustic seat, from which one could look down several of the main walks and see their sides both brilliant and fragrant with flowers and roses of a dozen different varieties. There were two arbors in the garden, one overhung with purple clusters of grapes and the other fairly buried under the clambering yellow cloth of gold, and snowy star jessamine. The gate was overarched with honeysuckle, into which the humming-birds came for their daily nectar, without the slightest fear of molestation.

A person might take a book and, straying into this garden, take one of its half-dozen seats under fruit tree or trellised vine, and he would at once find it exceedingly difficult to keep to man's printed works, when here was a volume of Nature outspread before every sense, whose writer was God, whose type was many colored, and whose pages were fresh and sweet as if just from the Press of Heaven.

We who think at all are bound to admit that the Lord can do even more beautiful and wonderful things in the soul. Paradise can be restored on a nobler, better scale. We can have the lost Eden again, and within. But as of yore, the Lord must plant the Garden.

When we submit to this work of grace, a number of things are certain to happen.

First, there will be moral loveliness. It is impossible to turn the life over to Christ without all seeing the change for the better. There is a spiritual beauty as certain as there are physical good looks.

Second, the feature of Christian usefulness will be seen blended and intertwined with the moral comeliness of the life. The man whose heart is cultivated by the Savior is bound to be a benediction wherever he goes. A study of the nature of the plants that Christ puts in the soul will settle this fact forever. No one can have flourishing in him such traits and virtues as kindness, gentleness, meekness, goodness, and long-suffering, without being a blessing to all with whom he comes in contact. These are some of the fruits of the Lord's soul garden, and they are just what the world is starving for.

Third, the existence of such a soul-garden is bound to cause pleasure to the Lord who planted and made it what it is.

There is a fashion of attributing insensibility to the Being who created feeling. This misconception would make the Lord regardless of what is going on continually under his eye. This wrong idea traced to its legitimate conclusion, would make the Almighty indifferent to the actions of vice as well as those of virtue. He would thus turn an unmoved eye upon a man whether he was doing right or wrong. The Bible teaches no such folly.

Analogy alone would say, that if it delights a man to gaze upon a beautiful, widespread farm, waving with harvests and garnished with orchards of yellow and crimson fruit; which farm was, when first seen, nothing but a tangled brake and gloomy wilderness; how much purer and deeper must be the joy of God when he looks upon a soul that was once stony, hard, unlovely and unprofitable, and yet is now beautiful and productive, transformed by his gracious and powerful dealings into a well-watered,

safely-defended and perfectly-kept life garden, a place wherein the Lord himself delights to walk.

What did the pioneer farmer do, compared to what the Lord did; one working in the soil, the other with an immortal soul; the farmer gathering crops and grain of a season, the latter bringing in fruit unto eternal life.

The fact that our faithfulness pleases God ought to make us more devoted than ever. That he does “take pleasure” in his people we have the statement of Scripture.

Fourth, the existence of such a soul garden is certain to attract and bless the human family.

We have often been struck with the spectacle of multiplied thousands of people rushing from the hot and cooped-up city to garden-like places, that possessed the desirable features of trees and fountains, flowers and fruit, seats and shade. These are but the outward signs and tokens of better things needed by the soul.

It is blessed to think that a man can be garden-like, and give forth to his fellow-creatures not only the promise but the fulfillment of far nobler experiences than those offered by keepers of summer resorts. When others obtain what he possesses, it is bound to stop the mad rush to places of idle amusement established by the hands of men.

All of us remember the strange, sweet attractiveness of some lives over us, before we found the secret of the Lord. They with sympathy, counsel and instruction, rested and revived us. We went from them refreshed and strengthened. It was as though we had been among seats and fountains. The explanation was, they were Gardens of the Lord.

When the church is filled with such people, who have been made so by the grace of God; it will likewise become so beautiful and fruitful, so attractive and satisfying, that men will forsake their week-day and Sunday worldly resorts, and flock to the House of the Lord. This is to be the secret of the church’s power in the Millennial age. This will be her glory. The Lord is going to make a park in the souls of his children.

If we have studied the world’s want correctly, it needs that Christians come after it with a garden in the heart rather than a library in the head.

Finally, the existence of such a restored Eden brings a subjective joy. The man thus transformed is himself blessed beyond all language to adequately describe.

He who has borne for years the briars, brambles and bitter weeds of sin, and then finds his soul changed into a flower and fruit garden, is bound to be a happy man. He not only feels sweet in his spirit as if roses were blooming inside, but he is consciously a blessing and strength to others by the very life he lives. This is true living and brings its own peculiar throb and thrill.

Nor is this all, for the Lord comes and walks in the garden. The soul receives its Maker! The creature through grace is able to please and entertain the Creator! The idea was strikingly foreshadowed in Eden; but Sin broke in and the happy communion and fellowship between God and man was ended. Then Adam was driven out with his unborn posterity, and Paradise disappeared. The second Adam next appeared, kept the broken law, and would now lead the race in the glorious recovery or restoration of Eden. This time he would plant the Garden in the heart. Thank God he is doing so. The instant that the soul is thus transformed God comes down and takes possession of the evergreen labyrinth. He is ever to be found in the walks and recesses, by the fountains, fruits and flowers of the genuinely and fully saved life. Multiplied thousands in the land can bear testimony to this blessed fact.

Two indescribably sweet experiences are theirs: One is that their souls feel like a watered garden all the while; and the other is that Jesus is the Gardener.

## CHAPTER 3

### SIGNALS OF THE SOUL

There are various signs given by men who are imprisoned, or floating helplessly on the wreck of a ship, or cast away on a desert island, by which their presence and peril are made known to the great busy outside world, and appeal for relief thus signaled.

The minute gun at sea is a volume in itself. The poor rag fluttering from a tree top on a rocky isle in remote parts of the ocean is eloquence. The tin plate, with a few nail marks on it and flung from the grated window of a fortress, was a letter of fullest character to tell the shocked world of the life confinement of the man in the iron mask.

These signals declare existence, and suffering, and become a hail or farewell, a petition or funeral notice, according to the time they are given and observed. Some are beheld too late. The last rocket is shot from the sinking vessel before the life boat leaves the shore. The cloth is noticed in the tree, but on disembarking, the relief party discovers only a skeleton lying under its wavering melancholy shadow.

It seems to the writer that there is nothing more isolated, invisible and imperiled than the human soul. When imprisoned, it is the profoundest of bondages. When shipwrecked, it is the worst of all calamities. And as for separation, loneliness and suffering what can approximate these experiences and life condition of the human spirit.

It is so walled in by flesh and bone, that we cannot see it with the eye. It can be so buried in ignorance, prejudice and sin that one cannot get a word through the thick walls and locked doors to where it is sleeping. It can drift so far in evil that we cannot send a message to it. It can so petrify with despair and wickedness that we have no hope of making ourselves understood by what seems a captive in stone, a man with an iron mask on his face.

Through these and other reasons there are some who question soul existence, and an immortal personality, in the beings they meet. They see, they say, no sign of this captive, this shipwrecked mariner, this invisible nature or spirit, made for God and a certain kind of life, and now suffering, starving and perishing for lack of relief and deliverance.

But there are many who mark the signals going up, call attention to them and are trying to bring help and comfort and liberty to the imprisoned, the entombed and the castaway, and thereby add to the sons and daughters of the Almighty, and swell the glorious population of heaven. They know there are souls in human bodies, and they must be rescued. In a sense they have the ocular and unmistakable proof that there is a prisoner in the silent castle, and a starving sailor on the lonely rock.

One signal sent up by the soul is the manifestation of a peculiar hunger.

There is a physical appetite known to us all that is met and satisfied with meat and bread. Back of this corporeal nature is an intellectual life craving information of all kinds. It questions and receives answers; searches and obtains facts and has as a consequence a gratification peculiar to itself, and as real as the satisfaction realized by the stomach after a sufficient meal. This nature we call mind, or intellect. But back of, and higher than both of these, the physical and mental, is a something with a purely spiritual longing for God and truth.

The entire separateness and distinctness of this desire and appetite, is seen in the fact that with natural hunger satisfied, and the mind filled with information to repletion, this other and third life cries out for light and food and help. Something within us different from the craving for knowledge, and unspeakably removed from bodily desire, wants not the creature, but the Creator himself.

It is remarkable how in addressing a large and mixed audience of people, when we have spoken of certain attributes of the Almighty, and the profound want of the human soul, its need of God, and eternal restlessness and despair without him, what a deep stillness has come upon the congregation. In scores of faces we saw looks cast upon us that came from the deepest and farthest away realm in man. We got a glimpse of the soul: We saw a faint skyrocket on the horizon. We beheld the fluttering cloth on



the tree top of a distant shore. We knew that an immortal spirit was waving a signal to us.

A second sign of the invisible soul is the flash of joy which leaps into the face when it finds and receives its Savior and God.

There is no gladness like it; no light of countenance equal to it; and its very uniqueness declares something has been reached never before touched. Also that something or some one has gone where bread could not go, and swept far beyond and higher than human knowledge of any kind has or can ever possibly come.

This is a beacon light, that no matter how far down the national, educational and social horizon it may glimmer, yet its reflection is certain to be seen. It is like no other shining, and declares that a soul is there and has been found.

A third sign of the strangely hidden away soul is its distress signal of approaching ruin.

The loss of the soul is called its everlasting death in the Bible. The term is a strange one because the same Book shows the soul still living in eternity. It is not annihilated, but has a death that never dies. In a word, failing to find God and enter upon its true life on earth, it passes into an endless existence so stripped and starved, so dwarfed and blighted and undone, that it is impossible to apply with truth and correctness so beautiful a word as life to such a woeful state of being.

As the soul approaches this fearful catastrophe, it has signs of fluttering that are simply unmistakable concerning the coming disaster. No gun pealing mournfully through the stormy night more certainly declares a ship in danger and going down, than we are made to see that an immortal soul is perishing before our eyes. No leprosy leaping into the forehead of the sinning King of Israel was clearer to the view of the shocked priests that stood around, than is the vision of a soul steeped in iniquity dying to God and truth before our eyes. No spectacle of a band of Cortez's soldiers led bound by the Mexicans to an altar on a hilltop and murdered in sight of their horror-stricken comrades on the plain, was ever more evident than is the spectacle of immortal spirits led to the slaughter by the hands of sin, the world and the devil, and slain in full view of the world.

There was no lack of signs of disaster and death in any of these cases. And in the greater woe of a perishing soul the tokens are perfectly manifest, and as melancholy as they are unmistakable.

Not always does the man himself, consciously or willingly admit his ruin, but the coming calamity has a way of declaring itself in facial lines and marks, in gathering countenance shadows, and deepening spirit gloom, that cannot be misunderstood.

There is a peculiar pensiveness felt by the observer in watching the close of a day from the summit of a hill commanding a broad landscape. The wider the view the profounder is the impression made upon the mind and heart as the eye takes note of the sinking sun, the final disappearance of the red in a bank of purple clouds, the fading of the colors in the west, the creeping of gray and then black shadow over the plain, while the evening star lifts up a white hand in the sky as if to hush all nature and mankind to stillness about the dying bed, and over the death itself and departure of a day that can never come back again.

We sat on the brow of Lookout mountain a few years ago, and watched a summer day die. The memory of the gradual sinking of the crimson globe until the last glowing edge went beneath the horizon, and vail after vail of gloom was thrown over the bier, and fell upon hills, fields, valleys, and the broad silent Tennessee river, winding along far beneath in the gloaming, remains with the writer until today as one of the deep impressions or mental pictures of his life.

We listened to a whippoorwill far down the mountain side, whose note that evening sounded like a dirge. A locust was drowsily singing in a tree above our head. A sadness was upon us that we found impossible to shake off. We had seen the death of a beautiful day. It had faded away before our eyes. Its opportunities, privileges and possibilities were ended forever. Its life was gone, and it could never come back again.

But melancholy and affecting as was this sight, we have witnessed far sadder and more heart-breaking scenes in the spectacle of an immortal soul dying to truth and God, and steadily sinking, and finally disappearing into the gloom of an everlasting night.

We have seen the light leave the face, the shadows creep up, the gloom settle, a distant dark world reach up and claim them, and they were gone and forever.

Who that ever witnessed such a Christless, joyless, hopeless death, can forget it. What a stillness falls on the group in the room. What pathos was in the closing eye and in that last quivering breath which sounded like a sigh. How distinctly and painfully came the fall of a footstep on the pavement, and the solemn stroke of the town clock far away in the night.

We, remember that once as a young preacher on witnessing such a scene of an ended life, and far more dreadful a soul lost forever, we burst into tears and sunk on our knees with an uncontrollable fit of sobbing.

And so the very shadows of twilight is a sign both of the life and death of the day. And the gloom of a sinful life, and the blackness that settles down upon the dying moments of an unsaved man, is just as unmistakably a distress signal that a soul has been in our midst and has gone down before our eyes forever.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE MANUFACTURE OF GODS

One of the strange and dreadful powers of men is the ability to make gods for themselves. No matter how ordinary their talents, and unsuccessful their efforts in other directions, here in the deity constructing business they always excel, and from the successful manufacture of one, they can soon turn out “gods many.”

In fine scorn and irony the prophet addressed an idolatrous people, and said, You take the trunk of a tree, make an image of it, call it God, and then afterwards burning it up, fail to see the silliness and absurdity of the whole proceeding.

But this and all other arguments fail to deter idolaters from their God manufacture; so intellectual Greece had thirty-three thousand false deities, military Rome possessed as many, and benighted Africa owned as great a multitude.

No tribe, no matter how degraded and poverty-stricken, seems to be poor when numbering their gods. They are legion, and they are of brass, iron, wood, stone, and anything and everything but spirit.

In enlightened America we have as many false gods as the countries mentioned ever possessed. Men are still busy making gods. It is true that in this nation men have better conceptions of the Divine Being than the Asiatics and Africans possess; they know that God is a spirit and is not to be constructed in the forms and images which the heathen fashion for themselves. Nevertheless, all misconceptions of God are idolatrous. All wrong ideas which result in the robbing him of certain moral attributes, or which deny his Will and Word and Work, inevitably make an idol or false God.

It is marvelous to see what impertinent and sacrilegious hands men lay upon the Almighty. They take from him attributes which belong to him

and clothe him with qualities which he plainly disclaims, and which are perfectly alien to his character. The result is of course a false God.

Evidently the God of the Bible does not suit people in America, and so they have gone to work to cut him up, shave him down, and then add a certain worldliness, weakness, and general molluscousness to his character which really brings another false God upon the scene, whom men worship, and whom at last they will find powerless to save.

It is a sickening thought that there are so many Christian congregations in the land today who are worshipping a false Christ. About all some of them have of the real, true Savior is the name Jesus Christ. That a certain divine man named Christ died on Calvary two thousand years ago is the one fact and truth they start out with, but after that comes in their handiwork in all that remains. Instead of changing their hearts and lives to suit the Holy One of the Bible, they alter him to suit their worldly and sinful lives. So a soft, easygoing, worldly Christ is lifted up in their Church as the object of worship.

As a God he is indifferent to the amusements and business life of his followers. He winks at card-playing, theater-going and Sunday traveling. He does not mind white lies, gossip, and various kinds of diversions in the family and church. He is perfectly satisfied that his people come to his temple twice on Sunday, sing him an anthem or two, bow slightly in the pews, and if convenient attend the prayer meeting on Wednesday night. The rest of the week can be spent anywhere and everywhere, it suits them; it is all the same to him.

We have not the shadow of a doubt in our minds that we have churches throughout our country called "The Church of the Redeemer," or "The Church of the Messiah," that if the real Christ, as he is, should walk down its aisles, the congregation would not know him and if he preached a single sermon they would never hear another; and if he persisted in his rebuke they would kill him as certainly as did the Jews.

It is purely an imaginary Christ that many congregations are worshipping. They have manufactured a God to suit themselves. The boundary lines of his salvation have been so run in and out as to allow not only questionable things, but matters forbidden by the Law and the Sermon on the Mount.

The Christ of the Bible, demanding a complete consecration, a devoted service, and a rulership without a rival in the heart, is one being, and the one they call Christ who permits compromise, a half-hearted following, and actual sin and worldliness is another person altogether different. The first is the true God, the second is a false one manufactured by the worshipper and unable to save in life, comfort in death or deliver at the Day of Judgment.

In our goings about we have often heard the following expression: “My God allows me to do so and so, or this and that.” We never heard the speech, but felt that some kind of sin was being covered. In numerous instances the proof was finally given to verify the suspicion.

The explanation of the phrase is that the man, being plainly forbidden by the God of the Bible from committing certain things, or acting in various ways, immediately proceeded to make a God for himself who would allow him to do whatsoever he desired. This manufactured deity he calls “his God.” Then in due season we hear the words, “My God allows me to play cards,” or to “go to the theater,” etc., etc.

These gods of course are very diverse, as people do not all favor the same kind of sin; and so they differ and are numerous as well. If a town has a population of three thousand people it is perfectly safe to say there are over one thousand false gods in the community, while a city of a million would have an array of man-created deities that would make the thirty-three thousand idols of Athens look like a corporal’s guard.

It stands to reason that if we would wield a harsh, slanderous tongue, we must be under the necessity of creating a God who will allow this, so that we can in the indulgence of such unkindness and spleen be able to say that our God continues to smile upon and bless us. The God of the Bible is against such words and such a spirit; so the counterfeit deity is struck off, elevated into position, and then, with hands wet with the blood of a brother’s reputation, the deluded man looks upward, while the lips say, “My God allows me to do this,” “My God continues to bless and prosper me while I do and say such things.”

If a man wants to be divorced from his wife for other than the scriptural cause, he is under the necessity of making a God to let him do it, for the

true God forbids it. Hence we do not have to travel far these days to hear a man or woman say, “My God allowed me to get a divorce; and the ground was incompatibility” Another God-maker!

If a person would like to gossip, or repeat evil reports; if he would condemn a fellow-being unheard, and nurse a grudge; he must manufacture a God to permit such a spirit and life, for the true God is against it all.

No one need be surprised to hear people, who are well-known to be guilty of these things, stand up in testimony meetings and say that God dwells in their hearts, and they never enjoyed religion more in all their lives than now. The explanation is that a God has been manufactured to suit the unloving, unChristlike life. It is true that their tongue is sharper than a serpent’s tooth, and their conversation is one of abuse, detraction, and slander; yet here comes the stereotyped expression, “My Lord was never nearer and dearer to me than now. He fills me now. He keeps me blessedly all the time.”

In spite of the bold declaration many of the readers of this chapter will recall how the God of the Bible failed to make his presence felt at this juncture; and how, when the testifier sat down there was a peculiar silence, unctious, ominous and oppressive.

False gods allow us to retain right eyes and right arms that offend. They grant seats at Jezebel’s table, and most distinguished favors and attentions from the world. They generate no fears, whisper nothing about a coming judgment, but rock the soul to sleep with the nonsensical but soothing doctrine of Final Restoration.

It is dreadful to mark the confusion and horror which comes with the light of the death hour revelation to men who have worshipped gods of their own creation. They find with a sudden and unspeakable shock that they have been adoring fantasies, delusions, and silly imaginations of their own. They find vanishing illusions where they wanted a divine Person, and mental fog where they needed the arm of the Omnipotence.

They compassed themselves with sparks of their own kindling, and now, says the prophet, they lie down in sorrow. They took their own desires to be divine leadings; their personal spleen to be righteous indignation, and their pitiless treatment of their fellow-creatures to be zeal for the Lord.

With Christ's own statement that no one who cast out devils in his name could speak lightly of him, and could not be against him, yet they proceeded to condemn and cast out from their regard and presence all that did not "follow with them," no matter what miracles of grace these same people were performing in Christ's name. This strange anomaly and contradiction was their religion, and this un-Christlike Christ was their Lord.

Of course at death no such God appeared to help and save. The true God had been substituted with a false one, and he was not only powerless to deliver, but being a mere concept, and a vain one at that, he was not even present to comfort, and so the now undeceived soul was left to flounder in darkness and despair in the hour of death.

Better far to serve the true God, though that service cost not only the right eye, and hand and foot, but all of earth beside. What are our members to us if we be cast with them in the Lake of Fire? and what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?

If the reader has a God, he should take it at once to the Bible and see how it compares with the Holy Being revealed there. If dissimilarity exists, and the prodigious blunder has been made of making a God instead of receiving One who never had a beginning, there should be an instant destruction of the idol, the abandonment of the false, and a cleaving now and forever to the one true God, high over all and blessed forevermore. It is infinitely better to discover a great spiritual mistake in life, than in death, when the senses are failing, the mind wandering, devils are assailing, and all the strange, trying and paralyzing sensations attending dissolution sweep like dark billows over the soul.

It would be a dreadful thing in the midst of dying gasps, fading faces, and a receding world, to discover in the last moment of life that we had worshipped a wretched counterfeit, a base imitation, a helpless idol, a God that we ourselves had manufactured.

Alas for the man who has created an imaginary God; served all his life a false God; and dies at last with no God!



# CHAPTER 5

## A WILDERNESS UNIVERSITY

This is a day of schools, universities and training institutes of every kind. Knowledge has increased and in the making of books, and the conferring of degrees there seems to be no end.

We are thankful for learning of every proper kind. We believe in the storing of the mind and in the developing of the intellect. We are glad to see church colleges springing up, and rejoice when we hear of schools founded for the training of young men and women for home and foreign missionary work.

And yet we cannot but know that unless a certain famous “Upper Room” with its divine light and fire, its supernatural transformation, impartation and education, finds not only a place, but a prominent and pre-eminent one in the place of learning, that God’s work will never be done as he desires it, salvation will not roll like a flood, and the world never be brought under the power and to the feet of the Son of God.

We have only to look at the Past, and turn our eyes on the Present, to see that the greatest reformers and revivalists, the mightiest rebukers of sin, and most tremendous movers on spiritual lines, were never made so by our scholastic institutes, no matter how great the extent of ground, or how venerable with age were the buildings of these same state, nation, or world famous universities.

God’s marvelous mouthpieces seem all to come up from what we call the Wilderness. They appear unheralded. They were not dreamed of. Nobody knew them or anything about them, when suddenly they burst forth from obscurity upon an astonished and convicted community, country, and even the nations of the world.

The astounding fact to the thoughtful mind is that these men, when they do appear before the public, seem to be thoroughly prepared, fitted, filled and furnished for their work! Their faces, lives, messages, courage,

readiness, steadfastness, character poise, fullness of mind and heart on living and everlasting issues, and the unmistakable spiritual force dwelling in and proceeding from them, show without doubt that they are not accidents, but have been thoroughly prepared for their life work somewhere in the deep unknown privacy, out of which they suddenly came.

They were getting ready for great battles in life before men ever heard of them. They were studying hard the text books of sin and salvation, poring diligently over the mysteries of the heart and heaven, and getting filled with the knowledge of God and the wisdom of the skies, while the people to whom they were to come later, were dozing, dreaming, idling and sinning their hours, years and lives away. They were faithful student in the Wilderness College, of God, Truth and Everlasting things, while hundreds of millions of their fellow beings were absorbed in pleasure, amusement, fashion and the business of the world; or if in the schools, taken up with the enjoyment of athletic games or the securing of evanescent accomplishments, or the understanding of languages as dead as the people who once spoke them and have passed away.

No wonder these graduates of the Wilderness College move and stir the cities and confound the schools and universities. What they say is so new, fresh, spiritual, startling, quickening, powerful and overwhelming, that men go down before such a truth charged, heaven filled instrument. The people muse in their hearts, and are pricked in their souls, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance turn from the idols of time and earth to serve the living God.

Then how full and ready such scholars of the Wilderness are. They never seem to be confused and upset by questions, no matter who asks them. They know what to say, and how to say it, whether it be to a soldier or citizen, to Pharisee or Sadducee, to Herodian or Essene, and have a message for King Herod himself and his infuriated wife.

There is something in the high, vaulted, star-frescoed chambers and solemn corridors of the Wilderness College that brings a corresponding seriousness of manner and loftiness of thought. Having been face to face with the sublime so long, such individuals cannot consent to trifle. Away from men's ideas, ideals, ritualisms, formalisms and superficialisms, they bring

back at once to the people, in language, bearing and life the forgotten heaven and the unknown God. They have been so much alone with the Creator in nature that they bring him in their prayers and preaching, in their rebukes and warnings, as they felt and beheld him in the heart of his own works. So their words distill as the dew, emit fragrance like a wild flower, charm like the song of the woodland bird, and yet on the other hand will suddenly change and the speech of the God-filled graduate of the Wilderness leaps and flashes like the lightning, strikes like a thunderbolt and rushes like a storm upon the awe-struck ears and over the trembling consciences of the solemnized and frightened congregation.

The graduated students of the Wilderness University all seem to have the Upper Room experience. All speak of the holy fire. All seem to have looked in the deep sense of the word, upon the face of God. And all are fearless, for he who comes from the presence of Jehovah, is never afraid of the countenance of man. The Bible teaches this, and life proves it to be true.

When in the Holy Land a few years ago, we stood one morning on the top of a building crowning the summit of Mt. Olivet, and looked southward, eastward and northeastward at the wilderness which stretches today in those directions.

We could but think what that particular rocky, sandy, mountainous waste had been to the world in the way of warning, instruction and spiritual benefit; and what the wilderness in general and in particular has always been to the human family. Its greatest friends and mightiest helpers have come literally and figuratively from the desert.

Moses was a student of high distinction in the Wilderness School. He took a forty years' course. What he learned there not only enabled him to stand before kings in palaces and lay down the law to them, but elevated him to the leadership of a great nation.

Having talked with God, it was a small matter to come into the audience chamber of Pharaoh and speak to him with steady voice and unflinching eye. More than that, with his countenance luminous from the glory of his protracted interview in the mountain with the Almighty, he towered in moral and spiritual greatness over two hundred and fifty thousand men,

and subdued a great rebellious camp of over a million people in a single morning.

Elijah came out of the Wilderness that lay to the northeast. He seemed to love his Alma Mater after his graduation, and would return again and again to the desert for post graduate courses. In one of these trips he took up a special study called "The Ravens and the Brook." This was followed by immediately increased activity and usefulness. On another occasion he visited the University where Moses had gone to school, and there took the degree of "The Cave and the Still Small Voice." It was after this new communion with God in the Wilderness that he secured Elisha for the prophetic office, rebuked King Ahab for his crime against Naboth, and pulled fire down from heaven twice to the overthrow and death of his enemies.

John the Baptist was a graduate of the Wilderness College of Judea. He undoubtedly took first honors. His salutatory to the people around about Jordan will never be forgotten. Jerusalem and numerous other towns and cities turned out en masse to hear later addresses of the man clothed in a shaggy skin and eating wild locusts.

As he talked, he presented life-sized pictures and portraits free of charge to everybody who attended his meetings. These photographs that he struck off with his burning mind remain unfaded to this day. The Publican found his likeness was that of a robber. The Pharisee to his surprise and indignation, as well as the anger of his church friends, discovered that his picture was that of a viper.

Soldiers, citizens, indeed everybody, beheld themselves perfectly understood and most thoroughly described. And so it is not to be wondered at that "all men mused in their hearts of John."

It does not appear that he ever received a call to become the pastor of any Jerusalem Synagogue, or the head of their school for the prophets, or to take any kind of position as teacher or ruler in the Temple. His sermons on Repentance were bad enough; but his additional teaching that there was a Baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire to be given by Christ was even worse; while his free gift to every hearer in his audience of an accurate

character likeness of the listener himself was simply disgusting and unbearable.

Moreover, his habit of telling the truth was very embarrassing to many in his congregation. Then instead of confining his rebukes to common people, and persons who were not present but at a great distance, he reproved very prominent individuals like King Herod and his wife, and that, too, when they had done him the great honor of coming to listen to him. For these reasons as well as others we have not time to mention, our first honor man of the Wilderness of Judea never received a city call.

It was well that he did not, as no church in the land could ever have seated his regular congregation. So he continued to hold services in the Desert until the time of his imprisonment and death.

The Savior preached his funeral sermon, taking for his text the words, "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

# CHAPTER 6

## THE OTHER SIDE

A certain old legend tells of two knights meeting on a highway, and getting in a dispute over a shield that was suspended between them. One said that it was silver, the other declared it was gold. From high words they passed to blows with sword and battleaxe, until finally they both lay bleeding, exhausted and mortally wounded in the dust. A traveler coming along, saw them in this plight, and asked the cause. They with failing breath explained the trouble, when their questioner informed them that they were both right and both wrong; that the shield was silver on one side and gold on the other.

The obvious lesson from the story is that before battling the two warriors should have gone over, each to his opponent's side, and discovered for himself what of fact and truth was in the statement of his antagonist. If this had been done, not only anger and bloodshed would have been prevented, but life itself saved.

The folly and contest of the two knights is still to be seen, and the bitter battle is on hand everywhere because men persistently look at but one side of a statement, report, question or occurrence. On all sides we see contestants weltering in something more precious than life blood; who have not only destroyed peace, happiness, reputation and influence in others; but fought themselves out of their own spiritual peace and blessedness; and murdered not only the faith, love and joy of others, but killed their own as well. They stabbed, and were stabbed to death in the saddest sense of the word, and in the identical way that the two knights perished.

If they had only come around to their brother's side for a while, if they had put themselves in the other one's place for a moment, if they had been just, or even calm, or simply been thoughtful for several minutes, how different would have been the result. How much sorrow would have been

averted. How many friendships and affections would have remained undisturbed to bless both parties for life and forever.

But no. The first sight with them was the correct view. The first impression was a revelation. The first report was the truth. The whisper of suspicion was conviction. There was but one side to the shield. It was of one metal. He that said to the contrary should meet the point of abusive tongue or destroying sword, and die the death.

The Bible gives us better directions than these and tells us that there is another side to the story which our neighbor has just told us. But with many there is no desire to credit any but the first account especially if it be a bad one. Some birds like carrion. Some people prefer to believe evil of their fellow creatures rather than good. They have a strong disinclination to rank their brother as a man of pure gold. They prefer to think he is silver and are made secretly glad that he is not even silver but sounding brass.

When a lad we had a cousin, who, when a young man, was called upon through the death of the head of the family, to manage a large estate. It was a trying position for so young a person, but he met the responsibilities successfully and remarkably. In the many blunders in work, insubordination of individuals and diverse trials peculiar to a large Southern plantation, not only his temper but his judgment was constantly put to the test. In all these difficult situations he acted as if he had an old head on young shoulders, and strikingly like men should bear themselves who possess the grace of God, and have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them.

We noticed that he never went by a first rumor. When two persons were involved in a disturbance he never passed judgment on the matter from the statements of one of these parties. His invariable answer to hot-headed advisers was, "Let us wait and hear the other side." And when that other side was heard, what a difference it made! Yet even then, he would add the two together, then divide by two, do some subtracting here and there as he knew the parties, and would thus calmly, justly and impartially find a remainder, which from his lips became a judgment that was wonderfully near, if not the whole truth.

We wish very much that this man of the world could have transmitted his just, discriminating mind and kind, faithful, unprejudiced judgment to many of us evangelists, preachers, writers and editors. As molders of public opinion we do well to speak advisedly, and act justly at all times.

There are many people who believe everything which appears in print. The cold, black type seems to be conclusive proof of the truth of the statement or accusation which they read. Behold, it was in a paper! They read it with their own eyes! And therefore as it was in print, it was bound to be true.

In view of such unsophisticated minds, and because of a certain evil effect on all hearers, how careful we all ought to be in making what we call the first report and delivering it as though it was final. And what a wrong we inflict on individuals by presenting one side of an occurrence or piece of life history, as though there was not another side to the matter which, if declared and known, would completely change public opinion.

Moreover, who can wonder at the growing difficulties of Christian work, when such grave charges are made against the workers not only by their enemies, but by their friends? For certain it is that if half the things be true that are uttered and written against evangelists and preachers the wonder is that any pastor, church, community or camp ground can ever get their consent to send for them and engage their service.

It is an exceedingly awful charge to utter or publish of men called of God to preach, and whom God is honoring in every meeting, that they are preaching for gain. This accusation places them on the same plane with the worst men in the Bible and history. Surely there must be another side to such cases. A side which if known to the public would completely sweep away the condemnation and clear the accused with credit and honor.

Full of ignorance and inexperience, and quick to make hasty decisions in all matters, we spent quite a number of our earlier years in receiving and believing the first report. The party who reached us first was the true man. His version of the affair was the fact of the case and nothing else was to be depended on. The side of the shield which we beheld was the right side, and we even questioned whether there was another side. So we went on to our own hurt and to the injury of others.



A woman once told us something in reference to a preacher, and we avoided him for years. Then suddenly the indisputable truth came out that the woman had lied outright.

A lady had us to visit her sick husband. Through a history she narrated of his conduct to her, we gave him the rebuke we thought he deserved. He was perfectly silent through it all. Weeks afterward we found out that the man was a martyr and the wife a domestic singe cat and the cause of all the family trouble.

Time would fail to tell of other instances through which we went blundering, believing as we did that every shield was just what we saw it at the first glance, and ready to shiver a lance with any one who intimated that the occurrence, character, life, duty or doctrine in hand had any other side to it than the one we beheld.

In later years, taught by experience and other ways, we find an increasing slowness to pass final opinions upon men and events; and a growing willingness to believe there is another side to every question and to every life that is up for pubic criticism and judgment.

Recently a man asked us if we were not getting rich from the sale of our books. It was hard to keep from laughing outright in his face. We finally asked him if he knew what we obtained from the sale of each separate volume, and he said he did not. The eyes of the man opened wide as we gave him the information, and then we further informed him what we received a year from the sale of our books his eyes opened still wider. He had a view of the other side. He thought he had seen a gold shield hanging up, but found by going around and viewing it from another quarter that it was silver, and pewter at that.

A man tells a preacher who has an understanding with his board of stewards about the amount of his salary; and the evangelist who has an agreement with a pastor or committee employing him, in regard to remuneration—that their faith is at fault, that they do not trust God.

Now suppose we glance at the other side, and ask the brother who imputes the faith of his brethren if he has a lock on his front door. He replies yes. Then we ask him where is his trust in God. Has God not

promised to guard his dwelling and to give his angels charge over him?  
Cannot God protect one as well as provide for another?

Look when and where we will, and at whom, and we are impressed with the fact that there is always another side to be considered. And because there is, we ought to be careful how we judge and whom we condemn. James says that we ought not only to be slow to wrath, but slow to speak. For certain it is that if we knew the other side of the matter and person we are so quick to disapprove and censure, our spirit, words and conduct we doubt not oftentimes would be exceedingly different. We would pity where we had abused; would exonerate where we had condemned; and would feel like crowning where we had presented the vinegar and the gall.

# CHAPTER 7

## SONGS IN THE NIGHT

Music by day is beautiful and grateful, but melody at night, wafted through quivering leaves or floating across the water is lovelier still, and is always felt to wield a peculiar and greater power over the heart.

The notes of a flute stealing through the starlight can never be heard without emotion, while a song by night heard in the distance melts every power of the soul, thrills every chord of the heart and is ever after hung up in the halls of memory a picture of rare and unfading beauty.

It might puzzle some to answer why a song in the night is so peculiarly affecting to the mind and spirit. For, after saying that the voices of the singers seem to be softened at such a time; that the garish day is over; that the sight and sound of labor are gone; and a stillness has settled and a loneliness outspread over the wood and field and stream in a way to prepare one to be melted and moved, yet other things are felt to exist that seem to defy all analysis of thought and therefore render impossible any expression of the same in words.

Irving's description of the music he heard at the Alhambra in the moonlight will ever remain a gem of literary beauty. While the gondolier's song on the star-gemmed Adriatic has touched the heart and fired the pens of a thousand writers.

The writer, when a small lad, lay one night in an old grassy field near Brandon, Miss. Sent on a mission to the railroad, he was camping with several men a mile from the place. It was near the close of the Civil War and Confederate troops were encamped in and around the county seat we have named. Suddenly a military band began playing in the distant town. Floating over the treetops and hillsides it came to us as we lay courting sleep, with a thrilling melting power we have never forgotten to this hour. Wide awake now, we listened with wet eyes and swelling heart to "Old Dog Tray," "Maggie By My Side," and other strains that made the boy

feel that his body was all too small to hold the different emotions which surged like billows in his breast. It was a song in the night, and the lad will never cease to remember the song and the night.

Repeatedly we have been aroused since we became an evangelist by the voices of young men singing as they passed down the street, and always we awoke with pleasure, although we were tired and it was long after twelve. But the nocturnal melody did the business, and we found our heart going out in prayer and good wishes for the late singers.

Every one who possesses the least sensibility of soul must admit that the awakening by the sound of a serenade is always pleasant. The instruments and voices breaking in on the ear of a person half asleep, or half awake if we will, weave a delicious spell, a delighted momentary thrill so pure and sweet as hardly to belong to earth. Any imperfections in the performance are not noticed in the gradual recovery of consciousness, while the night with its strange softening, crowning touch to the harmony itself, makes the waker think for a second that he has heard a strain from the heavenly world. It was only, however, a song in the night.

David had evidently listened to music at such a time. And hence we find him taking the beauty, tenderness, pleasure and melting power of such occurrences and applying them to certain experiences of the spiritual life.

According to the Book of Psalms, he knew of two kinds of song in the night; one in which he would sing to God and the other in which God sent the song to him.

To the first the Psalmist alludes in the words, "I call to remembrance my song in the night." He admits that he had been so troubled he could not speak; but he recalled some hymn of praise he had written and dedicated to God in happier days, and commenced singing it to Him in the night.

We scarcely know of a more pathetic scene in David's life than this. The man was in trouble, his soul was without comfort, his spirit was overwhelmed, he could not sleep and could not speak, and yet burdened, sad, wakeful in his misery and smitten voiceless on the earthward and human side, he, in spite of everything and all things, commenced singing to God. Here was faithfulness indeed Here was love and loyalty to the

Divine One, no matter what men and devils did nor how the natural heart drooped, sickened and ached all but to death.

We have heard mighty and glorious anthems swell upward to God from crowded church and camp ground, and we question whether a sweeter or more acceptable song ever came into the ears of the Almighty than the hymn of love and praise uttered by the trembling lips of a suffering, tortured, persecuted and discouraged child and servant of his on earth. To sing in the day when all goes well is easy; but to sing in the night is faithfulness, devotion and worship of the highest order.

No one can doubt that this pleases God, moves him and would naturally draw him to come to the quick relief of such a follower. Every parent knows how the voice of a child in distress instantly inclines his heart to bring immediate help and comfort. While in the case of Deity, if deliverance should be delayed, it would not be for lack of love and interest, but that such a soul might obtain all the benefit of such a situation in its own enrichment and development, and that the world and universe itself might have added to its spiritual wealth. the benediction and grace of such a character and life.

A song in the day is an easy affair. Any worldling can render such a performance. But the song in the night! The faithful utterance in times of trouble. The true thing said in time of greatest difficulty. The loyal, submissive, devoted speeches spoken about God when the soul is comfortless, enemies are thick, troubles are multiplied and relief is not in sight—here is something worth talking about, and that few seem able to do! Well may we pray for the world's good and the glorifying of Christ's Redemption that the Singers in the night might be increased an hundred and a thousand fold.

We recently read of a little boy who was run over and badly injured in a street accident. As he lay under the hands of the surgeon, he asked the physician if he might sing while he operated on him. The doctor consented and the little fellow with blanched cheeks and quivering lips, began singing and sang over and over again, with his childish treble, the first verse of that noble hymn called "Palms."

*“Blossoms and palms in varied beauty vie,  
Decked is the road with fragrant flowers to greet Him;  
Jesus has come, a world’s sad tears to dry,  
E’en now the throng rush forth with joy to meet Him.*

*Sing and rejoice with one accord,  
Sing joyous songs for this sublime ovation,  
Hosanna. Praised be the Lord,  
Blessed is He who has brought us salvation.”*

It was at night, and yet a crowd of attendants nurses could not keep from gathering about the martyr singer. We doubt not that all got a nobler view of life at the spectacle, and we do not question that the surgeon did his very best for the little sufferer, who sang so courageously in the midst of his agony.

Would to God that, instead of complaints, Heaven could hear the singing of its afflicted and smitten children coming up out of the night. Not only would it be nobler on our part, but better for the world itself. It was Paul’s song in the night, while he was fastened in the stocks, which brought relief from heaven to himself and salvation to the jailer and many others in the prison. And we can but feel that it will be our singing in the night of trouble that will produce earthquakes of conviction, open the doors of outer and inner prisons and awaken and set free the slumberers and captives of sin on every side and in every place.

The other kind of song in the night to which David refers is the one that God himself sent to him. So he speaks of the Lord “compassing him about with songs;” and again he writes, “In the night His song shall be with me.” In the first instance the man uplifts his song to God; in the latter case God sends down a song to the man. And here also it comes in the night. The Psalmist says, “In the night His song shall be with me!”

Here God is doing the comforting. The serenade comes from the skies. The singing is done in heaven and then wafted earthward to the child of God in the night.

Hence it is that when John was sent to Patmos, and the darkness of persecution, exile and loneliness had settled upon him, the Lord made the Gold and Silver Trumpet Company and the String Band of the Holy City come out and play on the hillsides of heaven. The banished servant of

Christ heard the singing, and “the sound of the harpers harping on their harps,” and was so blessed and filled that he wrote a long letter to the seven churches about it, and all the churches have been reading that letter ever since.

Paul had many a night of sorrow and affliction to come down upon him, but every time the Lord saw to it that his lonely and oppressed follower received a serenade from the kingdom of glory. In one of them he was caught up, and saw and heard unspeakable things. He said afterwards that he did not know in the ecstasy and glory which filled him whether he was in the body or out of the body.

Wesley heard this singing. And so does every faithful minister of Jesus Christ who preaches the whole truth and finds himself opposed, contradicted, and struck at by friend and foe, and by men and devils. The shadows come, but with them the divine serenade. Heavenly voices strike upon the listening ear of the soul, and a song begun in heaven floats downward, and is finished in the swelling heart of the smitten, wearied, but still loving and loyal follower of the Son of God.

There are aged servants of the Lord who awaken a great while before day and cannot sleep again. And there are physically afflicted ones who cannot slumber for pain. And there are bereaved Christians whose homes have been stripped by death, and who lie awake at night thinking of the empty chair and vacant room, and the new-made grave in the cemetery. All of these three classes know what we mean by the song in the night. They also know that but for such songs which God gives in the darkness, their hearts would have broken and they would have gone down into a pit of despair and into the grave itself. But the singing from the skies saved them.

At three different periods, the writer has taken long railroad trips alone, while his dead lay in the baggage car in front. As he leaned his head against the window frame of the flying train, and looked out at the distant stars, feeling crushed with the emptiness of the world and the full desolation of life at such a season of trouble, yet each time God remembered his lonely and sorrowing servant and sent him a song in the night. Otherwise he feels that his heart must surely have broken by the way.

He, in common with others who are presenting a full salvation, will alike meet with many sore trials and difficulties. All will undoubtedly be wounded by friend, stabbed by foe, and be maligned, abused and opposed on every hand. The night of natural sorrow and trouble is certain to come, but with it is equally sure the blessed, blissful serenade of the skies.

God is faithful, and because he is faithful, he will see to it when the darkness comes, that the song which will make us endure the long night, and even forget the gloom, shall come also.

We, like the lad, may be stretched in the shadows on the cold fields of earth, and far this side of the Golden City. But the Lord will take note of condition and situation, and full of pity for the solitary sufferer, will cause one of the bands of heaven to commence playing from some hillside of glory. And the listening ear shall hear, and the upturned face of the man on the stony ground will glow, and ever afterwards in speaking of that hour and experience he will say with one of old, I was caught up, and saw and heard things unspeakable. I know not whether I was in the body or out of the body. God knoweth. I do know that I was in the dark, and God sent me a song in the night.



# CHAPTER 8

## THE THIRD CHAPTER OF LIFE

The caption of this chapter may at first impress the reader as being somewhat vague and misty, but light will come with a few explanatory sentences, and the application will be readily made and warning taken by those who feel that it comes home to heart and conscience.

In the study of the Bible, and of secular history, as well as the cases of people around us, we have been for years increasingly impressed with the fact that men pass through three different moral states or conditions, which well cover the whole life and that might very properly be called three chapters.

Sometimes the “third chapter” is misread by the world, and the man is altogether misjudged by an over or under valuation. Sometimes it is not granted to the public to read the third section. But it is there just the same, has been written, or put up in the plain type of deeds and actual character, even though men fail to have the complete bound volume placed in their hands for perusal.

There is a day and hour coming when this third division shall be read by everybody. That time is called the Day of Judgment. “The other books,” these life volumes of ours, will be opened then and there, and all the record will be complete even to footnotes and a remarkable addendum which no one knew or suspected. We all shall be known then; and the finishing chapter will doubtless create the greatest surprise in that tremendous hour when infinite knowledge with perfect justice sits on the throne to sift out, divide, apportion, punish and reward according to the real lives of men.

We have not time now to amplify the three life chapters of the sinner who dies impenitent. The simple words Sin—Deeper Sin—and Final Loss of the Soul, however, would be their proper though dreadful headings. These captions would describe the dark course and darker end, the sad drifting and awful shipwreck of an immortal spirit.

Some sinners have been plucked like brands from the burning at the eleventh hour, at half-past eleven and a quarter to twelve; so that their chapters read Sin—Deeper Sin—and Salvation. The last of the three may be written in a place remote from where the first two were compiled. So that no doubt not there are men who, having drifted from home as vile transgressors and died are now supposed to be in hell when they are in heaven. The third chapter was edited and published unknown to old-time friends and neighbors in a far distant State, on a cot in a hospital, in a cabin on the prairie, in the bunk of a ship, or on the blood-stained soil of a battlefield.

Not less remarkable is the “third chapter” in the lives of Christians. With some the book proceeds just as God desires it, from good to better, from better to best, and so ending graciously and victoriously. Such a life conclusion of ripe fruitage, extended usefulness, blameless record and general character triumph constitutes one of the priceless heritages of the church.

But there are numerous instances when the rounding up, or “third chapter,” is so surprising, mortifying, heart-rending and appalling that human models and previous standards of judgment fairly go down with a crash, and men feel for a while that they hardly know how to premise again in the realm of character.

On account of the Fall of Man, the first chapter in every life must necessarily be headed “Sin.” But when the second has written over it “Salvation,” we have every right to expect the caption of the third to embrace the words Spirituality, Holiness, Success and Victory. When it reads to the contrary, the world laughs and mocks, while the church stands amazed, distressed and bewildered.

To illustrate what we have in mind, we call attention to the history of Asa, King of Judah. His second chapter fairly thrills the heart. The Bible says, referring to this time of his life, that, “He did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord.” He put down idolatry in the land, and caused the people to worship God. When a vast Ethiopian army of a million men invaded his kingdom, Asa cried unto God, and the Lord gave him an overwhelming victory.

With such a record as this we would naturally expect not only the same kind of life from the man, but even better, with increasing loyalty to God, and greater triumphs over his enemies to the end. But instead of that, in turning to the Bible we read the heart-sickening Third Chapter of this King's life.

Another great army came against him; and forgetting what God had done for him in the face of even greater odds, and failing to wait upon Him for direction and help, he used gold and silver to hire the help of a Syrian army. He obtained a victory, but God at once sent a prophet to pronounce a judgment upon him for what he had done. Then we read that Asa became furious at the rebuke and thrust the prophet into prison. It is stated in addition that "he oppressed some of the people the same time." After this a great physical affliction befell him, and the sacred chronicler writes, "Yet in his disease he sought not the Lord, and Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign."

No one can read this last division of the man's life without the deepest disappointment and pain, while the query arises, "Why did he not remain faithful? What made him let down as he did and commit those foolish and sinful things?"

The same kind of history is going on today. The Third Chapter, recording the facts of spiritual lapse, faithlessness, sin, and life failure, is one of the ghastly facts that continues to sadden the hearts of God's people as in the days of Asa and other faithless servants of Heaven before him.

Let us see if we can recognize just a few out of many.

The first chapter in a certain man's life revealed him a sinner. The second showed him saved and one of the humblest and most gentle and loving of preachers. In high appreciation of this Christ-like minister, the church made him a bishop. After this came the third chapter, and behold, it recorded him as the ridiculer of the religious experience of his brethren, the actual oppressor of better men than himself, a kind of modern pope in spirit, word and deeds, and so he died.

Another character volume tells of a worldly woman in the first chapter; how she was saved, sanctified and blessedly used of God in the second chapter; but in that strange, disappointing third division she is seen

listening to and adopting the teachings of Growth and Suppression Schools and standing plainly stripped of former glory and power.

Opening still another one of “The Other Books,” we see in the first chapter a drunkard, in the second a completely redeemed man and living thus for twenty years, and in the “third” a drunkard again!

We cannot refrain from giving a few more as we have seen and known them, but in condensed form, simply taking the heading of the chapters as follows.

*Drunkard, Preacher, Lecturer and Backslider.*

*Sinner, Preacher, Insurance Agent and Backslider.*

*useless, useful, useless again.*

A dozen times at least when a young preacher have we listened to the first two chapters of a prominent minister in one of our Conferences. We give them in a brief style:

## **CHAPTER 1**

There were two young men, A. and V. Both were well educated, accomplished and wealthy and both were unconverted.

## **CHAPTER 2**

A. obtained religion and V. laughed at him and told him he was making a great mistake, and missing a life of pleasure. At the time of this ridicule both were on a steamboat going down the Mississippi, A. to enter the ministry, and V. to New Orleans on a spree. V. was killed in a duel a year later. A. became one of the most useful and devoted of preachers. For twenty years he was recognized as the most spiritual man in his Conference.

The above are the two chapters, and the moral lessons drawn from them are too evident to repeat. If the curtain could have been rung down right then, the lights put out, and the actors retired from view, how the writer and reader could use those two life divisions with tremendous effect upon sinners.

But there was a third chapter, and here it is:

### CHAPTER 3

After A. had been in the ministry something over twenty years, the doctrine and experience of Entire Sanctification was presented to him. Unhappily for him and many others, he stifled his convictions, turned against this Bible Truth, fought it pitilessly, brought discouragement and grief to many good people, oppressed a number as did king Asa, became the bitterest man in his Conference, and died a silent, melancholy and many believe a hopeless death!

Sometimes the third division of a man's life is known only to a few people. How it must sicken them to hear the second chapter lauded, spouted and raved over on public occasions, in the papers, and over the coffin of the deceased, when they know the third chapter, with its stains of sin and crime.

There was once a terrible criminal in one of the Northern States. He was converted and sanctified in a very remarkable way. These two chapters of the man's life have been sounded aloud and the changes rung upon them many times and in numerous places. As the man is now dead, it is supposed that he went right on improving to his last hour. But a few people know the third chapter, and it is a distressing one! He got implicated in a church quarrel, lost his sweetness, then his experience, and died without a word!

The conclusion of the whole matter is that we had all better look out for our third chapter. The second may have been a glorious one; but there is no absolute guarantee that the third will surpass it or even measure up to it. The fearful thought is that it may fall far below the mark.

No wonder the Bible bids us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; and also declares that he who thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall; while Paul says that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, lest that after having preached to others he himself might be a castaway.

God grant to us all that the evening of our life may sweep beyond its noon and morning in grace and glory. And when we stand before the Judgment

Bar of God and “the Book” is opened, and “the other books” are opened, and the three complete divisions of life are read before an assembled universe, we may not be ashamed to be confronted with the final chapter of our lives.

# CHAPTER 9

## LESSONS FROM THE STARS

Some writer tells us truly that there are sermons in stones, and books in running brooks. We have been struck with the startling Gospel truths that are prominent in mythological narrative, and surprised and pleased to note that even in the plays of childhood the most profitable moral lessons and spiritual truths can be discovered.

Lately in astronomical study we have been deeply impressed with the profound and solemn teachings to be received from the floating universe above us. Volumes could be written about the laws of attraction and repulsion; the apparent waste of light and energy; the unknown shape of the stellar system; the motion of the universe itself toward some unseen point, and many other impressive facts.

Among the strange truths in the stars is the fact of different-colored suns. Some are red, others pure white, still others yellow, while a number are black. These colors are not arbitrarily given of God, but strangely declare the age, energy and condition of the suns bearing them. It is found by astronomers, through the spectroscope and other instruments, that certain elements lack or abound in these vast globes of fire that are rolling in mid air trillions and quadrillions of miles from us, according to their youth, maturity or old age. These elements make a strange handwriting in the spectrum of the astronomer, and he knows by the color of the star whether it is beginning or ending, or has terminated its life career.

First, the red sun declares the lusty strength of youth. Comparatively few cycles have passed over it, and it has a long and wonderful history of light and heat, and hence of usefulness before it. It has not reached its highest power, but is on the way.

This well covers the case of the blood red justified man he has light, heat and strength, and is a blessing. But he has only begun his life and work, according to the Bible, and is destined for greater things. It is quite

interesting to see the soundly and recently converted individual rushing on his way, pouring out his new life on all around him, and not dreaming that there is another and greater glory for him, with profounder influence and wider sweep of power.

Second, the heavens above hold in its depths the flaming type of a mightier grace in the form of giant suns of purest white, with intense measures of heat, and vaster orbits of influence and power.

We are certainly glad to know that the Kingdom of Grace measures up here most gloriously to the hints and teachings of the firmament above us. Not only the Bible, but history, rolls into view, not only the red suns of the justified, but great life orbs flooding community, and nation, and the world itself with the flashing white light and the glowing white heat of holiness.

Wesley, Fletcher, Fenelon, Finney, Inskip and others of their spiritual magnitude correspond well with Sirius, Procyon, Vega, Altair and Regulus, by whose side our sun is small and faint indeed.

We are grateful indeed for the pure light of holiness which can be possessed without regard to physical size, or social and ecclesiastical station. We thank God that many have it and are illumining and warming up homes, neighborhoods and churches with its beautiful radiance.

The experiences of these people agree with the handwriting of the stars. They say that God called them into spiritual life and being, and after enjoying for awhile a blood red justification, they were swept into a burning, glowing, snow white sanctification.

A third class of suns in the heavens is seen in what is called the yellow stars.

This orb is in the afternoon of its existence. Its fires are burning out, its heat is gradually waning, its time of decrepitude is at hand, and it is on the road to extinction. The marvelous little instrument called the spectroscope has found out what the telescope could not discover, and has placed in a strange handwriting in the spectrum before the intelligent eye of the astronomer the solemn announcement that the life of a sun is steadily going out before us far up in the heavens.



What is seen in the sky is likewise beheld on the earth. The gradual fading of a star in the firmament is not a more certain and terrible fact than the dying out of the divine fire and light from an immortal soul once illumined and quickened of God. And while it must be a solemn sight, indeed, for men of science to watch through the flight of centuries the gradual extinction of a sun, yet it is a far more dreadful spectacle to behold right before our eyes in the course of a few months or years the light and life of God go out in a human soul.

Men who study the heavens sometimes give us reasons for the decay and death, so to speak, of a sun; but oftener they confess to profound ignorance of such mysteries happening so far away in space.

As thoroughly mystified are observers today who see men pass into the blood red, thence up to the snow white, powerful experience of the Christian life, and then begin to enter upon the yellow of an unmistakable decay. Something has happened to sun or Christian, but what is the happening? What has gone wrong? What force has died out? What constituent element has departed?

A star ninety trillions of miles away is not harder to read and understand than a human soul only a few feet removed from us. Both are dying out, both are growing yellow, but what did it, and what is the matter, is the question.

The reader will notice that the colors we have mentioned, and the order in which they have been named, are all true to nature. We may take the flush of the morning, the white of noonday, and the yellow of evening; or start with the blush of spring, the whiteness of summer and the brown tints of autumn; or begin with the rosy hue of infancy, the fairness of youth, and the yellowing skin of increasing years yet in every instance we see that the order of colors as laid down in this article is the correct one. The yellow sun in the universe is a dying sun!

What a pang it gives the heart to look about us in life and see the fearful fatal correspondence in the moral world to what is transpiring in the natural realm. And it seems that no number of newly justified and wholly sanctified souls rushing here and there in their orbits of devotion and duty can take away the sadness aroused in us at the spectacle of the soul

weakening, heart cooling, character crumbling, and general life darkening of men and women once ablaze for the truth and God, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

A fourth class of suns swing in deadness, and blackness through the fathomless regions of the far away firmament.

They have burned out. All their heat and fire have departed. Light and warmth may fall around them and upon them, but they themselves have no light or heat of their own. Under the strongest instruments they are recognized to be darkened and dead.

Usually they are found geared up or connected in some way with suns of the first and second magnitude. One is following Sirius, around, and another has been discovered attached to the star Algoz. They are not planets, but burned out suns. They are the backslidden stars of the heavens. Cold and helpless themselves, they get what light that is upon them, and are prevented from flying away altogether into outer darkness through their great faithful white hot brethren in the skies known as Sirius, Algoz, Vega, Capella, Altair and Regulus.

The eye has only to drop from the sky to the earth to behold at once the darkened faces, midnight souls, and cold, unresponsive and unprofitable lives of those who once shone, burned, flashed, moved, rushed and achieved for God. The black suns are in our midst. They no longer give light or heat. The radiance which falls upon them and about them comes from other people. They are actually kept in some kind of orbit by the power of some great faithful soul with whom they find themselves providentially connected.

A preacher may become a darkened sun, and yet be kept in place by a faithful spiritual congregation. A church may become lifeless, and yet through a devoted man in the pulpit be held to some kind of duty, and be saved from utter worldliness.

As we look still deeper into these mysteries with the glass of observation we see a sanctified man at a white heat going through life with a cold, irreligious wife circling round him. Or a holy woman moving in a home or church orbit with a spiritually dead husband carried along by her side.

In still another direction we behold a darkened household swinging around a single consecrated member of that home. Four, six or eight dark bodies moving around, and kept in some kind of order by a solitary life full of the love and grace of God. And still again we observe a shallow, unspiritual, and actually backslidden singer journeying about with a holiness evangelist who has the real fire and glory in his soul.

In every instance we observe that the dark body gives no light nor heat of its own, and seems to be kept in place by another soul that is greater, brighter and warmer than itself, in the best and highest sense of the word.

Let each reader of these lines ask himself, or herself, which one of the suns covers their case. Is it red, white, yellow or black with our souls!

# CHAPTER 10

## THE DAILY DEATH

In one of his epistles Paul declared that “he kept his body under.” A number who strive to find scripture to bolster them in their teaching of the suppression of the sin principle or carnal mind, have endeavored to make this verse serve their purpose.

Unfortunately for them the Apostle does not say he “kept the body of sin under,” but his own body. There is a great difference between the “body of sin” created by the devil, and the human body made by the Almighty. The former is to be crucified and destroyed, and the latter is to be kept under.

In another place Paul declared that he underwent a daily death. His words were, “I die daily.”

Again we hear the defenders and apologists of resident sin in the heart, crying out that we make a grave mistake in saying the body of sin or the old man is put to death, for here the great Apostle to the Gentiles plainly states that his experience was a daily death.

A careful reader of the Bible could never, it seems to us, so mix and confound such widely different scripture passages as the verses referred to. Paul did not say that “the old man” died daily, but “I (Paul) die daily.” The devil made the old man, and God made Paul. The apostle in perfect understanding of what he is writing about, declares a single, final, finishing death for the Old Man, while for himself he says, “I die daily.”

Moreover in this expression, not the slightest reference is made to any kind of sin, but to a martyrdom which he expected might befall him any day at the hand of the Caesars.

As with Paul the sanctified people of today can bear witness to the unmistakable, instantaneous and complete death of inbred sin or the old

man, and also to an experience which follows in this earthly life which can be most properly described in the words, "I die daily."

This is not "the deeper death" taught by some evangelists, who feeling still the remains of the carnal mind, are naturally driven to such a teaching. How can there be a deeper death? A death is a death. If the old man is dead, he is dead. What death can there be for the dead, but that which is called the second death in hell—and which of itself never dies!

No, there can be a complete death of the body of sin in the soul the heart entering at once upon a life of cleanness and restfulness; and yet as individuals we make acquaintance with what may be called a daily death. The old man dies once for all, but we in a sense die daily. And as with the Apostle it is not sin that is the trouble, but something very widely and radically different from sin.

Paul moved in an atmosphere of martyrdom. Perhaps many holy people who read these lines are doing the same. Many of them have found out what is meant by the white blood of the nerve. They have been tied on the rack, and broken repeatedly on the wheel which was set going in domestic, social and ecclesiastical chambers. They feel in a deep mystic sense they have fought with gladiators and have been thrown to wild beasts of Ephesus. Truly they know another death than that of the old man.

First, there is the dying to the constant slights shown them and discount set upon their words and deeds by their own church brethren. A holy people expect as much from the world, but it comes with quite a shock to find that a great part of the family of God despise and condemn them.

No matter what is done in the way of zeal, activity, liberality and magnanimity on the part of the truly sanctified, it is all met with a chilling indifference not to say condemnation by the churches of today.

As a boy we once displeased the acknowledged king of the school play ground. We made some swift and capital runs in the game we were playing after that, but he ignored them all, froze us with his cold stare, and ingloriously put us aside. Very nobly and liberally and faithfully are some of God's holy people doing today in the pew and pulpit. But unless they give up preaching and testifying to sanctification they meet the stony gaze, the icy silence, and the careful avoidance of all words of praise and

commendation of what has been done for God, the church and humanity. This is a kind of martyrdom, and here we have to die.

Second, there is the constant dying to the deliberate and repeated misrepresentation of motives, performances, character and life.

This assailing comes not from one quarter; but just as Christ had the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes and every other following and organization against him, so the man baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, and who testifies to it, and urges it upon others, will get to know what the words isolation and loneliness mean, and find out all that is embraced in the term general opposition. He will discover as he plumbs the straight line of holiness that the hand of every man seems to be lifted against him. John Wesley not only had the world and the church opposed to him, but numbers on his own side, in the very societies he had founded. The cost of obtaining and retaining the genuine blessing, and of staying on the main line of holiness, is to have Pharisee, Sadducee, Essene, Herodian, Long Hair, Short Hair, Wild Eye, Ranter, Skinner, Blisterer, and a multitude of other characters solidly arrayed against one. To all of this we must die, and die daily.

Third, there must be a dying to a number of personally disagreeable and offensive people who are coming up the road along with the holiness movement.

Who has not encountered the individual who deliberately tried to overhear confidential conversations? Who has not met the person, male or female, who pries into one's personal and family history, and propounds questions that no one with any true refinement or proper regard for the proprieties could or would ever dream of asking? Who has not been interviewed, examined and cross-questioned, so to speak, by the veriest strangers and briefest of acquaintances as to one's age, size of family, spiritual condition of each, etc., etc., etc.

One lady asked a certain evangelist if his teeth were false, and if she might feel them with her finger so as to be able to settle a dispute then going on among five others of her sex in regard to that interesting fact. The aforesaid brother could have convinced the skeptical sister in a most impressive and incisive way concerning the genuineness and steadfastness of the molars in

controversy, but it would not have been in harmony with the teachings of Perfect Love, and so he refrained, though doubtless he was tempted.

It is very likely that many in the land today would be only too glad to have an addition to the Litany reading after this manner, "From all such social plagues and pestilences may a kind Providence deliver us." But as it seems we cannot escape from the affliction of such people, then the next best thing is to die to them.

A fourth dying is seen in the patient endurance of slanderous attack and coarse personal abuse.

There are numbers of individuals in the church and in the holiness ranks who have been made the recipients of the most abusive and insulting letters, and have seen repeatedly printed in different publications the gravest of charges and slanders. The writer, printer, publisher and even deliverer of these attacks perhaps did not know that they were violating one of the Postal Laws of the United States, and had subjected themselves to a fine of thousands of dollars, and an imprisonment of years in the penitentiary. It is nothing to the United States whether the charges are true or false. That is not the point. The Government does not propose that its mail system should be prostituted to the use of originators and disseminators of slander. If any one doubts what the writer says about this, let him procure a copy of the postal laws of the United States and read the section relative to scurrilous and slanderous letters and printed matter sent by the mails. The fact that a number of evangelists and preachers, with the law in their hands against these vilifiers, refuse to use their power, but go on patiently and silently, shows how thoroughly the soul can die to the abuser and slanderer.

A fifth dying must take place in regard to our hold upon persons we once spiritually helped, and to our influence in places where in other days we preached and labored and had great success and triumph.

It is deeply impressive and thought provoking to see how a preacher sent to a new pastoral charge tries to retain his ascendancy and rulership in the old appointment left behind. Also the smile is made to deepen in noticing how some evangelists unconsciously fall into the role of playing the

Cardinal, the Pope, or the Diocesan Bishop, in towns and communities where they have held in former days a successful meeting.

They do not know how to stand aside for other men as much sent of God as themselves. They would keep the whole community under their wing. They would rule and reign without a rival, over conscience and life, general and cosmopolitan as it may be. The fact that their own particular work is ended; that other men gifted and used of the Spirit may be needed, does not seem to occur to them. The additional truth that the people they once taught to walk, can ever walk without them is too painful a thought to be admitted to the mind. So though far distant these kind of brethren still wish to fill the milk bottle, and prepare the food, and are exceedingly distressed to discover that their own spiritual children have actually taken catnip tea from another hand, and have even gone to broiling their own steaks.

We find that we are called upon to die out completely here, in the acceptance of the fact that the persons we once were made a blessing to, can get along without us; that they even forget us; and that other laborers coming in, crowd us out from the heart, mind, plan and life of the people even where there is no unkindness or hatred toward us who were peculiarly near and dear in earlier days.

We could say much more on this line of thought, but enough has been written to plainly show that after the funeral of the Old Man, there are still repeated visits of the hearse to the door of one's life. There is and should be no more death to "the body of sin." And Scripture and Reason alike are against the idea of a deeper death of the carnal mind or inbred sin. But there are frequent deaths to persons, conditions and all the changing circumstances of this life, where sin is not, and should not be involved a single particle.

The black crepe has fluttered on the door knob a number of times since the burial of the "Old Man," but it was not for him. He had not been granted a resurrection, to be followed with a deeper death, and therefore treated to bigger bunches of crepe and longer streamers of woe.

No, after obtaining the great blessing some of us thought that certain things must be or must not be, or we did not see how we could well live, get



along, etc., etc., etc. Well, these same trying, painful melancholy things came to pass just as we preferred they should not. And as they would not die to us, we concluded to die to them. Hence the frequent flutter of the black crepe on the door knob, though the old man lies cold and dead in the graveyard.

# CHAPTER 11

## THE GRADUAL REVELATION OF PRAYER

Owing to the Holiness of God, and the spiritual state of his creatures, there is discoverable in the way of approach to and perfect communion with him, a certain gradualness as unmistakable as it is necessary and unavoidable.

If men have to fix their attention to perceive the truth and force of some thoughtful lecture or sermon; so must there be a spiritual concentration to recognize what God has to say to and in us. Elijah wrapped a mantle about his head, and then heard the “still small voice.” This fact was not stated without deep significance.

There is a certain form gone through as well as a proper attiring of the body, before men are led into the presence of an earthly monarch. This is but a shadow of a greater truth and fact. There are galleries, corridors and ante-chambers in the spirit life that have to be traversed before we stand in the Throne Room and confront our King face to face.

Even physical distance has its teaching to the thoughtful; and as we look at the steps to be taken from the door to the footstool of the throne of a terrestrial Ruler, so we say there is spiritual distance to be gone over, and steps of various duties to be taken, before we can hear the voice of our Heavenly King speaking to us and feel his divine touch on our soul.

It is either ignorance of this truth or the ignoring of the fact itself that accounts for so many unprevailing and unsuccessful prayers in this life. Men ring the gate bell and expect an immediate vision of and audience with the Holy One of Israel, without regard to spiritual preparation or moral condition. They would have God careless of rules and laws which they themselves observe and exact of one another. Their expectations in the religious life, if carried out in the social world, would remove all such things as steps, walks, shoe scrapers, foot mats, front doors, inner doors

and would precipitate one from the front gate into the innermost and most sacred chamber of the house.

Of course there are people who are living continually in the presence of the King, and this article does not apply to them, but to those who are offering up prayers for pardon, restoration and holiness. To all such there is a period of cleansing, a season of ringing and knocking, a time of patient waiting, before the door is opened and the soul admitted to audience with the Lord.

There is a certain gradualness even in the answer. Just as we have stood on a porch, and rung the bell for admittance in the house of a friend, we first felt a vibration of the floor which declared approaching footsteps, next heard the sound of opening doors on the inside, and then have seen the quiver of the door knob before the door itself opened. So in the victorious prayer, before the triumph comes, there are unmistakable indications and sensations that Mercy, the servant of God, is coming to let us in. If we will only stay on the porch and not leave; if we will only stand faithfully by the door, and give the persistent importunate push to the bell of prayer, we will hear distant doors opening, we will feel the vibration of coming footsteps of grace, we will see the door knob move, and better still, the portal of Blessing itself fly wide open before our wistful, pleading, beseeching souls.

This gradual revelation of prayer is brought out very remarkably in the case of Jacob as he sought God on the side of the brook Peniel. At first there was nothing but solitude and darkness. The Bible says “he was left alone.” The next turn in events was that, after a certain lapse of time, a man came out of the gloom and began to wrestle with him. Micah the prophet relates the third change where the man became an angel and Jacob wept as he struggled with the celestial visitor. At daybreak according to Moses, the conquering Jacob found that he had the Lord in his arms, and cried, “I have seen God face to face”!

The deepest truths and most precious lessons are taught in this remarkable progress and development of prayer as seen in the spiritual milestone words: loneliness man—angel—God!

The first experience of every seeker after pardon, reclamation or holiness is one of profound loneliness.

Like Jacob he sends everything he has over the brook, beginning with his cattle and ending with Rachel. The dearest was held to the last, but even the favorite, the well beloved, and the idolized have to go if we would meet God as Jacob did.

As we linger in supplication everything appears to recede and fall away from the petitioner. How dreary the night, how distant and cold the stars to one who is seeking God in loneliness and darkness.

For a while he seems to get no nearer. If anything the Lord appears to be farther off than ever. The soul is in gloom, the world looks pitiless, and the heart is a lump of lead. Instead of feeling better we feel worse. Instead of angel presences, devils envelop the spirit. Instead of an opening heaven, there seems to be a yawning hell.

When we come to look thoughtfully into the matter, this painful period is in a sense perfectly natural and should be expected. If one has been drifting seaward all through the night and turns at day dawn to see the remoteness of the shore, who wonders that the swimmer's heart should sink within him at the sight.

In prayer we really turn from our drifting toward the world and hell, and direct our gaze back to duty and heaven. Who marvels that the soul is at first all but paralyzed at the recognition of the great spiritual distance between its present position and the place where it ought to be. Who is astonished when a man beginning in prayer to look to God, should be overcome at the sight of his own ungodliness, or moral unlikeness to God; and feel his own conscious unworthiness pulling him down into depths of hopelessness. Here is where numbers sink and go down utterly. They do not recognize the lonely, stripped, helpless experience as one actually necessary to make us look to and cling to Christ; but construing it into an indication of divine forsakenness, a condition of soul too far gone to be recovered—behold they fall into discouragement and despair and lose all.

A second stage of prayer is where we pray on and come to the moment when we receive help from above equivalent to the strength of a man.

Something comes to us, help us, puts its arms about our spirit, and strangely assists the soul to continue the struggle after God. These are divine encouragements intended to keep us from fainting, without being the blessing itself that we are seeking.

The third stage of the real importunate prayer, comes after this, in which we obtain an angel blessing of relief and comfort.

That is, some people “feel a great deal better than they did.” And here they stop, instead of going on to the triumphant conclusion and end.

This class are never exactly certain about their spiritual standing or locality in grace. While good sweet people, almost any kind of searching sermon can upset them, while the appearance of opposition is the signal for their going down. A strong, positive character on the opposing side can easily disconcert them, and they can hardly be counted on in a battle until the victory is won.

Finally, there is a fourth and culminating point and experience in prayer.

There is a downward rush of a perfect satisfying blessing from the sky, and all upward gush of triumph, joy and blessedness in the heart. There is a daybreak revelation of God himself to the soul, and in the soul.

Something happens which makes the enraptured man says “I have seen God face to face.” Something has transpired that takes the scare out of him, burns the trickster and supplanter nature from the character, gives the victor power over men, and makes him a prince in his own consciousness and in the sight of God.

Nature is full of wonderful enriching secrets to those who keep digging in her fields and tarrying at her portals. The Kingdom of Grace is not behind, but ever ahead of the physical world in its ability to bless and glorify the man who observes its laws and complies with its conditions.

The trouble with most people is that they take the hand from the plow and leave the field too soon. There are others who stick to the furrow until the crop is made and find themselves rich in grace for this world, and opulent in glory for the life to come. Some persons ring the doorbell and then leave in impatience or despair. But there is another set of individuals for whom we thank God, who, after ringing, wait; and then ring again, and

wait some more; and do some more ringing, followed by an equally persistent waiting, until at last the Door of Mercy opens; the Mansion of Grace is entered, and walking in, these prevailers, conquerors and princes sit down and take possession to go out no more forever.

# CHAPTER 12

## THE GNAT AND THE CAMEL

The world's greatest teacher was and is Jesus Christ. He never has, never will and never can be surpassed. Truly it was said of him, "Never man spake like this man." And these words were uttered by those who had been sent to arrest him. His bitterest enemies agreed that "the whole world had gone after him."

How his sayings still live! There is no mold, rust, decay and death for them. They impress, astonish, silence and overwhelm as much in the twentieth century as they lockjawed and confounded his adversaries in the first century. The scathing terms "whited sepulchers" and "wolves in sheep's clothing" cut and burn as deeply today as when they first fell from his holy lips on the hills of Judea and within the walls of Jerusalem.

His figures and illustrations were so vivid and forceful that they actually hurt. One can all but feel the right arm being cut off, and the right eye plucked out, in order that the soul might be saved.

The wealthy man who was devoted to his money, had the darkest and strangest sensations creep and crawl over his spirit in the words, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." How wealthy people and their sycophants have been working on that camel and on the eye of that needle ever since. But there is the statement in the original, the eye of a cambric needle, and there is the camel standing before it!

Then who but Christ could ever have harnessed a gnat and camel together to pull in the service of Truth. Men might have coupled a lion and tiger, a camel and giraffe, or two elephants, or two whales; but the Great Teacher geared a gnat and camel together to do as deep plowing and throw up as large a furrow as can be found in any field of moral and ethical truth under the heavens.

This amazing figure was used by him to describe the character and lives of his opponents, the Scribes and Pharisees. They could violate God's law; be arrant hypocrites and humbugs; be filled with spiritual pride; be cruel as the grave and actually murder the Son of God; but oh, how careful they were about Rabbinical customs and traditions, how observant of ritualistic forms, how careful to wash before and after meals, and how defiled they felt they would be if they happened to step on unhallowed ground, or went a single yard over a Sabbath day's journey! It was dreadful even to think of!

Looking at this morally grotesque sight, this strange double-headed, religious character monster, who ignored the essential and magnified and exalted the nonessential, Christ brought out his figure of the gnat and the camel. In measureless scorn and withering sarcasm he said, "Ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!"

Coming down the Ages, there has not been a century but men have witnessed the reappearance of this spiritual monstrosity, and that too in the ranks of people calling themselves the children of God. They could stand to light the fires of the Inquisition, and to imprison, torture and execute beings whom God loved and Christ had died for; but they could not endure a divergence from some piece of ritualism or bear for a moment any difference in verbal expression of some doctrine perfectly nonessential to salvation. It was the gnat and camel over again.

Even in the mountains of Italy, among bloodthirsty brigands, this strange procedure has been beheld. Many of us have read of a peculiarly ferocious band of these outlaws, who after a recent frightful murder of a party of travelers, sat down in merriment and laughter with their blood-stained hands to eat their midday meal; when suddenly they were filled with consternation and horror to find that they were eating meat on Friday! One of the captives, who had been spared for the sake of a ransom, said they fell down at the foot of an old stone cross in deepest remorse and mental agony. They had swallowed the camel of murder, and were now gagging over a gnat of superstition and ceremonial observance.

But the gnat and camel did not remain in the mountains of Italy; they have been seen in the United States, and in every State of the Union; for the farm is big and much plowing is being done, and myriads of plowers with



their grotesque team of a gnat and camel are to be beheld in innumerable ecclesiastical fields no matter in which direction we turn the gaze.

The writer once had a presiding elder tell him that his views of entire sanctification or holiness were a great straining of the Scripture. Only a few weeks afterward we heard the same minister keep a badly bored preachers' meeting listening to him for nearly an hour, while he labored to prove that Christ made his ascension to heaven between the time Mary Magdalene first saw him and a few minutes later when the company of women beheld him. How he labored, how he stressed the words, "Touch me not," etc., and strained things until they fairly cracked, and all over something that was perfectly unnecessary to our peace and purity here, and to our salvation hereafter. Of course we had another vision in this of the gnat and the camel.

We know of a body of religious people who continually ring the changes on making restitution; and we believe that they are right in insisting that we make all monetary wrongs right, if we would secure self-respect, enjoy a good conscience and possess salvation and the favor of God. But there are other wrongs in this life that are deeper than financial injuries. And as we have noticed that identical body of people careful to restore street car and railroad fare money, running from five cents up to fifteen and twenty dollars, and yet at the same time heard of and read their bitter and slanderous attacks on the characters and lives of other people; we have been made to wonder at some individuals' ethical code, and then straightway ceased to wonder as we saw them plowing with our old acquaintances, the gnat and the camel.

Let any man with any judgment at all be appealed to for a decision as to which is the gravest and foulest wrong, to take a few dollars from an individual or to damage his good name and reputation. And his answer every one will know without asking. Money can be recovered, but the hurt inflicted on one by an unjust charge and slander is simply irremediable. No possible reparation equivalent to the damage can ever be rendered. Sin is sin, we all know, and a theft and a lie are both forbidden by the Decalogue. But at the same time we must all admit that the loss of a few dollars is not to be compared with the deprivation or injury of a good name by the tongue of human hate and falsehood.

It is wonderful then to observe how these people who are so scrupulous to pay back a little money they once took, go on with such equanimity in their tongue-lashing and backbiting life. It would all be a mystery but for Christ's figure when he tells us that it is possible in the religious world for people to strain at a gnat and then turn around and swallow a camel.

In still other parts of our country we have men who have gone into a condition that could be called necktie-phobia and coffee-phobia. To be seen with a black or white tie under the collar, or beheld lifting a cup of coffee to the lips, is to bring upon one, from these people, a verbal avalanche of criticism, and a loveless, pitiless tongue-lashing that fairly makes the air quiver.

Here seems to be an indignation and fiery judgment over two things that are not mentioned in the Bible at all; while they exercise a perfect silence in regard to the intolerance, and absence of love which they themselves are displaying, and about which the Bible has a great deal to say. Here are our old acquaintances the gnat and camel again.

Unfortunately for a number of us we owned the gnat, and the camel belonged to the other parties. So they sprang upon their camel and took after our gnat. In other words, to resume the figure, they could swallow without any trouble their own bitter scolding, fussing, fault-finding spirit, but gagged and choked over our poor little cup of coffee, one-third milk, and over our humble little cravat costing ten cents a dozen.

In still another quarter of our land we were most vigorously assailed for defending the eating of pork, and found later that our assailer had married a second time before he had a right to do so in the sight of God. The disregard of a ceremonial law that has been fulfilled and nailed to the cross was a most grave offense, but the breaking of an eternal, unchangeable moral law was, comparatively speaking, nothing. He strained at a rasher of bacon, and then turned about and swallowed a whole camel in the shape of a violated commandment of God.

In still other localities we have listened to a great clamor and protest against the oppressive conduct of bishops who were declared to be nothing but popes riding rough shod over the people, etc., etc.

Wherever this is the case, we can but sincerely grieve over the melancholy fact, and wish and pray for better and happier times. But the startling fact that we call attention to is, that the very man or set of men who rail so against ecclesiastical authority and domination, by and by through some little withdrawal movement from the church, come into the same possession and position, and straightway exhibit the identical spirit and practice they had condemned in others. Now then let bishops and popes hide their diminished heads. They are simply nowhere by the side of this newly-fledged, self-called, self-created, self-anointed and ordained ecclesiastic magnate, functionary and dignitary of Persimmon Ridge School House, Cane Break Hollow Chapel and Black Jack Neighborhood Church.

We do not mean to say that a number of God's people have not been justified in forming congregations of worship as a result of gross mistreatment and tyranny. The thing we call attention to is the figurehead of the movement itself, the individual who, in calling the people away from popery and autocracy as he terms it, becomes a greater autocrat and bigger pope than the one they fled from in their dread of man bondage and desire for religious liberty. They ran from one being who allowed them some freedom of thought and proper latitude of life, to another who takes the place of personal choice and judgment, dictates what they shall eat, how they shall dress, what they must believe, and how they shall live to a point beyond that of a Sultan of Turkey and a Czar of Russia. They gagged over a gnat and swallowed a camel.

As for the leader himself, he strained at a gnat sting of ecclesiastical authority, and turned around and swallowed himself—the veriest pope, the biggest church dictator, the most high-handed ruler over individual conscience and congregational liberty that has been beheld in the annals of history whether of ancient or of modern times!

# CHAPTER 13

## THE OX CART

The Ark of God contained the two tables of the Law, the rod of Aaron that budded, and a portion of the manna which fell from heaven. It was covered and overshadowed by the two forms and outstretched wings of the Cherubim. Underneath the wings was the Mercy Seat, where the glory of God shone, and the voice of the Almighty spoke. The Ark was a wonderful embodied epitome of the great Redemption of heaven for earth.

This Ark was repeatedly placed in some of its journeyings upon an ox cart. In this very happening a most remarkable truth was taught. The fact that in its passage through the Wilderness to Canaan it was borne by the Levites does not rob the first statement made of a single forceful feature.

The truth we allude to is that a divine salvation is seen making its way through the nations, apparently upheld by means, and escorted and defended by agencies unspeakably inferior in every respect to itself.

Every Bible reader will recall some of the sacred and wonderful history of the Ark. How the divine glory shone through the Cherubim upon Israel; how God spoke to Moses from the Mercy Seat giving commands and directions to his people; how Dagon tumbled down before it; how many thousands of the Lord's enemies were destroyed because of their conduct toward it; and how Uzzah was smitten with instant death by having touched it.

And yet this sacred symbol of salvation, this strange, awful representative of the skies, was borne for years on the shoulders of men, and at other times was laid on an ox cart!

It would be hard to conceive of a simpler, ruder piece of architecture than an ox cart; and especially one made in those early days. The very name brings up a vision of heavy axletrees, cumbersome wheels, plain yokes and pole, and the roughest of planking for the platform or body of the vehicle. To this is added the creaking and groaning of the wagon, and still to this,

the slow gait of the pensive eyed oxen, the most patient and humble among animals. In one of the journeys, two cows were hitched to the cart, and it is said they went lowing along the way for their calves that had been left behind.

The teaching of all this is that the divine, in visiting the world to bless and save man, had to come in the form of the human. To reach and dwell and move about on earth, it had to assume earthly forms. The glory of God appears in lowly vessels. The Ark of God is in our midst with all it stands for in power and salvation, but look where we will it is always on an ox cart.

Mortal, finite men are told, like the Levites, to camp around and protect a divine Redemption. A salvation from heaven itself is committed to agencies and beings immeasurably lower, compared to its author, than the uncomely and humble ox cart was inferior to the wonderful life-giving, death-dealing, glory-shining Ark which rested upon its plain timbers.

The principle is everywhere. The Ark is on the ox cart. It had to be. It cannot be otherwise.

First, it is seen in the Incarnation.

Here the eternal Logos takes the nature of fallen man, is born of a poor woman, sees the first light in a stable, is cradled in a rough manger, and dies on a rugged wooden cross.

Second, it is beheld in the sun-burned fishermen whom Christ called to be his disciples.

Men of poverty, and unlettered as the schools would say, yet here was the ox cart bearing about the Ark of a free and full salvation for all.

Of course men in a natural or earthly wisdom would have preferred that a Golden Chariot should have been provided for the carrying about of a Divine Revelation and Redemption. So they wanted the Messiah to be a great national prince and warrior. The teachers and heralds of heaven's message to men should be found in like manner among the noble, rich and great of church and state. They would have it so today. The Golden Chariot instead of the ox cart is quite in demand.

But any one who thinks at all would see that if the highest and greatest of this world were the messengers of God; and if all our houses of worship were the most colossal and imposing of edifices; still when men and buildings were compared with what is in the skies, that all of our richest and best would instantly shrink and shrivel to the plainness, uncouthness and contemptible proportions of the ox cart.

We cannot get rid of the ox cart. It is here to stay so long as God is greater than man, infinite wisdom towers above ignorance, omnipotence above human weakness, and salvation is vaster than the world it has come to save.

Moreover, other things are at work, so that the Ark of God is but rarely seen resting upon what we agree to call the golden chariots of earth. “Ye see your calling, brethren,” said Paul, “how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called—but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.”

The rich and great of earth do not desire what the Ark stands for nor would possess in reality what it contained in symbols. They do not want the two tables of the commandments written in their hearts, nor Christ as the manna to abide perpetually, nor to feel that their life is nothing but a poor stick at best, and can only bloom and bud and bear fruit when taken within the veil into the Holy of Holies. So it seems that God has to choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith. The Ark is compelled to be on the ox cart.

Third, the ox cart is seen in our religious services. There is not a gathering of God’s people together but we are made to see how far short we come in prayer, praise and worship of what is due the Almighty. That which we are singing and praying and preaching about is infinitely higher and greater and worthier than all we can say in hymn, supplication, testimony and sermon.

Fourth, the ox cart is observed in the infirmity, ignorance, narrowness, prejudice and general blundering that belongs to poor, fallen human nature, and that clings to it even in the Christian life.

It is not the spectacle of ungainly form, and eccentric conduct that we refer to, but to the absence of gentleness and courtesy and true refinement, and to the presence of downright rudeness and coarseness springing from a rough nature, bigotry, lack of observation and experience, and a profound ignorance about a great many important things.

It looks like the School of Christ itself would teach better lessons here, in absence of early home training, and that discipline of life which compels men to consider and respect the feelings and rights of others. But there is much to be deplored here, and the ox cart is so large and so needlessly rough and repulsive looking, that sometimes the Ark is utterly overlooked, and if seen, made perfectly undesirable by its most unattractive and undesirable companion.

Fifth, the ox cart is recognized again in the loudly expressed regret and complaints of gospel adherents and followers over the toil and they have to endure for Christianity's sake.

We read in the Bible that the cows drawing the cart and Ark went lowing on their way. The bellowing was not only over work laid on them, but there was vociferous longing for the calves that had been left at home.

It is impossible to enter a single church and attend a camp ground, visit a council synod conference, or drop in a steward's meeting without hearing the lowing of the cows. Complaint is made over burdens laid upon individuals in bringing the Ark up to Jerusalem. Downright fussing and scolding is heard about so much money and service being required of them. They are tired of it all. They are lowing about it; and they are lowing about certain things that were left behind in the world, which they want with them, and do not desire to give up. Listen to the lowing!

Finally the ox cart appears once more in the slowness of the church to bless and save the world.

True it is that slow-paced oxen seem hitched to the gospel vehicle instead of winged Cherubim. We are a long time taking the nations. The twentieth century finds us crawling and lowing on the way. Many years have been spent in the country of the Philistines. The Ark with all its fullness of meaning has not even yet reached Zion. David and the rulers have not yet

gone forth to meet it, and bring it with singing and praises into Jerusalem.  
It is still at the house of Obed Edom.



## CHAPTER 14

### “ALAS, MY BROTHER”

The words of the caption of this chapter were uttered by an old backslidden prophet over the corpse of a young man of God, whom he had led astray and caused to be destroyed. Through his words the unfortunate being had been influenced to disobey God, and so came to an untimely and dreadful death. And yet here he was bewailing the young man's fate. Told that the young prophet's dead body was lying in the road, he remarked in a complacent, magisterial way, “This is none other than the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord.” Later on he stood over the corpse and said, as he viewed the mutilated and lifeless body, “Alas, my brother.”

Here is an irony of fate, indeed, when the person who ruins another sits in a kind of sympathetic judgment over the victim. This is the sorrow expressed by the saloon-keeper over the drunkard found frozen to death at his door. This is the regret of the world over the suicide of a man whom it has driven to despair.

“Poor fellow,” says the world, as they hear of the man's starvation, heart-break or suicide. And yet, by its own traps, dens, temptations and beguilements, it had led him astray until he was willing to do the desperate deed.

We have attended the burial of individuals who belonged to some Lodge or Fraternity. We remember that the white-aproned procession marched around the open grave wherein rested the coffin, threw in sprigs of cedar or arbor vitae, and said, as they circled around, “Alas, my brother.”

We marveled then if they knew where the words they used came from. We wondered if they were aware that they were the utterance of an old prophet over a man of God whom he had ruined!

Truly it is a most unfortunate selection by the fraternities, not only because of the original circumstance, but because of the suggestions it

make to the mind that here again the destroyer is uttering words of pity over the destroyed.

The fraternity in the first place beguiles the man from his family and accustoms him to frequent absences from the home circle. Next it regales him with banquets and convivial gatherings, throws him with all sorts and sets of men, and in a word, furnishes a toboggan slide for him to shoot away with increasing velocity from duty, home and loved ones, until the final plunge comes into the grave and eternity.

After that it is in order for the society or lodge to announce the death in the papers, and with white aprons and regalia complete, parade around the open grave and, while throwing in sprigs of cedar on the unconscious form, say, "Alas, my brother."

It is certainly a most appropriate utterance. It covers the case. In fact, it covers both cases, the destroyers and the destroyed. Whether looking at the silent body in the coffin, or at the moving ring of men about the grave, the true description of the whole scene which springs from the heart to the lips, is the old time sentence, "Alas, my brother!"

In glancing again at the scriptural incident before us in the case of the destroyed young prophet, we are taught the utter vanity of earthly pity and compassion, so far as the ruined party is concerned.

What good did it do the slain man of God for an old, white-haired, backslidden prophet to wring his hands over him and say, "Alas, my brother!"

What comfort, help and blessing can possibly be realized by the victim of the world, when the destroyers of character and soul gather around the coffin with sighs and bowed heads, and place flowers upon the bier of the man or woman whom they caused to forget duty and God and dragged down to hell. What advantage when the papers publish the tidings of the sudden death, and friends and acquaintances of the departed meet on the street and say, "Have you heard that A. is dead? Poor fellow!" What possible consolation can come to a soul writhing in the torment of the damned, from the hurried expression, "Poor fellow," dropped upon the streets, and as quickly forgotten by speaker as well as hearer in the whirl of pleasure, the rush of business and the struggle for gain and for fame.

These very men helped to ruin the man whose funeral is disappearing down the street. And yet the next day they begin to forget him, and in a week's time he has been completely dropped out of mind. Meantime the victim is lifting up his voice in everlasting anguish in hell.

What if his friends have silver lettering on the handsome coffin lid which spells the two words, "at rest!" Does this metallic falsehood put an end to the gnawing of the undying worm, and draw the wailing lost soul from the Pit?

The club, the fraternity and society, boon companions united to bring him to hell, and now they hire an undertaker for a few dollars to put him in heaven with the words, "At Rest," on his casket. Sometimes, to heighten the delusion, a cross or anchor of beautiful flowers is laid just above or below the glistening falsehood.

Some time ago we were standing on a street in a large city watching a funeral procession of a very prominent man. Not only fraternities were in the line of march with their regalia, but detachments of infantry, cavalry and artillery. Two or three large brass bands poured forth their solemn dirges upon the air, and thousands of people lined the streets of the city which had thus bestirred itself to do this public honor to its deceased son.

A chosen orator at a great hall had delivered a glowing eulogium upon the life and character of the dead. He said the city regarded him with just pride. He had made a fortune through his own enterprise, built a great hotel and public place of amusement in the community where he had resided, had represented his State in the Legislature and in Congress, and all were justly proud of him. Young men were exhorted to take pattern after him, imitate his many virtues and excellences and go down into history enshrined in the hearts of the people as did this great man, etc., etc., etc.

The real history of the individual was that he had made part of his fortune by an accident, the other half by a fraud, built the aforementioned structures for the profit in them, had two living wives, and possessed a most unenviable record in other ways. He was taken sick while on a drunken spree and had died without repentance, giving no sign whatever of salvation.

So that, while the orator on the funeral occasion was glorifying him as a model for the young manhood of the country to imitate, he, the eulogized, was wringing his hands in everlasting agony and despair in hell. While the brass bands were sounding forth the solemn strains of a dead march, whose minor chords made the blood to tingle and the eyes to fill, the man himself was far away in the world of the lost where, Christ says, is heard the voice of “weeping and wailing,” “where their worm dieth not, and the flame is not quenched.”

What mattered it, we thought, to that poor, eternally destroyed soul, that a magnificent funeral ceremony and parade was granted him, and was at that moment passing along the streets of his city, while he, millions of miles away, was in the Bottomless Pit, writhing with undying torment. While the speaker was praising him, conscience was lashing his own spirit into torture. While the bands were wailing on the street, he was wailing in hell. “At Rest” was on the coffin lid. “Poor fellow,” dropped from the lips of old-time acquaintances on the street. “Alas, my brother,” was spoken by the fraternities at the grave. But the devil meanwhile went into convulsions of merriment over the make-believe, the stupendous farce on earth, while he was witnessing the real truth, the frightful, everlasting tragedy of a lost soul in hell.

# CHAPTER 15

## THE WAY THAT SEEMETH RIGHT

According to the Bible, and history itself, there are many kinds of lives being lived on the earth. These character presentations are called “ways,” and as such diverge, converge, cross and run in every conceivable direction before the eye of the observer.

Some of these ways are emphatically and unmistakably bad. Others are as clearly good. Still others have appeared for a season to be wrong, and then proved to be right. While still others look to be right but are evil and certain to end in ruin.

In this last class of lives there is a division; one is seen where the course seems to be a correct one only to the outsider, while the man himself living the life is conscious that it is wrong. The other division is far the strangest; where the man representing the character is the one who is victimized as to the deception. He is in a wrong way, and one that ends in ruin and death, and yet it seems right to him. There are not a few of these ways.

One is that of reformation.

That is, a man will risk death and the Judgment with the sinful nature that is in him. He would substitute a wonderful divine work with a small-sized human tinkering. He would attempt an entrance into and happy adjustment of himself to a holy heaven when there has been no moral change or character transformation in his own soul.

Reformation is only an external alteration, and no more renews or regenerates the spirit, than putting on a new suit of clothes can restore and heal a leper. And yet with this superficial touch of the life, that may be done for policy’s sake and other ignoble motives, there are many who are steadily and some swiftly approaching the dreadful final character inspection and judgment of Almighty God. The way has a surface shine upon it, it looks proper, it seems right, but is certain to end in the rejection, overthrow and damnation of the soul.

A second seemingly right way is the diligent but unspiritual church life.

If a Christian is really spiritual he will be active in the work of the Lord; but it is perfectly possible to be zealous in religious labors, and not at all pious. The words spirituality and activity are not synonymous. That which they stand for should go together and be seen in twin-like connection in the same breast and life; but it is far from being the case with many who name the name of Christ, and who stand high upon the rolls of the church.

That a merely energetic pushing of the material interests of the Savior's Kingdom will not be sufficient to secure an entrance into Heaven, is made unmistakably plain in the Word of God. Even faithfulness in what seems to be the more spiritual side of Gospel work will not secure admission. The clear statement of Christ in the matter is seen in the words, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

So even devotion to all kinds of meetings, preachings, and evangelistic labors will not take the place of a holy heart and life. It looks all right; it gains the respect and regard of the world, and the favor and approbation of the church, but is not salvation, after all. A cheat and humbug can abide for years and indeed a lifetime in it. It is one of the ways that can seem right, when the man walking its road is heading for eternal death all the while.

A third apparently right way is a self-constituted censorship of God's people.

There is no doubt that the Lord raises up reprovers; and there is no question that the world in a strange, uneasy way recognizes the divinely commissioned rebuker who stands fearlessly forth in the community and before the nation, and administers the quivering, cutting verbal lash where it is needed. But there is a vast difference indeed between a man sent of God to do this solemn and fearful thing, and the man who sends himself. There is a wide separation between authority and impertinence, between holy reproof and mere fussing and scolding. To the first character the multitudes flock as they did to John the Baptist, while from the second

the crowds scamper, to be delivered from the ranting and raving of the unbalanced enthusiast, or the spleen of an insufferable egotist.

To many the position of a general public rebuker at first ranks well. It seems right. And for a while it covers the inconsistencies, incongruities and moral shortages of the self-nominated and elected censor; but history is faithful to record that the end of these men is spiritual failure and death.

Sharp tools are not for children. A sword or gun is especially dangerous in ignorant and unpracticed hands. A stranger to the weapon who throws a boomerang had better get his grave clothes ready. But graver than all these conditions, and more profound the peril still is that of a man who thrusts himself forward into a place and office where God has not called him, and where certainly God will not stand by and deliver him. Hence Samuel's rebuke and God's rejection of Saul; and hence the smiting of King Uzzah with leprosy.

A censor is a high position. Such a one takes his seat on a throne and assumes impeccability and infallibility. He shoots his thunderbolts, and hews down the people. He is greatly grieved with the misdoings of everybody. It looks well. The way seems right. But if he is not sent of God, he will go down, and be crushed under the ruins of his own judgment seat, and perish with the same sword which he was so free to use in wounding and slaying his fellow-creatures.

A fourth apparently right way is seen in the twisting, and shaping of a wrong course, until it is made to look right to the bender and misshaper.

Men have learned the art of perverting scripture to defend and cover sin. Sadder still, they go into practices, beliefs, unbeliefs and lives that are plainly forbidden by the Word of God, and with a most ingenious manipulation of conscience, ignoring of proper example, and a steady refusal to obey the strivings of the Holy Spirit, they settle down at last quietly and contentedly under a sentence of death which reads, "Woe unto them who call good evil, and evil good."

Under persistent effort toward error, the strangest transformation has taken place before their eyes. Sin has become goodness; wrong is now right; a tiger is a lamb in their sight, and an unclean vulture they call a Paradise Bird.

It is now in vain to tell them they are mistaken. They cannot so see it. They have sustained inward injury, the spiritual vision is blurred and the moral judgment destroyed. That which is evil in the sight of God, and wrong in the opinion of men, is perfectly right with them.

There is no need to cite examples here; though pages could be filled with them. Far more profitable would it be for each one of us to ask ourselves, Am I drifting, or have I drifted into such a moral condition?

This remarkable passage of Scripture adds that the “way” spoken of ends in “ways of death.”

The singular of sin becomes plural in calamitous results. Or those who persist in this peculiar course of evil will reach finally their doom, but along different routes, and enter upon different deaths. There is such a thing as a divine judgment, knocking a human body into the cemetery. Then there is such a thing as death of influence, death of a good name, death of one’s character, death of earthly friendships and loves, death of every holy desire, and finally eternal death.

In dwelling upon this alarming verse; and in recalling that we have immortal souls on probation; and in remembering that eternity is our existence beyond the grave, and that conditions of endless, changeless happiness or woe await us there as the result of our moral choices and lives, we are drawn at once to the following conclusions:

First, we cannot dare to tread an evil or wrong way. The termination of such a course is so clearly laid down in the Bible, and so manifest in life, that it would be utter madness to be found in the broad road that leads to destruction.

Second, we cannot afford to walk in a way that simply seems right. There is too much at stake in this world and in the world to come, for us to risk our all on an appearance; we must have a reality. There must not be a hope so, and seem so, but a know so. We must know that we have passed from death unto life; we must know whom we have believed; and we must know that if this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God not made with hands eternal in the heavens.



In a word, we must get right, be right and do right. We must not be content with a way which seemeth to be right, but enter upon and abide in a life which the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and conscience all agree in pronouncing to be the true, the good and the right way.

# CHAPTER 16

## THE CITY OF REFUGE

The Spirit of God, in presenting to the world through the Word in figurative description the Savior of mankind, had to place under tribute in nature every thing strong, pure, beautiful, courageous and superlatively excellent. It is wonderful how many things Christ is likened to that we might by these very comparisons and illustrations have some proper conception of the completeness and almightiness of the Redeemer. The reader will easily recall the figures Lily of the Valley, Rose of Sharon, Morning Star, Day Dawn, Sun, and a host of other images.

Among the numerous objects utilized by the Spirit to show up the full saving power of the Lord was the City of Refuge. Several features about it throw light on the great truth of Redemption.

One fact was the number of the cities.

Instead of one there were six. This shadowed forth the fullness of the saving power of the Lord Jesus. And this truth in figure is faithfully confirmed in language in the New Testament where Christ is said to be able to save to the uttermost, and his salvation can do for us far above all that we ask or think. Our insufficiency is in ourselves, but a most overflowing sufficiency is in the Savior. No man need be lost for lack of salvation. And no man goes to hell simply because he was a sinner. He passed by the City of Refuge to get to Destruction. And just as six cities immeasurably overlap all needs of a single individual in his entertainment and general providing for, so the salvation of the Son of God is unspeakably above and beyond every possible spiritual necessity and condition of the sinner. The Man of Galilee is not only a mighty, but an almighty Savior.

A second fact concerning the Cities of Refuge was that they were located on both sides of the river Jordan.

There are many dividing lines in this world springing from the facts of race, color, sex, age, temperament, training, education and other conditions too numerous to mention. People on one side of these rivers which divide can hardly see how anybody on the other side of the stream, wall, or fence can possibly be saved, or know Christ as they enjoy and possess Him.

While they are wondering behold they see the fugitives of earth, whose salvation they questioned, running from sin, judgment and hell, and safely reaching and being received by Christ. The City of Refuge is on both sides the river. Christ is too great and loving and merciful to be monopolized by a class or a caste. He is not the Son of Judea or even Asia—he is the Son of Man! All nations feel that he is their peculiar Savior. All denominations feel somehow that they are at home, and in sympathy with him, and he with them. And individuals with every kind of temperament, rest in the blissful consciousness that Christ understands them, and that as one hand fits into another hand, he, the Savior, fits into them. He is the Son of Man. As a City of Refuge he is on both sides the river.

A third fact concerning the City of Refuge was that it was open for the gravest and greatest crime in the land, in the person of the manslayer.

We do not write the words hastily in saying the greatest of crimes. We cannot conceive a more horrible and everlasting deed in its results, than the taking of a human life. A priceless existence has been ended that the murderer never gave; probation has been suddenly terminated forever; and from an immortal soul, hope, peace, joy and salvation removed for an endless eternity.

Other crimes may be rectified. The soul sinned against may recover from the wrong. The besmirched spirit may obtain a plumage of snow after having lain among the pots. But what can be done for the being suddenly cut off in his iniquity, and sent unrepentant to hell by the shot, stab or blow of a murderous hand.

And yet the City of Refuge was founded for this very kind of transgressor.

The lesson taught and blessed hope thus thrown out to a despairing world then is that Christ can save the worst man that lives. The Scripture says the chief of sinners. And in pursuance of this plan and exercise of this

ability the Lord gave great offense to the church of his day. The reproach urged against him was that he went with publicans and the morally undone; and his explanation was that He came for the lost and that the physician ought to be found among the sick.

The fickleness of Peter, the doubt of Thomas, and the bigotry of Paul all went down before him. While the great Apostle published a regular catalogue of the worst of evildoers, who in our age are promptly sent to the penitentiary, but whom Christ met and saved. In the list we find idolaters, adulterers, extortioners, thieves and murderers.

Christ, our City of Refuge, is open to receive and save the vilest being that lives if he will only come.

So, then, no man goes to hell because he was a sinner or a great sinner at that, for all have sinned, and the Bible declares the human heart to be desperately wicked; but the soul sinks into perdition because it turned away from the Savior and the only Savior of the universe. The extent of wickedness ought not to be in the way; because of the extent of the Redemption. Sin has abounded, the Bible admits, but it also affirms that grace much more abounds.

A fourth feature of the City of Refuge was that it afforded perfect protection to the manslayer as long as he abided inside its walls.

The Avenger was not allowed to enter the gates of the place and lay claim upon the poor, trembling guilty wretch. He was safe therein from the hands of all his enemies and would-be destroyers.

In like manner if we fly to Christ for salvation we realize deliverance from every foe. Not only are devils kept from us, but the Savior's promise is that no one shall pluck us from his hand.

Here is taught in the figure of the City of Refuge not only a present and personal safety, but protection and deliverance from the very consequences of our sins. For as the manslayer beheld the Avenger outside of the walls and unable to touch him as the days and months rolled by, so the soul in Christ is kept not only in peace but assurance that not a single one of his adversaries shall harm him, their hate shall fail, their machinations fall to the ground, while the very consequences of past

transgressions shall be checked and completely ended. The faithful man abiding in the love and will of God shall see everything of the past being made to work together for his good.

We have known individuals after their conversion and sanctification allow the Adversary to nag and torment them with the thought that the result of misdeeds which have long ago been pardoned will break with avenging and destructive hand upon them at last, and cause their changed life to be all in vain.

Such a person fails to see the deep teaching of the City of Refuge as applied to Christ, and the soul abiding in him. From the walls of the redeemed life, one may behold his enemies tenting on the plains and training their guns, but no weapon can prosper and no sword or arrow will reach him who has committed all to Christ and lives in the center of his will.

We have listened to some heart rending confessions of burdened souls and anxious lives, and have frequently told them they were safe so long as they were true to God and abided in Christ; and wherever we have seen this faithfulness on the part of the child of God, we have beheld an even greater faithfulness on the part of God toward such a follower. He was never delivered over into the will and hand of his enemies.

A fifth lesson of the City of Refuge was that when the manslayer came forth outside the walls of the protecting locality, the Avenger could destroy him.

All this we have marked in the Christian life. We have seen a man escape from his adversaries of earth and hell and find security in the Savior for years. Then for some cause, would grow careless, come outside the safety line of grace, and be captured and ruined by men and devils. They should have remained in Christ.

A final teaching of the City of Refuge we gather in the fact that the manslayer remained safe and undisturbed in the place until the death of the High Priest.

Fortunately for us our High Priest, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, will never die. As he said of himself, "I am he that was dead, and am alive again

forever more.” He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Then as our deliverance and security is to be co-etaneous and co-extensive with the life of our High Priest, it is perfectly evident from that fact alone that if we abide in Him, we shall be safe with Him and in Him forever.

# CHAPTER 17

## A DECEIVED HEART

The Bible has something to say about the deceitful heart; declaring that in this respect it transcends everything in the line of cunning and dissimulation. The language of Inspiration states in unmistakable words that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

This is quite an opposite view to that held by certain famous pulpit and platform orators, and equally prominent writers. They abound in praises of that which God likens to a cage of unclean birds, and to a dripping and putrefying sore. Their deliverances are naturally much more agreeable and popular with mankind than the declarations of men who repeat without change of word or syllable the fearful descriptions of God about human depravity.

But in this chapter we call attention to the fact that God holds up the heart in another light, and shows it to be as profoundly deceived as it is deceitful. He turns from the positive pole of deceitfulness, and calls attention in his word to the negative pole of the state of deception in which it rests. It is shown to be not any more a deceiver than it is deceived. It is fearful in its duplicity and cunning, but it is equally given to being hoodwinked, honey-fuggled and generally bamboozled. Of all beings and creatures, none can be as thoroughly blinded, befooled and deceived as a human soul. The very persons who laud the native goodness of the heart, and indulge in panegyrics of its innate power of recovery and redemption, show in their statements unacquaintance with the Word of God, ignorance of the world’s history, and, above all, reveal their own tremendously deceived mind as to the condition of the nature which they possess and praise.

Through his servant Isaiah, God has been pleased in a single verse to give four signs or indications of a deceived heart.

The first is declared in the words “turned aside.”

The man may have been once in the ways of righteousness and usefulness, but has been sidetracked in some manner. Like Christian he was betrayed into a path that seemed to go in a parallel direction with the main road; but there was a divergence which finally landed him far indeed from the “old paths” in which he formerly walked, rejoiced in and accomplished for God.

But the fearful thought is that sidetracked as he is, the man is so deceived that he does not know it. He thinks he is in the main road, when he is not only out of it, but far from it. He supposes he has greatly advanced when he is “turned aside.”

Who of us have not seen this character, with a strange kind of smile on his face, talking about “greater light,” “deeper depths,” “second dispensations,” “redemption bodies,” and a “resurrection life.” Such people imagine a character advancement when they are really “turned aside,” and standing still as to development and usefulness, while continually passed by thousands and tens of thousands of Christians who have not lost the simplicity and sincerity of Jesus Christ, and who feel that the “old paths” of the Bible, and the experiences of early Methodism cannot be surpassed or improved on by the mysticism, hysterics and hallucinations of modern day religions

A second sign of the deceived heart is beheld in its effort to be filled and satisfied with that which in its very nature is unsatisfying.

The picture or figure given us by Isaiah in the remarkable passage is that of a man “feeding on ashes!” What if we could behold such a spectacle in life? How amazed and shocked we would be; and how we would endeavor to undeceive and deliver the deluded being.

But whoever tries to find satisfaction and happiness outside of God, is doing nothing in the world but feeding on ashes. Sinners in their amusements; backsliders with their idols; worshippers with ritualism and ceremonialism; people with lip worship and manmade doctrines; are all alike breakfasting, dining and supping on a diet of ashes. The hero worshipper, demagogue follower, Pope exalter and deifier, whether in Catholic or Protestant circles, is simply a gormandizer of ashes. A man absorbed in the red-tapeism and machine work of the church is but sitting down to a table that, so far as soul satisfaction is concerned, is covered



with dishes that are full of ashes. A person symbolizing, spiritualizing, mysticizing and mystifying the scriptures fairly away from the hungry soul is, in his highly wrought conceits and notions, drawing up his chair to a banquet of white and gray ashes. In a word, whoever strives to be happy, satisfied and blessed in any way except with Christ in the heart and God in the life, is doing nothing more, and accomplishing nothing wiser and better than a being who sits down with knife, fork and spoon to satisfy the pangs of hunger, with an old ash heap piled up high before him!

A third sign of the deceived heart is seen in the loss of the power of correct spiritual discernment between truth and error.

The verse says that such a man cannot say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" The individual has a falsehood in his life of doctrine or practice; and it is as near to him as his right hand; and it is in his right hand; and yet he cannot see nor say that it is hollow, false and wrong.

This agrees exactly with the description of the Israelites when they reached a moral state where they preferred Dathan and Abiram as teachers and leaders to Moses, and liked brass censers better than gold ones, and walked in the light of false fire instead of the holy flame which God sent down to burn upon his altar.

Still deeper on this line we read in the scripture of people who are "given over to believe a lie."

All this is very horrible; and yet it is God's own description of a deceived heart. And when we raise our eyes from the pages of the inspired volume and study movements and men about us today, we find with a shock that just what the Book said has taken place, and is constantly occurring all around us in the land.

So busy has been the "lying spirit" that went forth to deceive the people; and so great is the "strong delusion" that has come upon many and in diverse ways, that we confess to being filled time and again with a feeling of profoundest helplessness and hopelessness.

Who would undertake the talk of illuminating the mind of the "No Sect" advocate; or dream of wining from his folly the man who boasts that he has his resurrection body; or ever expect to alter the infatuation of the

worshipper of Saturday. What human wisdom and power can change the Mormon, convert the Mohammedan and persuade the Jew?

All of these are different in their beliefs and unbeliefs, and yet all say they are right. All have lies in their right hand, and yet none of them can see it, nor believe it; and much less say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

Some observers declare that they have seen a few of these deluded ones staggering back toward the light and truth at the end of years of failure, and some at the end of life itself. But they seem to have obtained a lasting injury by the "strong delusion" in which they were plunged for years; for even those who return years before death, yet have received such damage to character, standing and influence, that they never are the same again. Their life influence is gone. Whatever work they may do in other worlds; their labor in this for the results once possible to them, seems to be among the impossible things. They meet with continual failure. Their mission is ended. They sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, and though they weep their very eyes out, they cannot get it back.

The rule is that few indeed of the strongly deluded ever recover from their delusion. The man with the lie in his right hand, who is unable to perceive that it is a lie, generally dies believing that he has the truth in his possession. Very horrible and dreadful must be and will be the awakening of such a man in hell.

Fourth, we have the Bible truth in saying that persons die in this deceived state. We refer the reader to the same verse from which we have been quoting where the prophet adds, "He cannot deliver his soul."

In the days of Moses, Dathan and Abiram died in their folly. In the days of Wesley, Bell and Owens, who went into such wildfire and into such abuse and excoriation of the modern apostle of holiness, drifted in their backslidden lives into gross sins and perished without hope and without God.

From what we see in the Word, and read in History, and witness around us, we have every reason to despair concerning "the deceived heart," the man with a lie in his right hand and who seems utterly unable to recognize its nature and call it by its name.

At the same time we should pray that we who remain on probation, and are moving through the lowlands of this devil-tempted planet, may be kept from the delusion of the “many spirits that are gone out into the world;” and especially be delivered from him who has gone forth to blind and mislead the nations, and who does not hesitate in his infernal work to deceive the very elect.

# CHAPTER 18

## THE CALAMITIES OF THE WILDERNESS LIFE

The wilderness wandering of the Israelites has been often called a type of the regenerated life. This is a mistake. It is intended to show the spiritual condition certain to come upon the Christian who neglects or refuses to enter the Canaan of Perfect Love or Holiness.

It was not long after leaving Egypt that God's people were brought to Kadesh-barnea, and bidden to go over. Accepting the evil report of the spies, and putting God's will and word aside they, in full view of the Land of Promise, went back into the wilderness. It was the beginning of a life long, dreary wandering, in which the bodies of every adult save two were left to decay and bleach in the sands of Arabia.

Sooner or later every regenerated person is brought to the border line of entire sanctification. Under a sermon, good book, desperate sickness, or powerful revival, Kadesh-barnea is seen, and the inward urging of the Spirit, and call of the Word to the child of God is to go over.

But just like the Jews, many believers become unbelievers at this all important place and time, and, receiving the false report of the majority instead of the true testimony of a minority, turn back into a wilderness wandering that is the inevitable result of not entering upon Holiness.

The calamities in both cases, though separated by thousands of years, are identical. Out of seven distinct woes recorded by the Bible we mention three.

One was the divine displeasure.

“With whom,” writes Paul, “was he grieved? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

To think of God being “grieved forty years” with an individual or people! To think of one's being persistently disobedient to Heaven all that length

of time, and feeling for forty years the offended face of God fixed upon the beclouded soul!

Men who go counter to the will and command of God, are bound to have this as their portion. The Jews languished under it, and there are Christians today dying under it. There are men all over this broad country, both in pulpit and pew, who are walking day by day, and from one year's end to another under the aggrieved, displeased countenance of the Almighty. And they know it.

Our observation is that nothing can atone for this calamity. That nothing of human favor or worldly position can make up to the soul for the loss of the smile and light of the countenance of God. Truly we can bear to have everybody displeased with us in the social circle, the household, the church, and the whole world itself, but we cannot afford to have God offended.

It is possible for a man to have a whole community or nation frowning upon and opposing, but so long as the face of God is uplifted upon him, he can be happy, useful and victorious through it all. But if the Lord is grieved, if he turns away the light of his countenance, then are we poor, weak, helpless and miserable indeed. The stars seem to fight in their courses against us, the chariot wheels stick in the mud, the ditches run blood instead of water, and there is the sound of an opposing army marching in the air.

Alas for the man or woman with whom God is displeased. What an uphill work is duty. How hymns drag. How prayer is driven like smoke back in the face. What heaviness, uneasiness and trepidation come upon the soul, when the man is called to lead a congregation in prayer, or preach the gospel before a crowded house.

And yet under this thick cloud of divine displeasure thousands of church members and Christians are walking today. And all because they refused to "go over" and "enter into his rest," though the life lay outspread before them in all its loveliness, and Kadesh-barnea in the form of a book, conversation, sermon, or revival meeting, was inviting and smiling like an open doorway before them.

A second calamity mentioned is that of no progression.

The Israelites were steadily marching through the years, but they got nowhere. With all their traveling, after thirty years and more, they would be no nearer Canaan than they were two or three decades before. They were going in circles. They doubled on their tracks. Their retreats equaled their advances. Their backslidings were as numerous as their forward movements.

What a strange sensation, yes, horror must have swept over them when they would come upon the remains of old campfires where they had abided a while long years before. There were the heaps of ashes, ends of unburned sticks, and even bones they had gnawed upon lying around. And lo! they had thought they were approaching Canaan!

Here is calamity indeed, to be ostensibly serving God, and yet really making no advancement and getting nowhere. To think that we are steadily progressing when we are simply going in rings. To be saying in class meetings for forty years that we are growing in grace, and yet no nearer Canaan or Holiness than then we started.

What a shock it must be to the man or woman who has not lost all spiritual life, and become a carcass in the wilderness, to suddenly come upon the camping place of ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty years ago! In other words, to find the same low state of grace, the same weakness in temptation, the same faultfinding and sensitiveness, the same disposition to take offense, and indisposition to forgive wrongs and injuries, lying round about in the soul. Here are the unburned ends of sticks, piles of gray ashes, and half-gnawed bones of a former camping place. Here we are back again. And the bones, sticks and ashes are so many sign posts, telling us that we have gotten nowhere; that we are still in the old place.

Calamity indeed! After all our professions, and boastings, and church attendings, and after saying, "We had it all," and did not need a second work of grace, thus to run up on these dry bones and moldy ash heaps! To see that in spite of all our orthodoxies, moralities, liberalities, decencies, activities, board meetings, convention attendings, and many other things which we had construed into a steady advancement; to discover we have been only going in rings and circles in the wilderness life instead of approaching the border line of holiness! That we have been "marking time"

instead of marching forward; that we have been trotting all day long, indeed all the life long in the shade of one tree.

There are men today in the active work, who ten, fifteen and twenty years ago were sanctified and put into a larger field of usefulness. Now and then they get a home church paper, and find its columns filled with things that they have left long ago. There are the squabbles over modes of water baptism, wranglings over rules of order, windy disputes about some one-horse college, records of some preacher's "pounding," teachers' institute or Chautauqua gathering.

It was a vision of an old camping place. It was as though he was sitting among cold ash piles where he had once warmed himself, and held old dry bones in his hand upon which he had gnawed some fifteen to twenty years before.

A third calamity that comes from going back into the wilderness is the inability to distinguish between the false and true.

The time came to the Jews that they could not tell a brass censer from a gold one, nor false fire from the holy flame which burned on God's altar. They also followed Dathan and Abiram rather the Moses, and then God slew the two false teachers and misleaders of Israel, they were quite angry.

It is a dreadful thought that we can lose spiritual discernment, and true knowledge of doctrine and experience, and become a prey to evil spirits and false teaching.

The land today has many thousands of people who once walked with God, but turned back and are now going into every long-haired, wild-eyed doctrine that comes along. They cannot tell brass from gold, false fire from true fire, the counterfeit from the genuine, nor the devil's messenger from the prophet and servant of God.

Such persons seem to prefer humbug to truth. They mistake plausibility and volubility for Gospel liberty and unction, and prefer to be guided by the writings of some man or woman rather than the inspired Word of God. They take to the revived, or, rather, galvanized teachings of some old, defunct religion or philosophy of a departed age rather than be blessed, and filled by a salvation all embracing in its scope, purifying and satisfying

in its nature, holy in its work and transforming the worshipper into the likeness of the God who is its author.

Turning from the grand elevating truths of the Bible, as being too great for credence, they proceed to swallow the most absurd, contradictory and unreasonable of human doctrines. They cannot endure a God-sent Moses, but are ravished with a self appointed Korah and Dathan, for whom God in his disgust caused the earth to open and destroy. They cannot follow a saintly Wesley or Fletcher, whom God continually honored, but take up with writers and preachers who were never accused of being holy by the warmest of their admirers and never had a revival under their preaching all the days of their lives.

They prefer falsehood to truth, brass to gold, false fire to true fire, Abiram to Moses, and any and every old thing, like Spiritualism, Sanfordism, Eddyism and Sin itself to Full Salvation or Holiness of Heart and Life through Consecration and Faith in the Blood of Christ.

These are some of the results of turning back from Kadesh-barnea. It would have been infinitely better to have gone over into Canaan.



# CHAPTER 19

## A BOTTOMLESS ABYSS

One of the Bible descriptions of hell is that it is a bottomless abyss. This figure was a source of considerable amusement to a prominent infidel in the North. He said on the platform in one of his blasphemous lectures, that he was not afraid of anything that had no bottom to it. To his brilliant mind, the thing described had no foundation, nothing to prop it up, and so could not sit or stand alone; in a word, did not and could not exist.

The same figure of the World of the Lost filled the writer with a sense of horror from the terrible meaning he saw in it. It is true that he did not possess the superior intellect of the skeptic; but the Scripture tells us that certain truths, and they are the big ones after all, are spiritually discerned. And so with awakened and developed moral instincts in him, that were dormant or dead in the infidel, he saw with an unspeakable shock what had escaped the mere scholar and man of the world. He grasped at once the thought that in the unique description of hell as a bottomless abyss the fact of locality was not in the words or figure, but the far more ghastly statement of condition. That a man going to hell would find himself sinking into deeper depths for ever. There would never be a time when the moral falling of the lost being would cease. There would never be an age or cycle or remotest period in the illimitable future of eternity when the character drop would be arrested, and the undone man cease to plunge deeper. Hell is a bottomless abyss as to infinite depths of increasing devildom, and soundless distances into which and down through which lost men and women sink forever.

The same truth and argument that builds up a topless heaven and peoples it with a redeemed race that is constantly advancing and rising in grace, knowledge, happiness and holiness, would naturally suggest a bottomless hell whose population having cut themselves off from God, the source of life, goodness, and blessedness, are compelled to fall, and to fall forever.

The caption of this chapter, however, is not *The Bottomless Abyss*, but *A Bottomless Abyss*. There seems to be two as far as we can understand the Bible, and that crowning work of God, a human soul. The first is in a world called hell, and the other is in, or may be in, the human breast and life.

The soul is so amazingly endowed as to faculty and capacity, that it can become a topless heaven or a bottomless hell, according as it receives or rejects and turns away from God.

As it is so constituted that it cannot abide intellectually and morally in the same place, but there is bound to be advancement or retreat, bloom or blight, life or death, godliness or ungodliness, with ever increasing heights or depths of the same, we see the perfect reasonableness of the statement that an eternal and infinite heaven or hell can be finally set up in the soul.

A man who advocates an everlasting progression of the character life in the skies, to be consistent must admit an unending sinking of the same in a realm and world where God and goodness never come. There is not only a crumbling, caving in, and falling in of one's own nature, but a conscious, steady descent of one's own self-hood into profounder depths of darkness and vileness as though going down into a bottomless abyss.

Our observation of men in life confirms the statement just made. All of us see human beings steadily getting lower in a moral sense before our grieving and horror stricken gaze. Nothing that we can say or do, or that the Gospel promises or threatens, seems to affect them. They slip away from our grasp and view as we have seen miners descend a deep shaft into the darkness of the earth a thousand feet below. The light lingered a while on their faces as they sank, then there came darker shadows, and finally all sight of them was lost. So have we beheld men go down so deep in depths of iniquity that they were finally lost not only to our gaze and touch, but even to the sound of our voice shouted after them.

There is such a thing as getting where the word of reproof and cry of warning cannot reach the soul. Husbands, wives, sons, daughters and friends all over the land are fast descending to that place. Preachers mark certain of their members reaching such depths that every cry and signal from the pulpit are disregarded, because unseen and unheard.

It must be a frightful spectacle to behold from a distance a man sinking in a quicksand. To see him going steadily down until the yellow death has engulfed him to the loins. To notice from afar his efforts to recover himself, followed by deeper sinkings. To see him throw himself to one side and then another, and yet going down all the time. To mark that when the tawny destruction has reached his arm pits, the victim yields to despair and ceasing all effort goes slowly downward and disappears in the saffron plain of death.

Even more horrible is it to observe human souls slowly descending before our eyes into the yielding sands of sin, or into a yawning pit of wickedness down which they slip and sink steadily as the months and years go by.

They soon get beyond our reach. No matter how we stretch the hand, it does not seem to touch them. They go down before our eyes. A white gleam of forehead turned up toward us in the form of a hasty promise, or a fluttering look of hope is inspired for an instant by a tear they shed, or new leaf they said they would turn over; but it was but for a moment, and after that they seem to sink faster from words to deeds, from deeds to habits, from habits to character, and then with a plunge from character to destiny, black, hopeless and eternal.

The bottomless abyss is in the man as a fact of consciousness. Sinners know that they are getting worse all the time. The transgressor who now and then stops a moment to think is compelled to admit his increased capacity for sinning in the line he is pursuing, and for the increased volume of desire attending that form of evil. It is engulfing him. He feels that he is gliding with swifter motion down the slippery sides of the special iniquity. Something is falling in upon himself, and he is being buried alive.

Who has not known men falsify so often and so long, that they seemed to lose relish for truth itself and would not and could not state simple facts without twisting, distorting and fairly covering up the transaction with mental colorings, and verbal additions until the occurrence as presented was hardly anything like the original happening. We have met men so practiced in lying that they seemed to enjoy it as one would the possession and exhibition of a rare and beautiful accomplishment. In addition they became so morally hardened in the sin itself, that when

detected and exposed they never seemed the least particle ashamed or disconcerted, but gathering their depraved forces together proceeded calmly to lie their way out of the present difficulty.

As for the sin of faultfinding and harshness in speech and judgment, it will as inevitably take possession of a man as much as opiates, liquor and other forms of sin, bind and make hopeless captives of its votaries. No human body ever more completely vanished in a quicksand, than the light, beauty and glory of the soul will be swallowed up and disappear in the black, blinding, suffocating, choking, destroying mud of a spirit and life of lovelessness, uncharitableness, bitterness and revengefulness.

So is it with the love of money. And with every form of uncleanness, with bad temper, with hasty speech, and with suspicion of people. Indeed with every form and character of sin, the man who lives therein is compelled to see not only that the sin is growing on him, but that he is sinking in the sin. He ought to be horrified to observe his growing proficiency, his acquired alertness, his amazing dexterity in matters where once he had to admit he was halting and clumsy. But instead of horror there comes, it seems, a strange exultation over success in dark lines. The soul seems to be thrilled with a sense of its falling.

On the same principle that the murderer Holmes took a pride in having killed over thirty people without being detected, that successful burglary fascinates, so that any kind of sin indulged in grows on the sinner. The one idol started with becomes thirty-three thousand at last to which Greece bowed down without regret or compunction. The occasional glass changes to twenty drinks a day. Careless speech to downright lying. Hasty judgment to indiscriminate and general censure. Individual dislike to universal rancor and hatred. And so the man continues to sink, and always in the pit of his own making or selection. And he falls with the sin in his soul that as Scripture declares deceived his own heart and turned him aside. The Word adds, that such is his darkness and delusion that "He cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

# CHAPTER 20

## GOD'S INSTRUMENTS

It is impossible to study the Kingdom of God in its work and movements on earth without being impressed with the variety and diversity as well as multiplicity of agencies and instrumentalities used by the Lord for the accomplishment of his purpose.

We do not refer now to the differences as seen in hymn, prayer, testimony and sermon, but to the various kinds of people he employs, with the peculiar selfhood, style, manner, temperament, knowledge and gift belonging to each.

We doubt not that if many of us had the calling of the preachers and the stationing of workers in the gospel field, we would make a bad bungle and dreadful failure of the whole matter. We are sure that the first thing which would impress the observer would be the utter absence of that endless diversity seen in the divine method, while the human arrangement would present a row of gospel laborers most monotonously and drearily alike.

There are churches who would have every minister in the Christian ranks exactly like their own pastor. There are also not a few in the pulpit who would have all laymen, or all preachers, precisely the copy of themselves. They might be ashamed to confess it, but in the hearts of countless thousands there is the conviction that the trouble with the world, and the matter with the church, and the reason there are so few revivals and so little salvation, is that there seems to be nobody else who plans, works, preaches and practices their way. If they could be multiplied all over the land, there would be hope for the world, but as they are but one, and the mold was broken after they were made, alas for the people, the church, the nation and the globe itself.

As we listen to their wholesale criticism relative to other workers, and bodies of people, and mark a most notable absence of judgment and

censure launched at their own heads, we are compelled to infer that the thought mentioned above is in the heart of many.

The adoption of high-sounding, all-embracing Scriptural terms by way of ecclesiastical nomenclature, as well as the irreverent and even profane way of capturing and using the name of God himself, as if he had been monopolized, is one of the symptoms of the spirit of narrowness we are writing about.

Fortunately for the world, the church, the cause of salvation, and the present and everlasting good of men, God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are higher and better than our thoughts. His methods of reaching and saving men are wider, broader, profounder and infinitely more effective than our plan and style of accomplishing things.

Some of us would only put scholars and graduates in the field; but God has always had a host of laborers in his vineyard who never had a chance to attend school, never saw a college, and never went through an institution of learning except to go in at the front door and come out at the back. Men in their narrowness would use but one class, but God in his wisdom lays his commissioning hand upon many classes.

Some congregations have a pastor with a funereal manner, sepulchral voice, who dresses like an undertaker and preaches like he was burying the dead. For personal reasons they are devoted to him, and would like all other preachers to pray, read hymns and deliver sermons like their ecclesiastical pet. But while God uses this good man with his little flock, yet he has to consider the endless variety of temperament, taste, education and training in the ranks of hundreds of millions of people outside of the church just named, and therefore send servants, workmen, prophets and priests according to that boundless diversity. So in every age the Lord has used men of sparkling wit, and bubbling humor and vehement spirit and fiery action, all the very opposite of the solemn pastor so well beloved in the church around the corner.

Time would fail to tell how God has employed rough and uncouth men, and profoundly ignorant men, and others with a single gift, or one song, or a shout or a laugh, and through them has moved great audiences, rolling in salvation on the people through them like a flood of glory. Paul, in

speaking of this, says: “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise—and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are.”

Repeatedly at meetings, both small and great, we have seen a man unlock a tied up state of affairs, and billows of glory roll down from the skies on the audience, where there was nothing in the appearance of the person to suggest that he was to be the Joshua of the hour, and nothing in what he said to account for the split in the sky and the laughing, weeping, shouting scene in the church or under the tabernacle.

But mark the point already made, that there are many styles of people on earth, and there must be numerous ways used to reach them. There are countless thousands of human heart locks, and so the Lord must have many different kinds of keys on his ring. The right key was fitted in on one of those wonderful mornings.

Truly this fact ought not to discourage or unduly humble us. A man must possess all the temperaments and all the gifts and graces and all knowledge and power and be a veritable harp of a thousand strings, if he expects to capture and win everybody. As it is, most of us amount only to a jew’s-harp, or a cornstalk fiddle.

Thank God, however, we can play “Amazing Grace” on them, “How Firm a Foundation,” and “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood,” and behold a measure of success.

But while we cannot draw all and save everybody, others, elsewhere and in different ways from ours, are lifting up Christ, pointing the way to holiness and heaven and getting people saved whom we could not stir or move a single step.

We ought to be glad then over this variety and diversity in the ranks. That, as goldsmiths, silversmiths, tradesmen, lawyers and doctors all united to build the walls of Jerusalem, God has laid his hand upon every gift and power of his people, and engaged them in the work of arousing, convincing, persuading and drawing men to salvation and heaven.

So we are thankful for the stormy Elijahs and the weeping Jeremiahs, for the logical Paul and the tender, loving John. For the man who can preach

an audience up to the sight of the gates of the Golden City, and for the one who can bring them back and make them willing to bear the cross and go along a lonely, sorrowful, misunderstood way all the days of their lives. For singer, shouter, laughter, weeper, hand-clapper, foot leaper, exhorter, preacher and the whole business—we give thanks for them all, for God uses them all.

In full harmony with the thought presented in this chapter, not a preacher who reads these lines but will remember occasions when a strong, convincing argument utterly failed to move the congregation; and then to the speaker's intense surprise some point or thought little relied upon, some illustration that for a moment he hesitated to use, melted everything and won a complete victory.

Once at a camp meeting, where the preaching had been excellent, of a high order and unctuous as well and yet no particular movement had taken place, the break came one afternoon while a prosy, commonplace old country preacher was talking in a quiet tone and sleepy manner about the glorious triumphs of the Gospel in the days of early Methodism. Right in the midst of the quiet narration there was a sudden falling of the Holy Ghost as instantaneous and startling as if there had been a flash of lightning, a crash of thunder and a heavy downpour of rain.

The memory of that afternoon with the misty light under the shadowy rustic tabernacle, the swaying forms, uplifted faces, clapping hands, streaming tears and ringing shouts, will never fade away from our mind. We also recall the figure of the preacher in the pulpit, and do not think that any one in the assembly was more astonished than himself at the marvelous scene before him. All next day he wore a meek, chastened, humble, repressed kind of proud look, as if he carried all the keys of heaven at his girdle, and people would have to call on him to get into the divine storehouse of grace, when really he was just a key himself and only one of the millions which the Lord of Glory carries in his hand. That afternoon our brother happened to fit in the human lock that was before him.

On the other hand, at another meeting, a gifted preacher whom we most cordially love and admire, addressing a congregation of laboring, unlettered men and women, began a masterly discourse with the words, "The



deductions of ancient philosophy and the trend of modern thought,” etc., etc., when there was scarcely a single auditor before him who had much thought of any kind, whether ancient, modern, middle age, or any other age. We question whether any of them knew what he meant by “trend.” As for the word “deduction,” judging from some of the faces gazing vacantly upward at him, we rather think they supposed he was referring to a farmyard fowl of a new variety.

But we heard the same splendid speaker present this noble discourse to an audience of readers and thinkers, and the effect was tremendous. He threw his fishing line in the right pool. His key fitted another kind of lock. The door swung open and how he walked in! It was good to see him with the Gospel in his strong, intellectual, logical grasp knocking the deductions of ancient philosophy and the trend of modern thought head over heels down on the floor and out of the back door, while happy, appreciative souls cried out, “Glory.”

In one of our summer camps the leaders had preached faithfully, warning especially against backsliding and losing unwittingly the grace of God. But somehow their warnings did not seem to take deep hold. One morning a young preacher, with his mind filled with pictures of the farm and country life where he was raised, stated in his sermon in a simple, natural way that one day, as a lad, he was sent to the field with a bucket of water for his father, who was plowing in the remote distance. He said he was very busy thinking, and hardly realized that his load was getting lighter. But on reaching his father, he gave him the tin can, and behold, there was not a drop of water in it. He looked back and as far as he could see there was a line or trail of water clear across the field. The bucket had a small hole in the bottom, and it had been leaking from the time he had filled it at the well. So when he reached his father he did not have a drop in the vessel.

There was no need of making an application. Everybody had done that. A kind of foolish looking, troubled, convicted grin was general. They all saw the point and what is more, felt it. They saw inbred sin as a medium of moral leakage as they had never beheld it before. They understood now how they had lost the grace of God while in the service of God, and had actually run dry while carrying the water of life to others! They had a vision of themselves with nothing in their souls at the end of life’s furrow;

and a still more dreadful view of their standing empty in the presence of the Heavenly Father at the Day of Judgment; and we could see that thought and conscience were busy with many that morning on the camp ground.

Meantime we thanked God for the faithful and unique workman he had in the pulpit that day.

Once in the office of a dentist we saw at his right hand a circular revolving table, on which was laid in a row several hundred different looking instruments that he used in operating on the teeth. Just a touch of his finger and the table flew around and his quick eye fell on that which he wanted and in another moment, file, saw or one of the countless drills was in his hand and the work proceeded with the person in the chair.

So in the divine work, none of us can be everything. All of us cannot be saws or hammers or files. Some of us may be only a drill, and a great number of us have to give way to a finer drill before the nerve is reached and the work done. We ought to be glad that we are on the circular revolving table and the Lord uses us at all.

Therefore, let us not get up a row with the other instruments. Let us rather be glad that our Lord has such a variety and diversity on his table. The patients are many, the disease is great, the pain tremendous. So we ought to cry to God to use any of us and all of us, and whosoever and whenever and wherever he will, to cure and set at rest forever this poor, miserable, life-burdened, soul-aching, heart-broken old world.

# CHAPTER 21

## THE STONY HEART

The expression “Stony Heart” is used by Ezekiel. In noticing carefully the prophet’s statement about it, some most important and essential truths will be obtained. Things that not only should be known, but must be understood in order for the soul to enter into perfect peace and enjoy full salvation.

The verbal environment of the words, “The Stony Heart” is full of suggestion and information.

First, that after God has given the “new heart,” the “stony heart” is still left.

This is a deathblow to Zinzendorffianism, or all those who insist that in regeneration the soul is purified and freed from all sin. The teaching of purity being the result of the New Birth is quite flattering to human nature, quite soothing to the feelings of the Old Man, and most agreeable to the parties themselves who want no more altar work in their case, no tarrying in the upper room for the descending fire, and no “second travail” that Christ might be formed in them the hope of glory. It is enough for them that Christ has been “revealed to them”; they know and care nothing about his being “revealed in them.” They insist that regeneration has done a complete work, and settled the whole sin question. All that is left for them now is to grow in grace and knowledge and train and develop the holy heart which has been given them.

But Ezekiel filled with the Holy Ghost differs with this class, and declares that after God gives the new heart, the stony heart still remains.

Second, he distinctly affirms that after God has given the new heart and new spirit, that then he will take away the stony heart.

This additional statement is a deathblow to those who deny the second work of grace. For here it is made clear that God's first work to the soul is to impart something, while the second is to remove something.

If Zinzendorffianism was true, then this Scripture would have to be altered, and the Word declare that the stony heart was removed by the new heart, and there was no place found for it. But lo! according to the Bible, here is the stony heart left after we have obtained the new heart. And as God is said in the same passage to take away the stony heart, we are brought face to face with the fact of the second work of grace.

Third, the passage contains a knock-down and fatal blow to Keswickism or the Northfield school teaching about the Adamic or old sin nature being left suppressed in us. They say it remains in us. Ezekiel says here that it is taken out!

It also shows that something more than anointing or enduement for service is received in the second waiting upon God. His Spirit is put within us, but it is accompanied by the removal of the stony heart.

Fourth, the Growth theory of developing into purity is put to rout in this passage by the words, "I (that is God) will take away the stony heart." There is no evolution or insensible approach about it; God does the work. "I will do it," says the Almighty.

Fifth, the passage renders a most satisfactory explanation of the double-minded life of the regenerated. The "double-minded man" whom James writes about in his epistle is better understood through this description by the prophet, of a man who had at the same time a new heart and a stony heart.

According to the Scripture by James the regenerated being possesses a carnal and spiritual mind. Sometimes one is felt to be uppermost, and sometimes the other. The individual admits one day that he feels religious, and on another that he does not feel religious. All the variation and alternation of feeling, purpose and conduct in the converted life arises from the possession of the "double mind."

Ezekiel confirms this thought by the teaching that there is such a thing as one having at the same time a new heart and a stony heart. Until God by

the second work removes the latter, then is there bound to be those fluctuations of spirit and ups and downs of life which are so disheartening to the Christian, and so puzzling and reprehensible to the worldly onlooker.

Until the deeper light comes, what a mystery the regenerated man is to himself. One day he is tender, prayerful and devout, and the next day means of grace are a dreariness, religious conversation distasteful, and his heart feels like a rock. The stony nature is uppermost this time, and having everything its own way. The very hour he would feel tender he is like adamant, and while others are happy and praising God, his own soul is cold, hard and heavy as a stone.

Sixth, if the stony heart is allowed to remain within us, the result is finally to spiritually petrify its owner.

The new heart will sooner or later become hard. The face gathers rigid lines, the eyes severity, and the very voice comes into a tone and accent that is wonderfully suggestive of rock and granite.

Long ago we have seen that the early removal of the stony heart is necessary for the preservation of the new heart. In other words, we must be sanctified in order to remain justified.

It is a wonderful thing to live a truly justified life. It is claiming a high experience indeed to say that the soul keeps in an approved and accepted relation with God all the time. It is evident that many who profess such a grace are referring simply to their having once received the blessing of justification; that years ago they were soundly converted, and rejoiced a day or week in the unclouded approval of God. The justified life with them is an event in the past, a thing of vanished years—a memory.

Whereas, according to the Bible, it stands for much more than that. It means a constant walking in the light, unbroken fellowship with God, and the testimony that we please God. Unless we become wholly sanctified this blessed relation is constantly beclouded and broken. The stony heart must go in order that the new heart may remain.

It is a fearful thing after a bright conversion, and right in the midst of the duties, activities and even worship of the Christian life to discover a

stonification taking place in us, a petrification of sensibility and a deadening of spiritual graces, which we seem utterly powerless to arrest or prevent.

And yet this is the actual condition of many thousands in the land today. They claim justification; but the darkened countenance, heavy eye, silent lip, powerless and empty prayer and inactive life all declare they are surely mistaken. The soul that feels justified is glad, the eye sparkles, the mouth is quick to praise God, the prayer has liberty and unction, and service for God is cheerfully and joyfully undertaken.

And yet both the Bible and life prove that this state of things will not remain unless we obtain our Pentecost. We must be purified to remain justified. The stony heart must go if we would keep the new heart, and have it abide in us as an heart of flesh.

Seventh, we are blissfully conscious of the fact when God removes from us the stony heart.

Painfully aware of its presence while it was with us, we are overflowingly happy over its complete removal and everlasting absence.

How sweet it is to realize that the old, hard, heavy, cold, unmelting, unyielding nature is gone. We are not angels with wings, nor Solomons of wisdom, nor pieces of human perfection in body, mind or performance of work—but thank God the Stony Heart is gone.

Gone with the Stony Heart is the desire to throw rocks at the Davids of God as Shimei did; or to cast stones at his anointed Stephens as did the Jews.

The Second Work of Grace takes the stone of sin out of the heart, and the stone of hate and revenge out of the hand. And into this emptied and cleansed soul God puts his Spirit to dwell; and into the emptied hand he places the two-edged sword called the Word of God, which, while wounding with one side can perfectly heal with the other.

## CHAPTER 22

### THE DEAD BODY

In the book of Second Kings we read that Elisha was summoned by a heartbroken mother to restore her dead son to life. The woman's agony was so great that for a time she could not declare her trouble, but groveled on the ground at the prophet's feet. When her affliction was at last made known, and petition understood, Elisha went straightway to the house of death, entered the room where the corpse lay upon the bed and began the supernatural battle with that long invincible foe of man, that last to be destroyed enemy of the human race— Death

It was not a very inviting and promising labor before him. He had come from the despair of the mother, was now in the silence of the death chamber, and looked upon the ghastly pallor, the rigid muscles, and felt the marble coldness of the corpse before him.

The first thought suggested by this scene is that in like manner the children of God are confronted with dead bodies.

As it was in Egypt on a memorable sorrowful night, there is a corpse in every house, while the land is filled with this dreadful kind of death. The pulseless forms are to be seen along the entire journey of the longest life

Sometimes the lifeless body is to be found in an unconverted member of the family. For when it comes to spiritual intelligence and soul responsiveness to the truths of salvation, we have indeed a dead man or woman to deal with. In religious coldness and lifelessness there is a marvelous and horrible similarity between an unsaved person and a body shrouded for the grave. And when we approach such individuals to speak with them about their souls and the things of God, it is wonderfully like talking to, looking at and touching a corpse in a coffin. Corpses receive a great many attentions, have many things said to them, but they seem to see not and hear not, and certainly do not answer.

Again the dead body is found in a sinful, worldly community, where God is completely ignored, and the devil reigns.

Still again the dead body is felt in a spiritually lifeless congregation before whom the preacher or evangelist stands, to whom he speaks, and with whom he labors for days and seeks to bring back to the cold, clammy, silent, deaf, heavy, irresponsive thing, the departed Spirit of God.

A second thought suggested by this piece of the prophet's history is that the only hope under God for the dead boy in the house of the Shunamite woman was in a certain living man who had just entered the building, and whose name was Elisha.

Not any man could raise this lad from the dead, for Gehazi, the servant of the prophet, had come, laid his staff upon the child's face, and there was no response or movement of any kind.

If the sinner or the dead congregation is to be aroused, it will be under the blessing of God through a human instrumentality; but both the Bible and History agree in teaching that not any man can or will be that instrument. Gehazis with their rods abound. There is much coming and going, bowing and rising, chanting and talking—but the dead all about us fail to rise.

How the whole sickening scene makes us cry out for the Elishas of God, men whom God honors and uses, and who through the divine blessing have made many a home and church to rejoice by calling back their dead to life and usefulness.

It is a stirring thought indeed, that the salvation and recovery of one person depends upon the presence and faithfulness of another. They may be far apart, but it becomes the will of God through his providence to bring the two together. So Ananias finds Saul in prison, and Philip is swept by the Spirit into the desert to lead the troubled Eunuch into light and salvation.

The old fairy story of the Prince waking up the Princess who had slept one hundred years shines with a new meaning under this Bible lesson. And truly the one who arouses us from moral slumber and death is bound always to be a Prince and is so to us. The heart of the writer goes out with a great admiration, tenderness and affection for the preacher who led him



into full salvation. His every thought and word concerning this man is full of loyalty and kindness. He often wonders how a person who has been converted, sanctified, blessed and led forth into a deeper, sweeter spiritual life, could ever raise his hand, direct his pen, or move his tongue against the being God used so to help him. It is as unnatural as though the youth Elisha raised from death should, in after days, meet the prophet on the road, and strike him to the ground.

A third thought brought us by the study of this passage is the method the prophet adopted to restore the dead child.

The first thing he did, according to the Bible account, was to kneel down and pray to God. It does not say how long he supplicated, but one can well imagine with the gravity, the very desperateness of the case before him, how low he got down before God, how he humbled himself, how he sighed and wept and agonized and hung on to the Lord without any regard to flying time.

We have not the slightest idea that he arose from the floor until he felt the unmistakable assurance in his soul that his request was granted. That as he had prevailed with God, he would conquer with man. Knowing Elisha's character as we do through the Scripture, we have not the remotest belief that he would have ceased his prayer and entered upon his work, without the melting, blissful, blessed divine whisper that he was going to win in the battle with death before him.

We are equally confident that the reason why the "Dead" sleep on all around us, in spite of ringing church bells, volumes of song, and vociferous preaching, is that the prevailing prayer has not been offered which must precede a life and congregation resurrection. The disciples prayed through, and on the tenth day received Pentecost and gathered from the Jerusalem moral graveyard three thousand living souls. If we do the same, we will be certain to behold very wonderful things in the way of men getting out of the sepulchers of sin, casting off their grave clothes at the door of the tomb, and going forth to do mighty deeds in the life and liberty of the children of God.

Another thing Elisha did was to stretch himself upon the dead body, and as the Bible says, “Put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands.”

This is what we are to do in a sense with the spiritually lifeless who have come into our lives with their chilling and saddening power. In a figurative way we must come down where they are, eye to eye, and hand to hand. We must realize their inanimate condition and come after them, and stretch ourselves upon them in mighty resolution and endeavor to bring them out of sin and darkness into salvation and light.

Paul said he made himself all things to all men that he might win the more. He did not sin, but came in another sense down where the lost man was, in order to restore him. He, so to speak, stretched himself upon the corpse. It takes not only grace to do this, but much grace.

The hope of the spiritually dead is in the spiritually living. The former are helpless, and so the latter must come to the former. Death must be met with life, coldness, with warmth, irresponsiveness with activity, and the dumb, blind, motionless, icy sinner be ministered to, fluttered over, and warmed by a loving, patient, glowing Christian heart and life.

We hear much talk these days about dead churches, and backslidden members, and lost sinners. The question is what have we done to get them alive? Have we pulled away from everybody less spiritual than ourselves, given up as hopeless the backslider, and held ourselves utterly aloof from the transgressor? Then are we running from the corpse! We have left the dead man in the house of death!

The Savior did not do this; but came to a charnel house of a world, and brought life and immortality to light. He lived and died in the dearest ecclesiasticism that ever appeared on this planet; but he raised from spiritual tombs all around men and women to take up his work after he had gone, and, as a consequence, multitudes of redeemed beings are in Heaven, and multitudes more are mentioning these very beings He ransomed, in prayer, hymn and sermon every day of this world’s history.

Elisha did not leave the corpse, but penetrated the house of death, prayed by the side of dissolution, stretched himself upon what was lifeless clay and on the way to corruption, and behold! the flesh warmed, the breath

came back, the dead lived, and a house of mourning was turned into a habitation of praise and thanksgiving.

We know of parents who never gave up their children, and have seen them all saved at last. We know of a wife who prayed for her husband with an unshaken faith for sixteen years and saw him at last soundly converted to God. We also heard of a young girl who, from the age of twelve until she was twenty, never ceased her gentle, loving and wise efforts to bring her cold, worldly and wicked father to salvation. Others failed and despaired. But she stood by the corpse; warmed the dead thing with her beautiful Christian life and love, and saw the man not only converted, but wholly sanctified, and today a faithful, devout, consistent member of the church.

Very many are the preachers and evangelists in the land today who are called to stand in the presence of a profound, spiritual death in the form of the congregation before them. Every feature and characteristic of dissolution seems to be there. The very graveyard is suggested by the memorial windows an all sides. The tomb is there, and the corpse is in or by the tomb. There is the glazed eye, the irresponsive face, the rigid appearance, and the heavy ear—for the dead hear not.

For days the funeral services seem to proceed. Some are for running and leaving the body to be buried by any who will, or to rot above the ground. But the men we speak of stay in the chamber of death, and wrestle with strong crying and tears over the insensible, pulseless form before them. They feel all the weariness, loneliness and heartsickness attendant upon the situation, but they know in whom they have believed, and that the Savior is the Resurrection and the Life. And so they wrestle and labor on.

To all such is granted the blessed, thrilling, supernatural sight of the dead arising from coffin, bier and cemetery, with shining faces, and shoutings and leapings of joy, to die no more forever.

In a Southern town we once labored with a lifeless church for a whole week, and seemingly to no purpose. On the eighth day, while preaching, the fire suddenly fell from heaven, and twenty-five souls were regenerated and sanctified, and fifteen were saved that night. Here was forty in one day. The exact number was repeated the next day, and thirty-five were given to us from the grave on the day following. This made one hundred

and fifteen in three days. Thus ended the appearance of an ecclesiastical cemetery, and upon the ruins of the monuments a thriving, bustling community of redeemed souls built habitations of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In a large Western city, we had reached the end of the tenth day, and the chamber of death was still filled with cold, rigid forms, and we were almost ready to despair, when on the eleventh day, while preaching on Sunday afternoon on the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, suddenly the resurrecting power came down, the glory fell upon the long silent audience, a celestial pandemonium broke loose and very many hardly knew whether they were in the body or out of the body—God knoweth.

From this individual cemetery we obtained three hundred risen bodies for the Lord; one hundred converted and two hundred reclaimed and sanctified.

God help us to be like Elisha, and not give up dead bodies too soon.

# CHAPTER 23

## THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The Gifts of the Spirit do not mean the Gift of the Holy Spirit himself. The Bible is very clear in its statements concerning the difference, and our good sense ought to recognize the distinctness and separateness of the two without the slightest trouble.

We have seen men who had the Gift of the Holy Ghost, who were notably lacking in a number of His gifts. On the other hand we have known most excellent and useful Christians who possessed one or more of the gifts of the Spirit, who had neither sought nor “Received the Holy Ghost” as taught in the book of Acts and the epistles of James, Peter, John and Paul.

In the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, we find a number of the Spirit’s gifts mentioned. Among them are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, divers kinds of tongues, etc., etc. The apostle also illustrates the matter by reference to different members of the body as the foot, hand, ear and eye. The idea is that the gifts differ as greatly as the members of the body, and some seem to be more honorable than others, but all are needed, and make up that harmony and completeness of the church, that is designed and desired of God.

When Methodism began its wonderful career it possessed not only the Gift of the Holy Ghost, but abounded in the gifts of the Spirit. A perfect army of workers were at once brought forward, and the needs of the church supplied, and the wants of the world met in the diversity as well as number of laborers. Class leaders, exhorters, local preachers and traveling preachers were only a part of this suddenly raised up heavenly company.

We have observed in our work of a quarter of a century, that when a genuine revival takes place, and the Spirit has right of way, this remarkable variety of gifts and laborers immediately takes place. All the man-made offices and titles, the mere human setting up of ecclesiastical grades and distinctions is but an imitating and counterfeiting of the divine work; and

while showy, dressy and attractive enough through uniform and ceremonial, yet they lack unspeakably and immeasurably the freshness, charm, power and effectiveness of the Holy Ghost order. The mere ecclesiastic, though robed and Rabbi'd, is nothing and can accomplish nothing beside the man anointed or filled with the Spirit to do a certain work. All Jerusalem came out to see and hear John. Priest and prelate were smitten dumb before the man sent of God. Church-made deacons, elders, curates, vicars, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes are as nothing before singers, prayers, exhorters and gospel messengers chosen, anointed and sent forth by the Holy Ghost to reach and bless the church and the world.

As the Spirit retires or is grieved away, these gifts disappear, and remarkable workers sink out of sight. It is a sad day for the church and the world when such a thing takes place. It is disaster indeed.

When the writer was a pastor, and his churches were swept with a genuine Scriptural revival, he noticed that this diversity of gifts abounded among his people, and that his congregation was enriched and blessed with every kind of Christian laborer. There seemed to be no confusion. Men and women of every intellectual and social plane came naturally to the front, and worked harmoniously, agreeably and successfully together, according to Paul's figure of the members of the body, Christ, the living Head, was present and seemed to supervise and easily control all.

The hand, foot, ear, eye, tongue, voice and heart were all there. We had some mighty in exhortation, others powerful in testimony, still others resistless in song, and still others simply overwhelming in prayer. Some were gifted in altar work. Some seemed called to mission halls. And some were at their best in street meetings. The Spirit had his way. Every kind of soldier and weapon were in the ranks, and our triumphant church swept through the Sabbaths, the months, and the entire year with constant victory. This is as it should be, and will be, if the Spirit is allowed to have right of way.

In the first years of the writer's ministry, and before the holiness movement had come to the front, and the gift of the Holy Ghost was definitely sought as a distinct blessing, there were many genuine revivals in the Conference of which he was a member. In the writer's own church

services, and in the camp meetings which he attended, he witnessed a number of remarkable outpourings of the Spirit, with the clearest and most powerful conversions and reclamations.

In this period we recall numerous instances of the gifts of the Spirit; and the wonderful power that these anointed ones had in their peculiar realm and field of work.

One of these individuals was undoubtedly called by the Holy Ghost to sing. No matter at what part of the service he was used, Heaven always honored the man. In the opening hymns of the meeting he would immediately silence, soften and hold tearful and breathless the audience. At the close of the sermon, his singing would fill the altars when sermon and exhortation would fail. Most of his hymns were old-time Methodist pieces, with an addition of more modern ones, but selected with great care for gospel truth, and deep spirituality. Then the melodies were never on the jig and Negro minstrel order. The harmonies were tender, plaintive, solemn and always unctuous.

Put this man anywhere else in the gospel battle and he was a failure. Singing was his regal and solitary gift.

Another gift of the Spirit we recall of those days was that of exhortation. There were men in the traveling and local ministry who possessed it in a most remarkable degree. Some had it in connection with preaching and teaching ability, but the rule was that it abided alone. And we often met and listened to persons in the pulpit who carried a license to preach, when the Holy Ghost had called them to be exhorters. Their place was not in the sacred desk, but standing inside the altar, or before the altar, or walking down the aisle a human flame, a torrent of fiery speech before which the people went down like windrows in a field.

These warnings, appeals, invitations and prophetic-like deliverances would hardly ever last more than ten or fifteen minutes, but God's weapon had gone deep in the hearts of his enemies, and the wisdom and power of another gift of the Spirit demonstrated beyond all doubt and question.

We have seen the exhorter save the battle, and turn defeat into victory, when the preacher of the hour had failed. And we beheld the occurrence so

many times, that we knew better than ever why the Holy Ghost put such a gift on certain men, and stationed them here and there on the field of danger and conflict.

A third gift we were profoundly impressed with in those earlier days, was the power of prevailing prayer, possessed by some of the brethren. Strange to say, more laymen than preachers had this endowment. Now and then a minister would thus be distinguished, but the rule was that it seemed to be one of the gifts of the Spirit to the pew.

It would be impossible to give a faithful description of the operation of this talent, as it was exercised by different men. Education or its lack; originality; eloquence; simplicity of speech; voices trumpet-like or flute-like; naturally produced an external dissimilarity, but all these Jacob-like wrestlers in prayer had power with God and man and prevailed. There they were alike.

Some would begin quietly, rise to a gale and end in a tornado of spiritual power. Some began vociferously and would close quietly with victory all over the camp or house. Others would rise and fall, like the billows of the sea, and after dropping into an humble conversational tone with the Almighty, a child-like address to the Heavenly parent would suddenly flame forth in a swift succession of inspired supplications that seemed literally to lift the gates of heaven from their hinges, and let a flood of glory down upon the congregation, who were changed in an instant to a laughing, weeping, shouting, crying, leaping, hand-clapping and face-shining multitude of transported beings.

Among the number of this third class was a preacher. It got to be known all through the Conference how the Spirit used this man in prayer. In camps and revivals we have often heard him called on to pray, and generally in the darkest, hardest hour of the battle around the altar. We never knew him fail to bring heaven and earth together. His many triumphs never spoiled him, and so keeping humble, the Spirit continued to use him longer than he is able to handle most laymen and clergymen.

This brother would always begin in a quiet but earnest tone. In another minute all could hear the accent of longing and later the wail of pleading. He would make “rushes,” as they say in football language, and always held



the ground he had conquered. And he carried the people with him. There was something in the tone, fixed solemn face and gently swaying figure of the man that showed he was going to reach the goal and get the victory. There were sentences he would utter that would be like exploding bomb shells. Then there would be another verbal rush at the throne of grace and toward heaven itself, so that one could all but see the walls going down.

He had a way at times just before the culminating victory, of stooping forward, bringing the palms of his hands together with a resounding slap, and crying out, "Now, Lord!" And like a lightning flash from heaven we have seen the power of the Holy Ghost fall upon the people, sinners would be stricken to the ground, others would leap shouting to their feet, and a perfect storm of glory would sweep through the altar and all over the tabernacle.

We sigh for these vanished gifts and departed workers. They left many of our churches long ago. And there is no question but they are thinning out, and weakening down all over the land. The unctuous singer, flaming exhorter and man of mighty overwhelming prayer, are becoming in many quarters greater rarities with every passing year.

# CHAPTER 24

## THE RENEWING POWER OF PRAYER

It seems very strange and foolish in the eyes and to the judgment of worldly wisdom, that actual strength and spiritual benefit are received by human beings in praying to an invisible and silent God.

The expressions of relief falling from the lip, are attributed to excitement; while the glowing countenance and overflow and overspread of smiles and tears are accounted for in a philosophical manner very satisfactory to the explainer, though the explanation itself misses the mark by a thousand miles.

When the unspiritual outsider would interpret the relief experienced in the observance of this means of grace, by the temporary diversion of the mind from the burden and troubles of the day, he forgets to explain why such abiding peace remains when the prayer is over, and the same daily cares and sorrows come back upon the soul and brood upon the life.

The fact is that when the child of God prays he is actually having audience with God, and as he lifts his soul in humble, believing petition to his Maker and Redeemer, the Spirit of God overshadows and comes upon him, there are holy conceptions of life and duty, births of resolution, and influxes of strength and power more than sufficient to meet and overcome every trial and difficulty of the unrolling days and years.

Somehow the connection is made, the wires set up, and the message gets through. Better still, the outstretched hand touches God, and there is an instantaneous and steady flow of the divine life into the fainting, sinking soul, and the spiritually sick, so to speak, rise up to minister to others, and the morally dead stand upon their feet and come forth to gladden and bless mankind.

The Bible says if we wait upon the Lord we shall renew our strength. There is no explanation as to how the change is effected from lifelessness to animation and exhilaration, from weakness to vigor and from faintness

to force; but we all know that it is done, and have been made to marvel and rejoice thousands of times, over this supernatural happening along the long lonely journey of life.

The day of trial came between Sabbaths. There was no church service going on, and no preacher or Christian in sight. The rent was due, the agent had been rough, the pocketbook was empty, the baby was sick, the head as well as the heart had been aching all day, when the faltering discouraged Christian wife or mother knelt behind the empty flour barrel in the little pantry or store room, and while telling the Savior all about it, and asking for strength, the sweet, delightful, heavenly help came. It swept in an instant all through the soul, seemed to animate and invigorate the whole body, and veritably a new creature with moist, shining eyes, and glowing, happy face went out of the humble little larder back to the care of the children and to the never-ceasing toils and drudgeries of everyday home life. And not one of the children but saw and felt the influence of the change that had taken place.

It seems to the writer that if some great discoverer and creator in the realm of science could make a certain kind of metal plate or ball, which, attached to a post or wall in one of the closets or apartments in the house, needed only to be touched or pressed a minute, when gently but powerfully there would come perfect waves of physical rest and strength to the body—it seems to us that every member of the household would pay regular visits to the room and count it all joy that such a blessed invention was in their dwelling. A being would be a fool indeed to go dragging and pulling himself around in an exhausted condition, when there, under his own roof, was a contrivance which in a moment could make him physically another being, and all he needed to do was to touch it.

No such creation is possible to man, but God can, and has, granted us something even more wonderful. For the blessing we write of not only affects in a strange, sweet sense the body, putting an actual physical spring into it, but it lifts the burden from the heart, takes worry from the mind and causes the soul itself to be glad and to rush forward with a new impartation of heavenly power to do or endure according to the will of God.

There is not an apartment in the house, but this wonderful instrument of grace can be found. God sees to the regulating and working of the machinery. We are told simply to go into the room, and, after we have closed the door, to take down the receiver and go to calling, and we will hear from Heaven. We need only to kneel down beside the bed or over yonder in the shadowy corner behind the wardrobe, when suddenly something honey-like, wine-like, flame-like, takes place in the depths of the soul, and behold one of the Lord's dispirited, drooping followers has leaped to his feet ready for the burden, prepared for the race and panoplied and eager for any battle.

Surely the great body of Christians in the land have forgotten this marvelous provision of God for our deliverance, and that he has them everywhere and not one will fail us if we observe the conditions of their usage, as laid down in the word of God.

These instruments of grace, these golden plates of glory, which if a man touches or stands upon, send sweet currents of spiritual life and force into the moral being, are fortunately for us to be found in other places besides the room of a house.

The Publican stood on one in the outer court of the Temple, where no one in the city or sacred edifice dreamed of its location. And yet so great was its power that as the man cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," the drooping head was lifted, sins of a lifetime were swept away, the joy of salvation rushed in, and the man went down to his house justified.

Jeremiah to his delight found one able to hold him up in the bottom of a well or pit, in which he had been lowered to die by royal commandment. Deep in the loathsome mud he sank, but right then and there he struck the golden plate; he took down the receiver and began calling upon God. It is recorded that he not only did not sink deeper, but was marvelously sustained and finally lifted up from his dark and fearful surroundings into light and liberty again:

Paul found one of these marvelous fixtures of grace in the road to Damascus, and still another in a house on a street called "Straight," in the city of Palms. As he prayed Ananias came with his instruction, the scales fell from his eyes, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Elijah discovered not less than seven of these power workers and life energizers on the brow of Mt. Carmel. As he lingered a while on each one, it is not to be wondered at that when he did commence running toward Jezreel he kept ahead of the horses and everything else.

It seems to be the design of Providence to have the world dotted, if not actually paved, with these helps and uplifters of the soul, so that no matter where a man might be, he need never go down in discouragement and defeat, but lay hold on wire and lever, take up sounder and receiver, and find help and deliverance in every time of need.

We remember a member of our church who was a farmer, and from his constantly shining face, his exultant, triumphant soul, and his beautiful, Christ-like life, we judged that he had some understanding with the Lord whereby long lines of the grace and glory machines had been placed up and down every corn and cotton furrow that he possessed.

The writer when a lad for months observed the practice of nightly prayer, mainly through the request of a lady friend. One night he was entertained at the country home of a physician. The house being crowded with company, three or four of the male guests were put in one of the bedrooms. As he, in the presence of the others, knelt to pray, he was greeted by an obstreperous fit of laughter on the part of this doctor. The boy arose from his knees flushed and indignant, and gave the physician a scathing rebuke, which the man keenly felt, but the sad part was that the lad quit praying from that hour. The attack of ridicule was too much for him.

It is very remarkable, and makes one of the strange coincidences in life, the occurrence to which we now call attention. Fully seven or eight years rolled away; the physician moved away from this house, and the writer rented it; and right by the side of the bed, in the identical spot where he had uttered his last prayer, here, after the flight of eight years, he knelt to pray again. The fourth time he went down before God he heard from heaven!

The machine had little rest after that.

The fact is he increased the number rapidly, having one in each room of the house, and three between the house and the store located a mile away.

One of these was kept in a lovely little valley, a second on the brow of a hill, while the third was in a cottonwood grove. Still a fourth was behind the counter in a dark corner of the store. The reader can imagine the spiritual condition of a man who had the prayer plates or instruments in the house, three on the road to the store, and one in the store, and all faithfully attended to every day.

Suffice to say, that even then, in the beginning of his Christian life, he found that it paid to pray, and to pray much. After the lapse of a quarter of a century he feels like reaffirming with a thousand-fold greater emphasis, the power and efficacy of prayer for every condition of life.

Truly it was not in vain, and it should not be in vain, that the statement was made in the Bible: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

# CHAPTER 25

## MOURNING DAYS ENDED

The general opinion is that we have to enter Heaven before sorrow can possibly end with us. We are told this is a vale of tears, and sighs, that moans and lamentations are the common and unchangeable language of the human family until Time shall be no more, and we have all entered through the Gates of Pearl into the everlasting city.

And yet Isaiah distinctly tells us in the thirty-fifth and in the sixtieth chapters of his Prophecy that our days of mourning can and shall be ended, and that on earth. The man has not entered Heaven, but Heaven has entered the man.

Of course the Scripture does not mean that causes of natural sorrow will cease; or that our hearts shall not feel the bitter pangs of bereavement while our tears drip on the white, unconscious face in the coffin. The Savior wept. and the best and holiest of people will continue to feel the pain that will spring up naturally, involuntarily and of necessity under the mistreatment and ill-treatment of ingratitude, falsehood, cruelty and wrong. Suffering can actually be felt in the words of our Lord when he said, "The hand that betrayeth me is with me on the table." Evidently there is an anguish that has no personal relation with wrong doing, and by which the pure heart and godly life is affected through the hand, tongue and act of a wrongdoer. The existence of this state of things is no contradiction to the promise in the Bible of a religious experience in which mourning days are ended.

It must be remembered that the Scripture is not a book on Science, nor written to satisfy mysterious and really unknowable facts concerning the universe and the life beyond the grave. It is a volume on Salvation. It treats of our cure and deliverance from the disease of Sin, and is looking at and dealing with men from the standpoint of Redemption. It recognizes and teaches that the original cause of all sorrow in the world was the entrance

of Sin into the race. And that even now in every life the great cause of our days of grief and nights of sadness is sin in some one of its many forms.

Hence in presenting a Full Salvation from all sin, and looking at men always in the light of Redemption, the Book of God naturally and properly declares a blessing can be secured in which the days of our mourning shall be ended.

First, this state of blessedness begins in pardon.

For if the recollection of our transgressions and their pressure on conscience bows down the heart and brings repeatedly the sigh and groan to the lip, it stands to reason when God for Christ's sake forgives all our sins, then that much sorrow is ended and those periods of gloom connected with their existence are terminated.

Second, through the Birth of the Spirit we receive an ability through grace to live without sin; for the Word says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

Now we all know through bitter experience that the instant we do wrong, shadow and sorrow fall upon and take possession of the whole being. This gloom is not only indicative of the divine displeasure but is the protest of the soul itself against iniquity. For man was never made to sin. It is clear then that if the salvation of the Son of God can break up the sinning business, it has also with that achievement ended the days of mourning which invariably dawn or rather darken over our heads when a commandment of God is broken and some kind of guilt stains the heart.

A third cause of sadness to the soul is the presence of inbred sin.

This peculiar heart heaviness is not continuous, but occasional and always a mystery to the regenerated. Sin is a gloomy principle, and where it remains in the Christian in the form of the carnal mind, it is certain to affect the spirit with the strange periodical melancholy to which we have referred.

In such cases no willful sin can be recalled, or has for that matter been committed; and yet here is this mind depressing influence at work, leading to fits of prolonged silence, or despondent remarks, and to a cast down



appearance as well as an equally weakened and lapsed condition of the man's spirit life and activities.

The Word of God declares that this "body of sin" can be "destroyed," and in that event of course, those days of spiritual eclipses, sunset shadows and midnight gloom are no more, and so another large number of mourning days are ended.

A fourth cause of gloom with the people of God can be traced to the mistakes, blunders and failures which seem necessarily connected with human life we find it here on earth.

Certainly as long as we do not know all things, we cannot infallibly read and measure men; and while we fall short of certain infinite attributes called omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence, it ought not to appear astonishing nor remain unpardonable with ourselves and others, that we make unwise decisions, blunder in our judgments, and fail in our enterprises and labors in ways too numerous to mention.

There are godly men and women today, whose hearts are clean, and lives right and acceptable in the sight of God, who have not ended their days of mourning because of just such happenings and conditions referred to in the above paragraph. As wholly sanctified people it is their privilege to live as described in the thirty-fifth and sixtieth chapters of Isaiah, and they do the most of the time. But the day of mistake, blunder and failure coming, and neglecting to deal with it as God would have them, or not understanding what to do with it, the necessary consequence is an additional period of mourning.

Terminated are the days of sadness over sin dwelling within, or sins committed without. They know how to dispose of the shadows originating from those old-time experiences, but go down into gloom over a lesser evil and a smaller trouble.

We have known the best and godliest of people to make an unwise speech; fail to do the exactly correct and proper thing in some trying complication of duties, and then sink into gloom for hours over the occurrence.

We have known a layman to limp and stumble in prayer; a leader of religious song make a break or mistake in service; or a preacher through

exhaustion of body or an overheated audience room, fail conspicuously and unmistakably on his sermon. With some the pain and shadow of the failure or blunder remained for hours, and even days, while with still others it abided as a constantly recurring life memory of sorrow and mortification.

We hardly need to show how this state of mind is certain to affect the person in duties and labors that follow, and its equally unhappy influence upon others with whom such a person is thrown when in this mood of mind and condition of soul. If mentally burdened and preoccupied one can hardly do what God wants him to do, or be what He desires him to be. The anxious face and worried tone and vacant eye, are all against us in the work of doing good. And we thank God we need carry none of these things with us in the journey to Heaven. I beheld them, said Isaiah, and sorrow and sighing had fled away, and everlasting joy was on their heads.

Perhaps the crowning gladness of Full Salvation is the discovery that we can place our blunders and failures just where we cast our sins and sin, under the Blood of Christ, and in the hands of an almighty, overruling God.

Some have learned how to do this, and are living that way daily, hourly and momentarily. So with them the Scripture is at last perfectly fulfilled, and all their mourning days are ended.

In a meeting once in Ohio, a good brother stood up in the hour given to testimony, to tell some thing; when to his amazement the whole circumstance or recollection had escaped him. With hundreds of people looking at him, and a silence that grew with every passing second, the situation was anything but pleasant and enviable. But suddenly we saw a sweet light steal over his face, while he said, "I have forgotten what I wanted to say—but Hallelujah anyhow"—and then he sat down. It was all so simply, humbly and beautifully done, that tears stood in many eyes, while amens and shouts abounded.

Some men would have grieved over the mortifying circumstances for months and years, but our brother possessed the secret of which we are writing, and never felt a shadow; the days of his mourning were all ended.

In a certain camp meeting in the South, no matter how men resisted nor devils raged, nor the tide of battle turned, two faithful preachers laboring with us would inform the Lord with glad cries from their knees that they “were on top!”

It was the same truth taught in this chapter only embodied in different words. For as far as we have been able to see and understand things in life, it is the man “on top” who does the shouting, and the man underneath who does the mourning. Verily our speech betrayeth us. Our very words declare our spiritual location.

Certain it is, that if we turn down our sins, get our feet on the adversary, put every sad, trying circumstance of life under the Blood, where we had previously plunged the past and the soul itself, and keep at this—then are we undoubtedly on top, and the days of our mourning are all ended.

# CHAPTER 26

## A STRANGE POWER OF THE SOUL

We doubt not that there are powers of the soul that have not yet been imagined; and depths that no lead-line of thought has sounded. And this we feel to be the case while the greatness of the spirit through daily study is constantly growing upon us.

He who investigates the nature of the soul, its strange action upon itself and as certain influence upon others, will confess to two feelings, one a sense of bewilderment, and the other an emotion of awe.

Who has not been puzzled at its swift alternate softenings and hardenings, its magnanimity and meanness, its sacrifices and selfishness, its activity and idleness, its bravery and cowardice. Swung in one direction it impresses the observer with its kinship to God, but with a pendulum sweep it appears gazing at us with the features of Satan. Sometimes it lies within the body as quietly as a lake sleeping amid the hills, not a yearning of regret disturbs its rest, not a thought of pleasure or dream of ambition can stimulate it. It seems more than quiet, it is felt to be stagnant. But in the next moment or hour the body is aquiver with the awakened spirit, not aroused necessarily by anger, but by a great thought, noble intent and sublime purpose. The man stands thrilled with a consciousness of power. Nerve and vein are on fire. The heart is a Mountain of Flame! The breast swells, and at that moment nothing in the universe is too hard to undertake or accomplish.

If we had to liken the soul to anything material we would take the ocean. The sea, with its shifting colors, its light and shadows, its calms and storms, and last but not least its horizon line, measuring off indeed a visible greatness, but suggestive also of depths, lengths and breadths beyond, and of realms unseen, unknown and unexplored. Who has not felt that horizon line in his own soul, and beheld it in others, and who can approach it without thinking of distant sailing ships, peaceful sunny

islands, but also of monsoons, typhoons and all that these and other things of sea and land stand for, in the spiritual life.

However we started out to write not of many, but of a single power of the soul.

Among the various faculties within us is one called conscience. It is a moral attribute, and its province is to pronounce upon the quality of our actions and put upon them the seal of approval or disapproval. We all agree that it is conscience which rebukes us for the sin just committed, and applies the lash upon the quivering and suffering spirit, but what power of the soul is that which stamps the conviction upon the mind that everybody knows of the sin itself?

The deed may have been committed in secret, and it is not possible for any living being to be aware of what has been done, and yet the inward feeling remains that the ghastly thing is a matter of public knowledge. If this is the act of conscience, then has that faculty three functions, first to approve, second to condemn, and third to produce the impression and even conviction that one's guilt is known to everybody.

Dickens speaks of a murderer, who after slaying his victim and leaving him in the woods at night, and in a place where he could not possibly be found for days, yet fancied that everybody was talking about the murder. Miles away from the place of tragedy, and in the heart of a great city, he was convinced that men were looking up at the window where he was crouching, and speaking of the crime. Not only the water gutters about the house gurgled like the dying man did, but footsteps on the street seemed to stop at the door, and men were coming to arrest him. All this intense misery was produced by this strange power of the soul.

A gentleman related to us several years ago the following dream. He dreamed that he had committed a crime, a heinous offense, a sin the thought of which in his waking moments he would not allow to enter in his mind a moment; yet in his night visions he committed this deed. In his dream he was passing down the street, bearing his heart load, when suddenly a man sprang upon him from behind a corner, and with a red-hot iron branded him upon face and throat. The brand bore the name of the sin!

Even in slumber the sense of shame and pain was intolerable, amounting to an indescribable agony. He at once began to run, and sped like the wind block after block, but the thought which burned and blistered equal to the scorching letters, and which he could not outrun, was, "Everybody sees the word which has been stamped upon you."

We have related this dream in order to illustrate the peculiar power of the soul about which we are writing. It seizes the guilty mind, writes on it the sin of the life, and then presses home the thought, "Everybody knows the sin, for everybody sees it!"

When a pastor of large city churches, we never relaxed our efforts, but we immediately felt the effect of this power. The neglect of pastoral work would in point of time scarcely cover a week, not enough to have excited comment, yet the disturbing thought would continually arise, "Everybody is talking about your slothfulness."

A young man of our acquaintance once complained to us that people were talking about his private life, his habit of secret drinking, when the truth was that no one dreamed of it. And so, not suspecting his intemperance, there had not been any comment by the community on the subject. The voice within was so loud that he thought it was the verdict of society against him. The strange inward testifier swept out and came back upon the sufferer's own soul after the manner of a boomerang. It pointed its own hand at the man and said this is not a finger, but the tongue of the public. All men are talking about you.

It is doubtless this very feeling or conviction which brings the criminal to confession, or, if he flies for life from country to country, betrays him finally into the hands of justice. Murder will out is an old saying, and men said it because of their knowledge of this distressing and terrible power that is resident in man.

What has been our object in writing these lines?

Mainly to bring out the following thought: If the soul exercises such a dreadful office here, what will be the full force of its torment hereafter in Eternity, when the sins of the life under the accusing tones of conscience will seem to leap out in blazing characters upon the face, when the assembled universe will be able to read the guilty past, and the

overwhelming consciousness is that nothing is hidden nor can be hidden. At such a time it will seem to maddened beings as though hands were pointing at them from the dust, and voices were speaking to them from the clouds, crying out all the sins of a lifetime.

Who will be able to bear this? And who is willing to go into eternity to enter upon such an existence, and to endure forever such a doom?

# CHAPTER 27

## THE BLIGHT OF IRREVERENCE

According to the dictionaries, reverence is made up of fear and awe, mingled with respect and esteem. In public worship it is this spirit which secures that “decency and order” contended for by the apostle in one of his epistles. As a Christian grace and excellence it is simply essential to the character and life of the child of God.

In studying the realm in which reverence should have sway, we see at once that it lays claim upon the human body.

It is not a matter of indifference to God as to how men approach his presence and deport themselves before him. The Scripture is careful to note the profound humbling, the solemn waiting, the actual position in prayer, and the spirit which must reign within us if we would hear from Heaven.

Reverence also necessarily lays its hand upon our speech, in view of the Infinite and Almighty Being whom we address.

And here again on account of the ignorance and presumption of human nature, God has seen fit to lay down in his Word the forms of language with which we should come to him in prayer and at the hour of public worship.

At these two points mentioned above, speech and conduct, we have noticed that Irreverence breaks in to the injury and grief of earth and heaven.

Let any one study the Savior’s tender, reverent prayer to his Father in the seventeenth chapter of John, and read Paul’s solemn supplications in his epistles, and then tell us where do people of today get their authority and example for the shocking familiarity with which they handle the divine name, and address the Holy Eternal One in public service.



We have heard men say not only “Dear Jesus,” but “Dear God!” in public prayer. In the same solemn hour we have heard men indulge in witticisms, make puns, and crack jokes!

In letters written to us by good people, we have been many times distressed with an expression they used—”Father told me to do so and so.” If we had not read some preceding sentences we would naturally have supposed that they were speaking of an earthly parent. In private prayer we may use terms in speaking with the Lord, that we cannot employ in public worship or in a letter to another.

Then Christ can say “Father” as none of us can; and we should remember that he told us to say “Our Father.” The expression then in the letter, or spoken in the testimony meeting, that “Father told me,” etc., is not only a selfish, monopolizing claim, but a speech of wretched taste, and full of ignorance and irreverence.

In a town in the State of Washington, a preacher told us that a founder of one of the recent ecclesiasticisms, laid a dime upon the altar rail, and actually commanded God to make it a thousand dollars! This shocking scene was witnessed by several hundred people. Here was the violation of veneration in the double sense—of speech and action; and in that two-fold violation of word and conduct we see Irreverence sweeping over the land today.

Strange to say that much of this unholy familiarity we see in the ranks of God” people, is a rebound from the formality and deadness of certain frozen churches.

As we study the matter in history and life, we see that if a proper homage and awe is not preserved by the presence of the Holy Ghost, then Ceremonialism, and a freezing Formalism takes its place. Then should there come a sweeping revival on full salvation lines, the people delivered from an actual thralldom, and made consciously free, are in peril of swinging to an opposite extreme. The congregation is in danger of acting like a mob, and the services take on the racket and chatter of a business exchange, and at times remind one of pandemonium.

This was the “confusion” which Paul declared that God was not the author of. And this was why he plead for “decency and order.”

We have nothing to say against the stir, noise, outcries and shouts about the altar, where Christians are laboring with penitents and seekers, and getting them with glad hallelujahs into the Fountain of Cleansing. We refer to the regular worship where in the use of appointed means of grace we are seeking to have audience with a Holy God, and bring his Spirit down upon the people. We are pleading for the respect and adoration that we owe to our great Creator and Redeemer, and to the place and house of worship where he has promised to reveal himself to those who humble themselves and tremble at his Word.

There is nothing in Christianity to injure so beautiful a grace as reverence, but Christians may have manners and methods that will surely work its harm and destruction. There is nothing about Holiness to destroy such a lovely, adorning virtue, but we have seen here and there in the Holiness movement, things that will certainly wound it to death.

We have heard God's name handled so familiarly and irreverently in some of our meetings as to border on profanity and sacrilege. Here was irreverence in speech.

As to conduct, we know but few meetings in the field of active work where we do not see scores of people whispering and talking during the singing of the hymns, and even during the season of prayer. This is never beheld in the Churches which some people are so fond of abusing.

In a town in one of the Middle States, as we drew near one morning to the hall where our gospel services were being held, we heard a perfect babel of tongues before entering the door. As we entered, instead of finding the people silent, meditative and prayerful before the opening of a meeting on which much depended, we were almost deafened with the clatter of gossipy speech. Dozens of women were talking loudly, several groups were indulging in bursts of laughter, and it was not the religious laugh, while a lad of eight years of age seated at the open piano, was banging on the keys with might and main.

One of the prominent workers in this hall had expressed regret to me in a previous conversation that the church as a body had held aloof from this work. As we surveyed the sickening scene just described we felt we could understand in a great measure why and where the aloofness came in.

We cannot count the meetings where we have known people claiming the highest experience of grace keep up a constant buzz and whisper while others were pleading with God for the outpouring of his Spirit. It is certainly a spectacle never to be forgotten to see the singers on their knees, and at the same time running through the hymn book, looking for the next selection. Sometimes they have condescended to give various little grunts and groans to let the prayers and pleaders around know that they had an ear open to what was transpiring; but this simply added hypocrisy to irreverence and filled observant sinners with amusement, and many of God's people with pain and grief.

A few months since the writer had called the people to their knees to implore the divine blessing and favor on the service of the hour. Fancying that we heard various disturbing sounds, we looked up, and saw about half the people were on their knees, and the other part of the congregation was sitting bolt upright and gazing around. Five or six couples among the kneelers were whispering to each other while simulating the attitude of prayer. Several were examining the pages of their hymn books. One brother seemed to be counting some money that had been contributed, a second was reading a letter, and a third was adding up some figures with a lead pencil on a piece of crackling white paper. All of these three were on their knees. And all this was going on in a Full Salvation meeting.

Now does any one believe that such dishonor of the Divine One can be practiced without results of the gravest and most lamentable character taking place?

We barely mention two.

One is a certain injury and blight upon our own souls. We may think we are proving our liberty and are free, but we are surely losing more than we gain. Some of the tenderest and most sacred sensibilities of the soul are certain to perish if we thus treat God, and thus carelessly and familiarly handle the precious, holy things of Heaven.

We believe that the devil tempts the people of God as much to be irreverent as he does sinners to be profane. He knows the blunting, deadening and hardening of the soul which is certain to ensue, and so urges Christians on in this direction. Who with any experience at all has not felt

repeatedly and violently moved within to extravagance of speech and conduct, and even farther, to this dreadful familiarity of speech and manner towards God.

Some yield to the temptation, and think they are free in the Gospel, when they have swung clear away and out of a proper Christian liberty and entered the realm of irreverence. Would they declare the exact truth after one of these displays of apparent liberty, they would confess to a strange sense of emptiness and deadness that came upon the soul the instant they took their seat, and before the echo of their words had died away upon the ears of a remarkably silent congregation.

A second injury will be wrought on the Holy Cause itself which we profess and love.

People will judge the tree by its fruits. And when they notice disregard for certain spiritual decencies and proprieties, and a kind of pandemonium, instead of that godly fear, holy awe, and reverent waiting upon God as commanded in the Scripture, and which characterizes true worship, they are going to be properly offended and will undoubtedly have nothing to do with us. Holiness with them will stand for racket, uproar, disorder and lack of veneration and godly fear.

We repeat that not a word is here said against that necessary confusion about the altar, where we are praying, pleading, shouting and helping souls through into pardon and holiness. Not a word is uttered against the manifestations and commotions which are certain to come from the anointings and outpourings of the Holy Ghost upon the worshipping assembly. We do not, and would not lay the weight of a feather upon true spiritual freedom. It is the working of the "flesh" that we deplore. It is the spirit and practice of irreverence that is steadily gaining ground in our midst against which we lift up our voice in lamentation and in condemnation.

# CHAPTER 28

## DEVOTION TO SIN

Sin is the cause of all the trouble in the universe. It turned angels into devils, wiped out the Garden of Eden, dug every grave, raised the walls of hell, destroyed the happiness of homes, wrecked character, put torment in the human heart, and in a word is at the bottom of all the heartache, heartbreak and misery in the world.

It is strange that men should be devoted to so foul and unhappy a thing. That they would open their hearts to admit, and speak with their lips in defense of this disrupter of the household, this annihilator of peace, and this destroyer of character and happiness. But it is so, and so remarkable is the fond attachment that we feel safe in saying that if Christians were as given up to Christ as sinners are to sin the Millennium could dawn upon us tomorrow.

One evidence of devotion is confidence.

A certain measure of confidence most individuals have in one another; but we know of no one who would let a party blindfold him and start to lead him away without asking, "What are you going to do with me?" Trust here evidently is not implicit. But constantly we see sinners willingly hoodwinked and led down to hell by sin, and yet the victim never dreams of asking where it is carrying him.

Farther still we observe, that when human confidence is once shaken in a person, it is difficult to restore it. A man may have lived a Christian life for years, and then commit a gross sin. He had patiently built up a Christian reputation and with a single wrong act of a gross nature knocked down a superstructure in a moment, which it took twenty years to erect. It went down like a cob-house, but the trouble is that it cannot be built up again like a cob-house. God may forgive, but men in a certain sense never will. They will always feel a measure of distrust. The fallen one seems

unable to regain the ascendancy over the people which he formerly possessed. Men are not that much devoted to one another.

But when we look at the same thing in the life we are describing, we find that sin can fool a man every day, and lie to and deceive him for a lifetime, and yet such is that sinner's devotion to Evil that he goes on believing and trusting in it, to the end. It seems to be nothing to him that sin has betrayed and mocked and disappointed him so many times. He actually seems to be all the more ardent in his trust and faithful in his following.

Certainly we would all agree that people must be very much absorbed in and fond of a man that, no matter what he did, they still believed in him the same. And yet here is the devotion of the transgressor to the life and leading of Iniquity.

A second evidence of devotion is endurance of physical discomfort for the sake of the object of affection.

We find among many of God's people that a hot or cold day, or a black and rainy night are amply sufficient to keep them from prayer-meeting or church service. But we never saw a night so cold, dark and disagreeable, that would prevent a sinner from sinning. Sin had only to speak through one of the appetites and out the devotee would go to brave any or all of the elements of rain, hail, snow, wind and storm.

We knew of a preacher once who was summoned one dark, blustering night to pray with a dying man. The minister, with his cloak wrapped about him, stood on the second story balcony and talked with the messenger in the street. "I can not come," he said. "It is too dreadful a night." "But, Sir, he wants you to pray with him." "I will be around in the morning," replied the preacher. "But," urged the messenger, "he will be dead before morning." "Well," said the man of God, "we will pray that he will not be dead by morning," and straightway retired from the balcony, pulled down the window and went to bed.

When we heard this narrated, just as we have given it, we could but think how differently a sinner would have answered if Sin, his master, had called him. All that the Adversary would have had to say was, "I want you up the street for a while," and the ringing reply would have been, "all right,

wait until I get my hat.” And he would have gone if it had been raining pitchforks!

We do not feel that we are guilty of the least extravagance when we say that if Christians were as consecrated to Christ as sinners are to sin, the Lord could come tomorrow and take possession of a surrendered and redeemed world.

A third evidence of devotion is seen in one’s willingness to leave the society of all else for the sake of the object worshipped.

Look at the worldling! What ties can bind him at home. Christians find excuse for staying away from the house of God and post of duty through disinclination to leave the company of husband, wife or child. But a sinner will forsake anything and say good-by to anybody and everybody at the call of his false God. Who can count the home circles today, the lonely firesides, the solitary wives and mothers, made so by the call of Sin to the listening husband or son? Forgotten now is the marriage vow to cleave under all circumstances to the wife who hung in trustful love as a young bride upon his arm years ago. Sin called, and every tie and band is snapped, the heart cords pull in vain, and conscience speaks to no effect. The man has gone to serve his idols. The woman sits in waiting loneliness, brooding over the bitter separation, and the long absences. The explanation in the sinner’s case is found in what we call devotion to Sin.

A fourth evidence is witnessed in the readiness to lay down one’s money on the shrine of the perverted affection.

We need make no argument to prove how a man’s means flows toward the object of his love or devotion. When attachment springs up in the masculine heart toward a woman, it becomes instantly declared by gifts of various kinds.

If one’s love settles upon a pursuit, pleasure or some thing, instead of a person, the same phenomenon of lavish expenditure is beheld. So we have only to look around to behold streams of gold and silver flowing to the theater, dance hall, restaurant, confectionery, tailor shop and millinery department, according as one or the other happens to be the idol of the life.

We notice, moreover, that all such money is lavished without any fretting or murmuring. It is gladly given to obtain what the individual craves. Whoever heard a sinner growling about what he has to spend for his dram, cigar, theater ticket or midnight lunch?

One has to go among certain classes of Christians and church members to hear complaining when financial calls are made.

Once in our early ministry we took up a collection for Foreign Missions. Supposing that the church was enlightened on the subject, and all Christians would feel it to be a privilege as well as duty to give; we simply announced the assessment and sent around the baskets. Instead of the two hundred dollars we needed, we obtained something like twenty.

We became wiser at once; and the next time, we preached an hour on Missions, holding up the subject in various lights. We showed the civil, social, commercial and moral advantages, next brought in the salvation feature, and concluded with several tear-drawing anecdotes of the burning of Hindu wives, the destruction of Chinese girl children, etc. Then we said to the collectors, "Pass the baskets around quickly Brethren." That day we received three or four hundred dollars! But what did it not take in the way of argument and pleading to bring the amount!

As for Sin, it needs not to argue or reason. It hardly ever has to ask the second time. It simply says to the sinner, "I want some money," and it comes flying. The demand may be repeated on many occasions, but such is the fondness of the sinner for his Idol that he always responds, and does it willingly.

Again and again the sinner is seen doing in the matter of money gifts what the Christian does not do. That is, giving the last coin he has on earth to his God. Many times the toper has spent his one remaining nickel for a drink of whisky, then dropped on the street, where he froze to death, and fell into a bottomless hell.

But who witnesses such a moneyed expression of love among the rank and file of God's people? Many a Christian has given the last nickel he had in his pocket, but he had more money and property elsewhere. But the sinner spends his last cent on the lusts and appetites that are leading him



astray, dies in despair and goes stripped, bankrupted and undone to a Lost Eternity.

This is what we call devotion; and so we repeat that if Christians were as devoted to Christ as sinners are to Sin, the Millennium would not have to come, but would be here already.

# CHAPTER 29

## THE RESERVE OF CHRIST

The Gospel gives a completeness of life and character outline of the Savior that is not to be found in the paintings of men. The portraits by earthly artists are numerous, and many of them famous, but there is a marvelous similarity in them all in melancholy, agony and general dreariness of appearance.

The Savior was as truly human as he was divine, and as a man and a wholesome, perfect man had his pure soul filled with every noble sensibility and lofty thought belonging to the spirit made in the image of God.

It is lovely to see him with the children about him and in his arms; but it is also a glorious sight to behold him in his holy indignation, with scourge in hand, cleansing the Temple and driving out animals and materialized men in a crowd before him. It is delightful to hear him speaking for hours to the disciples and to the multitude that he said was like sheep without a shepherd; but it is even more thrilling to mark him perfectly silent to such men as Herod and Pilate.

All these were but parts of the many-sided but perfect character of the Son of God. And the more faithfully we study the record of his life, the profounder we are impressed with this wonderful mosaic of human perfection as exhibited in the words, deeds, spirit and conduct of the Man of Galilee.

He had preferences. He had friends. And he had particular friends. The twelve seemed nearer than the multitude; and three of the twelve closer than the rest. Then one of the three seemed to be even nigher to Christ than the other two. But this is not all; for the same Book which gives these facts of the, Savior's loving, discriminating heart; of a readiness to pour out the treasures of his knowledge and affection upon certain worthy ones, shows him reticent, reserved and even silent to others who were following

him in his journeyings through the land. The Gospel says plainly and unmistakably that there were persons to whom he did not commit himself, for he knew what was in man.

The reserve of Christ to certain persons is the striking, startling thought presented by this Scripture. And it is a fact made clear not only by the Bible but continually proved in life. There are some people like Herod and Pilate, to whom Christ is always silent. And there are still others to whom he does not commit himself. Here is not a refusal to speak to them, but a careful avoidance of confidence and trust as to deep Gospel truths, his own personal life and history, and plans for the present and future of the kingdom he has come to establish. He did not commit himself to them, because he knew them. He perfectly read them. and, knowing how unworthy they were of sacred revelation, and how unsafe these confidences would be with such people—Jesus held his peace and kept his counsel while in their presence. This conduct of Christ brings to us several most important truths and lessons.

First it is the proof of the untoward condition of the human heart.

Many preachers, lecturers and prominent writers today are fond of eulogizing human nature and making it a very clean, beautiful and noble thing, aside from any divine work of grace upon it. But the Savior's treatment of the group we have mentioned is a crushing negation to such a fond conceit. He dare not trust them with his thoughts, teachings or his person. They were unprepared, unfit and unworthy to receive a single heavenly confidence. He was unsafe in their hands.

A second truth brought to light, is the confirmation of a former scriptural statement in regard to pearls cast before swine.

There is no doubt that evil and not good comes from the ignoring of this principle, in the descending with holy phrases and spiritual arguments to combat and convince those who are contentedly living in a gross, carnal, worldly life. To such people gems are but pebbles to be tossed back, or ground under foot while the aroused animal nature turns and rends its rebuker and adviser.

There is a way of talking to the vilest and most abandoned, and even in the language of salvation and the Scripture, where the words will be like

swords and bullets. But pearls are never felt to be minnie balls to the gross in mind and life. Hence Paul's statement, "We speak wisdom to them that are perfect;" and Christ's voiceless attitude to a band of people who were unworthy to receive a divine confidence.

A third truth taught is a rebuke to those who suppose that candor and truth compel them to tell all they know and feel and have thought and heard, to everybody who comes along.

Of all absurd notions this is one of the silliest; and of all weak, shallow-pated, backboneless and character-colorless beings, are the people who hold to and follow this idea. They take the lead in the foolish processions of this world.

Vain for them is Paul's conduct before the Sanhedrin; and all for naught is Christ's quiet dignity and silent bearing to a shallow throng before him. They persist in making a confidant of the veriest stranger and latest arrival, and of turning themselves inside out for the benefit of any somebody or every nobody that passes by.

This is their idea of openness and their conception of strict truth and candor. It is not enough that they have a sore finger, but they must unwrap it and show it to you, with a complete history of who hurt it, and when and where. This same mental and spiritual weakness also causes them to invest everyone with the double honor, office and occupation of Father Confessor, and Family Physician. Different from Christ they commit themselves to every man; but alas! unlike the Savior they do not know what is in man.

A fourth fact brought out is the explanation of a number of the most painful experiences connected with our earthly life.

We trusted those who were inwardly false and treacherous. We confided in those who were unworthy of any confidence placed in them. We built our friendship on a moral quicksand. We admitted a Judas into our inner circle of thought and affection, mistaking a bland face for sympathy and an affectation of interest for a genuine expression of love.

Esop tells of the remarkable action of a frozen reptile that had been warmed back to life at a kindly fireside. A wiser than he speaks of a man

who blesses us with a loud voice in the morning, and curses us later in the day. And Christ uncommunicative and reticent to certain people who had seen his miracles and professed to believe in him, presses the solemn warning still farther in his desire to save his people from needless heartache and heartbreak.

But so long as men lack spiritual discernment, and while there are trusting, unsuspecting natures over against human shams and counterfeits, just that duration of time will the suffering of misplaced confidence be witnessed and felt on earth.

To a man of high principle and exalted sense of honor, all confidences reposed in him are forever sacred and inviolable. The relations of such individuals may change, and there may be rupture of intimacy and even estrangement, but the trust reposed in him is held by a man of genuine principle and integrity as binding forever. To a man of true nobility, not even enmity or great wrongs done him by the confiding party thereafter, can even then give him the right to betray what was once spoken in personal faith in him.

We know men who could today put to shame their own detractors and enemies by the statement of facts well known to them and imparted in times of early friendship; but their voices are silent. They could never afford to debase themselves by such a contemptible method of retaliation and revenge. They feel, as all men of honor do, that a man who could act this way is low down indeed, and destitute of what makes a true Christian as well as a real gentleman.

Christ knew this class of people and did not commit himself to them. It would be well for many of the readers of this chapter to study the Savior in this light as much as on other lines, and pray to be filled with a wisdom from above that would lead them to be as silent and reticent to some people as they should be open and communicative to others, who have no kisses of betrayal like Judas and Joab.

A fifth truth taught by Christ's reserve gives the explanation of many a silent and dead altar scene.

Here is the solution of some of those strange human problems and spiritual incomprehensibilities met with again and again in the religious world.

We wonder why something gracious and satisfying does not happen to certain seekers at the altar. Our prayers sometimes reflect reproaches upon the Holy One in the words, "Why not now, Lord!" But the silent God has a reason; and it is that he knows all about the man who is bowed in the chancel, and we do not.

Again, we are struck with the fact that some very zealous people seem to be profoundly ignorant of certain blessed and holy experiences that are plainly promised the soul in the Word of God. One has only to be a few minutes with these fussy, scolding, argumentative and pugnacious people to realize that they do not know the Lord in a tender, beautiful way enjoyed by companies of God's people in all countries and in all ages.

The simple explanation is that Jesus knew what was in them, and so did not commit himself to them.

# CHAPTER 30

## ON THE ROOST

We have a large black bird in the South who has a way of spying out a sick or dying animal, and then straightway, perching itself on a fence or neighboring tree, waits with smoothed feathers and solemn visage for developments in the dissolution line. This interesting fowl is called the turkey buzzard, and it is marvelous how long and patiently he will abide in his lofty position of inspection and expectation. The hope that animates his breast and sustains him in his lonely vigil is the speedy demise of the animal lying helpless in the field or in the fence corner of the lane.

The prophet Jonah did not think so, but he occupied for days the position and magnified the office of a turkey buzzard. He roosted on the hills near Nineveh, waiting for God to destroy the city before his eyes. That the disaster and ruin did not come was exceedingly disappointing and trying to the vulture nature remaining in him. The grief of the man over the withheld judgment is plainly stated in the Word of God.

The prophet has many like him to this day. Not only are there men who present the woe of hell without tears, and wear an appearance of satisfaction that some people are going there, but there are still others who reveal the vulture nature in looking up signs of failure and sin in people, and in expecting the immediate downfall of individuals whom they dislike and have devoted in their minds to a complete overthrow and destruction.

It is a spectacle never to be forgotten to mark Brother and Sister Vulture alight upon a roost of observation, smooth down their feathers, draw down the corners of their mouths, and assume the same meek, pious look that we have seen buzzards wear when watching a dying sheep, only in the case in question it was the temporal misfortune, character collapse or physical death of some man or woman they waited and wanted to behold.

We have known men of this pattern give others six months or a year to live before the arrival of some terrible sorrow or judgment, because these

unfortunates had aroused their disapproval by perpetrating the dreadful crime of differing with them in some of their sayings or doings. They were marked for ruin.

A certain preacher received the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and soon had a church blazing with revival fire; immediately another minister, quite prominent in the same denomination, gravely declared that he gave this brother just two years to land in a lunatic asylum or commit suicide. This was seventeen years ago, and so for all that length of time this prognosticating and expectant man has been perched upon some high point of contemplation waiting for a fellow preacher to go down under some dreadful disaster, whereupon he would proceed to alight upon the carcass, pick the bones and say, "Did I not tell you so?"

It is a lugubrious sight to see a row of buzzards sitting on a fence tarrying for some sick sheep or overworked and bogged down horse to die. They say but little, but do much thinking, and indulge in the greatest amount of ardent expectation.

God seems to try to exhibit in the physical and animal world some of the features and characteristics of the sinful and depraved nature in man. So when we hear men and women prophesying coming judgments about people whom they do not like, and see them with watch and almanac in hand waiting for death and destruction to strike the victim, we know at once why God put the nature in certain large birds to roost on trees, smooth their feathers, cast down their eyes, assume a thoughtful, melancholy and expectant expression, and await the decease of some wounded animal by the road-side.

Recently a good man died in the ministry. Already we have heard three persons intimate that God took him away because he had opposed them. Here was a group of one dead sheep and three turkey buzzards. Doubtless there were other vultures in trees farther down the road; we did not go on to find out; the three we had beheld were amply sufficient for our vision.

The prophet of Nineveh certainly had the vulture nature well developed in him when he was waiting for the extermination of a million people to take place in order that his dignity might be upheld and his prophetic fame be preserved. This certainly sweeps ahead of an irate servant of God who



anathematizes only individuals, or disgusted with a congregation shakes his coat skirts, wipes the dust from his feet, and tells the audience they can all go to hell if they want to, for he does not care. And yet it is evident that such a man possesses the same spirit of the messenger sent to Nineveh, and is plainly coming up to the completeness and fullness of this originator and captain of the Buzzard Brigade.

In blessed contrast to all this is the long suffering nature of the Heavenly Father and the loving, tender, pitiful heart of the Son of God.

When such a man as Ahab, vile and idolatrous as he was, humbled himself and went softly for a few days, God sent Elijah to tell him that he would be spared, and that the calamities prophesied should not happen in his day.

The same Lord added one hundred and twenty years to the already disobedient antediluvian world, and promised to hold back his judgments from the wicked Sodom if ten righteous men could be found in the place.

Likewise Paul, the persecutor, received an ample pardon. The dying thief had the door of Paradise open to him when all earthly portals were shut. While the multitude assisting in the crucifixion of the three, heard a voice ascending above the confusion and uproar, crying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." This was the prayer of the same being who, when He had foretold the ruin of the city of Jerusalem, as he looked down upon it from the brow of Mt. Olivet, said with out stretched arms, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings but ye would not"— and then burst into tears.

What a contrast is this beautiful, loving heart and life of Christ, with that rending, snapping, fault-finding, abusive and anathematizing nature we find in some people who declare they are His followers, are filled with His Spirit, and yet who condemn in total all who do not agree with them in everything and declare publicly that all are going to hell who are not part and parcel of their little "handful."

Our Christ is not a tiger, but a lamb; and the Spirit he has sent forth into the world to subdue it is not a croaking raven, nor a roosting, devouring buzzard, but a dove.

Truly the representative of heaven on the hills around Nineveh was a poor one. He certainly did not embody nor reflect the spirit and intentions of the heavenly world which had sent him forth as its ambassador. He came threatening, when God wanted him to warn the people. The preacher left no loophole of escape, and spoke so as to produce despair when the Lord desired repentance.

The ambassador was after the destruction of the people, while heaven wished deliverance and salvation. Evidently Jonah had misread his instructions, had old orders, and was not in late touch with headquarters. He had undoubtedly become soured and embittered. What he regarded as a gospel sermon sounded like an invitation to dwell in a land flowing with vinegar, shaded with groves of cayenne pepper, and whose dew and rain were sulfur and brimstone. One thing is certain, that while on the hills of Nineveh he was a poor representative of the Country and King in whose name he came.

Alas! the harm done to Christ in the name of Christianity. How some men follow Jehu instead of Jesus. How a fierce, intolerant, raging spirit is impiously and sacrilegiously called the Spirit of God, when it is a frenzy that has been itself "set on fire of hell."

The same nature crops out in different ages. The features are unmistakable. It offered strange fire in brazen censers and attacked Moses. It ran the Inquisition in the name of the Son of God. It appeared again in the lives of Bell and Owens who called John Wesley a back number, said he was shorn of power, and finally switched off from the Wesleyan following into an independent movement, got tangled up in every kind of confusion, sank into merited oblivion, and both finally died backslidden in heart and in life.

Jonah sitting on the hills waiting for God to burn up Nineveh, and becoming sulky and even angry because He did not do it, is a poor illustrator and declarer of the nature of his God, who so loved a sinful world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for it, and thereby save all who would accept Him from perishing.

In like manner the threatener, denouncer and condemner of men, and good men at that, is a poor representative of Christ, unless he can burst into

genuine tears when he says, “Your house is left unto you desolate,” and after that get up on a cross and die full of love and pardoning mercy.

By our fruits men will know us. If we bear thorns they will not call us a fig tree. If we go into the railing and abusive business our letters will all come directed to Mt. Ebal, instead of Mt. Gerizim or Mt. Zion. If we go around distributing lancets and mustard plasters, the world will never confound us with the band who, on a certain hill side, received bread and fish from the Savior’s hand and then went up and down the ranks of the multitude with food for the body and words of cheer, love and comfort for the soul.

God help us to be like Him of whom it is said that He went about doing good, healing the sick, preaching the kingdom of heaven, and delivering all those who were bound and oppressed by the devil.

# CHAPTER 31

## IN A QUICKSAND

A quicksand is a body of matter different in several respects from the pebbly creek-bed or shifting desert. Instead of being a solid resisting substance upon which we can safely walk, it has a treacherous yielding, sinking, sucking-in power which can easily and completely swallow up man, animal and vehicle.

The very first syllable, “quick,” reveals this trap of Nature under the figure of something that possesses a kind of life. It is indeed like a monster lying with its brown skin and quiet-looking, inviting appearance under the bright sunshine, and actually tempting one to step upon and walk over its surface.

He that goes any distance on its area is hopelessly doomed. The deceitful particles seem to open for the reception of the victim; the yellow hands reach up from beneath to pull the horror-stricken wretch down; tawny arms begin to close with tightening, suffocating clasp around the panting, heaving breast; while the saffron face drawing nearer and nearer to the despairing eyes of the doomed creature, blows its own yellow life into the strangling throat, and shakes its yellow hair in triumph over the human head that has just sunk out of sight, forever.

In the *Bride of Lammermoor*. Walter Scott gives a most thrilling and pathetic description of the death of the Master of Ravenswood in a quicksand. Both horse and rider went down after a fearful struggle for life. By the time the faithful old attendant of the castle reached the place, the tragedy was over, and the murderous Spot or Thing had resumed its smiling calm. As the servant stood in anguish on the border of the marsh, an ostrich plume that had been dislodged from the hat of the struggling victim, and that was too light to sink, and driven by the breeze, came rolling over the sand to the feet of the butler, who picked it up, and placed it in his breast with bitter sobs and tears. It was all that the treacherous moor and left of the master of Ravenswood.

We remember once to have read a description of a similar catastrophe which threw a spell of gloom over the mind for hours and days. The article said that a man was strolling on the seashore where long, flat stretches of mud and shells abounded. In picking his way here and there he suddenly discovered from the rapid sinking of his feet that he was in a quicksand. Forgetting where he had entered, his efforts to reach solid ground carried him deeper into the marsh and exhausted his strength at the same time. A human being looking through a glass, from a hill two miles away, saw the dreadful, gradual but certain end.

The victim, now to his knees and making violent struggles to extricate his limbs, simply sank all the deeper. When he had gone down to his loins, he realized that his strength was exhausted, and that every effort was futile, even if he had any physical power left. He screamed and waved his hands, but the village was a mile and a half away, and not a soul but himself seemed to be on the shore. Several fishing vessels, with their white sails, were a mile or more out on the bay, but they did not notice him, and had they done so could not have reached him in time.

He had sunk to the shoulders and tried laying his arms on the surface of the sand to buoy up the body; but he saw with horror that he still sank. He gave a wild glance about him, saw the distant town, the scattered homes on the sunny hillside, the vessels lazily sailing seaward, the white clouds floating in the blue sky near the horizon, and then, as if the sight of these things and his lonely dying in their presence gave him a burst of strength, he screamed again, and waved his arms. In another moment the sand filled his mouth and covered his eyes. There was a flitting gleam of the white forehead. That disappeared; and then the curly locks of his hair fluttered a moment in the wind, and all was gone. Another instant and a hand appeared above the sand, tried to wave, clutched at the air, and then sank steadily out of view! The sun shone on, the ships sailed seaward, the morning breeze broke the blue waves into white caps, and the quicksand resumed its quiet, harmless looking appearance; but a living being had been sucked into its depths, and an earthly life ended by it forever!

Sin is a vast quicksand that is engulfing and destroying not only multitudes but nations. Different sins are bogs pulling individuals down to ruin. Habits founded on appetites and passions are the same treacherous,

slippery, enfolding, sucking, deadly conditions that bring about the present and everlasting undoing of men and women.

The similarity of these things in certain particulars to this trap of nature is not only startling, but horrible. The man is first led into the evil from ignorance of the deceitfulness and deadliness of sin. He is sure he can get through to the other side; and any way return from where he started if he finds cause for alarm.

In this judgment the victim overlooks the growing power of a wrong indulgence, the abnormal craving that comes upon normal desire, the weakening of the whole moral nature by frequent transgression, the deadening of conscience together with the stifling of the voice of the Holy Spirit. He has failed to calculate upon the awful power of habit. And he has forgotten the dreadful indescribable spell, which is called infatuation, and that can be flung by one individual over another.

Men can go so far in sin that they cannot get back, because they do not want to come back. They can go so far, and sink so deep, that all faith and hope leave them, and a dreadful, stony despair settles upon the heart and broods visibly upon the face and life.

It is a fearful thing to see a man being sucked down to hell by some kind of iniquity. To view him steadily sinking deeper, and going lower as the months roll by. It is dreadful to mark him floundering in his impotent human efforts to escape from the folds, layers and bonds that are increasing and multiplying upon him. It is still more horrible to recognize the look of hopelessness on his face, and then behold him go down into the grave, and into hell before our very eyes.

What thoughts fill a man who feels that he is lost and that the devil has him, we may imagine, but none except such an unhappy being can know. All the anguish, desperation and final despair which swept over the heart of the victim in the quick-sand, as he beheld the distant town, the sunny hill-side homes, the ships sailing in the offing, and the sea gulls winging their free, glad flight in the bright morning air! All this agony and more a thousand fold, fills the soul of the being who hopeless, helpless, and in the sight of Bibles, churches, and worshipping congregations realizes that the scarlet arms of Sin are about him strangling him to death, and that the black

hands of the devil are pulling him surely and steadily down to the depths of “The Bottomless Abyss.

An individual in great agony, in speaking to another about the sin of his life, said:

When I am in the presence of the object of my temptation I am like a man flung into a river of chloroform. I become benumbed, deadened and all but helpless. In my fight against the sin, I climb out on the bank toward duty and salvation, weak and trembling, as I have seen a dog pulled shaking and exhausted from a flood of water! I see my only hope is in Christ! Call on Him for me and beg him to have mercy upon and save me!”

This was a frightful portrayal, but not overdrawn in many instances who walk our streets and sit by our sides in the home and in the church. The reader will see that while the figure of description is different, yet the idea presented in this chapter is still there. A man sinking in a chloroform sin river is as surely pulled down and destroyed as one engulfed by the yielding substance of that strange, awful bog of Nature, called a quicksand.

There is this thought, however, without which every man in transgression would be in despair the instant he realized that he was going down into ruin; and that is, some One is looking at him from the Hills of Heaven who is Almighty to save, willing to save, and able to save unto the uttermost.

He who made the sea birds, can fly to our help faster than they, and easily bear the poor, struggling one upon the broad wings of his deliverance. He who walked with ease on Lake Galilee can likewise tread with safety upon the treacherous fatal moor. He who drew Peter out of the waves can pull the worst men out of the soundless bogs of evil.

An additional thought of joy is, that unlike the man in the quicksand our cries and signals for help are not in vain. He who said that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the pitiful notice of God, will most surely behold the sinking of an immortal soul as it struggles with the toils and envelopments of appetite, evil habit and blackest iniquity. His eye is upon every such being, and so the instant the hand is raised, the voice lifted and the face is turned to Christ for relief, behold! that moment help, pardon, peace, deliverance and salvation will surely and abundantly come!

# CHAPTER 32

## THE PEACEMAKER

Among the beings who adorn the kingdom of Christ on earth is the Peacemaker. He is well called “blessed” by the Savior. And this he is in a double sense, in that the life he lives is a blessing to others and reacts in the same way on himself.

This character is to be found in different places and planes in life, but, wherever seen, all possess the same beautiful family resemblance.

As first evident to the ocular sense the peace-maker is beheld in the effort to bring estranged and separated people together.

This is certainly a most heavenly act; and when we see a person so engaged it does not take much imagination to believe that an angel is around, and celestial wings are fanning the air.

The malevolent tattler and whisperer will sunder life-long friends; but the peacemaker would and does bring together, those who had shunned and hated each other for years.

It is not in the province of this chapter to tell how the Christ-like work is done; but to rejoice that it is done. The tribe is not large, but this big world would sorely feel the absence of this gentle-voiced, kindly-lipped band who are trying to bring together again, those whom others have divided.

Second, the peacemaker is seen in the person who thoughtfully and studiously endeavors to remove trying and exasperating things from the path or life of another.

Recently a gentleman asked his wife to go with him in his buggy to the plantation some six miles away. It was a very warm day. The road was dusty, and the woman had a number of pressing duties at home. But without a moment's hesitation, and with a smiling face, and steady, kindly voice she said “Certainly,” and, with a whispered order to a servant to do



the best she could in her absence, she took her seat by the husband's side for a long, hot ride.

The quick, gracious act, to the wearied, nervous man, was like a benediction. A restful, pleased look was on his face all the morning, and it had been brought there by the peacemaker at his side. The woman's countenance was also luminous, as blessed with her unselfish act she observed the happy lines appear on the tired mouth of her husband.

Third, the peacemaker is seen in the person who is careful not to repeat disagreeable things, where their narration could do no possible good.

We have known people who possessed a most remarkable faculty of dragging into conversation and verbally forcing upon individual and social circle facts or fancies of the most painful, ruffling and distressing nature. Such persons pay a visit simply to unload. And in a talk of a few minutes will repeat enough disagreeable things to drive any but a fully saved and sanctified soul into a perfect fever of annoyance, gloom or profound dejection.

Hood, the celebrated English poet, in one of his inimitable compositions tells of a wearied business man going to his home, and that as he sank with a sigh of relief into his easy chair to take the first restful breath in that long day of toil, his wife drew near and began to pour forth an endless tale of domestic trials and woe, and general life mishaps. "The coal was out," "the servant had left," "the butcher and baker had sent exorbitant bills," "the landlord wanted the house," "the baby had fallen down stairs," "a number of country friends were coming to pay a long visit"—etc., etc., etc., concluding at last with the words,

*"And oh! there's such a letter come,  
Inviting you to fight;  
Of course you won't, you might get killed,  
God bless you, dear—Good-night."*

All of us have acquaintances, and even friends, that after a conversation with them, we feel a grayness begin to settle upon the sky, the heart grows sick and heavy, and we wonder if we have any friends left, while the cemetery seems after all the most attractive place on earth.

Just as we have seen a man with an iron hook going around poking and prodding into barrels, boxes and even the refuse in the streets for something with which he is filling the sack on his shoulder; so have we beheld the peacemaker working, stirring, raking, and hauling up and out to view things that not only religion, but good sense and humanity and decency would let alone.

Fourth, the peacemaker is seen in the person who is careful to repeat pleasant, helpful and encouraging things.

We have no reference to the conduct of the politician, nor to the compromisers nor to the utterer of "peace, peace, when there is no peace." The character we speak of can have the same contempt, disgust and indignation over sin and wrong doing that is revealed in the Scripture. But filled with a spirit of love, justice and moderation; and also possessing discrimination, wisdom and religious tact, this individual, while silent often about facts that are best left alone, is equally careful to make statements, and repeat the speeches of some about others, that have the effect of lightening the heart, renewing hope and strength, and cheering and brightening the whole life. Even rebuke becomes different when spoken by their lips, and advice has a sweeter taste than was ever dreamed could be, when coming, as it does, contrary to inclination and expectation.

Some people always rub the natural grain of temperament the wrong way. They make even the promises of God too hot to hold. We once knew a woman, who while devoted to her husband, kept him in purgatory by the way she tried to please him. One of her favorite caresses was to run her fingers through his hair in a most demoralizing fashion to the mode he preferred it to hang. Then she would remember some distant duty and leave the man's head looking like a fodder stack. He always had to go to the bureau and comb and brush his locks after one of these performances. The woman is a type of a large class of people whom we all know very well in the religious and irreligious world. They rub the wrong way.

What a blessing it is to the home, social circle, church and community, to have in it, individuals who know how to remove and hide unseemly goods and chattels, and bring forward other kinds of verbal furniture that make for peace, happiness and general good will. They are beings who seem to

possess a sixth sense and know as by a beautiful instinct how to do and say the right thing, in the right way and at the right time.

A lady once said to us, that she did not fancy worldly people, but she did like people of the world. She meant a class of refined, well-bred persons who were never guilty of saying and doing rude, offensive and disagreeable things in the home and social circle.

The character we are writing about goes far beyond this, in not being a merely negative figure, but a sweet, positive force of comfort and strength wherever found.

We are thankful that many of us can number among our acquaintances and friends, a blessed company of choice spirits whose words of good cheer, and letters of sympathy as encouragement in past days of trial and difficulty, have next to the grace of God, done more for our deliverance, triumph and steadfastness, than any other agency of good that we can recall. They were peacemakers indeed; as their words and counsel, steadied and strengthened us, and kept us from the discouragements and failure which otherwise would have certainly been our portion.

Fifth, the peacemaker is beheld once more in the life of one in the experience of full salvation, and whose spirit, conversation and entire influence is to bring men to a complete deliverance from sin, and to the full knowledge, possession and enjoyment of the redemption which Jesus Christ has brought to earth.

There is no peace saith God to the wicked. And yet perfect peace is promised to the soul.

According to the teaching of the Bible, and confirmed by the personal consciousness of the man himself, perfect peace can only come to the heart cleansed from all sin and filled with the Holy Ghost.

Hence it is that the truest and best peacemaker, the one who is such in the highest sense of the word, is the man who is teaching and leading others into full salvation or the blessing of entire sanctification.

He will not be regarded as such by the people who have been disturbed in the midst of their sins and idols by his proclamation of the whole counsel of God. He will rather be called a peace breaker. To this term will be added

church splitter, agitator, disturber and upsetter. But God nevertheless will call him a peacemaker; and God's sentences are those that will remain and abide forever.

The Prince of Peace was accused of deceiving and dividing the people. The disciples had the same charge laid at their doors. So had Luther and Wesley. And so has every true servant of God who preaches or lives the full Gospel of Jesus Christ. But in the Final Day the false charges shall be lifted by the Lord himself from his abused and slandered followers; and it shall appear as though written in glittering letters of fire, that the so-called peace breakers of earth were, nevertheless, the true peacemakers of Heaven.

# CHAPTER 33

## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

One of the remarkable facts we are called upon to recognize in life is the strange power exerted by a person or thing upon the human soul. This force affecting in different ways the individual, is called influence. And so under a silent but not less real working of a hidden law, the sight of a flower moves the heart, the song of a bird melts the spirit, and the gleam of the evening star or fading of a sunset sky affects the mind at times beyond words to describe.

Other impressions than these are abroad, and more commonly recognized by the world. They are termed social, political and financial influence. Each one differs from another, but all are powerful. To obtain them requires that great prices be paid down in the matter of labor, thought, education, refinement, money, activity and leadership.

When we contemplate religious influence, we are brought to the study of the highest form or member of this remarkable family group. For while social, political and financial power are great, spiritual force is greater. The former is for time and earth alone, while the latter has for its realm both this world and the world to come, and for its life and reign, the long sweep of eternity.

Religious influence deals with the immortal soul and results in changeless conditions and destinies. He who possesses it, is as genuine a power in the moral and spiritual realm as great financiers are in the business world. The man himself not only knows it, but all others who come in touch with him recognize it. Men may bluster and fret over the fact, but they cannot prevent their conscience from being troubled, their spirit hunger from being aroused, and their lives from feeling rebuked and drawn to duty, through the presence, or under the words and writings of such a man.

Because of this power for good upon the souls we should well crave it, who have families and friends to save, and who would turn sinners from darkness to light, and from perdition to salvation.

By the term religious influence we refer to genuine spiritual power. Not an approximation, imitation or counterfeit. There are such cheats today passing for the genuine coin of heaven. There are remarkably gifted men who by personal magnetism and commanding psychic forces for which we have no name, can sway and lead people in so-called religious and spiritual lines, that are not religious or spiritual in the true and scriptural sense. There may be tirade, excitement and frenzy in teacher and audience, and yet those who know the Holy Spirit best, feel that he is not there, with his holy, melting, sanctioning and endorsing presence.

So by the expression religious influence we mean the genuine article; that real power for good, which proceeding from a man's lips and life flows forth upon individual, and family circle, and congregation as veritably as a zephyr stealing from the sky touches and stirs a garden of plants and flowers.

It is noticeable that a sinner has not a particle of religious influence. He may have social, political and financial ascendancy in his community, and this many unregenerated people possess, but he can not have what is known as spiritual power.

It is no use for a regular transgressor to take the platform or pulpit and give lectures on morals. His rebukes would be answered with amusement or scorn, and his advice met with the words, "Physician, heal thyself."

It evidently requires some kind of heart and life condition to secure a hearing in the moral realm, and to be obeyed and followed after being heard.

Again we notice that a backslider is without this power.

Different from the sinner he once possessed and wielded it, but lost his crown and scepter by transgression. Selling his birthright for a mess of red pottage, he finds himself stripped of his former glory, and weak, and even weaker than other men, in the realm of spiritual influence.

The fact is that he is regarded with a scorn that is not visited upon the unconverted; for he knew better, had something better, and gave it up and went wrong. He had been washed, but returned to his wallowing in the mire. He had been a Son of the morning, but fell like Lucifer from the skies.

Of course we are speaking here of gross backsliding; of grave, deliberate and repeated violations of God's law resulting in darkness of mind, and emptiness and deadness of soul.

All such men discover that when they advise, rebuke and even preach, they seem to be hammering against a perfect wall. The people will not yield, hearts are unbroken and souls remain unsaved.

A man of wealth who had backslidden and fallen into gross sin; partly to redeem himself in the eyes of the community, offered to pay all the expenses of a revival meeting in his town. An evangelist and workers were about to come, ignorant of the case, when a committee of citizens waited on them, and said that while the a meeting was needed, yet they would rather do without it than have it brought to them through the soiled hands and life of the man in question. The meeting was not held. Evidently there must be a certain spiritual state and corresponding life, for a man to possess what is called spiritual power.

In a word, to have religious influence a man must be religious.

He must be genuinely good and live and walk in the Spirit of God. For just as an individual must have money if he would be a power in the financial world, so a man must have spirituality if he would be a spiritual force in the kingdom of morals and religion.

This simple and yet reasonable rule serves to explain some very curious things in life that have puzzled the multitude, viz., why men in high places the church fail to reach the people in prayer, song, testimony and sermon; and on the other hand, why people in much humbler positions in the ecclesiastical world, move their hearers every time they stand on their feet and speak, or get on their knees and pray. A man with a deep religious experience is compelled to have spiritual power.

We recall a local preacher of uncouth manner and but little education. He had some undesirable notions as to duty, and was undoubtedly a narrow

man in a number of respects. But he was a profoundly godly man, and all of his household, including three grown sons, knew it. His family altar worship lasted always an hour. He never prayed less than half hour himself, and there was naturally some squirming and twisting of human bodies in the room. If he had been a mere professor, an empty shell of a Christian, his sons would never have endured this long trial. But he was a devoted man of God, they felt it and were convinced of it, and so they not only stood the long morning service, but every one of the man's sons and daughters became not only members of the church but devoted followers of Christ.

In one of our large Southern cities lived a minister of the Gospel who for fifty years adorned the doctrine of Christ by a holy, consistent life. His countenance beamed with benevolence, his ear was ever open to the tale of distress, and his hand and pocketbook quick to relieve the needy. No one was ever turned away from his home; and for sorrow, want and death to break into another dwelling was to find this man there as the next visitor, to render sympathy, comfort and every practical help in his power. No day was too cold, and no night too dark to keep this servant of God from a place where he felt he could do good and help in some way a human being.

He so impressed himself on the town where he lived that he received tributes of respect and reverence from the whole community. He, in a figure, was uplifted to a throne, and sat down upon it with the cordial consent and grateful homage of the entire population. He was in the best sense the leading man in the city.

It was noticed that the instant a general trouble, a common affliction occurred, that every eye seemed to turn to this man. The public convocation would be held, and when the noble form and calm, Christ-like face of this man appeared coming up the aisle, everybody seemed to feel relieved, and with a thundering unanimous vote he would be elected to the chairmanship of the gathering.

He always opened the meeting with prayer, and then, like a Judge and Patriarch would advise the convention what to do. It was always good counsel, invariably it would be followed, the assembly would adjourn, and God's servant would return to his house more honored and beloved than



ever, and fixed more firmly than before, on that best of earthly thrones, the respect, affection and confidence of the people.

He was full of the Christian religion, and most naturally and inevitably overflowed with religious influence. The men who were led to God by him in this country and who learned to love Christ through him in that large community could scarcely be numbered.

## CHAPTER 34

### CUTTING LOOSE FROM EARTH

This old world has a tremendous way of holding people's bodies on its surface, and of binding the thoughts, affections and aspirations here as well. It is a mistake to think that Death breaks this strange power. The reluctance of the sinner to leave earth and time is one of the proofs that a certain binding terrestrial law has not been annulled. This orb of clay is the only one the sinner knows anything about, and he leaves it with dread and unwillingness. He had rather a thousand times stay. He goes by the compulsion that is in dissolution. He leaves as did the mandrake, shrieking, when pulled from the ground. He carries the love of this planet away with him in his heart.

To break the awful power of this globe, and to make it so that it is easy and pleasant to go, is the work of divine grace in the redemption of Jesus Christ.

It is noticeable in a balloon, that to make it leave the earth, and float in the skies, it has to be filled with a substance that must be more than a match for the attraction of gravitation, and for the heavy detaining atmosphere which belongs to this world. In addition to this, certain cords and ropes that bind and hold down the sky machine must be severed; otherwise the inflated silk bag pants, heaves and surges like a thing of life, and, all in vain, as it remains connected with and fettered to the ground. When the last fastening is cut, the balloon rushes into the heavens.

So in breaking this world's power over our souls, God plants in us a new life and love, and we at once feel the skyward pulling in us, and that we have something within us better, purer and stronger than earth itself.

But in the face of this fact, we become sensible of certain life cords that in the form of human relations and conditions hold us with a marvelous grip to this planet. To remove the soul suddenly from its abode here, with all these attachments and connections at their strongest and best, would be to

make the hour of death awful and frightful indeed. It would be like tearing up an oak without having previously cut a single root. It would be the wrenching of the balloon from its stakes before a solitary rope had been severed.

One object of the divine providence, the faithful dealing of God with the soul, is to so bring about, or permit things to happen, that the numerous ties which bind us so effectually and willingly to earth may be cut one by one, so that when the hour of departure to the skies arrives, the going may be an easy, willing and glad one.

We have seen so many of these old-time bonds and links broken in some lives, that the solitary cord of duty alone seemed to keep them in our midst. And they appeared to be hungrily waiting for that one remaining fastening to be slipped from the stake, so that they could soar heavenward and homeward. Such people carry a far-away look in their eyes. The sky seems to be outpulling the earth.

The cords that bind us to this globe of ours, run in many directions, and are found fastened in numerous places, from the home fireside, and social circle, down to the attachment for a locality, a piece of land, or a bit of sea and sky. One's love, friendship, trust, business, habits of life, and hope itself furnish the strongest influences to hold and keep a being contentedly or expectantly here in an existence of trial, temptation and sorrow. The future alone, with its unknown possibilities, has held many a man to earth who otherwise would have plunged into the grave and eternity.

Truly men are bound closely indeed to this little ball of matter only eight thousand miles thick, and destined at that to a complete overthrow and destruction. But the grace and power of God, and the flight of Time bringing with it the sad, sore experiences of life, can cut every tie of the already heaven-inflated spirit, and cause it to sweep with relief and gladness into the invisible and eternal.

One severance in life is that which inevitably takes place in the passing away of early hopes and expectations.

The fancies with which we start life are not facts. Air Castles are beautiful to look upon, but we cannot live in them. The charming edifice of the imagination was nothing but fog and cloud, and the cool north wind of a

matter of fact world made the gorgeous mental structure tumble to pieces or melt away without a vestige left behind.

With this disillusion, one of the first binding charms of earth loses its hold on the soul.

A second sundering blow is the cooling and death of certain ardent friendships.

Here no actual wrong has been inflicted, but people simply drop you. Their affections are transferred to other persons and objects.

No matter how much philosophy or religion may be in the heart of the forsaken, yet such a happening is found to stab to the quick, and somehow by the wound and consequent suffering, the world sheers off and seems to have a looser hold upon the individual.

A third sore experience is the betrayal of confidence.

To a person who has a proper conception of honor, a confidence reposed in him or her, can not be betrayed without perfidy. The breathing of private griefs and affairs into the ear of a trusted friend, should be kept inviolate, no matter what changes should take place between the confider and the one receiving it. The trust was in its very nature sacred, and eternal. A person who obtains the confidences of another in the unsuspecting intimacy of friendship, and with altered feelings of other years, reveals that which was reposed in him and in his honor, has committed a moral crime before which Perjury itself could lift up its head in conscious superior integrity and dignity. Such an act has the characteristics of the spy, and in all nations the spy is hung. Such a person obtains information through disguises and falsehood, and the judgment by common consent of the world on such conduct is death.

There are people who read this chapter who have adversaries today who were friends in other months or years. These enemies have ruthlessly stabbed them with the divulgence of heart and life histories which they secured moment by moment, and word by word in the bright, cloudless days of unsuspecting friendship. These same maligned people have as startling facts in their possession reflecting on their present foes who were once their friends, and yet never even have the temptation to give to the

public matters of their private, domestic, and business life. The reason is that they cannot take such a mean revenge. They cannot do a dishonorable thing. They cannot violate the confidence of friendship, even when that friendship is past. They cannot be a spy.

Nevertheless when the stab is given in the betrayal of trust, one of the strongest ropes is cut that binds the soul to this world. A positive promise was broken. A sacred confidence was abused. A secret which had been given to another in perfect faith was repeated to a third party, or given to an unfeeling and misunderstanding world. My, how the balloon swings and pulls and tugs skyward, after one of these gross violations of love and honor; and how the soul fastens a deeper, longer gaze upon Him who was denied and betrayed by friends and disciples; but who never Himself was unfaithful and untrue to another.

A fourth effective discipline of life is found in the lack of appreciation.

It is wonderful how the soul thrives like a sun plant in the light of good will and sympathy. Some there are who push on and up, and nourish, in spite of everything adverse and malign; but the rule is that men and women, like vegetation, do better under sunlight than frost. The home with its genial, loving fireside is better for spiritual improvement and development than the penitentiary with the dark cell.

So there are many whose gifts and finest qualities have first been benumbed, and then driven into a Siberian retirement, who under other conditions could and would have made the best members and citizens of our social circles and communities.

“Poor little Gerty,” the evening star used to seem to say to the beaten, sobbing, neglected, misunderstood child as she lay watching it from her window in the garret. And poor little Gerty it is to many others in this weary world, who in the absence of earthly sympathy and kindness, are driven for comfort to the heavens, and especially to Him who is the King of that country.

A fifth blow is felt in ingratitude.

Scarcely any stab goes deeper in the heart than to have kindness met with unkindness, benefits with injury, and a life of sacrifice with the most cold-blooded ungratefulness.

We are confident from years of observation that it is not the devoted husband who makes the same kind of wife; or vice versa. Nor is it the sacrificing father and mother who are rewarded with appreciative, grateful, obedient children. We have known of parents who denied themselves actual necessities, were insufficiently clothed, and often went hungry to give their sons and daughters comforts, pleasures, education and even accomplishments, and were regarded with neglect, slight, disobedience and utter thanklessness.

We have seen parents who had worked like slaves and pack horses for the good of their households, come to an old age where they were ignored, treated with contempt, elbowed aside, and all but pushed into the cemetery where they were finally only too glad to go.

The Bible says of this kind of ingratitude, that it is sharper than a serpent's tooth. And it is a tooth that cuts in two the thickest of cords which bind one to home and earth, and the balloon fairly surges to be gone.

A sixth trial which we take time just to mention, is that of bereavement.

How empty the world looks when certain ones we loved take their flight into the heavens. There are many millions of people still left who line the highway, and throng the streets, but very lonely feels the earth after some mounds and hillocks appear in the cemetery, whose sod covers the silent forms of those who were everything in this life to us.

Somehow the balloon strains very hard upon the ropes after that, and the days and hours are counted when the signal shall be given, and the lingerer upon the shores of Time shall rush away as upon wings of light to rejoin the company that has preceded him months and years before.

The writer knew one of the most gifted preachers of the South, who, when seventy years of age, would take his walking cane and walk out to the cemetery, two miles away from the city. Here he would spend most of the day among the tombs and graves of his household and many of his

old-time associates and companions. One day his daughter said to him, "Father, why do you go out so often to the cemetery?"

With a gush of tears to his eyes he replied, "I have more friends, my daughter, out there, than I have here in town."

The soul was pulling away even then towards the sky. and yet as a child, we had seen him in the glory of his manhood, in the zenith of his matchless pulpit power, with his name spoken in praise and admiration by thousands, while multitudes hung enraptured on his words, and counted it an honor just to touch his hand.

At this time he was not only young, handsome, eloquent, gifted and wealthy, but with friends by the hundred, and admirers by the thousand. How he must have loved this earth. How firmly he must have been bound to it. But as the years went by, the cords of the balloon were cut. Every kind of trial and loss and sorrow came into his life. Enemies as well as false friends did their work. Money took wings. Children died. The house got empty. A great company preceded him to the graveyard. By and by he wanted to go. Then he longed to go. One day the last cord was cut, and with a glad cry his soul flashed its way out of his body, and the heavens received him out of sight forever.

# CHAPTER 35

## THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR

There is something that strangely appeals to mind and heart in the ending of a day. As the sun sinks out of sight, and shadows gathers and men and animals alike forsake the fields and woods and hide them home, there is felt a pathetic power in the scene that the most gifted in language would find difficult to define and describe.

A page, if not a chapter, of life has been turned, never to be rewritten. Incidents, experiences, meetings, and partings have taken place that can never be repeated at all in most instances, or if gone over again, never as before.

Some years ago we sat on the brow of a mountain and saw the sun go down. For minutes it hung suspended over the horizon, a great scarlet globe, then slowly sank in an opaline west. That departed day has been recalled an hundred times to memory since then.

We never think of that sinking sun, or behold one like it, but a favorite song called "Good-bye, Sweet Day" comes to mind with the recollection of that evening, and all that appeals to mind and heart in the fact of a day forever gone.

If the termination of a day affects the spirit, how much more solemnly and profoundly should we be moved at the sight of the close or death of the year.

A day is but a chapter of life, while a year is a volume. With some reason we may expect a number of chapters, but with what right can we count on many volumes! There may be many of the former, but necessarily there can only be a few of the latter. One thousand and ninety-five chapters, after all, meant but three volumes of life. One-third of the human race never reach the tenth volume. Countless millions never complete the first.



So, as the year closes now in a few days, and some prepare to place the completed volume in their individual Library of Existence beside its earlier published companion books, and mark the number with the figures 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50, the thought may well and profitably fill the mind, "Shall I add yet another? or is this the last?"

What kind of a book have we made out of this present number? How does it compare with the others? Is it better, or is it worse in appearance and contents?

Some of the chapters we doubt not are much tear-stained. One or more has a black border all around, showing that Death has entered the home. One speaks very dejectedly of a certain sunset; another as rapturously about a sunrise. Several tell of the cooling of friendships, and the decay of a love that was thought to be eternal. One with many blots and the unmistakable mark of blistering tears, dwells upon a betrayal of trust. Surely there can be no more fascinating book to read than one of the volumes we have just mentioned. And all are invested with a certain sad interest when we come to the completion of the last page and sentence, and the finished work is placed on a shelf in the Library of the Universe. It is now a production to be referred to in many coming days, to be remembered at a dying hour, and to hear read aloud in full at the Judgment Day of Christ.

Tennyson recognizes the musing melancholy of this time in the words:

*"I stood pensively,  
As one who from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead."*

A part of the sadness which comes to the thoughtful mind over the close of the year, arises from the recollection of certain mistakes and failures made in this period of one's life.

It is perfectly natural for the pastor, evangelist, Christian worker, and every one indeed, who has been faithfully serving God, and achieving blessed results for heaven, to overlook their actually large success, and instead, to dwell with pain on the blunders and shortcomings which took place here and there in their labors and battles for righteousness and salvation.

How differently we would act, we say to ourselves if we could go over the same way again. And we doubt not that with the painful light and knowledge which experience brings, there would be with many, a wiser course and more successful life.

It may well be asked, that if such desires and resolutions, such amendments of judgment and conduct have been occasioned by these mortifying circumstances, then has not the soul secured a victory after all from the very jaws of defeat; while through the mistakes made, a strange, sad, yet most powerful education has been received, through the blessing and overruling power of God.

Some one has said that we all see life like one riding backward in a carriage. The objects on the road are beheld and recognized only after they are passed. In like manner the real crises of one's existence, the great opportunities, the times for certain speech and action, have in their momentous and weighty nature passed by before our minds and hearts seemed to take hold of the situation. Some of us, through lack of mental quickness, and by reason of disadvantages of many kinds, appear to be riding backward. We see the duty too late. We get sense on certain subjects after the hour the speech should have been delivered has gone. We see what we ought to have done to and for certain people, after they have departed from us and are out of our lives forever. Will not this fact count some in the Day of Judgment, that we had a back seat in the carriage?

Then, does not God know that we knew nothing to start on? and so had everything to learn?

In view of these facts it verily looks like men's errors of judgment, and shortage of the best performance of what they desired and tried to do, might secure for them a kindlier consideration and treatment than is the usual fashion of the world to accord to its inhabitants.

Nevertheless, with all this, the regret remains in the breast with very many who are not intellectually and spiritually dead, that they did not speak and do the best in everything, in the year that is just closing with them forever.

Again, there is a sorrow felt over the departing year in the contemplation of the losses that have befallen us in that time.

They are many, and run from mere disappointment in plan and labors to the going out from us and out of our lives of those whom we would gladly have bound to us with changeless ties of friendship, affection and association forever.

These last experiences refer not only to bereavement, the empty room, the gap in the home circle, and the vacant chair in our midst, to which it looks like we can never grow accustomed; but to the losing of those who were once warm friends and loved us, and then grew cold, fell away and became either indifferent or open enemies.

David felt this pang in connection with Ahithophel, and breathes out his sorrow over the matter in one of his Psalms. Samuel seemed to bear a lifetime affliction over the heart defection and life and character fall of Saul. The Lord had to ask him once, as if to arouse him from his grief, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?"

It matters not how we lose our friends, whether they of their own choice leave us; or are stolen from us by untruthful lips; or go back to the world and into sin and forsake us; or whether through our faithfulness to Christ they give up our company and go no more with us. Yet the pain of the loss is felt, and memory abides, and the old love will not die.

So the closing of the year to the thoughtful mind, and to the soul possessed with any measure of sensibility is a time and experience not to be regarded lightly, but as a very precious, sacred and solemn thing. It is as if one had come down to a vessel's side which was about to sail away with his treasures and with friends and loved ones whom he would likely never see again.

An English poet filled with this thought and feeling, once wrote:

*"I did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die."*

The Christian standing by the departing year can think and write and say nobler and better things than this, although the three lines are very natural, and somehow appeal to the heart.

We can say that the present volume is closed, but please God the next one shall be far better in every respect than its predecessors. The old year is going or gone, but the Savior being our helper, the new year shall behold us enduring patiently suffering joyously, praying more, working harder, and living closer to Heaven than any other time we have ever known.

The ship is about to sail away, but God assisting and keeping us we will come to the heavenly country at last to which the vessel is going. As we have bidden farewell to friends and loved ones on this shore, and seen them fade away into eternity; even so one of these days, it may be this very New Year, they over there will greet us with waving hands and shining faces and happy hearts, as leaving this world of sorrow and death, we drop anchor and land in that country where the King loves us, and where many have longed for our coming, and from which happy, blissful, blessed shore we will go away no more forever.

*O that beautiful land!  
The far away home of the soul!  
Where no storms ever beat  
On the glittering strand,  
While the years of eternity roll.*

**THE END**

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