

WESLEYAN HERITAGE Library

Holiness Writers

**YOU HOLD THE FAITH
OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS**

By

Winfield F. Poe

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

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS**

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PREFACE

I suppose that every doctrinal book, almost, has been written because of a sense of feeling that God wants the truth that is contained therein, in print. Certainly, this book comes to you with that feeling — that God would have this truth in print. With the author there is a deepening sense of the need of the printed page — its value becomes greater. We feel greatly indebted to those authors who have taken the time, and effort to put out the truths of these great books that have enriched the lives and been a great blessing to many readers.

We trust this book will come to you as a blessing. It is our sincere desire that this book will be a blessing to the people of every walk of the Christian life. Surely we desire that the ministry will see the great responsibility of handling the truth of God in dealing with the souls of men and handling their faith with a real compassion — and that the lives of the ministry will be enriched by reading the pages of this book.

It is our desire that every Sunday school teacher and every counselor will go deeper into the Word of God, and deal with men with a greater sincerity and compassion than they ever have. It is our desire that many who are weak in faith, and who are up-and-down will become strong in faith and will find a life of peace, and faith, and victory, and be established in the grace of God. Also, that they will be made stronger through reading the pages of this book. We so desire that it will be a blessing to this type of people.

Then it is with great gratitude and appreciation of the Holy Ghost who has laid this truth on our heart across the months and burdened our heart to bring this book to a completion that it might be presented to you.

Also, we feel a deep appreciation for Miss Judy Survance, who in the days that this book was being born, shared the burden of this book together with us in our home. She volunteered to let us dictate these chapters on cassette tapes and then she would copy it off to save the author many, many hours of labor and writing. We deeply appreciate her hours spent in writing, typing, and proof reading in getting this book ready to be presented to you. We appreciate Sister Lee Luck for her time spent in designing the cover of this book.

Truly it is our desire that this book be sent forth of the Holy Ghost to be a blessing to all who read it.

Winfield F. Poe

We feel it has been a ministry on our part to be allowed the privilege of helping with this book. In our working with the book, we have done the best we could to leave the personality of the writer in the wording. Any English errors and such are my mistakes, not Brother Poe's.

Judy Survance

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The author, Rev. Winfield Poe, has for many years been a close friend of mine. He is a fervent preacher of the Word and a man of deep devotion to his Lord. This book has come from the concerned heart of a man whom I know to be a sincere and devout servant of God.

The chapters that form this book will evidence the spoken style, and anyone who knows the author will perhaps be able to visualize the messages and the messenger.

It is our prayer that God's blessing will attend the publication of this book.

Pastor Ray Pollard
Overland Park, Kansas
Church of God (Holiness)

We wish to recommend the ministry and writings of Brother Winfield Poe. He has been an evangelist at our camp a number of times and we appreciate his anointed ministry. It has not been my privilege to read the last book he has written but I can highly recommend the ones I have read and am sure this one will also be profitable. May God continue to bless Brother Poe's ministry.

Rev. Mary Davis
Pastor of Singing Hill
Immanuel Missionary Church
Shoals, Indiana

I have known Rev. Winfield Poe for more than a decade. He has been a man with a burden for the lost. He prays with a burden, he preaches with a burden, he lives with a burden. He doesn't seem to know any hard cases as he is always sure that God will answer to prevailing, intercessory prayer. His writings lead one to know and feel that he has experienced what he has put in print. I personally have received definite help from reading what he has shared with us through the printed page. And, as I read the pages he has written I even then seem to sense the presence of this man of God. My life has been richer because I have known him. May God bless his ministry both by word and pen.

Rev. Max Rinker
Chairman and Pastor of Salvation Camp
Shoals, Indiana

I have known Brother Winfield Poe for a number of years, and to my knowledge he has lived a consistent Christian life. He has given himself to serve the Lord in the evangelistic field and has made several trips to the mission field. I trust God's blessings may rest upon him.

Rev. A. L. Luck,
Weisbach Community Church,
Rte. 2
Shoals, Indiana 47581

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

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CHAPTER I You Hold the Faith of Men In Your Hands

The title of this book, as well as the title of this chapter, is "YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS." This title is justified because of the seriousness of the subject on which it deals. For, the most vital part of our Christian experience is faith in God. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of our faith in this way in Romans 1:17, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The verse just preceding this reads, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

This phrase "from faith to faith" is speaking of the time we have that saving faith which brings us into a vital relationship with God, on through to dying faith which will carry us triumphantly across into Heaven. The Bible says, "The just shall live by faith." Now, when we consider that from saving faith to dying faith, the just shall live by faith, it makes faith one of the most vital elements of our Christian life. This is not referring to a general faith in God, or a general faith in the Bible, or a general faith in the practices and precepts of the Word, or a general faith in the standards and obedience, etc. It means a vital, personal faith that brings us into that clear relationship and fellowship and walk with God. It is a faith that gives us soul rest and happiness in this life. It is that vital faith which maintains our right relationship with God, that vital faith which causes us to triumph in life through battles, and storms, and hard places, and dark hours, down to the hour of death. It is that faith which causes us to triumph in Jesus Christ! It is the vital part of our relationship with God.

Preacher, you hold this vital faith of men in your hands every time you step into the pulpit. And, by wild, unfounded, unscriptural preaching you can wreck that vital faith in the life of a conscientious soul. That conscientious soul may go through the rest of their life struggling with their faith — praying, fighting, maybe living an up and down life, and trying somehow to make Heaven with all the storms they have to go through, because of some unwise preaching and unfounded statements.

Oh, preacher brethren, that man or woman we are preaching to, their faith is so vital! It is going to mean their own future relationship with God, therefore, we must step into the pulpit with the fear of God — seeking to help men and women get established in the grace of God. If it were your faith that was being wrecked, if it were your life and mind that would be tormented because you were trying to reach a place in God that the scripture does not teach, you would want men to handle your faith with real care, and concern, and burden, and with a real scriptural preaching to help you have a happy Christian life.

John Wesley once said something like this — if we preach the standard too high we drive men to despair. If we preach the standard too low, we make a slide board to slip men into hell. So, it is vital that we preach the message as it is in the Word.

We would like to consider some of the unfounded statements which have been made and the seriousness of those statements. One preacher said, "If you are not as high tonight as you have ever been in your life, then you need to be at this altar." Everyone who is really honest in his heart knows there are times when Christians are higher and have more of the glory or the fire than they do at other times. If you have such a conscientious soul there in one of those times when they have been going through a valley, maybe they are grieved over lost children until they are burdened down, maybe they have been going through some persecution until they have been beaten down until they wonder how they can go on. Then, someone makes this statement, "If you are not as high tonight as you have ever been in your life, then you need to be at this altar." That person could cast away their confidence and go back to the altar and pray and seek God, and try to get back to God. They may pray until they pray out on top and go on from there and seek holiness again. But, when they get out there in that next battle and go through that dry place we all go through (which God has ordained that we all go through for He said that there were times when it need be that we go through seasons of heaviness) when that soul comes back to that place, they may reason, I'm not as high as I was one time, and they are back at the altar again. That soul may even miss Heaven because they are trying to reach a plane where they live on a mountain-top all their life which the Bible does not teach. Even where the scripture states that we would be filled with all the fullness of God, it doesn't mean that we will always be joyful. The fullness of God is not particularly always feeling. The scripture that said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," doesn't mean that we will always be shouting. Most of the time we will be unconscious of those "rivers of living water" that are flowing out.

This author one time was preaching in Pittsburgh, Kansas, and preaching this one particular night was so hard. It seemed the message wasn't going anywhere. It just seemed as if it was dead and dry and no one was getting anything out of it. At the close of the message I said, "Let's stand." And, I thought of not even giving an altar call. Then the next thought came, let's sing a verse or two of some song. When they began to sing, people came out of their seats to the altar — some of them were nearly running. The people said that my mouth just dropped open. I was so surprised. Out of my belly was flowing rivers of living water but I was totally unaware of it. So, in preaching, even these scriptures that have just been mentioned — "All the fullness of God," and, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," — we need to bring out the fact that these are not all wrapped up in feeling and it is not all a matter of being conscious of its taking place. Whether we are conscious of the outflowing or not, it is there. Whether we feel it or not, it is there because the Holy Ghost is abiding within. Glory to God!

But, we need to bring out to the people that there are times of walking by faith. And, unfounded statements like the one discussed above can wreck men's faith, drive them to despair, and cause them to miss the way.

Another unfounded statement we often hear, from people naming out sins, is, "Under old-fashioned conviction you will give up these things." It is according to how much light you have had whether you will give up these things under old-fashioned conviction or not. Someone who has

never had the light, who has been brought up in areas where they've never been exposed to the old-fashioned, rugged gospel, may get under conviction and pray clear through, and may even walk with God for awhile before they are aware of the fact that the thing you have named out, that they would give up under conviction, was wrong. When you are preaching and they are sitting in the congregation, conscientious, the devil may say, "You never gave that up under old-fashioned conviction so you never got saved." There is a possibility of their faith being wrecked. These statements are not really Bible, and they are not really true. If we preach along this line we ought to bring out the fact that if a soul has light and knows a thing is wrong, he will give it up as he yields to old-fashioned conviction.

In testimony sometimes men say, "I gave that up under conviction." That's true — because of the light they had. But, at the same time we dare not unchristianize others who have not had the light we have had. We hold the faith of men in our hands and these kinds of statements can do eternal damage to some souls. What a tragedy to cause someone to suffer years and years because of our unwise and unscriptural statements.

Another unwise, unfounded, unscriptural statement is that if you ever have a doubt you are not sanctified. That, if you ever really get the experience of holiness you will never have a doubt. That is not true! Some folk's faith is weaker than others. Some have had that glorious time. Some wiser testimonies are like this — the devil has never been able to make me doubt but what I got the experience, but he may tell me that I don't have it now. There are those who are weaker in faith than others. We must handle their faith with care and try to strengthen that faith rather than kill it and drive them back to the altar.

It is a cruel-hearted preacher — and this may be a hard statement — who will preach just to try to get people to the altar just to have a big number. We all want to see our altars lined. We all want to see many pray through, but it is much better to strengthen a soul and keep them from falling than to get them to cast away their confidence and come back to the altar.

Another unfounded statement is to preach that nerves are carnality. Now, it is well to express the fact that there are those who call carnality nerves, and then explain the difference. For, there are people that certainly hide behind nerves when they are having carnal spells and temper tantrums. But, on the other hand, nerves can play some terrible tricks and put folk through some tremendous pressures. And, unfounded, unwise statements can cause those folk to lose their grip on God and break that vital faith — and maybe never get back to the place of soul rest in which they would have been if those statements had not been made.

As a young preacher, we were preaching in a camp meeting, and there was an old preacher sitting in the congregation. We were giving the altar call that night, the break did not come and I made the statement, "I don't know what to do." The next day this old preacher got up to preach and he said, "If folk had the Holy Ghost, they would know what to do." I was just a young preacher. That could have torn my faith and thrown me into the dark. But, the thought that came to my mind was if he knew what to do — why didn't he do it? If he had the Holy Ghost and knew what to do, why didn't he do it? I didn't know what to do, but the Lord helped me to hold my faith in God. We are talking

about unwise statements that can cause people to lose their faith and that vital contact with God which throws them into years of battle, and struggle, and unrest in their heart.

Another statement that has been made from the pulpit — if you get hurt you are not sanctified. Well brethren, if that statement was made at the time when a conscientious soul had been crushed, and they accepted everything that came from the pulpit, that soul would throw up their hands in despair and start seeking holiness only to be hurt again and decide again that they weren't sanctified and again, and again — perhaps a lifetime unless God somehow got through to them the fact that sanctified people do get hurt.

Another unwise and unfounded unscriptural statement that is made from the pulpit is when preachers preach that a man-fearing spirit is carnality — "If you have any man-fearing spirit you are not sanctified." Beloved, in the first place, this is unscriptural. True, the Holy Ghost gives us boldness and it is true that before the day of Pentecost Peter denied Christ. After the day of Pentecost he said, "Ye. . . by wicked hands have crucified. . ." Christ, and "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 2:23 and 5:29b) Such statements as these he spoke with the boldness of the Holy Spirit. Yet at Antioch it was this same Peter who had a man-fearing spirit. We read in Gal. 2:11-12, "But when Peter was come to Antioch I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision," — a man-fearing spirit. Now, beloved, we wouldn't for a minute say Peter was not sanctified, this great man who preached those powerful messages after the day of Pentecost — we wouldn't say he wasn't sanctified. But, he did have a man-fearing spirit. This only proves that a man-fearing spirit is not carnality.

I recall a time when I was to preach, when just a boy preacher, one service in a youth camp of the Church of God Holiness. When it came time to preach, my brother, James, was the Master of Ceremonies, and he introduced me kind of apologetically because he had never heard me preach. So, if I failed it wouldn't look so bad on him — that's the way it sounded to me. Probably he did not mean it that way. But, I didn't know whether to take my coat off or to leave it on. And, when Dr. Cowan, Dr. Yokum, and E. W. Roy and some of those preachers came in, I began to feel worse. I tell you I was scared! When I got up there I was shaking and could hardly read my scripture. When I got my scripture read, I didn't know whether to take my coat off or leave it on — so I jerked it off and gave it a throw toward a chair. I don't know whether I even watched where it landed. The power of the Holy Ghost came upon me and all fear was gone. I was the same person before the Holy Ghost power came on me as I was after. When I was shaking I was the same person that I was when I had the boldness of the Holy Spirit. He can give boldness and there are times when He does give boldness — again and again. But, to say a man-fearing spirit is carnality would mean that we never had any fear of man. That is not Bible nor is it true. If I had no fear of man, I would not need the boldness that comes through the power of the Holy Spirit. But, I appreciate the boldness that comes to give us strength to overcome and stand for God and truth to where we won't sell our soul and betray Christ.

Another statement that is unscriptural is to preach that impatience is carnality. We hear this often in instruction around the altar when folks are instructing seekers. We hear it there even more than from the pulpit. But, we also hear it from the pulpit and read in books that impatience is carnality.

Beloved, to my knowledge there is not one scripture that would teach impatience is carnality. Now if we have 'imps' in impatience, which we need to bring out if we are preaching along this line, and we get mad and show a carnal ugly spirit — that is carnality. But, impatience in itself is not carnality. In II Peter the first chapter it talks about those who have been partakers of the divine nature — the sanctified. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith. . ." your sanctified faith, your experience of holiness, "virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience." The Bible said to add patience after you get sanctified. If impatience were carnality we would never have any impatience. There would be no need to add patience. But, the very fact that impatience is not carnality means we certainly need to add patience. For a preacher to preach that if you are impatient — if your wife is slow and you are fast and you are impatient — that is carnality, can throw people into confusion and wreck their faith until they have an up-and-down life trying to seek an experience that God does not provide. Or, if the husband is slow and he is draggy for a meal, it would take a lot of grace after a woman has fixed a meal to have a man just sit around and not come to the table — that would take a lot of grace. If a woman needs to add some patience along that line and you preach that all impatience is carnality, then you have thrown that woman into the fog and she may cast away her confidence and spend a lifetime seeking something the Bible does not teach. It is a very serious thing! We hold the faith of men in our hands and for us to make unfounded and unwise statements is certainly detrimental to the soul and will wreck the faith of men and cause them to go into confusion. So, to preach that impatience is carnality is certainly a danger that could wreck the faith of some precious soul.

These are just a few of the examples showing we can make statements that are not scriptural and bring souls into spiritual conflict, and spiritual torment that might even wreck their faith eternally. Oh, what a serious and tremendous responsibility for us to declare the Word of God!

Brethren, let's handle the faith of never-dying souls with care and compassion. Oh, brethren, we must be a Bible preacher, for the Bible is the rule of our life and the foundation of our faith, and it will not confuse nor lead men astray. It will be a shining light that shineth more and more unto that perfect day.

On the other hand, we must preach the truth. To compromise is to sell men short at the judgment. To compromise is to be a traitor to every man you preach to, every man you counsel in private — it means you are a traitor to their soul if you don't tell them the truth that will get them by at the judgment. To compromise with men is to cause them to build their faith on a false hope, and they will die disappointed and be lost. It may hurt to be honest, but if you are not honest with souls they will burn forever and ever in hell. And, God will require their blood at your hands. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the

righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul." (Ezekiel 3:17-21)

It not only means to be honest in the pulpit with souls, but in private counsel where again and again we are forced to give advice in the most difficult situations — but in those situations we must be honest with the never-dying, ever-living souls of men for we hold the faith of men in our hands.

The Apostle Paul, facing his great responsibility of the ministry gives us these words, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (II Corinthians 2:15-17) Paul declares here that what we say is going to cut men out of the kingdom, and it is going to put men into the kingdom. You might say, "Well, preacher, we have no authority." But, if we as preachers lead men wrong, they are going to be cut out and go astray. On the other hand, if we preach the truth and they don't take the way, it is going to cut them out. And, if we preach the truth and they take the way, it will put them in. So, who — who is equal to this task? There is none of us equal to this task. We ought to step in the pulpit with the sobering knowledge that — I hold the faith of men in my hands, and what I am going to preach will have a bearing on man's eternal destiny. I must preach the truth. I must have compassion. I must try to help men. I must try to strengthen their faith. I must be honest with their never dying souls!

It is not only the preachers but you Sunday school teachers also hold the faith of men in your hands. You have almost equally the responsibility of the ministry for every time you teach God's Word, you have the faith of men in your hands. And, if you give unwise, and unscriptural, and unfounded teachings, you can drive men into despair and break that vital faith in their heart until they struggle on and on and on through a life that will be much of it unhappy, because someone, in false teaching, wrecked the faith of that one conscientious soul that was sitting in the class. Oh, the responsibility — to get up and teach a Sunday school class with the faith of men in your hands! What a tragedy for a Sunday school teacher to get up before their class and say, "Well, I haven't studied my lesson," and then just ramble through and make statements and talk when they are not really giving Bible truth that will help men and lead them through to Heaven. You have a responsibility to the text that lies before you. First of all you have the responsibility to be honest and teach it as it is — with the attitude of wanting to help the Sunday school class. You want to help them to a higher plane. You want to help them through. Second, you have a responsibility to their faith and you dare not wreck that faith. On the other hand, you dare not compromise with the truth and lead them astray or sell them short. Many times those that are in trouble spiritually are looking for a loophole. They are looking for a way out. And, if you get up and teach that they can get by with sin and do things which are not right, they will grab on to that and they may miss it. So, you have a responsibility to the truth, and to be honest with their souls, as well as to guard their faith. Therefore, it is a tremendous responsibility to be a Sunday school teacher with the faith of men in your hands.

Then there is the tremendous responsibility of Bible School teachers who are forming the lives of children and young people. Oh, the responsibility of their faith in this formative molding time that is in your hands! The responsibility of encouraging those wavering young people who are trying to

get established — to help them to get established rather than to drive them into despair. To take time with them, to counsel them, and to be wise enough to know when they are going through a battle spiritually, or to know when they are having a struggle with carnality — to give them the right advice and to help them get established is such a responsibility on Bible School teachers! It is a greater responsibility than any of us could really grasp — the faith of young people in your hands in their molding years. What a responsibility to get those young people established — to establish their faith, and to guide them aright. Who is equal to the task of being a Bible School teacher with the faith of young people in their hands? Not only the Bible teacher but every teacher, that child will go to them for counsel, they will look to them for advice. You hold the faith of men in your hands, Bible School teacher, so it means much for you to live close to God, to know your Bible, to be one who gives sound advice. This writer would like to take time to thank God for the teachers back in Bible School days. Our mind runs back in time when going through a tremendous battle, one of the teachers said, "Stand by your God-given conviction." It was such a help. It was words spoken at the right time. Every time when faith seemed to be weak they would give us wise counsel. Thank God for Bible Schools and Bible School teachers that have been a blessing to my life. I want to thank God for every teacher I ever had in Bible School. I don't remember a one who ever led me astray or gave me the wrong advice. So, I thank God for Bible School teachers.

Laymen, you hold the faith of men in your hands. You may never teach a Sunday school class, you may never preach a sermon, you may possibly never lead a prayer meeting, but someone will come to you for advice. You need to know your Bible. You need to live close to God. And, if you don't know what advice to give them, tell them, "Let's pray about it," and advise them to go to the pastor or some other godly person. Don't just give them some kind of advice when you really don't know what to say for you may give them the wrong advice and cause them to lose their soul, or their faith may be wrecked. They may struggle for years to gain back that vital faith that brings peace and soul rest. So, if you don't know what advice to give them be humble enough to say, "I think you should go to your pastor with this," or some other godly person who, you know, has more ability and is more seasoned in the Lord than you are. Many, many laymen have given souls the wrong advice telling them it is all right for them to do things that preachers have preached against and that the Bible teaches against. Those unstable souls will do those things and lose their soul. After a preacher has preached the truth along a close line, then these unstable souls will go for advice. Again, we would say, laymen, remember you hold the faith of men in your hands. So, in giving advice be sure you give Bible instructions. Be sure you give proper advice. And, when you don't know what to do, then seek someone with more knowledge in the Word than you have — for you hold the faith of men in your hands.

It is our sincere desire that this book shall be as great a blessing to the laymen as to the ministry. It is certainly not a book just to the ministry for every one of us at times in our lives hold the faith of men in our hands.

You hold the faith of men in your hands in every altar service where you pray around the altar or work around the altar. It is such a serious thing — the advice we may give at the altar, because if we advise a soul wrong, that soul may miss it and go through life professing something they don't really have. Or, we may keep folk away from victory until they will be a lifetime seeker when they should move in and attain the experience for which they are seeking.

In this book there is a chapter on the witness of the Spirit, but, in this place we would insert the fact that there are three possibilities at an altar. There is only one of these three ways which is correct. There is a possibility of us being in too big a hurry to get souls through to victory, and we tell them to take it by faith. And, beloved, faith without the witness of the Spirit is not true faith. Faith that bypasses the witness of the Spirit is not faith. It is faith that brings the witness of the Spirit, and there is no witness of the Spirit without a feeling of some kind. It may not be a great blessing. It may be just a knowledge that your sins are forgiven. When we were saved, there was no great blessing, there was just that knowledge that our sins were forgiven. The witness of the Spirit is when He lets us know our sins are forgiven. But, yet you say, "I've done my part, then I have a right to know He has done His part," and you take it by faith. Beloved, that is a faith that by-passes the witness of the Spirit and is unscriptural. It will cause souls to miss it. But, if we would urge folk in their seeking — expect God to save you — He will do it, He is true to His word, and inspire that faith until it reaches out and takes hold of God and brings the witness of the Spirit which witnesses to true salvation that has taken place in the heart. That is real Bible faith, and that is the correct way to deal with seekers.

But, if we sell souls short at the altar, they will go away without any victory. And, if they go away from the altar without a transformed life, without real victory — they have nothing to stand on. But, if we can somehow encourage them to a faith that will bring the witness of the Spirit to let them know their sins are gone, they will have something to point back to — they will have something to stand on. So, our exhortation in helping a seeker is to urge him to expect the Lord to come and save him. We dare not sell them short at the altar because we hold the faith of men in our hands! Not only the preacher, but everyone who is praying around the altar, with what advice we give we hold their faith in our hands. If we advise them wrong, we may cause them to miss it. It is such a serious time around an altar. We need more praying and less talking, more power and less counsel. Just a word now and then, when a soul has quit praying, that's the time for a few words of counsel, then back to prayer again, because salvation is a work of the Spirit in the heart. On the other hand, we see folk at an altar, when a soul begins to go up in the Spirit, God begins to carry them out to victory — someone will start to say, "Go down, go down, go down!" And, when they do they break the help of the Spirit that that soul was getting. They start them seeking in a routine again, going around in a circle, come back up to the place of help and maybe that time go through. But they could have gone through before. The tragedy is perhaps they never get back to the place of reaching out to victory. So, in helping a soul at the altar, we need to watch the Spirit. If the Spirit comes and the glory is coming we need to begin to lift with that soul. Then we need to advise that soul with the fact that when the Spirit witnesses — comes with that joy, or glory, or peace, or however He lets them know they are saved — that they must lay hold of the witness of the Spirit. That is a part of sound instruction to help a soul to reach through in faith and take hold of the forgiveness when it comes. But it is a tragedy to keep souls seeking in a circle. When they come up to victory, when God comes to witness to them that their sins are gone — then to begin to drive them back down and start them in another circle of seeking — what a tragedy. In that manner keep a soul seeking perhaps all their life, when they ought to be enjoying victory. We hold the faith of men in our hand. Yet, we must urge them to repent, to go to the bottom, to pray that God will take them through and all of these things. That is a part of very important help at the altar, too. And, in seeking sanctification, this is a very vital thing when souls have enough battles to fight in the area of their sanctified life — it is vitally important that they pray through until their faith reaches out and brings a definite and clear

witness of the Spirit in their heart. Again, we would say that faith which by-passes the witness of the Spirit is not a Bible faith. Bible faith brings the witness of the Spirit. We are saved by faith, without faith it is impossible to please God, without faith it is impossible to be saved. But, Bible faith brings the witness of the Spirit and gives that definite assurance that you are sanctified. Then you have something to stand on.

It is vitally important when folk are seeking holiness to instruct them to a full and complete consecration. Then there is the area of dying out to the world and dying out to self-will. They must pray until the Spirit witnesses to them that they are sanctified holy. Now the altar is a very, very serious place and a very vital place in dealing with the faith of men. Not the ministry alone, but every altar worker, every prayer holds the faith of men in their hands at the altar, and it is of the utmost importance for us to help them to get through to a clear experience where they know they are clear with God. So remember, at the altar the battle is either won or lost. The singing has its important part in bringing men under conviction. The praying and touching God to get the service off to victory has its very important part. And then the message — God chose the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. So, the preaching is vital and important. But, the battle is actually won or lost at the altar. You hold the faith of men in your hands at the altar.

We close this chapter with a feeling of insufficiency, but brethren, beloved in the Lord, if we will be humble enough to recognize that we need the help of the Holy Ghost and wait before God and seek wisdom, He said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." (James 1:5) If we will seek that godly wisdom God will give us wisdom to help souls get to Heaven and to fulfill our obligation to these souls whose faith we hold in our hands.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 2 Is Doubt Sin?

It has been the author's privilege to witness some glorious and sacred scenes of victory around the altar of prayer. However, the altar has, for some, been a place of defeat, caused by those who were working with the seeker. The necessity of this chapter became increasingly apparent after observing the oft-repeated occurrence of seekers being upbraided and told they were sinning because they didn't believe. This scripture, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," was quoted to them. Also, from the pulpit, preachers have made the statement that doubt is sin and quote the same scripture.

Certainly this is a very, very dangerous statement. First of all it is taking the scripture completely out of its context, and by so doing — a person who is battling over faith and struggling to believe God, becomes confused and feels condemned, rather than to be uplifted. Even godly, sincere people who are struggling to believe God could become confused over this completely unscriptural statement.

Let's consider the context of this scripture found in Romans 14:21-23. Then we will talk further about the danger of this and why it could not be so. It reads, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." So the entire context of this scripture, in fact the entire chapter, deals with the subject of eating meat and of keeping the Sabbath day. (This is not talking of the regular Sabbath as we know it. Some of these people were keeping Sabbath weeks, and regarding holy days. Also, there were still those that held to the clean and unclean meats. We've found down through the years that this question of eating meats, etc., is still troubling many minds.) So he sums it up in these two verses. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself. . ." In other words, if you are clear and you can eat meat, don't flaunt it before the man that feels like he can't do it. You just go on and serve God and be charitable toward the man's convictions and conscience that perhaps feels differently than you do — "have thy faith to thyself."

Notice the phrase, "Happy is he that CONDEMNETH NOT himself in that thing which he alloweth." In other words, if you are doing something against your own conscience, you are not going to be happy. You will be in trouble, you will be miserable, and you will be condemned.

Then Paul gets a little stronger, "He that doubteth is damned. . ." "If we stop there, and that is where most folk stop — and take the scripture out of its setting — it can be made to sound as if it is teaching something that it doesn't teach. Any time we try to make the scripture teach something that it doesn't, we are in danger of putting a yoke on sincere souls, and causing them to get in the fog. Maybe even causing them to lose out with God.

But the rest of the scripture says, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat." Notice the fact that he said, "If he eat." In other words, if he goes on and crosses his conscience and eats, then he is damned. This does not have to be just the eating of meat. When a man in his mind feels that something is wrong, and yet he overrides his conscience and presses on out there to do that thing, then he puts himself in the place of condemnation and sin. That is a serious thing. For the scripture says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. . ." In other words if you think it is wrong and you are persuaded it is wrong and you go on and do it, you are not doing it in faith. You are committing sin. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17) So certainly this is not talking about a matter of believing God — and not believing God. This scripture has no bearing, or even intention of teaching that if we don't have faith we are sinning because we do not believe God. To teach that meaning, would first of all condemn those doing the teaching. For, we would actually be saying every time we pray and do not get our prayers through, we would be committing sin — because He said, ". . . all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark 9:23) If we believe we will receive, but we do not receive it because we doubt. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:21-22) So if it is not done, there has to be some doubt. And, to say he that doubteth is damned would mean that every time we didn't pray through, we would be lost. That is certainly taking the scripture out of its context and making it teach something it does not teach.

This extreme case is being brought out to show the fallacy of this teaching. Let's go a step further. If doubt is sin, then any time you are praying for God to supply a need and it does not happen, because of your unbelief, you have committed a sin. No! That is not so! Let's go to the scripture for proof. It is easy for us to say these things but it is good to find the scriptural proof. Notice in Matt. 17:14-21 these words, "And when they were come to the multitude," — this is when they came down from the mountain — "there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil: and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief. . ." Now, beloved, stop right here and notice, Jesus said the reason they couldn't cure him was because of their unbelief — but He never said they were committing a sin. He never condemned them. He went on to say, "For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." But, there is not one word of condemnation. He is just merely explaining their failure was because of their unbelief, and doubt. However, their unbelief was not sin because they were not condemned. Therefore, DOUBT IS NOT SIN.

There is another example in Matt. 14:28-31. "And Peter answered him and said, Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his

hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Jesus didn't say, "Now you have sinned, Peter. Why did you sin?" He said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" So, we can see according to these scriptures, that doubt is not sin. And, in the matter of believing or disbelieving God, it is taking that scripture out of its context and making it teach that which it does not teach.

Another scripture which is often quoted in condemning and saying unbelief is sin, is Rev. 21:8. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." The "fearful" is a person who is afraid to step out and serve God, one who is a coward and gives in to the crowd, and goes down. It includes the whole realm of anything which through fear, keeps you from finding God and being what you ought to be. The second person being described here is the "unbelieving." The root word for unbelief comes from the same root word as disobedience. But, this can, also, be carried too far by saying all unbelief is disobedience — which is not so. We quoted the scripture where he said, "Because of unbelief you couldn't cast them out." Jesus wasn't saying because of disobedience — but the unbelieving, this carries the thought of the unfaithful, or the unchristian. It just simply states the fact that you don't have to be a murderer, a whoremonger, a sorcerer, an idolater, or any of these other things, to be lost. All you have to do is fail to be saved and you WILL be lost. Certainly, this is not putting the man who doubts in the place where he will be lost. It is taking the scripture, again, out of its context, and making it say something it doesn't say.

Next, we would like to consider the scripture in Mark 16:16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This "believeth" here has a "th" on the end of it, which is speaking of a continual faith. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized SHALL be saved." This is speaking of that man who keeps on believing, keeps on walking with God, keeps on being obedient to the gospel, and keeps on having faith until he comes down to die and dies in the faith — SHALL be eternally saved. But, notice it is talking about the end. The same is the opposite side, ". . . but he that believeth not shall be damned." That man who refuses to believe the gospel, and keeps on refusing until he dies — and dies in unbelief shall be lost. Not that unbelief is sin, but unbelief kept him from getting saved. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6b) No man can be saved without faith. It is this faith which brings him into a saving relationship with God. To doubt is not sin, but doubt can cause you TO sin, and keep you out of the kingdom. But, doubt in itself is not sin. Clarke further verifies this thought by saying, "'He that believeth.' He that credits this gospel as a revelation from God: and is baptized — takes upon him the profession of it, obliging himself to walk according to its precepts: he shall be saved — redeemed from sin here and brought at last to the enjoyment of my eternal glory. But he that believeth not, shall be damned — because he rejects the only provision that could be effectual to his soul's salvation." (Clarke, vol. I, page 344, col. 1) But, if he keeps on doubting until he dies, he will die lost. This is not making his unbelief a sin, it is the fact that his unbelief made it impossible for him to be saved, and he stayed in this unbelief until he died. Unbelief in itself is not sin, however, it is the thing that kept him out of the kingdom and caused him to be lost. There will be a lot of people who will be lost over nothing greater than the fact that they would not believe in the blood. Therefore, it is ineffectual to them. They can enjoy no benefits from it, they can enjoy no rewards from it, for they can have no salvation outside of belief. The whole matter of

finding God, of serving God, of victory, and of rest hinges on our faith in Jesus Christ, and in the blood. . . this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

But, on the other hand to teach that doubt is sin, would mean that every time we did not believe we would commit sin. If this were the case, the Apostles would be sinners, and many, many others because every time a prayer is not answered, the one who prays would have committed sin. Unbelief can lead to sin. When it leads to disobedience then it becomes sin. It, in itself, is not sin but it can lead to sin. We find this taught and brought out clearly in Hebrew 3:12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Now it is not sin until it becomes an evil heart of unbelief that causes us to depart from God.

Because of their lack of faith at Kadesh-barnea they rebelled in that they would not go over. (Num. 14:9-10) Here the children of Israel put themselves in the place of both the "fearful" and the "unbelieving," that is spoken about in Rev. 21:8, so that fearfulness caused them to rebel, and unbelief caused them to depart from God. It was an evil heart of unbelief. So, when your unbelief causes disobedience, it becomes an evil heart of unbelief that turns you away from God, and turns you back to sin. Still unbelief in itself, or in other words, doubt in itself, is not sin. However, when it comes to the place where it becomes disobedience, it is an evil heart of unbelief, and it causes you to depart from God.

Beloved, we trust this will help you see that unbelief in itself was not sin until it became something that caused them to depart from God. Then they had an evil heart of unbelief — an evil heart of disobedience caused through doubt that turned them away from God. But doubt in itself is not sin and there is no scripture that declares it to be so, because the Bible nowhere contradicts itself.

THE WEAK IN FAITH

Now we would like to consider the fact that God speaks of folk who are weak in faith. Romans 14:1 speaks of one who was weak in the faith. The Bible clearly teaches we are not to condemn the one who is weak in faith. This scripture is speaking of a man who is weak in faith while in many other places the scripture teaches that the newborn babe in Christ is weak and unstable. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:8) The unsanctified man, or the newborn babe in Christ is double-minded, therefore, he is weak in faith. They are not to be condemned because of their weak faith, or double-mindedness, but urged on to holiness, where they will receive a pure heart and their faith will be strengthened. Jesus further illustrates this in speaking to Peter in John 21:15-17. He said, "Feed my lambs." Then He said, "Feed my sheep." Again He repeated, "Feed my sheep." Why did He say feed my sheep twice? Beloved, there are two different kinds of sheep. There are well sheep that are easy to feed and they are no problem. We can feed them and they will get along fine. But Jesus knew there would be some weak sheep — and there would be some sickly sheep. These are going to have to have special care, and they are going to have to have special food. If this special care is not given — they will die. Dear Hearts, there ARE people who are weak in faith. Their faith has been crippled and they have been up and down, up and down. Unless somehow they can have special food and special care to get their faith rebuilt to where they can stand, they are going to perish. They are going to have to have some special food, some special care, some special hours of prayer, some special concern — or they are going to miss it. We need to take care of them

for their faith is weak. For someone to come to them and say, "He that doubteth is damned," taking that scripture out of its setting to make it teach what it does not teach — they are putting that person outside of the grace of God, if they really grasp what they are saying! Many times they don't, but if they do it puts them outside because they are struggling with their faith.

I heard a preacher make a statement one time that was very grievous to my heart. He said, "If I can preach your profession out from under you, I'm going to do it as quickly as I can." Well, beloved, there are those who are weak in their faith and who are having a struggle. Under provocation they could have their faith preached right out from under them and they would go down. They may never get back to the place where they are solid in faith again. So, it is not a matter that they have sinned, but that they are weak in faith and they have needed special care when they have not received it — which has caused them to go down. This should be a real concern to God's people for it is a real tragedy to teach that doubt is sin when the Bible speaks of those who are weak in faith.

Also, He said, "Feed my lambs." Now the lambs are the newborn babes. They take a different kind of food than do the old sheep or the well sheep. There has been many a lamb that has had their faith crippled because of unscriptural teaching or through unwise statements which have made them lifetime seekers. They got a wrong start and they have been up and down. It will be a miracle if they make it to Heaven, because of their crippled faith.

It means so much to help the lambs get a good start. Research studies tell us the best teachers are needed in the very beginning of a child's education to give them a good foundation, and also at the end of their high school education, lest they become discouraged and drop out. And beloved, how much more we need good pastors to help young people get started right, and the lambs to get nourished into sheep — to be strong sheep, so they will make it through. Also, we would urge the pastors and saints not to neglect the aged. So many times we feel they are established, while through the afflictions and infirmities of old age, the devil takes advantage and attacks their faith. Had these precious aged ones had the proper care, we could have warded off this attack of the devil, and saved them many long, dark hours of struggle. Some of them will waver and drop out causing them to miss Heaven.

The Bible says, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." (Hebrews 12:12-13) The hands which hang down refers to one that is discouraged, that does not have the courage to take the sword again and go out to battle. Or, of one who is plowing and he has dropped his hands from the plow handles. He needs someone to come along to say, "You can make it. Reach up and take hold of the plow handles and plow on!"

The words "feeble knees" signify a wobbly faith, as one who is struggling to hold on. The load is crushing them down. This could be illustrated by soldiers on a forced march. One is faltering with the crushing load of his pack. He cannot keep up and he is about to fall out. But, a strong, stalwart soldier steps up to his side and says, "Let me have your pack." And, he takes the pack from the faltering one as he encourages him by saying, "Let's go on. I'll help you carry your load."

Beloved, that man who is wobbling, his faith is wavering, and he can hardly go any farther needs somebody to come along and say, "You can make it! I'll help you carry your load." Make straight paths for your feet lest that lame one that is weak in faith, that is wobbly in faith, and that is crippling along misses the way. Let's encourage those that are wobbly in faith and try to help them to make it in. If we can give them enough help, we can get them to Heaven. They may not ever be very strong soldiers, but if we work with them enough we CAN get them to Heaven! Many times with the right help, they could become strong in the faith, so that they in turn could reach out to help others. Jesus' attitude was not if I can preach away their profession, I'll do it. His attitude was "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." (Matt. 12:20) Beloved, can't you see Jesus brooding over that bruised reed hour after hour, day after day. Amen! That smoking flax that is just about to go out — we see Him fanning it rather than quenching it! He cares for those who are barely making it. Let us care too, and somehow try to get them to the place where they can have strength.

To teach that doubt is sin, or that if you are sanctified you will never have a doubt, is to throw many people into confusion. One night after preaching a very serious message in a camp meeting, a dear man got up and said, "Now if you have one doubt, in the face of this message, you are not sanctified." I feared for that crowd that night. It was a serious hour. He could have caused some weak soul to go into the fog who might never find their way back to a solid foundation.

If there were no danger of godly sincere people getting into the fog and doubting, the Bible would not give us such exhortations as it does. Consider Hebrews 10:23. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)" Now, notice he said, "Let us HOLD fast. . ." If there were no danger of getting into doubt and having problems with our faith, He would not have said let us hold fast. In other words, don't let the devil break your faith. Don't let him get your testimony. Don't let him cause you to doubt. Hold fast your profession of faith without wavering. Why can we do this? He said, "For he is faithful," — whether we have any feeling or not, we can place our faith in the faithfulness of God.

Then this great exhortation in Hebrews 10:35-36 says, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Now he is saying don't cast away your confidence because you are going through a battle, because you can't feel God, because you can't pray, but you know that God is going to bless you and that He is going to see you through. After you have done the will of God you will receive the promise. So, if there is no danger of doubt, and no danger of casting away your confidence — he would not have given this strong exhortation. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

In Ephesians the 6th chapter, he brings out that we are in a real spiritual conflict — verses 11-16. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the

shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." We wrestle against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. After that he said take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done everything else but give up — don't give up. That is exactly what he is saying here, after you have done everything else but give up — DON'T give up! When you have gone to the end of the rope, tie a knot and hold on.

He said, "Having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness." Now, that is right living. That is all that you can make out of that — just simply right living. Live until you have confidence in your own life. You can say like Job, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

Job said, "My foot hath not declined from thy ways, nor from thy law." It means something for us to have on the breastplate of righteousness — I'm living right. Without that we have no defense. Then he said we were to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Our feet being shod with the preparation of the gospel signifies our testimony. No person is prepared to carry this gospel of redemption without a personal testimony of redeeming grace. Keep your testimony so you can tell others what God has done for you. And, above all, he said, above everything else, taking the shield of faith — now if there were no doubts, you would not have to worry about the shield of faith. When that doubt comes, you can put up the shield of faith and say, "Thank God I know He saved me!"

On the other hand, the devil will say, "Now if you were sanctified you would shout in the face of opposition." Again, throw up the shield of faith and say, "But I know He sanctified me!" Hold the shield of faith between you and the fiery darts of the devil. So, when these darts of doubt are hurled at you, the shield of faith will deflect them and keep you from going down. Keep the shield of faith!

If there were no danger of doubting, you would not have to take the shield of faith. But take the shield of faith and for a helmet the hope of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. So the shield of faith, and the Sword of the Spirit are the two main parts of our armour. Of course, we have to have the whole armour on to be able to stand. The breastplate of righteousness, the loins girt about with truth, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit: all are necessary to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

All these scriptures teach the fact that the devil is going to try to inject doubt and bring doubt. If there were no dangers, we would not be exhorted to believe, and to hold our faith. Therefore, doubt is not sin. We have given you the scriptures, and we trust that this chapter will also clear up in the minds of many, the fact that doubt in itself is not sin until it leads to the place of sin and departing from God.

DEGREES OF FAITH

The Bible speaks of degrees of faith. It says, "O ye of little faith." Jesus spoke of the centurion whose servant was sick. This was a servant very dear to his master and he sent word for Jesus to come and heal him. Then, as Jesus was coming, he sent his servants and said, "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say a word, and my servant shall be healed. . . . When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Luke 7:6b, 7, 9) He spoke of a great faith!

When we think about the degrees of faith and different kinds of faith, the Bible speaks of saving faith in Romans 10:17. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There is a saving faith, which the Bible says cometh by hearing, and hearing the Word of God. As we trust the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the atoning blood to atone for our sins, through that we can find forgiveness. It is that faith that brings us into the experience of justification.

GIFTS OF FAITH

The Bible speaks of the gift of faith. Where it speaks of this gift of faith, it is not talking about saving faith. This refers to another degree or kind of faith. The Beacon Commentary explains this faith on page 428 of vol. 8. "By the term faith the apostle here means a 'faith that has special, visible results, a faith that enables one to do miracles.'" This is the type of faith that Paul pictures in I Cor. 13:2 — the faith that could move mountains.

In I Cor. 12:9, Paul is speaking of gifts of the Spirit. Whedon suggests a different idea when he writes that this kind of faith is "'That realization of divine realities by which a powerful and heroic Christian character is formed, shown in maintaining truth resistlessly, and suffering for it unshrinkingly.' The gift of faith enabled the Christians to become uninhibited witnesses and fearless martyrs." He seems to hold out the idea that this faith is a faith that gives a person special courage and an undaunted belief in the Word of God to stand in the face of pressures, and oppositions, and storms, and be unshrinking. Now, there is a faith that is a part of the fruit of the Spirit which would be close to the same faith he is talking about here. But the faith which is a gift of the Spirit would have to be something extra. This is a gift of faith by the Spirit. Some hold out the idea that this would be speaking of a faith which would make a visible difference in the character of that Christian, making him a powerful worker in the vineyard. I think both ideas are true. But, the faith which is part of the fruit of the Spirit, which every saved person has, and which is strengthened in sanctification, is that faith which enables us to trust God. That faith that grounds us and anchors us in Him, that faith which keeps us that steady Christian year after year. In all kinds of circumstances it holds us steady and gives us a consistent walk with Christ. That everflowing faith keeps us anchored in Him. That is the part of the faith which is a part of the fruit of the Spirit.

There is also the faith the Bible calls "the gift of miracles," which is the faith to work miracles. And, the gifts of healing, (in the plural) which is a faith for healing. Notice it is plural, God doesn't always give that gift. So, not everybody will be healed because sometimes God just will not give

faith for healing for that person — ". . . but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." (II Timothy 4:20b) The person that has the gifts of healing has a special endowment of faith to believe God for healing.

FAITH IS THE KEY

The Bible speaks about fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life. Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

"(II Tim. 4:7) It speaks of us holding our faith, and fighting for our faith, and casting not away our confidence. It implies the fact — well even common sense lets us know there are some who are stronger in faith than others. The more we walk with God, the more we read His Word, the more we learn to fellowship the Holy Spirit, the stronger our faith will be. And, it is a blessed privilege to see God work through faith!

But in the conclusion of this chapter we want to say again that DOUBT IS NOT SIN. If you have been having problems with doubt, search your heart. If everything is clear and nothing is between you and God, then just vigorously, and with a grim determination, hold on to God by faith. Declare that you are clear with God — until faith brings you out to victory. God WILL see you through!

We that have lived for God, know there are times when it is so easy to believe. There are other times when it is a struggle to believe. And, there are other times when it is impossible seemingly to believe. But this great life of faith is a wonderful life. So, hold your faith and walk with God until one day we can meet in Heaven.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 3 God's Law and Personal Convictions

Let's study the Word of God and see the difference in God's law and personal convictions. The first thing we need to look into is — what is sin? The Bible declares that sin is a transgression of the law. Mistakes are not sin. Sin is not just something you don't like. But, sin is a transgression of the law of God. Now we would like to look at some striking scriptures that bear out this fact.

The first scripture we would look at is Romans 4:15, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Where no law is there is no transgression. This scripture explains a lot of things that happened in the Old Testament with men like Abraham, and Isaac, and men like David who did things we could not do in this dispensation because God had not made a law against it. There was no law — thou shalt not bear false witness. The scripture did not say all liars shall have their place in the lake of fire, or let your yeas be yea and your nays be nay back in the Old Testament. .Therefore, folk could do these things and maintain their relationship with God, things that we cannot do. Now, they considered in the Old Testament that they had to almost vow they would do something before they were bound to do it. But Jesus said, "Swear not at all. . ." You don't have to take an oath to make your word good. Let your yeas be yea and your nays be nay. So, that explains why there were so many things that could be done in the Old Testament. For example, they could have plurality of wives, but the New Testament says, let every man have his own wife. All through the New Testament the teaching is one wife and one husband. The man is bound by law to his wife as long as they both shall live. When God made a law against something, then it became sin. Also, in Romans 5:13, "(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.)" In other words, when there was no law against these things, God never laid sin to their charge. God hasn't changed, but, He had not made the law yet, so He didn't charge them with sin until the law was made. Isaiah 45:7 reads, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." How can anyone say the Lord creates evil? Does He make wicked devices for men to stumble over? No! There is only one thing that makes anything sinful and that is the fact that God made a law against it. When God made a law against it, it became sinful. So, sin is a transgression of God's law. God said, "I create evil." Therefore, you have no right to create evil. If God doesn't say it is sinful, you have no right to say it is sin. I have no right to say it is sin. I have no right to create evil. In other words, God is the lawmaker of the universe and He made the laws. It is up to us to live by those laws.

Why is it sinful for a man to worship idols? Because God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the Iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exodus 20:3-5) God made a law against worshipping idols. "Thou shalt not take the name of the

Lord thy God in vain." It is sinful because God made a law against it. If a man does it he transgresses the law of God. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." (7 and 8) Now, the Sabbath day is a day just like any other day. The sun comes up about the same time and sets about the same time as on other days. But there is one thing that makes it different. God hallowed it and sanctified it and made it a day of rest and worship. When man violates the Sabbath, he transgresses the law of God. He commits sin because God made it a law. Man transgresses when he violates that law. "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (v.12) Why is it a sin to do dishonor to your father and mother? It is because God made a law against it. "Thou shalt not kill." It is wrong to kill because God made a law against it. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (v.14) Why is it sinful to commit adultery? Because God made a law against it. For illustration we will use this story. In a certain town Jane married John Jackson. But, Jane had a living companion. She had separated from her husband, divorced, and then remarried. Also, Sue and Bill Evans lived in the same town. They had never been married before. When they married, God put His seal on their marriage. He blessed that marriage and home. And, His smile and sanction were on it. But, at the same time God frowned on the other marriage. God said, "The works of the flesh are. . . adultery. . ." (Gal. 5:19) "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21c) John and Jane were living together as man and wife the same as Bill and Sue. But, the difference is one couple has violated the law of God. Therefore, it is sin for them to live together for it is transgressing God's law. Sin is the transgression of God's law and God made a law against adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal." (v.) 15 God made a law against stealing. That is why it is wrong to steal for it is violating the law of God. Even to steal from God violates His law. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." You are not to tell something that is not so against your neighbor because God made a law against it. "Thou shalt not covet. . ." (v.17) God made a law against covetousness. That is why it is sin. In Galatians 5:19 we find these words, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness. . ." "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:28) It is sinful because God made a law against man committing adultery by eyesight. And, to have an unclean mind, so that you laugh at filthy stories is also sinful because God made a law against it. If you tell filthy stories it is sinful because it is uncleanness, and God made a law against it. The tobacco habit is an unclean habit. It defiles the body — defiles the blood stream. God said, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (I Cor. 3:17) He made a law against us defiling this temple. "Lasciviousness," this means to dress lustfully, for women to wear short dresses that expose the underneath part of their leg when they are sitting down. "Idolatry," is sin because God made a law against it. "Witchcraft," is sin because God made a law against it. Whether it be the ouija board, the fortune teller, spirit medium, warlocks, black magic, or any other form of witchcraft, it is sin because God made a law against it. Witch-craft has the same root word from which we get pharmacy. The unlawful use of drugs is sinful. "Hatred" is sin because God made a law against it. "Variance," that contrary spirit that causes trouble everywhere you go is a sinful thing because God made a law against it. "Emulations," outburstings of jealousy whether it be in the home or in the church, it is sinful for God made a law against it. "Wrath" — if you get mad and fly off the handle it is sinful because God made a law against it. "Strife" is sinful because God made a law against it. No matter how right we are, when we contend for our point until we become ugly in our contention, we become sinful because God

made a law against it. "Seditions," uprising against authority is sinful because God made a law against it. "Heresies" (false doctrine) is sinful because God made a law against it. "Envyings," that old envying spirit that causes some to go out and undermine someone else to ruin their influence or talk against them, or do things against them because of that old envious spirit is sinful. We may be tempted to envy and resist it and it leave, but that thing you have to hold down and suppress is the old carnal nature. We need to get rid of it. But, when it becomes active until we do things to mistreat people or hurt their influence, then it becomes sin, because God made a law against it. "Murders, drunkenness, revilings. . ." are all sin because God made a law against them. God said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (I John 2:15-16) So revelling is a sin because God made a law against it. That is drunken parties, gambling, dances, big-league ball games, prize fights, wrestling matches, rodeos, carnival, bowling alleys, pool halls: all of these things are a part of revelling. ". . .and such like. . ." What is it that is like these things? Now remember these things are wrong because God made a law against them, but what is like them? The television is exactly like the picture show. It is sin because God made a law against it. It is like the prize fight for it can bring the prize fight right into your home, or the wrestling match, or the big league ball games, or the dance, and a lot of other things that are not right. Therefore, the television is sin because God made a law against it. The rest of that verse reads "of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

I Corinthians 6:9 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate," (that is women, like men and men, like women) "nor abusers of themselves with mankind," (homosexuals) "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Now these things are sinful because God made a law against them. These are things and of course there are others not listed in this chapter that throughout the Bible, God has made a law against, making them sin. But, if God has not made a law against it, then I have no right to do so. Sin is a transgression of the law of God.

Another area we want to deal with is personal convictions. There are personal convictions. God does not require the same of everyone, but He deals with us personally. Now, there are some personal convictions which are for a period of time. This is a very important thing in the area of personal convictions to realize there may be a personal conviction which has a time element connected with it. Then, there are personal convictions which are lifetime convictions.

The first thing we would like to notice is one of the personal convictions with the time element. As Christ sent the twelve out He commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse. But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. (Mark 6:8-9) But toward the close of his ministry, Jesus told them that had a purse to take it. If they had two coats, take them, and they could take their provisions and necessities along. Now, had not Jesus lifted that it would have been forever wrong but, it was a personal conviction for them. If they had a personal conviction, then God has personal convictions for others. And, if that personal conviction had a time element connected to it, there may be some other personal convictions that have a time element connected to them. Now, I don't want to leave a loophole for

folks to back up on a personal conviction and fail to do the thing that God demands of them. On the other hand, it would have been bondage for the disciples to continue to live by that personal conviction which had a time element connected to it. We see the same thing in Acts chapter four. The disciples in those days who had possessions, sold them and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet. It was a matter of a need that had arisen and God put it on them for the present situation which was not a continual thing at all. It was a matter of a personal conviction to them which had a time element connected to it. It is a wrong and sad thing when folk take this scripture and interpret it and teach it for our day. If everyone sold all they had and put it in a common fund and lived in a commune system, there would be several disadvantages. In the first place it would certainly hinder mission work. Secondly, it is like the old story in the reading books about the hen that laid a golden egg every day. Her owner got greedy and decided to kill the hen and get all the eggs at once. When he killed the hen, there were no more eggs. When we sell everything and put it in one common pot, then we kill the hen that laid the golden egg. However, it was never God's law for them to sell what they had to give to the poor. It was always a matter of personal conviction. For Peter said to Ananias, "Whiles it remained was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (Acts 5:4) Ananias and Sapphira did not get into trouble because they hadn't given all, they got into trouble because they lied and wanted people to think they had given it all away when they had kept back part of it. Peter told them they could have lawfully kept back part of it because it was not required of them to give all. They didn't even have to sell it — they made the choice to do so, . . . was it not in thine own power?" If there was ever a scripture that could clarify this matter of personal convictions, it is this one . . . was it not thine own?. . . was it not in thine own power?" They did not have to sell it and when it was sold, they did not have to give all the money. Why did you lie to the Holy Ghost? So, there is personal conviction.

Adam Clarke's comments on verse 34 read, "It was customary with the Jews to call the poor together, to eat of the sacrifices; but the priest, etc., were incensed against Christ and Christianity, consequently the Christian poor could have no advantage of this kind; therefore, by making a common stock for the present necessity, the poor were supplied; so there was none among them that lacked. This provision therefore of the community goods, which could be but temporary, was made both suitably and seasonably."

Also, I would like to give you Dr. Whedon's comments on verse 32 taken from vol. 1 on page 62, the last paragraph. "The very term said implies the law of property still remains." In other words they still did not have to sell the property. It was theirs and it was their own voluntary choice. They did it at an impulse or a direct leadership of the Spirit to meet the present situation.

Another scripture that shows this was a temporary thing was when John was speaking to Gaius in III John, verse 2. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." We have little information on this Gaius — he could have been the same Gaius Paul spoke affectionately of — but that matters little. The fact was he had not given all he had. He was some kind of a business man and he had the opportunity of prospering. John said, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper, " — that your business might prosper, your farm might prosper, or whatever it was that he owned, might prosper. Then he said, "That ye be in health even as thy soul prospereth." The standard of prosperity is the soul. It is the first prosperity. It is the vital

thing. But, the next thing is a financial prosperity and a health prosperity. Certainly this could not have been a commune system of giving all that he had or there would have been no way for him to prosper because it would all have belonged to the commune. So, this definitely proves that it was a matter of personal conviction, it had a time element attached to it, and it arose to meet a certain need.

Then we find in Romans 14:1-7, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him to stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Here Paul, gives us two illustrations of personal convictions. He says one person may have a personal conviction that he is not to eat meat. The other person doesn't have. So, he eats meat. Then, they were living close to the law. There were some who personally felt they ought to keep the new moons and the sabbaths — this is not talking about the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day that God has required we keep. But, it is talking about holy days of the law. He said there were some who could still keep them, but they regard that to the Lord. That is their feeling. Don't judge them for it is a personal feeling with them that they ought to keep that day. So, they keep it to the Lord. Certainly this is a scripture that ought to clear up all questions about personal convictions. There is such a thing as personal convictions.

Now I would like to deal with why God gives personal convictions. Why does God convict one of something and not another? Of course, the first thing is what we have already discussed and that is the fact, as it was in the early church, sometimes God puts things on us to rise to a certain condition or need of the hour. These are the areas of temporary personal convictions. It is for a time and for a need. And, when that need has been filled perhaps God will lift the feeling of maintaining this conviction because it was for a certain time and for a certain need. But, these are only the temporary personal convictions.

The second reason God gives personal convictions is every one of us has a different personality. Even our fingerprints are different and God deals with us according to our own personal needs and our spiritual welfare. We are not just a bunch of puppets. We are individuals.

There is the universal law of the Word of God that God has made for all ages, and for all people. Thank God for that mighty and unspeakable wonderful work of God in giving His laws. But, on the other hand, God deals with us as individuals. He gives us personal convictions because He knows it is best for us according to our own personality. Things that will meet a special need in our own lives. God convicts us of those things — things that would be a hindrance in our personal lives that might not hinder someone else. God asks us to stop it or take it away. This is all a part of the reason why there are personal convictions, because God is dealing with us as individuals and speaking to us, asking us to do or not do the thing that is best for us to do or not do. Thank God for the personal dealings of God in the matter of personal convictions! Sometimes God gives a personal conviction

because He wants it to humble us and help us walk closer to God. Someone else may not need that personal conviction. Or, perhaps, the thing that would humble you wouldn't even humble someone else. It is a tragedy when folk get proud of their personal convictions, or proud of their spirituality or proud of the fact, "I can't do that but others can." That comes from a carnal heart and it surely grieves God because God deals with us in the matter of personal need. God may give us a personal conviction because it is better for our health. He may want us to quit doing something because it would hurt us physically, that He wouldn't speak to anyone else about. But it doesn't matter, their physical make-up may be such that it wouldn't hurt them. Now I have no personal convictions against eating shrimp but it makes me deathly sick. Had God spoken to me not to eat it, He would have known what it would do to me. But, I learned the hard way by getting sick from it.

Perhaps through your personal conviction God may somewhere use you in His work in a way unknown to you. A thing that is absolutely legitimate and you feel it is all right for you to do but all at once the Holy Spirit speaks to you and convicts you on that and asks you to quit doing it. He gives you a definite personal conviction. You wonder why because there is really no scripture against it. When it becomes clear that it is God dealing with you, then do as He directs. Because, down the road it may be the very same thing that God has asked you not to do that if you did it you would be an offense to someone else.

I don't feel clear to go into the circumstances but there was a certain thing which God had spoken to me about several years ago that He wanted me to do. It wasn't a matter of right or wrong. It certainly wasn't a matter of law but I had been doing that thing for possibly ten years. I was preaching in a camp meeting and a man got up and spoke against the thing. Some of the brethren were doing the thing God had asked me not to do. It seemed to be almost a real offense to that man. So, the Lord had prepared me to where I could be a help to him. I thank God that He was concerned about that man enough to ask me to quit doing this small thing that meant so little for His glory. Bless His Name!

So, God may give us a personal conviction for someone else's benefit. But, it matters not if it can be a blessing to others, it is our privilege to maintain that personal conviction. Another reason God may give a personal conviction, He may want you to deny yourself of something for His glory. What a privilege!

Now let's consider why we should not preach personal convictions. It is a very tragic thing when anyone preaches their personal convictions. The first reason it is wrong for us to preach personal convictions is because God has made no law against the thing you have been convicted on and you become a lawmaker rather than a follower of your own personal conviction. If God has made no law against it, it is certainly not for others — it is for you because He has told you it is wrong for you to do it. So, you live and die by your own personal convictions unless it is something with a time element attached to it. It is wrong for us to make our personal convictions a part of God's law. Real God-given personal convictions give liberty to the individual. But, what may be liberty for us may be bondage for someone else. To put our personal convictions on others is the greatest bondage a group can get into. A group that does not believe in personal convictions, that believes what God convicts one of must be measured up to by everyone becomes a people of great bondage. Actually, they become miserable in their bondage of not doing things because someone else couldn't do it.

Now take, let's say, thirty-five people, that is a small number. If everyone had to do everything everyone else did what would that situation be like in thirty years. God may convict one of one thing and another of another on and on. But each conviction becomes a law to the others until after while they would be in such bondage they couldn't do anything. Perhaps God may convict someone to wear solid colors. I'm sure God does talk to some people along that line. But, that is not a conviction for someone else. Or, He may convict concerning a certain style of shoes, or other things. These are just some illustrations of things God may convict different people of. If everyone takes the personal conviction God gives to a specific individual it becomes a bondage rather than a liberty.

There was a certain person who got up and preached a personal conviction. Had they intended to be just telling a personal conviction they certainly did not make it plain. They preached against a certain thing that was a personal conviction to them which would have been legitimate in a godly home if they felt that was what God required of them. But, a very conscientious young woman heard this preached. She felt that if this was wrong she did not want to do it. So, the devil took advantage of it and she began to live by what that man preached. That very thing became a great wedge to break up that home, because it was not made clear that it was a personal conviction and not for everyone. The fact is since it was a personal conviction, it did not need to even be mentioned from the pulpit or told anywhere. It is with much reluctance that we ever mention personal convictions lest someone else should feel they have to do the thing God has talked to us personally about. The only time we mention it is perhaps if we are preaching on personal convictions and let folk know that is our own personal property. It is not for anyone else and we care not if anyone else ever does it.

Then, the Bible teaches we are to have charity toward those who have personal convictions. If the Bible emphasizes anything in this fourteenth chapter, it is a spirit of charity. It says, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not." If that man has a personal conviction against eating meat, don't despise that man. Don't love him less than you would if he ate it. Don't let that be a ruffle in your fellowship because he feels like he can't do a thing that you can do. Or, the same in the respect of a holy day, or any other conviction, God just used this as an example in His Word. Don't let a man despise a man that has personal convictions, or criticize, or make light of him as long as he is not pushing those personal convictions on someone else, then let's have charity toward him. Let's not despise him. He said if you have a personal conviction and someone else doesn't have that same personal conviction, don't you despise that person because those are his personal feelings and he feels like he can do and you feel you can't. So, don't despise him, don't criticize him, but have charity toward him and love him. Even in some areas when folk misunderstand the scripture, we can't agree or go along with it, but we certainly can have charity toward them. Divine love is the highest law of God. Certainly, in this area of personal convictions we must have that quality of divine love. And, we ought to regard and respect and honor the man or woman who does not have the same convictions we have. This is a very vital thing in the area of personal convictions — remember others may and you cannot, but you must love them, you must love them. You must respect them and honor them in their personal convictions.

A word of warning. This is a conscientious life and walk with God. No one is a Christian who is not conscientious. They may profess but we have to be conscientious to be a Christian. Some are more conscientious than others, we will grant that, but we have to be conscientious to be a Christian. The more conscientious we are the more God may deal with us along the line of personal

convictions. But, the devil will also take advantage of us and try to get us to do things that will put us in bondage and that will bring harm to the work of God. Remember this — the devil drives, the Holy Spirit leads. The devil will bring something on you in urgency while the Word of God which is the highest authority says, "Try the spirits, see if they be of God." Don't follow every impression. I know there has to be that quality of being quick to obey God and walk in the light, but on the other hand, in this matter of personal convictions God does not want us to rush into them. He wants us to try the spirits. I have made some sad mistakes in my life by not trying the spirits longer and being more sure before I took a stand. So, in this matter of how to know a personal conviction, whether it be of God or not, I would like to give you some suggestions. The first definite way is the fact that the Word and the Spirit will never cross each other when the scripture is properly interpreted. The Word and the Spirit will always agree. If an angel tells you to do something cross-ways with the Word of God, don't do it. Or, if we get a vision that we are to do something that is cross-ways with the Bible, that God's Word says thou shalt not, then we are not to do it. The highest authority on earth is the Word and the Word, properly interpreted, and the Holy Spirit will always agree.

The second way to try a personal conviction to see whether it be of God — what kind of fruit will it produce in our lives? Will it make us more godly if we pursue this impression, or the voice that we feel is the Spirit of God? Will it make us more godly or will it make us less godly? If it will make us less godly then it is not of God. Will it make our life more useful, more successful, or less useful, less successful? I don't mean on the first impression, after we have weighed it carefully from every way and we see it is not going to honor God then certainly it is not of the Spirit for the Spirit would glorify God.

The third thing, will it be to the glory of God? Will it help us to be more humble and more spiritual? If so, it is of God. But, if not then certainly it is not of God. One very precious way of detecting whether it is of God or not is through the scripture. "Let the peace of God rule in your heart." There is never any rest to a soul until you are willing to do the thing you feel is of God. However, when you have said a perfect yes to it, but there is no rest in your soul, for it doesn't bring peace, then beloved, it is not of God. Down through the years, the real God-given convictions have been something that makes soul peace and there is a wonderful liberty that goes with it. Some things become settled that this is what God wants. There is no question, this is God's leading for me and for my life. "Let the peace of God rule in your heart." That is one of the precious things about a God given personal conviction. In leaving this point we would again remind you the Spirit leads and will give you time to know that it is His leading as you follow.

In closing, I would like to deal with the thought of the privilege of God-given convictions. What a privilege it is to have God-given convictions! The Psalmist knew something of that. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. The Psalmist used a personal pronoun "I, my, me, or mine in every clause — in every verse he used the personal pronoun usually twice. Then we lift out the phrase, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for

his name's sake." What a privilege to think that the Bridegroom of my soul would ask me to do something, just because He loves me, that He wouldn't ask anyone else to do! Isn't that a privilege! Aren't personal convictions glorious? Because it is the Lover of our souls who asks us to do it — the Shepherd of our life. He leadeth me — He may not lead you every step that He leads me, but He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. It is my own personal privilege to follow. Every couple who are really sweethearts have some things they like especially their companions to do. Perhaps, a certain way they would like for the wife to wear her hair. Or, perhaps, a certain color they would like for her to wear. A certain way they would like her to do something. It matters not whether anyone else in the world does it, but it is the choice of the bridegroom that his bride do that. So, she does it for him because she loves him. Jesus is the Bridegroom of our soul. And, if the Lover of our soul asks us to do something it is a joy to please Him. He doesn't ask someone else — it is our privilege to do it. We don't want anyone else to do it unless He asks them to. You wouldn't find a bride going around asking every other girl to do those little things that her lover asks her to do. No, she would do it herself because it is precious to him. That is the way in this matter of personal convictions. We do these things because they are precious to the Bridegroom of our soul. So, personal convictions are a real privilege. May God bless this truth to every reader.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 4 Judging

"For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (I Cor. 5:12-13)

This chapter will be dealing with the subject of judgment. There is a commanded judgment. There is a forbidden judgment. There is a self-judgment. And, finally, there is the judgment of God. Beloved, had the Church carried out God's plan in judging, in these areas that God has commanded we judge, there would be a lot less sin and hypocrisy among the professed Church. God would be glorified and more people reached. Had Israel carried out the law that God gave them in judging idolatry, Israel would never have fallen into idolatry. They were commanded to take them out and stone them without mercy if they committed idolatry. But, Israel never carried out that law. Because they did not carry it out, many, many times they went down under the sin of idolatry. There are some areas God commands the Church to judge. Not only did He command us to judge, but He gave us a standard by which to judge. It is a very, very serious thing when we set in judgment on our brother. We find these words in Proverbs 17:15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." That is a serious matter. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, both are an abomination in the sight of the Lord. That is the same standard He placed on the ministry. Someone has said, "When a man answers the call to preach, he lessens the possibility of his reaching Heaven by 40 per cent." I believe that. Ezekiel 3:17-21 reads, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul." The man that stands in the pulpit, stands before men and women, and he must be faithful to their souls. Many times he realizes there is going to be opposition. Many times there is that feeling of — will we turn them from God? But, yet, on the other hand, as we stand before God, if we fail to give warning, we will answer before the judgment bar of God for the blood of men and women.

When it comes to judging, the Bible says, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just. . ." Beloved, when we know a man has sin in his life and we cover it up and justify that man,

we are an abomination in the sight of the Lord. Also, if we condemn a man who is innocent, we are an abomination in the sight of the Lord. In other words, we must know where we stand when we judge somebody. When we condemn someone, it has to be more than hearsay.

We want to notice some of the areas in which God commands judgment. First of all He said, . . . if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator . . ." (I Cor. 5:11b) — not just something you have heard about someone, but you have real evidence, you are duty bound to bring it before the church. Then it is the church's obligation to take the Bible step which is found in I Cor, 5:13b. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Paul, here in Corinthians, continues to deal with the sin of covetousness. When the dollar becomes their god, they are so full of greed that they take advantage of widows, or elderly people, or those who do not know the value of the merchandise with which they are dealing, etc., causing them to be a reproach to God and the church. They are to be dealt with in the same manner as the fornicator. This is not referring to that person who is close with their money but, one whose greed drives them to sin and reproach.

The next sin Paul deals with is idolatry. An idolater is a person who actually bows to idols, or worships idols. Then, a railer who is one who speaks bitterly or reproachfully with, or against, or at someone. This takes place in a carnal blow-up. What a tragedy for folk to go on and profess, and hold offices in the church, and yet they have carnal spells, and blow up and rail on folk. The church is duty bound to bring them to trial before the church, and put that wicked person away from among them.

The next sin Paul lists is the drunkard — that person who professes religion and hits the bottle. The church is to deal with them. Or extortioners — the crooks — the man that takes advantage of the widow. I don't know of anything much more crooked than a man who would take advantage of a widow. I was in a revival in Michigan. There was a widow woman who was selling her house trailer. She priced it to a preacher at a very low price. He agreed to take the trailer. On the way home, he said to his wife, "I can't buy that trailer at that price. It's worth more than that." He knew what trailers were worth. So, he called her. She had made a fair and square deal. But he said, "I can't buy the trailer for that price. I'll give you \$1500.00 more." I thought to myself — that is honesty! And, God will bless him for it. We are talking about a person that will take advantage of a widow. A person who is a crook, who would cheat or rob someone and still profess religion. That person is to be handled by the church and not let them go on and profess bringing a reproach on the cause of Christ.

There is another area the church is commanded to judge. The Bible says "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord. . . ." I Thess. 5:12. Jesus said that we were to examine the fruit of the false prophet in Matt. 7:15. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Verse 16 continues, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" You have a right to judge every preacher. You have a right to examine their credit. It is a tragedy when any preacher leaves a string of bad bills behind. Any preacher who is not willing to be examined is not worthy to preach.

My brother-in-law used to say, "You can dress a wolf up in sheep's clothing, but remember a wolf will make wolf tracks." And, so we are to judge the ministry, we are to examine the ministry, and know those who labor among us and are over us in the Lord.

There is not only the commanded judgment, but we are commanded to judge in civil matters. I Cor. 6:1 and 6:6 reads, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." We are commanded not to take our civil matters between brethren, before the law of the courts of the land. This scripture says if you have a problem between one another, bring it before the church. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (I Cor. 6:3) So we are to judge the civil matters of the church. Now, if two brethren have a dispute over a boundary line, or any other thing, bring it before the church. Don't take a brother before the law. Why? Because we are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. We are representing the gospel. We are representing holiness and we are not to take our brethren to the law and that before the unjust. Now this does not in any way, in a civil matter with the unsaved, forbid our going to law. In other words, if there is an insurance case — we are living in a day when we have to settle by court. The policy of the insurance companies today in settling cases where there are injuries is to go to court and there is no sin in that. You say, "Preacher, do you have any scripture to back this?" Jesus said, "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." (Matt. 5:40) Now, if it was wrong to go to law, He would have said don't go to law with them. But Jesus never forbade them to go to law. The Bible did not forbid us to go to law. And, God has ordained the laws of the land. But, He does not permit us to go to law before the unbelievers, and spread it out before the world that there are problems in the church. This has been dealing with commanded judgments.

Now we would like to deal with the area of forbidden judgments. There are some areas where God forbids us to judge. We read in Matt. 7:1. "Judge not that ye be not judged." Now, if we leave it there, and many folk do leave it there, the Bible contradicts itself, for in I Corinthians it said, "We judge them who are without." So, we have to go to the context to see what He is talking about. Matt. 7:2-5 reads, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." What is Jesus talking about? He is talking about mote hunting. He is talking about judging in small things. The Bible is actually saying, don't be a mote hunter. Beloved, the Bible says, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." (I Peter 4:8) In other words, love puts the best possible construction on the deeds of others. And, love tries to feel like folk meant better than what it looks like. You say, "I can't understand that, but I believe they meant well." This ought to be the way every person evaluates his fellow man. We need that fervent charity until we can put confidence in folk and believe in folk, and not be a mote hunter. I'm not talking about preaching, I'm talking about judging. Folk talk about non-essentials. If God said it in His Word, it is essential. We need to preach against the things that are wrong. But, I am talking about these areas of small things. We can sit around and pick and cast folk out in our mind until we lose confidence in them over "motes," because they do not come to just what we feel like they ought

to — while souls are dying lost. Don't be a mote hunter. Have confidence in everyone you possibly can. It is impossible for us to judge folk in these areas for we do not always know how they feel. If we could know how they feel, we could understand why they do what they do.

We have preached all across the country in many, many places and in different kinds of atmospheres and environments. And, I know an area in the United States, that believes if a preacher preaches with his coat on when it is hot, he is proud. I know some more folk who believe, if a preacher takes off his coat, he is immodest. You couldn't please both of them. That would be an impossibility. (I used this illustration as an example.) While one man feels like, under God, I can't leave my coat on, it is easy for the other men to sit back and say, "That man is immodest. He is not living like he ought to live or he would leave his coat on." While, under God, he feels like if he pleases God, he has to take it off. On the other side, that man may get up there and preach, and sweat, and the other man sit back and say, "That man is full of pride." While that man, himself, feels if he takes his coat off he is grieving God. We are talking about the fact, if we could know how a man feels, we might judge him differently. Aren't you glad God is the judge!

We have been on the mission field, in Haiti, a number of times. The standard of living there is much different than it is in America. But, I have seen them walk in the light. Every year that I have been over there, I have seen them move up. Things I would preach against, when I came back the next year, those things would be gone. They would move up. But, I was sitting one day, thinking about some of the things they were doing, and feeling kind of bad about it, when my Heavenly Father said, "Son, I will judge them." I tell you it made me feel so good. Why? Because, God knows how much light they have. He knows their hearts. We can't judge in a lot of areas, because we can't see their hearts and don't know how much light they have. If we could know their hearts, then we would be better able to judge.

Then, we don't always see like the other man sees. Suppose a close friend of mine and I were both out in the country one day. Suppose he was standing over on one hill and I was standing on another hill. We were both looking into the same valley. And, it just happened that we both looked at our watches, and it was 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Then the next day I would be talking to another mutual friend, and say to him, "I was looking in a certain valley yesterday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock. There were two beautiful Angus cows." I would go on to describe those cows and how beautiful I thought they were. I would leave and an hour later my two friends would be talking together. The man I had visited would tell my other friend that Brother Poe said yesterday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock he was looking into a certain valley and he saw two beautiful Angus cows. His listener would drop his head. When asked what was wrong he would slowly lift his head and reply, "I always thought Brother Poe was honest. But, I was looking into the same valley, and I checked my watch. I saw it was exactly 2:00 o'clock. There was not a cow in that valley." But, the thing was, there was a tree between where he was standing and where the cows were, and he couldn't see them. He was just as honest as he could be, but he was not standing where I was standing. And, beloved, we can't judge because we are not always standing where the other man is standing. We can't always see what the other man can see. If we could, we would understand why he does what he does. We are not always standing where that other man is standing. We are not capable of judging a lot of areas. And then, beloved, we don't always know how much light our fellow man has. If we could know the light they have, then we could judge them better. We can look on and condemn, when we don't know how

much light they have. Therefore, we are not capable of judging a lot of times. We need to leave those things in the hands of God. This is not dealing with preaching, it is dealing with judging. A young man was saved under my ministry. He loves me, and I love him. He came where wife and I were, and he had on high top shoes, like I wear. He had on suspenders. He didn't have on any tie. Now, beloved, if the next time I see that boy he has slippers on, I am not going to say he is back of light. Because, I doubt if it is light. I think he did that because of the feelings he has toward me. What are we saying? Now, I am not referring to those who have declared they believe something they have read in the Bible and stood for this truth — and then go back on light. That kind of folk cannot have victory. If we are not walking in all the light, we do not have victory. It is impossible for anyone to be saved and live back of light. But, on the other hand, we can't always judge because we do not know how much light folk have. But, God knows, and He will judge them.

Many times children have been raised in the church. They have conformed to the standards, but it has never really become a Bible conviction with them. Perhaps, because there has been a lack of real Bible explanation concerning these standards. Although they went out in sin, God in mercy brought them back. They may not conform to all the standards they had in their youth because it was not really light. We may misjudge them and say they are not walking in the light when actually they have never had the light. Many of them have been destroyed through the lack of wisdom and harsh judgment. Had they been given time they would have seen the light and walked in it. So, you see how incapable we are of judging. It behooves us to deal with souls with compassion and care and long suffering.

And then, we are incapable of judging a lot of times because we don't know the other man's circumstances. If we could know that man's circumstances, we might understand why he does what he does. There was a very, very dear friend of mine for whom I had held meetings. We had been very close. But, his wife was unsaved and she was working. He was a pastor. One day he came home, and his wife had bought a television and put it in the living room. I came into town a few days later. He said, "Brother Poe, I want you to ride down town with me." We got into the car, went down town, and he poured his heart out to me concerning this problem. He said, "What can I do? What shall I do?" Under ordinary circumstances, I would have said, "Load the thing up and take it back, or else take it out and get rid of it." But, beloved, here was a young man with a call to preach. I knew his wife at that time, thank God she is not that way now, had a high temper. They had two little children. I knew to make the wrong move might break up that home. What that would mean to his ministry! I had to say to him, "Brother, I can't tell you what to do. Let's just pray that God will work it out." That is what we did. It wasn't very long until this man came home from work to find the television was gone. She had taken it back and traded it for a stereo and put it where the television had been. I went there for revival. The last Sunday night that woman came to the altar and prayed through and got saved. Why? Because he moved as God gave him wisdom to move. We stand by and find it easy to say "I'd do this." But, we don't know the other man's circumstances. God knows the circumstances and He never misjudges.

Here is another example of how easily one can misjudge others. While in revival several years ago, there was a godly lady who testified with victory, but she had short hair. After a few nights, she came to us and explained that she had had brain surgery. Due to this surgery, her hair had to be

shaved off. It would have been easy to have misjudged her and classed her as a sinner, or a backslider. But, God knew her circumstances and did not condemn her.

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." (Romans 14:1-3) You can see by this scripture that some feel it is wrong to eat meat and others feel it is not wrong. Also, in those days many of the Jews were still commemorating the Old Testament feasts. In verse 6 it speaks of regarding the day as a holy day. It was not speaking about the Sabbath, but was speaking of the holy feast day. If they don't regard the days, they don't regard it to the Lord. The Bible tells us not to judge them. (Romans 14:1-6.) We are talking about the areas of forbidden judgment. There are some areas we need to just simply leave in the hand of God. We will have a lot better victory in our own soul, if we will just leave folk in the hand of God. It is a blessed day when we reach the place that we learn we don't have to make every one do everything we think they ought to do. It is our place to preach the gospel. It is our place to stand by the truth. But, let's leave the judging with God.

I remember the time in my own life I reached the place that I said, "Lord, I'm going to Heaven regardless of what anyone else does — I'm going to Heaven. I don't have time to stand around and see who is and who is not going this way. I have made up my mind by the grace of God, I am going to keep my soul clear. I am going to keep sweet in my own heart. I am going to make it through to the City, by the grace of God!"

There is another area of judgment which is very serious. That is the area of self-judgment. Why is it important that I judge myself? There is another reason why self-judgment is so important, but one reason is that others are looking at my life. I have to live in such a way that I have confidence in my own life, and so that I will not be a stumbling-block to others. Each of us needs to be careful. We need to live godly. We need to live close. It is not a matter always of are we in the clear, but how does this look to someone else. The Bible says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (I Thess. 5:22) If this thing is going to be a stumbling-block to someone else, then let's not do it. "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." (Heb. 12:13a)

When in Arizona one time in a revival, there were two elderly ladies going to drive back to El Dorado Springs, Mo. They would be going to within 55 miles of our home. By traveling with them the plane fare to Joplin would have been saved and I could have been of great help to them in the driving. The thought came to me that they were both older ladies and I am a young preacher, so it wouldn't look bad. But after going to pray, the Lord said to me, "How would it look if the preacher left Phoenix with two women? They might not always say they were old women. How would it sound, the preacher left the valley with two women?" Calling her up I said, "I can't do it." Why? Because others are looking at our lives. I need to judge myself and keep a close account. Dear hearts, let's be stricter on number one than we are on anyone else. Whether we are a preacher or a layman, let's be stricter on ourselves than on others. Let's hold a higher standard on ourself than on others. Let's judge ourselves closer than we do any body else. It is this area in which we need to judge. It is that self-judgment we find in I Cor. 11:31. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." In other words, if we judge ourselves, we should not be condemned. Beloved, we are more

capable of judging ourselves than anybody else in the world, because we know our own heart attitude. We know how we feel on the inside, so we can judge ourselves. Sometimes we may speak and it sounds harsh to someone else. But, we know down inside we didn't feel that way. Brother Earl Greer was traveling with us. I had to deal with him about something. After I got through talking to him, I went in the house and my wife said, "Daddy, you were cross to him." I said, "Oh, Mama, I didn't aim to be." I didn't feel cross in my heart, but, I knew if it sounded cross to her, it sounded cross to him. So, I went back and said, "Mama said I sounded cross, Brother Greer. I want you to forgive me." What are we talking about? I knew I wasn't carnal. I knew the feeling of my heart. Though it sounded cross to him, I knew there wasn't anything cross in my own heart. We can know the attitude of our own heart when we speak. Others may misunderstand, but we can know the attitude of our own heart. On the other hand, we can smile while we are boiling on the inside. They tell about two ladies who were out making calls, an elderly woman, and a younger one. They knocked on a door and a lady came to the door. She talked terrible to the elder one of the two. When she got through, they started on down the street. The younger woman looked at the other and said, "I don't see how you can stay so sweet." She said, "I was boiling on the inside." It is amazing how some folk can smile while inside they are boiling. They are just as carnal as they can be, while they are smiling on the outside. They may fool somebody else, but they are not fooling themselves. They know the attitude of their own heart. You know whether you get mad or whether you don't. You know whether you are jealous or whether you are not. You know whether you have to suppress that thing or whether you don't. You know if there is envy there, or whether there isn't. You know that inward reaction. Whether you are clear or whether you are not, you can judge yourself. Beloved, because of the fact we know how we live, we know the motives of our heart. We are better qualified to judge ourselves than anyone else in the world. We must live until we have confidence in our own lives. We know how we live at home when the doors are closed, better than anyone else knows. With no one there but our own family, we know how we live. We know how we carry on between one another. We know our home relationships. We know whether we live a sanctified life at home or whether we don't. We know how it is in our secret private life.

Then, you know how it is on the job. When you can't get that tap to start on the bolt, you know how you react. When the wrench slips off and you skin your knuckles, you know how you react. You know how you react when the boss mistreats you. You know how you react under pressure. You live with yourself. Therefore, you can judge yourself. We are talking about self-judgment in the area of our work life. You know whether you laugh when filthy stories are being told, or whether you don't. You know whether you have eyes full of lust, or whether you don't. You know how you live away from home when no one else is around and you are miles from home, you know how you live then. You can judge yourself because you know how you live in your own private life. Beloved, it is a rewarding thing to judge yourself. The Bible says, "Judge yourself that ye be not judged," — that you be not condemned. One of the greatest rewards is the fact that you have confidence in your own life. There is nothing better than just to live until you have confidence in your own life. It is a marvelous thing to have others to pat you on the back, but the precious thing is to have confidence in your own salvation. It is a rewarding thing!

The Bible also says, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." (Phil. 3:15) How thankful we can be that when we have judged ourselves, and there is not one thing between us and God — whether we

can pray, whether we can get blessed, whether we can feel God, whether we can see a ray of light — bless His Name, it is all right, thank God, because we are not condemned. We know the time when we got saved, we know the time when we got sanctified, we know we are walking in the light. If we cannot feel a thing when we have examined ourselves, and judged ourselves, we have got a right to lift our eyes of faith and say, "Thank God, I am saved, and I'm sanctified and ready for the rapture right now," — because we have judged ourselves. Thank God for the privileges of self-judging. It is blessed to feel clear. All the way to the depths of your soul, you can feel clear before God. What a blessed experience and privilege!

Self-judgment is also a very serious matter. It is a privilege, but it is a serious thing. What makes it so serious? We are living right in the doorway of the rapture. When Jesus comes, there will not be one minute to pray. There will not be one second to fix one thing. There will not be one moment to change one thing. We will either be ready or not ready in the moment of the rapture. Therefore, we must judge ourselves.

Beloved, when we come down to die, when we are pressing a dying pillow-gasping and breathing our last — our heart beats its final time and we cross the line of worlds. We will either be forever saved or forever lost. That LAST moment will seal our eternal destiny. There will be no way to change it after life is gone. That is why we need to be honest in judging ourselves. Everyone of us will be someone, somewhere forever. And, I want to say again, when we draw our last breath, we will be forever saved, or forever lost. So, we need to judge ourselves seriously before God.

But, even beyond that — "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" (Heb. 9:27). One day, we are going to stand before the mighty judgment of God. It pays us to judge ourselves now, and keep ourselves clear now for we are going to stand before the judgment bar of God.

The last area of judgment is God's judgment. Everyone of us, without exception, will stand before the judgment bar of God. We are going to the judgment. The Bible says in Rev. 20:12-13, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their words. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Everyone of us, one day, is going to stand before the judgment bar of God. And, God is going to judge in divine justice. When I think about the justice of God, God put a standard of judgment upon Himself. I would be perfectly willing for God to judge me from memory, because He never forgets, and He never makes a mistake. I would be perfectly willing for God to call my record before the judgment out of memory. But, God has set Himself a standard of judgment. First of all God said, "The books will be opened." He is going to judge us according to the Bible. This is God's standard, dear hearts, it will behoove us to measure up to it. We will be judged by the Bible. Not only so, but, He is going to have our written record. The song writer said, "Oh my record, oh my record will be there on those pages dark or fair, Oh my record, oh my record will be there." Beloved, every moment of every hour, God is making a record of our lives. And, He said He would bring every good work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. God is going to bring our everyday life to the judgment. God is going to bring every deed to the

judgment. Everything that has not been covered by the blood will come to the light of the judgment. In that hour we are going to face our record without excuse. When we stand before the judgment bar of God, He is going to judge without partiality. The fact that I have been a preacher will not give me one merit beyond anyone else in the world. I want to repeat that. It will not give me one merit. If I have sinned, I will be just as lost as the drunkard out there who has never gone to church. I will be just as lost as the gambler, or just as lost as the outlaw. If I have sinned, my preaching will not give me one merit at the judgment bar of God. We will be judged there with just judgment. We are going to face our life as it is and give an account to God in His justice. Not only will it be a just judgment, but it will be a judgment without mercy. There will not be one ray of mercy shown at the judgment. The Bible describes the judgment: men and women will fall, they will weep, they will wail, they will gnash their teeth, and writhe there at the judgment bar of God. But there will be no mercy. It will be too late to seek God. It will be too late to repent. It will be too late to find mercy. It will be judgment without mercy. . . every knee should bow, . . . every tongue should confess. . ." (Phil. 2:10b, 11b) But, it will be without mercy. Then, too, it will be final judgment, there will be no parole. There will be no pardon. It will be a final judgment. Our sentence will be an everlasting, eternal sentence. A million years after the judgment will not change that sentence one bit. There will never be one way to change that sentence. It will be a final sentence. And, we are going to the judgment just as we are.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 5 The Offended Brother

"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." (Proverbs 18:19) Let's examine some of the meanings of the word offended. According to Young's Concordance, the Greek carries this thought: to make to offend, to cause to stumble, to scandal, to be a stumbling block. The Hebrew carries this meaning: to rebel, to revolt, to transgress, or to trespass. In the light of this scripture, we ought to be very careful in our words and our actions in dealing with our brethren lest we offend them. We have some responsibilities, as the people of God, to one another. We have some responsibilities to every Christian. We find that Jesus said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12) When we think about our responsibility to love one another, we feel like it is a high standard, because He said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 22:39b) Self is the standard of our love in Matthew 22:39. But, in John 15:12, self is taken out and Christ is the standard of our love. The standard of my love for my neighbor is how much I love myself. But, the standard of our love for the brethren is how much Christ loves us, and how He gave Himself for us. We are to love one another until we give ourselves for our brethren. In the rush of the fast age and the rising economy of this day, people are leaving others out of their lives and living more and more to self and for self. This is a deadening thing and it is affecting the people of God. That close love and that fellowship that we ought to have is wanting all across the country. But we are to love one another as Christ has loved us.

The Bible also says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2) When we see our fellow man going through a hard place, when they are facing battles, it is our duty to go in prayer and hold on to God for them until God breaks through. Beloved, the more we pray for one another, the more we love one another. If we carry the load, the church will prosper. To me it means more than that. It is not just a matter of me fulfilling a duty, but every person is going to be someone, somewhere forever. And, we need to do our best to help each other get to Heaven. We need to do our best to lift the load for those who are struggling beneath heavy burdens. For everyone that is battling, we need to stand by them and hold up their hands, and help them through. We are our brother's keeper!

Then the Bible says, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." (Romans 12:15) It is our duty, when our brethren are weeping, to have a heart that will weep with them. When they are rejoicing, our heart can rejoice with them.

The Bible tells us that we have an obligation to the erring brethren — that one we see missing the way. In Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." If you are going with the attitude of not restoring them, don't go at all. There are a lot of people who have been cut down and cut off that could have been helped if someone had gone to them in a spirit of meekness. If they

had gone with the idea of God help me to win them, help me to head them off before tragedy strikes, help me to head them off before they go deeper. They have missed the way, they have done wrong, but God help me to restore them back to peace with God and back to the Kingdom. Beloved, again, everyone is going to be someone somewhere forever. There are times when everyone needs somebody to help them. Jesus speaks of these little ones. In speaking to Peter He said, "Feed my sheep." Then again He said, "Feed my sheep." Why did He repeat that? He repeated it because of the fact that there are sick sheep, and there are well sheep. A sick sheep has to be fed differently from the way a well sheep is fed. The sick sheep must be taken care of or it will die.

He also said, "Feed my lambs." There are a lot of lambs that have been offended and they have died. When He speaks about the little one — woe unto him that offendeth one of these little ones — it is a serious thing to be an offender. We have been dealing with our obligation to one another, but now we want to consider the offender. In James 3:1 we are told not to desire to be many masters. Don't desire to be up at the top. The Word says, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3:2) This scripture is not talking about the perfection of sanctification. I wish sanctification did as much for our head as it does for our heart, but it doesn't. We get a pure heart when we get sanctified, but our head is a long ways from being perfect. This scripture is referring to that man who is mature, who is right in his doctrine and his teaching until he is not offending folk outside of the law of God. It is a serious thing to be an offender — "but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" (Matt. 18:7c) The scripture teaches that there will be offenses come from both inside and outside of the church. Many an offended one has lamented — I could handle it if it had not come from the church. But, regardless of where it came from, it is a serious matter to be the offender. It is a serious thing to cause someone to stumble. It is a serious thing to cause someone to lose confidence and go down, and become bitter. "But who so shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:6)

Back in Bible times there was a way they put people to death, especially if they wanted to make a public example of them. They tied a heavy stone around their neck, took them out to the sea, and threw them overboard causing them to go down and to never surface again. There could be no funeral, and there could be no memorial, so there could be no remembrance of them. This scripture teaches that that is a mild treatment in comparison to the offending of one of God's people. For, the scripture said you would be better off to have a millstone hanged about your neck and be cast into the bottom of the sea than to offend one of these little ones. Beloved, we had better be quick to apologize when we see we have hurt someone. When we have hurt someone and we are aware of it, let's be big enough to go back and say, "I'm sorry." It is better to apologize a dozen times when it isn't really necessary than to cause someone to become bitter and harsh and sour. Bitter people are the hardest people in the world to win. An offended brother is harder to be won than a strong city. He is harder to be won than it is to get into a castle with doors that are shut and barred. So, if we find out we have been a hindrance and have hurt someone, let's go back and ask them to forgive us. Again I say, it is better to make some back tracks, to take some extra blame, to suffer some things yourself than to see someone offended and become bitter and miss the way. I am talking about the offender now. It is a serious thing to be an offender, to offend one of these little ones for whom Christ died.

We are going to offend enough doing our very best. But it is easy for folk to be careless and cut people off.

One time, in a very spiritual, old-fashioned, godly church, there was a family that had just started coming to church. One of the women-folk came in a pair of jeans. The newcomer heard one of the old saints say to someone else, "She's got a lot of nerve coming to church dressed like that." The next time she came back was when they rolled her casket in front of the altar. She had been so offended she did not come back anymore, until the preacher preached her funeral. What are we talking about? Offenses. That didn't have to be said, the woman wasn't saved. She wasn't professing anything. That statement was hurtful and unnecessary. God help us! We need to be careful lest we offend.

Then, He spoke about the world being an offender. For example, offenses may come from school systems. We can expect this among the unsaved in public schools, but it is a tragedy when it occurs among Bible School students. If offenders could just see that if they drag that child down, it would be better for them to have a millstone hanged about their neck and to be cast into the bottom of the sea, than to offend that child. Out there on the job, where the world is laughing and making fun; it would be better to have a millstone hanged about their necks than to cause that person to go down — to backslide, and to become offended. It would be better to be drowned in the sea than to offend that person. It is a fearful thing to be an offender. Beloved, I want to emphasize — we hold the faith of men in our hands. Let's live carefully and godly lest we be an offender and cause one of these little ones for whom Christ died to go down.

Now let us consider the offended. When a man becomes offended, there are very few who can break through that wall and lead him out. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." Like a castle door' that is shut and you can't get in. It is a hard thing, but the Bible does not say it is an impossibility. When we think about a strong city back in Bible days, we think about a city with walls around it. It is built with high walls and strong gates. It is well guarded with soldiers and armies. It is a city that is strong and hard to overcome. That is the thing an offended man does, he builds a wall around himself until you can hardly get to him. He builds up a wall of unforgiveness. All he can see is how he has been treated. That wall of unforgiveness keeps on growing higher. It keeps growing until it grows into grudges — those old grudges that are buried deep in his heart. When you try to talk to him, he puts up this wall of unforgiveness, saying, "But look how they have treated me. Look what they have done to me." Beloved, this high wall is hard to break through.

Then we find the wall that joins onto this wall of unforgiveness is the wall of bitterness. They become so bitter! Let someone get bitter, and then they are critical. In their bitterness it is hard to even try to get them to see their need because they are full of criticism. They talk about the hypocrite. They talk about the faults of the saints. They are finding fault.

Built on to that wall of bitterness and grudges, there is another wall of resentment. They resent people. They resent the church. There may be a few they have confidence in and yet they have their eyes on the rest of them. They resent the people of God. They resent especially the folk at whom they are offended. This blinds them to their own need. It is hard for them to actually see their own heart need, because they are behind that wall of resentment.

The last wall is the loss of confidence. We have already covered that — the loss of confidence. It is a terrible thing for folk to make the statement, "Well, if they are going to Heaven, I don't want to go." But, at the same time they will go to hell with the same ones they don't want to go to Heaven with. In their minds, they don't believe they are going either, but, they will likely go to hell together.

There they are blinded behind those four walls. You say, "But, Brother Poe, is that man or woman without hope that has been offended? The one that is harder to win than a fenced city, are they without hope? Are they lost?" Beloved, they are lost unless somehow they can see themselves. One of the greatest days in anybody's life is when they realize they are behind those walls and they open the door. Only the person within has the ability to open the door. It is marvelous when that lost person comes to the realization that it is their responsibility to do something about their own soul need. I would like to emphasize that, because of the fact that until then they will go on with their bitterness until somehow God can get them to the place they can see they are the one who is lost, and they had better do something about it.

The first thing we are going to have to do is start to break down that wall of unforgiveness. The only way to break it down is to begin to forgive. For the Bible says, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:15) It means to simply drop the charges and say, "Lord, I am going to leave them in your hands and I will forgive them." You may say, "But, Preacher, you don't know what they have done tome." But, Beloved, there is only one way and that is just to forgive. Just drop the charges and leave them with God.

If somehow folk could get a revelation of Christ hanging there on Calvary, with that thorn-pierced brow and the blood oozing out around those thorns. If they could see Him with the torn flesh, those nails driven through His hands, those nails driven through His feet so that every time He tried to raise the weight off of His hands with His feet, those nails would push up between the bones in His feet until He couldn't stand it. He would let that weight back down on His hands. And as the hours began to darken, that mob was still going by mocking and making fun. About the hardest thing there is to take, is being made fun of, but they were mocking Him. "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." (Luke 23:35b) He looked out over that mocking crowd and in all of His suffering he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34b) Beloved, if Christ could forgive them in that hour, then we ought to be able to forgive, too. If we could see the long list against us, then surely we would forgive.

I remember some of them He forgave me for, some of them that being a preacher's boy, I was worthy of being cut off. But, I'm glad He forgave me. If folk could see Him and remember He forgave them so much, it would help them to forgive others.

The only way to really get bitterness out of your heart is to forgive, to just drop the charges, and leave folk in the hands of God. That is the only real way to find forgiveness and get out of this wall.

And then, Beloved, it is a marvelous thing when folks can somehow get a glimpse of their privileges in Christ. Oh, how good it feels when that old grudge is taken out of the heart — how good it feels when that old bitterness is gone and you just don't feel it anymore. You know how you have been treated, but that old bitterness is gone and you just have a heart full of forgiveness. What

a blessed change! But, it is your privilege to be delivered from the bitterness. It is your privilege to have a forgiving spirit. And then, it is your privilege to have the joy of the Lord on your own heart. It is a blessed hour when anyone settles it that they are going to Heaven regardless of what others do. It is so good to have it settled that they can say things about me, mistreat me, and criticize me all they want to but, I am going to Heaven. I am going to keep the blessing of God on my own life. That is a marvelous day.

It is a glorious day when you pray through and get sanctified. Get that thing out that clamors for revenge. Get that thing out of your heart that would cause you to get bitter. Get it all cleansed out. What a privilege it is to press your way into heart holiness.

And then beloved, it is our privilege to walk with God and have fellowship with Him. I am talking about those behind the walls in that city of the offended. Those that say, "I am going out. I am going to break the walls down. I am going to be free from all of this. I am going to know the joy of the Lord. I am going to know the blessing of Heaven. I am going to know the privilege of praying and getting my prayers through. I am going to know the privilege of being ready when the trumpet sounds without a minute to pray. I am going to see inside of Heaven. Thank God!"

The biggest help to any offended person, is to see that I can enjoy the privileges of salvation. I need not be bitter! I need not carry this old grudge. I can have the joy and the blessing of Heaven. But, what a tragedy to go on and live an offended life — a life of one that is bitter and sour, then to come down to meet God with that attitude. Dear hearts, this scripture exhorts you, that if you are offended, some way break out of it! Dear Reader, if you have been battling bitterness, if you have had an unforgiving spirit, if you have had your eyes on someone that kept you from getting saved, Beloved, battle your way out of it. Jesus, Himself, declared, "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:42-44) Jesus must have meant something more than cutting off your hand. Because if you have a hand that offends you, it comes from the heart. From the context of this scripture — He said the man that offends, it is better that a millstone be hanged about his neck and he be cast into the sea. He is meaning that whoever it is, no matter how good a friend he was, when he becomes an offense and you have gotten bitter against him, my friend, somehow pray until you get clear over the top of him, until he passes out of your life. You are going to Heaven regardless of what he has done.

Jesus says it is better to go into Heaven maimed than having two hands to be cast into the fire that shall never be quenched — than to go into hell where men will have a living memory. What an awful memory it will be, when folk are writhing in the flames to remember — I knew I ought to have been saved. I knew I could go to Heaven. I knew that I could have life. But, I wouldn't forgive. I wouldn't forgive! Beloved, the wail of a million years from now will be why, why didn't I forgive? Why didn't I get that out of my heart? Why didn't I get victory over people and go on and go to Heaven?

"If thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not and the

fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:45-48) At any cost, whatever it takes, break away from offenses and come out of that city, and settle it before God that you are going to Heaven. The tragedy of living all your life behind these walls as an offended brother, is the fact that you are going to become more bitter as you go along. You are going to become more sour in your soul. And, it is going to be harder for you to break out and get to God.

It has not been too many weeks back since we went to the bedside of a woman, that I have seen with the glory. I have seen her when she was clear with God. She had a husband that was just about as mean as a man can get. He was a great big, six-foot-tall fellow. He would beat her and treat her like a dog until finally she would leave him. Then she would get saved and she would go back to try it again. Again, he would beat her and demean her and abuse her. Finally she would break down and lose out with God and leave him again. That had gone on for years. I don't know how many times he has demeaned her and beat her until she would have to leave. But the last time it happened, she left with such bitterness, that she erected a wall between herself and God. In the past, even though she would backslide, she would still look like a holiness woman. But, this time, she cut every restraint and threw herself to the world. She became critically ill and her preacher brothers did not think she would live. We went to her bedside. I got down by her and was talking to her and praying with her. We prayed with her quite awhile. Then she said, "I can't forgive him. If he goes to Heaven I don't want to go. He is liable to repent in the last hours and God will forgive him and take him to Heaven." She was so bitter that even in the face of death, not knowing if she would live or die, she couldn't forgive him. Wouldn't that be a tragic hour, to come down facing eternity when you wanted God — but you couldn't forgive? An offended brother; you couldn't forgive! Gasping, dying, demons gathered around, but you couldn't forgive. And, you will never find life until you forgive first. "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:15) When you from your hearts do not forgive men their sins neither will God forgive you yours. We will have to forgive. Beloved, what an awful thing it is to die lost — lost forever! You are going to be someone somewhere forever! There is not a one of us that can save you. Dear reader, if you have something that stands between you and God, if there is an unforgiving spirit, no one can reach you. You are going to have to break out of those walls yourself, and settle it — I am going to forgive. I am going to find God. Dear hearts, out there somewhere in the Lake of Fire a million years from now writhing in torment, you will be saying, "Why? Why? Why didn't I forgive? Why didn't I get right with God? Why didn't I do something about it? Why didn't I get saved?"

Beloved, if you are lost, don't go on like you are, but seek God. Backsliders, if you have been looking at someone else, and they have been a hindrance to you, remember it is you that will be someone somewhere forever! That thing that has stood up in front of you every time you have thought of getting saved, you had better break through it and turn to God. It will look mighty small when you are pressing a dying pillow, when you are facing eternity. Beloved, why don't you break through and seek God? Backslider, why don't you come back to God?

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 6 Temptation

We can be tempted just as much after we are sanctified as before. However, we will have more power to resist temptation — the blessed indwelling of the Holy Ghost makes us more sensitive to sin and wrong attitude. Human weaknesses are revealed more through His indwelling. Thank God for the Holy Ghost who is faithful to reprove, check, and guide us away from sin. This is one of the reasons everyone ought to press into this wonderful experience of heart holiness because He, the blessed Holy Ghost, is such a safeguard to our soul against sin. There is something in the holy heart that abhors anything which has a tendency toward carnality. Therefore, we can recognize these temptations and resist them. If we count temptations carnality we would be in the fog when actually it is only a temptation.

The first area of temptation is the temptation toward pride in the sanctified heart. Now we are delivered from pride when we get sanctified — the old carnal pride is taken out. Yet, there is a temptation toward pride and a possibility of giving in to that temptation and losing our soul. We find Lucifer was holy — there is no question but what he was holy. He was the highest archangel of Heaven. He not only had holiness, but he had angelic perfection. Also, he had the beauty, power, and knowledge of the highest archangel of Heaven. Such beauty — the Bible describes him as having a covering of jewels and he was called the light bearer. We do not know how long angels inhabited the earth before chaos between the first and second verses of Genesis. During that time the angels praise Lucifer for his beauty, his glory, and his strength. Through the praise he received, eventually he began to admire himself. And, that is the tragedy. When we begin to recognize our own abilities and admire them, that is the first step down. Oh, that somehow we would stay away from that as far as we possibly can. Through pride he was exalted to the place he over-estimated his power and glory and became vain and lifted up. That is what pride always does. Then comes the fall. God hates a proud look. He will not tolerate pride. So if Lucifer in all his holiness and perfection of an archangel fell, then there is an extreme danger of us being lifted up and falling after we are sanctified.

Also, the Apostle Paul said in II Cor. 12:7-9, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Commentators differ so widely on this point, that we will not give our opinion of what the thorn in the flesh is. But, it really doesn't matter, it is the truth this scripture contains that is important. God wants us to get more out of this scripture than what the thorn is or He would have told us what it was. Whatever it was, it was a messenger of Satan to buffet him. That carries the thought of a man that is being beaten — like in the boxing bouts — he is being buffeted and beaten. And, the Apostle Paul, because of the thorn in the flesh is being buffeted — he told us

twice. When God's Word repeats something twice, He wants special emphasis put on why it was given. The first part of verse seven, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations," and the last part of that verse reads, "lest I should be exalted above measure." The first and last part of the seventh verse emphasizes the fact this thorn in the flesh was given that Paul might be kept humble before God. Then he said the strength of the Lord was made perfect in weakness. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." So, if the Apostle Paul needed a thorn in the flesh lest he be exalted above measure, then there is a need of God's people guarding lest they be exalted and fall after they are sanctified. Oh, Beloved, where is the preacher that hasn't had to face this thing after they have been unusually helped of God. The devil will come and whisper in their ear, "Look what you have done!" Or, perhaps after an altar has been lined, the devil says, "Look what you have done!" He is tempting you to be lifted up and exalted. But, then the Holy Ghost reacts from within. He abhors that thing and we pray, "God help me!" Beloved, that is not a lack of holiness, that is a sign of holiness. The reaction from within tells whether we are sanctified or not. But, there is something by far more deadly than this that the ministry needs to watch — the fact of praise that comes continually to the ministry. It is a flood to the ministry and we must have the Holy Ghost. It is not a matter of something that comes suddenly upon you, that the spirit detects and resists. But, it is something that through the years, unless you are careful, will work on you. We are talking of sanctified people — it worked on Lucifer, who was a created holy being, until he began to evaluate his own power and his own worth. And, we can begin to evaluate our own ministry and go down on the slide of pride. Or, a singer can be praised through the years, and then begin to evaluate and to go down rather than recognize the Holy Ghost. Oh dear Beloved, we of the ministry, there are two things we need to realize — the Holy Ghost makes a difference in any man's preaching. The second thing — the Holy Ghost gives conviction. He speaks to hearts. He is the One who gives the message. He is the One who locates the hearts and he is the One who should have the glory, not the preacher. We are talking about the danger of being exalted after we are sanctified. Not only the ministry, but every person has this thing to watch somewhat. The ministry must take the greatest precaution because they are in the limelight and they receive so much praise, compliments and flattery. This thing can creep in on them gradually until it kills them spiritually and they go down. Oh what a fearful thing!

The Apostle Paul prayed for God to remove that "thorn" three times but God told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." In other words, Paul you need this thing in the flesh. So, God sent it even if it was a messenger of Satan that brought it. We must recognize this danger.

Also, we find in I Timothy 3:6, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into condemnation of the devil." This is referring to ordaining an elder. Don't ordain a novice lest the devil take advantage of him. Now Paul wouldn't advocate ordaining unsanctified people, but he said not to ordain a novice lest the devil take advantage of him and he be lifted up with pride and fall into condemnation. We must be on guard unless we miss it and fall after we have enjoyed this great experience of heart holiness.

Psalms 24 in verse 3 a question is asked. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" Verse 4 answers the question. "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully." The clause "who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity" — if there were no danger of being lifted up after sanctification the Bible

would not have made this statement. This scripture declares clean hands and a pure heart are no guarantee that you will get into Heaven because there is the possibility of getting lifted up into vanity and falling after you are sanctified. So, there is a real exhortation and real warning against being lifted up. But the Bible counteracts this by urging us to seek humility. The Bible says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3b) I Peter 5:6 says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." The Bible also says for us to be clothed in humility. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (I Peter 5:5b) The glory of this exhortation to humility and some safeguards against pride are found in Phil. 2:3 which reads, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory;" that is pride. "But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." Oh, Beloved, this scripture has many times stirred our hearts. It is easy to recognize that there are many, many preachers who are far better than this preacher. It doesn't take humility to recognize that. Just open your eyes and look. Pride could blind one until they couldn't recognize that by judgment. It lets us know that there are many who are better, but it is hard to put yourself clear at the bottom — if you are going to be real honest, it is hard to put yourself clear to the bottom and esteem all of them better than yourself. This scripture didn't say esteem all others better than themselves, but it said esteem others better than yourself. It is easy for folk to get up and say like Paul, I am the least of all. It is easy to quote that scripture, but it is not easy to put yourself down there really in your mind to where you have reached the place the Apostle reached. Oh, for more humility! What an exhortation! What a self-abasing scripture God has placed before us.

Then He tells us one way to safeguard against being lifted up and to help us put others above ourselves. Verse 4 "Look not every man on his own things. . ." that is what the devil would like you do — look to his own accomplishment and success and glory in them, "but every man also on the things of others." Look and see how God is helping others and how God is using others, how their slate is full, how God has sent them out into His work — these will help us to be humble. Then if you still have any problem just measure yourself along the side of Peter, or Paul, or John and surely that will help bring you down when you have seen how God has used these godly men. Then if you still have trouble read on with verse 5-7. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men." Oh, dear reader, today, how can anyone exalt themselves above the place of a servant? How can preachers feel they have to give me the best or they have to cook the best for me? How can they feel that way when actually Christ took upon Himself the place of a servant. We ought to take the place of a servant. That more than any thing else will help us to be humble.

There are some earmarks of humility over which the devil often takes advantages and accuses the brethren who actually are humble in heart. One of these earmarks of humility is when they have been busy visiting with others. Perhaps you haven't seen someone for a long time and they want to know about you. You talk and when you go away that something inside of you says, "Did I talk too much about myself? Have I failed to exalt Him as much as I should?" Brother, those are earmarks of humility and the fact that the Holy Ghost abides. There are checks along those lines of being lifted up. It is a tragedy when we lose it. It is a lack of humility when this is gone. If we get proud of our humility in feeling we are humble enough — that is an earmark of pride. The heart must cry out for more humility or there is something wrong inside.

There is a temptation toward pride but humility will never revolt against holy or modest dress. Pride revolts against dressing like holiness people ought to dress. It is a proud heart that revolts against the standards. It is a proud heart that is unteachable. One of the definitions for humility is that you are teachable. If a person is not teachable, they are not humble because they feel they already know it all. The more teachable we are the more humble we are. So, we can judge our humility on our teachableness.

Another earmark of pride is when we can absolutely look over all our faults, not seeing our own blunders and mistakes. The more humble we are, the more easily we will detect our own faults and failures. An earmark of humility is the feeling we are not as humble as we should be and desire more humility.

Now, we want to consider the more common temptations. We are going to be using James, chapter one, verses twelve through sixteen. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Now, God did not do the tempting. He said, "Blessed is the man that endures temptation for when he is tried. . ." the devil brings temptation but we are tried through those temptations. For example, when we are tempted toward something, and we resist it we have been tried, and we have stood true which helps us receive strength. Our faith will also strengthen. Because we have resisted we will receive a heavenly crown. That heavenly crown will not fade away. Next he begins to deal with being tempted rather than being tried. Verse 13 and 14, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust; and enticed."

Jesus was tempted through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The devil said, "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." (Matt. 4:3) This temptation was the lust of the flesh. The lust of the eye — he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and said if you will fall down and worship me, I will give these to you. The pride of life — Jesus was taken up on the pinnacle of the temple — He was tempted but it didn't conceive. He stood clear. Adam and Eve were tempted that way. Every one of us will be tempted through these three areas. Back to James we read, "Then when lust hath conceived, . . ." Now here is the whole secret — when we let that temptation overcome us and decide to do it, until then it is not sin — it is not conceived. It is only a temptation, we resist the temptation and the temptation is overcome. We are tried and by overcoming are made richer. Our soul is strengthened and we become more godly because we resisted this temptation and came triumphantly through it. Now, when we let the temptation into our heart, and we let it conceive, then we sin. Every man that steals, first commits the sin of covetousness and lets it into his heart until it conceives. Then it brings forth death because it conceived in the heart and became an act of the will. It is sin when it is an act of the will. The fact needs emphasized at this point that we can be tempted with anything that is evil. No matter what sin it is, no matter how vile or vulgar it may be, we can be tempted with that sin. Evil thoughts come to the mind of the most pure but we have a trap door between our head and our heart. When evil thoughts come to the mind, the heart immediately resists them. This closes the door which is a sign of a holy heart. It is when we invite them in and sit down with them and commune with them and enjoy their presence, that is when it is of an evil heart. But, remember, the devil always has access to your mind. He can bring any kind of evil thought no matter how vile it is — he can bring

it to your mind. As soon as the holy heart recognizes it, it resists it and throws it out. Sometimes at the most untimely places the devil will assail you with thoughts that you abhor. But, the fact you abhor them and throw them out is a sign you have a holy heart. Remember, whatever is sin, no matter how evil or how black or how terrible it is, whatever is sin, you can be tempted with it even with a holy heart. But, the fact that you resist and overcome that temptation will strengthen you. Sometimes folk go through the most unpleasant circumstances where they are really tempted, but they resist the temptation. They stand because they never let it in. They never even let themselves think on the thought of yielding to that thing. They resisted. When the devil jumps onto you and says, if you were where you ought to be you wouldn't be tempted with such things — remember, the devil can tempt you with anything that is evil. But, if it is resisted and not let in the heart then you are the conqueror and the devil is defeated. You also become stronger because you resisted temptation and overcame it.

Remember again, the greatest safeguard you will ever have is to be sanctified. It is the holy heart that has more power to resist temptation. When the holy heart resists temptation you have been tried but, you will receive a crown of life in the end.

There is another area of temptation and that is toward envy. A sanctified person can be tempted toward envy. Envy is an uprising inside that makes you dislike people that are friends, and those who excel you. That is not a temptation, that is carnality. If you feel like talking about them and hurting their influence — that is carnality. But, there can be a temptation toward envy. When it is resisted it flees and the heart remains in peace unless the devil assails and tells you you are not sanctified or you wouldn't be tempted toward envy. We are not leaving here a cover-up for carnality. But, certainly there are areas along this line that will save a lot of heartaches if folk can recognize that there is a temptation toward envy and there is a temptation toward jealousy when resisted it leaves. But, if that thing brings dislike and accusation against the innocent — that is carnality. When it explodes it is sin. But, there is also a temptation.

There is a temptation toward revenge over which the devil will assail and tell you if you were sanctified you wouldn't have that temptation. Now, if we give place to that, then we backslide. But, when it is resisted it leaves. However, if it is a thing that grinds in on you and you have to suppress it for hours — or days of suppressing uprisings, that is another thing. That is carnality. But, there are temptations to revenge which, when resisted, it may take a little while (not just resist and it leave instantly) but resist it and in a short time it will flee. It may re-present itself sometime but not too often.

These are areas of temptation that will save a lot of heartaches if we can recognize them as temptations. Again, there is no desire here to find a hiding place for carnality. On the other hand — there is a difference between carnality and temptation. Also, we have tried to reveal the difference in sin and temptation.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 7 The Hair Question

This chapter was a Bible Study given in a camp meeting on I Corinthians. Scripture: I Cor. 11:2-16.

The key to this entire passage of scripture is verse 15. If we don't take that, there is part of this area of scripture that we will misinterpret. ". . . for her hair is given her for a covering." (Isa) That could be read in another way and the original bears it out — her hair is given her instead of a veil — her hair is given her instead of a covering. The Bible uses the word covering because of the Old Testament practice among the Jewish women of the use of the veil. It was also a custom in the New Testament time among the women. But, the Bible says that now in the church, the hair is the covering. The woman's long hair is that that takes the place of the veil. For, everything the veil was in the Old Testament, the woman's long hair is in the New Testament. The veil was the symbol of modesty, decency, and submission in the Old Testament. The Jews felt every woman had to have a covering in public.

Preach along the line of long hair and folk will say, "Non-essentials," but the Apostle Paul never considered it so. He said, "But I would have you know," (3a) this is serious and important and I want you to know why. Verse 3 also says, "The head of every man is Christ." If a man has long hair he dishonors God. Verse 7 brings out why he dishonors God. "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head. . ." Notice the hair is the covering — "forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." Here are some comments on the image of God. Because man is the image of God he is sovereign over all creation, and thereby visibly reflects the sovereignty of the invisible Creator over all things. In other words, when that man looks like a woman he reflects on the image of God because God is not feminine. We often say a woman's hair has got to be as long as it will get to be long and if it is trimmed off a quarter of an inch it is short. If a woman's hair is short if she trims it that much, then a man's hair is short if he trims it that much. That is actually so. A woman's hair is short if she trims it any and so is a man's. But this scripture brings out the fact that man with his hair below his ears or down around his shoulders so that he looks like a woman reflects on the image of God. It isn't a matter of whether he cuts one inch or two inches or three inches, if he still looks like a woman it is a slam in face of the sovereignty of God. He is to reflect the image of God. That man is violating the scriptures if his hair is long enough to make him look like a woman. That is why a man ought to have a haircut that makes him look like a man. It is easy for preachers just to say it is a shame for a man to have long hair. There are times when we need to get down to the reasons for these people so they will understand it is not just a matter of us harping on something, but there is a real vital reason. Man is to reflect the sovereignty of God and to be in the image of God. If he looks like a woman, what an awful reflection that is on God. Men ought to keep their hair cut until they look like men. ". . .his head. . . is the image and glory of God." His head is the noblest part of his body and the most expressive of his personality. If he looks like a woman then

that man is actually expressing that he is not a man, he is no longer noble, he is no longer manly. He is no longer taking the place he ought to take. The Bible says, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" (14) In other words, it is a shame for a man to look like a woman. He is putting himself out of his place and becoming more like a woman. And, he is saying, "I'm no more manly. I am subject to my wife. I am no more filling the place of a man." But, most of all it reflects on the image of God. It is disgusting to see a womanish man. "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head." (4) Is it honorable for a man to pray when he is reflecting against the image of God? Is it comely for a man to get down and pray when he looks like a woman and is supposed to reflect the image of God? Is he going to approach God and get help from God when he is a reproach on God — when he is a reproach to the character and personality of God?

How long ought we to cut our hair? The Bible says, "Be ye not conformed to the world." You cannot follow the image and fashions of the day.

God is jealous for His glory. When man by having long hair reflects on the image of God, he certainly takes from the glory. Also, when a woman cuts her hair like a man and makes herself to appear manish, she being feminine reflects on the image of God. That is why in the Old Testament in Deut. 22:5 we find, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." So, when a woman wears slacks, pant suits, and jeans she makes herself look like the man who is to be in the image and glory of God. Thus, her being a woman she reflects on the image of God and that is an abomination. When men wear shirts with ruffles and lace on them they do the same thing.

Why should a woman have long hair? The first reason: her hair is her symbol of subjection. Preachers, here is a word of advice. When you are preaching against short hair, don't call women harlots that cut their hair. You never help them. You will make them mad and drive them away. They are not harlots. That may have come in back there through the French custom of the harlot, but this Bible was written before the French customs took place. After all, we are preaching to help people. We had an evangelist once who while preaching said, "These women who cut their hair look like a skunk that has been dragged through a brush pile backwards." He made folk mad but he didn't help anyone. That is not straight preaching. That is crooked preaching. It is hard and harsh, but it is not straight preaching. That man wasn't harsh, I wouldn't want to accuse him of being harsh. But, that was an unwise statement. To call folk harlots because they have gotten their hair cut is certainly not going to help them. The fact is, the reason we are preaching is to help them. We need to teach them that it is wrong giving them the scriptural reasons.

While preaching a revival in Bible School, one chapel service I was preaching on standards. I took time to explain why women ought to put their dresses down — why they should not be short. A young lady, I think she was a senior that year, got up that night in service. She said, "I appreciated the message this morning. Before, the preachers said put your dress down but they never told us why. Today I let the hems out of some of my dresses." It means so much if we can help the people see this is what the Bible teaches, and this is why you ought to do it. They will come a lot nearer doing something about it.

Now, let's get back to the first reason a woman should have long hair. Her hair is a symbol of subjection. When she cuts her hair, she is testifying to the world, I am no longer in subjection to my husband. By doing so, the Bible says she . . . dishonoureth her head. . ." (her husband is her head) by cutting her hair. In other words, it is a reproach for a woman to go around testifying to her husband that she is not in subjection. Your hair is your testimony to the world that you are a woman in subjection. Back in Bible times there were two classes of people who cut their hair. One was a Greek slave. When a Greek woman was taken in as a slave, they cut off her hair. The other was, you can read this in the Old Testament if you will follow through, when a Jewish man had an untrue wife he could cut off her hair as a sign of reproach.

The next reason: her long hair was a symbol of her freedom. If she cut her hair, it was a reproach because no Jewish woman cut her hair unless her husband shaved her head because she was untrue. That is the setting of this scripture. Paul was bringing out the fact that a woman ought to have long hair. Then, he brings out in verses 5 and 6 that it is wrong for a woman to trim her hair. "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered." In other words, if she trims off any at all she just as well shave her head. Therefore, long is just as long as it will get.

It says ". . . because of the angels." (10b) There is another scripture that answers this, "because of the angels" in I Timothy 5:21a. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels. . ." He is saying I am giving you a charge in the presence of the Lord and in the presence of the elect angels. So, the scripture plainly teaches that when you and I get saved "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7) "That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father. . ." (Matt. 18:10b.) Angels are sent down to be ministers to those who shall be heirs of salvation. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14) In every service there are as many angels as there are Christians. That ought to encourage our hearts — to think there are angels present. And, angels are holy. That woman who cuts her hair and comes into the house of God is an offense to the holy angels that are gathered there. She ought to keep in a holy attitude and dress in a holy manner. To go beyond the matter of hair, if she dresses in an unholy manner, it is an offense to the holy angels who are there. She ought to have long hair. And, of course, men ought to have short hair because they are in the presence of angels.

Paul brings out the fact that a woman's long hair causes her to have power on her head. The margin readings say, "That is, a covering, a sign that she is under the power of her husband." Remember, her husband is her head.

This brings us down to that matter — you judge, can a man come before God with long hair and disgrace the majesty of God? Judge yourself. Good common sense will tell you if a man is to be in the image of God and looks like a woman, could he come into the presence of God and bring the smile of God upon him? Concerning the woman, the Bible forbids her to pray or prophesy with her head uncovered (having short hair). She is standing before the people as a symbol of rebellion trying to preach to them to be in subjection to the Word of God when she is in rebellion. Now, if a woman

with short hair gets saved, she can't make it any longer than it is. She has to let it grow. God knows she is letting it grow and she can go right on just the same as if she had long hair.

On the other hand, "If a man have long hair it is a shame unto him." "Generally, long hair has been regarded as unnatural in man. Especially in Corinth, with its sexual perversion. Such long hair will make a man seem much like a woman and will thus bring a corresponding 'dishonor' upon him. The situation is just the opposite with a woman. 'Long hair. . . is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.' (15) By nature woman is given a covering which is in effect a veil. Godet comments that this long and rich hair is a natural symbol of reserve and modesty, woman's most beautiful ornament." (Beacon Commentary, Vol. 8, page 416.) The most beautiful women in the world are those who have long hair. It is becoming to them. And, it is a natural thing.

"But if any man seem to be contentious. . ." if anyone wants to argue about this, "we have no such custom." Paul is either saying there is no such custom as short hair or there is no such custom as long hair for the women. There is no question that the answer is, there is no such thing as short-haired women in the Church of God because Paul gave eleven reasons why it is wrong for a woman to cut her hair. The Apostles have no such custom as women with short hair, and men with long hair.

The scripture lesson covers the eleven reasons.

1. She dishonors her husband — verse 5.
2. She cuts off the symbol of her subjection — verse 5.
3. She disqualifies herself for the pulpit — verse 5.
4. Shame — verse 6.
5. Because of the angels — verse 10.
6. Nature's teaching — verse 14.
7. Good common sense — verse 13.
8. Her glory — verse 15.
9. God's preachers do not sanction it — verse 16.
10. No such custom in Churches of God — verse 16.
11. She cuts off her prayer life — verse 5.

Now let's notice the four methods God uses to get light to us. The first one is the scriptures. That is the greatest source of light. The second is your higher judgment or good common sense. The third is providence. The fourth is the sanction of God's preachers and God's Church. These are four

methods that God uses to get light to us. Certainly, we can use these four methods in this scripture. First, he gave the scripture (I Cor. 11:3-12) then he said your own good judgment. (verses 13-15) Providence — (sexual perversion) — the things which were happening there showed that men ought to have short hair and women long hair. The fourth — the sanction of the Apostles and the Church — where there was no such custom (verse 16).

We add this postscript with the thought in mind of saving some misfortunate woman soul anxiety and spiritual darkness. Is it possible for a woman to ever cut her hair and still be clear? In the first place a woman would have to be real sure she couldn't take care of her hair. There are folk who make many light excuses for cutting their hair. In the case a woman had to have brain surgery, they would cut her hair off. God wouldn't condemn her for that. I know a few cases where women had a rare skin disease. Blood and matter would ooze out of their hair. The only way they could ever dry it up was to cut their hair. It wasn't a matter of just washing their hair to keep it out. They couldn't get well unless they cut it. In a case like that, God understands. Those are isolated cases. But, we must remember these are exceptions to the rule and not the rule.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 8 Scriptures That Are Frequently Misunderstood

This chapter could have been entitled "Spiritual Problems that Have Arisen over Certain Scriptures." And, the title of this book is You Hold the Faith of Men in Your Hands. The emphasis throughout this book is how careful we ought to be to properly interpret scripture and properly face problems in people's lives lest we cause them to miss it in the end, or to wreck their faith. That is why this section will deal with many different things that have been problems in people's minds and questions for which they have wanted an answer. Having spent many years in the ministry and having had many people to come with spiritual problems, we feel that some of these things written down may be an answer to a lot of these questions and perhaps be a blessing and a help to folk who are walking with God. We trust the Holy Ghost will help us in getting this truth out until it will be a blessing to many who will read these pages.

TAKING THE SACRAMENT UNWORTHILY

The first question we want to discuss is the scripture in I Cor. 11:28-29. "But let a man so examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Some have taken this scripture, where it speaks of unworthily, and have felt they could never be worthy of taking of these precious emblems which represent the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Neither their goodness nor their works could ever merit them that privilege because this scripture has been misinterpreted or misunderstood, leaving the impression that it was our goodness or worthiness which gave us the privilege of taking the Sacrament. Because of this many have stayed away from the Lord's table and have not taken of the Lord's Supper.

None of us — no matter who we are — could ever merit taking these precious emblems. We are not worthy by our works. We are made worthy through the shed blood — thank the Lord. It is Jesus' Blood which transformed our lives and made us clean and brought us to Him. So, we are made worthy if our sins are forgiven and the blood is applied and we can come and partake of these emblems.

There are two things that make folk unworthy of partaking of these emblems. One of them is if we disrespect the Lord and don't really regard His sacrifice as sufficient to take away sins and we take this in an irreverent manner — lightly — not considering the fact that the Lord suffered and died that we might live. Now that is unworthy. But also, it carries the thought that if we have sin in our life, we are not worthy. The Bible said let every man examine himself. Now if we have sin in our life, we are not worthy of partaking of these emblems. Certainly, we would drink damnation to our own soul if we are not clear with God. (v.30) "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." But, if we judge ourselves, if we examine ourselves, and see that we are clear, then

we are not judged. The Lord will not put this judgment on us and we will not be in this position. But if we judge ourselves, and see that we are unworthy, then we are chastened of the Lord. We can get clear with God and get to the place spiritually that we can take the Sacrament.

But, this scripture certainly does bear out the fact of not discerning the Lord's body. Eating and drinking with no reverence and no sacredness, and no real thought that this represents the precious blood — this represents the broken body. The truth of this scripture of being unworthy is not a matter that we have to merit our worthiness of this sacred supper because we merit it through the blood. If the blood is applied and we are really saved, we ought to feel the need of partaking of this in remembrance of Him until He comes. On the other hand, if there is sin and we take of it irreverently then it is wrong.

WHO BELIEVES FOR HEALING?

Another question which has been asked the writer is — who believes for healing? In other words, when one is sick, does the sick person have to have faith before they can be healed? A sick person can pray and be healed without the prayers of anyone else. Their faith can reach through and touch God. In Acts 14:8-10 we read, "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked." In this case Paul perceived that the sick man had faith to be healed. He needed just a little extra touch in his faith to make it complete for his healing and Paul's faith blended with his faith and he was healed.

In James, the fifth chapter, there is quite a different story. We, too many times, when we anoint somebody, depend on their faith. That is not what this scripture teaches at all. Not disqualifying the fact that that person who is anointed, if they will believe God — they can be healed. We as the Church do not need to put the responsibility to believe on the sick person because many times when you are sick you can't believe. And, God doesn't put the responsibility on the sick person. It is marvelous when the sick person DOES have faith, but God puts the responsibility on the Church to have faith. The scripture reads, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (v.13-16) God never said a word in this scripture about the sick man believing. He said that we were to anoint him. And, Beloved, it is up to us to pray the prayer of faith. If we will pray the prayer of faith, they will be healed. The condition to be met by those who are sick is to confess their faults and pray one for another that they may be healed. I wonder if this fault-confessing business doesn't go farther than just the sick person confessing their faults "that ye may be healed." While this is the primary thing, yet if we expect God to answer our prayers we are going to have to keep the channels clear. But, getting back to the fact, God puts the responsibility on the one who anoints them. The person who is sick does not have to have the faith to be healed. If the person who anoints will have faith — God will heal. Someone that is in the crowd, it may not be the preacher at all, it may be someone that hasn't even touched the sick person who believes God.

And the Bible says, the prayer of faith shall save the sick." That includes anyone who will pray that prayer of faith. So, it is important that the Church accept the responsibility for praying the prayer of faith to see the sick healed and not depend on the sick person to have the faith to be healed. Sometimes when we anoint someone, they know they have taken the step of obedience, their faith operates, and they are healed on their own faith. The real responsibility in this fifth chapter of James is not placed upon the sick it is placed upon the Church — for us to pray the prayer of faith. The Bible says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," and "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." How much? As much as the need is. Enough to heal the sick — to see the bonds of affliction broken. And, if there is a lack of healing the Church has to take the blame for it. For God has placed the responsibility upon the Church, to pray the prayer of faith, and not upon the sick.

CALL NO MAN FATHER

The next question that has been brought to our attention concerns the scripture that says call no man Father. We read in Matt. 23:5-10, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." Adam Clarke, the Beacon Commentary, and McLaughin's commentary all carry out the thought that this word "Rabbi" never came into existence — giving men titles — until about the time of Christ. It possibly first became really attached to men or else where it really became popular was when the School of Hillel and Shannai arose and they began disputing between each other. There were three words used, Rabh, Rabbi, and Rabban. They were all combined in our common word Rabbi that we read here. But these others were brought out "Rabh" was a teacher and a man of high honor. "Rabbi" was greater but "Rabban" was infallible. When a man reached the status of being called Rabban, he had about all the authority. He was the greatest of all. These folk got to where they loved to be called Rabbi. The learned people became very proud insomuch that they wanted the common people to call them Rabbi. Jesus said, don't do that, you be humble. God is the One Who is the first authority, not man. Then He said don't let anyone call you Master for Christ is your Master. Christ is the Head of the Church and to call anyone else Master, makes them the head. I am talking about giving him a spiritual title as Master puts them in the place of Christ. And, Christ will never take second place — He is the Master.

Then "call no man father" — the second man to the president back in that day was referred to as father. Jesus said, "Call no man father." God does not have one second to Him. God is first and He is All. For us to take that title "Father" which actually belongs to God is something He tells us not to do. So, certainly we ought not — any man — take a title, a spiritual title as father.

This has nothing in reference at all to the matter of a man being addressed as Father by his children. We are the father of our children. And, that is not an assumed title. We are titled because we parented the children — father and mother. This scripture has nothing to do with calling your own physical parent, Father. Also, this scripture has nothing to do with someone being a Doctor. If they are a Doctor of Science, they have earned that degree in science. Or, a Doctor of Education, they

have earned that degree. It is not an honorary degree. If they have gone to college and studied and taken the courses required until they become a Doctor of Divinity, it is not an honorary degree. It is something they have earned. It is not a matter of just a flattering title. And, it is certainly not in any way taking the place of God or the place of something just for honor. There is absolutely nothing wrong with taking the title of any degree that is earned.

Now, I think every preacher should certainly stay as far away from the title Reverend as we possibly can. For the Bible does say "reverend and holy is his name." Therefore, I think that is an honorary title that the ministry ought to avoid. However, in business, like in a telephone book, it is a way for someone needing a preacher to be able to locate one quickly. But, we ought to stay as far from the title Reverend as we possibly can by using the terms elder, or evangelist, or pastor, or something else. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with calling an earthly father — Father. He said, "Call no man on earth," in other words give no man that title as a spiritual title or an honorary title. It has to be something that is real. We have to be the real father if we are father. No man spiritually has a right to carry the title of father because God is our only spiritual Father. We can plainly see Jesus brought this out because they were claiming these titles for honor and to be flattered. He said, don't put yourself up. "Call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." We need to take the humble place. This is really the theme of this whole thing. Don't exalt yourself. Don't take things just for a matter of exaltation and being lifted up, but be humble before God.

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

The question we are now considering has been a problem to many young people. Is it wrong or disrespectful of parents to discuss things concerning them when seeking spiritual help? In other words, if there have been problems between parents and children, and the child doesn't know what to do and needs spiritual help, is it disrespectful to the parents if they go somewhere else for that spiritual help and have to discuss things concerning the problem between them and their parents? The Bible says, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land. . ." That is the command of God — to honor your father and mother. But, when a child is having a real spiritual problem and perhaps parents are not spiritual enough to help them, or, they do not understand the problem the child is going through, certainly it is not disrespectful to the parents for this child to go to some godly Christian or some preacher that they can trust — to confide in without this confidence being broken — to go to this person and discuss the problem they are having between themselves and the parents spiritually. (It might not even be spiritual but it is affecting them in a spiritual sense.) They want advice, they have to tell some of the things they would rather not say concerning their parents. Yet, in order to get the help they need, it has to be brought out. Certainly that is not being disrespectful to the parents at all. The young person is not doing it to disrespect parents, they are doing it with the thought of seeking help. That is not disrespectful to parents. It is not breaking the commandment of God. Sometimes these chasms could be bridged. Perhaps the young person doesn't understand from an adult standpoint or the parents' standpoint. It is possible some outsider can show the child both sides and bring forth a better feeling, and a better understanding, or even correct the situation that exists. It is certainly not disrespectful to parents to

seek spiritual help when it concerns problems in the home. However, a word of advice, seek someone who is spiritual, someone you can talk to confidentially so the situation wouldn't be scattered or spread.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

The writer has preached different times along the line of intercessory prayer and the feeling that many times comes upon us when in real intercession. We have been asked to describe this feeling of intercessory prayer.

Our first experience of intercessory prayer as a young Christian was during the time we were going to Bible School. There was a girl in the school who had been there for three years. She had sought at the altar again and again, but would go away without victory. We went there for our first term and God in His mercy laid this soul on our heart. We didn't understand intercessory prayer at that time. We felt like we were lost. We felt the judgment of a lost soul. We walked over the campus that day feeling like a lost boy — yet we hadn't sinned. That night this girl went to the altar. When she went to the altar, we fell down behind her and began to pray. When others quit praying we were broken and weeping and holding on to God. We kept on praying until she prayed through to victory — then, all of that lifted and we could see that it had been a spirit of intercessory prayer.

There have been times down through the years that that has been our experience of real intercessory prayer. We just feel so lost — that lostness of carrying the judgment of that soul through to God. Many times young Christians, when they feel this spirit of intercessory prayer, cast away their confidence. They feel like — well I guess I have sinned — because they feel just like a sinner. But, there is no sin in their life. When you come to this place that you feel just like you are a sinner, if there is no sin in your life — tell God, if this is intercessory prayer to help you be faithful to it. Sometimes He will direct you to the person you are carrying the load for. And, sometimes the pressure will get so heavy you almost feel like saying, "Lord, can you lift it?" But, never do that! Instead say, "Lord, give me grace to bear this to get that soul through to God." It is such a wonderful, wonderful experience in any Christian's life to be able to bear the judgment of a soul. It is an awful feeling, and sometimes the groans and the pressure is suffering. But, oh, when that soul comes through, the joy, the deep peace, and the happiness of the glory and blessing of Heaven on our soul because we had been faithful to bear that soul to Calvary. We trust that this portion of this chapter will help souls to be better intercessors when you feel the judgment of a lost soul. Many times when there is a problem that arises in a church, you may not be particularly acquainted with it but, you begin to feel that thing in your own bosom. It is a matter of intercession — God bringing you to the place you can bear that thing to God. So, in intercessory prayer, let's live to where God can trust us with this kind of a burden so we can be real intercessors for Him.

BAPTISM

The question was asked — how long do we have to be saved before we are a candidate for baptism? Or, do Christians have to prove themselves before they are a candidate for water baptism? This question can be easily answered by the scripture. In the first place on the day of Pentecost, there were 3,000 saved and they baptized them that same day. When the Ethiopian eunuch was converted

he said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" The Philippian jailer — Paul took him and his household out and baptized them that night. So, really, the scriptural way is when a person is born again, they are a candidate for baptism — if they have a testimony of a real born — again experience. John said, "Bring forth fruit meet for repentance." In other words, you folks repent, and show that you have repented and sought and found God. So, when you have a real testimony, you are a candidate for water baptism.

Now, on the mission fields, the culture is different, I know they have their different customs. And, those customs are all right. There is no sin in this because of the culture and to them baptism means more than it does to us. I can see their viewpoint. But, really the Bible way is, if we are born again — if we are saved — then we are a candidate for water baptism. Throughout the Bible, as soon as they were saved, they were baptized.

BEING DEAD

The next question is a very serious one. It is — what does the Bible mean by "being dead"? This is referring to being dead when we are sanctified. Of course, the Bible speaks of being dead in trespasses and sins — which means you are dead spiritually. And then there is a death to the world when we get saved as spoken of in Romans 6:3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" There is a death in regeneration, a death to the old life, to the old habits, and to the old sinful things of the world. There is a death to those things — a real breaking off until that old life is not a part of us any more. "Old things are passed away and behold all things are become new." So, in a sense there is a death then. But the question that is asked here is talking particularly of what do we mean by being dead when we get sanctified. In Romans 6:6-7 we read, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Carnality is nailed to the cross when we get saved. There is a real blow given to the old carnal nature when we pray. through to a born again experience. That is a great experience but carnality is not dead. Christ was nailed to the cross the third hour, but He did not die until the ninth hour. Carnality is nailed to the cross when we are saved, but the body is not destroyed until we are sanctified.

That man who is crucified hangs there with his arms outstretched and the weight of his body hanging from his hands. But the diaphragm and muscles around his stomach would come up and shut off his breathing until he would die of suffocation in just a few minutes. By his feet being fastened to the cross, he can raise himself up, catch a breath of air and let himself back down. That is why they broke the legs of the thieves. They would let a criminal suffer as long as they wanted to let him suffer and then they would break his legs. Because he couldn't get his breath he would die in a matter of minutes. Just a little while and he was gone.

That is what sanctification does. It is the thing that breaks the bones and puts the old carnal nature to death. So, this area of death of which we are talking is the death to the carnal nature. In other words, that old jealousy, envy, pride, etc. is gone out of your heart. It is dead.

Another area of "being dead" is dead to our own will. That comes through a complete consecration. The will is not completely broken until the consecration is full and complete. Then our will is so submitted to Him that we belong to God like a cow belongs to a farmer.

Then there is the area of being dead to the world. The Bible says "And be not conformed to this world:" (Romans 12:2a) — so dead to the world that the fads and fashions of the world have no effect. When the dress standards of this world become shorter or longer, there is not a bit of a pull for you to change your dress standard. When the hair-dos come and go, there is not a bit of pull for you to follow those things because you have died. If folk are lined up to the old-fashioned standard because they feel like they have to go along with the church, but in their heart they would rather dress another way, they are not dead yet. They haven't died to the world. But, when they really die that world pull is gone.

In Galatians 2:20 we read, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Because I have died and have gotten sanctified does not change the fact that I am still alive — I am still human. I still have every human appetite I had before I got sanctified. It does not change any of the natural human appetites. It gives me more power to control them, but it does not change them. I am still human after I get sanctified. Folk can say, "If you are sanctified you won't get hurt — you are dead." I heard a preacher say you can stick a dead man with a pin and he won't flinch. That is not the kind of dead the Bible is talking about. We are still very much alive and if they stick us with a pin we will feel it. And, if they say cutting things, we will feel it. The fact is our heart is tender and we can be hurt deeply and cut deeply. After we are sanctified, we are dead, but not that kind of dead. But, the difference is we don't get sore after we have been hurt. One man said you can run over a dead man and it won't hurt him. We are not that kind of dead. We are still alive and we still have feelings. So, we must be careful in preaching against carnality that we do not label humanity as carnality. We are still alive after we get sanctified. We must be plain and clear in our teaching on this lest we get someone in confusion; preaching that if we are dead we won't get hurt, we won't feel bad about things, or we will never complain. We are not that kind of dead, we are still alive — very much alive, and we are very much human.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

The next question that has been asked and that we would like to consider is the scripture, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." To notice the context of the scripture, let us look at I John 2:13, 14. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." He wrote to different classes of people. I am sure this is because of the different classes of temptation. There is the temptation especially to children, of pride and vanity. The temptation to the fathers, or young men, or middle-aged men is pride and seeking to excel for honor and praise. The chief temptation for the

old man is covetousness and lustful eyes. While to the young man who is strong, there is the temptation of the lust of the flesh. So, he covered all of this in this answer, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world. . ." he said though you are sanctified, though you are strong, though you have overcome — remember, you still live in the flesh, you can still be tempted. You are not out of the reach of temptation. This is a real caution and a warning that we are still in the flesh and there is still a possibility of temptation along these lines. So, if our love turns 10 any of these, then, Beloved, the love of the Father is not in us. It has been our sad experience to hear preached from the pulpit—quoting this scripture — that if you love your house, the love of the Father is not in you. You can't love your house that is a part of the world. You can't love your cattle, you can't love a horse, or you can't love a dog. You can't love anything that is of the world like your car. Naturally no one loves it to the same point that we love our family, but there is a love for these things — a natural love. That is not a forbidden love at all.

There are folk who enjoy their cattle. We used to have a milk cow. It was a real pleasure to take care of her, to step out and call her and have her come. There is closeness there. Of course, you don't love them like you love a human or like you love God — it is a different kind of love. But, to preach that you can't love that cow is certainly wrong and that is not what this scripture is talking about. To refer to it in this way is taking it out of its context and teaching something the Bible does not teach.

Concerning this the Beacon Commentary says on page 369 paragraph two: "The things that are in the world which the Christian is told not to love cannot mean all the objects which go to make up the world. The expression is identical in meaning with all that is in the world. By this we may understand the element that makes the world the world, its fundamental determination and nature: There follows, not a catalog of what goes to make up the world, but three essential marks of worldliness: the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

This matter of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life in the love of the world is talking about this world system. Paragraph one on the same page in Beacon states, "This world is the system of life which has been established by unregenerate man under the influence of evil. It can without argument be said of this system that, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. One heart cannot contain two loves so hostile to each other as the love of light and the love of darkness. God alone is worthy to be completely loved. No man can serve two masters. . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

We see here how wrong it is to preach, teach, or even instruct that one can't love natural things, which would mean we couldn't love the scenery, or the beautiful mountains, or the splendor of the Great Plains, or any of the wondrous beauties that God has created. We could not love these things if we took that scripture to mean love not the world for certainly the earth is a part of God's creation. People can love the climate of a certain area. This is not the same kind of love that we love God with. I love to drive across the country and behold the beauties of God's creation. It is not meaning that kind of love. The best that I have ever read on this is taken from Daniel Steele's book *Half Hours with Saint John* pages 48-49. "The lust of the flesh: The flesh is the subject in which the desire dwells. It seeks to appropriate that which is like itself, material rather than spiritual. It is not sin, but has a natural leaning toward sin in fallen humanity. But, all unlawful pleasures are sinful and lawful gratifications of senses may become sinful by being excessive, as gluttony. St. John rarely uses the

term 'flesh' in the same way that St. Paul generally does, to denote that portion of man's nature which has an hereditary proclivity toward sin. The removal of it by entire sanctification is called 'the crucifixion of the flesh.' Rarely, if ever, is 'the body' thus used. The phrase 'vile body' is an erroneous translation of the body of our humiliation." (Phil. 3:21) The body is not to be crucified or flagellated, but sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, otherwise it will be polluted and degraded by the tyranny of the flesh.

"The lust of the eyes." The eye is the inlet of much innocent pleasure. But this pleasure becomes idle and prurient curiosity, when it craves unlawful sights, inflaming pictures, nude statuary, polluting scenic displays. the foul exhibitions of the circus, the cruel and savage exhibitions of the ancient amphitheater and the murderous excitement of the modern prize fight. The college regattas, baseball matches, and deadly football contests make their appeals through the eyes of myriads of spectators, to the bestial rather than the angelic in human nature. The public competitions of modern athleticism have degenerated into what Augustine aptly styles "sacraments of the devil." The lust of the eyes also includes the leprous novel in which scenes of debauchery are spread out before the imagination, the eye of the mind. The lust of the flesh seeks to appropriate the object of its desire, while the lust of the eyes is satisfied by enjoyment under the form of contemplation. The first is physical, the second is mental. Both are hostile to true spirituality, which lives only in the atmosphere of holiness.

"The vain glory of life." Priding one's self on a false view of what things are in themselves, empty, unstable, and unsatisfying. The Greek word for "life" frequently signifies, as it does here, "the means of life." By this we can readily see what he is actually talking about when he said, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world." He is not talking about loving material things unless we have a covetous love for money. Then it falls into sin under the area of covetousness. So, we find he is not talking about the material things but about worldly things.

OWE NO MAN

The next question that has been asked and we would like to answer is concerning the scripture, "Owe no man anything." We have to read quite a little scripture to get the context of this verse. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Romans 13:343)

We notice here it said, "Owe no man anything." Actually this is not talking about money at all except for our taxes. Inverse seven we read, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due;" that is paying your taxes, "custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another: . . ." To the magistrates they owed

tribute, and customs under the Roman jurisdiction. If there are customs due we are to pay them. Fear to whom fear is due and honour to whom honour — but our fellow man to whom we owe nothing, we owe love. Love is the fulfillment of the law. This scripture has nothing to do with a man borrowing money. To bear this out we are going to quote Clarke's comments on verse 8, vol. 11, page 147. "Ye owe to your fellow brethren nothing but mutual love, and this is what the law of God requires and in this the law is fulfilled." Also, Beacon Commentary gives us good sound truth on this. "The transition is from the precept, 'Render therefore to all their dues;' to its negative corollary: Owe no man any thing. This means, do not continue in a state of owing any of the obligations referred to in verse 7, but fulfill and discharge them. Get rid of all debts, not by denying, ignoring, or evading them, but by paying them: there is only one debt of which one can never get rid — the debt of love. Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. Barrett paraphrases, 'Let your only indebtedness be the mutual love you are bound to owe as Christians.' " (Vol. 8, page 253)

Of course, we know every Christian is obligated to pay their debts to be honest. If we do not pay our debts, we are worse than a thief because a thief steals what another has earned but if we don't pay our debts, we are stealing a man's investment and crippling his business to where he doesn't have the power of investment. It is a fearful thing to leave grocery bills, or gasoline bills, or mechanic bills, because of weakening that man's power of investment and endangering his business. What a tragic thing when a man has worked hard to get some money and someone has promised to pay him — they not only lied but they have taken the money that man has worked hard to earn.

Another question that might arise here is the matter of paying interest-charging a Christian interest which the Bible does not forbid. It forbids unjust interest. This matter of usury — if we borrow someone else's money that they could use to make money for themselves, then we ought to feel it is right to pay usury. So, I feel without any further comment we will give you what Adam Clarke says in Vol. 1 on page 416. "The increase of usury is called *neshech* because it resembles the biting of a serpent; for as this is so small as scarcely to be perceptible at first, but the venom soon spreads and diffuses itself till it reaches its vitals, so the increase of usury, which at first is not perceived nor felt, at length grows so much as by degrees to devour another's substance." It is evident here that what is here said must be understood of accumulated usury, or what we call compound interest only.

There may be times when folks have sickness or tragedy and they are not able to meet their bill, but, they can meet their creditors and face them with honesty to make arrangements that are agreeable. This will keep the respect of their creditors and keep themselves clear with God.

BAD DREAMS

The next subject we would like to discuss is — bad dreams are not a sign of inward sin. A young man came to the writer in a camp meeting one time. Someone had told him that if he had bad dreams it was a sin. That just isn't so! There isn't one bit of scripture to verify that. We dream in our subconscious mind and we are not responsible for what we dream. Anyone can have any kind of dream. You could dream your wife had died, but that wouldn't be a sign you wanted her to die. It might be a fear that she would die. Or, you might dream you had been in a fight. And, it is often that those who have used tobacco in the past, after they get saved, dream they are slipping around using tobacco. Anyone that has ever had any life of sin at all and then get saved, there are times when they

dream bad dreams. Even the best saints have bad dreams. That is not a sign of sin at all nor condemnation. No one needs to feel condemned over a bad dream. It is not even a sign that God is trying to talk to you. We know there are dreams through which God speaks, but they are different.

I CORINTHIANS 5:4-5

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Paul says in verse 6, "Your glorying is not good." In other words, you can't do that. This is what you are professing to do, but it is an impossibility. He said that the thing to do was to purge out the whole lump, put it out and clean up the church. But, not to gather together and say, "We are going to deliver this fellow to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that they might be saved." That is a false doctrine. And, he told them they could not do that.

FORGIVENESS IN THE WORLD TO COME

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. 12:32) The question is concerning the phrase forgiveness in the world to come. According to Adam Clarke it was a common thing for the Jews to say in the age to come, or in the world to come, which referred to the coming age. Christ is not implying there is any forgiveness in the next world. But, He is saying if a man blasphememes, there is no forgiveness for him in this world or in the world to come. It is not implying there is forgiveness in the next world or in another age. He is just stressing the fact that there is no forgiveness — no way for anyone to find forgiveness. It is not in any way intended to teach you can find forgiveness for some sins after this life because this life is our probation time. There is no forgiveness after this life. "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27) He goes to the judgment just exactly as he dies. There is no time to get right after death. This life is our time of preparation in seeking God. So, in this scripture, Jesus is strongly stating the fact there is no forgiveness for the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which we comment on in another chapter but, I wanted to point out the part about in the world to come. He is not implying there is forgiveness for any sin in the world to come.

WHAT IS THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILDREN?

This is no doubt an age — old question. Many, many have commented on it. Used to be among the older people there was a lot of thinking that twelve was the age of accountability because Jesus was found in the temple at the age of twelve. But, this certainly would not hold true. Some children will come to the age of accountability much younger than others because of the light and knowledge they have had. They have been raised in a holiness home. They have had the Word all their life, and they come to the realization that if they get to Heaven, they have to be saved. Now they won't have as much knowledge as we have, but they have to walk in what light they have. Then, if they are going to go to Heaven they have to get saved. A word of advice along this line — never crowd children into that age. It is not advisable to rush children to an altar. Let them come to the place

where they feel their own need, feel the pull, and then go to the altar and settle it with God. Some children have been saved at a very early age. Dr. Godbey, at four, never did backslide. R. G. Flexon, that great holiness evangelist, was saved at six. But, it is well to let the children come to the place the first time they go to an altar that they see their own need and seek God on their own. On the other hand, if a child wants to go to the altar, above all things don't keep them from going when they feel that pull to seek God. We don't know at what age they will come to the age of accountability. It would be a tragedy to keep them out and they be lost. It means much to let that child move toward God as they feel for the first time the pull from Him. After that it means so much to try to help them get established and advise them along the line of not throwing up their hands every time they have a battle. With children, pray for them, advise them, read the Bible to them but let them feel that first pull. After that it is all right to invite them to the altar and try to keep them saved. But, let them feel the first pull to seek God.

I Corinthians 15:19

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Paul had no intention in this scripture of leaving a thought that Christian people have the hardest life — they have to give up so much. Then to live this life of discipline, going to church, praying, singing, and all that goes with a Christian life then no hope of a better world. We just die like a dog and are gone — we would be of all men most miserable because we have given up so much. That is not what he is talking about at all. If there were no Heaven or no hell the Christian life would be the happiest life, the most wonderful life, the most satisfying life, the most rewarding life that anyone could live. If we had to die like a dog and that would be the end of it, I'd want to be a Christian. I would want to be a strict disciplined Christian and enjoy the blessings we are getting out of this life. But, the thing the Apostle Paul is actually saying here is, there is a Heaven. But, if there is no resurrection, there is no possible way to get there. We would be of all men most miserable just to realize that there is a land of eternal joy and bliss but that we are forever shut out. To know that there is a hell and no way to miss it. For, if there is no resurrection, there is no possible way for anyone to keep out of hell! Everyone would drop into hell. We would live with a burning knowledge that no matter how we live in this life, it would mean to burn forever. To know a man is lost forever he would be of all men most miserable. But, the glorious truth is that He lives and because He lives He said, "Because I live ye shall live also." Glory to God! He does live! There is a Heaven and we can go there. There is a hell and a burning lake of fire, but we don't have to go there because He lives. Therefore, our hope is as bright as the promises of God to those who live under the blood and walk in the light staying ready for the soon coming. On the other hand, God is a loving Heavenly Father. Christ is the Bridegroom of our soul and God has invested of Heaven's richest jewel in everyone of us. He is not easily going to let us go. Christ loves us more than we could ever love Him. We can put our love in His love. We don't have to feel like He is ready to cut us off if we make a mistake. He is not ready to cut us off. We are not referring to willful sin but, if we make a mistake or a blunder unintentionally, God is not going to cut us off. He may give us a whipping and show us where we have missed it. To leak out spiritually we have to willfully sin or leak out in our prayer life. The Lord broke through on the writer one day with this glorious truth that Jesus loves us more than we love Him. Life became happier than it had ever been. Our Christian life became, it seemed, so much more precious, just the fact of living in love with Jesus. It is such a privilege to serve Him because you love Him. Remember, He loves you! Every man who has a good wife and every woman who has a

good husband and are really in love with each other — when they are apart their love rests in the love of their companion. They don't feel their companion is going to be untrue. Why? Because they know their companion loves them more than anyone else. Their love can safely rest in the love of their lover. And my love and your love can safely rest in the Lover of our souls, and know He is not going to cut us off because we make a mistake or blunder. His justice demands that He cut us off if we openly rebel against God. But, as long as we are doing our best, we don't have to worry about His cutting us off. He loves us! As the song writer said, "When I have tried and failed in my trying, He'll understand and say well done." Praise the Lord!

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 9 Illness Is Not Due to Past Sin

In this chapter we would like to study the fact that sickness is not a matter of God punishing men or women for their present or past sins. On the other hand we certainly would not outlaw the fact that God may send judgments upon men because of sin such as Uzziah. When he forced his way into the temple he became a leper until the day of his death. That was a result of sin. The judgment of God fell upon him because of his sin. Also, the servant of Elisha who went after Naaman and brought back the reward and then lied about it. Elisha said, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." (II Kings 5:27) There are other places in the Bible where the direct judgment of God has fallen and multitudes have died as a direct judgment of God because of their waywardness, and their sin, and rebellion against God. But, certainly sickness and tragedy are not in any way an indication that the individual has sinned. Neither is it an indication that God is punishing them because of their past sins. John 9:1-3 declares plainly that this man was not blind because of his parents' sin nor because of his sin, but that God might work. It was for the glory of God. And, the Bible says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Psalms 34:19.) Paul told Timothy not to drink water but to drink grape juice. The Bible calls grape juice wine. It is talking about sweet grape juice for his stomach was bad. It was just that he was no doubt under stress due to his labor and burden and the things he underwent. But, it wasn't the result of sin. Nowhere does the scripture indicate that all sickness is the result of sin or the judgments of God.

Concerning the righteous — look at Job. A man who God said was a perfect man. He was covered with boils from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. It was certainly not judgment sent upon him. It was a testing time that God put Job through. But his miserable comforters were accusing him of this. "Would God punish the just?" They continually accused him of sinning because of his affliction. In turn, they had to go to Job and have him pray for them. So, we had better be careful when someone is going through affliction and not accuse them of sin because if we do we may be putting our finger on God's people and have to go back to ask them to forgive us, or have them pray for us. It might even bring the judgment of God upon yourself by misjudging God's people when they are going through some tragedy or sickness. That is certainly not a sign of any spiritual lack nor a sign they are being punished for their past sins. Now, we know if a man has been an alcoholic until his stomach has been eaten up — when he gets saved, unless God heals him, he will suffer because of the sickness he brought upon himself. But, it is not a matter of judgment, it is just the fact that he has ruined his health and he will have to suffer because of it. Also, if a person has been on dope until he has ruined and wrecked his health — if he gets saved, that doesn't restore his health. He is suffering as a consequence of his sins. God is not going to pour judgment upon you for your past sins after you get saved.

Often, when someone is sick, or maybe their children are lost and they have gotten saved, people will say they are reaping what they have sown. No! After you get saved you don't reap what you sow. In Galatians 6:7-9 we read, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For, he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." It told us not to be deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth — now that has a "*th*" on it. If you keep on sowing to the flesh you will of the flesh reap corruption. When you get saved you no longer continue to sow to the flesh nor reap to the flesh. The whole crop of sin is plowed under. It is done away with. It is gone and the past is forgiven. You begin to sow to the Spirit and you shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life. While you are sowing to the Spirit you are not going to reap corruption because you sowed to the flesh. You are not going to reap the harvest of sin when you are sowing to the Spirit because you have stopped sowing to the flesh and you have started sowing to the Spirit, and continue to sow to the Spirit. Then, of the Spirit you begin to reap everlasting life. He said, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9) Paul was here bringing out the fact that because you may be going through problems and heartaches, don't be weary. Keep on sowing. For, if you don't faint there is a glorious reaping that is coming hallelujah — when you will reap of the Spirit everlasting life. Thank God that the old past corrupt life has been plowed under and done away with through the grace of God. We are not guilty and we are not reaping from a life of sin after we get saved. That is forever gone. We start sowing to the Spirit. Again, we emphasize this word "soweth." The "*th*" on the end of it means that it is a continual thing. If we keep on sowing to the flesh we will of the flesh reap corruption. But, when we get saved, that old sinful life is gone — we start sowing and continue sowing to the Spirit and shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

We don't sow in different fields when we begin to sow. We have one life. When we are in sin we are sowing seeds to the flesh and will of the flesh reap corruption. If we stay in that way we will reap a life of a harvest of sin. Now, when we get saved, the old sin crop is done away with and we are not guilty anymore. It is plowed under. It is completely done away with. Life is turned over. It is a new life, a new crop, new seed, and there will be a new harvest. It is clearly stated and set forth in this scripture that it is absolutely a new crop and the old crop is done away. Praise God for the glorious deliverance in redemption! When Christ forgives us, the seeds of the past life are completely done away with. They are not plowed under to come again and sprout up in our Christian life. They are done away with! They are destroyed. The old life is forgiven and we have a completely new plowed field in which we can start sowing. Sowing in the Spirit, until on that great harvest day we can harvest everlasting life.

I have often talked about how many grains one grain would produce. In a medium ear of corn, not a large ear, there were 495 grains from just the one grain sown in the ground. And, a grain of sown sin — think of how many grains that are produced for the wicked! But, look at it for the righteous. The same grain of righteousness will produce as much reward as the grain of sin will produce evil reward. So, everything we do for God is going to crop out, branch out, and multiply — glory to God, into many, many times, until it will produce a great crop of everlasting life in the end. So, let's sow seeds of righteousness.

Someone may bring up the question, what about parents who have lived in sin all their life? They have children who are lost. The parents get saved but the influence they have had on their children can't be recalled. They can't get those children in. Is that not reaping the life of sin they have sowed? No, they are not reaping the past, they are suffering some of the results that cannot be changed. Yet, through their prayers and faithfulness they may see their children won to God because those children aren't serving sin as a judgment pronounced upon the parents. It is one of the results of a misspent life but it is not reaping what they have sown.

That drunkard that has ruined his health as a result of drink and suffers physically the rest of his life, he is not reaping what he sowed for drinking back there. He is suffering from it, but he is not reaping because he was forgiven of that and it is in the past. He has broken down his resistance, he has brought about these conditions in his body so, unless he gets healed, the law of nature says he will suffer for it. But, he is not reaping for his past sins.

That person who has smoked for years until they have emphysema — when they get saved they may yet suffer from it until they die but they are not reaping what they have sown. God forgave them of the past, it was blotted out. The old crop of sin was plowed under. When they stand before God it will never be mentioned. They will reap everlasting life, not corruption or everlasting destruction. This could be enlarged upon concerning many other things that may be the result of a misspent life. Physical problems may have arisen and we will have to suffer but they are not a judgment for sin. They are results of an ill-spent life. But, thank God that through His mercy again and again when folk get saved they are healed of the infirmity from which they are suffering. What a glorious healing that is!

More than that, again and again, folk that have had an ill-spent influence get saved. They walk with God. They rebuild and recover much of the damage that was done. I thank God for that. Remember, in the closing of this chapter that sickness is not a judgment pronounced upon people for past sins, nor is it a judgment pronounced upon men for present sins. We know judgment can be pronounced because of sin, but much of the time it is just a matter of physical suffering. The laws of nature many times are violated by the things we eat, and by exposing our body to the elements too much we can take cold, flu, or pneumonia. It is not a result of sin. By too much stress we develop ulcers which could lead to cancer. It is not a result of sin nor of the judgment of God. It is just a result of violating the law of nature and bringing about these physical distresses. Certainly, we have no grounds on which to judge people because they are sick, or because they are well. Sickness is not generally the result of sin.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 10 Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost

Our scripture lesson reads "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. 12:31-32) And in Mark 3:28-30, "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." It is with real fear and trembling that we approach this subject of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and yet it is with a real sense of the need of clear scriptural teaching on this subject that is often misinterpreted. A real tragedy can occur when preachers so lightly and unadvisably speak about this sin, and in so doing drive men to despair by making them feel they have crossed the dead line. We feel like this is a very serious truth and needs to be dealt with as such. After study and prayer, we would like, by the help of God, to deal with this subject in this book in the hope that understanding may come to someone in confusion, and also to prevent souls from giving up in hopelessness. There are very, very few people who have blasphemed the Holy Ghost. Blasphemy is not something that is done casually. It is a very willful sin. We have found this needs clarification to explain this fully.

Beacon commentary, vol. 6, page 297 paragraph one reads, "Unscriptural preaching on this subject has done lamentable damage to tender souls. No one is likely to commit the unpardonable sin who is distressed over the possibility. This is not to minimize, but only to think clearly on the somber warning of Jesus. 'If therefore the light that is in thee become darkness how great is that darkness.'" This commentator again brings out the fact this is not a sin that is likely to be committed. It is not something that folk need to fear who are afraid of committing it, they will not because their fear of doing it will prevent the sin from being committed.

According to Clarke, John Wesley, and other commentators, in Matthew and Mark where Jesus spoke of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the Pharisees were accrediting the work He was doing as being the work of the devil. They were saying He was casting out devils through the prince of devils — Beelzebub; saying this was the power of the devil that was casting out devils. In reply to this accusation Jesus said, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto man." To make this clearer Jesus said in Mark, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Here, Jesus was being accused of having an unclean spirit which would actually be blaspheming the Holy Ghost.

We fully agree with Clarke in his statement on page 138, in vol. 1, col. 1. "Many sincere people have been grievously troubled with apprehensions that they had committed the unpardonable sin;

But let it be observed that no man who believes the Divine mission of Jesus Christ, ever can commit this sin: therefore let no man's heart fail because of it, from henceforth and for ever, Amen." Clarke emphasizes the fact if a man really believes in the mission of Jesus Christ he will not commit this sin.

In Hebrews, the tenth chapter, the scripture teaches that a man can willfully commit this sin. But, there is a possibility of willfully committing this sin without reaching the state of apostasy. Also, Clarke is trying to emphasize the fact that this is a willful thing. There have been different times that I have heard preachers declaring that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is attributing the work of the Holy Ghost to the devil — which is so, but, left said like that, is not so. When I hear that statement something in my heart has reacted. I have felt for precious sincere hearts who may have at sometime felt like a thing was not of God, and then later found out it was. For someone to say, to attribute any work that is of the Holy Ghost to the devil is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is certainly misquoting and misteaching the Word of God. There is a deep reaction in the writer's heart against this teaching. But, the Apostle Paul clears that up so preciously in I Timothy 1:13, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." He said that God had counted him faithful, putting him in the ministry who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But, he said, "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly."

Paul brings out that before he had attributed the work of Jesus Christ to the devil. The work of the Apostles, he counted it of the devil, and persecuted — even causing folk to blaspheme. He shut Christians into prison, and persecuted the Church. Certainly, he attributed the work of the Holy Ghost to the devil but, he did not blaspheme. He said he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly. Here is the secret. A man fully convinced beyond question that a thing is of God — that it is the Spirit and then he attributes that work of the Spirit to the devil, then, he is blaspheming the Holy Ghost. This throws a much clearer light and brings us out in the place where folk aren't always feeling like they have blasphemed the Holy Ghost. To blaspheme the Holy Ghost, there has to be something that is definite and clear in your mind that it IS the work of God, and the work of the Spirit — and then with knowledge attribute it to the work of the devil. It is a fearful thing when folks are shouting to say, "That's of the devil." But, we have to be fully convinced it is God, and then attribute it to the devil before it becomes blasphemy. Let's not even live in that border. God will judge. Now of course when folks are shouting, and they are living crooked, we don't have to be afraid to say, "Well, that is of the devil." For, God did not put the shout on them.

On the other hand, when we are convinced that a thing is of God, and then we attribute it to the devil and say, "This is of the devil," when we know better, then it becomes blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. In Luke 12:10 we find these words of Jesus, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." Here, He says, "blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost." It implies to me that there is a possibility of intentionally speaking hard things about the Holy Ghost. For instance, I heard Brother Archie Atwell give this illustration of the drunk man who stood up and blew his trumpet during a dance of drunken reveling. He blew three blasts on the trumpet and said, "Three toots for the Father." Then he lifted the trumpet to his mouth and blew three more blasts and said, "Three toots for Jesus." Men cried out, "No! Don't go any farther! Don't go any farther!" He gave a laugh and said,

"I'm not afraid!" He lifted it again to blow and say, "Three toots for the Holy Ghost," when an unseen hand smashed it out of his hand. He grabbed himself and fell to the floor dead. Every bone in his body was broken. He had been crushed to death by the Holy Ghost.

I was told about another young man who rebelled against God. As close as I can I will repeat it. He was a preacher's son. He was with a group of men who were shocking grain, and this boy stopped. Looking up at the sun he began to curse God. Alarmed, his father cried out, "Son, what on earth! Don't do that! Don't do that!" and begged him to stop. Then the boy stopped and began to curse Jesus. Horrified the father plead with him not to do it. In a rage the son began to curse the Holy Ghost. When he did this, he fell. They gathered him up and took him to the house. In a little while, he was dying, and he said, "I'm dying — dying without God! All because of my rebellious heart, I'm dying and hopelessly lost!" And, he died without God.

These are some of the ways in which folk can blaspheme the Holy Ghost and cross the deadline through blasphemy. This is not actually crossing the dead line — we'll get to that sin farther on.

A person can reach the place of no forgiveness through direct blasphemy, through apostasy which is a form of blasphemy, or through sinning away their day of grace — or crossing the dead line. We want to deal with all three of these in this chapter. The tenth chapter of Hebrews tells us what the Bible has to say there about apostasy, or willfully blaspheming the Holy Ghost, or willfully denying everything that the blood has done. "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-29)

In interpreting this scripture we must get the context. (That is one of the laws of the interpretation of scripture.) This scripture has nothing to do with ordinary backsliding. It is talking about folk who have denied everything for which the gospel stands. It is talking about folk who have been enlightened. It is talking about folk who have been saved and have been sanctified. It said, ". . . hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." Now, the ordinary backslider does not count the blood an unholy thing. He may backslide, he may go back to sin, but down inside there remains the fact that Christ is a reality, and that there is a way back. Through the teaching of the scripture, we find, ". . . if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (I John 2:1) There is a way back! Thank God! He gave the parable of the prodigal son — of the backslider who returned and found the kiss of pardon, the wealth of the father's house, the best robe, the fatted calf, a time of rejoicing, and restoration to sonship. Beloved, He is not in any way indicating there is no way back — for even the sanctified. In the first chapter of I John we find, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," and then if we confess our carnality — "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is receiving two works of grace. But, then he said little children I write unto you that you sin not — he said, now I write to you that you don't sin, but if you do sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We have a way back.

To take what the Hebrew writer said out of its setting and say that if you are once sanctified and fall, there is no way back — is certainly making the scripture cross itself. For, it says if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father. It is also reading into the scripture what it does not actually say, for this scripture is not referring to ordinary backsliding, because the ordinary backslider does not deny the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is talking about someone who does despite to that sacrifice — as the man who denounced the sacrifice of Moses' law and said there was nothing to it, that there was no virtue in it, and God was not real. This man was to die without mercy. The Bible declares this was the attitude of the man who willfully declares the blood to be an unholy thing.

The Book of Hebrews was initially written to the Jews who, at this time, were living under tremendous pressures. All through this book the writer is dealing with the problems that were causing controversy and confusion. The Jews had been objecting to the Christian religion by saying they have no sacrifice, they have no temple, and they have no priest. Christ is the greater sacrifice, we no longer need an animal sacrifice. We have no temple, our temple is in Heaven, and Christ is our altar. We have no high priest, Christ is the greatest high priest. All these marvelous things lead up to the scripture with which we are now dealing, "If we sin willfully. . ." — willfully after one has the light and the knowledge of God. This willful sin could happen from a justified state as well as a sanctified, but this scripture is speaking to those who have counted the blood wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing. And, they have counted Jesus an impostor and rejected Christ as their Messiah, or their sacrifice. Because of this, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. In other words, the sacrifices of the law were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. So that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ supersedes the law and takes the place of the sacrifices under the law. We find our salvation through Christ who is our sacrifice. The Bible is saying there will be no other plan, no other scheme. When man has forfeited his right to Christ, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. There is no other scheme, God has no other plan. Had Christ failed, man would have been totally lost, for God's plan of redemption was only through the blood of Christ. When man willfully turns against that knowledge, willfully proclaims there is nothing to it, there remaineth no more sacrifice.

Adam Clarke, p.757, verse 26, vol. 11: "For if we sin willfully, if we deliberately, for fear of persecution or from any other motive, renounce the profession of the Gospel and the Author of that Gospel, after having received the knowledge of the truth so as to be convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and that He had sprinkled our hearts from an evil conscience; for such there remaineth no sacrifice for sins; for as the Jewish sacrifices are abolished, as appears by the declaration of God Himself in the fortieth Psalm, and Jesus being now the only sacrifice which God will accept, those who reject Him have none other; therefore their case must be utterly without remedy. This is the meaning of the apostle, and the case is that of a deliberate apostate — one who has utterly rejected Jesus Christ and His atonement, and renounced the whole Gospel system. It has nothing to do with backsliders in our common use of that term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and yet neither renounce the Gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary but that of the deliberate apostate, who rejects the whole Gospel system, after having been saved by grace, or convinced of the truth of the Gospel. To him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; for there was but the ONE, Jesus, and this he has utterly rejected." To me, it seems impossible to over emphasize the fact that this is a man who does something willfully.

If under Moses' law they died without mercy, "how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God. . ." To take that at face value, that man under the law died without mercy — he had no right to make a sacrifice. He was stoned. With those circumstances, it seems hard to understand how there could be a more severe punishment. For, this person had to die shut out from sacrifice. He died without mercy. He had denied and rejected the sacrifice and now he must die; unless somewhere in the mercy of God, we could read into this that that man could repent in his heart and find mercy. Of course this is only a conjecture and I am not saying that was the way it was. But, it looks like there would have to be some means of grace, or it would be hard to say a sorer punishment." However, it can be a much sorer punishment because this man who has denied Christ has denied a greater sacrifice, therefore, his torment in hell through a living conscience of an enlightened age of the Holy Ghost dispensation. He will be tormented a thousand times worse mentally by remembering, "I knew He was Christ. I knew I had been saved. I knew I had been sanctified. And, then to avoid persecution, or to go along with the crowd, I willfully denounced Christ and counted Him as an unholy thing." Oh, Beloved! What an awful thing to do — willfully deny Him!

Then, the torment in hell would be so much greater and beyond anything the man under the law would undergo. A person's conscience under this age would have to be tormented far beyond the conscience of one who went to hell from under the law. Because, that man under grace has said, Christ is an impostor, and willfully rejected the sacrifice — he has by the act of his will trodden underfoot the Son of God. Not the man of Galilee that the Jews were rejecting back in Christ's time, not the One Who fed the five thousand, but actually the Son of God. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, the Christ of Calvary. Remember the scripture says, "And has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing." That man who had experienced the marvelous work of heart holiness, now says, "Christ is an impostor — there is no power in the blood. It is just like any other man's blood, there is no salvation in that blood."

While these words are going down on record, I want you to know this writer shudders to even deal with such a fearful thing as a man who had once been sanctified, to count the blood of that covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing and has trodden it underfoot. Beloved, this is far more than just failing God, or going back. This is someone who has COUNTED the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing. Notice that word counted. I think we need to emphasize that, because there have been those I have met in my ministry who have taught that if you are once sanctified and backslide, there is no way back — using this scripture. But, this is far more than that. This is counting the blood wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. This is the second step.

The third step is "He hath done despite unto the spirit of grace." He has insulted the Holy Ghost by saying the divine work of heart holiness and the entire work of the Spirit in salvation is nothing. That it is not God, and there is nothing to any of it. He has insulted the Holy Ghost, and thereby blasphemed the Holy Ghost.

Again, let us go back to Clarke on page 758, vol. III, "Wherefore, if one apostatized in the first age, after having been witness to these miraculous gifts, much more after having possessed them himself, he must, like the Scribes and Pharisees, have ascribed them to evil spirits; than which a

greater indignity could not be done to the Spirit of God. This is properly the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has no forgiveness." So, you see in reality when this sin has been committed, that person goes back to the place of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, or sinning against the Holy Ghost, because he has done despite against the Spirit of grace.

An apostate is a state a person is in because he did apostatize. (The word apostasy changes form when it becomes an act.) In the context of this tenth chapter of Hebrews, there are some steps that lead up to the condition. Verse 23 says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." From this we can see it is possible for faith to waver. However, this is a willful thing for he had not cast away his faith, or lost his faith. He had lost his grip on God, and lost the sweetness out of his soul perhaps under time of persecution, because of the Jews. You see, back in that day the pressure was on. They had spoken about the Christians having no sacrifice, no priest, no tabernacle, no atonement, and the Hebrew writer teaches concerning this up to this tenth chapter. Also, that we have a way into the holy of holies, to which they have no right. The Hebrew writer says, "Hold fast your profession of faith;" "provoke one another to good works;" and then, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." The next statement that is made is "for if we sin willfully" through neglecting the duties in the foregoing scripture, one will become weak. Rather than to take the pressure or the storm that you are facing, you may willfully commit this sin. This is what was happening to other Jews at this time. Because of this the Hebrew writer is warning Christians of this danger. When one willfully does this, the day of grace is sinned away and there is no hope. So, it is a dangerous thing to neglect spiritual things. Let's re-emphasize the fact that this apostasy in the ninth chapter, as we have said, is a willful thing. It certainly does not include someone who has been sanctified but has gotten in the dark, perhaps even has backslidden. But, they have repented and have been reclaimed and have really gotten sanctified again. They have been sanctified before, but this time they have gotten a greater or different witness. They say, "Well I have never been sanctified before." That is not blasphemy or discrediting the Holy Ghost. They are sincere in their statement and it is just a matter of being mistaken. I repeat, certainly it is not blasphemy nor discrediting the Holy Ghost with any intent of doing so. But, many times if folk do discredit their previous experience while they are seeking, and they say they have never been sanctified when they have — it does make it awfully hard for their faith to ever take hold to bring them back to that place where they can believe God that they are really sanctified now. So, it is not wise for anyone to ever discredit what they have had before, however, it is not blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. But, remember, it is not good for your faith to discredit your previous spiritual experience. Just thank God for what you have obtained. You can realize you are not sanctified, and go on and get sanctified. The reason for bringing this in is to keep the devil from taking advantage and telling some soul, "You did not really get it to start with." Later they realize they really had been sanctified. Then, the devil jumps onto them and says, "You discredited what the Holy Ghost did back there, so you have blasphemed the Holy Ghost." No! Not at all! Again I would emphasize that to blaspheme the Holy Ghost has to be something that a person knows is of God and then WILLFULLY attributes it to the devil. ONLY then does it become blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

As we consider the apostasy in the 6th chapter of Hebrews, we would like to first notice the state of grace from whence they had fallen. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened," that means illuminated — lit up by the grace of God, "and have tasted of the heavenly gift," have

actually tasted of the grace of God — partakers of Jesus Christ, "and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." They were sanctified. "And have tasted the good word of God," been fed on the Word of God, and have tasted "the powers of the world to come." They have felt the foretaste of heavenly power, heavenly glory, and heavenly sunshine. For, when you get sanctified you receive the earnest of the Spirit.

These people had reached the heights of grace and the Hebrew writer brings this out as a warning to let us know there is a possibility of falling even to the state of apostasy from the highest degree of grace. It behooves us to live close to God, and press on, live where the sunshine of God can be on our lives, and not fail God. I tell you beloved, it is a serious thing. (Vol. II, p.724) Clarke says, "The design of these solemn words is evidently, first, to show the Hebrews that apostasy from the highest degrees of grace was possible; and that those who were highest in the favor of God might sin against him, lose it, and perish everlastingly. Secondly, to warn them against such an awful state of perdition, that they might not be led away, by their countrymen from the truth of the heavenly doctrine which had been delivered to them."

So, this scripture was a warning to these Jews who were in danger from the constant pressure they had received from their fellow countrymen to turn back. If they did turn back and reach this place, they could be lost forever. Again, I would like to say that this is more — far more — than just ordinary backsliding. Backsliding, that we think of, is a weak Christian stumbling and falling. It is far more than that. This is apostasy.

The Beacon Commentary (pages 72-73, vol. 10) says, "When used alone *P-I-P-T-O*, many times, in the New Testament means a falling prostrate of the thing or person himself. But when used with *para*, as in this case—here only in the New Testament, it implies a separation between the thing or person and something else. A falling from this is not a stumbling in the Christian way but a departure from it." In other words, it is a departure from it to the extent of saying there is nothing to it. It is absolutely false, Christ is an impostor, and the blood is nothing. There is a departure from the Truth to the rejecting of the whole idea that one can be saved and sanctified through the blood of Jesus Christ. A. T. Robertson says, "It bluntly denies the possibility of renewal or apostasy from Christ. It is a terrible picture and cannot be torn down." So, apostasy is to deny all that you one time experienced and knew was of God. By denying you become an apostate.

There are different ways to apostatize. One of them is drifting away from the truth. In II Thess. 2:3 we are told, . . . that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. . ." Again, this scripture carries the thought of apostasy. Folk that simply drift away from truth and keep on drifting until after while they say there is nothing to it. They go out for modern and formal religion denying the power of regeneration or sanctification. Paul said, "Because they received not the love of the truth." One of the dangers is getting to the place that you back up on truth and receive not the love of the truth. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thess. 2:10-12.) Through that strong delusion man can be led to the state of apostasy.

I knew of a man who preached holiness. He went away and came back preaching Seventh Day Adventism. He went away again and a few years later returned and was preaching no hell, the Armstrong doctrine, that there is no hell and the soul sleeps in the grave. This came about by drifting away from the truth until he reached a state of apostasy which led him to the place of denying that there is an experience of heart holiness.

The apostasy Paul was speaking of was even deeper. It was denying the whole thing, of grace and also denying Christ. So, one way to become an apostate is to cool off spiritually, and drift and compromise (I'll tell you, Beloved, compromise is dangerous.), and try to fight truth. By these you are laying yourself wide open to drift into apostasy.

Another way is willingly — as they did in the tenth chapter — as we have already discussed. There is a possibility of willingly denying through persuasion of others, or through persecution — to willingly denounce the whole thing and say there is nothing to it. But, in the sixth chapter of Hebrews the scripture brings out that in the thing these folk were saying, they were crucifying unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame. Where it says, "they have crucified unto themselves," they willingly rejected Him on the grounds that He was an impostor and was justly put to death. "That is, they show openly that they judge Jesus Christ to have been worthy of death, which he suffered, and was justly made a public example by being crucified." (Clarke, vol. II, page 726) Clarke made that statement and I agree with it. They actually had the audacity to say that Jesus was justly crucified. When they put Him to an open shame, they declare publicly such things. Their case is absolutely hopeless. For, the Word of God says, "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. 6:7-8) This is nothing more than a state of hopelessness. After it has had all the rain, all the cultivation, all the work of the man that dressed it, then for it to bring forth nothing but briers and thorns will in the end mean final rejection. And, he is saying here after having received the grace, and finally reaching to the highest state of grace — partakers of the Holy Ghost and of the world to come — then to become an apostate and say that Jesus Christ was an impostor, to reach the point of denying everything the grace of God has done for you — He said the end is to be burned. So, he brings out a state of utter hopelessness in this scripture. This is the sin of apostasy.

Next we would consider what is commonly known as sinning away your day of grace, or crossing the deadline, which also is another area of very serious truth. Crossing the deadline, or sinning away the day of grace is done through rebellion. In Isaiah 63:10 it says, "Because they have rebelled and vexed his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy and fought against them." The next verse says, "Then be remembered. . ." There is a possibility of Him becoming your enemy, and then you repenting to the place He will remember and forgive you. But, there is a possibility also of continuing to rebel until He becomes your eternal enemy. When you reach that place there is no way to return. This is crossing the deadline.

Let us look farther into the scriptures concerning this matter. The first scripture is Proverbs 29:1. "He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." The entire teaching of the scripture is that he said in the day you hear His voice harden not

your heart. It is through rebellion and unbelief that the heart becomes hardened. And, it is rebellion which brings us to the place of destruction.

The one who rebels is not that man out there who has sinned and is very, very wicked and far from God. Folks say, "That man has crossed the deadline." No, that man is not nearly in as much danger of crossing the deadline as that good moral man or woman who goes through revival after revival and rebels against God. The man outside could come to the place where God cuts him off in judgment as He has done to others in the past. The earth opened up and Korah dropped into the earth. Fire devoured his companions. And, God destroyed the Antediluvian world. But, when it comes to this matter of sinning away your day of grace, the sin which brings this on, is the sin of continual rebellion. To illustrate this, look at the life of Manasseh. Manasseh was a very wicked king. He was the son of the godly Hezekiah. Manasseh tore down the altars of God and built to Baal. He built again the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He built altars to idols in the house of God. He caused Israel to sin. He dealt with familiar spirits and wizards — he was wicked in the sight of God. Then, he was carried away captive. But, in II Chronicles 33:12-13 (this blessed me so much when I saw it) "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel." II Chronicles 33:12, 13, 15, 16. If any man through being wicked had crossed the deadline, it would have been Manasseh. But, when he humbled himself and prayed, God heard his prayer, restored him, and gave him salvation. I am expecting to meet Manasseh in Heaven because he humbled himself and prayed. God has said that all manner of sin shall be forgiven man except the sin against the Holy Ghost. It doesn't matter how wicked or how far from God a man has gone. He may have murdered, he may have robbed, he may have beaten his wife, he may have beaten his children, he may have spent time in a penitentiary, but that man has not crossed the deadline. God in mercy will lift him out and save him if he will humble himself and turn to God. But, dear hearts, it is that man who rejects God, and rebels against truth, and turns down mercy that is in danger of crossing the deadline where there is no hope. That is why it is dangerous to sit in revival after revival and say no to God. It is dangerous to resist light, to go on and rebel against the Holy Ghost. That is the thing that is so very, very dangerous.

There is a scripture in Proverbs 29:1 that I want you to read slowly. "He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." This word "reproved" shows the mercy of God. God reproves men because He wants to save them. He wants to keep them out of hell. He wants to have mercy on them, and give them a home in Heaven. That is why He reproveth them. The word "often" shows the long-suffering of God. How that He comes again, and again, and again, and again. I have known men who have lived around a holiness church for years and their godly wives prayed for them and held on to God for years. Down in old age, after they retired, they have found God. So, God is long-suffering before man reaches the place that he is cut off without remedy, and without hope — where there is no mercy. It is a long time before man reaches that place, but there is that unseen line that can be crossed where hope and mercy will never, never come.

We read in Romans 9:22, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." These words "endured with much long-suffering" show that every man is a vessel of mercy before he becomes a vessel of wrath. And, God deals with him a long time before he crosses that unseen line. When he crosses that unseen line, there is no more hope for him. He has sinned away his day of grace and he becomes a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction that God might make His power known, that He might make that man an example to be a warning to others. For, God is going to get glory out of the folk who have light and truth whether it be by wrath or by mercy. The Bible gives us some illustrations of this. Romans 9:17, "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." The Beacon Commentary says there had to be a Pharaoh before there could be an Exodus. Wesley says that God gave Pharaoh ample opportunity and encouragement to repent before making him an object of his wrath and power. "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up," — that is unless thou repent this will surely be the consequences of my raising thee up. God gave Pharaoh at least ten opportunities to get right with Him. God did not make him the man that he was. He gave him time to repent. Ten times is a complete number showing God's mercy. God raised him up to this place because He knew what kind of a man he was. He gave him opportunity to repent, but when he would not, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Then, Pharaoh would reject. God told Moses what was going to happen before it happened. He told Moses Pharaoh would repent and that He (God) would harden his heart so that Pharaoh would not do as he promised. So, Pharaoh had opportunity to repent, but through his rebellion he crossed that line and became a vessel of wrath that God might show His power and make known the riches of His grace. Pharaoh sinned ten times, hardened his heart ten times, rebelled ten times, and a nation was saved. Israel rebelled and turned down hundreds of opportunities to repent until they were destroyed. That became the riches of the Gentiles.

We want also to notice King Saul. This king, God had given a new heart and a new spirit. But he began to trifle with God. He forced himself and made the sacrifice. Then when he went out to war with the Amalakites, God had given him orders to utterly destroy them. But he saved Agag and brought back the best of the cattle and the sheep and the oxen. He not only disobeyed, he covered his sin. God had already told Samuel beforehand what had happened, and sent Samuel to meet Saul. Saul could have repented. But, the first thing Saul said was, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (I Samuel 15:13b-14) Saul told him the people kept the best of the flocks to sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel's answer was that God had greater delight in obedience than He did in burnt offerings. When Samuel pointed out his sins, Saul said, "I have sinned: yet honour me now. . ." (I Sam. 15:30a) He did not repent like David did. When Nathan brought David face to face with his sin, David said, "I have sinned." He thoroughly repented. But, Saul never repented. He said, "I have sinned: yet honour me now." In spite of my sin, in spite of what I have done, come and honor me before the people. What a tragedy! Had he repented and forsaken his sins, and had he gotten through to God, he would have found mercy. But, he didn't, he just half-heartedly repented. And, even when Samuel went to leave him, he got ahold of him and rent his mantle. After Samuel had slain Agag and left, the Bible says, "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." His rebellion and halfhearted repentance in dealing with God got him to the place that the Spirit of God had left him. He became a lost — lost soul. His last testimony was that, "God hath departed from me and heareth me no more.

This truth is farther brought out in the seventh Psalm starting with verse ii. "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death." Now in verse 12 these four powerful words are brought out, "if he turn not." Speaking of the fact that though God is angry with him every day — that God is striving and dealing and trying His best to get him to turn from his sins and turn to God and repent and find mercy. God is not wanting to cut him off. He is pleading with him, but that man continues to rebel until he crosses that unseen line and becomes a vessel of wrath.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 11 Two Kinds of Darkness

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." Luke 11:33-36.

The key to this entire matter of two kinds of darkness is in this 35th verse in these words, "the light which is IN thee." Notice especially these words "in thee." The topic two kinds of darkness really comes short of describing the heart of this lesson. It is as near as we can come to it, but, it could also be described with these words — the two areas of darkness. The sinner has darkness in him. Where the Bible says there is no darkness in him but he is righteous etc. it is not talking about the darkness of sin. But, the darkness the righteous face is a darkness which surrounds us, a darkness that we fight — that we wrestle with. It is a darkness that we have to break through into the presence of God to bring the glory and the blessing of Heaven. Yet, that darkness does not penetrate the light that is in us when we are saved. There just isn't any darkness in us after we get saved. The darkness is around us. It may eclipse our feeling until we don't feel God, we can't see the light, we can't pray, and we can't feel a bit of salvation, but that is darkness that is around us. It doesn't change the light that is in us.

Also, this matter of darkness is a matter of two kingdoms — the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. The kingdom of darkness is the kingdom of sin. The kingdom of light is the kingdom of righteousness. They are opposite to each other. When day comes night has to give way. It cannot penetrate the day, it is driven back. But, when night comes day gives way. There are two — night and day. There is the kingdom of night and the kingdom of day, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

Let's look at the kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of darkness is the kingdom of the devil. He is the fallen archangel. He is the dark angel fiend of hell. His presence brings darkness. Folk that live in sin under his dominion are in a kingdom of darkness. Whether you have sin in the heart and life or not is the thing that puts men either in the kingdom of darkness or in the kingdom of righteousness. The Bible teaches that sin, or transgression of God's Word puts us in the kingdom of darkness. We read in I John 1:6 "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." How are we walking in darkness? We are walking contrary to the Word of God. No matter what folk profess, no matter how much they shout, no matter what they do, if they are knowingly walking contrary to the Word of God, they are in the kingdom of darkness, and they don't have fellowship with God because transgression has put them in the kingdom of darkness. So,

sin is the dividing line from righteousness. Now, we cannot just simply step over the line into righteousness and say, "I'm in the kingdom of light," one day then step over into the kingdom of darkness the next day and say, "Well, I'm in sin now," and not have a change of heart. We are either in the kingdom of darkness, or we are in the kingdom of light. If we have sin in our life we are in the kingdom of darkness. I am glad there is a way out of the kingdom of darkness. Praise God forever! We do not have to stay there because Jesus Christ came and died on Calvary that we might be set free from the kingdom of darkness. We find in John 1:4 — "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Christ is the way out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. In Acts 26:17-18, "Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." It is through Jesus Christ that men can be turned from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. Through Him they can be delivered from the power of Satan unto God and receive forgiveness of sins. In Colossians 1:13-14 we read, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." When we come to Christ and repent and pray through we are delivered from the power of darkness. The shackles of sin drop off and sin's power has no more hold on us. The ways of darkness can no longer cling to us. We are set free from the power of sin. Thank God for a born-again experience that sets men and women free from the shackles of sin and that causes the works of darkness to fall off. Sin is the works of darkness. But, the works of darkness fall off, and we are delivered from the powers of the works of darkness. Then, we are translated into another kingdom — the kingdom of His dear Son. Praise God! We are a new creature in Christ Jesus. We are in the kingdom of light for God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. So, we are in the kingdom of light, walking in the light, and having fellowship one with another. But "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) What a blessed thing to live in the kingdom of light.

Now we would read in I John 2:8 which gives us a little more of the secret of what we are talking about — the light. "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you." Notice the words "in him and in you." That is the key. Now let's read on, "because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." Again, notice the key to this is "in him and in you." I John 1:5 reads, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." There is no darkness in Him and when He comes into you then no darkness in you. This is referring to what is in you, not what is in the world surrounding you, and the pressure about you.

There is another scripture that will shed a little more light on this subject in I Thess. 5:4-5. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness," in other words you are not living in the kingdom of darkness "that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we

are not of the night, nor of darkness." See the difference? This fourth verse is explained in the fifth verse, we are not of the night, nor of darkness." We live in an age of night. This midnight hour we are living in is an age of night and we are surrounded by a darkness that the Church has never faced before. But, we are not of that darkness. This is a quote from the Beacon Commentary concerning this. It entitles this encouragement and assurance. "The Thessalonian brethren are not in darkness. The reference is likely to be ignorance of the truth as well as to moral and spiritual depravity." See, they are not living in a kingdom of moral and spiritual depravity, "as Christians enlightened and spiritually transformed by Christ, (John 8:12) the coming day of Christ will not overtake or surprise them as a thief." In verse four where he says we are not in darkness, he is saying we are not in the kingdom of darkness. We are not walking in the ignorance of the truth or we are not walking with sin and moral depravity. It is talking about that inward life that is not darkness. I'd like to emphasize a part of the fifth verse. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we are not of the night. . ." Now that doesn't mean we are not in the night for the entire teaching of the scripture that points toward the coming of the Lord talks about a midnight hour. He could come in the third or fourth watch of the night, "blessed are those who are found watching." It speaks about the five wise and the five foolish virgins. At midnight there was a cry made. In the Song of Solomon, the fifth chapter, he talks about the woman that was asleep. "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." All of these scriptures point toward a night time. But, we are not the children of the night, which are the lost in the kingdom of night, but we are the children of the day. Yet, we live in a night of darkness. The light we have is in us.

This brings us to the fact that though darkness is not in us, we are at times surrounded by it and we wrestle against the powers of darkness. (Ephesians 6:12) "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." This tells us we wrestle against rulers of darkness, or the dark rulers of the world. The devil is the prince of the power of the air. And, the atmosphere is charged with the dark demons of hell. While the light is in us, there are times when we can't feel a ray of light. We can't feel a ray of hope. The darkness is all around us but it is not in us. There is not one bit of sin. He said, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." Praise God! If we are walking in the light, even though we can't feel God, we can't get blessed, and we can't pray, we are still in the light and the light is in us. And, the light is in you if you are walking in every ray of light. This illustration is given in other places in the book but is repeated in this chapter. Years ago while in a revival in Moberly, Missouri it had been getting darker and darker and darker and darker until there was a wall I couldn't break through. In that time the devil was telling me, "You have been anointed in the past, but you'll never be anointed again." The devil was also telling me that I wasn't sanctified. He didn't tell me I hadn't gotten sanctified. He knew better than that because it was so real when the Lord sanctified me that blessed day in the upper room after three days of seeking. But, the darkness kept coming. I can't explain that awful wall. It got so dark we didn't have any power to fight back anymore. I laid face down on the floor, and with all the strength I had left I said, "Lord, You have got to help me!" Beloved, that wall of darkness just rolled back. Thank God! The light of Heaven flooded my soul. The glory was all around. I mounted high. I had some battles, of course, but I was on that high plane for about two years. Why? Because the light was in me all the time. There wasn't

any darkness in my heart. The light was there but the darkness around me had so swallowed me up until I couldn't feel the light in my heart. It was there. I was just as much in the light when the darkness was on as I was when I was shouting happy. I was not walking in darkness. There was no darkness in my soul. The darkness I was wrestling with was around me. If you wrestle you really have to put out some energy. If we take this scripture, "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth," and do not explain the two kinds of darkness we leave people in confusion.

A friend of mine was going through tremendous darkness — this surrounding darkness. Then in the time of darkness stumbled and sinned. After this friend got back to God, we were talking together. This friend said the darkness was so much different than it was when they were fighting the darkness. Why? Because the light was still in them while they were fighting the darkness, but after they fell the darkness was inside. That makes a vast difference. So, if we just take this scripture and preach that if we are saved there is no darkness, or we will not have days of darkness, or we will not have hours of wrestling with blackness after we get saved, then we are going to wreck the faith of multitudes of Christians. For, there are few Christians who never have these times of wrestling with darkness when they can't feel God anywhere. The witness of the Spirit as far as feeling is concerned, is gone. They can't pray. All they would have to do to backslide is give up. They feel everything is gone and that darkness is come. To say there is no darkness after you get saved and not explain the difference, is to throw that person into despair because they say, "I'm in darkness." And they throw up their hands and quit. Their faith goes down. They pray through and start out again. But it isn't long until once again they face that darkness. If they believe the preaching that there are no days of darkness after they get saved, they throw up their hands in despair and their faith is so broken they just simply wreck their lives and many times become a lifetime seeker. Why? Because someone never explained the difference of the light in you and the darkness that is around you, and the pressures you fight when you are fighting darkness. Someone never told them the darkness they wrestle against doesn't put out the light in the soul. Although that light is there, we may not be able to feel it. We may not be able to see it. Like the time when I was wrestling against the awful wall of darkness. I couldn't feel the light but, it was there. And, when it broke through, that wall rolled back, and the victory came! Why? Because the light was there all the time. The darkness never touched that light. It never put it out. It never changed it. So, there is a difference in the light in you and the darkness that surrounds you.

It is good when the darkness that surrounds you is driven back and the whole atmosphere is light. There are many things that can darken the atmosphere. You can go to church and maybe there is a cross spirit there — a division. You get down to pray and you can't pray. We had an experience like this in a revival. One of the men who amened the loudest — you could hardly preach straight enough to get him quiet — was a man who had things in his back-life that were dark. As far as anyone knows they have never been repented of. He ordered his own father-in-law off the place and told him not to come back. Folk didn't have confidence in him. But, he would say "amen" louder than anyone else in that whole congregation. During this revival, I couldn't pray. I'd try to pray, but I couldn't pray through. The services were tied up. I could hardly preach. That went on until actually it was awful the darkness that surrounded me. Praying was almost an impossibility as far as getting through to God and feeling the blessing. After service on Sunday night, some folks took us a good many miles to an airport where we could catch a plane after midnight — about three or four in the morning. We

had two or three hours to wait there in the airport. We went back in one of those places where they load the planes — where there was no one. We got down to pray and the glory was there! The light was there. We had gotten out of that atmosphere of darkness. So, many things can create an atmosphere of darkness that surrounds you, but that darkness doesn't touch the light that is in you. Again, I want to emphasize the fact — though that light is untouched, it may be unfelt at the same time. But, it is still there. When the darkness that is around us is driven back, that light shines forth. Again, we feel it, enjoy it, and rest in it. That is where when we can't feel that light we can say, "I know I'm walking in the light. And, if I'm walking in the light I have fellowship with Him. Whether I feel it or not I have fellowship with Him and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses me from all sin." Praise God! The light is still on the inside. As long as there is no sin on the inside, light is there. The only thing that can put out this light inside is sin — transgression. Then, darkness is in you and you are in the kingdom of darkness. It is darkness inside and darkness outside. But, as long as you are walking with God, the blood is applied and there is no sin. There is light on the inside. You are in the kingdom of light. The darkness may surround but you are in the kingdom of light. You are a child of the day, and a child of the light. And, the light is on the inside.

Let's consider Job. There are many instances of Job's darkness. But, as we think about the book of Job, it carries one great and grand truth — holiness will work under pressure. When the devil came before the Lord, the Lord said to him "Where have you been?" He said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." He didn't tell Him what he had been doing while he was walking. The Lord said, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" In other words God said Job is a holy man. He is sanctified. He is a perfect man, and he is living the life. Have you considered him? Satan answered, "You've got a hedge around him. I can't touch him. Let me take his possessions and he will curse you to your face." Satan is implying that holiness will not work under pressure. God said, "It will work. We will take back the hedge and see how it works." Everything was swept away. Job said, . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Satan again appeared before the Lord and said, "You've got a hedge around his body." God took the hedge from Job's substance, now He took it from his body but He never took it from his life, nor did He take that hedge from his soul. He didn't let the devil touch Job's soul. Then along came Job's miserable comforters. They accused Job of sinning. He was covered with boils from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. He went through all of this. But, when we come down to the end of the Book of Job, God testifies for Job. "Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." (Job 42:8) Then in the New Testament we find these words in James 5:11b, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." And in Job 42:12, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. . . ." "So Job died, being old and full of days." (Job 42:17) God testified of Job's perfection and his holiness.

But, Job had some dark days. Let's read of some of the darkness that Job passed through. "My days are past, my purposes are broken off even the thoughts of my heart. They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness: If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed

in the darkness." (Job 17:11-13) That perfect man was facing real darkness. Also in the 19th chapter of Job, verses 8-10, we read, "He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree." It was so dark Job felt there was no hope for him. There would never be a better day. Talk about despair and darkness — Job was going through real darkness. But God testified that he was a perfect man. And if Job, the perfect man, went through darkness, then you, the perfect man, may go through darkness. Some of the darkness Job went through was because of his comforters. They were like some preachers today who preach that if you have darkness, you have sinned, for there is no darkness unless you have sin in your life. In Job 22:9-11, listen to one of these preachers. "Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken." He is accusing Job of sin. "Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee; Or darkness, that thou canst not see: and abundance of waters cover thee." He is telling Job the reason for the darkness is Job's sin. But, listen to Job's testimony in chapter 23:8-17. "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there;" what darkness! "and backward, but I cannot perceive him." I go back over my back life but I still can't find God. "On the left hand, where he doth work," I've gone where I used to get blessed but it just doesn't work. He is not there. "But I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." I have gone every direction but I can't find Him.

Then Job cried out, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Hallelujah! "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." So Job, in the midst of the darkness, said he couldn't find God but, he states that he is still walking with Him. "Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him." It was so dark that Job said I don't want to meet God like I am. "For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me: Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face." Job was troubled because God had not cut him off before the darkness overtook him. He was in darkness. But, Beloved, the light was still in Job. Yet, Job was surrounded with darkness even to the point he said he was troubled at God's presence. He didn't want to meet God with that awful darkness. If he died without feeling God, his faith was so great he said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my loins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27) So, Job had faith in God but yet he said, "I'm troubled at his presence."

In chapter 29, Job begins to talk about how God was with him. "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; When the Almighty was yet with me. . ." On through the 29th chapter he talks about how good God is. But listen to the first note of the 30th chapter. "But now. . ." (it's so much different now) "But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock." He goes on through the 30th chapter talking of the conditions of now. He said, "My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest." Verse 26 says, "When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness." Then out of the midst of the darkness God spoke. When God came the

darkness fled away. The fact remains that Job, a perfect man, went through all of this darkness and was clear with God while folk accused him and said he had sinned or the trouble would not have happened to him. While he was struggling in the dark, folk were putting on the pressure. Yet, he was a perfect man. Where was the darkness? It was about him, not in him. When God broke the darkness, the light from within shined out.

The next righteous man we will consider is David. This great man had some real dark hours. One time when his own men would have stoned him, he wept until there was no more power to weep anymore. Things were dark but David said, "I will encourage myself in the Lord." (I Sam. 30:6) God lifted him out. In II Sam. 22:29 we find these words, "For thou art my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness." But, he is saying God is going to help me through this storm of darkness and lighten my darkness. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: . . ." Ps. 112:4a. Notice they had darkness or light could not have arisen in the darkness. The darkness can't stay. The light is going to drive it back because he is walking upright. Light is going to rise in the darkness and make a way through for him.

The darkness that surrounds us because of the rulers of darkness of this old world, is a real pressure and a real storm. But, out of the darkness there arises light. Thank God!

The Psalmist says in Psalms 42, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me: while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." The Psalmist was having a real darkness. In verse three he says, "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" He is just sobbing out, Where is God? There is darkness! He says he remembers when he used to go to the house of the Lord and get blessed with them that keep holy day. But now that is only a memory. He goes on, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" Then he cried out, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." He was having darkness! He goes on in this Psalm talking about, "Deep calleth unto deep. . . all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." He was like a man clear to the bottom and all the waves and billows of trouble had gone over him. But, the cry from the depths of this heart was to the depth of the heart of God. He talked about his enemies. He said in the last verse, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." David was at the very depths of darkness and the

powers that were about him. But he said, "I shall yet praise him. I'm going to hold on for there is a way out of this darkness."

We'll not quote the scripture but in Joel the entire second chapter is a prophecy of the last times. It does bring in about Pentecost and then refers to the last times. But it talks about a dark and a cloudy day. It tells of a gloomy day. Zephaniah speaks of this same day as a dark day. In Matt. 24:14 we read, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." This speaks of the fact that it is going to get darker and darker and darker until the coming of the Lord. There is going to be less shouting and more enduring as time goes on. The thing that is a real trouble to our heart is the fact that many folk who have walked with God for years are throwing up their hands and going down. They say they can't understand. It is so dark — so dark. What is it? It is the dark and cloudy day we are living in. To preach that if you are saved you will have no dark days is to throw some precious old saint into despair and into darkness, until they go down and maybe wreck their faith and miss Heaven. Oh beloved, these days are dark days. There are times when you pray clear through and shout the victory. You hardly get home until that awful pressure is on your heart again, until you feel you don't have a thing. These are momentous days when people's nerves are shattering all over the country. There never were so many nervous breakdowns. Folk are facing this pressure and the darkness comes over them. Especially in those nervous cases when awful depression and darkness comes over them, then someone gets up and says if you are saved you will have no dark days. They quote that scripture taking it out of its context to make it teach something it doesn't teach. It says the darkness will not be in you. You will not be in the darkness of sin. The darkness may surround you, but when you break through it the light has been there all the time. The darkness has never daunted that light in your heart. It is still light. And, it will always be light. But, the darkness of this awful day will bring pressures in on you and storms about you until you can't feel God. It seems like there is no way out of this awful darkness. Then you break through it. Oh, you feel so good! Yet as time goes on the dark pressures again settle around you. You have to wrestle against those demons of darkness and break through them by faith. As you break through them by faith they clear away. God comes. So, we must be careful to bring out the fact that the light is in you. It is the kingdom of darkness, and the darkness of sin, not the spiritual darkness we have to fight and face after we get saved.

Isaiah gives us a recipe on how to get out of darkness. This precious truth is found in Isaiah 58:6-12. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?" One way is to fast. ". . . to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free. . ." Fast and pray for others until your life is poured out in undoing the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free — to break the oppression off of folk until they go free. ". . .and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Remember that you are human and face up to your own faults. This is what will happen. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity." In other words, pointing your finger in scorn at others and speaking proudly of yourself. "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry. . ." Let your life and soul be poured out to the hungry. "And satisfy the afflicted soul." Get in there with that one who is going

through the pressure and the storm until their soul is satisfied. . . then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day." This is the way to break it. "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isn't that a marvelous way to break out of the darkness and come into the marvelous light of blessing and victory and Heaven? Notice this was talking of a righteous man, one who is living for God, who can fast, and pray. It said, "in thy darkness," — that darkness that surrounds you shall be as the noonday. It is going to break away. Bless His sweet Name!

All through the scripture we are taught there are two kinds of darkness. There is the darkness of sin and the kingdom of this world. Isaiah, chapter 8, tells us about demon darkness folk get into when they start fooling with witchcraft and things of the occult which are part of the kingdom of darkness. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards — that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness." This is the kind of darkness that comes from seeking after witchcraft, the ouija board, and familiar spirits etc. These drive folk into darkness and finally into outer darkness. There is also the darkness of sin which has already been commented on in the earlier part of the chapter . If man sins, he lives in the kingdom of darkness and he has a darkened heart. But, when he gets saved, he is in the kingdom of light. While the light is in him the darkness can never put it out. He may be surrounded with darkness and not able to feel God at all but the light is still there. It is in him. He is walking in the light. That darkness will never come over him — the darkness of sin — because he is walking in the light of God. The hopeless darkness of a lost soul will not be there. There may be a feeling of hopelessness when the devil surrounds us with darkness like there was with Job, but the light that is in us will hold us during the time the darkness is around us until we break through and drive it back.

Now, in conclusion, preacher brethren, when you preach on darkness be sure and keep in mind that you hold the faith of men in your hands. Once that faith is broken, it may never be regained. Once you convince folk there are no days of darkness after they are saved and you do not explain the difference in the darkness, and you have broken their faith, the chances are they will never build it back. They will go on with a crippled faith. They may seek the rest of their life and MAY cripple into Heaven, but they may be lost because the meaning of no darkness was not explained. So, again, as you preach, remember you hold the faith of men in your hands. Let's guide them to the fact there are two kinds of darkness so when they face the powers of darkness and hell they will have something to hold to. They will be able to fight through it and come out to light.

Sunday school teacher, you hold the faith of men in your hands. So, be sure in your teaching not to teach that there is no darkness. Tell them the kind of darkness there is, the kind there is not, and the kind a Christian faces.

You that are privately counseling souls, be sure to teach that soul that there is a darkness the Christian has to face and wrestle through. But, the darkness of sin is gone when we get saved. Yet, we face the powers of hell. We have to take the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. Let's do our best to help everyone we can make it to Heaven.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 12 The Trinity

We write this chapter in appreciation of the blessed Trinity. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) If we could read Hebrew this would read — "In the beginning the Gods. . ." for God (or Gods) is *Elohim*. The word of God in the Hebrew is "*El*" but when it is *Elohim* it is God in the plural. Therefore, this verse would read, "In the beginning the Gods created the heaven and the earth."

In considering this great subject of the Trinity, I am made to think back to the time when we were in Bible School. Brother P. M. Cowan asked the class, "Does anyone here know all about God?" One of the girls spoke up and said, "If I made a mud man would he know all about me?" That is just about the way it is when we try to comprehend the vastness of God, and the greatness of the blessed Trinity. Beloved, our human minds at the very best, with all the studying we can do on this subject of the Trinity, can only look through a glass darkly, and get a reflection of the Trinity. We just see a little bit of it. It would be an impossibility to grasp the greatness and the marvelous truth of the divine Trinity.

We can know the Trinity. We can know the Father. Thank God, we can know the Son. And, we can know the Holy Spirit. It is our privilege to be personally acquainted and to have blessed fellowship with the Trinity. If I counted correctly in Young's Analytical Concordance this word *Elohim* appears 2,323 times in the Old Testament. Remember, *Elohim* is the Hebrew word for God in the plural. That ought to be enough to prove there is a Trinity.

We have those who believe in Jesus only. But, the very first verse in the Bible disproves the Jesus only doctrine. In the beginning the Gods created the heaven and the earth.

Let's consider some of the names that are given in the Old Testament for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. We find when the Bible is referring to God the Father, usually it uses the word "*El*," speaking of God in the singular. The first place the word *Jehovah* appears in the Bible it refers to God the Father. But, there are places in the scriptures where the word *Jehovah* refers to the Lord Jesus. "The root meaning of the name *Jehovah* is eternal, self-existent life, the one who has always lived, and will live forever, and a fountain of self-existent life." (God's First Words by George D. Watson, God's Bible School and Revivalist, p.13) There is another Hebrew word which is "*Adon*." It is found first in Gen. 15:2. The root meaning of this word is a pillar, a supporter, sustainer, to bear up, to protect, to defend. This refers to God the Son, the second person in the Trinity. This definition gives us a wonderful picture of our blessed Saviour. It says a pillar — that means to bear up that which holds up a load like the pillar of a bridge. I am glad we can lay our eternal soul on the blood of Jesus Christ and we don't have to be afraid of it failing. Thank God forever, He will support us. We can rest on Him. There is no danger as we rest on Jesus Christ. He is a pillar, and a supporter.

He holds us up when we would go down. He is a sustainer. He will bear us up, protect us, and defend us.

Then the word "*El-shaddai*" — this is found the first time in Gen. 17:1 and refers to the Holy Spirit. The root word to *El-shaddai* signifies an exhaustless fountain. Isn't that a beautiful picture of the Holy Ghost? He is our exhaustless fountain, an ever-flowing supply sufficient for every need. Isn't it a marvelous thing when we get that exhaustless fountain flowing in and out of us? That is why the Bible says, "Out of your bellies shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38) The name indicates God outpouring Himself into His people and corresponds with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the believers. So, the word *El-shaddai* in the Old Testament refers to God the Holy Ghost.

Just the fact that the Bible gives the three different names for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost is enough to prove the blessed Trinity.

The New Testament speaks of God the Father. When the Bible refers to God throughout the New Testament, when it speaks of God alone (and again, and again it refers to God alone) it is referring to God the Father. The New Testament speaks of Christ as Jesus. Not only does it refer to Christ as Jesus, but it also uses other names like Emmanuel, Lord, Saviour, Redeemer, and Mediator, etc. There are many names given in the New Testament for Christ.

When the New Testament refers to the Holy Ghost it speaks of Him as the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit. The word "ghost" is not in the Greek, it is the Holy Spirit. So, we find the Trinity in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Certainly the baptism of Jesus is a beautiful picture of the Trinity. Jesus is in the water. As He comes out of the water, the Holy Spirit descends from Heaven in a bodily shape like a dove. Then the Father speaks from Heaven. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:16:17) Throughout the Bible the thought is carried of the Creator in the plural. We find in Gen. 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . ." Notice that He said let "us" make man. He had to be speaking to somebody else that was equal in power and able to create. He could not have been speaking to angels for angels do not have creative power. He could not have been speaking to seraphims because seraphims do not have creative power. He had to be speaking to someone else with creative power. So, He had to be speaking to another God — God the Father speaking to God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Our friends who believe in Jesus only, tell us that the Father is only an office, and that actually there is only one and that is Jesus. The Father is an office, and the Holy Spirit is an office, but Jesus is the only person. I have several different titles if you wanted to give them to me. You could call me Evangelist Poe if you wanted to. Or, you could call me Elder, Mister, Preacher or Brother if you desired. But, wouldn't I be silly to get in a room and say, "Now Evangelist, what do you think about us doing this?" Or, if I would say, "Elder, what do you and Mr. Poe think I ought to do about this?" That would be ridiculous wouldn't it? Here God has spoken and said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . ." According to Dr. Adam Clarke's comments on Ecc. 12:1, "Remember

now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," the word Creator in the phrase "Remember now thy Creator" should have an "5" on the end of it. This is speaking of the fact that there is more than one creator in the creation. There was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. They had their part in creation.

Marvelous as it is, in John 1:1 we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Why can it say the "Word was God?" God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost were present. So, "the Word was with God," the Word was not God the Father but was with God the Father. Verse two says, "The same was in the beginning with God." Notice, when the Bible wants to emphasize something it repeats the statement. And here in verse one we read, "The Word was with God," and in verse two, "The same was in the beginning with God." God wanted to emphasize there was a difference between God the Father and God the Son. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (v. 3) The Bible is emphasizing the fact that Christ had a part in everything that was created.

We have another blessed statement in Hebrews 1:1-2. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Notice here the two persons of the Trinity. It said God spoke by the prophets. We wouldn't say the prophets and God were the same person. Then the second verse says, . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. . . by whom also he made the worlds." In other words, God through His Son created the world — showing again that Christ had a part in the creation. The third verse also is a blessed verse. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." (Heb. 1:3a) We hear the Jesus only people speak about the scripture in St. John 14:8-9. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Jesus is not saying He and the Father are the same person but as the scripture in Hebrews says, "Who being in the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. . ." The express image — in other words, if you see Jesus, you see the Father for Jesus is in the express image of the Father. Isn't that clear? You know, one scripture interprets another and the Bible never crosses itself. This scripture interprets the fact that Christ is in the very express image of the Father. But He couldn't be the Father and be in the image of the Father. It would be an impossibility. . . and upholdeth all things by the power of his word." He holds the worlds in place and holds the stars in space. By him all things consist and if He would withdraw His power everything would go into nothing. But, Beloved, He holds it all together. "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (v. 3c) He is on the right hand of God the Father on high. He couldn't be the Father and sit on His right hand at the same time. So, it is an impossibility, this Jesus only doctrine, for it to be true.

Now let's study the official position of the Trinity. Many times the Trinity is thought of in their official positions. God the Father sits on the Throne in Heaven. Christ the Mediator is at the right hand of the Throne of God. He is making intercession for us. The Holy Ghost is in the world gathering out a bride for Christ. These are the official positions. We dare not be confused in the fact that God the Father is omnipresent. He is right here as much as He is on the Throne in Heaven. That

is just His official position. God the Son, said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20) He is here as well as at the right hand of the Father. The Bible says, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (I John 5:7) The Holy Spirit is here gathering out a bride, but at the same time He is in Heaven bearing record of our salvation. So, while the Trinity has an official position, we must remember the Trinity is also omnipresent.

They have their official place and purpose in the Godhead. God the Father is the legislative part of the Godhead. Christ is the judicial part of the Godhead. The Holy Ghost is the executive of the Godhead.

As a young preacher, I was in a revival and some Jesus — only people were attending. I wanted to know what they believed. I had never met anyone of that doctrine before. I sat down by a man who knew his doctrine. He went through those scriptures. For over an hour he talked about them. That is dangerous because one is apt to be deceived. Going in my room I said, "Now, Lord, I want to know what is right." The Holy Ghost is faithful. He gave me this scripture, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:22) There is a key to the oneness of the Trinity. They are three in one, but they are no more one than two sanctified people and I am one. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21) They are three different persons. The Bible tells us husbands and wives are one flesh when they marry. But, they are still two people yet there is a oneness. Let's consider the oneness of the Trinity. What is the meaning of oneness? The first, they are one in attribute. Whatever you can attribute to the characteristics of one you can attribute these same characteristics to the others. They are one in purpose. There is not one iota of difference in the purpose of the Trinity. They are one in Spirit. There is no danger of them ever having a division because God the Holy Ghost, God the Son, and God the Father are all absolutely perfect. You and I may both be sanctified, but we might have a misunderstanding because our heads are not perfect yet.

Paul and Barnabas had been traveling together. When they got ready to go on the second missionary journey, Barnabas insisted on taking John Mark. Paul insisted they not take him. Barnabas could see that if he took him, he could save him for the glory of God and the gospel. Paul could only see that if he took him, he would turn back again, and the work of God is too important. Their contention became so sharp they separated. But, they didn't hate each other. When Paul wrote about Barnabas, he would say, "our beloved Barnabas." There must have come a time on the field where perhaps Paul and Silas dropped in on Barnabas' and John Mark's service. They might have gotten in a little late. (We have to surmise on this.) John Mark was just starting to preach. God began to help him. I can almost see the Apostle Paul lean forward with tears running down his face. Something welled up in his heart and he was saying, "Thank God, I'm glad Barnabas kept him — that he didn't turn him down." I can see Paul, at the close of the meeting, making his way through the crowd. He takes Barnabas by the hand and says, "Barnabas, I want you to forgive me. I know now you were right." You say, "Preacher, where do you get that?" Because one day Paul, while writing a letter, said, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." (II Tim. 4:11) How did he know? Because he heard him preach. That is the only way he could have known he was profitable for the gospel.

We used that to emphasize this point. There is no danger of there being a division in the Trinity. When we have been in Heaven ten thousand years, they will still be in as perfect harmony as they are now. Thank God for the blessed Trinity!

Next we want to consider the Trinity in the Church. In Ephesians 4:4-6 we read, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Notice this says there is one Spirit, speaking of the Holy Ghost. There is one Lord, speaking of Jesus. And, one God and Father, speaking of the Father. These are the Trinity.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (I Cor. 12:4-6) Notice, "there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." The Lord is the head of the Church. Ephesians 4:9 tells us, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." So, Beloved, Christ calls us into the work of God. He calls the preachers. He calls the missionaries. He calls the pastors and He calls the teachers. He is the administrator, or head, of the Church.

In Corinthians it reads, "There are diversities of operations." God is the One who takes care of the operations of the church. God places us in the body as it pleases Him. If He wants us for a little finger, He puts us there. If He wants us for an ear, He puts us there. If He wants us to be an elbow in the arm He puts us there. Wherever He wants us, He places us there as it pleases Him. In other words, God puts us where He wants us to work.

The Holy Spirit is the one who enables the Church to do whatever Christ has called them to do. And what God has ordained they do, the Holy Spirit is the one who enables them to do it. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (I Cor. 12:7) They are given to enable us to carry out the plan of Christ.

In Genesis the 24th chapter we read of where Abraham's servant went to Laban's house to get Rebekah. He took ten camels with him. The number ten in the Bible is the number of completeness. It is also the number of responsibility. And, it was the responsibility of Eliezer to bring Rebekah back to Isaac. When he was preparing for the journey, Abraham opened his treasure to him. He could get anything he desired to put on those camels. Beloved, the blessed Holy Spirit came into the world to gather out a bride for Christ and He has sufficient of whatever He needs to get us back. It doesn't matter what your problem is, the Holy Ghost has what is needed to get you through. You may say, "But, Preacher, you don't know what kind of battles I have!" The Holy Ghost has whatever is needed to get you through. All we have to do is say like Rebekah, "I will go." Then we become His responsibility and He has what it takes to get us through.

Next, we want to consider the Holy Ghost in redemption. Oh, that we could see the Trinity — the blessed Trinity! We hear such a small amount of preaching along this line. But, the Trinity has a part in every area of our life. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins. . ." (Heb. 1:3) Also, in Col. 2:9 we read, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The Greek word for Godhead is not referring to the persons of the Godhead. It is referring to the deity of the Godhead. It is an entirely different word. (Young's Analytical Concordance, col. 3, page 423) "In Acts 17:29 the Greek word is *Theios* which refers to the three persons. In Romans 1:2 *Theiotes* refers to the divine power or authority of the Godhead. While in Gal. 2:9 the Greek word for Godhead is *Theotes* which speaks of the deity of the Godhead." In Acts 17:29 we find these words, "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." The Greek word for Godhead used here means the three persons or personalities in the Godhead. But the Godhead used in the scripture in Colossians is a different word. It tells us that in Him dwells all the fullness, or all the power of the deity is dwelling in Jesus Christ to redeem men. This scripture is actually saying God the Father has placed all of His redeeming power in the body of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit has placed all of His redeeming power in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Christ's redeeming power lay in His body and blood. Beloved, had Christ failed there would have been no other Redeemer. There could have been no other hope because God the Father and God the Holy Ghost had invested all their redeeming power in the body of the Son. I wish the whole world could read this. He did not fail! Christ died for us, took His own blood and placed it on the altar in Heaven. When a soul comes to bow before God crying to be saved, that soul can have faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. The song declares, "It will never lose its power, it will never lose its power." All the redeeming power of God the Father is in the blood. It doesn't matter how wicked or how far down you are, there is enough power in the blood to set you free and to deliver you from the powers in hell. There is enough power to clean you up and make a new creature out of you. Then, all the power of the Son is in the blood. And, God the Son is all powerful. All the power of the Holy Ghost is in the blood and He is all powerful. Therefore, we can come and bow before Him with faith in the blood until the shackles of sin fall off and He sets us free, and sanctifies us holy! Bless His name! "There is power, power, wonder working power in the blood." Thank God for the Trinity in redemption! Christ has by Himself purged us for all the redeeming power was in Christ.

Next we want to consider the Trinity in bringing a sinner to God. We find, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God saw the poor lost sinner dying and His beloved Son by His side. And He had to let one of them die. But, to see that sinner die would mean to die hopelessly lost. God loved His Son but He looked at us and He said, "I love them too much, I'll let my Son die that they might live." Beloved, He loved until He gave His Son for every wretch in the world that they might be saved. If men will turn to Christ, they can be saved because God loved — because God loved and kept on loving. He loves now. Jesus Christ died for that sinner. He died for every sinner in the world. Everyone in hell — Christ died for them, they did not have to go there. Christ died for every sinner. Oh, that we could see as the Bible says it is not of works lest any boast, but it is through the grace of God. (Eph. 2:8)

It is something like the Old Testament sacrifice. That man who had done wrong, brought his sacrifice, laid his hands on that sacrifice and confessed his sins — that man's guilt passed over on the innocent animal which had done no wrong and was not worthy of death. His guilt passed on the animal and that animal died that he might live. Beloved, Jesus Christ took the guilt of everyone of us. Literally, when we come to God we are laying our hands of faith on the Lamb of God, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our guilt passes from us over on Him. Through His blood our guilt is all gone. We stand free because Jesus Christ died for us. Not because we were good enough, not because we merit it, not because we are worthy of it, but because of the fact that Christ died for us. When our sins are confessed, they pass over on Him and we are set free. When we have been in glory ten thousand years we will still be saying, "Saved through Jesus' blood." Thank God Christ died for us on Calvary.

The Holy Ghost calls us. When we are out in sin, the blessed Spirit of God calls us to Him. "But those whom he calls he also justifies." (Romans 8:30) When the Holy Ghost calls someone, we can place our faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost. He will never call anyone He doesn't want to save. The Holy Ghost is faithful! He is faithful! How does He call? The Holy Ghost calls in various ways. First, "No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him." (John 6:44a) How does He draw him? Through the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost begins to put a desire in their heart to want God, to want to serve Him. That doesn't come of yourself, that came from the Holy Ghost. He is drawing. When He is drawing, it is like me standing on a river bank. Someone is out in the waves drowning. I'd throw a rope out to them and call, "Take hold and I will save you." Beloved, that is what the Holy Ghost says when He draws a sinner. He says, "Take hold by faith and I will pull you out! I will save you." He not only draws, there are times when He comes in real convicting power until souls feel mean and undone. It is Him drawing. Sometimes He brings the scenes of judgment and hell before folk. There are different ways he draws. But, however it may be, He says that those whom He calls He also justifies. When the Holy Ghost draws someone, we can place our faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost who is drawing. We can know if He draws us He will forgive us. When we bow at the altar and are praying and repenting, when we say the last yes to God, the Holy Ghost puts the blood on the altar of our soul, washes our sins away, and then witnesses to our heart that we are His child. How does the Holy Ghost witness? However He lets you know you are saved. With me, it was just that the burden was gone and peace came. It doesn't matter how He lets you know, just so He lets you know you are saved. We don't have to be afraid to trust Him. Back when we left Haiti last year, I told the cook I would send her some money because they only gave her five dollars for taking care of me. When we got home I was short on money and forgot it. Sometime later we got a letter from the main man over there. He asked if I had forgotten it. I was so glad he told me because I had forgotten it. I didn't intend to forget it. But, I'm glad the Holy Ghost will never forget. He will never deceive us. He will never lead us wrong. When He comes with that peace in our heart, we can place our faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost. It doesn't matter how we feel next week, we can place our faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost.

We see the Trinity in sanctification. God the Father's holiness demands our holiness. In I Peter 1:15-16 we find, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." The holiness of God demands our holiness. The very fact that God is holy demands that we must be holy to stand in His presence. God the Father planned that we be sanctified. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you,

brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (II Thess. 2:13) God the Father made a choice in the beginning that one day He was going to have a sanctified people who would go up in the rapture. God made a choice that we be sanctified. (Romans 8:28-29) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . ." God the Father made a foreordained plan that we could be brought into the image of His Son which is holiness. God planned holiness but, the Son bought it for us. Jesus bought entire sanctification for us. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12) "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:10) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10:4) Christ bought sanctification for us. Then, through the provision of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost sanctifies. John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. 3:11-12) There is not one trace of carnality that can stand in the face of Holy Ghost fire. So, Christ made the provision. He baptized us with the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost does the work. When He comes in with the cleansing blood and the purifying power and fire, there can't one trace of carnality stay. ". . . they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire." It didn't say they were tongues but tongues like as of fire, "and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues," not unknown tongues, "as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1a) They were filled with the Holy Ghost. In Acts 15:8-9 we find, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." In Romans 15:16 we read, . . . that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." So, sanctification is the work of the Holy Ghost. He comes in and sanctifies us holy.

We have a personal relationship with the Trinity. We can just get a little glimpse of this great truth. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: But ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (John 14:15-17) The Holy Ghost is that comforter who comes in to abide in His fullness when we get sanctified. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." (I Cor. 6:19a) So, when we get sanctified, the Holy Ghost comes to His temple to abide there. But, that doesn't exclude the Father and the Son. John 14:23 says, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." You say, Preacher, how can your heart be big enough to have the Holy Ghost, the Father, and the Son all in there? Well, Beloved, that is one of the mysteries of God. The Bible says, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) Ephesians 4:6 says, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." We have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost abiding in our heart. But, the Holy Ghost has come in His fullness when we get sanctified, as our comforter, our leader, our counselor, and our guide. And Jesus said He

would manifest Himself to us and He and the Father would live with us. What a blessed privilege! How unworthy we are to have the blessed Trinity of Heaven live with us. Wherever we go, however humble our home might be we can have the blessed Trinity of Heaven live with us.

In closing, let's look at the Trinity in heaven. In Rev. 22:1 we read, "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." There in Heaven in that beautiful New Jerusalem-that golden city — there is going to be a throne. We don't know whether it will be a golden throne, or an ivory throne, or a throne that is decorated with all manner of precious jewels. But it is the throne of God. Beside it is the throne of the Lamb. You don't read any place there where it speaks of the throne of the Holy Ghost. Why? Because He took His throne when we got sanctified. When He gets to Heaven, He is not going to leave the throne of our heart to go sit on a throne of material things. He is going to abide on the throne of our heart forever and ever. Thank God for the Trinity in Heaven!

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 13 The Witness of the Spirit

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." (I John 5:9a.) This chapter will deal with the witness of God, and the witness of man. Beloved, God has ordained to witness to our salvation. It displeases God for us to fail to believe the witness of the Spirit. I am afraid many times folk minimize and make light of the witness of the Spirit. We hear some say, "Don't seek for feeling." That is all right if they interpret what they mean, but, there will be some feeling. We need not try to figure out in our minds just how we are going to feel, but, beloved, there is a definite witness of the Spirit to the grace of God. And, the witness of God is greater than the witness of man. Thank God for the witness of the Spirit.

One time the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart after He had witnessed and said, "If you won't believe the witness of the Spirit, then I am going to quit witnessing." That stirred my heart! I don't want the Holy Ghost to quit witnessing. I want the witness of the Spirit.

Before we enter into the study of the witness of the Spirit, let's consider four verses of scripture lifting out one word in particular. That one word is believe. We read in I John 5:1a, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." That word believeth with a "*th*" on it is not only a present thing, but it is a continual thing. It means to believe and keep on believing until you are born-again. It means to believe as you repent, to believe as you confess, to believe as you forsake sin, to believe as you pray to God with all your heart, to believe as you promise God you will make restitution, and to believe that you will receive Spiritual life when you are born again, when the Spirit of God makes you alive spiritually. So, it means to believe, and keep on believing until you are born again.

That is a vast difference from the way it is taught much of the time. They say, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?" When you answer, "Yes," they say, "God bless you for that noble confession." Beloved, that is not what it is talking about. It means to believe and keep on believing until you are born-again. Then we find in Romans 10:10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Again that word believeth that man believes and keeps on believing while he repents and seeks God. He keeps on believing until he is made righteous. There is a real transformation in his heart. "Old things pass away and behold all things become new." That person is made a brand new creature in Christ Jesus. So, it means to believe and keep on believing until you have been made righteous.

We find in Heb. 11:6b, "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." It means to believe as we come, to believe that Jesus is the Christ. It means to believe as we seek, as we meet conditions. And, it means to keep on believing until we get the reward, and walk away rewarded of our faith.

Then in I John 5:10a, he said, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." That means for that man to believe and keep on believing until he has the witness. Now, dear hearts, no one can just say, "Well I've done my part, so I believe Jesus saves me." That is not what he is talking about. It takes faith to bring the feeling. If we stop before the feeling comes, we stop short. It means to believe and keep on believing until we have the witness in ourselves until the Spirit of God lets us know we are a child of God. You don't have to just say, "I hope I'm saved. I believe I am saved. Somebody told me to take it by faith." You don't have to stay with that. There is a place where you can believe and keep on believing until you have the witness down inside and you know you are a child of God. It is our privilege to know. Thank God, it is our privilege to know that we are born of God, because the Spirit of God has witnessed within that we were made right with Him.

I don't know how God is going to witness. But, the witness of the Spirit is however God lets you know you are saved. This evangelist has been in evangelistic work for many years. And, we have seen many people pray through to a real born-again experience. We have seen folk that have prayed through until the Spirit of God witnessed to their heart. Some just fall over the altar and begin to weep. Why do they weep? Because God let them know they were saved. We have seen others pray through whose face just lit up like a light bulb. Their countenance would shine with the glory and the presence of God. Why? Because God witnessed to them that they have been born again. We have seen others pray through until they were so full of the love of God that in giving expression to this love, the men would embrace the brethren, and the women their new sisters in Christ. Why? Because of the joy of the Lord that came into their hearts. We have seen others get saved that shouted and shouted because of the joy of the Lord.

While we were at a camp meeting in Canada, there was a young man who was seeking God. I have never heard a man pray in my life like that fellow prayed. He didn't seem to realize there was anyone around him. He was telling God how wicked, how mean, and how ungodly he was. Then, suddenly, the forgiveness of God came and that load of sin rolled away. He jumped to his feet to testify. All at once his feet began to go up and down as if he were running, but he wasn't going anywhere. Then he took out of that tabernacle like a deer out into the dark. I don't know how far he ran, but he was full of the joy of the Lord. God had forgiven him of his sins.

The Lord met the need of my heart at Sister Pourchot's little mission in Springfield, Illinois on the corner of 13th and Washington. I was glad when the preacher quit preaching so I could go to the altar for God had so moved on my heart during the service that I just sat and wept. Making my way to the altar, I began to weep and pray. In just about ten minutes that burden of sin rolled from my heart. I never shouted. I don't suppose anybody there thought that I had gotten anything, unless it was my Daddy. But, beloved, I knew God had forgiven me. I had the witness within. I never wept, I never shouted, I never made any noise. I just looked up at the preacher and said that Jesus had saved me. But, oh, that glorious transformation that took place. God instantly delivered me from the love of the world. I have been delivered thirty-one years — from the time I prayed through. Thank God! Why? Because Jesus saved! What are we talking about? It is not how we act, but it is that witness within — when the Spirit of God lets us know our sins are rolled away and our name is written down in Heaven. It is our privilege to have that personal witness of the Spirit; that we know we are saved. Thank God forever!

The Word of God teaches that when we get saved, there are three that bear record in Heaven. (I John 5:7) It is not a small thing when a soul prays through. The three in Heaven do not have to bear record that Jesus is the Christ. Heaven knows that. But, they bear record to the work of redemption that takes place in the heart through the blood of Jesus Christ. The very moment that soul gets saved, the Trinity of Heaven bears witness to that great transaction. Thank God! I John 5:8 tells us, "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The first witness in earth is the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit bears witness to the heart of that individual who prays through. When praying with someone at the altar have you ever prayed through and had the Spirit witness to your heart before the seeker got victory? What a glorious experience! But, beloved, the thing that counts is when the Spirit bears witness to THAT individual, that their sins are gone, and they are right with God.

The second witness in earth is the water. What is that to which the water bears witness? When we are baptized in water, it is a testimony to the world that the great work of redemption has been done in our heart. And, that our sins are washed away and we have quit the world and turned to Christ. It is a witness to the world.

But beloved, the Bible says, the blood. Now where does the blood witness? The blood witnesses to Heaven. And Heaven will always bear witness to the blood, and the Spirit will always bear witness to the blood. The water is a witness to the world that the blood has washed away our sins. Therefore, Beloved, there are three that bear witness on earth — the Spirit, the water, and the blood. And the divine Trinity bears witness to the divine work of grace that takes place in our hearts when we get saved. This is a know so salvation. We find that not only is there the witness of the Trinity, but the Bible says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16) But there is another witness — our spirit bears witness. This witness is absolutely aside from feeling or the witness of the Spirit. After we have had the witness of the Spirit, we won't always feel religious. We won't always feel the Spirit. It is a marvelous thing when the Lord comes and assures us again that we are right with God. But, there are going to be times when we have to walk by faith, when we can't feel the witness of the Spirit anywhere. It seems like God is gone and our prayers return to our own bosom. It seems like Heaven is brass and everything is black all around us. But, I am glad there is another witness, thank God, that has nothing to do with feeling. The first witness is that there is a transformation. Thank God, I am not the person I used to be — I am a new creature in Christ Jesus. I may not be able to get blessed, but there is not one bit of pull back to the old world. There is not one tug back to the old crowd. There is not one tug back to sin. There is not one desire to turn away. Thank God, I am still saved whether I can get blessed or whether I can't get blessed, whether I can shout or whether I can't shout. I am still saved because of the fact that I am a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Another silent witness of the Spirit is found in I John 5:2-3, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." In other words, it is not that I have to do this, but it is a pleasure to walk with God and serve Him because we love Him. Our heart says yes to the will of God. Our heart says yes to the commandments of God. Thank God for that inward witness. When we can't get blessed and when we can't pray, we can still say thank God there is a liberty in the law of God. My heart still says yes

to the commandments of God. It is not a grievous yoke to walk this way — it is a privilege to go this way. The Bible says in I John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." We can't feel God anywhere but we know we have fellowship with Him because we are walking in the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us. We can know when we are walking in the light whether we are blessed or not, whether we can feel God or not. We may feel like He is gone and we will never get blessed again. Did you ever feel like you never would get blessed again, that you never could pray again — it seemed like the Heavens were brass? But, I am glad to say, "Lord, you know where I am. You know that I am walking in the light. You know that I have not failed. You know that I have not backed up and I am still a child of God, because of that inward witness without one bit of feeling, without one touch of the Spirit." Thank God, I can know where I live, because of my inward life, and inward love, and inward devotion, and inward consecration. I have it settled that I'm going through. I have it settled that I'm going this way. Praise God for the witness of our own spirit.

Next we want to consider the importance of our witness. Romans 10:10 reads, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It is important that we keep on testifying after we get saved. C. W. Ruth said that "faith drives the nail, testimony clenches that nail." You men that know anything about building, know if you drive the nail in and don't clench it, it doesn't take much to pull it back out. But if you drive that nail through the board and bend it over to clench it, you can hardly pull it back out. That is what our testimony does. When we say, "Praise God, I am so glad that Jesus saved me," we bend that nail of faith over. Thank God that clenches our testimony. After a nail has been clenched, in order to pull the board off, the nail must be straightened out. This is what the devil is trying to do when he tries to steal your testimony. So, when you feel you don't have a thing, you should immediately stand up and testify. That, like clenching the nail back, will clench your faith, making you an overcomer. This will hold you in the storm. Therefore, let's keep our testimony up. It is important that we testify. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Then, there is the witness to our sanctification. Hebrews 10:14-15 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." What does He witness to? He witnesses to sanctification. And again, what is the witness of the Spirit? It is any way the Holy Ghost lets us know we are sanctified. When He makes it real — then we are sanctified! There are conditions to meet, there is a consecration to be made. There is a dying out to self. There is a dying out to the world, and a dying to self-will. There is the confession of carnality. Romans 8:13b says, "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." We through the Spirit need to draw carnality out for the Spirit to put it to death. When we have met the conditions, beloved, the Holy Spirit will witness to our heart that we are sanctified. It is a tragedy — there is a multitude of people — that cannot point back to the place where the Spirit of God definitely witnessed that they were sanctified. And, there are too many times that folk have gone to the altar and somebody said, "Well, if you have done your part, you have a right to believe that He has done His." I don't believe a word of it! Beloved, you can do your part and WAIT until He DOES His. And He will witness to our experience of heart holiness.

It has been our privilege to see many people pray through and get sanctified. In fact, we know two people who, when they got sanctified, literally saw the Holy Spirit come in a bodily shape like a dove. It came right down to their heart and moved into them. Wasn't that a marvelous experience? But, that was their experience — not yours. God has a personal experience for you. Thank God, He has one that will just fit you.

Now, my clothes wouldn't fit a small man at all. They would be too big and loose on him. Why? Because they were made for someone like me. His clothes fit him because they were made for someone like him. And, God has an experience of heart holiness for each of us alone. We don't have to covet anyone else's experience, but we can know when the Spirit witnessed to our heart and we were sanctified.

In one revival a lady was sanctified. She said it was like a ball of fire that came right down upon her and went through her body. That was a marvelous experience. I have heard of folk who while seeking sanctification went out under the power. When they came to, they were sanctified. Well, that is marvelous, but that is their experience. We have had the privilege of seeing a young man get sanctified, who while seeking, tears were running down his face. When all at once he began to stagger back and forth on his knees until he literally fell over backwards. When he got up he was as drunk as any drunk man you ever looked at. He would stagger and he'd fall. He finally got seated but was still so drunk on the Spirit he fell off of the seal. You can call that fanaticism if you want to, but I was there. The power and the glory of God was so gloriously on that service. That boy was about 12 years old. That was a marvelous experience. Another young man got sanctified up in Michigan. That boy shouted and shouted and shouted until the service was dismissed. He kept on shouting, he was still shouting when they loaded him in the car, and he was still shouting when they drove out in the road. As far down the road as you could hear, he was still shouting. Why? Because God sanctified him. That was marvelous!

Another woman was seeking holiness walking from one side of the tabernacle to the other when all at once she stopped. With both hands in the air she said, "Clean, clean, clean." What was it? God witnessed to her with just a cleansing. Oh that cleanness!

We got a letter the other day from a young lady who had just gotten sanctified, and she testified like this. She said, "Oh, God took something out of me." Well, God let her know she was sanctified.

In our own case, in seeking holiness — after seeking all the time we had to pray on Monday, and then again Tuesday without getting through, Wednesday morning we went upstairs and came to the end of our consecration. And Beloved, the last yes was said, the last struggle made. The Spirit of God witnessed that my part was done, but I wasn't sanctified yet. I had completed my consecration, and my part was done. I am afraid right here is where a lot of folk quit. They say, "I have done my part, I believe He has done His." No! Beloved, I know there are folk that have come to that place, they have stood and said, "I have done my part, and expect God to do His." And they walk on and God does do it, maybe the next morning, or maybe on the way home. But that is dangerous! It is far better to say I have done my part, and I believe God IS going to do His. I believe He will be faithful to His Word. And I believe He will. That morning when we came to the end of our consecration, and the Spirit of God witnessed that my part was done, it wasn't a matter of me just saying, "I've got my

part done," there was a clear witness that I had done my part. I went in and laid down on the bed, I didn't know anything else to do. But, about ten minutes later the blessed Holy Ghost moved in — the sanctifying power began to surge through my bosom. I jumped off the bed and shouted and shouted. The neighbor man, who was a sanctified man — I don't think he even knocked — came running over, and opened the door and barged in. He said, "What happened over here? Something happened, I felt something over at my house."

Well, Beloved, the Holy Spirit had come, I felt sanctified from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. You may wonder why God doesn't sanctify everyone alike? Why doesn't everyone feel the same, why doesn't the witness of the Spirit come the same? Beloved, because God does not want us to seek a witness, He wants us to seek a pure heart. He wants us to seek deliverance from carnality. He wants us to seek for the blessed Holy Ghost to come in, and when HE comes in, He will make Himself real. He will witness to us of His indwelling, and everyone has the blessed right to have a personal experience where the Holy Ghost has definitely witnessed to their heart that they are sanctified. And souls, we can't afford to stop short of a definite, know-so experience of heart holiness!

Then, beloved, there is an inward witness to holiness, that has nothing to do with feeling. I am not talking about getting the experience — that was a real witness. We believe for the witness of the Spirit until it comes. There is a real witness of the Spirit. But, after you are sanctified, you will not feel sanctified all the time. It would be a marvelous thing if we could feel the witness of the Spirit all the time.

I heard Brother Whistler testify that from the time he had been sanctified, there has not been a waking moment when he has not been conscious of the witness of the Spirit. That was a marvelous experience. And, he is the only man that I ever heard testify that had that experience. But, as the Bible says, "The just shall live by faith." Even though there are times when we won't feel sanctified, in the midst of pressures, in the midst of storms, when things have hurt, when things have cut, when things leave the heart bleeding, and we don't feel like shouting — then we need to look at our hearts. The first thing is to look and see that there is no carnality. But, beloved, THIS works under pressure. Thank God, that is a real inward evidence, when we can't get blessed and can't feel God, we look up and say, "Lord, it is still working. Thank God, this experience of heart holiness is still working." But, beyond that there is another witness. The Bible says, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them." (Hebrews 10:16b) Our heart aligns itself with the Bible. It loves the Bible, and there is a freedom in the Word of God. With this glorious freedom we won't go to church hoping the preacher will not preach along a certain scriptural truth, because a holy heart IS fully aligned with the Word of God and in love with divine truth.

Then, there is a yes to the WILL of God. We may not always want to do what He wants us to, but we WILL to do it whether we want to or not. This is the inward witness to holiness.

Another very vital part of our sanctified life is testimony. After we get sanctified, it is important that we testify to this experience. Acts 1:8 tells us, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." God said we were to be a witness at home. We are to be a witness in

the surrounding areas, wherever we go we are to be a witness. And, He said He is going to give us power to be witnesses when we get sanctified. If He gives us power to be witnesses, He expects us to be witnesses — to witness for Jesus. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. 12:10-11) I don't know how broad we can interpret this scripture. Every scripture has more than one meaning — it has a major and a minor interpretation. But, I am sure that God knows where we stand, regardless of what the devil says about it. But I have wondered if this scripture doesn't carry the thought — right in the face of the great witness of God, the devil accuses us that we haven't got a thing. The Spirit of God witnesses, the glory of God comes, and then the next thing the devil says you don't have a thing. You don't have anything, you know you are not where you ought to be. He accuses us before God — right in the face of God who is surrounding us with His love. The devil accuses us day and night. And, the accusation comes to us in the presence of God. But He said, they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. The Bible says in Heb. 10:23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." The devil does his very best to break your faith. After folk get a real experience of heart holiness — probably about 75 per cent of them — after they really get sanctified, within the next week or two are going to have a severe test of faith. The devil is going to test our faith to the very limits. And, if he can break our faith, we will struggle and battle. Sometimes, it takes a year or even years to get back to that place, because your faith wavered in the hour when the storm was on. Therefore, it means something for us to just simply settle it. We are going to keep on believing. We know what God did for us, we know what the Spirit witnessed to and we are not going to cast it away. "Don't cast away your confidence." "Hold fast your profession of faith without wavering."

On the other hand, it means something to testify. I Tim. 6:12b says, ". . . and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." To profess means to declare publicly. It means to avow that something is so. And when we testify, "Thank God, I am saved," we are professing to be sons and daughters of God. That is a good profession! We are professing to being born of the Spirit. We are professing to be heirs and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. We are professing to live above sin. When we testify we are sanctified, we are professing to have a pure heart. We are professing to Christian perfection. We are professing that the Holy Ghost abides within our hearts. That is a good profession, but it means something to profess it. The thing that stirs me is the fact, that all across the land and country, there are multitudes of holiness folk who do not testify to being sanctified. They are not professing very strongly. And, you never hear them say, "I'm sanctified." You never hear them point back to right there is where the Lord sanctified me. But, if we don't have enough victory to testify to, I am afraid we won't have enough to die by. If we don't have enough to testify to, how are we going to face the rapture. We must live clear in our experience of heart holiness until we can testify that we are sanctified. Give a definite testimony. That is the thing that overcomes him. "For they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony." Testify that, "Thank God, through the blood of Jesus Christ, I am sanctified — feeling or no feeling, bless His name!" Our testimony does not depend on our feelings. We are not testifying to how we feel, we are testifying to the fact that God did a work of grace in our hearts, and we are testifying that grace is still there, regardless of how we feel. Beloved, don't get up and testify for the devil. Too many folk

get up and tell what a hard time they are having and how they are just about down. They are just giving the devil a chance to jump onto them. Instead, let's testify with a definite testimony. "Thank God, through the blood I am saved. Through the blood I am sanctified. Glory to God." It has been your evangelist's privilege time and time again to testify in the church when there is no one but the Lord, the devil, and myself there. I have gotten up and testified to the devil that, "Thank God, I'm saved and I'm sanctified." The victory comes through that kind of a testimony. Glory to God, it is our privilege to live in the place, where without one bit of feeling, and it seems like God is gone, we can still testify to the devil that through the blood of Jesus Christ, I know I am saved and I know I am sanctified. Without one bit of feeling, testimony is designed to give you the victory. But, you are going to have to have confidence in your life. Testify with a definite testimony, regardless of how you feel. Remember this, you are sanctified until you are proven that you are not. The old devil will jump on your shoulders and say now don't you say you are sanctified, you might not be. But, we are sanctified until we are proven we are not. The Spirit of God witnessed that we WERE sanctified, and we have a right to believe the witness of the Spirit that we are sanctified until we are proven different. So without one bit of fear of lying, you can get right up and testify when the devil is telling you you don't have a thing because God said, "We overcome him by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony." Guard your testimony, keep your testimony. Testify to definite victory. Testify to what you have, because that is the testimony that brings us out to clear victory over the powers of the devil.

When we think about the effect of testimonies, we will never know how far reaching testimonies go. A wealthy man in West Virginia, came to church and prayed through. Someone asked him what was it the preacher said that got him under conviction. He said, "It wasn't the preacher, it was that old washer woman that lives just over the fence, that would rub her clothes on a board and sing Amazing Grace, and get blessed, and throw up her hands, throwing soap suds in the air. That is the thing that got a hold of my heart." He prayed through and found God through the testimony of that washer woman who never knew that man was watching her life. But her life was the testimony that brought that man to God.

Remember when Jesus went to the country of the Gadarenes? There He met a man that had the legion of devils in him. He cast them out and the devils entered a herd of swine. The swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choked. The man was clothed and in his right mind. Those people were so beside themselves with amazement and fear, that they asked Jesus to leave their coast. Now, Jesus understood why they asked Him to leave, and He got ready to go. This man, this demoniac who had gotten gloriously saved and delivered wanted to go with Him. But Jesus told him, "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done for thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him." (Luke 8:39) When Jesus returned to the coast of the Gadarenes, the Bible says that the people came from all around bringing sick folk and coming to meet Jesus. Why? Because of a man's testimony that God had transformed his life.

Carry your testimony. Let folk know what God has done for you. It is the greatest blessing you will ever have. I think about a man who lived in the Ozark Mountains, down in Arkansas. He did not have much education, but when he left home as a young man, he went out to California to work on the railroad. God got hold of his heart. He prayed through out there on the railroad by himself. God

transformed his life. He walked with God down through the years. As an old man he was in the Veterans' hospital over in Fayetteville, Arkansas. I wish you could have known him. When you get to Heaven look for Brother Emery Askew. What a blessed, blessed man! While there in the hospital he was talking to a man. This man was telling him how he had traveled around the world and all that he had done. When he got through talking Brother Emery said to him, "Man, God has been good to you." That fellow looked at him and said, "I don't believe in God." And, he began to give his big arguments of why he didn't believe in God. When he got through, little Emery Askew looked up at him with tears in his eyes, and said, "Man, I can't argue with you. But when I was a young man I went to California away from my parents and away from my home. God got hold of my heart out there on the railroad. I prayed through and God gloriously saved me." He had tears running down his face as he was telling what God had done for him. Then they parted. Brother Emery thought, "I hope I never see that fellow again." He just felt like he didn't have any answers for him. The next time they met going down the hall, this fellow came over, took Brother Emery by the hand and said, "I want you to know that I am a believer." Why? Because Brother Emery had a testimony. Our testimonies mean something to the world. You may not have an education, but you have a testimony. You can tell the world what Jesus has done for you and what He is doing. You have a testimony and it is important that you testify.

We want to notice in II Corinthians, the first chapter, in the 12th verse these words, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world. . ." The Apostle Paul says that our conscience testifies that we serve God in simplicity and godly sincerity. Now, dear heart, I say this kindly, that you are either sincere, or you are a hypocrite. There is no such thing as a Christian who is not sincere. You are either sincere and have confidence in your own life, and you are serving God in sincerity, or you are a hypocrite. The Apostle says the thing we rejoice about is when our conscience testifies. Bless His Name! It is a good thing to testify in a meeting, but it is a better thing when your conscience testifies that you are doing the very best you know how and that you are walking with "God in simplicity and godly sincerity. Our conscience will testify. When we testify, our conscience is going to testify one way or the other. Sometimes folk testify, but when they sit down the Holy Ghost says, "But, what about that bill you won't pay." Their conscience testifies. Sometimes they testify, but when they sit down their conscience says, "But what about when you blew up out there on the job today — when you had that carnal fit?" You are testifying, but your conscience testified again when you sat down. You testify, I am saved and sanctified, but your conscience says, "What about that business deal, that thing you know was not right, making the other man get the wrong end of the deal and you said nothing about it?" Your conscience testifies. Sometimes that man comes into church whom you haven't treated right. You get up and testify, but when you sit down, then your conscience testifies. Folk say, "Thank God I am sanctified." But when you sit down your conscience says, "You know you got mad. You know you had to hold that thing down. You know that thing stirred inside. You know you had jealousy. You know your heart is full of envy." You are testifying, but your conscience testifies again.

Beloved, our conscience is going to testify when we come down to press a dying pillow. The good testimony of our conscience will be a marvelous thing in that hour, and it won't matter whether we shouted or not, it won't matter what we say. But, in that hour we want our conscience to be clear. If nothing troubles our conscience in the hour of death, that is going to be the thing that will count, for,

our conscience to testify that we have served God in simplicity and godly sincerity in the face of death. But oh, Beloved, that man or woman who comes down to die without God, their conscience will testify. They may sear their conscience as with a hot iron, but most of the time when they go to face God, their conscience testifies.

There was a woman who threw her little unwanted baby under the hedge on a cold stormy night, and walked off in the storm to let it die. The animals ate it and no one ever knew what happened. But, twenty years later on a stormy night that woman was on her death bed. She cried out, "I can hear my little baby crying out under a hedge." Her conscience was testifying on her death bed.

There was another woman dying, who was pulling at her covers and crying out, "I can't forget my sins long enough to die." Her conscience was testifying in the face of eternity.

Beloved, every person's conscience will testify forever after death. There are people who are in menial institutions because they couldn't get away from their conscience. They are tormented with a guilty conscience. But, what will it be out there in the Lake of Fire, in outer darkness, for, there will be absolutely no way to escape your guilty conscience. Folk — their conscience will keep on testifying, "Sin, sin, sin, sin," forever and ever.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 14 Romans 8:1 Word Study

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The Bible says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." So, there was a time when everyone of us was condemned. We stood condemned to death as surely as any man who was on death row. But Christ came and died in our place that we might go free. Suppose I would violate the law, and would be brought into court. I'd confess that I was guilty and they would pronounce the penalty. A friend would step up by my side and say to the Judge. "I love Brother Poe. He is my brother in the Lord. I am going to pay his fine." Beloved, that friend would be the one who would suffer for my wrong that I might go free. Christ took our blame and our guilt. He went to the cross and met every demand. There He paid the penalty for everyone of us. When a sinner bows before God and begins to confess his guilt, Jesus says, "Father, I died for them. I paid the price and the penalty for his sins." We receive forgiveness and the condemnation is gone. We are set free.

One time in England there were many sailors and soldiers who had deserted the navy and army. Finally the Queen of England sent out a proclamation that there would be no soldier or sailor who would suffer the penalty of desertion if they would just come back to their post of duty. They would not have to suffer but would be forgiven. I'm glad the proclamation has already been made that if we will just turn from sin and come to God, we can be forgiven. Our guilt and condemnation will be rolled away.

A number of years ago I was in a revival in Kansas and I read an article in the paper. It said, "Free after three years on death row." This young man had been brought to court and accused of murder. The evidence was given and he was pronounced guilty. But, before the court that young man pled innocent. There was one person who had confidence in him. That was his mother. She appealed to a higher court. It takes time to get a case back in court. He was put on death row and lived there because he couldn't be executed until after the next trial. He was brought back to trial again. The evidence was brought and he was pronounced guilty. He stood before that court and pled that he was not guilty. They sent him back to death row. His mother secured him another trial. It took a long time to get his case back to court again. And, again they pronounced him guilty, and he pled innocent. They were waiting for the day of his execution when a young man was picked up for another crime. This young man confessed that he was guilty of what the other young man was to die for. So they brought the evidence and sure enough it proved that the other boy had committed the crime. The mother who had stood between the innocent boy and death for three years was brought down to his cell. The cell was opened and he was let out to go free. The first thing he did was run over and throw his arms around his mother. She was the one who had saved his life.

Beloved, I stood on death row but the Son of God unlocked the doors of my prison, and I walked out. I am going to love Him forever and ever because He opened the doors of my prison and took

me off death row to go free without any guilt — without any condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This verse declares that if we are condemned, we are not in Christ Jesus. But if we are in Christ Jesus we are not condemned. This brings us down to a word study — we are going to study five words. The first word is condemnation. The second word is conviction. The third word is chastisement, the fourth is accusation and the last is oppression. These words are so closely associated that it is a very vital thing for us to know the difference.

The first word is condemnation. What is condemnation? It is a guilt of sin. Sin is a transgression of the law. We holiness folk have coined this phrase — sin is a willful transgression of the law. The Bible does not say this but it teaches it. For the Bible says, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." (I John 1:7) It also says, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," or lay sin to his charge. That man who is walking in the light — God does not lay sin to his charge. "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin." (James 4:17) Therefore, sin is the willful transgression of the law. We are not condemned unless we willfully transgress the law of God or unless we willfully say no to the will of God. Then we are condemned. That man who shoots someone down, as soon as he pulls the trigger and sees that man pitch and fall, he is condemned. He doesn't have to wait until the law brings him in and finds him guilty. He is condemned already. That young man who steals a ten-cent-store trinket is condemned already. He doesn't have to wait until he is caught. He is condemned as soon as he takes it because he is guilty. He has transgressed the law. We could go on and on. Whatever law we know we have transgressed we are guilty. We may do something and be happy in doing it right in the presence of the law. We wouldn't be condemned because we didn't know it was wrong, but they might pick us up because we were doing wrong even though we didn't know it. But, the blood of Jesus covers when we do not know we are doing wrong. So, if we are condemned, we are condemned because we are guilty of willfully transgressing the law of God.

The next word we want to study is conviction. There is a vast difference between conviction and condemnation yet they are closely related. And, it is vital that we know the difference. God first convicts us before He condemns us. In this matter of conviction, the preacher may be preaching and coming right down the line and declaring that this is sin. You never knew until then that it was sin. God doesn't condemn you for that. He convicts you for it. If you say, "Lord, I'm sorry, I'll not do that any more; I'm going to walk in the light," the blood keeps on covering and that conviction lifts. Your soul is blessed. Why? Because you were not condemned, you were convicted. You may be doing something and you are not aware that it is wrong. God doesn't condemn you for that, He convicts you for it. For instance, someone might get up and testify. When they sit down they realize they hadn't said the thing like it ought to be said. They didn't tell a lie, they told it the best they knew how. Then when they sit down the Spirit checks them. Sometimes they have to get up and fix it right there and say, "Folks the Spirit checked me and I want to fix it up." That is the way to keep from being condemned. You were convicted but you are not condemned for you took care of it. But remember this, the devil will run folks in circles on that sometimes. You tell something and he will say, "You didn't tell that right." You try to fix it up, and he will say, "You didn't fix it right." And, he will get you to running in circles. I've known folk who were simply miserable because the devil had them running in circles. Remember, if you tell something and don't change the meaning of it, you have

told the truth. You may not tell it word for word but if you don't change the meaning of it, you have told the truth. To illustrate that, in Joel 2:28 we read of the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. It says, . . . afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." But, Peter said, . . . this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit. . ." Did you catch the difference? Joel said, "afterward," but Peter said, "In the last days." Now Peter didn't tell something that wasn't so. He didn't change the meaning one bit but he didn't quote it word for word. So, as long as we haven't changed the meaning we haven't said a thing that is wrong. We are still telling the same thing whether we told it word for word or not. You may tell something that just simply is not so. But you think it is so. You are not telling a lie. That is a mistake — you think you are telling the truth. When you find out it isn't so, fix it up if you can and go on and shout the victory. God is not going to convict you because you thought you were telling the truth. One time I told folk all over the country that I was going to hold a revival at New Florence, Missouri. I'd gotten a call. The secretary of the church lived there. I knew a Fire Baptized church was there and I knew the pastor. When it came time for a revival I wrote to the pastor and told him to meet me at the bus at a certain time. I'd be there to hold a revival. I got a phone call. He said, "Brother Poe that is wonderful about the revival, but I don't know anything about it." I said, "Well, is there another holiness church in that area?" He said, "Yes." I asked, "Does the secretary live in New Florence?" "Yes." I said, "Give the letter to her. That is where I'm supposed to hold the revival." I was telling something that wasn't so, but I wasn't telling a lie because I thought I was right. Beloved, we can be doing something that is wrong, but we don't know it is wrong. The Holy Spirit convicts us for it. He doesn't condemn us for it.

Back when I wasn't as busy in evangelistic work as I am now, I did odd jobs. When I finished up the job, whatever nails I had in my nail apron, I'd just take my nail apron off, throw them in the pick-up and go on home. I had no intention of stealing nails. That was the farthest thing from my mind. I didn't have my nail apron full. You men know that by the time you get through a job whatever nails that are there, there are not a lot of them. But, that went on for two or three years. I don't know why the Lord let it go on so long unless He wanted me to use this for an illustration. I was in a revival and was out praying one day when the Holy Ghost said, "Those nails didn't belong to you!" You might ask how I felt — I felt like a thief. I felt terrible. But was I to throw up my hands and say all this time I'd been a sinner? Was I to say I didn't have any victory because I was taking nails that didn't belong to me when I had no thought of stealing nails? No! The thing I was to do is what I did do. I said, " Lord, when I get back home, I'll make it right." I'll tell you if I do anything now days I empty my nail apron! I went back home and I could have said, "Now that's embarrassing. I'm a preacher. What are folks going to think of me if I fix it up? I'm just not going to do it." I'd have lost out with God. But, instead, when I got back home, I started to make my rounds. I offered the folk fifty cents everywhere I had worked to make it right. Back then you could get nails a lot cheaper than you can now. I don't suppose I took over ten cents worth of nails from anybody. But, I wanted it fixed up. As far as I know I went to everyone I could remember and it doesn't bother me a bit. Praise the Lord! What are we talking about? I wasn't condemned, I was convicted. When God convicted me, I took care of it. You may be doing something wrong and not be aware of it. When God shows you it is wrong don't throw up your hands and say I'm a sinner, but go back and fix it up, and don't do it any more. There are some things you can't fix up, but you can quit doing them. You can say, "Lord, I'm sorry. I'll not do that anymore." So Spirit checked me and I want to fix it up." That is the

way to keep from being condemned. You were convicted but you are not condemned for you look care of it. But remember this, the devil will run folks in circles on that sometimes. You tell something and he will say, "You didn't tell that right." You try to fix it up, and he will say, "You didn't fix it right." And, he will get you to running in circles. I've known folk who were simply miserable because the devil had them running in circles. Remember, if you tell something and don't change the meaning of it, you have told the truth. You may not tell it word for word but if you don't change the meaning of it, you have told the truth. To illustrate that, in Joel 2:28 we read of the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. It says, ". . . afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." But, Peter said, ". . . this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit. . ." Did you catch the difference? Joel said, "afterward," but Peter said, "In the last days." Now Peter didn't tell something that wasn't so. He didn't change the meaning one bit but he didn't quote it word for word. So, as long as we haven't changed the meaning we haven't said a thing that is wrong. We are still telling the same thing whether we told it word for word or not. You may tell something that just simply is not so. But you think it is so. You are not telling a lie. That is a mistake — you think you are telling the truth. When you find out it isn't so, fix it up if you can and go on and shout the victory. God is not going to convict you because you thought you were telling the truth. One time I told folk all over the country that I was going to hold a revival at New Florence, Missouri. I'd gotten a call. The secretary of the church lived there. I knew a Fire Baptized church was there and I knew the pastor. When it came time for a revival I wrote to the pastor and told him to meet me at the bus at a certain time. I'd be there to hold a revival. I got a phone call. He said, "Brother Poe that is wonderful about the revival, but I don't know anything about it." I said, "Well, is there another holiness church in that area?" He said, "Yes." I asked, "Does the secretary live in New Florence?" "Yes." I said, "Give the letter to her. That is where I'm supposed to hold the revival." I was telling something that wasn't so, but I wasn't telling a lie because I thought I was right. Beloved, we can be doing something that is wrong, but we don't know it is wrong. The Holy Spirit convicts us for it. He doesn't condemn us for it.

The next word we want to study is chastisement. Now, beloved, God doesn't whip us for sin. He said that He chastises those that He loves. And He said that no chastisement is joyous for the present, but afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It's good for us after it quits hurting. But the Lord doesn't whip us for sin. What does He whip us for? He whips us for our lack of obedience in the line of moving as quickly as we ought to, or moving too quickly. Sometimes folk in zeal can get ahead of the Spirit and get out of divine order and do something that hurts the cause of God. God doesn't condemn them, a lot of people might, but God won't condemn them. He will give them a whipping. I've had quite a lot of zeal in my time and I've gotten ahead of the Spirit. And the Lord has whipped me and I've wept over it, but it teaches us to learn how to try the Spirit and to move when the Spirit moves. Thank God for the whippings that God gives us along the way because they help us to learn to follow Him. Then God gives us a whipping for being too slow sometimes. You that have served the Lord for some time have possibly had the experience of God putting something on you and saying, "Lord, is this Thee? Is this of the Lord, is this what God wants me to do?" All at once somebody on the other side of the house gets up and does the thing you felt you ought to do. Then you feel so bad — so defeated. Now God doesn't condemn you for that because you didn't say no, but He will give you a whipping for being so slow. How do you feel when you get

a whipping? You feel like you are lost — you feel terrible when God gives you a whipping. He is not whipping you for sin, He is whipping you for being too slow. Especially timid folk — they may go to a service and feel like they ought to testify. Maybe there is a crowd there and their heart is pounding for they feel like they ought to testify. They say, "Lord, let someone else testify and then I will." Sanctification doesn't take all the timidity out of you. Some folk aren't bothered with this, but I am talking about real timid folk, sanctification will help them, but will not remove their natural timidity. Others testify while the timid one keeps waiting for one more to testify. All at once the person in charge changes the order of the service and they never got to testify. They didn't disobey God, they were trying to get up enough courage to do it. But, they were too late and God gives them a whipping. Why? Because they were too slow and God wants to teach them obedience.

I remember back when I was a young Christian. I was saved the last week of May or the first week of June and the next April the Lord called me to preach. It wasn't a bit of a struggle for me to say yes to the call to preach for before I realized I was called to preach, He would give me a message and a place to preach it. I had a message and an invitation to preach, I didn't know what else to do but preach. People would ask me if I was called to preach and I would say no. I ought to have known the Lord was calling me but I wanted to be sure. I'm not sorry I waited to be sure. There came a time when God let me know that was what He wanted. So, I had already preached some before ever I knew I was called. That really wasn't a struggle to say yes to the call to preach. It was either that fall or the next fall when it came time for Mt. Zion Camp, God called me to exhort after the other preacher preached. I almost never made it! I was just a boy preacher, a student in school. Back in the days of open camps, they would pick out the old veteran preachers and put them up to preach. They'd preach and about the time they'd get through my heart would start pounding. God would begin to move on me to get up and exhort after they were through preaching. I'll tell you that looked like a mountain, nobody knows how big that looked. I'd pray, I'd tell the Lord to have them sing another song and then I would. They'd sing another verse. Maybe they would close the service and I hadn't exhorted. I would go home and the Lord would whip me. I'd cry and I'd pray. The Lord didn't condemn me but He whipped me. He knew the struggle. He knew how big that looked. I'll never forget, Brother George Clouse's mother — bless her heart — if she was close to me she would see me start to go down under that thing. I can remember yet, she'd say in a low voice, "Winfield, mind God. Winfield, mind God." That would be just what I would need to get out and get up there and mind the Lord. Oh, I'd go home that night and I'd feel so good! I'd minded the Lord. But, I'd go back the next night and maybe that night I wouldn't make it. I'll tell you, I'd go home and the Lord would whip me, and whip me, and whip me. Finally one day I said, "Lord, I'm going to do it whether you help me or whether you don't — I'm going to do it anyway. That was a big step towards victory. I'm not going to tell you it has always been easy through the years to get up and exhort after another preacher, but it is blessed to mind God. What am I talking about? I didn't sin because I wasn't saying no to God. I was trying to say yes to God. God knew the struggle of my heart and He knew I was trying to mind Him — I was trying to say yes. And, beloved, there are a lot of young people that have struggled over things and when they didn't have the courage to do it, the devil said, "You're backslid, you don't have a thing." They would throw up their hands and go down in defeat. They started over when all they needed to do was say, "Thank You, Lord, for the whipping. I'll try to do better next time." The Lord whips us because of our blunders and our mistakes because He wants us to do better. It may be that God wants you to go somewhere and you put it off and miss it. But, in these areas God will give us a whipping.

Then the next word we want to study is accusation. The Bible says, . . . for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." (Rev. 12:10-11) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (I Peter 4:12) Catch the phrase "as though some strange thing happened unto you." There will be times when you feel so lost and the devil will say you are backslid — you have sinned. But, you don't know of anything you have done wrong. Remember this, the devil will always tell you that something is wrong but the Holy Ghost will always tell you what is wrong. He will put His finger right on the thing you have done wrong and say, "This is where you missed it." The Holy Spirit will never deal in generalities, He deals in specific things. He will tell you what is wrong. There can come such a strange feeling causing you to think you have grieved God. You will wonder what is the matter. The devil will tell you you have sinned. That is always the devil. The Holy Ghost will tell you what you have done. Then, during revival meetings there are a lot of folk who have cast away their confidence and gone to the altar and tried to get saved when all they needed to do was resist the devil. The devil will whisper in their ear, "You are not saved, You have backslidden." They will go to the altar and say, "While the preacher was preaching the Lord told me I was backslid." Now listen, beloved, if a voice whispers in your ear saying you are backslidden you say, "Lord, if this is Thee show me where I have backslidden." He will do it. But if He doesn't show you where you backslid, don't throw up your hands and go to the altar. You just hold steady until God lets you know where you are. But, don't just throw up your hands and go to the altar because the still small voice whispers and tells you that you are backslidden. The devil can whisper, too. And, if you are backslidden the Holy Ghost is faithful and will show you where you missed it.

Also, the devil can whisper while the preacher is preaching, "You are not sanctified." Just because you hear a voice saying you are not sanctified don't go to the altar. Instead, you say, "Lord, if I'm not sanctified, you show me carnality in my heart." God said, "Try the spirits whether they be of God." Therefore, it is safe for you to say, "Lord, if I'm not sanctified, you show me carnality. You show me why I'm not sanctified." He will. The devil will make you feel you are not sanctified. You may say Brother Poe, do sanctified folks have that trouble? Sure they do! The devil will try to wreck your confidence and make you feel terrible. But, that's the time to say, "Lord, you show me if there is any carnality there. You show me where I missed it." Remember, the devil will tell you something is wrong, but the Holy Ghost will tell you what is wrong.

At one time we pastored in Valley Springs, Arkansas. A number of years after we had left dear Sister Wills, a very godly woman, got down to pray one night in prayer meeting. While she was praying there was a voice whispered in her ear. "The Holy Ghost has left you!" I don't know how the devil had so much power to cast a spell over that precious old saint almost ninety years old. The Holy Ghost doesn't leave folk for going to prayer meeting. You have to do something for the Holy Ghost to leave. He came to abide forever. The devil told her the Holy Spirit had left her, and he put such darkness over her that no matter how blessed the saints were, she couldn't get blessed. For about two years she went under that awful darkness. I don't know how she stood it. She went to her pastor, a very godly man, and told him about her problem. He said, "Grandma, you're just old and it is the devil fighting you." That was so, but that didn't break the darkness for her. Then she went to an evangelist who, I feel, has much more wisdom than I have. He told her the same thing her pastor had.

He said, "Grandma, you're just old and this is the devil fighting you. You'll be all right." We went there for a revival. We are very close to the people there. Her daughter-in-law said to me, "Oh, Brother Poe, if Granny could just be blessed one more time before she dies!" The Lord put that precious soul on our heart. I'd write letters in the morning, I was there by myself before my wife started traveling with me. I'd go to the post office and then go to Grandma Will's house. I'd sit there and say, "Grandma, have you sinned? Is there anywhere you have sinned?" She'd say, "No, Brother Poe, I don't know of a thing that I have done wrong." I'd say, "Then that is the devil fighting you." And, I'd give her scriptures and try to help her. But, I'd leave her just as dark as when I came. The next day, I'd do the same thing. That went on day after day until the last Friday morning of the meeting. When we came to the door and knocked she opened the door, threw up her hands and said, "He's come! He's come!" She was blessed. The last time I was at Valley Springs, I said to her daughter-in-law, "How did Grandma die?" She said, "It was wonderful!" Why? Because she fought through the darkness. I'm talking of accusation — the devil accusing. Isn't that an awful thing to jump an old lady like that and tell her that the Holy Ghost has left her? She went through that awful darkness for about two years. If she hadn't been living godly, she would have never made it. But, the devil couldn't point to any sin. That was the only thing that held her.

The last word we want to study is oppression. There are oppressing demons. Especially folk who have problems with their nerves have these times of oppression. Sometimes it is just a dark pressure that settles down on them until they have become depressed and they feel like there is no help for them. That is an oppressing demon. It doesn't mean there is anything wrong on the inside. But, they have to recognize that and resist it in order to break it and come out where they have freedom and victory again. Sometimes, elderly saints face these oppressing demons. But, that is just one way. I have two very good friends, godly men, who demons oppress until they hear cursing in their ears of a night. The devil told one of them he was blaspheming the Holy Ghost. It just rings through their mind. It is a terrible thing. It is not a part of them, but it is that oppressing spirit that comes on them. I was in a camp meeting where one of these good brethren was and he came in the morning. Long before the rest of the people came I was at the altar praying. He came in in the dark and fell down beside me. He said, "Brother Poe, is there any hope for me? Where am I at?" Those demons had screamed at him in the night. It was an oppressing demon. Not many folk have to face that kind of pressure. But, we don't know how many are going through this. Beloved, it may not be that, it may be something else. It may be some kind of a feeling that is not actually a part of you, yet it comes on you. It is an oppression from the devil that comes on until it beats folk down many times. The only way out of that oppression is to recognize it. One of these brothers, the last time we were together said, "Brother Poe, we have broken that spirit." I was so happy about that. He said, "It hardly ever bothers me anymore." God had helped him. He had battled that thing for a number of years before he finally broke it. But, he said, "God helped me to break that thing!" So many people go through oppression, especially nervous people who have real nerve problems. Maybe it is a temptation of some kind that comes. But it comes with such an oppressing spirit that it seems a part of you. Yet, if you detect it, it is coming in from your mind, not flowing out from your heart. That is an oppressing spirit. Usually somewhere in life God's people have to face that thing. Many times they will go down under the pressure.

We want to notice the reward of no condemnation. Beloved, it is marvelous to live above condemnation. If we are living above condemnation, the Bible says, "If we walk in the light as He

is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." That means that moment by moment the blood of Jesus flows over the soul. Glory to God! It keeps the soul white and clean before God. What a blessed privilege it is to walk in the light. We can call God to record whether we are walking in the light or not. Then the privilege of having no condemnation — we have fellowship with Him. How blessed it is to think we can fellowship with God. There is a ground where we can meet and that is where there is no condemnation. Where the holiness of our heart blends with the holiness of God we have fellowship in the Spirit. To have this we must be walking in every ray of light. You may not have as much light as I have, or I may not have as much light as you have, but if we are walking in the light that we have, we have fellowship one with another. Thank God, there are grounds of fellowship just walking in the light.

Beloved, if we know we are walking in every ray of light, we can know that God hears us. He said, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (I John 3:21-22) So if we are walking in the light, we can know that God hears us and our petition is granted. The thing that we are praying for, God is going to give it to us if we are walking in the light.

Then, if we are walking in the light we can come down to the end of life and life's evening sun can set clear. What a blessed thing it is, when we have come to the last step there is nothing between us and God! There is not a cloud, not a shadow, not a thing to trouble our heart, just peace because we are walking in the light! It doesn't matter whether we can talk, it doesn't matter whether we are too sick to lift our hand, there is peace. There is no condemnation. Glory to God! We can step into the presence of His holiness without condemnation because we have walked with Him. There is a secret to no condemnation. That secret is to walk after the Spirit. Just step by step keep up with the Holy Ghost. When He says, "Son, or daughter I want you to quit that." "Yes, Lord, I'll quit." "Son or daughter, I want you to do that." "Yes, Lord, I'll do it." The Holy Spirit checks us. We might be saying something and the Spirit says, "Don't say that." Just stop or else change the conversation. That is the secret of no condemnation. Just walk with the Spirit, He is going to lead us all the way to Heaven. He knows how to get us through.

I want to ask you a question. How long has it been since everything was clear? How long has it been since there was nothing that disturbed the peace of your heart? Oh, beloved, it is wonderful when the peace of your heart is not disturbed. The Bible says, "Let the peace of God rule in your heart." Is everything clear? It is marvelous when your own conscience doesn't condemn you. But, it is a tragedy to profess and be condemned by the Word of God. It is a tragedy to profess when the index finger of God points right at you. While preaching one time, a man came to the altar. He was a preacher who had married into adultery. As the preacher was there weeping and praying, I never felt much more sorry for anyone. He looked up at me and said, "I used to preach it clear like you do, but for twenty years I've been up and down. I'll pray through and feel pretty good for awhile, then I'm condemned and go down." Why? God's Word pointed its index finger at him. There was no way to get around it. Condemned by the Word of God. And then condemned by your own conscience. What a sad thing to leave this world under condemnation. If we live under condemnation, we will die under condemnation and go to hell.

*It is the writer's hope that the personal illustrations used in this chapter will help folk find their way out of spiritual problems.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 15 How To Maintain the Experience of Holiness

It is just as vital to stay saved and to stay sanctified as it is to get the experience. Getting the experience is just the starting place. Many times getting the experience is stressed over and over. It needs to be but after all, if we don't maintain the experience after we get it, we will never make it to Heaven.

The first thing that is so important in maintaining the experience of holiness is to know you are sanctified. It doesn't matter how you feel right now — but that you know you really got sanctified. If you don't know you have been sanctified, then you don't have anything to fight for. But if you can point back in the darkest hour and say right there was where I got sanctified and as far as I know I haven't broken with God, then you have something to contend for. You have something you can hold on to. That's why it is so vitally important to get folk through to a real definite experience. The Holy Ghost has witnessed to their heart and they know they are sanctified. It would be better for folk to come and go from the altar many times than to see them go away in the fog and not know they are sanctified when they leave the altar. If you have an experience that you know you have, then you have something to point the devil back to in the times when the pressures are on.

We don't always live in the atmosphere of camp meeting or revival, but in everyday life. We, as the ministry, should strive to preach a salvation that works in everyday life and not preach a mountain-top experience all the time because we have to live this life after we get it.

Another thing that is very important after you get sanctified is to remember that God gave you the experience that just fits you. God doesn't give you someone else's experience. When you hear someone give their experience — and everybody ought to have a right to testify and give their own experience of how they were sanctified — the devil may whisper in your ear and say you didn't get it like that. That is so because they are not you. God doesn't give you someone else's experience. He gives you an experience of your own. So, never let the devil browbeat you because you didn't get it like someone else. I've often said when I got saved I never demonstrated at all. I just looked up and told the preacher I was saved. But instantly my life was transformed. Folk have told about how they were gloriously saved and how long it took them to come back down to earth. I've seen folk get saved who have shouted and shouted and in a few days they have gone back. This is not questioning the fact that they got a real experience nor is it saying that if they shout they will go back. But the fact is God gave me an experience just like He wanted me to have. When I got sanctified, it was altogether the opposite. The sanctifying power just surged through my bosom. I felt sanctified from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet, and I shouted and praised God. But remember this — we don't have an experience like someone else's. God gives you your own experience. Some have been sanctified who just say, "Clean," they felt the cleansing. Don't cast away your confidence when you didn't get an experience like someone else did. If you do you will be in the fog a lot of the time.

One reason why God doesn't give everyone the same experience is because God doesn't want us seeking evidence. He wants us seeking a pure heart. Then, He witnesses in His own way. When He does witness to us it is up to us to hold to that.

The next thing in maintaining the experience of heart holiness is to maintain your testimony. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10) Someone has rightfully said that faith drives the nail but the testimony clenches it. If you drive a nail into two boards and don't bend the nail over it doesn't take much of a blow coming against the board to drive the nail back up and the boards will come apart. However, if you bend the end of that nail over, it doesn't matter much what the pressure is that comes against it. You can break the board before you pull out the nail. On the other hand, if you want to pull out that nail to take the board off — do you know what to do first? You get something underneath and straighten the nail. Then you can pull it out. That is what the devil is trying to do when he tries to rob you of your testimony. He is trying to straighten out the nail. And if he can rob you of your testimony then he has caused you to begin to stagger. It is extremely important, if you are saved and sanctified, to testify to it. That continually keeps the nail clenched. If the devil could beat you back and say, "You don't feel like you are sanctified. Don't you get up and testify that you are sanctified, you might be telling a lie." Remember this — in court you are innocent until you are proven guilty. That is the way it is about being sanctified. "Old devil, I'm sanctified until you prove I am not!" Just keep testifying. You may say, "I don't feel like I have a thing." That doesn't make a bit of difference. Testify to it and that is the thing that will give you victory. Again — you are sanctified until you are proven guilty. It isn't a matter of feelings. Don't give up just because you don't feel right. Don't feel that if you testify you will be acting the hypocrite. That is not so! The Bible says in Rev. 12:11a "We overcome him by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony." So it is important that we testify. It is a sad thing that all across the country not very many people testify. A lot of people get up and take up a lot of time, maybe 15 or 20 minutes, and yet they haven't testified at all. About 90 per cent of the long testimonies are out of divine order anyway. The thing to do is get up, testify how you stand spiritually and tell what God has done or is doing for you. This is not to leave the impression that all long testimonies are out of order. Ten per cent of them are probably in divine order. Also, don't get in bondage because you don't testify like someone else. But testify to a definite experience. Sometimes preachers leave a wrong impression. We hear folk say, "Don't be a professor." But if you don't profess, you don't have anything. I Tim. 6:12b says, "Thou hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." It is very important to profess. I profess to be sanctified. Thank God, I am and I'm glad the Spirit witnesses to that profession. But, if I didn't profess it I wouldn't have it. Therefore, it is important that we profess. The word "profess" means to declare publicly or to affirm. Yet, it has a still stronger meaning, it means to avow that something is so. It means something in the time when you feel everything is gone to yet declare, "I know I am sanctified. I know it because God did it and God is faithful. He is not going to take it away from me. Therefore, I am sanctified." It is very vital that we profess and declare that we are sanctified.

Think about how Job professed. "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:8-10) If he had stopped there he had a wonderful testimony. But he didn't. "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the

words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (23:11-12) He had a testimony. Then he said, "My familiar friends have forsaken me and my wife's breath is strange to me. My kin folk have failed me and I am escaped by the skin of my teeth." In other words, he is saying he is just barely alive. He seems almost like a man clutching onto something with his fingers and someone pecking his hands trying to make him let loose. But he said in Job 19:23-27, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job was saying if I die on this ash heap and I never feel God I know I will go to Heaven because He is my Redeemer. And I know when He comes back to earth I will come back with Him. In his testimony He could have said, "I know the Redeemer liveth," but, that wouldn't have given him victory. The testimony was "my" — "I know my redeemer liveth." This point needs to be emphasized. It is vital that you keep your testimony. It is important that you testify to what you have. When you don't feel like it, testify to it anyway. John Fletcher said that he lost the experience because he didn't testify to it. Let's testify to the experience of heart holiness. Just get up and if you don't say anymore than I'm saved and sanctified — then do that. But let's testify to what we have. Declare that I am still saved and sanctified. On what rights? The fact that I know He did the work. The second thing is, I have not backed up. And if I haven't backed up, then I am still saved and sanctified whether I can pray or whether I can't pray, I am still sanctified. That is such an important thing. There are times you should testify to the devil. When you are out praying and you can't pray, testify to the devil. There are a lot of times it really brings victory when there is no one there but you and the devil and the Lord.

We live by faith. After we are sanctified, the just shall live by faith. But beloved, after we first get sanctified (if you would ask, you would find 90 per cent of the sanctified people will affirm what I am about to say) you will have a severe test of faith. Sometimes it comes the next day. Sometimes it may be a week before you have the test. But it usually isn't very long after you are first sanctified. It will seem like everything goes wrong. You feel as if you are not sanctified. The devil will tell you you are not sanctified. Many have told about the time they went through this. I remember very definitely my experience. I was sanctified about a week, then the next week I really faced the storm. The battle raged for about a week. If the devil can break your confidence and your faith during that time, you may not give up but you get into the place where you are in the fog and you decide you don't know where you are. You may struggle for years to get back up to the place where your faith is strong. But if you fight and hold on through that first battle, then usually you don't have that struggle of faith in the extreme measure you do if you waver in the first battle.

Almost every older preacher can look back and say, "Oh, if someone had told me that when I first got through. It would have saved me so much if I would just have known these things." So it is important to recognize that when the devil comes you must fight him and not let him break your faith. Hold fast! God is faithful. He has witnessed and you know you have it. Satan will tempt you in every way he can. Temptations will come. But that is the time you will have to hold faithful. No matter how long you have been sanctified, there is the possibility of getting into the fog. There will be times when you cannot feel God. You can't pray. You can't seem to find God. You feel like you have lost everything.

After I had been preaching for 20 years, it was in the fall of the year and the pressures began to come in. The devil began to fight. For two or three weeks it kept getting darker. I went to Moberly, Missouri and started a revival. In this revival it got so dark there seemed to be a wall between Heaven and me. It is hard to explain. It was a wall of darkness I couldn't break through. The devil would say to me, "You used to be anointed but you will never be anointed again." Actually I was anointed then, and didn't know it, because we were having seekers every service. I couldn't feel the help I was getting but God was moving and folk were praying through every service. But no one knew the battle I was having. Preachers, many times, don't have anyone to tell their problems to. They have to fight them through themselves. (One lady in a camp meeting said, "I'll be glad when Brother Poe gets here. He is always on top." That's all she knew about it.) This pressure kept getting more intense and it kept getting harder. I could point back to when I had gotten sanctified but it didn't do any good. The devil didn't say I hadn't gotten sanctified, he told me I wasn't. That pressure got so dark I felt I could hardly stand it. There seemed to be a wall that was impossible to break through. Until on Saturday morning (I've often wished I could explain this) it was so dark I absolutely didn't have any more power to resist. The only thing that kept me from going down was God pointing out two people who were up and down. One of them was sanctified in one of my meetings and saw the Holy Spirit come into her heart in a bodily shape like a dove. After that, she cast away that marvelous experience and was up and down. The Lord told me, "If you cast away your confidence, you will get in the fog as she had." So, I felt like I couldn't turn loose. That morning I went down to the church. It was so dark I had no more power to fight. I laid face down on the carpet. With what strength I had left, I said, "Lord, You've got to help me!" That's all I said. I didn't struggle but it seemed as if God took hold of that thing and rolled it off of me. Leaping to my feet, I began to shout up and down the aisles and began to soar higher and higher. I was up there for almost two years after I came through that battle. God carried me out. I had some encounters with the devil but never lost that marvelous victory. But what if I had given up in that time? We must hold on in the pressure.

The Pea Ridge Battlefield in Arkansas is an example to the world of giving up in defeat just before victory could have been won. The Northern Army had gotten around on the south and put the Southern Army in the north. They cut off the southern supply line. The North was outnumbered. The southern men had the best position. They were back in the woods and the rocks. The Northern Army was out in the flat and coming across an open place. The Southern Army had every advantage except for one thing. They began to run out of ammunition. They had no communication. About 4:00 o'clock in the evening the South withdrew. They left a few people to keep shooting to keep the noise going while the main army escaped. Then the stragglers were to get away the best they could. But the thing they never knew was that less than two miles away — when they began to withdraw the wagons with the ammunition were coming. Help was less than two miles away when they retreated. If they had known, they would have stayed there and won the victory. "Hold the fort for I am coming, Jesus signals still. Wave the answer back to Heaven by thy grace we will." When you feel like giving up, hold the fort. Help is nigh. It may be just two miles away. Don't withdraw! So in the hardest battle there will be times you will fight the fight of faith. But hold your faith. Hold your faith! God is faithful and He is not going to leave you. He is not going to forsake you! You have a right to hold on to your faith until God comes. Here is a promise. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth

him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:15-17.) He doesn't come as a visitor. He comes as an abider. He comes in and takes up His residence.

Do you realize when you get to Heaven He is not going to leave you? Look in Revelation. There is the throne of the Father and the throne of the Lamb. But there is no throne for the Holy Ghost because He took His throne when you were sanctified. And He is not going to leave that throne in your heart even when He gets to Heaven. He is not going to step out of your heart to set on a throne of ivory or gold. He is just going to stay in your heart forever. Glory to God! Aren't you glad the Holy Ghost comes to abide and "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." He can help you overcome.

The most vital thing next to your faith is prayer. Prayer is like breath. You quit breathing and you will die. Take time — get yourself a set time to pray. You don't have to get gray-headed to do that. Get yourself a set time to pray and have your private devotions. I recommend getting up early in the morning. I think that is the best time to pray. But there are some people who early in the morning their head is out of gear and they can't pray. Well if you can't pray early in the morning get another time. Get a set time to pray and be sure to pray. For one of the most vital things is your prayer life. Then remember, God hears you whether you can hear God or not. Daniel prayed 20 days without hearing from Heaven one time. Wouldn't that be hard praying to go almost three weeks and not hear from Heaven? He hadn't heard from Heaven one time during all those days, but when the angel broke through on the 21st day he told Daniel that he had been heard the first day he prayed. Heaven heard from Daniel 21 days before Daniel heard from Heaven. Whether we hear from Heaven or not, don't go away and say God didn't hear me. He did hear. The Bible says His ear is open to the cry of the righteous. We can know He hears us. Whether we feel like it or not, we can know God hears us. Yet it is vital that we try to pray into His presence. If you can't pray through, then praise through. There are some times when you go to prayer that it seems like you don't have any burden, that is the time to begin to praise the Lord. Praise Him and praise Him. Many times He will come and bless you. So when you can't pray — praise Him. Sometimes the devil may say you don't have a thing. There's no use for you to pray. Don't try — just praise Him until He comes.

Don't condemn yourself when you can't feel God when you pray. You may go to prayer and your mind won't go with you. Brother Adcock tells while preaching to a group of preachers, "Sometimes I go to pray and my mind just won't stay home." It is easy to let your mind wander and be thinking about something else. That is not a sign of sin. That is not a sign of weakness. That is not a sign of not being sanctified. It is just that we are human and sometimes we have trouble getting our minds brought into the spirit of prayer. It is important to know this for if you go to prayer and this happens to you you may say something must be wrong with me spiritually. My mind won't stay on prayer. That happens to all of us. It is a part of being human but seek to touch the Lord. Seek to get happy as much as you can. Don't condemn yourself if you don't but make that your goal. If we beat ourselves down we are not apt to pray through. When you come to pray, it is a good thing to come with praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and come with faith. Recognize the fact that you have a right to come into His presence. This will help you to pray. You are a child of God and you have a right to pray. God hears your prayers just as much as He hears my prayers. He hears your prayers just as much as He hears the prayers of the greatest saint you know. No matter how great the saint, they do not come

to God by their own merits. They come to God through Jesus Christ and you have the same right they have. Isn't that precious?

The next thing vital to your maintaining the experience of holiness is to learn obedience, obedience to God. This is so important in order to maintain the experience of sanctification or justification. It is not only vital we learn obedience to God, we must also learn what disobedience is. Now the Lord may tell me to do something and I may try to do it and not get it done. I haven't disobeyed God. I failed to get done what He wanted me to do but it wasn't a matter of disobedience. You might be sitting in a service and God asks you to do something. You intend to do it but you don't get it done. Maybe the order of the service changes. That is not a matter of being disobedient. It is a matter that you failed to move quickly enough. It may be something else that you are really trying to get done, but you don't get it done. You haven't disobeyed. You were trying to obey and God knows that. The devil will try to tell you that you have sinned — you disobeyed God. To disobey God is a willful act of rebellion. "Lord, I will not do it!" You just don't do it because you are rebelling. It is not disobedience if you are trying to do it and don't get it done. That is not rebellion, it is failing to accomplish the thing you should have gotten done. God will give you a whipping for it. When God gives you a whipping you feel as if you are lost — you feel like a sinner. It feels terrible but you are not backslidden and it isn't a sign you are not sanctified. You just failed to get done the thing God wanted done. So we need to learn what disobedience is. Disobedience is when we rebel or refuse to do what God wants us to do. Not because we failed to do it, or because we were too slow in getting it done. God is grieved at that and will give us a whipping for it but it is not disobedience. On the other hand, we need to learn obedience. We need to learn the voice of God and how to move in the Spirit. That's the way to be blessed and to carry the glory. Learn to move in the Spirit.

Then there will be the question of trying the spirits and knowing whether it is of God or whether it is not of God. Not every impression is of God. Preachers many times say that God has just revealed something to them. It may be completely unscriptural and untrue. Therefore, the impression came from the devil and not from God. So we need to try the spirits to know whether it is of God because sometimes the devil will impress us to do something and then God doesn't give us the grace to do it. We may fail to get it done. Then the devil will jump on to us and tell us that we failed God. God wasn't in it to start with. It was an impression.

Learn to listen to what kind of voice is talking. Sometimes by listening to the voice you can tell it is not God. If it comes that you have failed God and there is no hope for you, you mark that down as being the devil. That couldn't be God because God doesn't cut you off for a mistake or a blunder. The devil will try to drive. He will try to come and confuse you with a confusing spirit. The Spirit of the Lord speaks gently and clearly, but the devil is the author of confusion.

There is another thing of importance in maintaining the experience of heart holiness and that is to learn the difference between humanity and carnality. There is a vast difference between the two. Some people struggle through this a whole lifetime. There is also a difference in purity and maturity, but I want to deal with some of the differences in humanity and carnality. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Paul is saying

I am crucified, I am sanctified, nevertheless I live in the flesh. After I am sanctified I am still human, and I still have human traits just as I had before I was sanctified. Remember, sanctification will not make someone extremely timid forward. If you are real timid and you get sanctified you will probably still be timid the next morning. That is a part of humanity and we have to work to overcome those dispositions. So if you are bashful, real backward, and real quiet, when you get sanctified it will help you, but it won't change you overnight. If you are very quiet and you get sanctified, it won't make you talkative. We illustrate it sometimes like this. There was a fellow in a church where I pastored. His name was Loveall. Brother Loveall was a very quiet man, but he could sing the glory down. (I believe he is in Heaven. He is dead now.) But I've always had trouble staying awake when I was driving. I used to have much more trouble than I do now. I used to be talking to someone and the next thing I'd be asleep. One night I had to take some folk home after church so I took Brother Loveall along with me to keep me awake. I took the wrong fellow because when we got out in the country, let the people out and started back, the only way I could get a grunt out of Brother Loveall was if I would ask him something. He might say, "yes," or "uhuh." Then I'd have to think of something else to ask him if there was any conversation. I fought sleep and battled to stay awake all the way up to his house which was just a few blocks from my home. When I let him out he said, "Do you think you can stay awake the rest of the way home?" I thought since I had that far, I probably could the rest of the way. This illustrates that getting sanctified never made him talkative. It never changed his disposition. We are still human after we get sanctified. It is important to know the difference between humanity and carnality.

Another thing, impatience is not carnality. Now if you have imps in your impatience, then it is carnality. If your impatience makes you act ugly, then it is carnality. But impatience is not carnality. There is scripture to back this up. In II Peter 1:1 "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us. . ." He was talking to those who were sanctified, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, . . ." That is when we get sanctified, "Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (vv. 3 and 4) So after you are saved, then you are sanctified and become a partaker of the Holy Ghost. "And beside this," after you are sanctified add these things. Among the things we are to add in verse six he said, "And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience." After you are sanctified, add patience. Now, if it were carnality you wouldn't have to add patience. You wouldn't have the problem. All the impatience would be gone. But the very fact that it is not all gone and you have to add patience after you get sanctified shows that sanctification does not take out impatience. There is one area in which I have to add impatience. I am not a fast driver but I hate to be behind somebody. I am very strict in the fact that a Christian should be a law-abiding citizen. We ought to drive the speed limit. But I hate to get behind someone who is driving 53 when I want to go 55. So I have to add patience along that line. Now I don't have fits. I'm not implying that, but I'm saying I don't like to be behind that fellow. You may have problems along some other lines. Well, you need to add patience. To those who are married, if your wife is slow and you are fast, do you need to add more patience? Or if she is fast and you are slow, do you need to add any patience? After you get sanctified there is an adding to patience. But we need to know that. If we don't the devil will tell us we are not sanctified. The Bible tells us to add patience after we get sanctified.

We are talking about how to maintain this experience of holiness. We have to learn what carnality is and what it is not. If we don't we will be up and down. It is cruel for anyone to say nerves are carnality. Nerves are physical and a terrible thing. But nerves are not carnality. Now, if nerves make you act ugly, nerves are carnality. After folk slam things around and act ugly, then talk about their nerves being torn up, it is not nerves. It is carnality. But on the other hand remember you may not be able to stand noise. It may make you extremely nervous. Perhaps in a time when there is a lot going on, your nerves are torn up. That is humanity. That means we live in a physical body and will have problems with nerves. We need to know the difference. The devil will jump on to you and tell you that you are not sanctified.

Another thing we need to recognize in being human is that we can get discouraged after we are sanctified. Being discouraged is not a sign of any lack of spirituality. The Bible says, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, . . ." (Hebrews 12:12) That means when a fellow has been in the battle until he has put the sword away, his hands are hanging down. He feels he can't go any farther. There are times of real discouragement in almost everyone's life. If you haven't gone through it, you may face it. That discouragement that becomes so bad you feel you can never smile again. That is not a lack of spirituality. That is not a lack of being sanctified. Beloved, the fact is we are human and can get discouraged. No matter how well sanctified we are, we can get discouraged.

We had a terrible experience one time. Some folk came to our house. They were so discouraged. They had gone through a terribly hard place. And as the woman sat that day and tried to pour her heart out to us, she sobbed and sobbed. She was broken, she was so discouraged! We spent hours trying to encourage that couple. We went to prayer meeting that night and the leader got up and read the scripture and then began to talk, saying if you were sanctified you wouldn't get discouraged. You can see the pressure that put on those folk who had gone through so much. But the tragedy was, it was not so. Sanctification will NOT keep you from being discouraged. Discouragement is not carnality. Discouragement is not sin and sanctified folk do get discouraged.

Let's consider some scripture concerning this. In II Corinthians seven starting with verse 4 we read, "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." You may say, "Preacher, that doesn't sound like he is very discouraged." Well, let's read on. This is his testimony after the victory came. Now he goes back to tell what happened. "For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, . . ." Those words "cast down" mean discouraged. ". . . comforted us by the coming of Titus." Paul is actually saying, we were cast down, there were fightings without. There were fears within. We were discouraged, we needed to be comforted, and the God of all comfort comforted us. We will come back to this scripture, but another is found in the fourth chapter of II Cor. 7:9. After we get sanctified, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed," (that word perplexed carries the thought we don't know what to do or which way to turn.) "but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." He is saying when we get sanctified, we have this treasure in earthen vessels. But there are times we are cast down. There are times when we get discouraged after we are sanctified. Why? Because we are still human. But, dear hearts, don't stay under discouragement. Don't live under it. When you get

discouraged you have done all the good you can do until you get encouraged again. Pray your way out on top of it. Let's go back to chapter 7:5 to the phrase "our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." Now, Paul was sanctified, don't you think? But he said, "Without were fightings, within were fears." No doubt there are two kinds of fears that Paul was experiencing. One of them was explained in the next verse when he received the consolation from Titus. He was troubled about how they stood — whether they were standing or whether they were backsliding. Paul is actually saying he was worried about them. So worry is not carnality and it is not a sin. Jesus said in Matt. 6:31 that we were to take no thought for tomorrow. But He didn't put that as a standard to whether you have victory or whether you are sanctified or not. That is a goal Jesus placed for us to strive toward. There are some things in the Bible that are standards by which we must live. But, there are things set up for us to reach out after and this is one of them. That is why we have to rightly divide the Word of Truth. We are still sanctified but we have room to grow.

You may hear folks say, "If you are sanctified you will never worry." Did you ever hear anything like that? That is not so. We are human and some people are more disposed to worry than others. The more faith we have, the less worry we will have. But that is not a sign of sanctification. The less faith we have the more worry we have. The Bible exhorts us to take no thought of tomorrow. It didn't say it was a sin if we do.

A man-fearing spirit is not carnality. We often hear folk talk about a man-fearing spirit being carnality, but that isn't scriptural. In Galatians the first chapter, Peter was in Galatia eating with the Gentiles, then when the Jews came it said Peter withdrew himself from them fearing the people. Now Peter withdrew because he feared the people. He was sanctified yet he feared the people. He had a man-fearing spirit after he was sanctified. Now if Peter had a man-fearing spirit, sanctified folk can have one for he was sanctified, wasn't he? But he still withdrew himself because he feared the people. Now God gave us a certain amount of fear. That scripture, "perfect love casteth out fear," is often taken out of its context. They say perfect love casteth out all fear. That's not so. If I get out in someone's cow pasture and the bull gets after me, I'm going to be scared enough to run as fast as I ever ran in my life, and get up a tree if I can. I'm glad that fear is not gone because I couldn't handle him. If I wasn't afraid of him, he would kill me. God gave me fear and sense enough to run. Fear is not carnality. But he said in I John 4:17-18 "That we might have boldness in the day of judgment." It is not a fear of death and the judgment because we stand in His likeness and the sting of death is taken out.

Another vital thing is that being sanctified does not take the sex drive away from anybody. I want to say as little about this as I can and yet be as plain as I can. That is as much a natural part of you as it is to eat when you are hungry. Now the reason I'm saying this, and I wish I could say it like I heard Brother VanWormer say it — he said, "I wish someone had told me this. When I was a young man, if I had any feelings along this line, I hung my head over an altar and prayed and asked God to forgive me." Sanctification doesn't take that away from you. That is a natural part of every person. But the fact is, sanctification keeps us pure until we don't want to commit sin. It is not a sin until we try to satisfy that desire outside of marriage. I know that is plain talk but I feel a lot of young people battle over this area during their teenage years. They are afraid to talk to anyone. They don't know how to unburden their hearts. And just a few words to let them know this is a part of being human,

and is not carnality, will help to keep them steady through these battles. And I think I have said enough everyone can understand it.

My heart is stirred because of so many unwise things that take place. One boy came to me and said, "They told me if I had a bad dream it was a sign of carnality." That is ridiculous. We can't control our dreams. I once dreamed someone gave me a cigarette and I smoked it. When I saw what I had done, I hit the fellow in my dream and knocked him into the other room. Then I was trying to pray through. When I woke up, I was glad that it was a dream. And it sure wasn't a sign of carnality or sin. It was just a dream. We are talking about the fact that we are still human after we get sanctified.

After you get sanctified folk will tell you you won't get hurt. But after you get sanctified your feelings are made alive. They are tender. You can get hurt after you get sanctified. I remember when I was a boy preacher there used to be an old brother who would get up and preach on being dead. He said, "You can stick a dead man with a pin and he won't flinch." But you are not that kind of dead. If you get stuck with a pin you will jump, because you are still human and you still have feelings. He'd say, "You could run over a dead man with a truck and it wouldn't phase him. He wouldn't feel it." We are not that kind of dead, we are still alive. After we get sanctified we are still alive and we can still get hurt. Things can crush you until you will weep over them for days. That is not a sign you are not sanctified because it hurts. I heard one man preach, "If you are sanctified they can throw rocks at you and you will still sing." That is not so. You may and you may not. We are still human after we get sanctified. You may not need all of this now but you will need it down the road somewhere. Try to keep as much of this as you can.

There is another thing that is not carnality. In I Cor. 13:14a we read, "Charity suffereth long and is kind: . . ." Now, getting your feelings hurt is not carnality. We need to discern the difference about feeling bad about something and having carnality. Being sanctified doesn't make me like everything everyone does. Being sanctified doesn't keep me from feeling bad about things. He said, "Charity suffereth long." How can you suffer if you don't feel bad? Charity suffereth — in other words you will have to pray to get victory over some things. You have to pray to get victory over some people after you are sanctified. But we had better do it. If we don't we will let bitterness get in our heart and then lose out with God and carnality will come in. Charity suffereth, it suffereth and the devil would like to get folk to feel that feeling bad about something makes them not right with God. You may never have a struggle like that, but some conscientious people may. You can't like everything that goes on. You can't live without there being things which crush you down. There are times when God pours the honey and oil in and you can shout in the face of anything. The next time you may not shout. Instead, you may weep, you may groan, you may agonize. In verse 7a he said, "Charity beareth all things." If you are bearing something, you are not enjoying it. That means when persecution comes from every direction until you feel like your legs are beginning to wobble and you are about to go down, you feel like you can't stand anymore. You don't know how you can take anymore. Beloved, God gives you grace, then they can pour on some more. You may get to the place that no matter how sanctified, you still feel you can't stand it. But the difference is a carnal person would say, "They better not push me another inch or they are going to hear from me." But the sanctified heart may weep and say, "I don't see how I can stand it. I wonder if I can stand it!" That is not a sign of carnality. The pressure is on, and it will come like that.

Another thing the last of verse 7 reads, "endureth all things." If you are enduring something, you are not enjoying it. That is when they are sand-papering you. You get sand-papered thin and the Lord puts on another coat. They can start sand-papering again. Charity endureth all things. What he is actually saying is holiness will work under any and every circumstance. You may go through a lot of pressure, but because you feel bad about it and your heart is crushed over it, you may weep and cry — but that is not a sign you're not sanctified. You may feel hurt and wonder why they did that. And you have to pray to victory. That is not a sign of carnality. We are human. We need to know the difference between carnality and humanity.

Let's consider one more thing, that is the difference between temptation and carnality. No matter how holy our heart is, we can be tempted with anything that is sin. The devil is the tempter and he can tempt us with anything that is sin. But that is not a sign we are not sanctified. Resist the temptation and go on serving God. In one of our meetings a lady was counseling with us. I have known her for years. She has been up and down, up and down. That precious woman told us, "I get saved and then some evil thought will come to my mind. I felt if I was saved I wouldn't have that." So she would throw up her hands and go back. That has been her big downfall. She would get saved then some evil thought would come. Now, you have a trap door between your head and your heart. The devil can bring any thought to your mind. And sometimes in the most unlikely place the devil can bring an evil thought. That is not a sign of anything but that the devil is trying to get you to think wrong thoughts. This is the important part — the way you can tell whether you are sanctified or not is how you react inside. If when that thought comes, something inside rises up — "I don't want to think about it," you put it out of your mind. That is a good sign you are sanctified. Let me illustrate it like this. You invite that evil thought on in and tell it to sit down for you are going to talk together. Then the thought comes from the heart. As long as there is something that resists the evil thoughts you are still sanctified. Now it is important to know that evil thoughts can come but as long as we resist them we can be assured they are not arising from our own heart: He is tempting us with evil thoughts. Resist them.

Another way, after you are sanctified you can be tempted to pride. Psalms 24:3a reads, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." There is a possibility you can be tempted toward pride. When the devil tempts you, resist that and it will leave. It may come back pretty soon but resist it. Now if it is a part of you, and you want to strut, then that is another thing. Usually when there is a temptation toward pride, if you have a holy heart, you just kind of sink. You feel like, "Oh, I don't want to be proud." That person who gets to the place they feel like they are really humble — they are in a dangerous place. The very fact that there is something tempting toward pride inside and you shrink back from it — that is a good sign you are sanctified. You have just been tempted toward pride.

You can be tempted toward envy after you are sanctified. There is a vast difference in being tempted toward envy and resisting it than suppressing it and holding it down. There was a man who was an evangelist. He had a close friend who was also an evangelist. They lived just a few miles apart. The friend went out West and some friends bought him a brand new Airstream travel trailer. He already had an older one. The other man didn't have any travel trailer at all. He went to pray and got to thinking about the trailers. The devil tempted him to envy. When the temptation came, he

resisted it and left the place of prayer. He went to his wife and said, "Let's go up to Brother so and so. I want to rejoice with him because he got a new trailer." So they went up and rejoiced with him and visited. After they were through visiting the fellow said to him, "Say, you don't have any trailer do you?" He said, "No." Then came the reply, "Well, my old one is in real good shape. If you would like to have it you are welcome to it." So the fellow went away feeling good in his soul with a travel trailer he did not have when he went up there.

We can be tempted toward jealousy after we are sanctified. But there is a vast difference between a temptation and someone who accuses their companion of being out of line just because they see them talking to someone else. The devil may come and tempt you toward jealousy but if you resist it, it leaves. That is a sign of temptation. But if that old thing boils inside until you go home and falsely accuse — that is carnality. You may be tempted toward jealousy, then if you blow up and that thing boils out — that is sin.

You may be tempted toward revenge. There is a vast difference in being tempted toward revenge and having a revengeful heart. It will come as a suggestion. The devil may suggest, "Now is the chance. While you have a chance to pay them back, why don't you do it?" That is a temptation toward revenge. That is not a sign of carnality. I want to repeat that. The devil says, "Now you have a chance to get even with them. Why don't you do it?" You see it comes from the outside rather than an uprising in the heart. It is a temptation toward revenge.

One last thing I'd like to give you. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (I Cor. 9:27) That is a description of a wrestling match when a man is being held down for the count. Paul is saying, "I keep my body down. I get it down on its back. I make it stay there." What is the ruler at your house? Is it the flesh or the Spirit?

Young people, this could happen to you. At Gravette one time my wife was teaching one of the boys to come to her and said, "I guess I'm not sanctified. I just didn't feel like it so I didn't get up and pray this morning." That is not carnality. When you start thinking that way you defeat yourself. One thing we do need to do is quit pampering ourselves. Get ourselves by the nape of the neck, so to speak, and make ourselves get up and pray. But, now if you fail, that is not a sign you are not sanctified. It is just a sign you need to discipline yourself. But don't go to condemning yourself because you didn't pray. Determine, by the help of the Lord, the next time I'm going to do better.

Older folks, as your life changes and you can't do as you once did, you will have to make some adjustments. But at the same time don't pamper yourself too much. We must discipline ourselves.

You may never have to face these things. However, I felt led to include them in the book in the hopes that some precious battling soul might possibly find help.

Here is a word of advice to the young. If you are having problems in these areas it is well to counsel with some godly and wise older person. Many, many young people don't take someone older into their confidence. They battle through these areas and get into trouble until they are up and down

spiritually. If they are not careful they make shipwreck of their faith before they get developed. God bless the young people. I hope God will use this until you can absorb it and take it with you.

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 16 The Journey of Faith

". . . the just shall live by his faith." (Hab. 2:4) We have chosen this scripture because of one word. There are several places in the Bible where it says, "The just shall live by faith," but, we chose this text particularly because of that one word "his." "The just shall live by HIS faith."

It is a marvelous thing to have praying parents that are strong in faith. They can surround us with prayer. They can do a lot to help us get to God, but if you are ever saved, it will have to be your own faith that will save you. No one else's faith can save you. It will be your own faith that transforms your life and changes your heart. You can have a church pray for you, and saints to pray to try to help you get sanctified. They can pray a good atmosphere around you, but if you are ever sanctified, it will be your faith that reaches through and touches God. It will be your faith that brings the witness of the Spirit in your heart. Beloved, if you ever make it through to Heaven, it will be your faith that takes you through.

We should thank God for the prayers of those who have prayed for us. We should thank God for every saint who holds our hands up, everyone that tries to help us through. But it is our own faith that is going to keep us in contact with God. It is our own faith that is going to bring us through the battles and keep us alive spiritually. Again, let us emphasize the fact, other people's faith can help, but it is our own faith that is going to give us our heart relationship with God, and give us the victory.

We realize that faith must have a foundation. In Hebrews 11:6b we read, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Faith MUST have a foundation. It is an impossibility for me to believe that the sun is going to come up in the north. Many times I get turned around and it seems like the sun is coming up some other direction. But I cannot believe that it does. Why? Because there is not one thing upon which my faith can find a foundation to make me believe the sun is going to come up in the north, or in the south, or in the west. It is going to keep coming up in the east. And, beloved, everything we believe must have something upon which to found our faith. I'm glad we have a foundation for our faith.

Everything around us testifies there is a God. When you see a house, no one has to tell you there is a carpenter. That house itself testifies that there is a carpenter. When you see an automobile, no one has to tell you there is a manufacturer. That automobile testifies there is a manufacturer. When you see a suit, no one has to tell you there is a tailor, because the suit testifies to the fact there is a tailor. And everything there is in creation testifies there is a Creator. Every time we look at a star, it testifies that there is a God. Every time we see a hill or a valley, it testifies there is a God. Every time we see a blade of grass (for no man can make a blade of grass grow), every time we see a tree, every time we see a bird fly through the air, every time we see a bee — these all testify that there is

a God. Every time we see a river, every time we see the clouds fill the sky, we are seeing a testimony that there is a God. Bless His name!

We were standing on the rim of the great Grand Canyon a few years back. I think it is the most dazzling and beautiful thing I've seen in the way of creation. As I stood and looked over that vast canyon with all its beauty a man came up beside me and said, "It took a long time for the water to wash that out like that." I said, "Man, it didn't happen that way. God made it that way." Beloved, when we see the marvels of creation, they testify to the fact that there is a God. We have a foundation for our faith.

The very fact there is a God, gives us the foundation to believe He is big enough to do anything that we need done. One day God stepped out without a tool, without a thing to work on, without a thing to work with, and by the power of His word spoke Heaven and earth into existence, and hurled it out into space. And it has been there ever since because God put it there.

They tell us it would take 193,000,000 miles of steel cable an inch thick to hold up the weight of this globe. But, after you have gotten all that steel cable tied on to this globe, where are you going to find something heavy enough to hang it on? Yet, the great omnipotent God put it out in space. He put every star in the sky. Thank God, He is able to answer your prayers and my prayers. Beloved, one day God sat down and had a roll call. He called all the stars by name. They talk about how many billions of stars there are, God had a roll call and called every star by name, and sent them on their journey. They haven't gotten one minute out of time all these centuries. Why? Because our God put them that way. Our God made them that way. The God that can send the stars across the sky is big enough to answer your prayers. He is big enough to answer my prayers. He is big enough to fight your battles. He is big enough to fight my battles. I have a right to believe God. He is the God that measured the heavens with a span. They talk about how many million light years the stars and the planets are away from us. They get me lost, I don't know how they can tell. But, however big it is, God's hand is big enough that He measured it from the end of His little finger over to the end of His thumb. He can reach out and measure the heavens. That is how big our God is, and He holds the waters in His hand. All the waters of the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, the Antarctic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and all the gulfs and all the bays and all the rivers — God can pour them all in the palm of His hand, hold it out and it will not splash out on either side. That is how big our God is! "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." (Isaiah 40:12, 15) Our God is big enough to answer our prayers.

He is the same God who cleansed the leper, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, and stilled the stormy seas. He is the same God who divided the Red Sea, and caused the Jordan to stand up in a heap. He is the same God who fed the children of Israel in the wilderness. Did you ever stop to think about how much manna he fed them every day? They gathered something like 16,315,000 pints of manna every day. There is not a super market in the country big enough to hold that much manna. Yet, God just dumped it out every day. It took 8,157+ tons of manna to feed Israel daily without counting the amount not gathered. Plus twice this amount was gathered on the day previous to the Sabbath. And it never impoverished Him one bit. God is big enough to answer your prayers.

He is big enough to answer my prayers. God has enough power to do it, and we have a right to believe God, to see more done than what we are seeing done.

Beloved, if God has enough power to do it, then the next thing is — is He wise enough to do it? Does God know how to work out our problems? Is God wise enough to solve your problems? He was wise enough when He made the earth. He caused the plant life to take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. And the animal life to breathe in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. One lives off the other. One purifies the air for the other. No one but God could have done that. He was wise enough to make the fish to live in the water. Take a fish out of the water and it will die. If a human is held under the water long enough they will die. God fixed them that way.

There is much talk about the ability of the surgeons of this day, but let's look at God's wisdom in surgery. Do you know that never a leaf falls off but God always heals the sore before He makes the incision? No one else can do that. No leaf falls until there is something that heals over before the leaf separates in fall. God was wise enough to fix the leaf so it would be healed before the incision was made.

In thinking of the wisdom of God, think about how God could make a snake that crawls around and breathes air, yet that snake can freeze as solid as a piece of wood and lay frozen. But when the warm sunshine comes it is still alive, it thaws, and crawls away. Only God could make it that way.

I talked to a doctor friend of mine to ask him about specialists. He said, "Man, the human body is so great and marvelous, no human mind can grasp it all. And, there are many more specialists needed because of the greatness of the human body." But God was wise enough to make us so that no two of us have the same finger prints. That isn't much space with which to work to make us all different. But God was wise enough to make us all different even down to the finger prints. He was wise enough to give us minds with the ability to retain knowledge. The marvels of these things, not being a medical doctor, I can't tell you much about, but I can tell you that the body is a marvel of God's creation.

Another of the marvels of God's creation is the instincts instilled in a wild goose. They have no navigating instruments. But away up in Canada, with no radio to tell them it is time to go south for there is a storm coming, that old goose has something inside which causes it to pick up and take off. Across the states he goes. He may never have taken that trip before but he knows how to go. God fixed him that way.

God fixed the frog so that he dives down when the temperature drops to a certain level. He dives down to the bottom, and there he buries himself in the mud under the pond. There is no radio station to say, "Mr. Frog, it is spring. It is time to get up." But there is something down inside God put there, which will cause him to come up out of the mud, up through the water and out on the bank. He will begin to sing, "It's spring, it's springtime."

God was wise enough to make a great big elephant and the black whale. He was still wise enough to make an insect so small it is impossible to see with the natural eye. That little insect is alive. God made it all!

If God is wise enough for all of that, then He knows how to answer your prayers and my prayers. Oh, we ought to trust Him more! I was praying for my brother. I said, "Lord, I don't see how you are going to save him!" He seemed to whisper back, "I don't have to ask you." Thank the Lord. He knows how to do it. He doesn't need our instructions. God knows how to work it out. God knows how to get folk into a corner. God knows how to change the course of their lives.

God knows how to get you through. You may feel you are not going to make it. God knows how to take you through. He is wise enough to answer your prayers. It may not always be in God's divine will to answer your prayers, but that still does not change His wisdom or His ability.

The next thing, does He love you enough to answer your prayers? God is able and He is wise enough, but does He love us enough? Beloved, He loved us enough He gave His Son to die for us! "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32) God loves us enough to answer our prayers. In the book of Hebrews the Bible tells us, He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He has invested all that Heaven afforded in us that we might be saved! So He loves us enough to answer our prayers.

Then we can place our faith in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Col. 2:9 reads, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." What is this talking about? It is saying that God the Father, the omnipotent, all powerful God, put all His redeeming power in the blood of Jesus Christ. God, the Holy Ghost put all His redeeming power in the blood. And Jesus Christ had all His redeeming power in the blood. When we think about the blood being backed by the eternal power of the Godhead, we can sing, "It has never lost its power." It doesn't matter how far you have gone in sin, there is enough power to transform your life. No matter how deep-seated carnality is in your bosom, there is enough power in the blood to cleanse it out and set you free. We can place our faith in the never-falling blood of Jesus Christ. If we have the blood applied we will stand when the world is on fire. When kingdoms are falling, the blood will still stand!

We can also place our faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost. The blessed Holy Ghost is faithful. We do not have to be afraid of Him deceiving us, or leading us astray. When you find Christ through repentance, the Holy Spirit witnesses to your heart, you do not have to be afraid to trust Him. You can put your faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit. Then as you are seeking sanctification, when the Holy Ghost witnesses to your heart, you have as much right to trust Him as you did when you were seeking the first work of grace. You can put your faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost.

When you do not know the way to Heaven, you do not have to be afraid to trust Him. He knows the way to get you through, thank God! All you have to do is to follow Him, mind the checks of the Holy Ghost, and let Him lead you day by day. Beloved, He knows how to get you through. Place your faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit. Oh, that these words could carry enough power to inspire a new faith in your heart! Don't be afraid of tomorrow, the Holy Ghost will be there. When the devil attacks you and all the storms of hell are turned loose, the Holy Ghost is still faithful! We can place our faith in the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost.

Then when we think of faith — faith is always a journey from the known to the unknown. We know where we are. We know where we would like to be. But we do not know how to get there. It is always a journey to the unknown. Faith is the bridge over the chasm between us and that which we desire. It brings us into the possession of that which our heart longs for. In considering the fact of faith being a journey, we must realize that everyone who gets saved has to take this journey of faith. They know they are lost. They know they would like to be saved. They do not know how they are going to feel. But they have to take the journey of faith. And beloved, when you start seeking God, start seeking Him by faith. When you go to the altar, don't say, "I'm going to pray," but go with the thought, "I am going to get saved tonight."

A little boy, in Arkansas, went to the altar one night and prayed. He got up and testified the Lord had saved him. When he got home, his mother said, "Dale, did you get saved tonight?" He looked up at her and said, "Why, of course. What do you think I went up there for?" In other words, when he left his seat, he intended to get saved. That is the attitude with which we ought to go to the altar. I'm going to get saved tonight. This is the kind of faith that brings the victory. Then every step toward the altar is a step of faith — I'm going to pray through. When you bow there and begin to pray, you repent by faith. For the Bible says, in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. . . ." As we begin to say, "Lord, I'm sorry for lying," we can believe God forgives us for that. Why? Because He said He would. And when faith lays hold of the fact that that sin is forgiven, we feel a little closer. "Lord, I'm sorry for stealing. I want You to forgive me for it." God forgives and we feel a little closer. "Lord, I'm sorry. . ." you go on down the line telling God you are sorry for your sins. You don't have to cover that ground again and again. For when you confess it, you can believe that Jesus Christ forgives it, and it goes under His blood. Isaiah 55:7 reads, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." When seekers begin to say, "Lord, if you will forgive me, I'll never go back to the shows again." We can say, "Thank God, that is gone!" Beloved, if you will repent like that, there is something inside that will begin to well up — "I'm getting closer. I'm getting closer. God is going to save me. Lord, I'll never go back to the ball games again. I'm sorry. I'll never go to the dances again, or the skating rinks, or the bowling alleys. I'll never go to the carnivals, or to the circus, etc. Lord, I'm through with the world. I'm through with lying, cheating, gambling, and stealing. I'm through with smoking, and drinking, and swearing, Lord. I want You to forgive me."

As you turn away from sin you can say, "Thank God, He IS forgiving me. Those things are going under the blood." Your faith mounts higher and higher. The Lord begins to roll restitutions in front of you. You say, "Lord, if you will forgive me, I'll make it right." As you believe Him, your faith mounts higher. All at once your faith somehow takes a journey out into the presence of God. It brings the witness of the Spirit into your heart. You know you are saved. Why? You took the journey of faith from the known to the unknown that brought the witness of the Spirit into your heart — the assurance of salvation.

When you seek holiness, you don't know how you will feel when you get sanctified. You may have heard others testify to how they felt, but you still don't know how you are going to feel because God does not sanctify us all the same way. But I'm glad He gives us a personal experience we can know about, that is real to our own hearts. Beloved, you have to take the journey from the known

to the unknown. I'm sure the Apostles never had heard anyone testify to being sanctified. They knew nothing about what it would be like. But, when they went into the upper room, Jesus had commanded them to tarry until they be endued with power from on high. They stayed in the upper room seven days. While they were sitting there the Holy Ghost came as the sound of a rushing mighty wind. Cloven tongues like as of fire set upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Not unknown tongues, but other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. I'm satisfied that day that Peter did not look over at John and say, "John, do you think this is it?" Or that John looked over at James and said, "James, do you think this is what we were waiting for?" I'm satisfied Andrew did not say to Bartholomew, "Do you believe we are sanctified?" No, beloved! That bunch came out of that room with so much power men thought they were drunk. But when they began to question, Peter replied, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (Acts 2:15-17) They never had any trouble believing God. They said, "THIS IS THAT!" They had taken the journey by faith!

While in a revival in Iowa, there was a little woman seeking to be sanctified. She would look up at me so pitifully and say, "How am I going to know when I get sanctified?" I said, "Sister, keep on digging. You'll know when it comes." Night after night she would say that. But one night she was praying when all at once she began to jump up and down saying, "He's come! He's come! He's come!" Thank God, you will know when the Holy Ghost comes in and sanctifies your soul. You will know when it takes place. But you will have to take the journey of faith. If you have never been sanctified before, or if you have backslidden, you may not feel the same way again when you get sanctified. So you will have to take the journey of faith. But when you leave your seat, you can leave with the thought — I'm going to get sanctified tonight. I'm going to pray through and get sanctified. Beloved, that is the kind of faith that will help you cover the ground that needs to be covered. When you get to the altar, begin to confess out on carnality. If we confess our unrighteousness He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. You are there saying, "Lord, you know how jealous I've been." (I've been jealous of my wife, or I've been jealous of my husband. Whatever the case may be.) "I'm jealous of the other folk in the church. I'm jealous when others get blessed. Lord, you know that old jealous nature, cleanse it out. That old nature of envy that envies others when they prosper, and when they are praised etc. Lord, take it all out. That old rebellious spirit that does not harmonize with the Word of God, but rebels and draws back from the truth — Lord, take it all out. That old nature that makes me want to pout when I am crossed and don't get my way. That old nature that clamors for revenge — take it out. That thing that gets mad so that I have to suppress it and hold it down, Lord, take it out." Beloved, every time we confess something, we have a right to believe that He cleanses it out. Glory to God! For the Bible tells us He is faithful and just to cleanse it. The only thing we have to do is be sure we confess it as deeply as we feel it and cry out for deliverance as deeply as we feel it. When we have covered that ground, we don't have to go over that same ground all the time back over and over the same thing. If we will take the journey of faith, we can say, "Thank God, that is gone. I'm a little closer. God is helping me." And even if we have something else to confess out, something inside says, "I'm getting closer, I'm getting closer." We keep on going. Then God, the Holy Spirit, begins to take us down the route of personal consecration. We pray up against something God demands and we put that on the altar. We begin to say, "Yes, Lord."

I don't know how you will have your experience, but I know when I was seeking, I wanted to get sanctified so bad my head would have said yes to anything. But it made a difference when I could feel my heart say yes. I could just feel that go on the altar. We don't have to go back over that ground again when we feel that it is on the altar — that we have given it to God. We can thank God for He has accepted that part of the sacrifice. Then God takes us to something else — "Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord," for that goes on the altar. By the time we come to the end of the line, we have died out to the world, and to self-will. Our faith begins to take a journey. It begins to mount up — He is coming closer, I'm about to get through! Then all at once, somehow — SOMEHOW — we don't understand how He does it, but faith takes a journey out into the presence of God, and brings the witness of the Spirit into our heart and we know we are sanctified. Why? We took the journey of faith.

Then, beloved, every time we get into the supernatural, we have to do it by faith. I have been in the ministry about thirty-two years, but I don't know how to get in the Spirit. Somehow, I just start to preach and may be struggling along when all at once faith takes a journey. It seems like the human just kind of drops into the background. The Holy Ghost begins to take over. I don't know how to do it. If I did, I would do it every time, but faith has to take a journey.

We come to church and folk begin to sing. It is just ordinary singing, it is just an ordinary song until all at once someone's faith takes a journey into the presence of God. The glory begins to come. The fire begins to fall. The service is carried to victory. Why? Faith has taken a journey into the presence of God.

We talk about praying through. Beloved, we don't pray through, we believe through. We may have to do a lot of praying before our faith will work. Actually, you can pray all day but without faith you haven't gotten one bit of help. Everything is dark — it seems like there is no hope for you if you are praying without faith. You can pray all night, you can pray all month, you can pray all year — you will never touch God until faith takes its journey. Sometimes you can sing and get in the Spirit and then it is easy to pray. Sometimes it seems like nothing will work. It is hard to pray and you are praying and struggling, trying to get through. Then all at once faith takes its journey. The clouds all blow away, you come into the presence of God and the answer comes. Why? Faith took its journey.

Every time we pray we have to take the journey of faith. That is the only way through. Young people, learn the secret of believing God when you pray — believe God hears you. Again, I say, I don't know how to do it. Sometimes it takes a lot of struggling before faith will take its journey. But, beloved, it is a blessed thing when faith does take that journey into the presence of God.

The Bible speaks about the mystery of faith. It says, "the mystery of faith in a good conscience." It is marvelous how faith will work if your conscience is good. But, beloved, you try to believe God over a guilty conscience and somehow faith just will not work. A seeker at the altar, who has prayed up against something, can't believe over it. Someone working with them may say, "Honey, take it by faith, believe God. Don't you think God will save you?" No, they don't think God will save them! Faith just will not work because they haven't minded God. They haven't surrendered. But as they begin to surrender faith begins to work and take its journey into the presence of God.

In trying to get sanctified, if you haven't fully consecrated your all, you can try to believe and struggle to believe and struggle to have faith, but faith will not work when the consecration is not complete. When you get everything clear and you have met every condition, then somehow faith begins to work and take its journey into the presence of God. You may try to pray through while there is something troubling your conscience. It just seems like you can't believe. Faith will not work unless your conscience is clear. You just cannot believe over things. I have heard old Brother Thomas Nichols, who has now gone to Heaven, tell more than once about walking out in his oats field one Sunday. He said that it was red with red-rust. He went to the barn and got down on his knees to pray. He said, "Lord, you said that if I would bring all my tithe into the storehouse you'd rebuke the devourer for my sake. Lord, they are all in. Amen." He got up and left the barn. The next time he walked out into the oats field there was not a sign of red-rust there. Why? Because his tithes were in, he could believe God. If he had been robbing God and not paying his tithes, his faith could not have taken that journey. But because he had paid his tithes and brought them all into the storehouse, he could stand on the promise of God, and believe faith to take its journey. You can, too! If you have been robbing God and robbing your pastor (sending your tithes off to a radio preacher somewhere) God may not answer your prayer. When we can say, "Father, it is all in," faith will take its journey.

There is also the fight of faith. The Bible tells us in Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The devil is the prince of the power of the air. The atmosphere is charged with demon darkness, and demon power. Now dear hearts, the Bible tells us to hold fast our profession of faith, and not castaway our confidence. There is a real conflict. It means something to wrestle. Two men who are wrestling do not just stand back, one in one corner and one in the other corner and look at each other. They get a hold of each other and put forth every ounce of energy to try to get the other one down. Before I was saved, I went to a wrestling match. (After we get saved, we do not go anymore.) At this match there were two men who probably weighed around 210 or 215 each. They started to wrestle. Somehow one got the other down face forward. He got one leg over behind the other. Taking hold of the leg on the bottom, with both hands, he came down on the leg with tremendous pressure. It looked like it must have been terribly painful. That poor man would beat the mat with both hands and groan, but he wouldn't give up. His opponent would let up on the pressure to come back down again. That fellow would pat the mat and groan — but he wouldn't give up. After a while the pressure was let up just enough that that man gave a flip and came out of there. The scene changed! What are we saying? If the devil gets you down until you can't do anything but pat the mat and groan — don't give up! Just settle it that you are going to keep on wrestling, that you are going to stay in the fight. ". . .and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, . . ." (Eph. 6:14b-15a) When you have done everything else but give up, just pat the mat and groan, and say, "Old devil, I'm not going to give up! I'm fighting for my faith and I'm going to stay in the fight."

I had been preaching about 20 years and had used this text many times before I fully realized what it meant. We were in revivals continuously. It seemed the spiritual lights began to go out. Everything kept getting darker. Not for just a few days but it went on for one week, two weeks, three weeks — I'm not sure but what it wasn't four weeks — that the pressure kept getting greater, it kept getting darker. We went to Moberly, Missouri to start a revival. In that revival there were seekers almost

every service. No one knew the battle the preacher was going through. Every morning I'd go to the church to pray. The old devil stood in front of me. He'd say, "You used to have the anointing, but you will never have it again." I prize the anointing above everything in the world. He couldn't say I had never gotten sanctified because I could point back to where I had. But he told me I wasn't sanctified now. That pressure got so dark and so heavy that I wish I were able to describe it. There was a wall which seemed impossible for me to penetrate through. I couldn't break through it. It kept getting bigger and greater until it seemed like I didn't have power to fight back. There was only one thing that kept me from giving up, that was the memory of a man I had known. This man was so confused he almost made shipwreck of his faith. He would go to the altar and pray through. He seemed to be clear and would testify that he was sanctified. But before morning he would be groaning, "Oh, God sanctify me, sanctify me." The pressure became so great that finally in a revival he moved into my room so that when the devil got to fighting him in the night, I would pray with him. That poor man was going through so much, year after year after year — praying through and then going down. The Lord said, "If you give up, you might be like that." I felt like I couldn't afford to give up.

I knew another lady, who had been up and down for years. She was attending a camp meeting where we were preaching. She got sanctified and literally saw the Spirit come into her heart in a bodily shape like a dove. You might say if you'd had an experience like that, you would never doubt it. You would if you had made shipwreck of your faith before that experience took place! Out there when the pressure came, she doubted again. The Holy Ghost said to me, "If you give up, you'll be like that, too." So I felt like I couldn't give up. That wall kept getting greater. When I went to pray, it was either on a Friday or a Saturday morning, I just simply didn't have any power to fight back anymore. I didn't have any power to resist anymore. The pressure was on! I laid on my face before the altar. It seemed like with all the strength I had, I said, "Oh God, you've got to help me!" Without one more effort on my part, that darkness just rolled back! I leaped to my feet and began to shout and run up and down the aisle. For two years God seemed to carry us up to heights it seemed like we never had been before. Oh, what if I had given up before the victory came! Just before He broke through, what if I had given up, thrown up my hands in defeat. Beloved, when I had come to where I couldn't go any farther, God stepped in and lifted the load. There is a fight of faith! Dear hearts, hold your faith. If you have not sinned, hold your faith. Stand there. And when you have done all to stand, keep on standing until you can shout, "Hold the fort for I am coming. . . Wave the answer back to Heaven by thy grace we will."

Another way to illustrate this is the Battle of Pea Ridge which took place near Rogers, Arkansas. The Northern Army had gotten on the south side and cut off the southern supply line. The Southern Army was back in trees and rocks. They had everything to their advantage except for one thing. They were running out of ammunition. The Northern Army was trying to force their way across the valley. Along about 4 o'clock, General Lee ordered his troops to withdraw. He left a few men there to keep firing so the Northern Army would not know what he was doing. They left and made their escape. But what they did not know was that the wagons bringing the much needed ammunition were less than 2 miles away when they retreated. If they had fought for two more hours, they would have won the battle. But they left just before help reached them.

Many, many people do this same thing in a spiritual battle. Just before God would have broken through with the needed help, they go down in defeat when they could have had victory. This is a fight of faith. Let's fight for our faith.

Next we will consider the reward of faith. The reward of faith is present victory. ". . . this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4b) Beloved, it is that faith which, in the midst of the storm, gives us that inner assurance that says, "I haven't sinned. I know I am saved whether I can shout or whether I can't shout, whether I get blessed or whether I can't get blessed. Whether I'm on the mountain or in the valley doesn't change my relationship one bit." That is the rest of faith. That is the reward of faith. I like the song — "When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul." Praise God forever! Beloved, the reward of faith is soul rest. When it seems like God is gone, when it seems like everything is going, there is that faith which gives a soul rest in Him. That is the rest of faith. The reward of faith will one day be like the Apostle Paul. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Tim. 4:7-8) The reward of faith will one day be when we come to the place of death and we don't have strength to pray anymore, when we won't have strength to talk to ask the saints to pray — faith will carry us across safe to the arms of Jesus. Praise the Lord! I want to tell you one more thing before we leave this point. Dear old Sister German (when you get to Heaven look for Sister German, she's just a little short woman.) When she got too old to be able to carry a tune with the piano and the rest of the singers, the Lord said, "You can sing specials now." It didn't matter whether anyone called on Sister German to sing or not, she didn't look for that. If the Holy Ghost gave her a song, it didn't matter if the song service was over or what was going on. She would just get up and say, "I've got a song," and to the front she would go, and would sing. While singing, the Lord would come and many times she would dance in the Spirit. When she became old and feeble, I was talking to her. She said, "Brother Poe, I can't pray like I used to, but I can trust and it works wonderful!" Thank God, when strength fails, faith is still there! Glory to God! Beloved, faith will carry us across — when strength has failed, faith will carry us home.

The last area of faith we wish to consider is a shipwrecked faith. The Bible says, "concerning faith, some have made shipwreck." This is talking about something that you have made-shipwreck of your faith. We know that atheists wreck people's faith. That is not what this is talking about. It is talking about YOU making shipwreck of your faith. There are three ways in which you can make shipwreck of your faith. One way to make shipwreck is to begin to pick faults with the saints of God until actually you don't find anyone in whom you have confidence. When you lose confidence in everybody else, the next thing will be that you lose confidence in yourself. After losing confidence in everyone else and yourself, then you will lose confidence in God until you believe there is just nothing to it anyway. God isn't really real. You have made shipwreck of your faith simply by looking for hypocrites. Dear hearts, don't hunt hypocrites but have faith in everyone you can. Until they prove you can't have faith in them, put confidence in them. That will help you to have confidence in yourself and it will help you to have confidence in God.

Another way to make shipwreck of your faith is to live in a questionable zone. Just live so that you don't really have confidence in your own life because of the questionable things that you are

doing. After awhile you will decide that other folk live that way, too. "They don't have any more than I have." The next thing will be that you will lose confidence in God. When folk live a careless, loose life and profess religion over the top of it, they are going to do one of two things. They are going to make shipwreck of their own faith, or else they will sear their own conscience until they can ride over the checks of the Holy Ghost. They can ride over what they know is right and go right on making themselves believe they are all right. I repeat, in doing so, they either make shipwreck of their faith or else they sear their conscience.

The last way to make shipwreck of your faith is to get saved and then every time you don't feel right, give up and go back to the altar. You get saved again, walk a little while, and then go back to the altar. You can do that again and again until after awhile your faith is so wrecked that you feel He can't save you nor can He keep you. "He can keep others but I don't believe He can keep me." Your faith becomes so wrecked that somehow you just can't reach out and touch God. You have made shipwreck of your faith. You say, "Brother Poe, is there no hope for that person who makes shipwreck of their faith?" Yes, beloved, there is hope for them. But there is only one way they will ever build back their faith. It is not an easy thing. After faith has been wrecked, it is not an easy thing to build it back. You are going to have to build it back with sheer determination. That determination that says, "I'm not going to give up. I'm not going to go down. I'm not giving up!" Everything will be as black as night until it will seem as if there is no hope or any way that you can be right with God. All the pressures are on you and your faith has always in the past gone down. Now you are saying, "I'm not going to give up. I'm determined to hold on! I'm determined to hold on! I'm determined to hold on!" If you will hold on long enough, that darkness will begin to break back and your faith will begin to build up. Beloved, it is like someone who has been sick for a long time until they are down to skin and bones. Their body has no resistance. But start feeding them and nourishing them and their body will slowly and gradually begin to build back. They have to be careful not to take a backset. It takes some time to get them strong again. In some cases of a lingering severe illness they may reach the point where they will have to be taught to walk alone. Oh that we, as the people of God, with patience and gentle love would teach these with shipwrecked faith to walk again!

That is the way with a shipwrecked faith. You just have to hold on, and hold on, with a sheer determination. During this time of building back there will be times when it seems like you can't feel peace, you can't feel rest, you can't feel the calm, and you don't feel like you ought to feel. But you are determined — "Lord, I know you are faithful." You hold on in the darkness until after awhile your faith will become stronger and stronger. Then it won't be long until your faith becomes normal. You begin to enjoy the peace and the joy, the quietness of soul, the steadiness of life that others are enjoying, because you have built back your faith. It is a hard job but it can be done!

Dear heart, what a tragedy it is to die without faith, to come down to die with a shipwrecked faith. In the hour that you are facing eternity, and you realize you are sinking, how horrible that your faith won't reach out. It is wrecked. Your faith can't take hold of God and you are sinking. If you are dying without faith, you have nothing on which to hold. You are like a man who is on a high building. He trips over something and falls backwards. But he falls out far enough that he can't touch the wall. There is nothing for him to take hold of. He is falling. He is screaming. There is nothing to reach. There is no limb to which he can catch hold. He can't reach the windows as he goes by. He can't reach anything! There is nothing but falling down, down, down, until he crashes to his death many

feet below. That is what it is like when someone dies without faith. They can't reach God. They can't reach anything to hold to — it is just sinking and falling, sinking and falling, until they drop into hell.

Souls, that soul in hell cannot believe God because they have no foundation for faith. That soul that is in hell would not believe you if you told them there is no God. They know there is a God. But they can't believe God to do anything for them because there is no promise given them. There is not one thing on which they can base their faith. They can't believe God to do anything for them. They can't believe God to answer their prayers. They can't believe God to lift them out of hell. There is no promise for them there. That man or woman burning in hell knows that there is a Heaven. They know there is a place of singing, and joy, and happiness. But they can't believe that there is any hope of them ever getting there. There is not one promise on which they can base their faith. They know there is no place for them to ever reach a basis for their faith, so they can't believe God. Out there alive in the Lake of Fire wailing, "I can't stand it! I can't stand it!" There is no way to believe God to lift them out, to take them from the burning blazing liquid fire, to carry them to a land of rest. They have no hope. They have no faith. They have no promise. They are there forever.

Is there one who will take that journey of faith? Sinner friend, will you take that journey of faith and seek God?

YOU HOLD THE FAITH OF MEN IN YOUR HANDS

By
Winfield F. Poe

CHAPTER 17 What Is Life?

Life is a gift of God. That is why we ought to care for it and preserve it. Life is not only a gift of God, life is a short journey from time to eternity. Life is also a dressing room where we prepare for our place in eternity, either in Heaven or in the Lake of Fire.

When we consider life, we realize it has three dimensions; that which is from above, that which is within, and that which is about us. When we think about that which is from above, we realize we can have a personal relationship with God. What a blessed privilege it is to be able to point back to the very time and the very place where you prayed clear through. Your life was transformed. God came into your life and you became a child of God. What a blessed privilege to know you are a son or a daughter of God. It is a blessed privilege to know the very time and place the Holy Ghost came in and sanctified you holy as a second definite work of grace. The Holy Spirit lives and abides in your heart. Beloved, when we think about that which is from above we are considering the most vital part of every Christian's life. We no longer live according to the dictates of our own mind, but we live according to the law of God. We live to please God, and our greatest concern is our relationship with God. It is a privilege to hear from Heaven, to have God come and bless our soul, and talk to our heart. We can have divine communion with God.

It is our privilege to know that we are a citizen of Heaven. Thank God, as citizens of Heaven we can have divine directions from above. God is our guide. He is our counselor. He is our leader. He is our comforter. What a divine privilege it is to have God to guide us through this uneven life to that beautiful land above. As citizens of Heaven we are not permanent residents here. We are just going through on our way home. When we think of the problems and cares of this life, how good it is to know our citizenship is in Heaven. We, as a people of God, have our home in Heaven. Our citizenship is in Heaven. So our life has a real relationship with that which is from above.

The next area of our life is that which is from within. The first thing we notice in the life of the justified is "Christ in you the hope of glory." The song writer said, "You ask me how I know He lives. He lives within my heart." It is a divine reality that Christ is a living Christ who lives in our heart. Within is divine life. This is more than saying I believe Jesus is the Christ. It is more than joining a church. It is more than being baptized in water. We are made alive spiritually on the inside. There is something inside that loves God and can feel Him. There is something inside that can worship God. Thank God for that inward life. I want to say again, this is far more than just professing religion, or joining a church, or a set of rules or regulations. But there is a real divine life on the inside. We are alive spiritually. Also, we have peace. Romans 5:1 tells us, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The old load of guilt is gone and there is peace on the inside. It is not a matter of no trouble or problems, but "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but

after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1) We live without condemnation. We live with inward peace because guilt is gone. Peace is the absence of guilt, the absence of condemnation. So we have peace within. We have joy within. There are times when we walk by faith and we have no feeling but there are other times, thank God, when joy flows from the depths of our heart. This joy is contained within us and doesn't depend upon other people. Sometimes there is a song in the night and joy bells of salvation are ringing from within. There is inward joy in this salvation. Then, not only is there joy, but we find in walking with God there is divine love that flows from the inward man. There is something within which causes us to love and care. Souls, I am glad for the inward life that can fix us up until we love our enemies, we love our brethren, because of that divine flow of inward love.

Every heart that is unsanctified has carnality. The Bible tells us in I Cor. 3:1-3a, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal." So we realize though they are justified, they are babes in Christ. They are brethren able to take spiritual milk. But yet they have the old carnal nature on the inside. If somehow God could pull back the curtain and let us look inside at that nature men would cry out to God for deliverance. First it brings inward defeat. When you are trying to be spiritual, you are trying to conquer, that nature that worketh death inside drags you down, and brings defeat until it is hard to rise above it. It takes a constant battle to keep victory over that nature on the inside. In that carnal inward nature jealousy, pride, deceit, rebellion, and anger are found. All of those things are a part of the traits of the carnal nature. But, more than that, within there is the body of sin, that sin principle or sin nature. While it is not operating and is suppressed in the heart of the justified, your heart contains everything that is in the heart of the most vile, wicked person in the world. Again, I say, it is not operating, it is suppressed. But that nature is there. Thank God there is deliverance from it. You don't have to leave it there. . . Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12) He said, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication." (I Thess. 4:3)

After we receive this blessed and marvelous experience of heart holiness or entire sanctification let's see what is on the inside of a sanctified life. The first thing, the blessed Holy Spirit comes in in His fullness to abide in the sanctified life. We are filled with all the fullness of God when we get sanctified. The Bible says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. . ." (I Cor. 6:19a) How blessed it is to have the Holy Spirit abiding within our own body, resident inside our heart. When we look on the inside where the image of the fallen Adam was, there is the image of Christ stamped on the heart. Romans 8:28-29 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, . . ." The image of His Son is holiness. We couldn't think the image of Christ anything other than holiness. Every man is in the physical image of Christ but only the sanctified are in the spiritual image of Christ. As we look into the sanctified heart, there is the image of Christ. We also find on the inside of that sanctified life there is perfect love because when we get sanctified our love is made perfect. Also, there is a pure heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) Look inside the sanctified and you will find heart purity there.

Next, we want to notice that which is about us. When we think about that which is around us, we realize we live in a sinful world. There is sin on every side. There is temptation on every side. But I am so glad for something within that is greater than that which is without us . . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (I John 4:4b) The blessed Holy Spirit from within gives us power that is greater than all the power that is about us. That is why we don't have to cave in to temptation. We don't go down in the storm because of the power that is within is greater than the power that is around us. That is why man can live with a pure mind and a pure heart in this day when women go out on the streets in shorts, and hardly enough clothes on to be out of the bedroom until men have to keep their heart pure lest they be tempted and lust and commit adultery by eyesight. Thank God for something within that will fix us up until it is not hard to turn our head and look the other direction. When you get in a place where you are driving and you can't look the other direction, or you are in a place where it is all around you and there is no place to look. Beloved, I am so glad for something that will keep your heart clean, and keep your mind pure. Thank God for something inside until we can keep clean and pure in this wicked and sinful generation. We are talking about a power within until we don't have to cave in to the powers around us. Temptations of all kinds will come but there is power within to overcome temptation, until we can live above sin and walk a holy life right here in this sinful world. The Bible says, . . . they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John 17:14-15) It is the power within that enables us to live a life above sin and walk with God and keep victory in this day. But, more than that, we are living in a time of trouble and a time of persecution and opposition. The storms are raging and the battles are all around us. Many, many times it looks hard, but thank God, that which is within us can reach out to that which is above us and lift us above the circumstances that are around us. Because of that which is within, it can reach that which is above, and we can be more than a conqueror in the circumstances that we live in.

Life not only consists of the three dimensions, but there are three areas of our life. There is our church life, or public worship life. There is our everyday life that we live right in the home. And there is our life on the job. We can be a Christian wherever we are. Isn't it a marvelous thing when we can come into the house of God and the song service is blessed with the glory and presence of God? Folk are rejoicing and praising God. But it isn't always that way. We can come to the house of God and shut out the cares of life, shut out the ordinary day we have been going through, come together and worship and fellowship, and encourage each other. We can enjoy the testimony of the saints. That is a wonderful privilege. But, beloved, life is more than that. We don't live at the house of God all the time. We sing that song, "I'm on my way to Heaven shouting glory all the way." There is just one thing wrong with that song and that is it is not so. We are not going to shout glory all the way home. We are not going to live in the house of God all the time. We are not going to be in camp meeting all the time. But we have another area of our life in the home.

One of the most vital areas of your life in the home is your own secret prayer life. If we are going to be victorious in our everyday life, we are going to have to learn to get alone with God and pray until we can be strengthened in the inner man through the help of the Holy Spirit in the place of prayer. Your own secret prayer life is so vital. That is why multitudes are not making it in this day. They are not taking time to pray. Seek to pray through and touch God early in the morning. You say, "Preacher, do you get through every morning? No, but I would like to. But whether we do or not, we

are going to be faithful to the place of prayer. That is the place and source of victory. Not only is life in the secret place of prayer but there is that everyday relationship with each other.

Dear hearts, there is that relationship of husband and wife — I thank God that a husband and wife can be sanctified. They can become one flesh, but that doesn't make them one head. They won't always think alike. There are times in daily life where husband and wife disagree. There are times when we are very strong in what we think it ought to be. In that time we must settle our disagreements in a sanctified spirit, in a Christian attitude that God can smile on. It is important that we be aware that in that time we may not feel like shouting, but we can manifest a right attitude, and a Christian spirit.

But a part of our Christian life is this part of everyday life when we deal with one another, when we misunderstand one another, when sometimes we may speak too sharp and have to go back and say, "I'm sorry." But that is the way to keep the blessing of God. That is the way to keep the heavens open. Beloved, that is the way to keep a real relationship with God and relationship with each other in the home. We live in the home, we don't live in an atmosphere of shouting all the time. Sometimes we hurt each other. Beloved, again, we can go back and make it right. There is also the area of parents correcting children which has to be done in a right spirit with the help of God.

There is the area of work life. We have to work and rub shoulders with the world. Perhaps on the job there are many times all around you folk are swearing, or they are telling filthy stories. There are all kinds of vulgar language you have to put up with. But, in that time, the grace of God is sufficient. You may not feel like shouting then. You may be glad when the day's work is done so you can go home and be out of that atmosphere for awhile. But we are going to have to walk with God in that kind of an atmosphere. That is a part of life just as much as coming to church and shouting the victory. Our Christian walk and shining light on the job every day is just as much a part of our life. Brother Leon Lynch, a very godly man, who lived in Gravette, Arkansas was of a very quiet nature. I have never heard Leon Lynch shout, or demonstrate, only perhaps with tears. He became very ill. In his last illness when we would pray with him the glory of God would come, he would wave his thin hand and the tears run down his face. His pastor said, "I wish we had a church full of people like him and his wife." That man lived such a consistent life on the job that the men who worked with him said he was a holy man. They said they had confidence in him. That man had walked with God every day. Beloved, a part of the Christian life is out there in the world where the pressures are on, when the storms are raging. It is not all shouting, sometimes it is a real battle, but that is what it takes to walk on with God. There are some times in this Christian life when everything will go wrong. You start out the day and it seems like the first thing something goes wrong. You go to do something else and it doesn't work out right. You start something else and it goes backward and so on throughout the day. That is a part of the Christian life. We will have those kinds of days. But in those times we can walk on with God. We can keep step with the Spirit of God. There will be those times when we can't pray. There will be those times when we feel dry. But that is a part of life. We are talking about the different areas of our life.

There are three time elements in life. There is the past, the present, and the future. We want to notice first the past. The people of God can look back to the past and say, "Thank God, the past is all under the blood. I'm not guilty of those things I used to do. God blotted them all out. There is no

record in Heaven. I was made a brand new creature in Christ Jesus, and I'm not guilty! Bless His Name!" I don't know how you feel about this, but there is something down inside me that could almost shout just to think of the fact that all my past is gone. I'm not guilty! That is so with every Christian. When Christ comes into your life, He blots out the past and gives you a brand new record to start out all over again.

Not only do we look back to the fact that the past is forgiven, but thank God, from the time we got saved we look back and we can say with the song writer, "Precious memories how they ever flood my soul." Souls, those blessed memories of victories and times when God has blessed, and the outpourings of the Spirit — this blessed walk with God — what a glorious thing. Some can't look back very far. But, they can look back and say what a blessed life it is. Some can look back fifteen years. Some can look back twenty years, some thirty-five, some fifty years, and on. They can look back and say, "Thank God, it has been a wonderful life." If there were no Heaven, if there were no hell, I'd want to walk this holy way. I would want to be just as strict as I am now. I would want to walk just as carefully for this is a happy life. The joy and the peace of walking with God — we can look back in the past and say precious memories.

There is the area of the present life. When we look at the present we can say, "Thank God for up-to-date victory! The past has been wonderful but I'm so glad the Spirit abides right now. The present is wonderful." We are saved right now and sanctified right now — up to date victory. We can enjoy that present victory right now. Not only so, but now we can be doing our very best for God. Most everyone tries to be a success, at least they should. But the only way we will ever be a success is to be a success in the present. Did you ever talk to someone who is always going to do something, always making plans to do something but they never do anything? They will never be a success because they are living in the future. There is only one way to be a success and that is to be a success today. We have to do our best to take advantage of the opportunity we have for now is the only time we will ever have. We can't call back yesterday. We can't reach tomorrow. We only have now, and we must do our best with the time we have.

The future is as bright as the promises of God. Souls, we can look out there to that blessed glorious future with all the help that God will give us. If we live for God, if we are going to walk for God, we are going to plan to enjoy His blessed presence out there in the future. When we consider the future we realize world conditions are getting bad. There are the mounting clouds of communism, the awful pressures of the Antichrist, but thank God there is a glorious, glorious future for the people of God for He said in Luke 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." In the near future there is going to be a glorious rapture of the church. What a blessed hope for the church to look forward to. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:16-17) Then, the old will be young again. We will have a new body without aches or pains like unto His glorious body. There is going to be a glad reunion with the saints that have gone on before us. There will be a blessed time when we will meet to separate no more. One day labor will be over. We will go to a land of eternal rest where we can rest in Him forever and ever.

In closing we want to notice the three dimensions of a sinner's life. The first dimension of a sinner's life is that which is from above. That man or that woman who is without God is conscious of the fact, "I'm failing God. I am living in sin. I am a condemned man or a condemned woman. God is not pleased with my life." They know God is not pleased with them. They know down inside they are a lost soul. And when we think of that which is from above, every man or woman will have to answer the same question Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called the Christ?" (Matt. 27:22b) Men and women will either reject Christ and turn Him down and be lost, or they will turn to Christ and repent and be saved. When they think of that which is from above there is fear, there is guilt, there is unhappiness as they think about God because they are not right with Him.

When we think about that which is from within we see a picture of the inward life of the sinner in Galatians 5:19-21. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." All of these are in the heart of every unsaved person. Within that heart there is fear and guilt. That thing that drags them away from God, that thing that pulls them farther and farther into sin is from within.

Then, we want to notice that which is without or around the sinner. There is sin, and temptations, and pitfalls all around the unsaved person. They don't have that power from within to overcome that which is about them. Again and again they do things they wish they had never done. If somehow they just hadn't done that thing, and they hate themselves because they don't have the power from within to resist that which is about them. That man who is a drunkard and goes out and drinks up his week's wages, when he comes home his family is in need. When he is sober, he is sorry and he weeps over what he has done. Then he will go back out and do it again because he has that old nature within. He doesn't have the power to resist that which is about him. Not everyone is chained by drink but there is an area in everyone's life where there are things they wish they had not done. Oh, if only they didn't have that weakness. But the same thing will take them down again, taking them farther and farther from God because of that which is within them. They have heartaches, and heartbreaks, and tragedies but they have nothing within to reach to that which is above to lift them above their surroundings. They have to walk on and face life's dark problems all alone. Without the help of God, they go on because they have nothing within to reach out to that which is from above.

The sinner's life consists of three time areas. The past — oh the dark past — those things that loom up like a nightmare. They wish there was some way to erase them but they are there in memory. They are there in reality. Back there in the sinner's life, there is the memory of their rejecting God. The memory of those things they wish could be different.

There is the present in a sinner's life. Sinner friend, now is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time, now you can change the past. Now, you can find forgiveness. Sinner friend, you don't have to continue to carry that load of guilt and sin. You don't have to go on regretting the past. You can pray through and God will forgive you of the past. You can start out brand new. God wants to pick up the broken pieces of your life and make you a brand new life. He wants to give you a new start. You may feel like life is worse than hopeless, there is nothing to live for. Beloved, if you will

pray through and get saved, God will give you something to live for. He will pick up the broken pieces and give you a brand new life. II Cor. 6:2b says, "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."

The future, sinner friend, what do you have to look forward to in the future? I want to ask you a question. If you go on the same direction you are going right now, how far will sin carry you in one more year? How far will sin carry you in five years? You can't afford to go on in sin like you are going. It will take you down and wreck and ruin your life. Beloved, when we think of the future for the unsaved, we see communism rising higher, and the Antichrist taking over. U. S. News and World Report tells us that soon our dollar will be worth nothing. Souls, everything is crumbling. What do you have to look forward to if you are not a Christian? Out there things all around are getting darker and harder. Jesus is soon going to come and if you are not ready you will miss the rapture. What do you have to look forward to if you are not saved? It will mean to die without God, and to die and be lost. You will drop into hell and go to the judgment unprepared to be cast into the Lake of Fire. What is your life? Your life is your very own. You are only going to live one time. If you lose and waste the only life you will ever have, you will never call back time and do it over again. You will never have an opportunity to change after death. You have only one life and one time to die and one place to be in eternity. What a tragedy to come down to death having wasted the only life you will ever have. You will live with the results of your own life. If sin wrecks your health, and wrecks your life, you will live with the misery of your own life and then die lost. What is your life? Life is uncertain. James 4:14 reads, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Life is uncertain. Life is as uncertain as the morning fog, when the sun comes out it soon vanishes away. Life is as uncertain as breath. There are those that die without a minute to pray on the highways. They are run down by automobiles and go out to meet God. There are those who are murdered. There are those all over the country who are dying with heart attacks without a minute to pray. Life is uncertain, but more than that, life is the only thing between you and hell. You are walking over hell with nothing but breath holding you out of it. When you lie down in your bed to sleep, you will be hanging over hell if you are unsaved, with not one thing between you and hell but life. If your heart should stop and your breath be cut off you would drop into hell. When you get up in the morning you are going to walk over hell with nothing between you and hell but your breath. When you work tomorrow, you will work over hell with nothing but breath between you and the fire. If you quit breathing, you are gone. You will drop into the fire. Souls, won't you give your heart to Jesus now. You say, "But, Preacher, it won't happen to me." Everyone who was killed on the highway today did not think it would happen to them. That one that died with a heart attack did not think it would happen to them. That one who was murdered did not think it would happen to him, but it did. What is your life? Give it to Jesus and let Him pick up the broken pieces. Sinner, if you ever get saved, there is going to have to be a now time.