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Holiness Writers

The Convert's Homeward Guide

By

J. M. Hames

*“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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THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL EDITION

The printed text from which this digital publication was created is assumed to be in the public domain. (See the final paragraph of this Introduction.)

The printed, paperback edition of "The Convert's Homeward Guide" was in quite poor condition. The cover and publication data pages were missing, as was also part of Chapter 39 and all of Chapter 40. I have therefore chosen to publish only Chapters 1 — 38, but I have still listed Chapters 39 and 40 in the Table of Contents, noting that these chapters are not included in this digital edition.

Since the pages containing the publication data were missing, I was also unable to include the names of the original Publisher, the date of publication, and the copyright date. However, J. M. Hames dates the writing of his Foreword to the book as August, 1915 [See Below] — a date well within the range that places the work in the public domain. — DVM

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

FOREWORD

Kempis said, "We ought to be as ready to read a devotional book which is quite simple as we are to read those which enter deeply and learnedly into their subjects. Let not the authority of the writer, whether he be of high or low literary repute, influence you; but let the love of pure truth draw you to read.

"You should not inquire who wrote it, but consider attentively what is written. Men pass away; but the truth of 'the Lord endureth forever.'

"God speaks in various ways to us, without respect of persons. If you wish to derive profit from this small treatise, read it with lowliness; simplicity and faith."

Yours for Him, J. M. H. August, 1915.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

CONTENTS

Foreword

The Plea Of This Book

1

Getting Properly Started

2

Paul's Conversion

3

Satan's First Attack

4

"Walking By Faith"

5

The Value Of Secret Prayer

6

The Danger Of Being Sidetracked

7

Untempered Zeal

8

Obedying The Checks

9

When And How To Seek Holiness

10

Carnality

11

The Double Portion Blessing

12

How To Listen To A Straight Sermon

13

How To Treat Doubtful Things

14

Beware Of Jestng

15

"Taking Up The Cross"

16

On Being True

17

How To Determine Our Calling

18

How To Keep Free In The Meeting

19

The Curse Of Disobedience

20

Going Back To The Altar

21

Untimely Matrimony

22

How To Treat Inspiration

23

The Change From Joy To Soul-Burden

24

What To Expect

25

The Chastening Of The Lord

26

Planted In The Proper Soil

27

"The Evil Day"

28

Beginning The Day With God

29

What To Do When Tied Up

30

Spiritual Lessons From The Trees

31

Bringing Christianity Into Disrepute

32

Administering And Receiving Reproof

33

Seed Thoughts

34

The Starting Promise

35

Why Some Are More Spiritual Than Others

36

The Ear Of God

37

Hidden Manna

38

The Little Child Spirit

39

How To Keep In The Spirit When Traveling
(not included — much of the printed chapter missing)

40

Do Not Disappoint Them
(not included — all of the printed chapter missing)

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

THE PLEA OF THIS BOOK

Read me early, read me late,
Read me while your duties wait;
Read me daily, read me through,
Read me and my sayings do.

Read me when your heart is glad,
Read me when 'tis lone and sad;
Read me when your path is bright,
Read me when 'tis dark as night.

— The Author —

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 1 GETTING PROPERLY STARTED

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness In himself" (1 John 5:10).

The starting-point in the way of Christianity has proved to be the weal or woe point to thousands of immortal souls. Therefore, the greatest care is to be taken here. The one thing that should concern every person at this point more than anything else in the world is that he obtain a clear, definite witness from God that his many sins are all forgiven and under the blood.

The Holy Scriptures not only insist that men firmly believe that they are accepted of God, but that they positively know it beyond a shadow of doubt.

In 1 John 4:13, we find the following statement: "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

It is not sufficient evidence that we are saved, because we have confessed our sins, turned over a new leaf, joined the church and are living a better life. All of these things are good and commendable but will never take the place of the "New Birth."

Jesus said to His moral inquirer, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). There are hundreds contenting themselves with the fact that they have joined the church and are enjoying a degree of the rest of conscience, but this is by no means to be taken for the "New Birth" or for the witness of the Spirit mentioned in our text.

Many good, honest people are told to just believe that Jesus is the Son of God and join the church and they are saved, but Satan never forged a greater lie. No one is a Christian who has not received a definite witness that he is accepted of God. What saith the Scriptures on this point? "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). Every one who has received the "New Birth" bears the following earmarks: He has realized a definite change; he has a hatred for all sin and worldliness; he has a hearty relish for truth and righteousness, and a growing love for every man and woman in the world.

If he is wanting in these fruits, his Christianity is false no matter how piously he lives or zealously he labors for the cause of Christ

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 2 PAUL'S CONVERSION

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:3-5)

It is true, we are now living in a time when theoretical religion is taking the field; when men are no longer entering through the "Wicket Gate" of repentance, but are being trained into Christianity (?).

We are glad, however, that we still have in our midst the blessed, old Bible, the unerring guide.

Now in the text and chapter before us we have the clearest case of experimental religion and its operations found in the Bible. This one case is sufficient material to rout and put to flight all of the Moralists and Do-rights in the world.

Let us carefully notice a few points of interest connected with Paul's conversion.

1. He was by no means a dull, illiterate man, according to his own testimony found in Acts 22:3, which reads as follows: "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." It is a common saying these days among the cultured and refined that only the illiterate and common people believe in experimental and emotional religion. However, let this be as it may, we are certain that one wise man really got converted nearly twenty centuries ago.

2. Notwithstanding Paul's almost unparalleled state of morality he had to be born again, i. e., receive a change of heart. Listen while he tells us of his self-righteousness which he had before really getting converted: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3:4-6).

But even with all of this morality he discovered the fact that he was the chief of sinners and on the way to hell with the cutthroats and gamblers. (1 Tim. 1:15) Reader, have you made this wonderful discovery?

3. The next striking fact connected with this experience which deals Moralists and Formalists an awful blow is this: He fell prostrate upon the ground under Holy Ghost conviction. Oh, what a shock to pride and false modesty! These are days when people are too proud to even kneel in prayer but the kind of conviction that our brother Paul got not only brought him to his knees but threw him upon his face. (Acts 9:3, 4)

4. Another truth taught in the lesson which equally impresses us is the thoroughness of his conviction. He did not simply get worked up a little over the death of a relative or friend and shed a few crocodile tears, resolve to do better, sign a card, shake hands with the evangelist and join the church like many do today, but his conviction was so deep and pungent that it put him on the street called "Straight" for three days. So does Bible conviction in this twentieth century. It sends a person over his back life to confess, pay old bills and straighten up the past as far as possible.

Reader, have you ever spent any time on this street? If not you are in possession of the wrong kind of religion no matter how often you frequent the church.

5. Still another valuable truth taught in the lesson which will no doubt be a little difficult for the "Do-right Family" to welcome, is this: Paul prayed. These people teach that it is not necessary for one to pray to get saved, only commence to do right. It is too bad, however, that Paul did not make this discovery and thus save himself from putting in those three long days in Damascus praying and fasting. Poor fellow! It is also too bad that Jesus did not know of this new method when He said: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). And some devils go "not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:21).

6. It is being taught in these days that it is not necessary for one to obtain a witness certifying to the fact that he is saved and made a child of God and an heir of heaven, but Paul obtained a clear, unmistakable witness. (Acts 9:18)

7. The next interesting feature about his experience which is worthy of the convert's notice is this: About as soon as he became converted he joined the cleanest church he could find in all the land. (Acts 9:26)

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 3 **SATAN'S FIRST ATTACK**

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4:1).

Because we have broken ranks with sin and the world and enlisted in the army of Jesus Christ is by no means a sign that Satan will never annoy us again. Every newly converted soul may well be on the lookout for a rude attack from the subtle foe the first few days after he is converted. It is true, however, that Satan may defer this attack longer with some than others; this, of course, depends largely upon the length of the "joy period" and also the convert's knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

In the following lines will be found some of the ways in which Satan rudely attacks newly converted souls with the sincere hope of getting them back into sin.

After they have come home from the meeting and the tide of their new-found joy has subsided Satan will set in to make them doubt away their conversion by whispering the following suggestions in their ears: You did not get the true religion, for it did not come on the same order as when your parents were converted or the minister or some old acquaintance. Hence, at this point, many give ear to his deceptive lies and commence comparing their blessing with that of the preacher or some other well-established Christian, and, on finding it somewhat different, they yield to doubt and get into darkness. Oftentimes, after souls have received a wonderful blessing at the altar, Satan will try to make them believe it was only excitement.

If he fails in overthrowing the convert here he will frankly admit that he did get the true religion but, in the meantime, will try to make him believe that it should keep him overflowing with joy and praise every day of his life.

Therefore, after he has succeeded in getting him to accept this false idea, he will then bring upon him a storm of pressure and heaviness. This, of course, being such a new and strange experience and so vastly different from that which Satan had caused him to accept, might well upset his faith and force him to the conclusion that he has lost his religion which, of course, was not true but one of Satan's lies.

If Satan fails in this attempt his next effort will be to the convert by saying that he will not be to hold out. He, in the meantime, will point out several people who once professed Christianity but soon turned from the way. He will also argue that it is not strictly necessary to bother with Christianity anyway until near the close of one's life.

If he fails to accomplish his purpose here his next advice is not to become too religious. He argues that there is no need of praying, reading the Bible and going to church so much; neither is it strictly necessary for one to renounce the cards, the dance, the theater and old associates, to be a Christian.

He is like Pharaoh who insisted that if Moses and the Israelites must go out of Egypt to serve God, they were not to go very far away.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 4 "WALKING BY FAITH"

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

In entering upon the Christian life the beginner will hear many new and strange expressions, which, if not explained and made clear, will tend to confuse rather than help him. The above text is something of that order and needs to be explained, for it contains some of the most helpful lessons to be found in the catalog of a Christian's experience.

The first thought suggested by the text is that we will not always be full of joy, nevertheless, we are to press on in the way of the Lord and be just as faithful as when we are happy and joyful. Our feelings may vary many times during the day but we are not to depend them but must keep believing Jesus saves or sanctifies us "just now" no matter how dark it gets around us or how God seems to veil His face.

Second. We may not always obtain from the Lord a real clear leading as to what He would have us do, where He would have us go or what He would have us say. Hence, at such times we are to be guided by the Word and our better judgment. There are two general methods which God has adopted in leading His children. One is, "Direct leading," i. e., by the strong impressions of the Holy Spirit we are made to realize that God wants us to lead the meeting, testify, speak to some unsaved person, refrain from talking, etc. His second method is "Indirect leading." Observe a few examples. A hungry man comes to the door begging food. God will not give us any special leading to feed this man but duty will suggest it.

A minister goes to church on Sunday morning and to his surprise, finds the house crowded with sinners anxiously waiting to hear the gospel message. The minister may not have any special message for them since he came prepared to deliver a message to the Christian people, nevertheless, duty suggests that he select an appropriate text, even if he does not realize a bit of the help of the Spirit, and perform his duty as faithfully as if he felt unusually led of the Lord. This is "walking by faith."

Again, two lines of duty suddenly present themselves, one of which must be immediately acted upon. What am I to do at this point, seeing I have no special leading from God to go to the right or to the left? I am to get down before God and explain the urgent circumstances and also implore His leading, then I am to get up and pursue the course that is the clearer in my mind, that is, I am to do the thing I think God would have, me do. This is what it means to "walk by faith."

Many times God is better pleased with this kind of service than that which we render under more favorable circumstances and clearer leadings.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 5

THE VALUE OF SECRET PRAYER

"That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day" (Dan. 6:13).

There is no phase of devotion more rudely opposed by the devil than secret prayer. No doubt when we get to eternity and behold the things unseen, we will discover Satan and his rebel host spent more time striving to prevent the children of God from praying in secret than at anything else in earth or hell.

It is astonishing the various methods Satan uses to destroy our relish for secret devotion. Some of them are as follows: Sending us an undue amount of company; stirring us up to go traveling and "globe trotting;" overtaking us with fine homes, fine furniture, and worldly cares. We know not of a more destructive instrument to secret prayer and a heavenly mind than an automobile. It may be alright in its place; however, there is something tremendously infatuating about it that swallows people up soul and body, so to speak.

Reader, if you desire a good experience and a close walk with God you must not neglect the secret prayer life. What fertilizer and showers are to vegetation, secret prayer is to the Christian's life. How soon the flowers fade and droop their heads when the dew and showers are withheld; just so does the soul when the showers of secret prayer and meditation are withheld.

No one will ever backslides while he keeps up the secret prayer life. Satan can endure an abundance of sweet singing, fine sermons and nice testimonies, but volley after volley of secret prayer will rout him every time. Secret prayer prevents spiritual stagnation, keeps the soul tender and passive, develops faith and confidence in God, helps to surmount difficulties, brings us into better acquaintance with God and keeps every grace of the Spirit flourishing in our souls.

Dear convert, if you would be successful in the divine life, never allow business, company or worldly cares to destroy your relish for secret devotion, for when it is once gone it will require no small amount of prayer and fasting to regain it.

Hundreds of church members are void of the spirit of prayer today because they misused and abused it in the earlier part of their religious experience.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 6

DANGER OF BEING SIDE-TRACKED

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

We frankly admit that error and false doctrine are some of Satan's most successful means of recapturing souls. However, while this is true, it is also equally true that carnal associates and worldly friends have been the cause of more people backsliding and returning to sin and the world than all the erroneous books on earth. Therefore, newly converted souls cannot be too careful at this point. When money, pleasure, strong drink and all other devices fall in the hands of the devil to induce souls to return to the ways of sin, a subtle, sly, attractive human being (especially a woman) hardly ever fails, unless God mightily interposes.

A number of years ago in the midst of a powerful revival the preacher observed a young lady under deep conviction. He was moved by the Spirit to urge her to give her heart to God. He plead with her and urged her not to grieve the Holy Ghost, but she replied, "Not tonight." She went home under deep conviction and told her parents how she felt, and how she had been halting between two opinions; that she never felt such concern for her soul before, and never realized her danger of being lost at any period during her life so much as she realized it that night. Her parents were unsaved and had no concern for her eternal welfare. On asking their opinion regarding her living for Jesus, they said in reply: "You are young and will have plenty of time," so after a struggle with the Spirit of God for several days she yielded to the advice of her parents and sent the Holy Spirit away. Some weeks after the revival closed she was stricken down very ill and in a short time was on the verge of eternity. She tried hard to pray and obtain the favor of God but He refused to be entreated. She had allowed her loved ones to get between her and the Savior. Hence she went out into the great beyond — a lost soul.

A young man in the East, some years ago, was wonderfully saved and called to preach the Gospel; but his wife was quite a society belle and a great lover of pleasure, hence, she rudely withstood him for years until finally he decided to renounce all of his religious scruples and join her in the broad way of sin. In a few months he was stricken with a serious illness and was nearing the dreadful gates of death. Before passing away, he cried out in a shrill, fiendish tone: "R____, you have damned me! You have damned me! You have damned me!" and then glided over the "Falls of Eternal Death."

Reader, whatever you do, be true to God and stand by your conviction, no matter if it causes you to lose every friend in the world, sleep in the street, die in the poorhouse and be buried in the potter's field.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 7 UNTEMPERED ZEAL

"Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).

One of the many things which furnished material for shame and regret in the early part of the writer's Christian experience was the rash and unwise way we approached and dealt with the souls we were trying to help. We sincerely thought it was our duty as a Christian to exhort about every person we met on the street to get religion. As a result, we became a public nuisance. We considered it almost a sin to be in conversation with a person more than ten minutes and not to speak to him on the subject of religion. It was not a great while, however, before we discovered the fact that we were driving souls away rather than winning them to Christ.

This is a point where newly converted souls need much instruction. They are so happy and full of joy that they try to talk religion into nearly every one they meet. If they should continue this unwise action they would talk themselves clear out of employment and out onto the sidewalk.

I hope the reader will not mistake my meaning. It is perfectly right to speak to people on the subject of religion; however, it is not using the best wisdom to buttonhole every person you meet, neither is it wise to speak to the same man on the subject every time you meet him.

We have found it more harmful than helpful to argue on the Scriptures with sinners and carnal-minded church members.

We were once accustomed to awkwardly approach people with the following question: "Do you live without sin?" This method, of course, called forth an argument wherever we went. Our intentions were good but our judgment was tremendously faulty.

We were also accustomed to putting the following question to strangers on the street: "Are you saved?" "Are you a Christian?" This method tended to stir up strife and the devil rather than produce conviction. The question was alright but we did not properly put it. We should have first prepared the way for our question by saying, "Good morning; how are you today?" etc., and after passing a few brief remarks on the general topics of the day then put our question.

Should we have adopted this method no doubt the people would have accepted our question in a better spirit and been profited thereby.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 8 OBEYING THE CHECKS

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

No doubt by this time the newly converted soul has become acquainted with the Christian's guide, the blessed Holy Spirit, therefore, it will be no great difficulty to make him understand what we mean by "Obeying the Checks."

Now what we mean by the "Checks" is as follows: The Holy Spirit, our great teacher and leader, makes His home in our hearts; hence, in communicating His will to us He does not yell or use violent language but leads sometimes with a gentle whisper and at other times through a gentle inward restraint and at still other times by suddenly causing us to feel inwardly burdened and heavy hearted. The foregoing are what Christians call the "Checks." The Holy Spirit uses these methods to let us know when He is pleased with our conduct and when He is displeased, when we should speak and when we should refrain, when we should go forward and when we should stand still. If we obey His voice He will guide us daily like clock work.

It is to be borne in mind, however, that the blessed Holy Spirit is very tender, also very easily grieved out of our hearts. He is not pleased with loud, boisterous talk; scolding; jesting; loud, reckless laughter; careless, loose walking; trifling, giggling, flirting; unprofitable sightseeing; spending too much time before the mirror, primping and such like things.

The blessed Holy Spirit also inspires, prompts and reminds us to pray; helps us to testify, sing and preach; actuates us to live holy lives; subdues the human, enlightens the mind and inflames the heart with the fire of heavenly love. He commends and blesses us when we do well and chastises and reproves us for thoughtless and careless works and deeds. He holds us steady in the storms of temptation, fiery trials and persecution.

Above all things, reader, let us obey His still small voice, mild impressions and gentle reproofs, and by so doing our souls will be kept like a "watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 9

WHEN AND HOW TO SEEK HOLINESS

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

All true Christianity begins and ends in the Bible. Therefore, we are not, by any means, to believe or accept any doctrine or theory which can not be found within the lids of this blessed old guide. On the other hand we must not allow any man or devil to influence us to disbelieve or dispute any of its sacred teaching but strive to bring our lives into perfect accord. And if at any time we come across something therein that we do not understand, if we take it to God in prayer, He will make it clear to our minds.

In the above text the apostle evidently is writing to newly converted people. He is exhorting them not to stop at conversion, even though it be a grand and glorious experience, but to go on "unto perfection." Generally speaking, perfection, holiness, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, perfect love, the second blessing, full salvation, and entire sanctification are synonymous terms; that is, they all mean the same state of grace.

If we modernized the contents of the text it would read as follows: Now, you are converted but don't stop there, but go in immediately for the experience of holiness, entire sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

Those who have been recently converted must not allow themselves to be confused or upset over meeting people who dispute and oppose the doctrine of holiness.

They will attempt also to poison your mind against it; however, if you follow the teachings of your Bible, their arguments will be of no avail. It would be well for the beginner to commit the following texts to memory: Matt. 5:48; Luke 1:73-75; John 17:17; Eph. 5:24-27; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16.

The next thought to be considered is: When shall the newly saved soul begin to seek holiness? Our reply is: Just as soon as he comes to the knowledge of the fact that it is God's will for him to be sanctified, even if it is the next meeting after he is converted. If he defers this matter any great length of time, the chances are that he will settle down and never seek it.

The next question that arises is how to seek it. We know of no better way than that of Peter, James, John and the remaining hundred and seventeen. Luke tells us in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Jesus told them in the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke, forty-ninth verse, how long to seek. "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." There are many would-be holiness teachers throughout the country who teach seekers to consecrate and take it by faith, but this teaching is not Scriptural according to the teaching of the Son of God. He said, "Tarry until ye be endued with

power from on high." Either He or these modern teachers are wrong. Will some one please inform us which?

We are willing to admit that the blessing is obtained by faith, but not the kind recommended by these shallow teachers. They mean, venturing faith, which of course is excellent in its place. But for one to receive true holiness, viz., the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, he must lay aside venturing faith and adopt persevering, tenacious, Jacob-like faith, that which will not be denied nor let go until the fire falls.

It is quite evident that Peter and the rest of the company were using this brand of faith, for the sacred record says: "They were all with one accord in one place [this reads as if they were taking Jesus' advice and TARRYING UNTIL the blessing came]. 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, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:1-4).

Our advice, reader, is to continue to pray, believe and wait until the fire falls from heaven.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 10 CARNALITY

"But Saul and the people spared Agag" (1 Sam. 15:9).

While there are several figures and characters used in the Holy Scriptures as types of Christ and the Holy Ghost, there are also two special characters used as symbols of carnality-the "old man." One is Ishmael, the son of Hagar (Gen. 21:10; Gal. 4:23-30), and the next is Agag, the subject of our text. If we were permitted to modernize and spiritualize the language of the text it would read as follows: But Saul and the people excluded and winked at carnality.

Here in this narration we have a life-sized picture of carnality and also a brief synopsis of a superficial holiness seeker. We will not take time and space, however, to properly explain the subject but will simply mention in brief some of the ways the modern holiness teachers and seekers are sparing Agag.

The first way of sparing him and easing up on carnality is seen in those who live on one side of Jordan and labor on the other. They are like the Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh. They are willing to fight in the land of Canaan, i. e., sing, pray, preach, and testify to and about holiness but are not willing to pay the price to live there. There are hundreds who pray, "Thy Kingdom come," who do not want Scriptural holiness. There are also multitudes who sing with great earnestness:

"Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the DOUBLE CURE,
Save from wrath and MAKE ME PURE,"

who do not mean a word of it. They also sing, "Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole," while at the same time they fight holiness and hate the word sanctification.

A second way of sparing Agag is seen in those who excuse and wink at the small uprisings of anger, impatience, jealousy, envy and pride in their hearts and at the same time continue to profess to be sanctified wholly. They go right on professing when they are conscious of daily uprisings. A man who only feels a small ruffle of carnality in his heart once a year is as much in need of a clean heart as the one who feels it every hour in the day.

Still another way of winking at carnality and passing it by is when people try to make religious acts and deeds of charity atone for the manifestations of a bad spirit. Sometimes a zealous brother gets his feelings ruffled at the preacher in the official board and manifests a bad spirit. But rather than confess, beg pardon and get carnality cleansed out of his heart, he will present the preacher with a new suit of clothing or a new Bible. When wife has been having a touchy spell and saying some

hard things to husband, rather than confess out, dig out, and get the "old man" cast out, she will bake husband one of his favorite pies, roast a goose, or make some ice cream. But ah, this is only a unique way of sparing Agag!

A final way of sparing the life of this delicate, troublesome king, is making an allowance for carnality and branding it "infirmity." Some people seem to think they are justified in getting impatient, fretting and grumbling simply because they are suffering with the toothache.

There are others who seem to think because they are getting old and childish, it is sufficient excuse for carnality. Some people, rather than grow sweet and childish, are growing old and devilish. What they stand in need of is the first and second work of grace which will keep a person sweet and blessed in the fiery furnace, den of lions, inner prison and Isle of Patmos.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 11

THE DOUBLE PORTION BLESSING

"And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (2 Kings 2:9).

"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7).

What the Bible does not give us by precept and promise it gives us in pen pictures. Elijah here represents Jesus and His finished mission upon earth. Elisha with his brief petition represents the believer seeking the fullness of the Spirit, viz., the blessing of holiness. The mantle of Elijah represents the blessing.

Let us briefly paraphrase this narrative and notice how perfectly the conditions upon which Elisha received the blessing harmonize with those required to receive it in the present dispensation.

1. It required contrast to make Elisha see and feel his need. His previous association with the man of God had thoroughly convinced him, first, of his need; second, that it was possible for one to live a spirit-filled life right here upon earth. Is it not probable that the blessed Holy Spirit, at some time and point in life, will show the believer a person who enjoys the blessing and lives the life?

2. The promise of the blessing was conditional: "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be so." All of the promises of God contained in the blessed, old Bible are on the same basis, i. e., conditional. To claim them, you must meet the conditions.

3. Elisha had to renounce all and follow the man of God. In the thirty-second chapter of Genesis we read of a man who before obtaining the blessing packed up all of his possessions and sent them over the brook Jabbok. The Apostle Peter and the other disciples seemed to be on this same line, for Peter called the Savior's attention to the fact that they had left all and followed Him. Reader, this is the only condition upon which you can obtain the fullness of the Spirit.

4. Elisha would not allow himself to be influenced by his less spiritual friends. They made several attempts to tell him something but he said, "I know it." If we would be true followers of Christ we must also turn a deaf ear to the clamoring, jeering, criticizing voices of our friends.

5. Elisha followed Elijah down to Jericho. The spiritual significance of Jericho is, "The cursed city," or in other words, "The city of reproach." So it is today. If we would have the "double portion" blessing, we must follow Christ "without the gates bearing His reproach." We must be willing to go anywhere, associate with any people, be called any vile name and undergo any kind of deprivation.

6. Elisha also followed him across the Jordan river. Jordan here symbolizes the crucifixion of the "old man," the death of the self-life, the destruction of carnality. Reader, if you would receive true

holiness, viz., the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, you must not simply consecrate, but self must be crucified.

7. After Elisha had received the blessing it instantly became noticeable to those about him. "And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, the Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (2 Kings 9:15). When we get the real blessing those about us will realize it and on the other hand they will know when we haven't got it.

8. Satan had agents on picket to confuse him and cause him to doubt away the blessing. "And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or in some valley" (2 Kings 9:16). This is the dictation of unbelief. The thought suggested is this: If Elijah was not gone up Elisha was deceived and not in possession of the blessing.

Satan has agents today that meet every newly saved or sanctified soul to talk them out of it or make them doubt it away.

These agents oftentimes are professors of religion, and in many instances preachers.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 12

HOW TO LISTEN TO A STRAIGHT SERMON

"Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 8:9).

The convert must also learn how to listen to strong sermons without casting away his confidence or be coming crippled. Many an honest soul after hearing a straight sermon has become confused and thrown down a good experience. This, of course, was due to his being inexperienced and not knowing how to accept truth and distribute light. He thought if a person was saved it put him beyond being hit by the preacher no matter on what subject he preached. Therefore, after listening to a deep, heart-searching sermon, one which convicted and trimmed even the one who delivered it, the convert realized at once that he did not measure up; and, of course, Satan then stepped in and told him he was not saved at all. So in many cases such souls go home discouraged and tempted to give up altogether.

The correct way to listen to a strong sermon will be seen in the following lines.

If you really have the witness of the Spirit that you are saved or sanctified you need not let the preacher preach you into darkness. If he reveals some new light or mentions some new truth that you have never heard before you must not think that you are not saved because you do not measure up to it. God does not expect us to do anything until we know it. Therefore, you can promise God right there and then that you will walk in that light, you will be careful at that point, you will lay that thing aside, you will never use that word again, etc. Hence, by the time the preacher finishes his discourse you will have finished digging yourself out and be ready for the benediction or to help dig some one else out at the altar.

There are scores of Christian people that flock to the altar at nearly every camp-meeting simply because they do not measure up to all of the new light and deep sermons they hear on the camp-ground.

Many times even the evangelist or preacher himself does not measure up to all of his sermons, for, quite frequently, if he is the right kind of a preacher, he preaches himself and all the other saints under conviction, and if he is of that type who can not be preached under conviction, he should go to the altar and let the saints pray him under conviction and get saved.

The way that both old and young Christians are to keep saved is when the Spirit sheds new light upon their pathway to immediately walk in it. Reader, go thou and do likewise.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 13

HOW TO TREAT DOUBTFUL THINGS

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

The devil is aware of the fact that it would be no easy matter to induce a newly converted soul to commit a gross sin, therefore, he has a more unique way of getting him into darkness; that way is getting him to tamper with doubtful things; things which he is not sure are right or wrong; practices which he is not certain that Jesus would do, going to places where he is a little doubtful as to whether Jesus would go, and using words in conversation that he is not sure Jesus would use. It is to be remembered, reader, that you must always give God the benefit of every doubtful thing. Never do anything that you are not sure is right. If you have doubts about it being the proper thing for a Christian to do or the right kind of a place for a Christian to go, ask some more experienced, spirit-filled Christian about it. If at any time there arises a doubt in your mind concerning anything that you are engaged in, you are to refrain from doing that thing until the doubt is removed and you are as clear as heaven. For to do otherwise would bring condemnation and make you a sinner before God.

Sometimes Satan tries to rush us into doubtful practices simply because they are popular and other church members and preachers are engaged in. But this is no excuse, for the Word says: shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. 23:2).

There are hundreds of precious souls back in sin today who were once bright and shining lights. They did not get there through lying, stealing, dancing and card-playing, but through the small doorway of "doubtful conduct."

O soul, dwell deep in God; there's danger,
For subtle foes around thee lie;
To Satan's wiles thou art no stranger;
Hide in thy secret place so nigh."

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 14 BEWARE OF JESTING

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23).

Among the many beautiful thoughts springing from the life of our blessed Redeemer which greatly impress the writer is this: "He was a man of few words," that is, He only spoke when it was necessary and profitable. This is one of the grandest victories that one can obtain on this side of the gates of pearl, namely, where one's spirit is so subdued and his tongue under such control that he never jests, jokes, scolds, backbites, nor uses idle talk. This is the Scriptural standard of a Christian's conversation. (Matt 12:36,37; Eph. 4:29; Eph. 5:4)

In the following lines I wish to submit to the new beginner a few suggestions on how to thus regulate his conversation.

1. By prayer and faith hold on to God until He not only cleanses out all jesting and joking, but also the inward tendency to use many words. An experience where your tongue will be under such control that you can keep quiet as easily as you can speak, where you can put the brakes on your conversation with ease, anywhere, everywhere and any time.

2. "Study to be quiet," that is, be always on your guard to see, not how much, but how little you can have to say. And when in company and public gatherings, do not talk just to be considered a good entertainer. Jesus said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

3. The most successful way to comply with the above rule is to continually practice the presence of God, ever remembering that, "He is the head of every house, the unseen guest at every meal, and the silent listener to every conversation."

4. It would also be well to avoid mirthful gatherings, large crowds and big birthday suppers, etc., for these are strong weapons in the hands of the devil to destroy holy modesty, evenness of spirit and heavenly communion, and also tend to close our ears to the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit.

Many times in one hour's conversation people tear down the rampart of holy modesty from around their soul which for years they had been erecting with prayer and tears.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 15 TAKING UP THE CROSS

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

The command, "Take up the cross," is no doubt a strange one to the new beginner; therefore, for his special benefit we will hurriedly explain a part of what is meant by "taking up the cross." We are not to understand by the word cross that Christ meant for us to carry a crucifix on our person or hang a picture of the cross upon the wall. It means those phases of Christian duty which go against our grain and cross the desires of the natural man. The following are some of the things which constitute the cross:

The pastor appoints you to lead the young people's meeting or the prayer-meeting and just as soon as he does so you will feel a strange burden on your heart. Now from the human side of the matter you will feel like excusing yourself and telling him to appoint some one else; this kind of conduct, however, is what the Christian people call "shirking the cross," but if you resist this inclination to shirk and go right against your feelings and take the meeting as you were appointed, that would be "taking up the cross."

Again, you may be appointed by "the sick committee to sit up at night with a sick brother; you may be willing to go, only you realize to some extent how greatly it will disadvantage you, but in order to please God you strain a point and go. This would be another way of "taking up the cross."

Still another way of taking it up is when you feel that the Lord would have you spend the day in fasting and prayer. This, of course, will be rudely protested by your appetite; nevertheless, you make the sacrifice and obey God.

No one can keep the victory and live for God who is given to shirking the cross. On the other hand, if we deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily, it will bear us on to the highlands of holiness and finally up to the city whose streets are gold, whose gates are pearl, whose inhabitants are saints and angels and whose king is Jehovah.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 16 ON BEING TRUE

"We are true men" (Gen. 42:11).

The word true is used as an adverb when establishing a fact, statement, or declaration, but here in the text it is used as an adjective, referring to principle, genuineness, uprightness and sincerity.

We are well acquainted with what it means to have an untrue timepiece, untrue mirror or untrue friend, etc. Some of these things have, no doubt, caused many of us quite a bit of trouble and disadvantage.

In the following lines will be found a few of the characteristics of a true Christian.

1. One face. The business, the political, the social and the religious world, today, are so honeycombed with dishonesty and falsity that it is quite difficult to find a really true, reliable person.

We are glad to say, however, that the grace of God is a perfect cure for dishonesty and guile. It will take all of the deceit and two-facedness out of people and make them the same everywhere.

2. A true Christian cannot be bribed or turned away from what he honestly believes to be right for all the money on the globe.

3. As far as he has light and understands, all that he does is worthy of imitation. His life and conduct is as straight as a string. From the time he was saved there is a clean, straight record clear up to the present moment

4. All of his purposes, intentions and thoughts are of the class that could be placed upon a bill-board for the inspection of three worlds. He at no time entertains a thought that he would be ashamed to entertain in church or in heaven on the front seat. Of course, Satan sometimes suggests evil things to his mind but he at once repels them by lifting his heart to God in prayer, therefore, he is kept pure and holy continually.

5. The next characteristic of a the Christian is, he is fully turned over to Jesus without the least reserve. He is consecrated to work, give, suffer and die for the cause of Jesus Christ. Strictly speaking, he claims nothing upon earth as his own, and yet through Christ he is heir of all things.

6. At the present moment he is as much in the center of God's will as he knows how to be. He is ready to go to heaven today as he ever expects to be.

"Where duty calls or danger,
He's never wanting there."

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 17

HOW TO DETERMINE OUR CALLING

"Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee" (Jer. 1:17).

In the chapter before us we have one of the most delicate subjects in the catalog of a Christian's experience. The question, no doubt, arises from the heart of the reader, How may one know for a certainty that he is called to the work of the Lord?

Some of the ways by which this can be determined will be seen in the following lines.

1. When the Lord calls one to a certain work that person is generally the first one to know it. At times, the thought of the work will be so prominent in his mind and the drawing of the Spirit so great upon his heart that he will not be able to rest night or day.

2. Usually, whenever people are called of God it can readily be seen in their testimony. Nearly every time they get up to testify they will unintentionally drift into exhorting.

3. Those who are called of God are given a quick memory, a free delivery, a deep insight into spiritual things, a love for prayer and a passion for souls.

4. One who is called of God to the ministry does not have to be hired and promised a stipulated amount, but the burden is resting upon him so heavily that he sometimes exclaims with St. Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." He is willing to take the job on any terms and thus throw himself into the breach and head some one off from going into the flames of everlasting damnation.

5. Again, those who have the call upon their hearts can not make themselves satisfied pursuing any other calling in life, neither will they be successful at any other occupation. The holy oil is upon their heads and the call and responsibility will follow them to the grave. No matter if they fly the track and run away from God, yet they will never get away from that peculiar anointing and strange conviction. We believe, even if they go down to hell they will be and feel different from all other human spirits.

6. Persons who are called of God to preach the gospel can never keep an even, victorious, satisfying experience, pursuing any other occupation. It is true they may become book-agents, solicitors, financial agents, deans, orphan home managers, etc., but there will always be an aching void in their hearts.

If preachers who are now filling such offices would tell the clean judgment-day truth, they would acknowledge that they do not possess the degree of joy, peace, sweetness, clearness and deep soul satisfaction that they did while devoting their whole time to the ministry of the Word and the

salvation of souls. Many of them are placing the blame of their spiritual condition to ill health, domestic trouble, financial pressure, etc., but if they would return to the ministry for just one year there would be as much difference in their spiritual temperature as there is between night and day.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 18 **HOW TO KEEP FREE IN THE MEETINGS**

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1).

My purpose in this chapter is to give the convert a few brief hints on how to keep free and enjoy the meetings. One must be in possession of the joy and freedom of the Spirit if he would feel contented and at home in the house of God. Satan, too, is aware of this fact and uses every conceivable method possible to prevent us from enjoying the religious services. It is no marvel, however, for he is well aware of the fact that if we cease to enjoy the services it will be only a matter of time before we will cease to attend them.

Now, dear one, the first way to derive benefit from a meeting is to give in your testimony if possible. It is true you may not be able to give in a long, loud testimony like some of the older Christians, nevertheless, get up and tell your little story and it will help you. In testifying do not try to imitate any one but be yourself. Do not feel that you must give in a long string of words about Tom, Dick and Harry in order to constitute testifying. To testify, means to tell where you are, and how you stand spiritually at the present moment. It will also greatly help you if you would say, "Amen," and, "Praise the Lord," occasionally when the other folks are testifying and when the minister is preaching. It will help you to keep free, help to lift things in the meeting and also be a source of encouragement to the one who is testifying or preaching.

2. To take up your cross and lead in prayer will also be of great help to your soul. In the beginning of the meeting is generally the best time for beginners to pray and get their testimony in, for if they defer it until the tide of the meeting rises the water will be too deep for converts to swim in. It is always best to step in at the shallowest point.

Now, dear one, when you are leading in prayer, do not allow yourself to get in bondage to the people and feel that you must say a lot of pretty, poetical words, neither should you be so greatly concerned about your verbs, adjectives, nouns, etc., but let your chief aim be to get hold of God. Do not pick up words and use them in prayer just because you heard some one else use them.

Once, while in the city of New Orleans, La., we heard a man say with quite a bit of earnestness in prayer one evening, "Lord, give me the gift of gab." This poor soul did not know what he was praying for. He no doubt used this word because he had heard some one else use it.

When you are praying do not form the habit of repeating the same sentence over and over. There are two things on the line of prayer which Jesus did not speak very favorably of. One is "Vain repetition" (Matt. 6:7), and the other is "Long prayers" (Luke 20:47).

3. Make it a point to be present at every service as far as possible. If you carelessly miss one service it will make it much easier to miss the next one. You must also train yourself to be prompt

and on time to meeting just as you are to your daily employment. To come in ten or fifteen minutes late does not make a good impression on others.

4. It is also a portion of your Christian duty to tithe your income, i.e., give the Lord ten cents out of every dollar you earn. What saith God's word on this subject?

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

If all professing Christians would pay their tithes the church would never have to appeal to the unsaved for financial assistance.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 19

THE CURSE OF DISOBEDIENCE

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:23).

There is no theme in the blessed Book of God which converts need to be impressed with more frequently than the "Curse of Disobedience." It matters not how thoroughly we are saved or how high up the ladder of piety we may ascend, our continuance in the way of God depends wholly and solely upon our constant obedience. There is no place along our Christian pilgrimage where past obedience will atone for present disobedience. The Word tells us: "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" (Ezek. 3:20).

It will be of infinite benefit to newly converted souls to frequently take a retrospect of the disastrous trail of disobedience and notice how it destroyed the unclouded bliss of Adam and Eve; drowned the old world; burned the cities of the plain; turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; buried Korah, Dothan and Abiram alive; slew Nadab and Abihu; stoned Achan; slew Balaam, the disobedient prophet; and wrecked Saul, the pioneer king of Israel, and brought disaster upon all who practiced it.

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Reader, your future success and happiness wholly depend upon your constant obedience to God.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 20 **GOING BACK TO THE ALTAR**

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel" (Gen. 35:1).

Since we are dwelling in the enemy's land and are not beyond the possibility of falling from grace, it may be well, right here, to hurriedly relate the experience of Jacob and how he first began to lose out in his soul. For it may be that the convert will some time in life pass through a similar circumstance.

We are quite sure, however, that Jacob's experience will somewhat put the convert on his guard and thus help him to withstand the wily foe.

"Bethel" was the place where Jacob first met God and saw the vision of angels and the ladder. In modern language we would call this Jacob's conversion. Many years after this occurrence God found it necessary to send him back to the starting-point, viz., back to the altar or mourner's bench.

Let us briefly notice a few things which might have made it necessary for God to send him back to the altar:

1. He had become so engaged with his herds, flocks, camels, asses, wives and children that he was losing relish and time for communion with God. It is true he was still professing, however, God saw that he was becoming tame and spiritually dry.

2. In moving so frequently from one country to another and from one nation to another and also coming in touch with so many kinds of false religion he was losing the spirit of exactness, carefulness and technicality in making deals, sales, bargains, promises, agreements and contracts. No doubt there were several little things creeping into his life which at one time he did not feel clear to admit.

(A) His keen eye, quick discernment and spiritual vision were becoming dim. He was forming too great an alliance with the uncircumcised nations about him. He was not so quick to detect sin and compromise as he had been in former years.

(B) He was losing that peculiarity and society which made him different from all other people. He was mixing, dealing and conversing so frequently and freely with carnal-minded people that he was becoming common and losing the savoring affect and holy reserve that once characterized his whole life.

(C) He was so busily engaged and living in such a constant whirl that it was difficult to hear the Spirit's still small voice or feel His check and gentle reproof.

3. On being in such an incessant chase for gain, he had somewhat neglected to keep the proper watch over the spiritual welfare of his family, therefore, he had allowed them to accumulate a variety of idols and heathen gods (Gen. 31:30).

4. He had also gotten slack in keeping strict watch over the children and had allowed them to compromise with the uncircumcised nations around.

It also appears that old Sister Leah had "let down," for she sent her oldest daughter Dinah out sight-seeing. We are unable to say whether it was to a county fair, church social, card or birthday party. However, her visit was not a successful one, for it gave rise to a tidal wave of shame and disgrace as wide as the world and as long as time. (Gen. 34:2)

5. The next thing which seemed to make it necessary for Jacob to go back to the altar was the fact that he was losing faith and confidence in the God of his fathers, shrinking reproach and cowering beneath the fear of man that bringeth a snare. "And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house" (Gen. 34:30).

This is the same old little faith devil who tempts God's people nowadays to join a lodge with sick benefits, and cling to the secret, oath-bound labor unions.

7. Still another fact that made it necessary for Jacob to "go up to Bethel" was that he might get quiet before God and carefully inspect his consecration and see if his all was still upon the altar.

Secondly, to take a careful retrospect over the road of former light and early-day convictions. Thirdly, to pray through and get fired up again.

Reader, if you will promptly obey the Holy Spirit and carefully walk in all the light which has shone upon your pathway you will never find it necessary to pack up and move back to Bethel.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 21 UNTIMELY MATRIMONY

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet 2:11).

In looking the field over there seems to be no end to the wily methods Satan has adopted to wreck the human race. His warehouse seems to contain devices fitted to every walk and condition of life.

A careful observation for many years has assisted us in arriving at the conclusion that untimely matrimony is one of Satan's most successful ways of destroying young converts. We are willing to admit that marriage in its proper place is one of God's greatest gifts to the human race, but on the other hand, when it is misused it often becomes a curse as boundless as eternity.

If Satan cannot impede the progress of a newly saved soul any other way he will fill his mind with the idea of getting married. There is scarcely anything that we could mention that will more quickly rob a soul of the spirit of prayer, destroy a heavenly mind and open the floodgates for a thousand temptations than this thought.

People who have walked with God for many years rarely ever cross this plot of the enchanter's ground without suffering some spiritual loss. Consequently our advice to those starting out in the Christian life is, defer this matter until you become more established in the things of God.

Nowadays, almost as soon as single persons get converted, a troop of matrimonial devils get on their track to marry them off. Previous to their getting saved these persons may have been old maids and bachelors for years, but as soon as they get saved and commence living for Jesus the devil will send some one around who is on the lookout for a good companion. Oftentimes he will send some fellow who will even go to the mourner's bench and pretend to get converted just to succeed in carrying off some good Christian girl.

Oh, may the Lord open our eyes on these lines so that we may protect our converts from these vultures of hell.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 22

HOW TO TREAT INSPIRATION

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art a hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strewed" (Matt 25:24).

There are two lamentable features found among the Christians of these days. One is, they are entirely too slow in recognizing their God-given inspirations; and secondly, too slothful in performing their divine appointments. In nearly every other profession in life the young man is quick to scent his calling and to immediately qualify himself for the performance of that profession, and when he has reached the age of twenty-five he is ready to launch his bark upon the sea of prospect with every sail unfurled to the breeze of worldly success. These men are so deeply interested in their particular profession that it becomes a part of them, therefore, they abandon all other pursuits and follow that one profession with delight. They believe that he who would succeed should be a man of one work.

But when it comes to gospel workers they are entirely too slow in catching on. There are numbers of religious people engaged in secular labor today that are in possession of gospel talent of the highest order and inspirations akin to those that heaved in the breast of St. Paul, but they are too slow in finding it out.

We often hear people pray and talk about the old-time power which "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." The modern Christians fail to realize that they have in their midst the very same seed that produced that mighty power in former days but they are too slothful to cultivate it.

May God help us and stir us up for Jesus' sake!

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 23

THE CHANGE FROM JOY TO SOUL-BURDEN

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:7).

There will hardly be an experience more perplexing and confusing to the newly converted than the sudden change through which he passes from joy and ecstasy to the heavy pressure of soul-burden. The joy dies so suddenly and the burden bursts in so vehemently that it frequently confuses the convert and causes him to think for a moment that he has lost his religion or in some way deeply grieved the Holy Spirit. He cannot understand why his sun of joy disappeared so suddenly and the landslide of depression settled upon him so heavily.

It is only a short time, however, before the blessed Comforter, like a loving mother, will whisper cheering words to his heart and also in some way let him know that his heaviness is not from disobedience, condemnation or guilt, but is soul-burden. What is meant by soul-burden is when the blessed Holy Spirit makes your heart heavy and sorrowful for the unsaved. The burden may sometimes rest upon your heart so heavily that you may fall prostrate upon the floor and besides not be able to utter a single word but groan within. This is what the apostle meant in Romans 8:26, when he made the following remarks:

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

This is what it means for Zion to travail. Sometimes this burden and inward groaning will come upon us in the early part of the day for sinners who will be at the altar that night. Of course, we may not know they are to be there, neither will we always know what we are burdened for, but the blessed Holy Ghost who dwells within knows, hence, it is He that prays and makes intercessions through us. Those who have been recently saved or sanctified are quite often confused during revival meetings. They cannot understand why they do not have the same degree of joy and blessing that they had before the meeting began. They, of course, are beginners and have not awakened to the fact that when soul-burden, soul-concern and the spirit of intercession prevail in a meeting, the flow of joy for the present is stayed. This explains also why the saints are not so jubilant and joyful during revival times as they usually are before and after.

This difference is also noticeable in prayer and praise meetings. We rarely ever see the Christians as happy and joyful in a prayer-meeting as they are in a praise and testimony meeting. The difference is this, in the prayer-meeting the spirit of intercession and soul-travail prevails, while in the praise and testimony meeting the spirit of encouragement and holy merriment prevails.

Another fact worthy of the convert's notice is this, a prayer-meeting is more rudely opposed and withstood by the powers of darkness than a praise or testimony meeting. You will find it much easier

to go to sleep in a prayer-meeting than in a business meeting. You will also find it much easier to remain awake while reading the evening paper than while reading the Bible.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 24 WHAT TO EXPECT

"Yea, and all that will live godly In Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 8:12).

In casting a hurried glance over the highway of holy living clear back to the time of pious Abel, we see no place where the world had any esteem or appreciation for a godly person. There is a trail of the blood of the saints, so to speak, all the way from the body of the martyr Abel clear down to the present day. The way of the Christian is by no means strewn with flowers but as the apostle tells us, we "through much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven."

I want to mention five characters found in the Bible who represent five classes of persecutors which the convert may expect to meet on his homeward march.

1. Criticizing, accusing Bildad, the Shuhite. We are sorry to say that all the Bildads are not dead but are still to be found here and there to find fault, censure, blame and torment the saints of God.

2. Slandering, talebearing Doeg, the Edomite. There are also a host of this man's relations still on earth. It may be a little difficult to locate them, however, unless you get into a neighborhood where God's people reside. There is hardly any doubt about finding several of these holiness-hating, abusing vultures of hell, sailing around and prying in, trying to scent some carrion of ill news and slander.

3. Old, predicting, threatening, frightening Sanballat and Tobiah. These two characters are also still around to preach discouragement, insanity, poorhouse and potter's field to newly saved souls who are giving up the world and taking the way of the Lord.

4. Deserting surface hearers. This class of people will come to your meeting and declare they are going to take the track and stand by the work of the Lord, but as soon as you deliver a clean-cut, radical sermon, denouncing lodges, theaters, circuses, skating rinks, ball games, county fairs, church socials and entertainments, also the wearing of feathers, flowers, silks, satins, jewelry and costly apparel, these people will leave you like a flock of blackbirds.

5. The self-conceited Pharisees. These fellows will come around posing as gospel workers. They will profess to believe and teach the same doctrine as yourself, but from a spiritual standpoint they are as dead as the bones in the valley of Ezekiel's vision. They can sit under the most scorching, heart-searching sermon, and from all appearances are no more affected than Satan, the arch-fiend of hell.

Reader, as you run up the highway, take heed that you be not influenced by these five characters.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 25

THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" (Heb. 12:5).

As earthly parents sometimes find it necessary to reprove, correct and chastise their children for acts of disobedience, just so does our heavenly Father. We read in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

Where parents adopt only two or three methods of performing this unpleasant task, God has adopted several. Now, since His dealings are so peculiar and somewhat difficult to be understood by beginners, we feel impressed to describe to the convert, in brief, some of the many methods God uses in chastening His children. In the following lines will be found some of the most prominent ones used by Him in performing this essential manifestation of His love.

1. If we are careless, talkative and prayerless during the day, He will reprove us by causing us to have a dry time in the meeting that night. He has a unique way of putting us to bed without our supper right in the love-feast and testimony meeting.

2. Sometimes when the contribution box is being passed the Lord will say to put in this or that amount, or subscribe this or that amount for the foreign missionary work. If we fail to obey, we may have to pay out twice that amount for medicines, dentistry, plumbing work, etc.

3. Our heavenly Father in His mercy may at times reprove His children for self-exposure, supping late, overtaxing their strength and dressing too thinly, by permitting them to contract a disease and thus suffer the consequences therefrom. No doubt this is why many do not speedily recover who are anointed and prayed for. They should repent and ask God's forgiveness for their carelessness and neglect.

The good Book says, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11).

4. The Lord's way of reproving extravagant and slack-handed people is to permit them to get into pressing financial circumstances just after carelessly and thoughtlessly spending money for needless adornment, vases, needless wall pictures or a graphophone. So many times after the writer has been slack-handed with money, the Lord reproves him by sending him a financial famine for "many days."

5. His way of reproving parents for compromising with their children and not properly training them when young is to permit them when grown up to oppose, ridicule and desert them. We have seen children who were not trained when small to respect the family prayer service after becoming

young men and women utterly refuse to bow, and, what is worse still, persist in walking back and forth through the room during the time of family devotion. Reader, remember Eli.

6. Quite often God's way of reproofing a man for hastily buying a farm and moving his family out of touch with the Christian people and religious services is to cause him to lose his health, lose every dollar besides and bury one or two children. Many times it takes all of this to break the spell of moneymaking and prevent his falling headlong into perdition.

7. Still again, when a person has been indiscreet and not careful in abstaining from all appearances of evil regarding the opposite sex God sometimes sharply reproves him by permitting an evil report to be circulated.

8. God's way of administering reproof to those who refuse to obey the prompting to sing a certain song or deliver a certain message while in the meeting is to give both message and blessing to the person in the next seat or across the aisle and at the same time leave the disobedient one dry and unblessed. Take heed, reader, that no man take your blessing in the meeting or crown in heaven.

9. When Christian people grow slack in paying their tithes and commence using the Lord's money for their personal benefit, He quite often reproves them by permitting the house to be burglarized, the purse to be lost, the crop to fail, or a heavy drop to come in the market prices.

10. His method of reproofing us for taking the glory to ourselves when He has helped us to pray a good prayer, give in a helpful testimony or deliver a powerful sermon, is to let us get into the brush and fail the next time.

11. One of the methods God uses in reproofing people who backslide, but get reclaimed at a later date, is to withhold or mitigate some special gift or grace which they once had. Of course they may be more free and blessed than they were before backsliding, yet all along they will be conscious of a certain loss which they may never regain on this side of the gates of death. The withheld grace may have been of the following, excessive soul-burden, quick, spiritual discernment, sublime revelations in the Scripture, the gift of persuasiveness, a high-class melting and tenderness of spirit, and a heaven-born tact to help souls through at the altar.

God may restore many of your former gifts and graces but may withhold some choice one as a reproof for your backsliding.

This loss, however, may not be visible to another being in the world except yourself.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 26

PLANTED IN THE PROPER SOIL

"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13:20, 21).

In the above text we are reminded of the importance of sowing grain in the proper soil. Not only sowing it but placing it in the proper soil. Grain will germinate in soil where it will not develop and mature. Some years ago we noticed oats sprouting up in the body of an express wagon. We are all ready to admit that no oats could be borne under such unfavorable circumstances. It is the same with people who get converted. They can get converted in places and under conditions where they cannot remain and be fruitful. We have an acquaintance living in Northern Michigan who was soundly converted in a saloon in the city of Chicago yet there is no one prepared to say that the saloon would be the place in which to remain and be fruitful.

A man may get soundly converted in a church that endorses tobacco, lodges, entertainments, circuses, baseball, Sunday work and sinning religion, but after he is converted he cannot remain there and keep saved. If he would grow and be fruitful he must obey the injunction which reads as follows: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17, 18).

We notice when the Apostle Paul got converted he did not connect himself with an unclean, Christ-rejecting, sin-pleading, holiness-opposing church, but "joined himself to the saints." This has no reference to joining the Mormon, Adventist or Come-outers, but any clean, orthodox church where the Holy Scriptures are taught and practiced.

Reader, you can no more keep saved and be fruitful in a worldly church than a fish can live on dry land or a snowball abide the fire.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 27 "THE EVIL DAY"

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13).

Since the convert is in a new country and has never gone over the road before, it is quite necessary that he should be informed of the hills, valleys, sloughs and sunbaked plains that skirt his homeward path.

Doubtless the words forming the title of this chapter sound a little strange to our reader. However, we will proceed to explain what we mean by this strange expression. Some evening you will retire feeling as peaceful and happy as a lark, while the spirit of prayer heaves in your soul like the waves of the sea. You will spend the night as restful as an infant upon its mother's breast but on awaking in the morning your first discovery will be that the spirit of prayer has somehow slipped away and no matter how you pelt away and try to get hold of God it will all seem fruitless.

You will also find yourself pressed and strangely tempted within and as you go about the house you will discover that wife, husband, children or roommate are more of a trial to you than usual. You will feel so strangely pressed and tempted that you will find yourself not wanting to speak or be spoken to. I do not mean that you will yield to this feeling for if so it would grieve the Spirit and make you a backslider. However, this is the way the temptation will strangely affect you. As you go forward with the home or business duties of the day you will notice from all appearances that everything is going wrong and working against you. Perhaps the clock has stopped and you are late getting up, wife is slow with breakfast, the baby is unusually cross, the children have misplaced your hat, you just missed your regular car and on reaching the office you discover that you have left the key in your other trousers, etc., etc. This is a day in which Satan is permitted to sift you as wheat is sifted and thoroughly test your religion to see whether it will keep you patient, prayerful and victorious or, on the other hand, if you will grow touchy and crabbed and commence to scold the children, short talk the office girl, wear a cross and sour look, jerk the horses, kick the cow, shake the baby and slam the door in the peddler's face.

The secret of retaining the victory on this noted day lies in not talking much, taking time to answer every one kindly, closing the door softly, leading the cow gently, promptly repelling every suggestion of Satan and also watching unto prayer continually. This will bring you out at the close of the day without the smell of fire, wind or water upon your garments.

Therefore on attending the evening prayer meeting God will lift the pressure, restore the spirit of prayer and fill your soul with glory.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 28

BEGINNING THE DAY WITH GOD

"When I awake, I am still with Thee" (Psalm 189:18).

A careful observation of more than twenty years has thoroughly convinced us that if a person would live a real Christian life and have power with God and man, it will be necessary for him to spend some special time in the performance of the pious employment of waiting upon God. There are many who would not think of committing an open sin who grow cold and backslide through yielding to indolence and slackness. Doubtless ninety per cent of the present-day backsliders can trace the cause of their downfall to this point.

Just as the engineer finds it necessary to replenish his engine with coal, water, sand and oil before leaving the roundhouse, just so it is necessary for the child of God to take on new supplies of grace and glory before going forth to meet the world. Many an honest, well-meaning soul has lost the victory, yielded to temptation and failed during the day simply because he did not take time to coal up before leaving the roundhouse in the morning.

We will submit a few suggestions on how to begin the day with God.

1. If it be possible and consistent rise in time to give yourself one hour for secret prayer and meditation. It is true you will find Satan right at your side to withstand you and fill your mind with a thousand cares but you can gain the victory by withstanding him and pressing onward.

2. You need not grow discouraged or think it strange because you do not have the same degree of fervency in prayer each morning, neither should you be alarmed through not being able to break through in the same manner each time.

3. On awaking in the morning let Jesus be the first one you enter into conversation with. Do not chat or gossip with the roommate or look out on the street before prayer, if so it will cripple your spirit of prayer besides cause worldly cares and business responsibilities to crowd into your mind.

4. Be sure to take sufficient time to prayerfully and carefully read at least one chapter in the Bible each morning. It is far more necessary that your soul should be fed upon the spiritual bread than your body upon the natural. It would also be found helpful to keep a Bible or Testament with you to read during the spare moments of the day.

5. On starting out each morning, resolve by the grace of God to live a more prayerful, watchful and holy life than you did the day before. Strive to make stepping-stones of your past blunders and mistakes, also strive to live as godly and circumspectly every day as you do at church on Sunday.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 29

WHAT TO DO WHEN TIED UP

"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" (Job. 23:8, 9).

One does not go far up the royal highway before awaking to the fact that a thoughtless word or deed will instantly bring darkness and take away spiritual liberty. It does not have to be some great act of misdemeanor, but a trifle.

On reflecting a moment, no doubt, we can all remember a certain time and circumstance when we expressed our opinion concerning a matter, delivered a message, gave a reproof, made an excuse, mailed a letter, opposed an individual, closed a bargain, made a promise or cast an uncharitable look and immediately after doing so the blessed Holy Spirit put us under arrest and proceeded to place the handcuffs of distress and darkness upon our souls.

We did not fully realize, however, how tightly we were bound until we got to meeting where the pilgrims were happy and rejoicing. We, of course, proceeded to take part in the services by singing, clapping our hands, patting our feet, saying amen and also by testifying. But in spite of all this we felt inwardly bound. Our heart and spiritual nature would not respond or beat with the time of the meeting or with our external motion. At last we awoke to the fact that we were really tied up and reluctantly took down our flag of external religious hurrah.

Then with the telescope of the soul we looked this way and that, we pondered this and pondered that, we also reflected on where we had been, whom we had met, what we had done and what we had said during the last twenty-four hours. But in spite of this hasty retrospect we failed to locate the thing that was holding us fast. Finally, we betook ourselves to prayer but could not shake off those viewless fetters. We read the Bible, sang hymns, visited the sick, gave to the poor and fasted but none of these things would disperse the gloom or break the fetters. A sacred covenant had been broken, a sacrifice polluted, strange fire offered upon the altar, the Spirit grieved and communication with heaven cut off.

"How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!
Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers,
Have all lost their sweetness to me."

I will attempt to inform the convert how to locate the trouble and bring his soul out of, prison.

Closely, carefully and prayerfully look the field of past conduct over and see if you at any place yielded to self-will and thus let your will come across the will of God. It may be that you at some

point said, "I will not do this," or, "I will not do that," when requested to perform some duty. In doing so you forgot, however, that you were not your own and could not have your way at any point only as it harmonized with God's will and way. Hundreds of Christians get tied up at this point.

2. Search carefully your consecration and see if you have taken even the smallest thing off of the altar. See if your consecration on all lines is as complete as it was the day you were filled and is as perfect as you hope it to be on your dying day. Of course, this includes home, family, money, reputation and all, for time and a whole eternity.

3. Get quiet before God and look the field over and see if you at any point have trifled with temptation or gone too near that one thing about which the Spirit has so often reproved you.

4. Reflect carefully and see if you have at any time rushed ahead of the Spirit and taken matters into your own hands.

5. Carefully examine the back track of conversation and see if you at any place strained the truth, exaggerated, used a slang phrase or byword, made a false impression or expressed yourself in a proud, pompous manner when being introduced to some worldly person.

Now as you prayerfully run the keyboard of past conduct the Holy Spirit will press the button when you reach the thing that is tying you up.

It does not always necessarily mean that you have committed a sin in this transaction since sin is a willful transgression but the Spirit is using this method to make you more careful and watchful in the future. Now when you have succeeded in locating the trouble, you must make no delay in adjusting it and asking God's forgiveness, which will be freely granted. However, you must sincerely promise Him that you will try to be careful and never grieve Him at that point again.

Almost instantly after this is done you will discover that the fetters have slipped off, the darkness is dispersed and your soul is again in Edenic bloom.

Always remember, reader, whenever you awake to the fact that something is tying you up, go immediately over the track of past conduct for the last twenty-four hours and adjust and tighten up everything you think might be causing the trouble.

This will save you from many a joyless meeting, dry testimony, heavy heart and powerless sermon.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 30

SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE TREES

Among the many admirable and attractive pieces of divine workmanship seen in the world today there is hardly one to be found more instructive and inspiring than a tall, majestic tree, as it lifts its bushy head above the woody maze and stretches out its beautiful boughs to the gentle breeze. There is no marvel that this piece of high-class workmanship is so frequently spoken of in the Scriptures. The tree seems to have held such a prominent place in the divine mind that He used it in testing the obedience and fortitude of man: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16, 17).

In the first Psalm God also likens the godly to a tree planted by the rivers of water, and in Matt. 3:10, John likens a whole generation to trees. He spoke as follows: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

Now, reader, since a tree is such a common thing and is seen almost everywhere, permit me to call your attention to a few facts about it which will no doubt be of great help in your Christian life if properly applied.

1. The first thought suggested by this noble piece of divine workmanship is as follows: A tree is a great instructor and also an object lesson of what can be accomplished through time, perseverance and patience. The tree is first seen a tiny twig peering out of a decayed acorn. But after weathering the sunshine, cold and rain for a century or more, it is developed into a hundred foot, giant oak, capable for boat and bridge material. Just so it is with religious principles and holy aspirations, which though small in their beginning, if properly cultivated will develop the converts into giants and giantesses for the cause of Jesus Christ. Like the oak, they may be a long time reaching the goal, however, let us continue to watch, wait, pray and believe for them, for "patience is a plaster for all sores." "All comes right to him that can wait."

Another singular thing about the tree is this, it obtains all of its strength and supplies from an unseen source. It does not depend upon the underbrush, weeds or grasses about it, neither does it depend upon the morning dew or summer showers, but keeps alive through all kinds of changes and droughts. So it is with the child of God. He is not sustained by the summer showers of society, pleasure, wealth and prosperity, but the water of life unceasingly flows into his soul and thus keeps it flourishing all the year. The worldlings often wonder why he does not grow discouraged and dry up, but he can not while the sparkling water of life continues to flow into his soul.

3. A third interesting feature about a tree is seen in the fact that it is never affected by the various changes of the weather, but bears unflinchingly the bleak winds, the snow gales and also the torrid glare of the summer sun. Nothing seems to affect or retard its onward course toward maturity.

Equally so should it be with every child of God and heir of heaven. No created thing should ever be permitted to impede his onward march to the city of God. They should exclaim with the lion-hearted apostle: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:24; 21:13).

4. The tree annually clothed in its beautiful green robe also strikingly reminds us of the thoughtfulness and accuracy of our heavenly Father in providing and caring for His children. Notwithstanding his attention being given to millions of other matters in the universe, yet He never forgets to in due time beautifully decorate the tree in its robe of glossy green. Think, reader, if He takes such special care of trees, grasses and sparrows, how can He forget His children for whom Christ died? It is true, Satan often tries to make us think so, but it cannot be, for He has beautifully said through the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, I have graven these upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isa. 49:16).

The next lesson of value taught by the tree is seen in the way it yields its substance to all who may apply. It cheerfully furnishes shade and protection for the bleating sheep, the lowing kine and singing birds, besides, it stands daily with outstretched arm offering cheerful assistance to all who chance to pass that way. What a reflection and sharp rebuke upon those who turn the widow and orphans from their door unfed, close their ear to the lamentable cry of the poor, and also suffer the homeless beggar to freeze in the street. Think of a man with heaps of cankered gold in the bank while his fellow creature perishes with want. Of course such a man is no more a Christian than he is an angel, neither is he any more in the way that leads to heaven than the devil.

6. The next interesting feature about the tree which is full of significance is, it soars above all other created things and abides in a pure, healthy atmosphere where it gets the purest dew and freshest air the whole year 'round. We are glad to remark right here that this is also the actual experience of every sanctified Christian in the world. He, too, has learned the secret of mounting above the fog of creeds, parties, greed, worldly ambition and carnal pleasure and is living where he enjoys continually the pure buxom air of Beulah Land.

7. A seventh noticeable as well as interesting fact about the tree which should teach us a few points of interest is this: It never makes itself monotonous to the observers by wearing the same colored gown the year around, but changes from green to yellow and from yellow to red and from red to a ginger brown. It would be a grand thing if some of our preachers and gospel workers would take a few lessons from the tree on this subject and thus avoid so much monotony in their prayers, testimony, exhortations and sermons. They remind us of the old country musician who had but the one tune, therefore, as a result, he used it for the waltz, two-step, round dance and what not. No matter what the people called for, he always struck up the same tune.

8. The tree does not move from forest to forest every week or two neither does it go off of duty but is always at its post; therefore, for this reason it serves as a fitting and reliable way-mark, land-mark and state-line. Would this not be an excellent lesson for those Christians to learn who are so vacillating, unstable and full of changes? For with their present experiences we do not know where to find them, whether with the Methodist, Baptist, Come-outer or the devil.

9. There is such unity and heart to heart fellowship existing between the trees that oftentimes after the woodsman has succeeded in cutting one clear off of its stump, it remains standing upright from the fact that its fellow trees lend a helping hand and thus prevent it from going down. Oh, that God's people, instead of censuring and criticizing an unfortunate brother or sister, would rally around him with outstretched arms of prayer, love, sympathy and financial aid, and thus prevent his falling into the slough of misfortune, discouragement, sin and despair.

10. The next profound lesson taught by the tree is how uniquely it extracts great blessings and benefits from the storms and hurricanes that come against it. Instead of capsizing it, the storms only loosen the earth around its roots and thus cause them to push downward and get a tighter grip around the rocks. No doubt every farmer has long since realized the fact when trying to uproot an oak stump that it possessed more territory than it appeared to at first sight.

God's children should make a similar use of temptations, accidents, misfortunes and fiery trials. Instead of becoming frustrated and upset by them, they should go deeper in God and get a tighter hold of the horns of the altar.

11. Finally: A tree is also a beautiful reminder and divine pledge of the coming resurrection of the just. We all have noticed how dead, dry and void of beauty it appears during the winter months; but when spring puts in her appearance and the sap begins to rise, it puts forth a beauty in foliage, flower and fragrance akin to those of heaven. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. As we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:42-44; 15:49).

Reader, think of these frail, decaying bodies arising some day radiant with light and beauty. "all glorious and immortal."

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 31

BRINGING CHRISTIANITY INTO DISREPUTE

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of" (Rom. 14:16).

It is a well-known fact that no matter how piously one may live, he will never obtain the confidence of every one or ever reach a plane where he is exempt from criticism. Jesus Christ, the immaculate Son of God, was the purest and holiest being that this world ever knew and yet He was censured and found fault with all the way from the cradle to the cross.

It is also true, in many instances, that the Christian people give their enemies great reason to criticize and censure them. Let us briefly observe some of the most common ways of bringing Christianity into disrepute.

We do so when we testify that the way of the Lord is a hard, up-hill way, that the cross is so dreadfully heavy, etc. All such statements are flat contradictions to the Word of God, for it says: "The way of transgressors [not the child of God] is hard" (Prov. 13:15). Jesus said: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). The Psalmist said: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). Isaiah said: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

Another way of bringing Christianity into disrepute is for those who profess to be Christians to let the unsaved see them looking back, brooding over the things they left behind or everlastingly talking about the great sacrifices they made to become a Christian. All such conduct makes a bad impression upon the unsaved. If salvation is worth anything it is worth everything. When we consider what we gave up from eternity's view-point it is but worthless trash.

Still another way of bringing Christianity into disrepute is to rebuild the things we once destroyed or to return to the things which we once renounced and counted sinful.

It is to be borne in mind that what was once light is always light. There is nothing that will shake the confidence of the unsaved in religion more than to see one of its adherents return to a practice which he once preached and testified against. Paul said: "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (Gal. 2:18).

For one's conduct or conversation when at home or abroad to, in any way, contradict the testimony which he delivers in class meeting on Sunday is another way of disgracing religion. Our lives should be so godly and circumspect at home during the week that our unsaved loved ones will be compelled to believe our testimonies on Sunday. It is a bad sign for wife to hang her head or gnaw the corner of her handkerchief when husband is giving in his testimony. It is also equally as bad for husband

and the children to begin looking out of the corner of their eyes while wife zealously testifies of the victories of the past week.

It also becomes quite difficult for little Johnny and Mary to not class Mamma in with the Ananias and Sapphira family after hearing a heart-searching sermon on lying in view of the fact that she had promised them several punishments during the past week but had failed to fulfill her promise. They also found it difficult to forgive her for hoodwinking them with the old Santa Claus and Bogy-man lie which she had been telling them for years.

It also greatly affects the cause of Christ for its adherents to engage too frequently in soliciting finance from the unsaved. Such imprudence has caused the man of God — the mouthpiece of the Spirit — the watchman on Zion's holy hill, to become common in the eyes of the world and be branded scavengers and beggars. May God hasten the day when all His children will pay their tithes and cease to beg corn from the Philistines or go down to Egypt for help!

The habit of constantly borrowing money is not a good one to admit into one's Christian life. We have known people who make a practice of borrowing year in and year out, so to speak. In a certain city, where we once served as pastor, a prominent business man, who was a stranger to us, came to the altar one Sunday morning and prayed through and during the same week one of these borrowing vultures, who spied him at the altar for the first time, went to his office and asked for a loan of nearly a hundred dollars.

Adorning ourselves slovenly and untidily is also another way of bringing Christianity into disrepute. We admit that wearing jewelry, feathers, flowers, laces, silks, satins and other needless adornments are forbidden in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet 3:3), yet this does not give us license to be untidy. We should be patterns of neatness, cleanliness and plainness.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 32

ADMINISTERING AND RECEIVING REPROOF

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (Psalm 141:5).

One of the surest signs that we are progressing in the divine life and growing in grace is that we have a hearty relish for reproof and also retain a high esteem for those who reprove us.

Reproof is one of the greatest helps to holy living found in the catalog of the Christian's experience for three reasons.

1. It serves as a mirror to reflect the full image of ourselves. No one can see himself as others do, no one can detect his faults as quickly as another, therefore, it should be considered a great kindness when a friend or even an enemy has courage enough to call our attention to them.

No man becomes displeased with his neighbor for informing him of the fact that his house is on fire or that the cattle are destroying his corn; neither should we become displeased over being told of those faults which are destroying our Christian influence.

2. Being reproved by a fellow creature, often, times, helps to confirm what God has been trying to tell us for some time. The Holy Spirit deals so tenderly and gently with us that it usually takes quite a while for us to fully understand what He means.

3. Reproof to the Christian is what the red lights and danger signals are to the railroad man. It is considered a serious crime for an engineer to heedlessly run his train past a red light. It is by far more dangerous for a human soul to heedlessly rush by the faithful warnings of a Christian friend. Solomon said: "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

In view of the foregoing remarks it can readily be seen that reproof is of no small value to the earnest Christian. However, it would be well right here to submit to the convert a few simple rules on how to administer and receive reproof, for, even though it be an excellent oil, there is great danger of it working harm if improperly administered.

We should never reprove a person while he is a trial or temptation to us, if so, we are quite likely to manifest the wrong spirit or either say more than is strictly necessary. Many a Christian has lost the inner victory by having too much to say to the person with whom he was tried.

It is not using the best judgment to reprove a person while he is tempted or undergoing pressure. Even worldly physicians, when compelled to perform an operation on a patient, usually select a time when the patient is strongest and feeling the most cheerful.

Before proceeding to administer reproof to a fellow creature we should be sure that he deserves it. There is hardly anything that will confuse a convert more quickly than to reprove him for something of which he is not guilty. It would also be well before proceeding to reprove a fellow creature to look the field of personal conduct over from (a) to (z) and see if you yourself are in any way guilty of the same thing.

"Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Rom. 2:21,22)

Reproof should never be administered in public unless the offense was committed in public. Even then, great wisdom is to be used. Jesus said, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (Matt. 18:15).

Reproof should be administered in a mild manner, a gentle tone of voice and a sweet, lowly spirit and never in a blustery, denunciatory manner. Solomon said, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

Reproof should be received in the same spirit that we receive commendation and applause, namely, without self-defense or retaliation, but thankfully and humbly.

James said: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 33 SEED THOUGHTS

"Who of us believe unwaveringly that for every idle word we speak, we shall have to give an account thereof in the day of judgment?"

"We exercise faith and confidence in frail, dying men who are subject to various contingencies and on every feature of whose existence vanity and uncertainty are written. But when we are called on to believe in and rely on the word of Almighty God who cannot lie, who has all power in heaven and on earth, the immutable Jehovah, who is seated on the throne of heaven and occupies the earth as His footstool, and who will forever sway the scepter of eternity, whose love and tender mercy is as boundless as His power; when He speaks and makes us a promise, when He gives us His bond and endorses it with His oath and seals it with His own Son's blood and delivers it in the presence of a cloud of honorable witnesses — we begin to make excuse. Do we not by such dishonorable conduct and shameful unbelief, write our own condemnation in characters of blood?"

God's heart is full of love, whilst the face of His providence is full of frowns. We are always to measure Him by the promises of His word and not by the aspect of His providence."

"Pleasure is a boundless ocean calm and smooth near the shore but at a distance ever agitated with outrageous storms. He that keeps within sight of land may be safe and happy but he that ventures is in danger of being lost."

"To suppose that persons who are favored with the privileges of Christ's Church and the written Word of God, can enter into heaven without measuring up to the appointed standard, would be to impeach the character of Almighty God and cast a veil of deformity over His attributes."

"It would afford little comfort to the man of refined feelings who was compelled to suspect that his wife's affection for him was not as pure and ardent as it should be, were she to say, 'I intend to love you fervently just before I die.' Reader, this is what people mean when they say, 'I will get sanctified at death.'"

"Were a man who is worth millions of money to see his steward casting his money or grain into the fire or river, he would instantly discharge him in disgrace. Can we honestly say that we are not spending one cent for anything superfluous or unnecessary? If we can not, then we have thrown our Master's money into the fire or river before His eyes."

"If thou rememberest that thou art in the body only to be holy, that thou standest upon the brink of Death, Resurrection and Judgment, and that these great things will suddenly come upon thee, like a thief in the night, thou wilt see a vanity in all the gifts of Fortune, greater than any words can express."

"Humility, meekness, heavenly affection, devotion, charity and a contempt of the world are all internal qualities of personal holiness; they constitute the spirit and temper of religion which is required for its own excellence and is therefore of constant and eternal obligation."

"Before yielding to sin reflect upon the following thoughts. In yielding, you renounce the eternal love of God, you forfeit your share in heaven and expose your soul to all hell's torments. The sins which seem very small now will appear as great as mountains when you reach the other shore."

"Honor, rank and dignities are like saffron, which thrive best and grow more plentifully for being trodden under foot."

"There is as much difference between pride and decency as there is between light and darkness or vice and virtue. Decency is an exalted virtue essential to the Christian character. Pride is a vice of the blackest hue, a soul damning sin. If we feel mortified or uneasy when we are in the presence of those who are richly dressed, because our apparel is inferior to theirs, it discovers a disease, a wound inflicted by sin, viz., Pride. The spiritual heads and horns of the beast, may refer to the principles and passions of our fallen nature imbibed from the great Dragon, that furious beast, i. e., the Devil. The heads may be thus designated: 1. Pride. 2. Unbelief. 3. Idolatry. 4. Superstition. 5. Dissimulation. 6. Ambition. 7. Lust. The horns' may refer to Cruelty, Anger, Malice, Hatred, Envy, Bigotry, Strife, Contention, Sedition and Love of Applause."

"True resignation consists in a thorough conformity to the whole will of God: who wills and does all, excepting sin, which comes to pass in the world. In order to do this we have only to embrace all events, good and bad, as His will."

"We are to bear with those we can not amend, and be content with offering them to God. This is true resignation."

"It is hardly credible of how great consequence before God the smallest things are, and what great inconveniences sometimes follow those which appear to be light faults."

"To continual watchfulness and prayer ought to be added continual employment. For grace fills a vacuum as well as nature, and the devil fills whatever God does not fill."

"When we have received any favor from God we ought to retire, if not into our closets, into our hearts and say: 'I come, Lord, to restore to Thee what Thou hast given; and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness.'"

"It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this, the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, 'Have you received this or that blessing?' if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way and putting them on a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but

more of that love described in the thirteenth of Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom."

"Show thyself so lowly, such a little child, that every one may go over thee and tread thee as the dirt of the streets under their feet."

"Think of nothing but the salvation of thy soul; care for nothing but the things of God. Keep thyself as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth who hath nothing to do with the affairs of this world."

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 34 **THE STARTING PROMISE**

"And He said certainly I will be with thee" (Exod. 3:21).

The above is the promise God made Moses when sending him to Egypt to lead out the children of Israel. This no doubt served as a great stay and staff for him in all of his after years.

We have all likely learned the value of a special divine promise. The promises are all valuable, but what I mean by a special promise is one that comes to us under peculiar circumstances, similar to the following. We are getting ready to take a long trip, say to California, and before going to the railroad station, kneel in silent prayer to ask God for His direction and protection. On arising and opening the Bible our eyes fall upon the following promise: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5). On the other hand, we may be undergoing persecution, and are beset by foes on every side, when these soul-reviving words fall upon our ears.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." When receiving such promises, at these times and places, we grasp them and stand more firmly upon them than we do the ordinary promises.

Now let the convert on starting out in the Christian warfare accept the promise, "Certainly I will be with thee," for his stay and staff, all the way to heaven. No matter how dark the way may sometimes become, or how the winds of hell may blow, or the raging foe persecute.

Let us briefly grind up the word "Certainly" and see what it contains.

It contains the following: "Positively I will be with thee," "Without doubt or question I will be with thee," "Without failure I will be with thee." Reader, there are no grounds here for doubt or dismay.

Let us next see how much it will mean for GOD to be with you.

1. The first thing implied is that you have a sleepless guard with you to protect you by day and by night. Notice what David said about Him, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber." "The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee" (Psa. 121:2, 6, 7).

2. God will also be a refuge from the many storms and head winds which you will meet on your homeward march. What the caves, rocks and sand pits are to the weary traveler on the eastern deserts God has promised to be to His people. Isaiah, looking down the line of time through his prophetic telescope, got a glimpse of Jesus and what He would be to the human family, and broke out in the

following language: "And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2).

3. The next thing implied in God being with you means that you do not have to keep yourself or live the life in your own strength, but He promises to be your upholder. Listen to His precious words, "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10). "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19).

4. A fourth thing implied in God being with you is this: He is your Counselor and Guide. Oh, how difficult it would be to keep out of Satan's by-paths and pitfalls, stationed along the way, without this unerring guide! We are thankful, however, for the following promises: "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psa. 32:8). "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

5. Still another thing included in God being with you is, He is an exhaustless supply. The Israelites, while traveling through the wilderness, did not have to send here or there for supplies, but God was all they needed. Paul said, "But my God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

6. A final thing implied in the promise is that you have in your midst the Great Physician, who is equal for every malady that the devil may inflict upon you. Long ago He made the following statement and it holds good today: "For I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. 15:26). "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psa. 103:2, 3).

Reader, let us go forward in the power and strength of Jehovah, fearing nothing but sin.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 35

WHY SOME ARE MORE SPIRITUAL THAN OTHERS

"But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matt. 13:8).

Jesus here compares the willing, responsive heart to grain sown in good soil. How simple and yet suggestive are all of the parables of the Savior.

You will notice that the good seed in good ground did not all yield the same amount of grain, but varied considerable.

In this chapter I shall attempt to explain to the convert why some Christians are more spiritual than others.

There are but few people who realize the fact that there is a vast difference between spiritual fruit and gifts. A person may be endued with the gift of faith, the gift of wisdom, the gift of discernment and many others, and yet be greatly wanting in love, joy, peace, etc., etc. It is often the case that a humble laundress or scrub girl brings forth more of the fruit of the Spirit than a great speaker or gifted theologian.

In closely observing the text, you will notice the cause of this unequal grain bearing was neither in the ground nor the seed. The text infers that both the seed and the ground were good. However, we must all frankly admit that there was a cause for this shortage somewhere. We must also relieve our minds of the thought that the Lord of the harvest was as well pleased with this shortage as He was with the hundredfold grain. No farmer is as much delighted with the short nubbins of corn, small potatoes and dwarfed pumpkins as he is with the well developed ones. Of course, he makes himself satisfied, but he would rather they had all been large, well-developed ones.

Now in order to fully obtain the truth right here, it will be necessary for us to briefly paraphrase a field, and thus become familiar ourselves with some of the conditions and environments which frequently dwarf good seed in good ground. By this method I believe we will be more capable of grasping the simple truth contained in the lesson.

The first thing that will affect grain or vegetables planted in good ground is, the shade of a tree. We have all, no doubt, noticed, while in the country, how slender and dwarfed the grain, potatoes and vegetables were which grew under a tree. The cause for this was that the tree prevented them from getting the full benefit of the sun. In the Christian life, while some people are extremely devout, conscientious and careful, there are others who allow themselves to be brought under the influence of some apparently innocent thing or practice which keeps their sun of joy about half eclipsed all the time. Just as the grain under the tree fails to get any thing but the morning and evening sun, just so

these souls fail to live beneath the meridian blaze of the joy and peace that crowns a fully abandoned life.

The first way we will notice in which one's life can become shaded and dwarfed is, by trimming too close to worldliness and shallow religion. Yet another way is by making a few hasty moves or speaking a few rash, hasty words, and thereby getting out of immediate touch with God. So many times workers have been out of touch on this line, and thereby let many an opportunity of doing good slip by. Perhaps an opportunity to pray some soul through or give a timely word of encouragement, but as they were dry, beclouded and tied up in their own soul, the opportunity was lost forever. Oh, dear one, always keep out into the clear, undimmed favor of God! Do not allow any person or thing in any way shade your life.

The next thing that will dwarf vegetation in even good ground is to not keep it frequently bugged and wormed. Sometimes one-fourth of a farmer's crop is lost in this way. So is it in the spiritual life, where some of God's children are ever open to new light, and ready to lay aside anything which may be found a hindrance to their spiritual progress, though ever so small; there are others who do not give up things so cheerfully nor are they so willing to lay aside "every weight." Dear convert, if you would be a well-developed Christian, bringing forth "the hundredfold" fruit, you must hold frequent self-examination and thus keep the bugs and worms from devouring your spiritual life and dwarfing your soul.

Not being deeply cultivated is sometimes the cause of a blasted crop. Oftentimes during dry times when the farmer fails to get rain, he finds it necessary to cultivate his corn deeply and thus give it moisture. The principal reason why we have so many tame, shallow namby-pamby holiness professors today, and such few with a deep, rich experience, is because of the large percentage of shallow preaching they receive. In order to have a crop of Christians after the order of Paul, Wesley, Fletcher and others, it will be necessary to have the same "gospel plow" preaching — something that will plow the people up from (a) to (z). O Lord, send us some more of that class of preaching that will at one time make us feel that we are in hell in a lake of fire and at another that we are in heaven upon the streets of gold! Many converts have been instructed to avoid deep preaching, close class meeting and that class of workers who go deep and plow through; but I declare unto you, reader if you want an experience that will stand the wear and tear of earth and hell and mount up to glory to live with God forever, you will have to be plowed deep.

Misappropriated fertilizer will sometimes cause grain and vegetation, even in good ground, to become unfruitful. Just as the farmer has various kinds of fertilizer to refresh and hasten the growth of his grain and vegetation, so has the Lord. Whenever He wishes to develop our prayer life, He puts on the fertilizer of pressure and opposition. When He desires to increase and strengthen our faith, He apparently leaves us in the dark for a while. If He wishes to increase power, He puts us under a long fast. If He wishes to wean us more thoroughly from our friends and loved ones, He will incense them against us and stir them up to persecute us. If He desires to increase our humility and give us a sweeter and more gentle and tender spirit, He will put on the fertilizer of voiceless grief and tears. If we humbly receive it without murmuring or chafing, we will receive a deeper and richer experience, but if we yield to a complaining, pining spirit, we will thwart God's plan and thereby lose

in our souls. Reader, let us aim, not only to bring forth thirtyfold and sixtyfold, but a hundredfold to the glory and praise of His precious name.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 36 **THE EAR OF GOD**

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are opened unto their cry" (Psa. 34:15).

It is quite difficult to throw off the embarrassment of being slighted or overlooked. It also places us in rather a strange predicament when we write or speak to people, and know they hear us, or receive our mail, and yet fail to give us any reply whatever. Now to avoid falling into a similar temptation when we pray, God had the statement which constitutes the text left on record.

In the following lines I shall attempt to call the convert's attention to a few interesting facts about the ear of God, which may be found beneficial in his Christian life.

1. The ear of God is universal. In this life there is a possibility of us getting out of touch with our loved ones and friends, to the extent that we can not reach them, neither by phone or mail. But this is not so with God. His ear can be reached from the lion's den, fiery furnace, whale's belly, dark dungeon and the Isle of Patmos. All we have to do is to keep the conditions met and we will be able to hear from heaven on the darkest night and in the loudest storm. Reader, His ear is everywhere present. You may be away on the burning sands of Africa, or amid the barren islands of the sea, or away on Greenland's frigid mountains, but remember, God is there and will answer prayer.

2. God's ear is not only universal, but it is attentive. Many times away on some lonely island, or far-off seashore, the bones of a shipwrecked man and a white handkerchief tied to a stick have been found. The poor, unfortunate man had drifted there from some sinking vessel. For days he called aloud and waved his handkerchief in the briny air, but received no response. He had called loud and long, only to be mocked by the surging billows. The boats were seen passing in the distance but gave him no response. But God is not like this, but gives a listening ear to all of His children in every land.

3. His ear is also a patient one. How many times those people to whom we go for soul help and spiritual advice, turn upon us and accuse and upbraid us; but our heavenly Father lovingly and patiently hears the long prayers, short prayers and ungrammatical prayers. He not only hears our prayers, but our soul whispers and the midnight groans, which are too deep for words.

4. It is also a confidential ear. Many times we reveal our secrets confidentially to our friends, and hear them from a half dozen parties a few days later; but with God it is not so. He is the best secret keeper in the world.

5. His ear is impartial. He does not have any respect of persons, but is willing to come to the relief and assistance of all classes, colors and nations, if they meet the required conditions.

6. Finally, He has an unforgetting ear. Many times we make petitions to our friends and they forget. all about responding, but God never forgets, neither does He make any mistakes. Listen to His precious words, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" (Isa. 49:16).

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By J. M. Hames

Chapter 37 HIDDEN MANNA

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17).

There are three hidden things referred to in the Word of God which greatly interest the writer. One is found in Job 28:7, 8, which reads as follows:

"There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." The other is found in Col. 3:2, 3, which reads as follows: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The third one is in the text, viz., "Hidden manna." Here in these three passages an illusion is made first to the hidden path, viz., "the highway of holiness." Second, to the hidden life, or rather the deep spiritual union that the believer has with Jesus. Third. To the high class soul food which the believer partakes of daily.

If we were permitted to modernize the text it would read as follows: "To him that overcometh will I give a continual feast of joy." All that the world and carnal professors seem to see in Christianity is the cross, the hammer, the spear and the rugged side of things, but those who accept, obey and fully follow Jesus, find Him to be the "Rose of Sharon," the "Lily of the Valley" and the "One altogether lovely."

Let us notice some phases of this hidden joy upon which the godly continually feed.

1. It is the joy which springs from an unclouded assurance that our sins are forgiven, the past all under the blood, our hearts made clean and holy, and the Holy Ghost abiding within. Oh, this is heaven below! It is no marvel that the poet asked the following question:

"Is not this the land of Beulah,
Blessed, blessed land of light,
Where the flowers bloom forever,
And the sun is always bright?"

2. The next class of hidden joy that the fully abandoned believer feeds upon is the joy which he extracts from the Word of God. To sinners and worldly-minded church members, the Bible is a dry, uninteresting book, but to the soul who has the Holy Ghost abiding within, it is sweeter than honey in the honeycomb. "The Bible," says one, "is like a garden of spices, in which you may walk, and at your leisure pluck the flowers and gather the fruits of the Eden of God."

3. The third denomination of hidden joy found in Christ by the devout believer is the joy that arises from the fact that he has been made free indeed from the chains of guilt, habit and custom. When he can pass the saloon without the least hankering for strong drink, when he can hold a clean,

chaste conversation without occasionally polluting it with foul profanity, when he can pass the gambling dens and fashion shops without the least desire to partake of their evil practices, his joy becomes almost uncontrollable.

4. The hidden joy of Christian fellowship is the next denomination of unspeakable joy. Heretofore he had enjoyed, to some extent, the society and association of his family and choice friends, but lo and behold, on finding the hidden path, hidden life and hidden bread, he finds himself more delighted and at home with the most humble follower of the Lord Jesus than he does in the presence of the lords and nobles of earth. No marvel it was said by them of old, "See how these Christians love!" No wonder that they stood together, suffered together, rejoiced together and died together. O matchless love divine!

The next source of hidden joy upon which the believer continually feasts is the joy of sacrifice. We admit it is like extracting teeth to get some church members to do, give or suffer anything for the cause of God. But to those who have the enthroned Christ it is an occasion of great joy when they are called forth to do, give or suffer for His cause. Acts 5:41. This class of people have experienced what it means to rejoice because they are counted worthy to suffer for their blessed Lord.

Still another phase of the hidden joy that the believer finds is the joy of communion with God. To our minds, this joy surpasses any of the before mentioned ones. This communion turns a barren wilderness into a blooming flower garden; it turns sorrow into gladness, night into morning, winter into spring, death into life, and hell into heaven. O hallelujah! How could John grow lonesome on the barren Isle of Patmos while holding such unbroken communion with his blessed Redeemer?

The last phase of this hidden joy upon which the believer continually feeds is that which springs from his lively hope. No matter how dark things may grow around him, or how his plans and earthly hopes are blasted, he spreads the wings of hope and in his imagination flies beyond the bounds of time and perches on the tree of life, and there refreshes his soul with anticipations of future reward. His hope is so full of immortality that he lives both in heaven and on earth at the same time. 2 Cor. 12:3.

THE CONVERT'S HOMEWARD GUIDE

By **J. M. Hames**

Chapter 38 **THE LITTLE CHILD SPIRIT**

"And He said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

In this chapter it shall not be our aim to speak of power, faith and great external gifts, but the little child spirit. We confess, however, that it is a scarce article among religious people today. There are so few who will take the low place and do the little things.

Now since the Savior has used a little child for our example, it would be well for us to closely examine the characteristics of a child and bring our lives in harmony with them. You will notice the Savior did not say, large children, but little children.

For our special edification let us briefly paraphrase some of the most prominent characteristics of a little child. 1. A little child is open, honest and free from guile. It does not hide or cover up things. It does not know how to play the hypocrite, but states facts just as they are. Oh, it means so much for people to have all of the dodge, guile and two-facedness taken out of them! We are glad to say, however, that salvation takes it all out. Praise the Lord!

2. A little child is teachable and easily led. This is the same spirit that should possess all of God's children. They should be easily entreated and free from every vestige of stubbornness, self-will and hard-headedness. No one can retain the grace of God and at the same time be stubborn and mulish. The two do not go together.

3. A little child is also free from uncharitable suspicion and surmising. It believes good of every one until otherwise convinced. It is not hasty to misjudge people. Reader, have you any of this material in stock? There is a class of people who on first sight censure and misjudge others. All such conduct is wrong. We are to believe good of every one until we are sufficiently convinced to the contrary.

4. Little children are of a tender spirit, and easily moved to sympathy and tears. It is absolutely impossible for them to hold a grudge, or manifest a hard, merciless spirit. Tears and entreaties will melt them up and make them willing to be friendly with their greatest enemy. This is the way Christians should be. Not hard, merciless and stiff, but pliable, sympathetic and merciful. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

5. Little children entertain no worry or uneasiness, but believe and depend upon their parents fully. This is the way God wants His children to do. He does not want them filled with anxious care, but with implicit trust. Just as the little child fully believes everything that its parents tell it, just so does God want us to fully believe all that He has said in His Word without the least shadow of doubt.

6. A little child is also lowly and free from self-conceit and egotism. It is simple, humble and lowly in manner and deportment. Reader, beware of an egotistic, self-conceited, important spirit, for it paves the way to a fall. The wise man of old left the following statement on record: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the great" (Prov. 16:18, 19).

7. A little child takes all kinds of reproof, both at home and abroad without dictation or back-talk. It is true, a large child may sometimes talk back, but the smaller ones receive all reproof and criticism without a word of back talk. Reader have you reached this place?

Jonathan Edwards describes a Christian as being like "such a little flower as we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground; offering its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrance; standing peacefully and lowly in the midst of other flowers." "Reader, I charge you, be clothed with humility, or you will yet be a wandering star, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Let Christ increase, let man decrease. Remember, 'Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.' Looking at our own shining face is the bane of spiritual life, and of the ministry. Oh, for closest communion with God, till soul and body, head and spirit shine with divine brilliancy! But, oh, for a holy ignorance of their shining!"