

THE DRAMA of REDEMPTION

Samuel Jackson Cartledge

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THE DRAMA OF REDEMPTION



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By

Samuel Jackson Cartledge, D.D.

Pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church

Athens, Georgia



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DEDICATION

* * *

To

My Wife

In Grateful Acknowledgment

of

Valuable Assistance

FOREWORD

In the "Drama of Redemption" I hear again with deep delight the cadence of a voice to which I have often listened as it declared the truth of Christ.

Like the Book it so fearlessly follows, this volume is "a well of pure English undefiled." And its author was just as clear and perfect in the language of his extemporaneous sermons and addresses as he is here in his written words.

One ever felt that the life of Samuel Jackson Cartledge was the counterpart and reinforcement of all he said. He lived within the veil with God, and with radiant face and heart he spoke forth all the words of this Life.

Whether he was offering prayer at a university public function or in his visitation of his people, he always rendered the honor and glory to Christ, whose redemption this book so clearly portrays. When this man of God prayed Christ seemed more majestic. He was gifted in prayer.

In the closing chapters Dr. Cartledge has taken us not only near to heaven, but has drawn us inside the gates to stand there with himself, and to gaze on the ample grandeur he now beholds as he dwells "at home with the Lord."

This heavenly minded minister of the New Testament lived near the Throne, and in the final pages he has made our hearts enjoy the bliss of that "sweet and blessed country, the Home of God's elect." That fair and spacious land appears more real than ever before, and Christ is seen more truly as the only Way to its open gates.

WILLIAM HAZER WRIGHTON

Department of Philosophy
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BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By SAMUEL A. CARTLEDGE, Ph.D.

Shortly after the author completed the manuscript, he was called home to his Heavenly Father. It has seemed wise, therefore, to include a brief sketch of his life, as the book will probably be read by many of his friends.

Samuel Jackson Cartledge was born May 9, 1864, at Bold Springs, Franklin County, Georgia. His parents were Revs. Groves Harrison Cartledge and Mrs. Annie Lane Cartledge. For over forty-seven years his father was pastor of the Presbyterian Churches of the Hebron community, being in a real sense the father of Presbyterianism in northeast Georgia. Samuel Jackson was the eleventh of twelve children; all but the youngest lived to adulthood.

After attending school in the Hebron community for about three years, he attended Martin Institute at Jefferson, Ga., for three years. After five years of work on his father's farm, he went to Athens, Ga., and attended the preparatory school of Mr. A. M. Scudder for six months. There he also took the sophomore year at the University of Georgia. The next year he taught school in Hebron. He took his junior year at the North Georgia Agricultural College at Dahlonega, Ga.

He took the first year of his theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary and his last two years at Columbia Theological Seminary, then at Columbia, S. C. He graduated from Columbia on his birthday, May 9, 1889, just forty years after his father had graduated and forty years before his son was to graduate from the same Seminary.

His first marriage was to Laura Louisa Burns on Nov. 27, 1889. They had three children, Groves Howard, Fred Burns, and Laura Burns. Groves Howard is head of the Chemistry Department of the University of Buffalo; the other two children died in infancy.

After the death of his first wife, he married Rebecca Lamar Poullain on March 27, 1900. They had two children, Samuel Antoine, now Professor of New Testament in

Brief Biographical Sketch

Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga., and Annie Lane, now the wife of Rev. Elwood D. Vaughan, of Berryville, Va.

He was ordained by Athens Presbytery and installed as the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Gainesville, Ga., where he served from 1889 to 1894. He was pastor of the Church at Washington Ga., from 1894 to 1901; of the First Church of Anderson, S. C., from 1901 to 1906; of the Purity Church of Chester, S. C., from 1906 to 1910. In 1910 he came to Athens, Ga., to become the first pastor of the newly organized Prince Ave. Presbyterian Church. At the time of the building of the new church building in 1914, the name was changed to the Central Presbyterian Church. He continued to serve this Church until the time of his death. He lived to pass his seventy-fifth birthday and the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination.

In 1932, Presbyterian College of Clinton, S. C., conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

All his life he was a devoted student of God's Word, giving a large part of his time to the study of it in English, Hebrew, and Greek. He sincerely accepted the Bible as God's revealed Word, his "infallible rule of faith and practice."

He was a faithful, sympathetic pastor to every member in all his churches, and to many others as well.

He considered his greatest duty the preaching of the Gospel, and here he excelled. His sermons were always Biblical; they inspired and instructed. Though he dealt with profound truths, he always used simple language. Gifted with a beautiful tenor voice, he was able to sing the Gospel as well as to preach it.

He was always in splendid physical condition, and he was active in his church work until the time of his sudden and peaceful passing from heart failure, February 2, 1940.

His family and countless friends have been blessed by the life of this true Servant of God.

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Section I

God to the Rescue



Our first parents, created in the image of God, did not long continue in that happy condition. Soon an Adversary appeared on the scene, through whose machinations they fell from that estate of holiness and happiness into an estate of sin and misery.

But God in infinite love and mercy quickly came to the rescue; and in the present section will be set forth the steps that He took to lift the curse of a broken law, and restore in them, and in their posterity, the divine likeness.

THOSE STEPS ARE:

A divinely inspired Book to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation.

A Redeemer who is both God and Man, whose atoning death is the sinner's only hope.

The Holy Spirit to apply the purchased redemption and make it effectual.

The Church to proclaim the glad tidings and make known to all the world, God's plan of salvation, the only possible way of escape.

I.

THE BOOK

GOD IS NOT THE KIND OF BEING THAT SOME have supposed; a being who made us and put us here in a world of sin, sorrow and death, and then dismissing us from His thought left us here alone engaged in a hopeless struggle with resistless fate. What earthly father would treat his children so? Here is your child, innocent and inexperienced, starting out on a long journey across an unknown sea. What solicitude for his welfare! How careful to give in advance suitable instructions! How many anxious thoughts, how many loving messages would follow him!

And God is more solicitous and considerate than the best of earthly fathers. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," saith the Lord. "Higher," not lower. His children are out on the treacherous sea of time, sailing amid dangers seen and unseen toward the vast ocean of eternity, and in infinite solicitude He is thinking of them, and with infinite wisdom and love has given them instructions for the journey.

"How? Where?" do you ask? Here is a book that purports to be the answer to that question. Is this book what it claims to be? Does it speak the truth concerning itself? Is the Bible from God, or of men? How can we tell? What tests may we apply?

First of all, we might apply the test of Criticism, carefully and impartially weighing the evidences for, and against; the "external" or historical evidences; and the "internal," or the evidence afforded by the contents of the book itself. This test only a few of us are in position to

make for ourselves. It has been frequently made, however, and the overwhelming majority of those who have made it have been fully convinced that the Bible is God's message to His children.

There are other tests, however, that every one can make for himself. There is the test of Character, the character of those who accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God as contrasted with the character of those who reject it. An African Prince visiting England being asked what he thought of the Bible replied, "I must believe it to be the Word of God, because I find all the good people in favor of it, and all the other kind against it."

Of course it is not claimed that *all* of those who are on the one side are better than *any* of those on the other side; but it is maintained that of all those who are honestly endeavoring to shape their lives by the teachings of this book, who are living a life of prayer, who have consecrated themselves to the service of God and are going about doing good, not one can be found who denies the divine origin of the Bible; while those who do deny it are living in the daily indulgence of some form of sin, the sin of covetousness, the sin of lust, or the more respectable sins of self-righteousness and intellectual pride.

Here is a manuscript purporting to have been written by Robert Browning. The authorship, however, is in dispute, and the critics have assembled for the purpose of deciding the question. As a result of their investigations it comes to light that all those who lived near Browning and therefore knew him best, who shared his convictions and entered most heartily into his spirit, who in their ideals and their personal character were most like Browning, all of them, without exception, were fully convinced that he was indeed the author; while those who doubted and disputed it were those who lived farthest away, knew little or nothing about him,

and had little or no sympathy with his spirit and mission. Under these circumstances, who would for a moment doubt the Browning authorship?

And this, I submit, is a fair statement in regard to the authorship of the Bible: Those who live close to God, and therefore know Him best, who walk with God day by day, who have entered most completely into the spirit and purposes of God; in a word, those who are most like God, all of these without a single exception are fully convinced of the divine authorship of these Holy Scriptures, while those who doubt it and dispute it are those who are least like God, and know little or nothing about Him.

Besides the test of Character there is the test of Experience, the commonsense test of Judging a Tree by its Fruit. What kind of fruit grows on this Tree? What results flow from the teachings of the Bible?

We take a broad view first and look at the nations: Compare the heathen with the Christian nations. Where would you rather have your home and bring up your children? In the United States, or in China? In England, or in India? Why? Why? What makes the difference in the nations of earth? Queen Victoria when asked the secret of England's greatness, pointed not to her armies and navies, and not to her industries and commerce, but holding up a copy of the Bible replied, "This is the secret." Green in his "Short History of the English People," chapter 8, speaking of the effect of the English Bible during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, says, "No greater change ever passed over any nation than passed over England during these years. England became the people of one book, and that book was the Bible. The whole temper of the nation felt the change. A new conception of life, a new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."

And we must bear in mind that in England, as in every other Christian nation, only some of her people even profess to shape their lives by the teachings of this Book, and

that many of these do not live up to their profession. The true test would be to select a nation, if one such could be found, where the whole population accepted the Bible as their rule of faith and conduct and were honestly endeavoring to fashion their lives according to its teachings. What kind of people would you find there? Suppose we could eliminate from the whole population all that this Book condemns, all selfishness, covetousness and heartlessness, along with all the grosser forms of sin; and as these go out we could bring into all these lives the virtues and graces and beauties of Christian character that it enjoins; then the Bible would have its own way, the whole nation would feel its impress, and we could then observe the legitimate effects of its teachings. How I should like to live in a nation like that!

But now let us narrow our vision and examine the fruits of this Tree in the life of the individual: Most important of these is Salvation from Sin; not only the guilt of sin, and the penalty of sin, but from the power and practice of sin. The chief mission of the Bible is to set forth the fact of sin on the one hand and of salvation on the other: Man a sinner under sentence of death; Christ Jesus the God-man dying in the sinner's place; The Holy Spirit convincing of sin, enlightening the sinner's mind in the knowledge of the truth, renewing the heart and will and thus bringing the sinner to faith and repentance and new obedience, and so making "old things pass away and all things to become new."

Such is in part the mission of this Book, and hundreds and thousands in every land and clime can testify that it actually accomplishes its mission. Away down in Paraguay, South America, lived Mokabo. Had you asked any fifteen year old boy, Who is the leading gambler in all Paraguay? without a moment's hesitation he would have answered, "Mokabo." And who the most notorious drunkard? "Mokabo." And who the vilest libertine? "Mokabo." In-

deed Mokabo was the ringleader in all kinds of villany, the incarnation of all the spirits unclean. But Mokabo began to read the Bible, and under its transforming power the old Mokabo passed away, and a new Mokabo went forth preaching the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation.

This Tree bears also for the individual the choice fruits of Comfort and Peace in times of sorrow, storm and heart-break. These experiences come to all, and like Jacob we cry out, "All these things are against me." In such an hour how comforting the assurance of the dear old Book that God is our Father, that His eye is ever upon us, and His ear ever open to our cry; that in all His dealings with us He is prompted by infinite love, guided by unerring wisdom, and enabled by almighty power, and hence instead of all things, or anything, being against us, all things are conspiring together for our good. Not some things, nor many things, nor nearly all things, but all things; "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28).

And this is not simply a beautiful theory. Thousands have converted theory into glorious fact. A noble Christian woman was aroused at midnight by the cry of "Fire!" She barely had time to escape with her children, and as she stood across the street and saw her home and all its contents burn to the ground, with no insurance to cover the loss, resting on the promises of this Book, with the peace of God filling her soul, she lifted up her voice and sang,

*When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply,
The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*

Who but a child of God could have done that? What book but the Bible could have inspired a song like that?

This Book also gives us as another of its blessed fruits for the individual, Victory in the Dying Hour. At the approach of death, we are bound to ask with an earnestness

never felt before, Is death the end? "If a man die, shall he live again?" If anything comes after death, What? And how shall I prepare for it? Apart from the Bible, there is no satisfactory answer to these profoundest of all our heart cries, and death is, as the infidel Hobbes declared, "a leap in the dark."

In this crucial hour, how welcome the revelation of this dear old Book that death is not the end. Standing by the open grave of His friend our Lord declared, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live"; and then as if to show that this was no empty boast, He bade them roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and with a loud voice cried, "Lazarus, come forth"; and the sheeted dead heard His voice and came forth and lived again. In like manner He declares that "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth." Resting on these promises thousands have gone down into the "dark valley" singing and shouting, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where thy victory?"

Such are some of the fruits that grow on this Tree, in the nation, and in the individual. Tell me, are they good fruits? If so, then the Tree on which they grow must be a good Tree. If good results flow from the teachings of the Bible, then the Bible must be a good book. But a good book must speak the truth. A good book cannot speak falsely, and we must accept the testimony of this Book when it declares that it was written by "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21). If it speaks falsely at this point, if it is not from God through holy men of God, it is not only not a good book, but on the contrary it is the basest of impostures. If the Bible is not inspired of God, it was surely inspired by the devil; and we then behold the amazing spectacle of a corrupt tree bringing forth good fruit; fruits of heavenly flavor growing on a tree that was planted in hell!

On such grounds as these we conclude that the Bible is not of men, but from God. And we should be very sure at this point, for this is the fundamental doctrine of our holy faith; the truth upon which all other truths rest. If the Bible is not from God, we have no Savior, no assurance of immortality, no sense of acceptance with God, no voice to still the storms of life or break the silence of the tomb.

What, then, shall we think of the enemies of the Bible? Are they not also the enemies of mankind? Seeking to destroy a Tree that bears such heavenly fruitage; robbing us of all we hold most dear, and leaving us adrift on an unknown sea without chart, compass, or pilot, knowing neither whence we sailed, nor whither bound.

Some years ago a brilliant assembly gathered round the banquet board in the city of New York. Among the guests were Robert Ingersol and Henry Ward Beecher. Early in the evening Mr. Ingersol began to criticise Christians and Christianity, and meeting with no opposition, he grew bolder, and in a little while was pouring a perfect torrent of abuse and ridicule upon the Bible. Men wondered why Mr. Beecher was silent, and at length one ventured to say, "Mr. Beecher, do you hear? Have you nothing to say in defense of your Book?" Raising himself up as if from some profound revery the old preacher replied, "I was just thinking of something I saw on my way over here tonight: Crossing Broadway I saw a poor cripple on a single crutch with great difficulty making his way across that great thoroughfare, and as I watched him, a great big burly ruffian came up behind him and deliberately kicked that crutch from under him and left him sprawling in the street." Mr. Ingersol was the first to speak: "The brute," he cried, "Where is he?" Then the old preacher turning upon him, his lips quivering with emotion, his eyes flashing lightning, replied, "Thou art the man! That poor cripple is humanity, broken, bruised, almost ruined by the fall. That crutch is the Bible, his only support as he slowly makes his way along life's

rugged highway; and thou art the brute that would strike that crutch from under him and leave him helpless in the mire."

Is the Bible really in danger? I am not afraid. Never was a book so hated, so abused, so assailed. But it has stood the assaults of men and of devils; assaults of professed friends, and of openly avowed enemies, and is today more widely circulated and more generally known than any other book in the world, its history typified by its own burning bush in the midst of the fire, and yet not consumed, and by its own Three Hebrews in the furnace seven times heated, but coming forth without even the smell of smoke on their garments.

Stone Mountain near Atlanta, Georgia, is said to be the largest rock in the world, some twelve miles in circumference, four or five hundred feet high, and extending into the ground nobody knows how far, solid granite from center to circumference. Driving over to Atlanta one day, as I drew near the mountain, I saw, in my fancy, a little man with a brickbat in his hand and an old-fashioned fence rail on his shoulder. Drawing up alongside him I inquired, "Where are you going, little man, and what are you planning to do?" Much to my amazement he replied, "I'm going to yonder mountain, and I'm planning to get rid of the ugly old thing. Too long has it stood already, like a monstrous wart on the fair face of mother nature, an eyesore and impertinence to every passerby, and with this brickbat for a fulcrum, and this fence rail for a lever, I'm going to turn the old thing over and put it everlastingly out of the way."

Stampeded into a frenzy of apprehension and alarm, I stepped on the gas and hurried around to the other side and hurled myself against it with all my might in the effort to protect the dear old landmark and keep it from being overthrown. Do you think I did? Well, I assure you I did nothing of the kind. Firm in my conviction that the

old mountain was abundantly able to take care of itself, I rode serenely on. And so it has proved. There she still stands unmoved, immovable, and unafraid. And just as safe and secure, in spite of all its foes, is "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

"The Book Glorious," let us call it. Glorious in its Origin and Authorship; glorious in its Mission; and in its Content unspeakably precious and full of glory. It is confidently believed that each of the chapters that follow will be found to be a nugget of pure gold from this inexhaustible mine.

II.

THE REDEEMER: HIS DEITY

"SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS," SAID "CERTAIN Greeks" to Philip the disciple of our Lord. "More about Jesus" is the yearning of our hearts expressed in song. To satisfy this universal longing of devout souls by a clearer vision of the Christ is the purpose of this chapter.

"What think ye of Christ?" said the Master to the Pharisees, and in comparison with this question all others are of little consequence. During a discussion of the subject, Christianity a Life rather than a Creed, I once heard in a supposedly orthodox pulpit the statement, "I don't know what you think of Christ, and what's more, I don't much care."

I wanted to say to that preacher, and his congregation, Christianity is both life and creed, and in the order of thought creed comes first. Creed is the root of the tree, and life is the fruit; and the character of the root determines the character of the fruit, for "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." What we think of Christ determines our attitude toward Christ, and this attitude determines our life here and our eternal destiny.

Any adequate vision of the Christ must begin where He Himself began: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). For nineteen centuries the person of Christ has been the subject of sharp controversy. While He was here on earth in person, the people were divided concerning Him. Some said of Him, "Thou art the Christ the Son of God," while others affirmed, "He hath a devil." In the year 325 A.D. the Council of Nicæa officially declared, "We believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and

invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God; God of God, Light of light, very God of very God"; and this has been the orthodox faith of the church from then until now.

But all through the centuries this citadel of the faith has been assailed; by the Arians in the fourth century, by the Socinians in the sixteenth, and by the Unitarians and the so-called "Modernists" of the present day; and it is to be feared that the spirit of Unitarianism is growing and spreading; for as an ex-president of the United States once said, "While the Unitarian church is not itself growing, Unitarianism has found its way into all the churches, and Unitarians are more numerous today than ever before."

On what grounds do we believe that Jesus is God? What reasons are there for believing in the absolute deity of Jesus the Christ?

In the first place, His Character and His Teachings put Him in a class by Himself, forbidding absolutely all human classification. His character is without a flaw. He spoke the simple truth when He said, "*The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me*" (John 14:30). In the saintliest of men, Satan finds some territory still that he can call his own, but in our Lord Jesus Christ there is not one inch on which he can set his cloven hoofs and say "It's mine."

As for our Lord's teachings, they were absolutely unique, without a parallel in all literature. When He had ended "The Sermon on the Mount," the people were astonished at His teaching, for they had never heard anything like it. And when unlettered policemen were sent to arrest Him, they gave as their reason for not taking Him into custody, "Never man spake like this Man." In both cases, no doubt, the impression was produced partly by His gracious manner of delivery, but chiefly by the subject matter with which He dealt.

In the second place, our Lord's Miracles declare Him to be divine. Here is a man who has been dead four days. Now in his grave. Decomposition has already set in. Approaching the grave, He said, "Roll away the stone"; and when this was done, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," and the sheeted dead heard that commanding voice and came forth, and lived again.

But it may be said that His disciples worked miracles, and the argument proves too much. But notice the difference: They did it expressly in His name, and by the authority and power that He gave them; as when Peter said to the lame man, Acts 3:6, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Rise up and walk." Our Lord, on the contrary, used no borrowed power, and exercised no delegated authority. To the poor leper He said, "I will, be thou clean." To the man with the withered hand He said, "Stretch forth thy hand," and in the exercise of the power that accompanied the command he obeyed. To the paralytic, "Take up thy bed and walk." To the little daughter of Jairus, "I say unto thee, Arise." To the legion of demons, "Come out of him," and they obeyed; and recognizing His authority besought Him not to commit them to their infernal prison house before the time. Always, everywhere, Jesus performed these mighty works in His own name, by His own authority, and in the exercise of His own power.

In the third place, Jesus possessed and manifested divine attributes, the attributes of Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence. (A) Omniscience: When still far away from Bethany He said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." No one had told Him. The message from the sisters had merely said, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." How did He know that Lazarus was already dead? Only through that divine attribute by virtue of which He knows everything.

At Capernaum He said to the paralytic, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; and when the Scribes and Pharisees began

to say in their hearts, "This man blasphemeth," He knew their thoughts and proceeded to answer their unuttered criticisms. How did He know what they were thinking about? Just as He knows everything else, in the exercise of that attribute which Deity alone possesses, the attribute of Omniscience.

(B) Omnipotence: All power is His. Power to create: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Power also to preserve and control the universe He had created: "Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). How much power does it require to create and uphold a universe like this? Have you ever noticed that striking statement in Job, "He hangeth the earth upon nothing"? (Job 26:7). If I want to hang up so light a thing as my hat, or my coat, I must have a nail, or a peg, or some such device to hang it on. But our divine Lord in creation and providence hangs the earth upon nothing, and keeps it there. And not only the earth, but the sun, and the moon, and the stars. And not only these that we know best, the members of our own solar system, but all the suns, and moons, and stars in this vast universe.

Think of the problem, ye mathematicians, and astronomers: To create a universe consisting of myriads of heavenly bodies, and hang them all up in space and keep them there by mutual attraction. How many suns, and moons, and stars; how large each one must be, and how far apart; what sort of materials to employ in each separate world, and then bring them into being at the same moment. Only divine omniscience could solve the problem, and only divine omnipotence could carry it into effect. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood forth."

(C) Omnipresence: Jesus said to Nicodemus, John 3:13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man *Which is in heaven.*" In heaven, and here on earth at the same

moment; for the omnipresent Christ can come to earth without leaving heaven, and then go back to heaven without leaving the earth.

Again He said to His disciples, Matt. 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Here is a little group of believers gathered together in His name in the local community. Jesus is in the midst. From this little group have gone out individuals and families, into twenty-one states of the Union, and two foreign countries. Jesus is just as near to them as He is to the mother church. Some of these kindred spirits have gone as far away as Johannesburg, South Africa, but they haven't drifted beyond His love and care. And so throughout this great continent of ours, and in other continents as well, Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, Australia, and the Islands of the sea, there Jesus is in the midst. "Though sundered far, by faith we meet around one common mercy seat," a worldwide mercy seat presided over by our omnipresent Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the fourth place, The Scriptures teach that divine worship should be given Him, and show Him accepting such worship without protest. "When He bringeth in the First begotten into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1:6). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, Which . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Cornelius recognizing Peter as God's messenger sent in answer to his prayers, fell down to worship him, but Peter said, "Stand up, I myself am also a man." Once and again the Seer of the Revelation fell down to worship the revealing angel, but the heavenly messenger forbade him and said, "Worship God." Our Lord, however, accepted worship as His right. Here on earth He permitted the blind man, now restored, to fall down before Him and worship.

And yonder in the heavens, with no word of protest, He sees the heavenly host casting their crowns at His feet as they fall down and worship crying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). As Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer such worship is His rightful tribute, and with full consciousness of His worth He accepts it without protest or rebuke.

In the fifth place, Jesus is associated with the Father and the Holy Spirit, on equal terms, in the Formula of Baptism, in the Apostolic Benediction, and in the Benediction of Paul as the source of Grace, Mercy and Peace.

(A) The Formula of Baptism: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

(B) The Apostolic Benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." (II Cor. 13:14).

(C) Paul's Benediction: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . unto Timothy my own son in the faith, Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Tim. 1:1-2).

Would you dare use the name of a mere man in such a connection? If you are not afraid, suppose you try it: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, *and of Moses*, and of the Holy Ghost." Blasphemy! and I tremble as I write the words! Or, put the name of Abraham alongside that of the Father as the source of grace and peace; or the name of Paul in the apostolic benediction along with the name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost! You dare not!

Now our Lord Himself gave us the formula of Baptism, and "thought it not robbery" to put Himself in such company. Paul has ever been accepted as the great theologian of the church, and he is responsible for the apostolic benediction in Second Corinthians, and the slightly different form with which he begins his letters; and without apology to either of the three, Paul put God the Father, and God

the Son, and God the Holy Ghost upon an equal footing, as being "the same in substance, equal in power and glory"; and I submit that it is utterly inconceivable that he should have done so did he not recognize the absolute deity of all three.

Is it merely an accident, or an inadvertence, or of deliberate intent that the most popular radio preacher in America never closes a service with the apostolic benediction? To use it, is an acknowledgment of our Lord's deity, and no one knows it better than the aforesaid preacher, and so he uses instead the priestly benediction of the Old Testament.

In the last place, Jesus is expressly called God, both in the Old Testament and in the New; and this would be argument enough, if this were all. "To the law and the testimony":

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." (Rom. 9:5).

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).

"Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire; but unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Heb. 1:7-8).

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus

Christ. *This is the true God, and eternal life*" (I John 5:20). What could be clearer than this? If the Bible teaches anything clearly and unmistakably, it teaches that Jesus is God.

Does any one ask, What difference does it make? All the difference in the world in this life, and the difference between heaven and hell in the life to come. For if Jesus is only a man, there is no atonement for sin, and we are still under the curse, because "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). True, the apostle goes on to say, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (vs. 13). But this is on the supposition that Christ is God, as Paul said He was; for if Christ were only a man, His death had no more efficacy in removing the curse of the law than the death of those two thieves who were crucified with Him.

And so I never expect to see in heaven any one who does not come humbly trusting in the atoning blood of the DIVINE SON OF GOD.

III.

THE REDEEMER: HIS HUMANITY

WE SAW IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER THAT THE Christ of the Bible was God; we are now to see that He was also Man, the God-Man. The apostle John who wrote "The Gospel of our Lord's Deity" declares in his opening sentence, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Just a little further on in his first chapter, vs. 14, he completes his testimony to our Lord's personality by saying, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Immediately the statement carries us in thought to Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary lived at Nazareth, but a decree of the Roman Emperor had brought them to Bethlehem, the imperial decree unconsciously carrying into effect the eternal purpose of God as revealed long before by the prophet Micah, 5:2. And there at Bethlehem Mary "brought forth her First-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

*Cold on His cradle the dew drops are shining,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall.*

But I wonder if we do not dwell too much upon His lowly birth, and thus fail to see the other side of the picture. Earth, indeed, took but little notice, but all the hosts of heaven looked on with deepest interest. "The glory of the Lord" (Luke 2:9) was a halo above that lowly stall, and that humble manger the most glorious spot in the universe that night.

Some time before this, the angel Gabriel, one of the highest of the heavenly host, had visited a humble home

in Nazareth and announced to Mary the coming event. Later on, when Mary's condition had become apparent, "the angel of the Lord" visited Joseph in a dream and removed his suspicions by the assurance that it was the Lord's doings and all was well. And now, as events reach their climax at Bethlehem, "multitudes of the heavenly hosts" are on the scene, and to the terrified shepherds as they saw "the glory of the Lord shining round about them," "an angel of the Lord" said "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord," and then the whole company of the angelic choir join in that first Christmas song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Who is this wondrous Babe? Matthew answers, "Immanuel," which is to say God with us; the Word now made flesh and dwelling among us. At once our minds raise the question, How? How did Christ the Son of God become man? The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly gives this answer: "Christ the Son of God became man by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin."

Here we are confessedly face to face with a great mystery, and the only explanation offered by the gospel writers is that given by the angel Gabriel to Mary His mother: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called The Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

This discussion will seek to answer two questions: First, Was Jesus born of a virgin? Second, What difference does it make whether He was or not? And in the first place, Was Jesus virgin born? In the Apostles Creed, the oldest of all our creeds, we are taught to say, "I believe in God

the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary." This has been, through all the years since, the orthodox faith of the church universal, Protestant and Catholic. In recent years, however, discordant voices are being raised denying the fact of the virgin birth, and asserting that it is a matter of little or no importance anyhow.

They make much of the fact that nothing is said about it in the gospel of Mark, and the gospel of John, and that the doctrine rests solely upon the testimony of Matthew and Luke. (Leaving out of consideration the disputed passage in Isaiah 7:14.) Surely, they say, if it had been true, and of any consequence, John and Mark would have mentioned it; and on the ground of their silence the positive testimony of Matthew and Luke is thrown out of court.

The argument from silence, however, doesn't prove anything. Two credible witnesses testify that they actually saw the crime committed. The defendant may produce any number of men who testify that they didn't see it; and any intelligent jury will ignore the negative testimony of the many, and find a verdict of "guilty" on the ground of the positive testimony of the two. Two friends of mine spent several days in Washington City, and in writing to me of their visit, one spoke in raptures of the Congressional Library and the Lincoln Memorial. The other had much to say concerning other points of interest, but made no mention of the Lincoln Memorial or the Library of Congress. Must I, then, conclude that that first letter was a fabrication and that there are no such things in our capital city as a Lincoln Memorial or a Congressional Library because, forsooth, my second correspondent didn't mention them? The second doesn't contradict the first; doesn't deny that these things are there; it simply doesn't fall in with his purpose to speak of them.

Having disposed of the "argument from silence," we now look at the positive testimony of Matthew and Luke: In Luke 1:26-35, the angel Gabriel gives us the prediction: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God; and behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (vss. 30-31). Matthew tells us how the prediction was fulfilled, 1:18-25. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

Here are two competent witnesses agreeing in their testimony to the fact of the virgin birth, and on the ground of their positive testimony we accept it, even though other writers are silent upon the subject.

Of course it was supernatural; and that's just where the shoe pinches. The world is divided into two schools of thought, naturalists and supernaturalists. On the one side are those who declare that everything is the product of natural law; that the universe itself is the result of a slow process of evolution; that the Bible is just the same kind of book as countless other books; no miracles, no supernatural answers to prayer; and of course nothing supernatural about the birth of our Lord. He was born just as other men are born, with a human father as well as a human mother.

On the other side are those who believe, as I do, that we have a God great enough to work miracles; Nature's Lord, not her slave; the Author of all natural law, great enough and wise enough to suspend the operation of natural

law, and bring things to pass that nature alone could not achieve. And believing this, when Matthew and Luke, the inspired servants of God, tell us that a miracle took place at Bethlehem that first Christmas night, that our Lord was born of a virgin contrary to natural law, we accept it, we have no doubt of it. Such a Being as He is shown to be in these Holy Scriptures could not have been born in the usual way. Supernatural Himself, of course He must have had a supernatural birth.

Let us now take up the second question, What difference does it make? "None," some are saying; saying it from pulpits, and professorial chairs in universities and theological seminaries. "It doesn't make any difference, so what's the use getting excited about it?"

Well, let us see: In the first place, if Jesus was not virgin born, then Matthew and Luke have testified to a falsehood. And if they have spoken falsely here, what confidence can we have in what they have said elsewhere? So goodby Matthew and Luke, and goodby Acts of the Apostles, too, for Luke wrote that. Three precious books of our Bible gone!

Not only so, if Matthew and Luke cannot be trusted to tell the truth, can we have any confidence in John, and Mark, and Peter, and Paul, and all the rest? All are on exactly the same level. If some of them are false, perhaps all of them are; and so our confidence in the whole book is shaken, and it's goodby to the dear old book that we once revered as the inspired Word of God! "No difference"?

In the second place, If Jesus was not born of a virgin, he was born out of wedlock, and was therefore a bastard, and his mother an adulteress! (Forgive me, Lord, for merely uttering the blasphemous alternative!) Look at the record, Matt. 1:18. Are you prepared to admit that? Jesus Whom you admit to be the Son of God a bastard, and Mary,

declared to be highly favored of God, and revered the world over as among the purest and noblest of women, an adulteress! Perish the thought!

In the third place, If Jesus was not virgin born, then it follows necessarily that we have no Savior, and no gospel worth preaching to a sinful race. For if He was born in the ordinary way, of human parentage, He was just an ordinary man, like all other men. And if He was only a man, His death had no more significance than the death of any other man. To deny His virgin birth is to deny His atoning death, and to deny His atoning death is to leave us in a sinful world without Christ and without hope.

Our Lord Himself saw that, and made it clear when He said (Luke 24:46-47) "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The world's greatest problem is the problem of sin; the world's supreme need, the need of forgiveness. The divine Son of God, the Word, made flesh, dying on the cross, and rising from the dead, is God's solution of that problem, God's provision for that need, and on that basis alone are we authorized to preach to all men forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

IV.

THE REDEEMER: THE SINNER'S ONLY HOPE

IN THE TWO PRECEDING CHAPTERS WE HAVE seen that the Christ of the Bible is both God, and Man. We are now to see that this Christ is the sinner's only hope of salvation.

To save the lost was His mission on earth. The angel said to His parents before He was born, "Call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). His forerunner John the Baptist pointed Him out on the banks of the Jordan as "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He Himself said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). And Paul testifies, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15).

Christ saves us by taking our place under the law, and paying our debt and suffering the penalty that would otherwise have been exacted of us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Pet. 2:24). "He hath made Him to be sin for us Who know no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21). If the Bible teaches anything clearly and unmistakably, it teaches that Christ was the sinner's Substitute, and His death on the cross was an atonement for our sins.

This was His part. Our part, as sinners under the curse, is by faith to accept Him and His finished work as He is freely offered to us in the gospel. Salvation on God's part is Grace; on our part, Faith. God gives; we receive. And

so this Bible everywhere teaches that faith is the one essential condition of salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Such is God's plan to save the lost, and on these terms salvation is offered to all mankind. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

And now as we take a further step in the argument, we see the Scriptures plainly declaring that Christ Jesus the God-man freely offered to us in the gospel and received by faith alone, is our only hope of salvation, and if we reject Him, we must die in our sins. To establish this truth three lines of testimony will be offered:

First, the plain didactic statements of the Word of God: "Then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:8-12).

Of like import is the testimony of the apostle John: "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life,

and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:11-12).

Add to this testimony of the inspired apostles that of our Lord Himself: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

For those who receive this Bible as the inspired Word of God, such statements would seem to be conclusive; but we pass on to present the second line of testimony, namely, the Typical Teaching of the Bible. The Old Testament is full of types pointing to Christ, and many of them bear directly upon the point under discussion. We look at three, Noah's Ark, the Cities of Refuge, and the Paschal Lamb.

(A) The Ark: In that day of wrath, when the heavens were opened and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and death and destruction threatened to engulf the whole race, I doubt not that the tree tops, and the hill tops, and the highest mountain tops were crowded with terrified men, women and children, frantically struggling to escape the destroying flood. But all in vain! The waters rose higher and higher, till the tree tops, the hill tops, and the highest mountain tops were covered, and all the race perished in the flood, save the little colony of God's chosen ones within the ark. And that Ark is a divinely appointed type of Christ. Another day of wrath is coming, a day whose terrors are but dimly foreshadowed by the deluge of the patriarchs; and in that great and awful day, when the thunders shall roll, and the lightnings flash, and the storms of God's retributive justice shall come, our only hope of safety will be found in the shadow of His cross. Happy they who will have the right to say,

*Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is passed,
Safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last.*

(B) The Cities of Refuge. These were a definite number, well known, and easily accessible from every part of the land, and the rulers of the city in each case were authorized to afford shelter and protection to the manslayer until trial could be had. We can conceive of some one of the princes of the royal tribe, in the pride of his heart, ignoring the divinely appointed cities and seeking refuge in Jerusalem, the capital city, the joy and pride of every heart, the city that God Himself chose to place His name there. Surely he can find protection there. But would he? The authorities have had no instructions to that effect. No provision has been made for him there, and overtaken by the avenger of blood, his life must pay the penalty of his foolish pride.

Or we can conceive of some poor fellow in his ignorance fleeing to Nazareth for protection, honestly believing Nazareth to be one of the chosen cities. We pity a man who makes an honest mistake, but our sympathy cannot alter the facts in the case, and the facts here are, that Nazareth is not a city of refuge, that no provision has been made for protection here, and when overtaken by the avenger of blood, he must pay the penalty of his ignorance with his own life.

These cities of refuge are divinely appointed types of Christ. The manslayer fleeing for his life is the sinner. The avenger of blood represents the wrath of God on the sinner's track, with sword drawn ready to strike, and Jesus Christ is the City of Refuge. In Him we find protection, and in Him alone.

*Other refuge have I none, Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, O leave me, not alone, Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed, All my help from Thee I bring.
Cover my defenseless head, With the shadow of thy Wing.*

(C) The Paschal Lamb. A great danger was impending. The last of the ten plagues was about to fall, and the firstborn throughout the land were to be destroyed. The chosen people were warned in advance, and directions were given to slay the lamb and sprinkle its blood on the door posts and the lintel over the door, and the assurance was given that the blood thus sprinkled would be a sure defense against the destroyer. We can easily conceive of certain households substituting other things for the blood, so that the destroyer finds at this home water instead of blood. At another, baskets of luscious fruits, or fragrant flowers, and at still another a casket of costly gems. Pausing to consider, he reasons within himself, These homes have evidently been warned, and their occupants desire to escape; but my instructions call for blood, "When thou seest the blood, pass by." Water will not suffice, nor fruits, nor flowers, nor precious stones." And with that he enters, and the light of the home, the life of the firstborn, goes out. Even so, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7), and for His atoning blood there is no substitute.

To these two lines of testimony we now add a third, namely, The simple fact that God adopted this plan proves beyond question that there was no other possible plan. Consider the sacrifices involved in this plan:

(A) Sacrifices on the part of the Son: He left His Father's side, laid aside His royal robes and kingly crown, emptied Himself of the glory that He had with the Father from the foundation of the world, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Knowing from the beginning all that was involved, do you suppose He would have submitted to it, if any other plan had been possible?

(B) Sacrifices on the part of the Holy Spirit: To leave His own congenial abode, in the heavens, in delightful fel-

lowship with the Father, and the Son, and the holy angels, and take up His abode in a world of sin and sorrow and death, to be resisted, and grieved and insulted by those whom He came to save! Would you sacrifice your congenial home and take up your residence permanently in the jungles of "Darkest Africa" just for fun? Far greater was the sacrifice of the Holy Spirit in undertaking His part in the plan of salvation revealed in these Holy Scriptures. And knowing from the beginning just what the sacrifices were, I cannot believe He would have consented to the plan if any other plan had been possible.

(C) Sacrifices on the part of God the Father: To give up His only Son, and send Him into the world to be "despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; would He have allowed it if it had been possible to save us in any other way? See that Son in Gethsemane, the sin of the world on His head, and the woes of the world in His heart. "My soul," He cries, "is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and such was the anguish of His spirit that "He sweat as it were great drops of blood." And looking up to heaven He cries, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away." If any other plan had been possible, the loving Father would have removed the cup; but instead of removing it, He sent an angel from heaven to strengthen Him that He might drain that bitter cup to its very dregs; and in so doing announced to all the world that this is the only possible plan; that Jesus Christ is the sinner's only hope, and if we reject Him, we must forever die.

We now pass on to note the application of this truth: And in the first place, it applies to the skeptic, the infidel, the agnostic. The word skeptic means doubter; infidel, without faith; agnostic, literally without knowledge, the agnostic affirming that we do not know, and cannot know with certainty anything concerning eternal verities. The skeptic, the infidel, and the agnostic all agree in rejecting

Jesus Christ, the God-man, God's only provision for the sins of the world; and in rejecting Him, they seal their own doom.

"But," you may be saying, "these men are just as honest and sincere in their belief as you are. Won't a just God take that into consideration?" Let me say, very earnestly, that honesty and sincerity do not, and cannot alter facts. My believing a thief to be an honest man does not make him so, and the more honestly and sincerely I believe it, the more dangerous a thief he is to me. My believing a falsehood to be the truth does not make it the truth, and the more honest and sincere I am in that belief, the more dangerous a falsehood it becomes.

I want to tell you a story, an actual happening: A lovely home in the capital city of one of our Southern states. Twin baby boys have just come to enhance the happiness of the household. When just a few weeks old they become ill, and the physician is called. He makes his examination, and leaves a prescription at the drug store, where it is filled and sent out. But in a little while alarming symptoms appear. The physician is hurriedly summoned, but in vain! Somebody has blundered, poison has been administered, and in a little while those beautiful twin boys are in the cold embrace of death. Everybody connected with the transaction was perfectly honest and sincere, the doctor, the druggist, the parents, but their honesty and sincerity did not, and could not alter the fact. And even so, all the honesty and sincerity in the world cannot alter the fact that Jesus Christ is the sinner's only hope, and if we reject Him, we must "die in our sins."

This truth applies with equal force to the Jew, the Unitarian, and to all, by whatever name they may be called, who deny the essential Deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For the Jews as a people I have the profoundest sympathy. I can never forget that my Savior was a Jew; that the twelve apostles were Jews; that every book in the

Bible, with only two exceptions, was written by a Jew. The world owes to this people a debt of gratitude that never has been paid, and with the apostle to the Gentiles I can say, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved." But if ever saved, it must be by the truth. Falsehood cannot save. Falsehood can only delude and deceive and destroy; and the truth is that Jesus, the divine Son of God, is the sinner's only hope. He Himself said so to the Jews of His own day: Foreseeing His own rejection, He warned them faithfully of the terrible consequences, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

With equal force this truth applies to the "Moralist." I wage no war against morality. The moral man is infinitely to be preferred to the immoral. He is as a rule a respectable, honorable gentleman, a good neighbor, and a useful citizen, and perfectly honest in believing that nothing else is required either for this life or the life to come. He will admit, perhaps, that he's not perfect, but who is? He has his weak points, no doubt, but also some points that are very strong, and on the whole he averages up pretty well, and will take his chances at the last day. It was such a man, always boasting of his moral averages, that sent his hired man, who happened to be a Scotchman with a lot of common sense, to make a fence for the cattle. When it was done, the landlord wanted to know if it was sound and strong, and was informed that while it had some weak places here and there, it was unusually strong at other points, and on the whole it was a pretty good average fence. The landlord was enraged, and pointed out the fact that a fence was no stronger than its weakest panel; but the "canny Scotchman" merely replied, that he was always hearing about "averages" in the field of morals, and he thought he'd try it on the cattle!

This truth also applies to many who are not moralists, nor Jews and Unitarians, nor infidels and agnostics, those

who are simply neglecting the offered Savior. Indeed, neglect here is just as fatal as infidelity and atheism. Here are three men, equally sick with the same disease. For that disease a sovereign remedy has been discovered. The first man believes in it, and takes it, and gets well. The second man has no faith in it, and refuses to take it, and dies. The third man also believes in it, and intends to take it, but for the present simply neglects it until he shall find "a more convenient season," and he dies. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). To this question the apostle gives us no answer, for there is none. God Himself has given none. If He could have found one, He need not have given up His well beloved Son to die on a cross.

Now I know perfectly well that the position taken here will be characterized as narrow, and those who hold such views will be stigmatized as bigoted old fogies. Today as never before people are clamoring for universal tolerance in religion. "Give us broadminded preachers," they cry, "men who abound in the grace of Christian charity, who open the doors of the kingdom wide enough to admit the honest moralist, the honest Jew and the honest skeptic." For my part, there is no stigma in the word "narrow" in this connection, provided one is no narrower than our Lord Himself. He said, The way to heaven is narrow; the broad way leads to death.

Is it charity to withhold the truth simply because it happens to hurt? Is it charity for the surgeon to stay his hand just because the patient winces beneath the knife? On the lake of Geneva there is a curious old prison in which are confined such prisoners as are under sentence of death. On the morning appointed for the execution, the prison keeper appears with smiling countenance and pleasant speeches and bids the poor criminal to prepare for his release. "The authorities have granted a pardon, and have sent me to bear the welcome good tidings. Just step out that open door, and

down that dark stairway, where you'll find another open door; pass out of that, and you are free." With light heart and buoyant step the poor fellow passes out the open door, begins, as he supposes, the descent of the dark stairway, **PLUNGES** and **FALLS**, and is dashed to pieces on the rocks half a hundred feet below! Lured to his death by the fair, but false promise of life!

Such is the "charity" that proclaims salvation out of Christ. A charity that raises hopes only to be blasted by the eternal reality. A charity that deceives, deludes, and destroys. Out upon it! Away with it! "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

V.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON. "THERE ARE *three Persons* in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Corporeity is not essential to personality. The ability to think, to feel, and to choose constitutes personality, and the Holy Spirit possesses and exercises the power to do all of these. Our Lord Himself in speaking of the Holy Spirit uses the personal pronoun seven times in a single verse, John 16:13. We should never say "It" in speaking of the Holy Spirit.

The Work of the Holy Spirit is, in general, to apply the redemption purchased by Christ, and make it effectual: that is to say, To work *in* us that which Christ has worked out *for* us: or in other words, To make real in our experience that which Christ has made possible by His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His High-Priestly intercession at the right hand of God the Father.

The Spirit's work thus falls into two great divisions, first for the unsaved, and second for the saved. For the unsaved He is the Spirit of Conviction, the Spirit of Illumination, and the Spirit of Regeneration and Life, "Convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, and thus persuading and enabling us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel."

The sinner thus becomes a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ and by a new birth wrought in him by the Holy Spirit: and so the Spirit works in him that which Christ worked out for him, the Spirit actually accomplishing the purpose for which Christ died and rose again, and now intercedes.

It follows, therefore, that the work of the Holy Spirit in our redemption is just as important as that of the Father, or the Son; indeed, if the Spirit should fail to do His work, all that the Father and the Son have done, or might do, would be of no avail. Hence the danger of "resisting" or "grieving" and "quenching" the Holy Spirit: for since He alone can put us in possession of salvation, to extinguish the sacred fires that He kindles in our souls is to become guilty of that "eternal sin" which cannot be forgiven in this world, or in the world to come.

The unsaved one is now a child of God with his face set toward his Father's house on high, and the Spirit who has brought him thus far on his journey will not forsake him and leave him to go the rest of the way alone. "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of the Lord Jesus."

Let us then consider in the second place, the work of the Holy Spirit in behalf of Christians, and the Christian Church.

Our Lord in speaking to His disciples of this phase of the subject repeatedly calls the Holy Spirit "The Comforter." The Greek word so translated is *Parakletos*. In I John 2:1 the word is translated "Advocate"; but neither "Comforter" nor "Advocate" is an adequate translation. The word literally means *called alongside*, carrying with it the implication, at least, of a sense of need. The best translation, perhaps, would be "Helper." On our way home, we have by our side for every time of need a divine Companion and Helper, the Holy Spirit of God. If the help we need is comfort, He is our Comforter. If we need advocacy, He is our Advocate; whatever the need, the Holy Spirit is ever by our side to supply it.

And so He is to the Christian, and to the Christian Church, The Spirit of Holiness, holy in Himself, and working through His Word to produce in His people holiness of heart and life. Let us beware of "grieving" Him by sin-

ful thought, word, or deed, or by the sinful neglect of those "means of grace" through which He would accomplish His holy purposes.

He is also the Spirit of Truth, giving us the Bible, the word of truth, guiding us to its proper understanding, enforcing and applying it to our hearts and consciences, and thus making it "the Wisdom of God and the Power of God unto Salvation." What a comfort to the parent, and the Sunday school teacher, as well as the official minister of the Word, to know you have such a blessed Assistant in your work of imparting to those under your care a proper knowledge of that Word "which is able to make one wise unto salvation!"

For us also He is the Spirit of Guidance, opening and closing doors, as He did for Paul and Silas in Asia Minor, and whispering when we come to the parting of the ways, "This is the way, walk ye in it." When in need of guidance, seek it from the Word of God; study any Providential indications that may appear; take counsel with parents, pastor and friends, and be sure to ask the help of that never failing Companion at your side. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Power, to the individual and also to the Church—and here I purpose to tarry awhile. In His parting message to His disciples our Lord said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In this great text there are three things, our Task, our Field, and our Equipment. The Task is Witnessing to Christ: the Field is the World, and the Equipment, the Power of the Holy Spirit. This power had been promised, Luke 24:49, and for it the church must wait. The world was dying in sin, and waiting would seem to be a waste of time, but the Master said, Wait: "Tarry ye in the City of

Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

In obedience to His command, they waited, waited on their knees, for we read, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren” (Acts 1:14). Here was united prayer, importunate prayer, believing prayer: and as they prayed the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God came upon them, and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Peter’s message is the only one that is recorded, but they were all filled with the Spirit, and they all spoke; and as a result of their combined testimony enforced by the Spirit of Power, three thousand souls were added to them in a single day, and the church itself received a mighty uplift, being transformed from a little handful of weaklings into “a mighty army with banners.”

Thus a new Dispensation, the Dispensation of the Spirit, was launched, and the day of Pentecost set the pace for all the days to follow, giving the Church an exhibition of the things that are now possible. The Church today faces the same task, is confronted by the same field, and her indispensable equipment is still the power of the Spirit of God.

But power to be effective must be applied. The power of a horse, the power of electricity, the power of a great river, must be *harnessed* by means of appropriate machinery before it can be effective in the accomplishment of a given task. The machinery is the connecting link between the power and the work to be done, and is thus an essential factor in the process. Without the machinery nothing happens. Where the work is already under way, if the machinery be removed, the work stops.

All this is just as true of Spiritual Power. The power of the Holy Spirit, though infinitely greater than horse power, and water power, and electric power all combined, must also be “harnessed” in order to become effective. In this

case, too, appropriate machinery must be provided to serve as a connecting link between the source of power and the point of need; and that machinery is a human heart and life, or an organized group of human hearts and lives, an individual Christian, or the Christian church.

The story of Gideon is an illustration of this: God had a great task confronting Him, a task which only God could accomplish, the deliverance of His people from their enemies, the Midianites; but while only God was adequate to the task, God alone could not carry it through; He needed an ally. And so we read that "the Spirit of God came upon Gideon," literally, "clothed Himself with Gideon," put on Gideon as a man puts on a garment, and made Gideon the connecting link between the power and the work to be done. And so by the power of the spirit of God working through human machinery the work was done.

What a privilege to be so used; to be used by God Himself in doing God's work of seeking and saving the lost, and in fighting God's battles against the powers of darkness! How comforting too, to know that in the doing of our own allotted tasks we have the mighty power of God working in us and through us and making failure impossible! But how sobering the thought that we may neglect, or refuse, to supply the necessary machinery, and so leave God without the expected ally! We may not say that God *cannot* save a soul without the help of another soul, but we do say that ordinarily He *does* not; and precious souls all around us may be in their sins today because you and I have not supplied the machinery the Holy Spirit is waiting for.

Another truth we must keep in mind: Power, though applied, may be held in check. An electric street car running merrily along carrying its quota of passengers to their destination suddenly stops. What's the matter? There is no lack of power, and no lack of machinery through which the power can be applied. Out yonder in the power house great dynamos are throbbing with tremendous power ready

for use, and all around are innumerable wires waiting to carry that power to the point of need; but something has gone wrong with the machinery, and the connection between the power and the task has been broken, and the car cannot finish its journey until the defect has been repaired and the broken connection re-established.

This, too, is true of spiritual power, and how often we have seen it happen, with the individual and with the Church. It happened in the Churches of Galatia nineteen hundred years ago, and well nigh broke their faithful shepherd's heart, for he mournfully writes, "Ye did run well: who did hinder you?" (Gal. 5:7). Pastors today are witnessing the same defections in individual members, and the Chief Shepherd must often grieve at the sight of a congregation losing the fire and fervor of its earlier days. When this does happen, what shall be done about it? Well, what did that motorman do when his car stopped? Get an oil can and lubricate the machinery? Or a paint bucket and brush and give it a fresh coat of paint? Or a broom and sweep up the floor? Or a dusting cloth and remove the dust? Or gather the crowd together, with offered refreshments, and hold a conference? Nothing of the kind; in fact he did nothing at all except report the situation to headquarters, and then sit down and quietly wait for the "trouble man" to come and re-establish the broken connection.

Shall we not learn wisdom from this homely illustration? Let individuals, and congregations, search their own hearts and lives in the light of God's word, and by the help of God's Spirit discover the positive sin, or the failures in duty, that have robbed us of our power, and then by the aid of the ever-present Helper at our side remove the obstruction and let the power have free course once more.

A final consideration: For the individual congregation and for the Church as a whole, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Administration. He is the *True Vicar* of Christ, Christ's

personal representative on earth taking charge of His affairs and administering His estate. Christ said to His disciples, Matt. 28:18, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth": and He in turn has entrusted this authority to the third person in the Holy Trinity who, as God, possesses all *power* in His own right.

This divine being possessed of all power, and clothed with all authority, on the day of Pentecost came down from heaven to earth just as truly as Christ ten days before went back from earth to heaven and took up His residence in the Church and there occupies the seat of authority for the purpose of administering our Lord's inheritance.

As the Spirit of Administration He would take charge of all things pertaining to the Church's welfare. He has given the Church her "rule of faith and practice," and for the asking would give the particular message for every separate occasion. He would guide His Church in the selection of pastors and officers. He would direct all her movements. He would shape all her policies. He would settle all controversies. He would solve all problems, and give success to all her undertakings.

To show more clearly what I mean, take a few cases from the inspired record: The most important single event in the New Testament after Pentecost is the opening of the door of the Church to the Gentile world, as recorded in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Our Lord had said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"; but narrow-minded Jews as they were, nobody seemed inclined to go; as yet everything centered in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, down at Caesarea a Gentile soldier, Cornelius, the Roman centurion, was fasting and praying. In answer to his prayer, he was bidden to send to Joppa and call for Simon Peter. While the messengers were on their way, Peter, praying on the housetop, fell into a trance and saw that wondrous vision, a great sheet containing all manner

of beasts and creeping things, clean and unclean, the presence of the unclean making all the rest unclean. Being thrice commanded to "rise, kill and eat," and thrice protesting that he had never eaten anything common and unclean, he heard the Divine Voice sternly replying, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

While Peter thought on the vision, the messengers of Cornelius arrived, and the Spirit said to the wondering apostle, "Go with these men without questioning, for I have sent them."

He went; found a goodly congregation; preached the Lord Jesus, crucified and risen and mighty to save Jew and Gentile alike; and "while he yet spake, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard." They were then baptized and admitted to membership in the Church.

This supreme event was brought about under the personal direction of the Holy Spirit acting in His capacity as the Spirit of Administration, the Holy Spirit working simultaneously in two hearts far apart, the one a Jew, the other a Gentile.

Take another case: In carrying out God's plan of world-wide evangelization, the time had now come to launch the Foreign Missionary movement. Nobody, however, had as yet thought of it. But in the Church at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers, including Barnabas and Saul, and "as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia, and from thence they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:2-4). Here we have another movement on the part of the Church of tremendous importance, and for it also a lost world is indebted to the Holy Spirit acting in His capacity as the Spirit of Administration. He originated the movement. He selected the men, and He

sent them forth to their field. And it is most interesting and instructive to observe that the Church in which He started the movement was at the time engaged in "ministering to the Lord and fasting." Whenever He finds a Church that is listening, He will be sure to speak.

Consider one more case: The opening of the door of the Church to the Gentiles and the launching of the Foreign Missionary movement had created a new situation, and the Church was now wrestling with a very serious problem: What shall be the Church's policy and practice toward these Gentile converts? Some insisted that they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, while others contended that this "yoke of bondage" had been lifted.

A General Assembly or Council was called at Jerusalem, where the subject was debated at length and finally settled. Though James occupied the moderator's chair, the real presiding officer was the Holy Spirit. He directed their thoughts and brought them to a unanimous decision; and so conscious were they of His presence and His guiding hand, that they sent their decision down to the Churches in His name, saying, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Here again we see the Holy Spirit as administrator of the Church's affairs, moving upon the hearts and minds of an official assembly, settling its controversies, and in a very vital matter shaping the policy and practice of the Church for all time to come.

These are some of the important functions performed by the Holy Spirit, administering our Lord's affairs, as He occupies the seat of authority in the Church; and these, and others of equal importance, He stands ready to discharge today in all the assemblies of His people, both local and general. But it is much to be feared that we have fallen far short of this divine ideal. The average Church has largely taken the reins into its own hands, and is directing

its own movements and shaping its own policies and practices, and selecting pastors and officers for its own worldly reasons with little regard to intellectual and spiritual qualifications. And so the Spirit of God has been largely excluded from active participation in the Church's affairs, with the result that His voice is seldom heard, and His hand seldom seen, and His blessing for the most part looked for in vain.

VI. THE WAY OF ESCAPE

THE BIBLE IS DIVINELY INSPIRED. "HOLY MEN of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). Guided by the Spirit of Truth, the writers were preserved from error, and so gave us an infallible rule both of faith and conduct. Not only in the act of writing, but also in the selection of their material. "Many other signs did Jesus which are not written in this book," we are told in John 20:30. It was not necessary, and perhaps it was impossible, to record everything; and so from the great mass of available material they were led by the Spirit to select just such incidents as would serve the divine purpose.

A most interesting and important selection is the conversion of the jailer at Philippi, recorded in Acts 16:19-34. The purpose of the Holy Spirit in this selection was unquestionably to set forth God's Plan of Salvation; to answer for all men, and for all time, that most important question, How shall sinful man be justified before God?

How beautiful is the Spirit's manner of dealing with this question! Not in some elaborate theological treatise, nor in some learned philosophical essay, interesting and important as such productions might be in their own proper place; but after the manner of the Master himself who so often employed the parable and the object lesson, who, when He would teach the lesson of humility took a little child and set him in the midst and said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven"; Who, when He wanted to teach His disciples how to be free from anxious care, pointed to the little birds, and to the flowers of the field, and declared that

His children are far more precious in His sight than these; Who, when He would show us God's attitude toward the sinner, gave us the parable of the three lost things, the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. After the same manner the Holy Spirit desiring to show us how men are saved, throws on the canvas right before our eyes the picture of a man actually going through the process of being saved; with a few skillful strokes of the brush shows us a sinner crying out "What must I do to be saved?" and then produces an inspired apostle to answer the question.

Look for a moment at the background: A dark background truly. A poor girl tormented by an evil spirit. Heartless men taking advantage of her affliction to enrich themselves. Enraged when the poor girl is healed and they realize that the source of their gains is dried up, they drag the servants of God before the magistrates and on a false charge secure their conviction and imprisonment. And now it is midnight, and all seems well. Silence broods over the city. But hark! In the prison is heard the sound of prayer and praise where prayer and praise are not wont to be heard. An earthquake follows. God himself is taking part in that Roman lawsuit, and interposing in behalf of His servants. Their chains are loosed; the prison doors are thrown open, and the servants of God are free.

Just at this point the jailer appears. Having sketched the background, the divine Artist now puts on the canvas the chief actor. Seeing the prison doors wide open, and supposing that his prisoners had of course taken advantage of the opportunity to escape, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, when Paul cried out with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." And now he realizes that this is no ordinary earthquake; that he is in the midst of a scene possessing divine significance. Perhaps he had heard that poor girl's testimony as she cried after them up and down the streets, "These are the servants of God who show us the way of salvation," and now con-

sconscious of his own need, he comes trembling into their presence and cries, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Here, then, is the first step in the process of being saved: Conviction for sin, wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. The man who has just eaten a hearty breakfast feels no need of food. The person who thinks himself perfectly well feels no immediate personal interest in a physician. And until the sinner is brought under conviction for sin and realizes that "The wages of sin is death," he cannot be made to feel his need of a Savior. And so, the Spirit of Truth in the effort to show the Bible plan of Salvation, as the first step in the process points us to a sinner under conviction, realizing through the work of the Holy Spirit his lost estate and crying out, "What must I do to be saved?"

How glad we should be that an inspired apostle is present to answer that question! Paul and Silas doubtless went to prison that day wondering what it all meant. Only a few days before they had come to Philippi in response to a divine call. In a vision they had seen a man of Macedonia beckoning and crying out, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Obedient to the heavenly vision they had come. Was it for this? To be falsely accused, scourged and imprisoned? To see the work of God cease when scarce begun?

But God is at work in His own mysterious way His wonders to perform. The God of infinite compassion who saw the poor sinful woman at Jacob's well and "must needs go through Samaria to quench her unconscious thirst; Who heard the cries of the Gadarene demoniac and braved the perils of a stormy sea to restore him to his normal state; Who saw the Ethiopian groping in the darkness and sent Philip to lead him into the light; Who heard the prayer of Cornelius the Roman centurion and sent Peter to teach him the way of life; this God saw in the jailer at Philippi one of His chosen ones, heard his despairing cry, "What must

I do?" and in love and compassion sent the chiefest of all the apostles as a prisoner to answer that question.

Under these circumstances how important the answer! The answer of an inspired apostle; a servant of God whose mission it is to show us the way of salvation face to face with an honest, earnest soul inquiring the way; without question we shall here find the true answer.

Well, what is it? Join the church and receive the sacraments? So some would have answered, but not so the apostle Paul. The church and the sacraments are important in their place, but their place is not here.

Break off your bad habits. "Quit your meanness?" Some have given this answer, but this is not the answer of the inspired apostle.

Get busy, go to work, and see how much good you can do? So some have answered, but not so these servants of God whose mission it is to show us the way of salvation.

Come to the altar and seek for prayer? Read your Bible? Do penance, and perhaps after a while God will have mercy? So thousands have answered, but this is not the answer here.

What then? How shall one be saved? Listen, while the inspired apostle gives us God's answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Not one word about the church and the sacraments. Not one word about reform. Not one word about good works. And not one word about coming to an altar and asking for prayer. **ONLY BELIEVE.**

Believe what? Believe whom? All important is the object of faith. Here is a man spending the night in the tenth story of a city hotel. At midnight he is awakened by the cry of "Fire!" He rushes to the fire escape and throws himself on it only to fall and be dashed to pieces on the pavement a hundred feet below. He believed, but perished because the fire escape was defective. His faith was all right, but the object of his faith was all wrong. And so

the apostle is careful to say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," one who possesses saving power, whom you can safely trust.

Does any one ask, "What must I believe about Him?" Believe in His Deity. Your condition is hopeless unless God comes to the rescue. Believe also in His humanity. To redeem you from the curse of the law He must be "made of a woman, and made under the law." As such He took your place, paid your debt, and suffered your penalty. Believe, too, that this God-man is the Christ, the Anointed One, God's chosen Savior. Man is a sinner by his own fault, and if saved it must be in God's way, and by a Savior of His own appointment.

And if you should say, "I believe that already; I believe in His Deity; I believe in His Humanity; I believe He is God's Chosen One, and therefore man's only hope. I know He has saved thousands: I have a mother, the best woman in the world, and I know He has saved her. I have a sainted father now in glory, and I know that He saved him. I cannot help believing in Him."

But listen! The word is not "in," but "on." "Believe *on* the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Here is a man who has fallen into a deep pit. Friends passing by hear his cries and come to his rescue. Procuring bucket, rope and windlass and putting them quickly into position, they let down the bucket and tell him to get in. He looks at the bucket, and the rope, and the windlass, and all seem sound and strong. He recognizes in the faces of the men at the top his own best friends, able and willing to draw him up to safety. As he takes it all in, there isn't in his mind a shadow of doubt in regard to a single feature of the plan. He believes in the bucket; he believes in the rope; he believes in the windlass, and in the men at the top. Well, why doesn't he come up? You see it isn't enough to believe *in*

the plan; he must accept it, and commit himself to it, and give it a chance to do its work. In other words, he *must get in the bucket*.

And just so, true faith not only believes in Christ, but receives Him and rests upon Him, and Him alone for salvation. Such is the sinner's condition that nothing else will avail. "Dead in sin"; "By nature a child of wrath," joining the church and receiving the sacraments, reforming the life and doing good works will not reach his case. What he needs, and what he must have, is a divine Savior, who died in his place, and whose death atones for his sins, and who therefore "has power on earth to forgive sins."

All this being true, the sinner may be saved in the twinkling of an eye. In less time than it requires to read these few sentences he may become a child of God by faith in His dear Son. I put nothing between the sinner and the Savior; no church, no sacrament, no altar, but point him directly to the cross on Calvary and cry, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The publican prayed, and that very hour went down to his house justified and saved. The thief on the cross cried, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom," and that very moment received the gracious response, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And you, dear reader, just now, just where you are, may receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and have at once the sweet consciousness that your name is written in the Book of Life. Will you do it?

If you will; if you have, you are ready for the next step. This man at Philippi did not stop with merely believing. That same hour of the night he confessed his faith, received baptism and united with the church. This is the place of the church in God's plan. I shall not stop to discuss the possibility of your being saved out of the church. All that you, or any one, ought to ask is, What is the divine plan? What would God have the believer do next? And in regard to this, there can be no sort of doubt. "The Lord

added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). *The Lord* added; *He* put the saved ones into the church.

The young Christian, the newborn child of God, needs the church. Needs it at once, and God has graciously made provision for meeting that need. A little boy of ten was converted and wanted to join the church, but his father said, "You are too young; wait a few months, and if you hold out, then you can join." A few days afterwards, a storm was seen brewing, and the father and little son went out to the pasture to bring up the sheep. As they were entering the fold one by one, John with his little crook would drive the lambs away and not allow them to enter. The father remonstrated, "What do you mean, son?" "Oh," said John, "they are only little lambs, not worth much any way, and I thought I'd just keep them out in the cold for a few months, and if they held out, then I'd let them in." The father saw the point, and offered no further objection.

And now that the sinner has received Christ and professed his faith by uniting with His church, he is ready for the next step. These servants of God are sore from their recent scourging. Hungry, too. And this newly born child of God out of love and gratitude washes their stripes and provides food. And this is the place in God's plan for good works. Not before salvation, but afterwards. Not in order to be saved, but because saved already. In love and compassion for lost humanity, and out of love and gratitude to the Savior, strive to follow in His footsteps as He "went about doing good." There is no such thing as "an idle Christian." "Faith without works is dead."

How beautifully now the divine Artist puts on the finishing touches! The great question has been answered. The once lost sinner is now resting by faith on Jesus the Christ of God. He has made an open profession of his faith and brought his household with him into the church. He has offered loving and grateful ministry to the Lord's suffering

servants. And now the divine Spirit begins to bear witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, and his heart is filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And this is the place of joy in the Bible plan of salvation, and we need not expect it elsewhere. You may be a believer, but if you refuse to profess your faith; or confessing Christ, refuse to take up the duties of the Christian life, you cannot have "the witness of the Spirit"; and lacking this, you cannot experience the joy of salvation and the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Confess Christ before the world; consecrate your life to His service and follow Him in His loving ministry to the needy, and the songs of the angels around the throne will speedily find an echo in your own soul.

Section II

Man's Response to God's Overtures



I. THREE TYPES OF CONVERSION

I ONCE THOUGHT THAT EVERYBODY WAS converted in the same way. How much worry and anxiety it would have saved me if I had known that in the Bible itself we find three different types.

The first is that of Saul of Tarsus who became after his conversion Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. The record is found in Acts 9:1-6. Called upon to tell his experience, Saul would have to say something like this: I was a Pharisee and a persecutor. I believed that it was my mission on earth to destroy that Galilean heresy that sprang up in connection with Jesus of Nazareth, and beginning at Jerusalem, I made havoc of the church, entering into every house and arresting men and women and committing them to prison. When they were brought to trial, I gave my vote against them, and many were put to death. I punished them oft in every Synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly furious against them I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Having completed my task in Jerusalem, I obtained from the High Priest letters to the Synagogue at Damascus, authorizing me if I should find any of this way, whether men or women, to bring them in chains to Jerusalem. Thus equipped, I was on my way to Damascus, and almost there, when a marvelous thing happened: Suddenly there shone round about me a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun. I was overwhelmed as were my companions, and together we fell to the earth, and I heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And I said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And then, though blind to the physical

world around me, I saw, what I had never seen before, that Jesus the Nazarene was both Lord and Christ; and trembling and astonished I threw myself at His feet in wholehearted submission and cried out, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Such is the story. Let us consider it for a moment. Here is a clear case of sudden conversion. And not only sudden, but convulsive and overwhelming. And so vivid were his impressions that Saul remembered the experience as long as he lived. Relating it before King Agrippa many years afterwards, he tells just when and where it took place, and all the attendant circumstances: At mid-day. On the way to Damascus. To persecute the church. A glorious light. An audible voice. A vision of the Christ. Need we wonder that the subject of such an experience was convulsed through and through? That flood tides of emotion surged through him like the waves of an angry sea? And that he was blinded, and overwhelmed, and lay prone upon the earth, and for three days afterward had no desire for food or drink?

"Is this a type of conversion?" you ask. "Was anybody else ever converted this way?" If you doubt it, read the story of the great revivals in the early history of this country. Though you need not go back that far. Many a time in my childhood have I heard God's people relate such experiences: out in the old country church or at the annual campmeeting. At the 11 o'clock service, under the faithful and fearless preaching of the terrors of a broken law, I saw myself suspended by a brittle thread over the mouth of the bottomless pit, and the sword of justice drawn, ready to cut that brittle thread in twain; when in terror and despair I cried to God for mercy, and in love and mercy He heard my cry, and forgave my sins, and instead of Sinai's dreadful thunderings, I heard the sweet whisper from Calvary, "Go in peace, sin no more."

Such experiences are never forgotten, and those who have passed through them remember, as long as they live, just when and where they took place, how real and vivid they were, and what waves of holy emotion surged through their souls.

So much for the first type. Look at the second, Matt. 9:9. Matthew would say something like this: I was a tax collector. My home was in Capernaum, that great Galilean city where Jesus spent so much of His time; where many of His mighty works were done. The whole city, as well as the country round about, was talking about Him. I had seen Him, and heard Him, many times. Had witnessed some of His miracles, and had been thinking about His claims. And one day, I shall never forget it, as I sat at my desk writing tax receipts, I saw Him approaching, and as He reached my side, He paused, and looking at me in love He said in a quiet, yet powerful and persuasive voice, "Matthew, follow me." And realizing my need of Him, and convinced that He alone could satisfy my soul's undying thirst, I rose up, left all, and followed Him. And I've been following as best I could from then till now.

In some respects Matthew's experience is just like that of Saul. He, too, remembered the time and place and all the attendant circumstances, and relating the story long afterwards, tells us where he was and what he was doing, when he passed from death to life. But while Saul's conversion was convulsive and overwhelming, Matthew's was calm and quiet. No vision of glory. No voice out of the heavens. No shock that blinded and convulsed him and threw him to the ground. Matthew rose up and followed Jesus just as quietly and dispassionately as he went about his daily task. If Saul's conversion can be likened to an earthquake shock, or a stormy sea, that of Matthew was like a mountain lake bathed in the beauty of an autumn sunset, with scarcely a ripple on the surface of the waters and hardly a leaf rustling among the trees.

And in exactly the same way thousands of God's children through all the centuries have come to the saving knowledge of the truth. As a rule they are men who are naturally quiet and undemonstrative; men who never "lose their heads," who never become greatly excited about anything; men who are in the habit of doing their own thinking and reaching their own conclusions. They have been reading the Bible, and hearing sermons for years; and then one memorable day they come face to face with Jesus and see Him as they never saw Him before, and by the help of God's good Spirit they yield, they surrender, accepting Him as Savior and Lord, and consecrating their lives to His service. That holy hour they will never forget; but they do this, as they do everything else, quietly and deliberately and dispassionately, with no whirlwind nor tempest, with no earthquake nor ocean storm.

Now consider the third type, the experience of John the Baptist recorded in Luke 1:13-15. When called upon to relate his experience, John would have to say something like this: I have listened to these experiences of yours with deepest interest, and yet with wonder and amazement. They are marvelous stories, but they sound to me like one speaking in an unknown tongue. Conversion is an experience that I know nothing about. I have never had a conversion, so far as I know. As far back as I can remember I have been a child of God. I've heard my father Zacharias tell how the angel Gabriel appeared to him as he ministered in the Temple, and assured him that his prayer had been heard and that his wife Elizabeth should bear him a son who should be called John, who should be the forerunner of the Lord and be full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Through the agency of that Spirit I must have become God's child before I was born. At any rate, however it may be explained, I have no recollection of an experience that you call conversion, for I have never known the time

when I did not believe in the Lord my Savior and when I did not love and serve Him.

John had godly parents: he was the subject of many prayers, and we should not wonder that a prayer-hearing God answered those prayers so early in his life that he had no conscious experience of conversion. And I am perfectly satisfied that this is the experience of countless thousands of God's children; those who, as a rule, have been brought up in Christian homes, and taught from infancy the doctrines and duties of our holy faith.

For whatever it may be worth, I desire to say, This was my experience, and with profoundest gratitude to God for godly parents and a Christian home, I bear my testimony. My father was a minister of the gospel of the highest type, and my mother a companion and helpmeet worthy of him, and together they walked, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Whether he was at home or not, and much of the time he was not, morning and evening of every day saw mother and children gathered about the fireside for family worship. Of the eleven children that God gave them, ten are already with father and mother in the Father's house above, and the other is on the way. They gave me to the gospel ministry when I was born, and never for a moment doubted that God had accepted the gift. Why should it be thought a thing incredible that the prayers of such parents should be heard so early in his life that he would never be able to recall the time or place of his conversion?

"You don't believe in the new birth, then, in such cases?" Indeed I do. "Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God." The Bible clearly teaches the necessity of the new birth, a necessity to which there are no exceptions, but it nowhere teaches the necessity of our knowing when or where. Regeneration is the act of God's Spirit, and that Spirit can work the new birth in the four

year old child, or even in the unborn babe, just as easily as in the man or woman a hundred years old.

Of these three types of conversion, I verily believe the last is the best. In a meeting for public testimony, a recent convert arose and in a burst of enthusiasm cried out, "Brethren, I want you to help me praise God for His wonderful salvation. I was a drunkard, and He saved me from that. I was a gambler, and He saved me from that. I was a blasphemer, and He saved me from that. I was leading an impure life, and He saved me from that." When he had finished the leader said, "Yours is indeed a wonderful salvation, brother, and all of us, I know, feel like glorifying God on your behalf; but I can tell of a more wonderful salvation than that, for He saved me when I was a little child, before I knew what it was to be a drunkard, or a gambler, or blasphemer; before I knew even the meaning of an impure life."

As for me, I shall never cease to be grateful that God saved me in childhood, and by His grace kept my feet from wandering in paths of open sin; and if I had a thousand souls to be saved, I'd want them all saved in this way.

But perhaps you are asking, "How shall I know that I've been converted at all if I have no conscious experience to which I can point? Since I cannot put my finger on the time and place of my conversion, may it not be possible that I'm cherishing a false hope in believing myself a Christian?" That was my question, too, and for years I found no satisfactory answer; and there were times when I was well-nigh in despair. But let me ask you a question: How do you know that you were born the first time? Do you remember it? Have you a conscious recollection of the time and place and all the attendant circumstances? Well, why haven't you been going about all these years with a long face and a heavy heart wondering whether you've been born or not? You say, "So long as I am alive now, I don't need to worry about the experience of being born. That which is alive

today must have been born somewhere and sometime. There's no way to life except through birth." And so you are satisfied, and don't need to worry about being born the first time.

And in exactly the same way you may be satisfied about being born again. Are you spiritually alive now? Alive to God? Have you accepted Christ as your Savior, and are you now resting on Him alone for salvation? Have you repented of sin? Do you love God? His house, His Word, His cause? Are you walking in love toward the brethren, and toward all men? Are you bringing forth the "fruit of the Spirit, love, peace, joy, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faithfulness, self-control?" Are you growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? These are some of the evidences of life; life through the Spirit of God; and if you find these in your life, you need not worry about your conversion, for he who possesses these things has been born of God, even though he may not know when, or where, or how.

II.

CHILDREN OF GOD BY A THREEFOLD TIE

WE ARE NOT NATURALLY CHILDREN OF GOD. "By nature we are children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3); and must **BECOME** God's children in accordance with a wondrous plan which is revealed to us in this blessedly glorious Book. In that plan there are three steps, Adoption, Regeneration, or the New Birth, and Faith.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:14-15). We know what adoption is in the relation of man to man, and this helps us to understand what it is in the relation of man to God. "Adoption," as defined by the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "is an act of God's free grace whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the children of God." Adoption is thus an act, not a work, nor a process. It is an act of God's free grace, not of merit, nor desert. And that which distinguishes this act of free grace from all other such acts is, that herein we are received into the number of God's children, and have a right to all the privileges that belong to that relationship.

This gracious act of adoption took place in the counsels of eternity, when God the Father chose an innumerable company out of every nation, kindred and tongue, and gave them to His only begotten Son in the covenant of redemption to be His mystical Body and Bride, the one Family of the living God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that

we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us *unto the adoption of children* by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Eph. 1:3-5).

The Christian is a child of God not only by adoption but also by Regeneration, or the New Birth. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of Regeneration, even the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5). "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

We know what it means to be born, and this helps us to understand what it means to be born again. By our first birth we become the children of man; by our new birth we become children of God. By our first birth we become partakers of the human nature; by our new birth we become partakers of the divine nature. The author of the new birth is the Holy Spirit, and the instrument that He uses in bringing it about is the Word of God: "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). Bearing in mind that "water" is a type of the "Word" in its cleansing and purifying power (Eph. 5:26) our Lord in John 3:5 brings together in a single utterance both the Agent and the Instrument of this new birth, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

REGENERATION, THEN, IS THAT RADICAL CHANGE WROUGHT IN THE SOUL BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING THROUGH THE WORD, BY WHICH ONE BECOMES PARTAKER OF THE DIVINE NATURE, THE ADOPTED CHILD BECOMING NOW A BORN-AGAIN CHILD OF GOD.

Why isn't Adoption sufficient? Why must one be born again? Because Adoption is merely an outward, legal change. It changes one's relation to God, but does not

affect the heart, the nature, the character and conduct. Among men, the adopted child has a new name, a new family relation, and is the heir to the family estate; but the same old blood flows through his veins, and his disposition and tastes and personal characteristics have not been touched, even after the adopted parents have done for him everything they can by way of education and training and a wholesome environment.

But God is not so limited. He can do more than this, and He does. His children are destined to live with Him forever in the Father's House above; and for this, they must be as holy as the Father Himself. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). This work of preparation for heaven is what we call "Sanctification," or "the Christianizing of a Christian," making him fit for his part in "the inheritance of the saints in light"; and this preparation begins in Regeneration. In Regeneration we receive a new heart and a new nature. Regeneration gives us new tastes and new inclinations, so that we now love the things we once hated, and hate the things that we once loved.

In short, as the apostle declares (2 Cor. 5:17) "If any man be in Christ," that is, united to Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration, "he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." In a single sentence, then, we may say that while Adoption gives us a title to heaven, Regeneration gives us a fitness for heaven. And this is why our Lord said, "Ye must be born again," and "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:3 and 5).

We now pass on to consider the third Tie. The Christian is a child of God, not only by Adoption and Regeneration, but by Faith as well. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to

them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

Why Faith? Why are not Adoption and Regeneration sufficient? Because, in the plan of Salvation, God has a part, and man has a part. Have you ever noticed that God nowhere commands us to be adopted, or, to be born again? He says, "Ye *must be* born again," but never does He say, "*Be* born again"; and never "*Be* adopted." But He does command us to believe. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Why the difference? Because Adoption and Regeneration are God's part, and He'll take care of these; while Faith is man's part, and man must take care of that.

We can conceive of one who is so satisfied with things as they are that he refuses to be adopted and born again. I have read the story of a young girl who made her home in a family of wealth and influence where she enjoyed all the privileges of a daughter, and was looked upon as such. She was frequently asked if she had been adopted, but would always reply that she had never been quite willing to break off her family connections. But by and by her benefactor died suddenly, without leaving a will, and she found herself a penniless orphan.

An here we come face to face with our personal responsibility. In the gospel I am told that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); that "In the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:4-6).

By FAITH I assent, and consent, to God's gracious plan. By faith I accept the divine Son of God, the gift of His love, as my own personal Savior. By faith I TAKE MY

PLACE in the household of God, and step out before the world as an adopted and born-again child of God, accepting all the rights and privileges of that blessed relationship, and at the same time assuming all its duties and responsibilities, and so striving henceforth by His help to live as a child of God should live.

Such is the relationship of the Christian to God, a Child by a Threefold Tie, Adoption, Regeneration, Faith. We now pass on to consider some of the "rights and privileges" of that relationship:

(A) The Right of Support: We are not surprised when we are told that our Heavenly Father has made provision for spiritual sustenance, giving us in His Word "milk for babes," and "strong meat" for those who are more matured; but we sometimes overlook the provision that He has made for physical or material support. I have a dear friend who is fond of teasing and "jollyng," and he sometimes tries it on his children; and to his six year old who had asked for a pair of new shoes he said, "Joe, do you know how much a pair of shoes costs?" Not noticing the twinkle in the father's eyes, Joe promptly replied, "Well, Dad, don't you think it's a mighty sorry man that won't take care of his own kids?" May we reverently say that we couldn't think very much of a Heavenly Father who failed to provide for His children.

Our Father is interested in everything that concerns us.

At the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee a most embarrassing situation had arisen; the Mother of Jesus drawing Him aside said to Him, "The wine has given out." He had not begun His public ministry as yet, for He was waiting to begin it at the Passover at Jerusalem, and while He reminded her that His hour had not yet come, the situation of the bridegroom made such an appeal to His great loving, compassionate heart that He wrought a miracle before the time to relieve the embarrassment. Jesus is God, and is "the same, yesterday, today, and forever"; and His children

have the right and privilege of taking every trying situation to Him, even though it be in the realm of the physical and material.

“Be not anxious,” He said, “as to what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed, for your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things; and He who feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the flowers of the field, will not forget to take care of you. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

*My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands;
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.*

*I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, an alien by birth;
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown.*

*A tent, or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a mansion for me over there;
Though exiled from home, yet still I may sing
All glory to God, I'm the child of a King.
With Jesus my Savior, I'm the child of a King.*

(B) The right of Protection: Christians are not at home in this world. We are “strangers and pilgrims” here, and our pilgrimage through earth’s wilderness is not only difficult but dangerous as well. Peter, who had had dealings with him, warns us of our chief adversary: “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8); and Paul, who was no stranger in the spirit world, declares that “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

Besides these, there are "the world" and "the flesh" completing the trinity of our adversaries, and these three will see to it that the Christian life is not a pleasure party, but rather a fierce warfare in which there will be many casualties.

But the father is the child's natural protector, and the child of God may say with David, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower" (Ps. 18:2). His provision for our defense is seen in the same passage that reveals our danger: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:13-18).

Here we have weapons of defense, and weapons of offense; defensive weapons for every part of the body except the back, for the Christian warrior is not expected to turn his back to the adversary; and weapons of attack, the "sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God," and prayer the strong right arm that sends that sword-thrust home to the heart of the enemy.

But this is not all: If angels are among our adversaries, angels are enlisted on our side for defense. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34-7). Unseen and unheard, but really present, notwithstanding; and could these dull eyes

of flesh be opened, we should see, as Elisha's servant saw, that "they that are for us are more than they that are for them."

For our encouragement our Lord, changing the figure, declares, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

And so God's children are perfectly safe. Not one of them shall ever perish.

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

(C) The right to the Inheritance: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:16-17). We catch a glimpse of the Inheritance in His prayer in the upper room the night before His crucifixion: "And now Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," and further on in the prayer He says, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me" (John 17:5 and 24).

In the language of Scripture, "to see death" is to die; to "see corruption" is to experience corruption, and to "behold my glory" is to experience, or to share, that glory; and here in His great prayer, as the Heir to the inheritance He issues His official pronouncement making His people joint heirs with Himself to all He possesses. Just what that glorious inheritance is we may not say, for "Eye hath not seen, nor

ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him."

These are some of the "rights and privileges" of the "children of God"; we now pass on to consider some of the "duties and responsibilities." Perhaps the most obvious duty of all is

(A) Love for our heavenly Father; in view of what He is in Himself, and what He has done, is doing, and has promised to do, for us. This is "the first and greatest" of the commandments, "To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37-38). This commandment is binding upon all men, but more particularly upon those who have become the children of God, and are in the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of that blessed relationship.

(B) Love for our Father's other children. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14). And who are "the brethren"? Let the "Elder Brother" Himself give us the answer: "Whosoever doeth the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (Mark 3:35). There may be, and there are, differences in color: we may speak a different language; the Englishman and American saying "Father" the Hebrew "Abba," the Greek "Pater"; but to all who do His will He is the same glorious God, and all who draw near in the name of His only begotten Son are brothers to one another.

(C) To be obedient. His Word is the expression of our Father's will, given for the purpose of "teaching us what we should believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man"; and striving to fashion our lives according to its teachings, we shall find it "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." Obedience is the test of love: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," and the reward of obedience is the abiding

presence of the Father and the Son; "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:21-23).

(D) To be happy. Our Father's plan for His children is not gloom but good cheer. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). How much we have to make us happy! A gloomy Christian is a false witness against his heavenly Father, like the ten spies who brought back "an evil report" of the Promised Land, and "discouraged the hearts of the people" and moved them to turn back to the land of bondage. We who have enjoyed the blessedness of a place in our Father's family circle should be constantly saying both by precept and example, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" (Num. 10:29).

To sum it all up in the language of the apostle, The child of God is in duty bound to "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," "Worthy of God, who hath called you to His kingdom and glory" (Eph. 4:1; I Thess. 2:12). A child of God by a threefold tie; partaker of the divine nature through the new birth; a temple of God through the Holy Spirit dwelling in you; live as the child of God should live. Let us say as we go forth to each day's task, My Father's good name is in my keeping; the world will judge Him by what it sees in me; I'm partly responsible for the reputation of His family; **I MUST NOT LET HIM DOWN.**

III.

THE SEPARATED LIFE, OR, TWO TYPES OF CHRISTIANS

Abraham sat in the door of his tent.—GEN. 18:1.
Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.—GEN. 19:1.

ABRAHAM AND LOT REPRESENT TWO TYPES OF Christians. Lot was living for this world, Abraham for the world to come. Living for this world, Lot chose the fertile plain of the Jordan and pitched his tent toward Sodom. With his heart set on the world, he found it to his advantage later on to leave the country and move into the city. And here in our text we find him sitting in the gate of the city of Sodom. A heathen city, where iniquity abounded, and whose sins were already crying out to God for vengeance.

The gate of an Oriental city was used for three purposes:

- a. It was the place of social intercourse.
- b. It was the market place, where the people bought and sold.
- c. It was also the place for holding the courts of justice.

Just how Lot was now engaged, as he sat in the city gate, is not certainly known. Some have supposed that he was one of the Judges of the City Court, and was now hearing some judicial controversy. At any rate, he was now a full-fledged citizen of the corrupt city of Sodom, mingling freely with her people in the place of business, the place of pleasure, and the place of legal controversy, and so thoroughly identified with the life of the city that some of his daughters had actually married into Sodomite families.

And thus Lot is set forth in the Scriptures as the type of the worldly-minded Christian. How do we know that Lot was a child of God at all? I fear that he did not make that impression upon the members of his own family. I feel pretty sure that he did not so impress his friends and

fellow-citizens in Sodom, and the world today knows that he was a child of God only because Peter tells us so (II Pet. 2:7-8).

And in all of our churches today we find this type of Christian experience perpetuated. Men and women who are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and yet with their affections set on the world, their thoughts and activities largely taken up with the things of the world, thoroughly identified with every phase of the life of this present evil age; as you watch them moving about among their fellow-men, you can discover no difference between them and the great mass of mankind. Their habits are the same. Their speech is the same. Their pleasures are the same. Their maxims, their methods of doing business are the same, and you wouldn't know that they were Christians at all if somebody hadn't told you so.

Abraham, on the other hand, was living for the world to come. While Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, Abraham was sitting in the door of his tent, and that lonely tent proclaimed him a stranger and pilgrim in the earth. Living for the world to come, he felt no call to identify himself with this world's social or political life. On the contrary, he heard the call of God to be separate; to come out from the world, to leave his father's house and his native land, and walk apart with God. And thus Abraham becomes the type of the spiritually-minded Christian, the separated Christian who has set his affections not on things on the earth, but on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

God's call is always a call to separation. The word Church means *called out*, separated from the mass of mankind, and God in employing this word has given us His conception of the Christian life. The Mosaic law was intended partly to teach this lesson. Peculiar rites and ceremonies erected a wall of separation between Jew and Gentile and proclaimed in thunder tones that God's people must be

separate. In the New Testament we find the same call: "Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18).

What sort of separation is intended? Not necessarily physical, but moral and spiritual. Separation from all the world's ungodly ways; from everything that is opposed to the will of God; from all that would lower the level of your spiritual life; from all that would cripple your spiritual powers and destroy your influence for good; from everything that would compromise your testimony as a witness for Christ; from everything that would make you forget that you are a pilgrim and a stranger here; from everything that would have a tendency to obliterate the distinction between the church and the world, the children of God and the children of the devil. Such is the nature of the separation to which God everywhere and forevermore calls His own.

What arguments shall we bring whereby to enforce His call?

1. The separated life is the helpful life, the useful life. Trouble overtook the man who mingled so freely with the world. War was declared against Sodom, and Lot as a citizen of that city was captured, and with all his goods was carried away to grace the triumph of the conquerors. Who is going to help him in this hour of need? Not his fellow-citizens in Sodom, for they are all involved in the same common ruin, but Abraham, the separated man of God. *He* comes to the rescue, organizes a little band of his household servants, pursues the enemy, and sets Lot at liberty.

Helpfulness! Usefulness! God's plan for every Christian. "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Out of you shall flow rivers of living water." Light in a dark world. Salt to preserve and sweeten human life. Rivers to enrich and beautify earth's barren deserts.

Such are some of God's ideals for that life of yours, and these ideals become realities just in proportion as you walk in the footsteps of Abraham. Where do you instinctively turn for help when trouble comes? Sickness, sorrow, disappointment and distress? Whom do you call to pray for you in that hour? Anxious for an unsaved child, or husband, or wife, where do you look for help? To the prayer-meeting Christian, or the ballroom Christian? Come out from thy native land and thy father's house. Cut loose from all entangling alliances with the world, and *then* I will bless thee, and *thou shalt be a blessing*.

2. The separated life is the only really happy life. Lot didn't find happiness in Sodom. He was too much the child of God to feel fully at home in such a city, but not enough God's child to move away, and so he stayed on from year to year, and "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (II Pet. 2:7-8). And so, today, thousands of Christians have just enough religion to make them miserable. Were they unregenerate, they might find a certain sort of happiness in association with the world, but being God's children by a new birth, they have tastes and aspirations that this world can never satisfy. Abraham found happiness in intimate fellowship with God, and won for himself the recognition of heaven when God said of him, "*Abraham my friend*." His was a happiness that the world did not give, and that the world could not disturb.

3. The separated life gives access to the throne of grace and power with God in prayer. Separation and intercession go hand in hand, and wherever Abraham pitched his tent, there he built an altar for worship. Listen, while Abraham the intercessor pleads for Sodom, the devoted city, (Gen. 18:23-32). Taking him into His confidence, God drew Abraham aside and made known His purpose concerning the city, and Abraham with the boldness of one friend face to face with another, asked, "Wilt thou also destroy the

righteous with the wicked? . . . Be it far from thee to do after this manner. . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And six times over, God met Abraham on his own terms, and never stopped giving until Abraham stopped asking. That's how a separated man can pray.

Lot, so far as the record shows, built no altar. Family altars were not the fashion in Sodom, and Lot was just enough the child of God to adopt the popular maxim, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Besides, living for this world, as he was, Lot had no time, and no taste for family worship. It may be that for a while, through the influence of Abraham's example, he went through the outward forms of worship, but his heart was not in it; he found no satisfaction in it, he received no answers, and becoming discouraged ultimately left it off.

In the great majority of Christian homes today the family altar, if it ever existed, has fallen into decay. With their affections set on the world; seeking its honors, its pleasures, its rewards, fathers and mothers with a God-given responsibility for the training of immortal spirits, have no time, or no inclination, for daily prayer and praise and religious instruction. Multitudes who still "say their prayers" find no joy in it, and receiving no answers have largely lost their faith in a prayer-hearing God. O, that we might cut loose from the world, and get back on "praying ground"!

4. The separated man sees the Bible in a new light, and is constantly receiving fresh communications from God. To Abraham God was constantly giving fuller revelations of Himself, and of His purposes (Gen. 18:17). He sends the angels on to Sodom to warn Lot of its approaching destruction, but He himself tarries a while with His "friend," and taking him into His confidence, reveals His purpose concerning the city. Lot, though living in Sodom, knew nothing of it all until the angels laid hold on him to take him away. Too busy listening to the myriad voices of the world, Lot heard not the still small voice of God. In the

quiet of your home, you go to the 'phone and call up a friend at his office downtown. You hear him distinctly, but he finds it impossible to hear a word that you say. His 'phone is working just as well as yours, and you are no farther away from him than he is from you; but before he can hear, he must close his office door and shut out the countless noises of the street. And just so, if you would hear and understand the voice of God in His Word with an ever-growing richness, you must be content to shut out some of earth's strident voices, and walk apart with God.

To the average Christian much of the Bible is a sealed book. Do you know why? Listen: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." This is "the natural man," observe, the unregenerate man. But the worldly-minded Christian has so much in common with the natural man, has so little of "the anointing" of the Spirit of Truth, that he is almost as ignorant of spiritual things as the unregenerate. Oh, that you might give God a chance to reveal Himself to you! To take you into His confidence and open up to you His Holy Word in all its fulness and richness, not only bringing all things to your remembrance, but showing you things to come!

5. The separated life brings God into the home, and makes His presence a living reality. To Abraham is given the privilege of entertaining not only angels, but the Lord Himself. Sitting in the door of his tent, the old patriarch saw the heavenly trio approaching, and with accustomed Oriental hospitality bowed himself before them and invited them to come in. The invitation is promptly accepted, and the lonely tent is irradiated with the light of celestial visitants. In the next chapter, we find Lot also entertaining. The Lord tarries behind to hold a tryst with Abraham His friend, but sends the angels on to Sodom with His message. Lot sees them approaching, and invites them into

his home. The day is far spent; the evening is at hand; come in, my Lords, and spend the night. But they said, "Nay, we will abide in the street all night." Lot insisted, and they reluctantly consented. But what a night they spent! Read the chapter, and see! No place, this, for holy angels! Much less for the Lord!

Is there anything in your home inconsistent with the presence of the Lord of glory? Anything to make holy angels unwilling to come in and spend the night? Books? Pictures? Pastimes? I have read of a college boy whose parents gave him for Christmas a copy of Holman's beautiful picture, *The Head of Christ*. He hung it on the wall of his room along with pictures of athletes, actresses and prizefighters. But one day a friend coming in saw him removing all these, and asking what he meant, was told with a significant look and gesture, "Somehow these didn't seem to belong where *that* was." And it may be that before God can come into some of our homes and light them up with His own blessed presence, some things will have to be removed.

6. The separated life provides the only safe path for the children, and the only sure way of bequeathing to posterity the blessing of a godly seed. Abraham gave to the world a posterity through whom all nations shall be blessed. The Jews are a most wonderful people. They failed once as witnesses for God, but the covenant with Abraham still stands, and some of these days God is going to take up the cause of His ancient people, restore them to their own land, and enable them to look in faith and penitence upon Him Whom they pierced, and then as His witnesses once more they shall carry "the law from Mt. Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," and in those days the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord even as the waters cover the sea."

Look, on the other hand, at the family of Lot: all but two of his children perished in Sodom, and if these two had

perished along with them, it would have been better for them, and better for Lot, and better for the world. For by these two daughters Lot became the father of Moab and Ammon, and thus the forefather of the Moabites and Ammonites. *Idolaters!* Moloch is their chief god. Before him they bow down and worship. To him they bring their infant offspring, and in his red-hot brazen arms are they consumed, a living human sacrifice. Closely related by blood to the true people of God, yet are they their most inveterate foe, and frequently denounced by the prophets of Israel, they are finally swept away in the flood of God's wrath. And yet, Moab and Ammon were the children of Lot, and Lot a righteous man!

Are any of you living for this world? Its honors, its pleasures, its rewards? Consider well the effect of such a life upon your children, and through them upon humanity the world over. A gentleman who lived at the foot of a mountain started out one day, alone as he thought, for a mountain tramp. There were two trails, the one comparatively easy and safe, the other most difficult and dangerous. The latter led to his favorite haunts, and he was just about to take it when he heard behind him the voice of his little boy calling out, "Father, take the safe path, for I'm coming too." "Which things are an allegory": all up and down, and over the mountain ranges of life, are the two trails. For the sake of our children who are following in our footsteps, and for the sake of humanity who shall receive the impress of our lives through them, let us by the help of God, evermore take the safe path.

7. The separated life has a glorious ending, and gives an abundant entrance into the city that hath foundations whose maker and builder is God. Abraham lived long and well. His was a useful life. A happy life. He died, loved and lamented. And when he reached the celestial city for which he had lived and labored, he found all his dearest treasures awaiting him.

On the other hand, Lot, the man who had lived for this world, lost it after all. The angels' message was urgent: "Escape for thy life," and there was no time to convert stocks and bonds and real estate into ready cash, and all was lost. I do not say it will always be so, for Satan is "the god of this world," and his servants are often prosperous and apparently happy, but going out of this world at last, they leave all its treasures behind, and enter into the eternal state miserable paupers. Alexander the Great, when he came to die, is said to have given instructions that he should be buried with both hands protruding from the casket, in order that all might see that the man who had conquered the world must go out of it at last empty-handed.

Lot's last days were full of sorrow and shame. The last entry in the record is that disgraceful scene with his two daughters in their mountain cave. His sun went down at noon, under a cloud black as midnight, and hundreds of years afterward Peter had to tell the world, for fear the world would never know, that Lot was a righteous man.

Not so with Abraham. His altar of worship proclaimed him a servant of God. His lonely tent declared him a pilgrim and stranger in the earth. While he lived, everybody knew just whose he was, and whom he served, and when he took his departure, everybody knew just where he had gone.

Isn't the separated life worth while? It costs something, to be sure, but it's worth all it costs, and infinitely more.

IV.

THE VALUE OF A LIFE, OR, WHAT IS YOUR LIFE WORTH?

JESUS HAD JUST CHOSEN THE TWELVE APOSTLES, and was now sending them to their task. A difficult and dangerous task. "Behold, I send you forth," said He, "as sheep in the midst of wolves." The enemies of the cross will put you to death with a clear conscience, believing that in so doing they are serving God. But fear not: you are in God's hands. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father." On another occasion when teaching the same truth He said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" Combining the two passages we get a shade of thought which is not in either alone, and which makes the Master's meaning strikingly beautiful: Sparrows are so small and insignificant, that the dealer will, with every two farthings' worth, throw in one for good measure; two sparrows for one farthing, and five sparrows for two farthings. And yet though so small and insignificant, not one of them, not even the little one thrown in for good measure, is forgotten before God. "Fear not ye therefore, for ye are of more value than many sparrows." The mother who cares for the canary in the bird cage, will surely care for the baby in the cradle; and the Father in heaven who takes care of the little sparrows may be depended on to take care of you, and make you immortal till your work is done.

Let us consider, then, the Value of a Life, or What is Your Life Worth? Why is a human life more precious than the life of a bird? What constitutes value? What determines the worth of a thing? One factor in determining

value is intrinsic worth, or the value of the thing itself. Gold is more precious than iron. Wood possesses greater value than clay. And so man is intrinsically more precious than a bird. He is in himself a higher order of being. He has not only a material body, and animal life, like the bird, but in addition to these he has reason, and conscience and immortality.

He was made originally in God's own image in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Was made the crown of creation, on the last creative day. All else was made for him. The heavens and the earth; sea and land; mountains and valleys and plains; the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the seas; all these God made first, and last of all He made man, the completion and crown of all, put him in possession of his inheritance, and bade him exercise the rights of royalty. Man thus possesses far greater intrinsic value than a bird.

A second factor in determining value is Efficiency, or what a thing can do. A piece of machinery may be perfect in itself, but unless it can be utilized in the doing of some useful work, it is practically worthless. A system of education may be ideal from the theoretical standpoint, but unless it prepares one for some needed service, it is worthless from the standpoint of efficiency. What can it do? The answer to this question goes very far in determining value. And from this standpoint, man possesses far greater value than a bird. The little sparrow can build its nest, and lay its eggs, and hatch out its young, and sing its simple little song; and that is all. But what can man do? He can clear the great forest, cultivate the growing crop, and feed and clothe the race. See what man has accomplished in literature, music and art; in science and philosophy; in the ministry, and in the school room; in medicine, and in law; in manufacture, commerce and trade; in the world of invention, in discovering and manipulating the hidden forces of nature. The truth is, instead of asking what man can

do, we are sometimes tempted to ask, what is there that man cannot do? And for this reason, one human life is incomparably precious.

A third thing that constitutes value is Relationship. An old letter, or an old faded picture, possesses no intrinsic worth, and is of no value to others, and yet may be unspeakably precious to you because of the one fact of relationship. And because of his relationships man is infinitely precious in the sight of God. Every man is related to every other man, and to the whole race; and so intimate and far-reaching is this relationship that it is easily possible for one man to affect the history of the race. Abraham and Moses did. Alexander and Caesar did. Luther and Calvin did. Washington and Woodrow Wilson did. By what they were; by what they did; by what they taught, they left their impress on humanity everywhere; they changed the map of the world, and revolutionized the history of the race.

But not only is man related to his fellowmen the world over, he also sustains a peculiar relation to God. In his constitution man was a new order of being. Before he came there were some beings wholly material, and other beings wholly spiritual; but none both material and spiritual. This was reserved for man. Thus man is related on one side to the brutes that perish, and on the other side to the holy angels, and to God the Creator that liveth forever. Not only so, man is the only creature for whom Christ died. Once before the problem of sin had arisen; but for the sinning angels no Savior came. Sentence of doom was pronounced, and the unhappy creatures are now reserved in chains unto the judgment of the great day. But not so with man. So precious is he in the sight of God that he must be redeemed; and in all the universe there is nothing sufficiently precious to pay the price of his redemption save the infinitely precious blood of the Son of God. And now redeemed at such a price, man is infinitely more precious than ever before.

A fourth factor in determining value is the Purpose for which a thing is designed, or the destiny to which it is appointed. Here are two pieces of wood. The one is designed for fuel, and goes on the fire. Out of the other is constructed a rare piece of furniture to adorn a king's palace. They possess equal intrinsic value, but one becomes far more precious than the other because of its purpose and destiny. Here are two gems, equally precious in themselves, but the one is practically worthless because destined to lie undiscovered in the sands; the other is of priceless worth because destined to adorn a royal crown. And from the standpoint of destiny man is incomparably more precious than a bird. The little sparrow is destined to live out its brief life, build its last nest, and sing its last little song, and then with the heavenly Father's permission fall to the ground and cease to be. But man, the completion and crown of created being, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, born of God's Spirit, restored to God's image, is destined to fulfill his mission here, to finish his God-given task, and then enter upon larger, more illustrious, and immortal service in the house not made with hands.

Such is the value of one human life; because of its intrinsic worth; because of its capacity to serve; because of its relationships; and because of its exalted destiny.

But now I ask you to observe that I have been speaking from the standpoint of ideal, or potential value. The actual value of a life may fall far below its potential, or possible value. Here is a block of marble. Out of this marble the sculptor may chisel the peerless statue; and the value of that statue is the possible value of the marble. But lying there in its crude state on the ground its actual value is practically nothing. Here is a beautiful farm, which for years past has brought forth food for man and beast. But this year it has not been planted; and while bountiful harvests are growing everywhere else, here we find only weeds. The potential value of this farm is just as great as ever,

but its actual value is zero. And just as great a difference may be found between the potential and the actual value of a life. Your life may bring forth naught but thorns and briars; or it may abound in fruitful harvests of helpful service.

How, then, can you make the most of your life, and thus bring its actual value up to the full measure of its possible value?

In the first place, find your place in God's plan. For He has a place for all, a plan for every life. Paul could say, "An apostle by the will of God." We insist upon a divine call to the ministry, and rightly so. But why not also a call from God to teach, to practice medicine, to manage a store, or run a farm? Happy the man who can stand in his lot and with confidence exclaim, Teacher, by the will of God. Physician, by the will of God. Farmer, merchant, manufacturer, by the will of God. What peace of mind, what strength and inspiration, in the thought! For into every life difficulties and dangers are sure to come, and sometimes almost in despair the bravest of us will be tempted to run up the flag of truce and enter into a dishonorable compromise. In such an hour, our only salvation is in the power to say: I am what I am, and where I am, by the will of God.

Have you ever honestly asked God to show you your place in His plan? One of the great London preachers tells this story: "I had gone into my study to prepare for the coming Sabbath, and had just written down my text when my nephew, a young man of twenty summers, came in. Seeing how I was employed, he asked what I was going to preach about, and I showed him my text. Glancing at my manuscript, he read these words: 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.' Becoming suddenly serious he said, Uncle, why do you suppose I was born, and for what purpose am I in the world? I am sure I don't know, I replied, but for some noble purpose, I trust.

Well, I'm sure I don't know, he said; and I wish I did. And then he went out, down the street, pondering deeply over life's meaning, and wondering how he should fulfill life's mission. Approaching a popular theatre, he saw a great crowd surging out into the street, and inquiring what it meant, was told that the building was on fire, that a panic had set in, and men, women and children were perishing in the flames. Being strong and athletic, he rushed in, and by heroic effort succeeded in rescuing thirteen. For the fourteenth time he started in, but was struck by a piece of falling timber and knocked to the floor. Unconscious, he was hurried away to the hospital, where he regained consciousness for a few moments before he passed away, and looking up into my face he whispered: To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might save these thirteen precious lives."

Have you ever honestly asked yourself this question? And then earnestly called upon God to help you find the answer? Accept God's plan in advance. Don't be afraid of God. The ship captain often sails under sealed orders, never knowing till far out at sea whither bound, or for what purpose. If men can trust each other so, need we be afraid of God? Abraham left his father's house and his native land, and went out not knowing whither he went; and to all eternity Abraham will bless God for the faith that enabled him to follow God in the dark. I have a dear friend who felt that God was calling him to give up his profession and enter upon a life of Christian service. As he thought of the sacrifices involved, he frankly confessed that he was afraid. Afraid of God! Afraid to throw his own plans away, and accept God's plan. In this state of mind, he went to hear an address on Consecration. Nothing in the address made any special appeal to him; no message to help him solve the problem of life. But the address ended, the leader called the congregation to prayer, and dropping on his knees began to pray in these words: "O God, some of us know that we

need not be afraid of the Man who died for us." And that was the message of God to the heart of my friend. He made the sacrifice; gave up his profession, and entered upon a ministry that God has greatly honored and blessed to the enrichment of the lives of thousands. So do you accept God's plan in advance, and then honestly, earnestly ask Him to show you what, and where.

And now, in the next place, having found your place in God's plan, give yourself to it wholly and unreservedly, and do your utmost to fill that place with loyal, loving service. Do not merely occupy your place. Fill it. Do not be too easily satisfied. Many a life has fallen far below its possible value for the want of a noble ambition. A visitor looking through a public library saw a book that bore the strange title, *Succedaneum*. Wondering what sort of book it could be, he took it from the shelf to see; only to discover that it was not a book at all, but only the hollow shape of a book, put in to take the place of the real book that was out. And all over the world today, are the hollow forms of men; creatures who wear the shape of a man, and pass for men, but are utterly destitute of every element of real manhood. Don't be satisfied merely to wear the form of a man. Be a man; and fill your place to its utmost capacity with all the elements of true manhood.

To realize such aspirations will require a whole-hearted Consecration. Without it no man ever yet brought his life up to the highest point of efficiency. The successful merchant and manufacturer, as well as the successful preacher and teacher, must be consecrated to his task. For what is Consecration? For all practical purposes may we not say that consecration is simply Concentration? The right to say, "This one thing I do," instead of, "These forty things I dabble in."

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman once asked General Booth the secret of his life, that life that has been so fruitful in Christ-like ministrations. To this question the old man replied:

"If my life has meant anything to my fellow-men, it is all because I said when I entered His service, God shall have all there is of me." This is consecration; and this is the secret of bringing your life up to its highest possible value. God shall have all.

A few years ago, while attending the meeting of Synod, I preached on the Sabbath in the First Baptist church in the city of Charleston. At the close of the service I saw a curious specimen of humanity coming forward to speak to me. After a few preliminary words, I asked him if he were a Christian. He told me he was, and then said: "I served the devil for thirty years, and you see how he treated me. I lost both these legs in his service; and there isn't much left, but every inch that's left belongs to God." That afternoon I saw him at the corner of Citadel square, in the midst of a great crowd, standing in the end of a gospel wagon, preaching to the assembled multitudes. Poor, untutored foreigner as he was, speaking English brokenly, and with difficulty, a large part of him already in the grave, but yielding up to God as a willing sacrifice every inch that was left. This is consecration; and this is the secret of bringing the actual value of your life up to the full measure of its highest potential value.

And now, what do you intend to do with your life? Fearful responsibility, to have such values entrusted to our keeping. Suppose you fail to make the most of that life. What values forever lost! What riches forever undiscovered! The actual value so very far below the possible value. Though saved by infinite grace, though in heaven you find a place at last, through all eternity it would seem that you would be haunted forever by the ghost of what you might have been.

But, Oh, you must not fail. God needs you. He never made two men for the same place; and unless you fill your place, who will? Can you be content to leave it forever

unoccupied? You are the heir of all the ages gone. Good men and true, through all the past, have thought and wrought for you, and you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Find your place. Fulfill your mission. Bring your life up to its highest possible value. And so will you enrich human life the world over, and generations yet unborn will rise up and call you blessed.

Section III

God's Hand in Human Affairs



I.

THE STORY OF ESTHER, OR, DIVINE PROVIDENCE

THERE IS ONE BOOK IN THE BIBLE, THE BOOK of Esther, a book of ten chapters, in which God's name does not appear. God's hand, however, is clearly seen, and His presence consciously felt from beginning to end. Indeed, the book cannot be understood apart from the fact of God, being, as it is, an illustration of the providence of God, God foreseeing, God providing, God taking care of His own; moving upon human hearts, working through human hands, raising up chosen instruments, preparing them for their task and bringing them upon the stage of action exactly at the time and place of need.

The word Providence literally means foreseeing. In actual use, however, it has broadened its scope and has come to mean God's foreseeing certain events, and then taking such steps as may be necessary to accomplish His wise and gracious purposes. This is just what we find in the Book of Esther. God had long foreseen the threatened destruction of His people, the chosen people from whom the Messiah should spring, and in whom all nations should be blessed; and having foreseen the need, had gone to work to meet it.

And now at last the clock of destiny strikes. Haman the Prime Minister has secured the King's signature to the decree of destruction. The King's couriers have published it through all the 127 provinces of the kingdom. All the necessary preparations have been completed, and the fateful day is rapidly approaching.

But if the enemies of His people are ready, God is ready too. No surprises can overtake Him; no situations arise

for which He is not prepared; and from His throne in the heavens I imagine I can hear Him saying, "I'll go down there and see about that. Those are my people. I have chosen them for a great purpose, and I'll take care of them. They shall not be destroyed." And at once He is on the scene. King Ahasuerus makes a great feast lasting 180 days, and they eat, and drink, and make merry. In the midst of their carousals, the king calls for his queen, the beautiful Vashti, and bids her to exhibit her beauty before his drunken lords. She resents the insult and refuses to appear, and as a punishment for her disobedience is deposed.

God's relation to all these transactions is simply that of an onlooker. He does not make the king and his nobles drunk. They are free agents, and God is not responsible for their behavior. But God sees; and remembering the threatened danger to His chosen people, takes advantage of the present situation to carry out His own great plans. A successor to the queen must be chosen. Long years before God had foreseen the need, and had gone to work to meet it, and now that the occasion calls, His chosen one is ready, Esther, the most beautiful, the most accomplished maiden in all the realm. God's first step in averting the impending doom is to put a member of the doomed race on the throne beside the king. God had raised her up; He had qualified her for her task; He had brought her upon the scene just at the right moment, and it was of His ordering that she found favor in the eyes of the King.

But God needs another helper besides the queen, and we must now look at another link in the chain of divine providence: Some time before, two of the king's chamberlains had plotted to take his life; but the plot was discovered and reported to the king, and the would-be murderers were put to death; and the record was duly inscribed in the Chronicles of the kingdom. And who is the man that discovered the plot and saved the king's life? Who but Mordecai the Jew, another member of the race doomed to

destruction by the royal decree? God in His providence had foreseen the plot, and had gone to work to raise up Mordecai, and had put him in the right place, just at the right time to serve His own great purpose.

But the king burdened with the affairs of state, perhaps, or absorbed it may be in his own personal affairs, thought little of it, and soon forgot all about it. But God hasn't forgotten, and God is going to see to it that Ahasuerus doesn't permanently forget. And so it comes to pass one night that the king cannot sleep. "And so He giveth His beloved sleep," the grateful psalmist said; but in another place he says, "Thou holdest mine eyes waking," so that I cannot sleep. And the king's insomnia was of God's ordering.

Tossing upon his bed during the long hours of night, the king finally calls for something to read. What book do they bring him? The Chronicles of the Kingdom. And where do they read? The chapter that relates the plot against the king's life, the plot that was discovered by Mordecai the Jew. God's hand kept the king awake; His hand selected the right book, and His fingers found the right place to read.

Wider awake, if possible, than before, the king asks, "What recognition has been given Mordecai? What reward for the services he has rendered the king and the kingdom?" "No recognition," he is told, "and no reward." Amazed at such ingratitude, or neglect, the king begins to wonder what can be done now to atone for the omission. Just at this moment Haman appears on the scene, and the king appeals to his trusted Prime Minister for advice: "Haman, what should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" "Of course he is thinking of me," said Haman to himself, "and I'll give him a *big order*." So he replied, "For the man whom the king delighteth to honor, let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown

royal which is set upon his head; and let the apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man whom the King delighteth to honor, and cause him to ride on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him. Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor."

Then the King said to Haman, "Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the King's gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken." A "bitter pill" it was, but Haman had to swallow it; so he "took the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and caused him to ride through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honor."

Already Haman's heart was full of hatred towards Mordecai, and acting upon the advice of his wife and his friends, he had built a gallows fifty cubits high upon which to put him to death. But God is watching over His chosen instrument, and not only preserves his life, but brings him out of his obscurity to the attention of the King against the day when another vacancy will have to be filled and a new Prime Minister chosen. Long ago God has seen the need, and is now at work to meet it.

In the meantime it becomes known throughout the city that the decree has been issued. Mordecai hearing of it, is overwhelmed with grief, and sends a message to Queen Esther charging her to go to the King and make supplication for the life of her people. She protests that she is out of favor with his Majesty, and would be taking her life in her own hands to go in to him unbidden. But Mordecai with prophetic foresight assures her that deliverance is bound to come from some quarter, and flings in her face this ringing challenge, "And who knoweth but that thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

And what Mordecai vaguely guessed at, you and I, dear reader, most confidently believe. The beautiful Esther *was* on the throne by divine election, and had come to the kingdom in the providence of God for the sole purpose of saving His people from impending destruction.

After a season of fasting and prayer, fully conscious of the seriousness of her mission, the Queen ventures to approach the royal presence, and the God in whose hands is the heart of the King gives her favor in his eyes, and the golden scepter in the king's hands is stretched out as a token of his good pleasure, and he promises to grant her request even to the half of the kingdom.

"If it seem good to the King," was her modest request, "let the King and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him." And the King said, "Cause Haman to make haste that it may be done as Esther hath said." So the King and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

But the King is still in the dark, and urges the Queen to tell him all that is in her heart, and gives her again the assurance that her request shall be granted even to the half of his kingdom. Then answered Esther and said, "My petition and my request is, if I have found favor in thy sight, let the King and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the King hath said."

At this second banquet on the morrow, the Queen reveals the plot and pleads for the life of her people, putting the responsibility upon the head of Haman the Prime Minister. The King is filled with wrath, and seeks the open air. Returning, he sees Haman fallen upon the couch upon which the Queen reclined pleading for his life. Misunderstanding

his behavior, the King calls for his attendants who carry Haman forth and hang him on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

Divine providence! God foreseeing the threatened danger to His chosen people and taking the necessary steps to avert it. Haman was a murderer at heart; and not satisfied with the death of one man, he would compass the destruction of a whole race. He had thus forfeited his right to live, and God is simply dealing out retributive justice in putting him out of the way. There is now another vacancy to be filled, and Mordecai the Jew is made Prime Minister. God had long before seen the need, and through all the years had been at work to meet it, and when the clock of destiny strikes, Mordecai His chosen instrument is ready.

The peril, however, is not past. God has put a member of the hated race on the throne beside the King, and another member has been made Prime Minister, but the decree of destruction still stands, and according to the law of the Medes and Persians it cannot be changed. So once again Queen Esther goes in to the King, and pleads for the life of her people. God gives her favor in the King's sight, and he grants her request. The decree must stand; it cannot be changed, but the King issues another decree giving the Jews permission to resist; and when the fateful day comes, God gives His people strength and courage to stand up and fight for their lives, and by His blessing they win a great victory. And thus God's people are saved.

Such is the lesson of this book: Divine Providence. The fact of God; God foreseeing; God providing; God keeping watch over His own. God working through human hands; unseen, often unsuspected; yet seeing all, knowing all, ever

at work. Apparently defeated at times, yet ever victorious, making all things work together for good to them that love Him.

*Careless seems the great Avenger,
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
Twixt old systems and the Word;
Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And within the dim unknown
Standeth God amid the shadows
Keeping watch above His own.*

And God is ever the same. His Word is for all ages. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our instruction upon whom the end of the age has come." So for you, and me, and for all His people today, is this most comforting message, God lives, God rules, and God is just. He knows, He cares, and He can be trusted to take care of His own.

II.
STIRRING THE EAGLE'S NEST, OR
THE SILVER LINING

*The day is cold and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining.*

*As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her
young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth
them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him.*

—DEUT. 32:11-12.

TO THOSE WHO HAVE EARS TO HEAR ALL NATURE speaks of God. "The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." The birds of the air, the flowers of the field, tell of His love and care.

Let us turn, therefore, to the book of nature, as interpreted by the Book of Revelation, and take our lesson today from the eagle, the king of birds.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him" (Deut. 32:11-12).

High up on the mountain side, among the rocks, she has built her nest, and there she has laid her eggs, and hatched out her young and during the period of helplessness has brooded over them; and fed them, and shielded them from all harm. But now they have nestled long enough, and the mother bird, solicitous for their own welfare; begins to teach them how to fly. See how she does it:

That nest is too cozy and comfortable, and so she begins to pull it to pieces—"stirreth up her nest"—to induce them from sheer discomfort to leave it. Then spreading abroad her wings, "she fluttereth over them," to show them how, and to persuade them, by force of example, to try their wings. And then, taking one of her little ones on her own strong wings, she soars aloft, to teach it the very joy of flying; and pausing at last in her flight, she shakes the little one loose, to give it a chance to spread its own untried wings; but hovering ever near in tenderest solicitude, as the little one begins to fall, swift as an arrow she darts beneath it, catches it up and soars aloft again.

And thus the little ones gather strength from day to day, and learn at last through painful discipline, life's lesson; the lesson that the nest, having served its purpose, must now be left behind, and the serious work of life, the work of breasting the storms, and soaring aloft with the sun, must now begin.

And now, says Moses in his farewell address, this is the way God deals with His people. "As an eagle . . . so the Lord."

Of course, the statement refers primarily to Israel in Egypt. What a cozy nest they had down there! Through the influence of Joseph, and the favor of the king, they had been allowed to settle in the choicest part of the land, and there, through that industry and economy and shrewdness for which the descendants of Jacob have ever been noted, they had grown rich. And there prosperous and happy, they were content to stay; forgetful of God's promise to their fathers, forgetful of the land of promise, and forgetful of their great mission as yet unfilled.

But God had not forgotten. He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through whose seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and in mercy to them, and in mercy to the world, He began, through Pharaoh, to stir that cozy nest, and the chosen

people became a race of slaves. In their distress they cried to God, and with a mighty arm He led them out. And now for forty years He led them by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, He fed them with "angel's food" from heaven; He chastened and corrected them, and through much painful discipline prepared them at last for their destiny.

And so God often deals with individuals. Here is a man whose every wish has been gratified. All he touches turns to gold. A host of friends. Good health. A devoted family. A beautiful home. And there in that cozy nest he settles down to enjoy life. Under such circumstances how quickly does he become self-centered, self-indulgent, self-satisfied! God is forgotten—the claims of humanity are ignored; and self becomes all in all. Life's meaning missed! Life's mission unfulfilled!

Then God in love and mercy sends some great sorrow, or some providential calamity, to stir that cozy nest, and teach the nestler that nests are built for eggs and baby birds, but eagles are meant to fly and soar, and breast the storms.

Here naturally arises the problem of affliction. An old problem. About as old as the race. Some phases we do not understand. Perhaps never shall. But at the same time some of the uses of affliction have been clearly made known.

Leaving then, the deep mysteries for God to unfold in His own good time and way, let us be content to learn some of the uses of affliction, as God has revealed them in His Word.

One of the outstanding passages bearing upon this subject is the 12th chapter of Hebrews. These Hebrew Christians were undergoing severe persecution, and so great were their sufferings that they were actually thinking about giving up Christianity and relapsing into Judaism, and the apostle in this letter is seeking to comfort them in their afflictions, and to establish them in their faith.

To this end he reminded them of the "cloud of witnesses" by whom they were surrounded; he pointed them to "Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"; He assured them that their Lord's sufferings were far greater than their own; chided them for having forgotten that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"; bade them look upon their afflictions as evidences of their sonship and proof of their Father's love, and then pointed out some of the gracious results of the experiences through which they were passing, and some of God's wise and loving purposes in permitting them.

One such result and purpose is to promote our holiness and produce the highest type of Christian character. "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (vss. 9-10).

God's plan for His children is holiness: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Be ye, therefore, perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect." And affliction is one of the agencies that God employs to make His people holy. Here is a piece of gold in the crucible. If it could feel and speak, it would doubtless say, "Why am I treated thus?" We know why: and so God says to His children

*When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply:
The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

Another of God's gracious purposes in the afflictions of His people is to increase our fruitfulness. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous:

nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." God does not want us to be barren trees. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit" (John 15:16). And, "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit" (vs. 8).

We prune our vines to make them bear more fruit and better fruit: and our Lord says, "Every branch in Me that beareth fruit He pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit" (vs. 2). And affliction is the pruning knife in the hand of the divine Husbandman. The fruits of submission, patience, compassion, helpfulness, all the richest, ripest fruits of Christian character are found growing on the vine where the pruning knife has faithfully done its work.

In addition to these fruits of Christian character, God expects also the fruit of Christian service. God's purpose in our lives is not idleness and self-indulgence, but service. All creation bears witness to the law of service. The angels are "ministering spirits." God Himself is constantly at work in the service of His creatures. Our Lord declared that He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; and He said to His disciples, "As My Father hath sent me, even so have I also sent you."

This being our mission, God deals with us in all things so as to prepare us for effective service; and He knows that preparation for service does not come from nestling in idleness and self-indulgence. Here is a father preparing his son for life: If a wise father, He will not allow a great deal of ease and idleness. At school, hard lessons: At home, daily tasks and necessary discipline. Little by little burdens are increased. More and more he is thrown on his own resources, and all for the day so quickly coming when he must leave the parental nest, and go out in the world to fight life's battles alone.

O that we might learn to look upon all life's trials in the light of this truth. We look upon poverty as a curse, and esteem riches a blessing. But poverty has done more for the world than wealth. Wealth can only improve external conditions. Poverty makes men. We shrink from a life of toil, and covet a life of ease and luxury. But the necessity for toil is a far greater blessing than the privilege of idleness. For toil develops strength, builds character, and brings out all our highest powers. Who are our greatest men? As a rule, men who had no inheritance, but the legacy of poverty and hard work, and whose difficulties thus became stepping-stones to higher and nobler things.

Said a friend to one of God's servants who was undergoing a great sorrow, "God must be getting ready to use you for some great task." And so it proved. Even then events were shaping up, and influences were at work to lead that chastened and afflicted one into larger fields of service. So all our trials are designed to prepare us for our true place in God's plan.

Is it because he does not love you? Those eaglets might say, "Our mother does not love us, or she would not treat us so." But lay *your* hand on that nest and see. Those little ones are wrong. She treats them that way just because she loves them.

That son might say, "My father does not love me, or he would not require all these hard lessons—all these heavy burdens." But he is wrong; and when he reaches manhood and looks back on the past, he will thank that father for every lesson and every burden.

And "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (vs. 6). He loves you too much to allow you to enter on life's work unprepared; too much to permit you to go through life un-

fruitful; loves you so much that He wants you to be like Himself; so much that He is willing to see you suffer a little while, since through suffering is accomplished His wise and loving purpose of building up in you the highest type of Christian character.

In the light of this truth, it is possible for us to thank God for affliction; possible for us to "rejoice evermore," and "in everything to give thanks." Shall we not, therefore, say from the heart

*O, Thou whose bounty fills my cup
With every blessing meet,
I give Thee thanks for every drop,
The bitter and the sweet.*

*I thank Thee for the desert road
And for the river side,
For all Thy goodness has bestowed,
And all Thy grace denied.*

*I thank Thee for the wing of love
That stirred my worldly nest,
And for the stormy cloud that drove
The flutterer to Thy breast.*

And now, child of sorrow, carry with you the assurance that God knows all, and He understands; and "what thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter."

*Sometimes when all life's lessons have been learned,
And suns and stars forever more have set;
The things which our weak judgment here has spurned,
The things o'er which we grieve with lashes wet
Will flash before us out of life's dark night,
E'en as the stars shine best in darkest tints of blue;
And we shall see how what we thought reproof
Was love most true.*

*But not today, then be content, poor heart,
God's plan like lilies pure and white unfold,
We must not tear the close shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold;
And when at last we reach the land,
Where tired feet with sandals loose may rest,
I think that we shall say: God knew the best.*

In the meantime, 'til the day dawns and the shadows flee away, receive the blessed assurance of your Heavenly Father's abiding presence. That mother bird does not abandon her little ones till they have learned to fly. That father does not relax his care until the son is safely launched upon the voyage of life. And God says to His children, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fires, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee" (Is. 43:2).

Will He keep His promises? Can we trust Him? King Nebuchadnezzar had cast three of God's servants for their fidelity to Him into a furnace of fire, but conscience-smitten, he could not sleep, and rising up early, he called his counsellors, and hurried away to see how they fared. Upon looking in, he was amazed beyond measure, and said to his counsellors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the furnace?" "True, O king, we did," they replied. "But I see *four* men, *loose*, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Section IV

The Glorious Consummation



I.

THE FUTURE LIFE

AN OLD ENGLISH CAPTAIN IN A REMINISCENT mood was relating to an admiring audience some of the experiences of a soldier in "England's far-flung battle line"; his marvelous escapes, and the wonderful things he had seen on sea and land under every sky. "But one day," he said, "I shall see more wonderful things than these." They wondered what he meant. He was over eighty, honorably retired from active service many years ago, and as he read in their questioning faces, "When? Where?" he quietly answered, "The first five minutes after death." What revelations then!

I want us to try to imagine that we are face to face with death for the first time, that we had never seen, or heard of death before; that we are near neighbors to the rich man and to Lazarus the beggar who lay at his gate; that we see both of them frequently about their ordinary affairs; that we see them gradually growing old, and at length we see them lay down the daily task and take their beds. We watch them grow weaker day by day until at last respiration ceases, the heart stops beating, and they close their eyes in death. Loving hands, our hands assisting, carry them out to some quiet spot, lay them away in silence, and leave them there under the sod.

As we turn our faces homeward, the fact of death confronts us with all its mystery and intensity. What has become of them? we ask. Is this life all? Is the grave the end? Is there anything beyond the grave? If so, what?

To these questions, Science has no answer. Philosophy has none. They have answered many of our questions, and we should be profoundly grateful for every contribution

of theirs to the happiness and welfare of humanity, but in the presence of death, and the multitude of questions that emerge in that awful hour, Science and Philosophy must remain, as they have always been, silent and dumb. O how we should appreciate the dear old Book, the inspired Word of God, and how glad to listen to the one voice that speaks with authority to still the storms of life, and break at last the silence of the tomb!

In His own matchless way, Luke 16:19-25, our Lord lifts the veil that hides the life beyond the grave, and gives us a partial answer, at least, to our questions: "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." "What?" you say, "I thought we left the beggar yonder under the sod." But you are wrong. That was not the beggar. It was only the house in which the beggar lived. Not much of a house; sadly in need of repair; and because of that poor old tenement men didn't think much of him. But God did. He judgeth not as man judgeth; "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh at the heart"; and God saw through this unattractive exterior a real man, a man of solid worth, a man fit to keep company with saints and angels, and when that dilapidated old house fell to pieces, He sent holy angels to escort its occupant into mansions eternal.

And what of the rich man? "The rich man also died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments." Again you say, "What? I thought we left the rich man yonder among the trees under the sod." But again you are wrong. That was not the rich man that we left out there. 'Twas only the house in which the rich man lived. In good repair. Beautifully furnished. And because of that fine abode men thought well of him; but in the sight of God he wasn't of much account, and when his earthly house fell into decay God banished him forever from His presence.

This life, then, the Bible declares, is not all. The grave is not the end. Our hopes are not buried with the ashes of

our loved ones in the cold and silent tomb. Lazarus and the rich man are not dead. They have passed out of sight, but both are living still beyond the tomb.

Would you have further proof? Read the story of the Transfiguration in Luke 9:28-35. Moses and Elijah had departed this life hundreds of years before, the one by a natural death, the other by translation, but here on the mount they are seen, not dead, but living messengers from the skies to the Lord of glory. That which we call death is simply transition to another sphere. Notice the beautiful word employed, "Spake of His *decease* which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." In the Greek the word is *exodos*, the word used to describe the triumphant exit of God's people from the land of Egyptian bondage. Something "accomplished," something achieved; not something to be suffered, to be endured with tears and groans and breaking heart.

And the experience is not peculiar to our Lord. Peter uses the same word in speaking of his own approaching departure, "My *decease*," my *exodus*, II Peter 1:15. Having served his day and generation here; having finished the work that his Master gave him to do, as the evening shadows fall, God calls him to higher service yonder, and gives him his *exodus*, his triumphant exit from the sorrows of earth, and his glorious entrance into the everlasting kingdom, and as he obeys the heavenly summons, he goes singing and shouting, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where thy victory?"

And what comes after death? What awaits the child of God on the other side of the grave? First of all, a state of consciousness. The soul does not fall asleep with the body, as many are teaching, only to awake on the morning of the resurrection. In this marvelous representation of the future life there are three characters, Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man, and all are conscious, Abraham engaged in conversation with the rich man, Lazarus consciously comforted,

and the rich man consciously tormented. So in that beautiful transfiguration scene, Moses and Elijah are both conscious. Though the disciples were heavy with sleep, these heavenly visitants were fully awake to the glories of the scene, and engaged in high and holy converse with the Master concerning His approaching decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem.

And not only a state of consciousness, but there will be also Reunion and Recognition of friends and loved ones gone before. Moses is Moses still; Elijah is Elijah still, and both are recognized. So too with Abraham, and Lazarus and the rich man. Death has not changed them; their identity has not been destroyed. Thousands of God's children in the dying hour, at conscious intervals, have testified to the presence of departed loved ones whom they recognize and call by name. Just a few years ago there passed away in a nearby village a splendid Christian woman known all over the Union for her fine work in the cause of temperance. For two weeks before her departure she was more in the other world than in this, and whenever she would drift back to consciousness she would say to the watchers by her bedside, "I have been talking with father and mother." Identity unchanged. Father and mother still. We *shall* meet again, and we shall know each other when we meet.

There awaits us also a state of Glory. "There talked with Him two men, Moses and Elijah, who appeared IN GLORY." Not final and complete, for that does not come until "the redemption of our bodies" at the resurrection. But "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory" (Shorter Catechism). There is no Scriptural authority for the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. Paul certainly recognized no intermediate state. "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). The same teaching is found in II Cor. 5:6-8, To be at home in the body is

to be absent from the Lord, and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. On our journey from earth to heaven we will find no treacherous detours or delays.

From all that has been said, we are surely justified in believing that our sainted dead are deeply interested in the cause of the Master, and happy participants in the work of the kingdom. Moses and Elijah are back on earth, messengers from the skies to the Master on the mount, and they talk together of His coming deace the supreme event of all ages. Heaven is not a place of unbroken rest. The angels are ministering spirits, and so are the glorified saints. Moody was built to live a hundred years, but so abundant in labors was he ; his great loving heart so throbbd with the sins and sorrows of humanity that it shook that mighty frame to pieces in sixty-two years. Perpetual rest would not appeal to a man that wore himself out before his time ; and all the saints possessed with the spirit of service in ever so small a degree would soon tire of a heaven where they had nothing to do but to sit forever under the shade of the tree of life, and play on a harp and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

And why may they not be permitted, as Moses and Elijah were, to revisit the scenes of their former labors as ministering spirits to us who are still bearing the burden of the day, and the scorching heat? I wonder if you still read "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," and if you love those beautiful stories of Scotch life as much as I do? Do you recall the one entitled "His Mother's Sermon"? John Carmichael had just been called to his first pastorate and was making preparation for his first appearance before the people of his new charge. He had graduated with honors from the Theological Seminary, and thought it only right that he should in his first message try to cover himself with glory, and place fresh laurels upon the brow of his Alma Mater. He had chosen for his subject "Some Recent Developments in Liberal Theological Thinking," and had done

his best to bring forth a production worthy of that mighty theme. His maiden aunt who kept house for him, with a woman's intuition scented danger, and with a woman's tact went to work to avert it. It was now Friday night, and as they sat together for a while before he retired to his study, she managed to bring to his recollection that holy hour when he knelt beside his mother's dying bed to receive her parting blessing. She had laid her hand on his head and expressed the hope that God would call him into the ministry. "An' ye'll no refuse, laddie. An' the first day ye preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ; an' John I'll hear ye that day, though ye'll no see me, an' I'll be satisfied."

It all came back as if it had been yesterday, and as he thought of that *magnum opus* in his study drawer his heart sank within him. But he was true and brave, and hurrying away to his study, he took down that labored production and deliberately threw it in the fire. Then, late as it was, he set about to prepare, as best he could, to "speak a gude word for Jesus Christ." Sabbath morning he went into the pulpit greatly agitated, so much so that he forgot two whole petitions of the Lord's prayer. But he had not been speaking five minutes before the people forgot all about John Carmichael and saw only the pierced hands and thorn-crowned brow of the Man of Galilee. In a little while the women were quietly weeping all over the house, and the faces of the men were softened and subdued like the granite of their own rugged hills in the deepening twilight.

The services ended, the preacher and his aunt wended their way homeward in silence, but once within the manse, he ventured to speak, and with quivering lips faltered, "O, that *she* had been here today to see the answer to her prayer!" Throwing her arms about his neck she whispered, "Dinna be cast doon, laddie; dinna ye be cast doon; yon was yir mither's sermon, and she heard every word of it and was satisfied." And I believe she did.

So far I have been speaking of the *near* future, the future that comes immediately after death. What of the *distant* future, when the history of this world is closed and eternity comes into view? Avoiding details, and speaking in the most general terms, the Word of God authorizes us to look forward to the time when all earth's wrongs shall be righted, and every man shall be dealt with fairly and impartially in accordance with the principles of strictest holiness, justice and truth. When every poor Lazarus, having set his affections on things above will be comforted, and every Dives having lived for this world and his own selfish ends, will be tormented. The inequalities that have characterized this life will be evened up, and every wrong suffered here will be forever righted.

That there are wrongs that need to be righted, none will deny. High-handed wrongs. Outrageous wrongs. Wrongs that cry to heaven for vengeance and get no answer. Wrongs that try our faith and wring from our lips the bitter cry. Does God see? Does He know? If He sees and knows does He care? If He cares, can He help Himself? What has become of God, that He doesn't intervene for the deliverance of His people, and the utter destruction of the hosts of hell?

The problem is as old as the race. Read the 73rd Psalm. "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as other men; . . . they have more than heart can wish. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency, for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." Wrestling with this problem and finding no solution, he well-nigh made ship-wreck of his faith. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me until"—until what? "Until I went into the sanctuary." Then what? "*Then understood I their end.*"

God can afford to be patient. He can work slowly for He has all eternity to work in. He doesn't pay off every Saturday night, or the first of every month, but He pays sooner or later, and pays in full. As we look out on life with its manifest wrongs, we are often tempted to exclaim with the poet

*Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,*

but in the light of God's Word we can go on with the poet to the end and sing,

*Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And within the dim unknown
Standeth God amid the shadows
Keeping watch above His own.*

I cannot say with the pessimist that all is wrong, for full well I know that all is not wrong; nor can I say with the optimist that all is well; but this I do most confidently affirm, That all *shall* be well one day, for God lives, and God rules, and God is just.

II. NO TEMPLE IN HEAVEN

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.—REV. 21:1-3.

IN THESE CLOSING CHAPTERS OF "THE BOOK," Heaven is represented under the figure of a city; a great city; a glorious city, having the glory of God; a city with jasper walls, and pearly gates, and streets of gold. A city, however, that has no church, nor sanctuary; for, says the inspired seer, "I saw no temple therein" (vs. 22).

There was a temple on earth. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for me an offering; and let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them", (Ex. 25:1-8). Explicit instructions were given; and these instructions were carried out, first in the Tabernacle, and then in the Temple of Solomon.

There was also a temple in heaven. In Hebrews 8:2-3, we read, "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Here is a temple not made by human hands, a temple that God set up, and at whose altars the true High Priest ministered. And this temple was

the "pattern," the model, that was shown to Moses in the mount after which the earthly sanctuary must be fashioned.

And so we find a temple on earth, and a temple in heaven, but when the new heavens and the new earth have come, in that "Holy City, the New Jerusalem" no temple is found. Why? Well, what was the temple for? What was its purpose? If we think of God as some do, as a being content to dwell alone in some remote corner of His universe, wholly occupied with His own personal affairs; if such is our conception of God, we shall find no answer to our question, and the temple, both on earth and in heaven, will ever remain a mystery. But we must not so think of Him. God is a genial, friendly being who craves companionship. He made us for Himself, and His heart, like ours, is restless until it finds rest in His children.

To this end He has prepared a home, "the Father's House" where the many mansions are, and where all the children shall be gathered home by and by. "I go to prepare a place for you," He said, "and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

The garden of Eden was a foretaste and pledge of that eternal state, and in that beautiful Edenic home God and His newly-created children enjoyed sweet fellowship. How long that blessed state continued, we do not know. But after a while, sin entered, communion was no longer possible, and our first parents, with conscious guilt and shame, turned their backs upon God and hid themselves among the trees of the garden.

And then God was face to face with a problem that taxed all the resources of infinite wisdom itself: How shall this fellowship, destroyed by sin, be restored? And how shall the promise and prophecy of Eden be fulfilled, when God and man shall enjoy eternal fellowship in the Father's house on high?

In the councils of eternity, the triune God reached a solution, worked out a plan, and embodied the plan in a temple, "the true temple that God pitched, and not man." And in order that you and I, and all the rest, might know that plan, and understand its provisions, He said to Moses, "Make one just like it down here on earth, and let it stand in the midst of the people as the embodiment of God's plan of salvation, and as a perpetual testimony to God's yearning for fellowship with His people."

Let us see how beautifully that purpose is accomplished: Put your memory and your imagination to work, and try to visualize its principal features: First of all, the Holy of Holies, containing the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, and the cherubim, under whose outstretched wings was the Shekinah, the visible symbol of the presence of God. In the front of the Holy of Holies, and separated from it by a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, was the Holy Place, containing the table of showbread, the altar of incense, and the golden candlestick. In front of the Holy Place, in the Court of the temple, was, first, the laver of purification, and, second, the altar of sacrifice. Outside of all, was the Court of the Gentiles.

Such was the temple itself. What did it signify? It was the visible, tangible embodiment of God's plan of salvation, providing a way for man's approach to God, and a ground upon which God and man may enjoy eternal fellowship in the Father's house on high. Here in the Holy of Holies is God. Out yonder in the court of the Gentiles, the people; afar off, alienated by sin, separated from God as by a great gulf. How, and where, and on what grounds may these two meet, God and man now so far apart? "I am the Way," saith the Lord; "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." This was His mission, suffering for sins, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God" (I Peter 3:18).

But in order to bring us unto God, He Himself must come for us. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." To carry out the divine purpose of bringing us to God, a double journey is necessary, a round trip; a journey from heaven to earth on His part, and a journey from earth to heaven, over the same road, on our part.

And this is what we see in the Temple: God coming from heaven to earth, and providing a way for man from earth to heaven; the Son of God bridging the chasm that stretches between heaven and earth, and bringing God and man together in the Father's house. God is a holy God. Holiness is His supreme attribute, His most essential characteristic. The cherubim who stand before His face do not cry "Merciful and gracious art Thou," though that would be true; but conscious of their unworthiness, veiling their faces, cry, "Holy, holy, holy art Thou, Lord God of hosts." His rightful dwelling place is, therefore, the Holy of Holies, and here we find Him.

The ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies proclaims Him a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God. But God's covenant with man has been broken, broken by man; and man is now under a curse, the curse of a broken law. But this holy God is also a merciful God. The presence of the mercy seat bears witness to that; and "In the fulness of time He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," and restore them to God's presence and favor.

Behold Him as the journey begins: Laying aside His royal robes and His kingly crown, He turns away from His Father's presence in the Holy of Holies, draws aside that separating veil of blue and purple and scarlet, and steps out into the Holy Place. And here everything speaks of Him: The table of showbread proclaims *Him* the Bread of Life. The golden candlestick declares that He is the Light of the World; while the aroma from the altar of incense testifies

that this undertaking in behalf of humanity is as a sweet savor, an offering acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of God.

Passing out of the Holy Place, He enters the Court of the Temple. At the Laver of purification He consecrates Himself to His great task; is baptized with the Holy Ghost, and receives His Father's attestation, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." From the Laver He journeys on to the Brazen Altar, the altar of sacrifice, and here, as the Lamb of God, fulfillment of all the lambs on Jewish altars slain, He sheds His precious blood to take away the sin of the world; and there on the cross receives *the first fruit* of His finished work, saying to the penitent thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Here at the altar, the cross of Calvary, the earthward journey ends, and the return trip, the journey heavenward, begins. Begins just where the earthward journey ends, at the altar of sacrifice. Here, God and man meet. "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me"; and here at the cross the lost sinner accepts the atoning sacrifice of God's dear Son, and begins to tread the narrow way that leads at last to God.

That way leads him, next, to the laver of purification. (We are retracing our steps, remember, and are now heavenward bound.) Justified by the blood that flowed from the altar, the precious blood of the Son of God, the sinner must be sanctified by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. In God's plan, Justification and Sanctification are fundamental. The altar stands for the one, the laver for the other. There are two sacraments, both under the old dispensation and the new. Circumcision and the Passover under the old, Baptism and the Lord's Supper under the new. The one points to Christ, the other to the Holy Spirit. The blood from the altar means Justification, the water in the Laver, Sanctification. The altar declares that the debt is paid, and the curse is lifted; from the Laver there issues

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the command, "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."

And what, to us on the upward journey, is the meaning of the Holy Place? (For remember we are retracing our steps, going back by the same route as before.) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:3). In Christ Jesus we are already citizens of the Kingdom of heaven, and we live and move and have our being in heavenly places; "in the world, but not of the world"; and passing through these heavenly, holy places, at every step of the way, we find ample provision for every need, bread of life to sustain and strengthen us, light of life to guide our wandering footsteps, and all else that is needful, given us by the heavenly Father in answer to prayer; prayer that is as acceptable and well pleasing to God as the aroma of sweet incense fresh from the altar.

And so we onward go; from the altar of sacrifice, by way of the laver of purification. On through the Holy Place, divinely supported and divinely led, we approach the Holy of Holies, wondering, perhaps, like the women at the sepulcher, Who shall roll it away? With joy unutterable we find "the veil of the temple rent in twain from top to bottom," permitting unhindered entrance. And so we enter that open door into the Holy of Holies, and are at home with God in the Father's house.

And so the great problem has found a solution. God and man, once so far apart, have met once more; met at the altar of sacrifice, the cross of Calvary. Those who were once so far away have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. Communion between God and man has been restored, and God's great loving, restless heart has found rest in companionship with His children.

But now a great surprise is in store, for in these closing chapters of our book, we see God *getting ready to move*.

Getting ready to move heaven and all its inhabitants. Listen: "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:2-3).

God moving from heaven to earth! But not the earth as we know it now, "groaning and travailing in pain," the "trail of the serpent" everywhere visible. The inspired seer declares, "I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth" (Rev. 21:1). The earth that was once overflowed with water, and destroyed, has now experienced a purifying baptism of fire, and "Old things have passed away, and all things have become new." In this new earth, righteousness dwells. Sin itself, and all that sin brought in its train, is forever gone. And here in this renewed, regenerated earth, God settles down, and is forever at home in the bosom of His great family, the household of faith.

Such is the glorious consummation of God's eternal plan: "The restitution of all things"; the curse forever lifted; the earth restored to its primeval beauty, inhabited by a holy, happy race once more in the image of God, and God Himself dwelling in their midst. Here, no temple is found; for the temple was God's solution of the problem of sin; God's answer to the question, How shall communion between God and man be restored, and man be brought at last to the Father's house? That temple having now served its purpose, forever disappears; and the inspired seer can say, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it." Having God Himself, we need no temple to tell us where He is and how we may find Him. God Himself is the glorious fulfilment of all that the temple signified.

Such is God's plan of salvation: Is it your plan? Are you being saved in God's way? Have you been to the altar

of sacrifice and there been justified by faith in the precious blood of Christ? And are you at the laver of purification being sanctified by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit? Is your face set heavenward? Are you feeding daily on the bread of life? Guided at every step of the journey by the light of life, every real need supplied moment by moment in answer to prayer? These are the privileges and resources of the children of God on the upward way. Are you using them? Or are you robbing yourself of your God-given birthright?

And your Savior, who is He? What kind of Savior is He in whom you are trusting? Did He come down from heaven to earth to carry you back? Is He God Himself, God manifest in the flesh, and did He go to Calvary and there on the altar of sacrifice by His own precious blood make atonement for your sins? *When* was the veil of the temple rent in twain? 'Twas when Jesus *on the cross* cried out "It is finished," and gave His spirit back to God. Nothing but the blood of the divine Son of God could rend that veil asunder and open the door of access into the Father's presence. Jacob's ladder is a type of Christ; stretching from earth to heaven, man here at the bottom, God yonder at the top, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." That ladder is Christ. "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." And a Christ who is not divine is a ladder too short to bridge the chasm between man and God. A Christ who is not God Himself is a ladder with nothing to rest on yonder at the top. Is your Christ such a Christ?

III. THE NUMBER OF THE REDEEMED

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.—REV. 21:12-13.

AS WE SAW IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, HEAVEN is represented under the figure of a city; a great city; a glorious city; God's dwelling place, having the glory of God resting upon it; where His people shall see His face, and His servants shall serve Him; where there is no sin, no sickness and no sorrow; and where God and His people shall enjoy eternal fellowship.

But all these beauties and glories are shut up, and shut in, behind great towering walls; for we read, "Around the city was a wall, great and high." Now walls are for protection; for defense against invaders. Walls are barriers to keep people away, fortifications to keep people from getting in. How then shall we enter that beautiful city and enjoy its glories?

"The city had twelve gates," and those gates are never shut. Now an open gate is an invitation to enter. And God put gates in those great walls because He wanted people to come in and be at home. God is a genial, friendly being, He craves companionship: and He intended that heaven should be inhabited. That's what those gates are for; God wants you and me, and all men, to come in, and share with Him, and each other, the glories of that beautiful city.

And notice particularly that there are twelve gates, "On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south

three gates; and on the west three gates" (Rev. 21:13). God wants a multitude; He expects a multitude; He has made preparation for a multitude; too many to enter by a single gate. The price of our redemption is the infinitely precious blood of the Son of God. On this basis, a universal offer is made: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Is. 55:1). "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). God is no tribal God; He is the God of the whole earth. He loves the world, the whole world; He has erected no racial barriers; has drawn no color lines. He has declared that they shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south, a great multitude whom no man can number out of every nation, kindred and tongue. For this great multitude there must be more than a single gate, and so God says, Let there be twelve gates, three on every side.

As a further indication of God's desire and expectation, notice the size of the city: "twelve thousand furlongs," or fifteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide, and fifteen hundred miles high; as far as from Maine to Florida, and from the Atlantic ocean half way across the continent, and an equal distance from bottom to top. Consider the significance of this: Allowing fifteen feet to the story, this city would be five hundred and twenty-eight thousand stories high. Woolworth, Chrysler, the Empire State buildings, just little ant hills in comparison. Every one of these stories would contain two million two hundred and fifty thousand square miles; and all the stories combined, one trillion, one hundred and eighty-eight billion square miles. ROOM! Room for a crowd!

Earth's present population is supposed to be two billions. In six thousand years, since Adam and Eve were created, there have been one hundred and eighty generations, allowing thirty-three and one-third years to the generation. Supposing every generation were as large as the present (of

course it was not), we would have three hundred and sixty billions as the total population since Adam and Eve.

Dividing these into families of five to a family, we would have seventy-two billion families; and then dividing the number of families into the number of square miles, there would be for every family an area of sixteen and one-half square miles; room for mansions, walks and driveways, fields and forests, orchards and gardens, lakes and streams, and everything, indeed, that heart could wish.

This, on the supposition that every generation were as large as this one, and that all were saved; nobody lost; everybody safe within those jasper walls; there would be for every family of five sixteen and one-half square miles; or three and three-tenths square miles for every man, woman and child that ever lived.* ROOM! Room for a crowd!

Now I realize that all this beautiful description of the Holy City may be figurative (may be, I say; for it may not be). But on the supposition that it is figurative: Figures of speech are full of meaning; they are sometimes the most impressive way of conveying our meaning; and these figures of speech here, if figures they be, declare in thunder tones that God wants a multitude; and God has made room for a multitude; and God will be terribly disappointed if all those many mansions are not occupied. (Perhaps disappointed in you and me that we have not helped Him to furnish the guests.)

It has been said by some that Calvinists believe and teach that God saves only a handful, and consigns the overwhelming majority of the race to eternal perdition. But here is one Calvinist who doesn't believe it, and has never taught it; and so far as I know no other Calvinist has ever believed

* The department of Eugenics of the Carnegie Institute has estimated the total population of the earth since Adam and Eve as thirty billions. On this basis there would be in "The Holy City" an area of one hundred and ninety-eight square miles for every family, or thirty-nine and three-fifths square miles for every man, woman and child.

it, or taught it. If any do so believe and teach, Calvinists, or what not, May God have mercy on them for so misrepresenting and slandering Him!

He is a God of love. He gave His Son to die on the cross in our stead. He has given a universal offer; the Bible to tell about it; the Church to publish the glad tidings. The Holy Spirit came to apply and make it effective. He has prolonged the day of grace in order that this gospel may be preached to "every creature"; and He Himself has declared, "My word shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please."

Do you think it would please God, such a God as our God, to see only a little handful within those pearly gates, and the "overwhelming majority" of the race in "the lake of fire?" "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. 33:11). That is what would please God, and that is what God is going to accomplish.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the suffering Messiah, how He was despised and rejected of men, was led as a lamb to the slaughter, was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, declares that "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied" (53:11). Can you think that He would be satisfied to have just a little handful with Him in those many mansions, and the "overwhelming majority" of the race with the devil and his angels in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone?

In the age-long conflict between the "seed of the serpent" and "the Seed of the woman," can you believe, dare you believe, that the devil is going to be victorious, and that Christ is going down in defeat? Would God be well pleased with such a result? Would Christ be satisfied? Believe it who will; but as for me, I do not believe that the

divine Son of God, with all power in heaven and on earth in His hands, will ever be satisfied until the overwhelming majority of the race are forever safe within those pearly gates. Make gates on every side, that they may come from the east, and the west, from the north, and from the south. And make room inside those gates for ALL WHO COME!

These twelve gates not only provide for a great multitude, but they also suggest that there may be different roads along which we may approach, as well as different gates through which we may enter heaven. Not yet have we all come to the unity of the faith. As yet "we see through a glass darkly," and therefore cannot see alike. For the present we are gathered together into different denominational groups, each marching under his own regimental flag, but all alike under the blood-stained banner of the cross. So God in His goodness allows us to travel in separate parties, along different routes, all alike leading to the same glorious home; and from whatever direction we come, we find awaiting us an open gate, "on the east three gates, on the west three gates, on the north three gates, and on the south three gates."

But note this, and note it well, for your eternal destiny is at stake: Those gates are guarded; guarded not by St. Peter, according to the popular tradition, but guarded by angels, vs. 12. "At the gates twelve angels," an angel at every gate; and those angel guards are furnished with a password; and the password is the same for every gate; that password is a single word, and that word a name, the name JESUS. HAVE YOU THE PASSWORD? Can you say, with me

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood.*

The Drama of Redemption

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.
On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

“I am the door (or gate) ; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved” (John 10:9). “I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John 14:6).

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