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Bernie Smith

Triumph and Tragedy In New Testament Personalities

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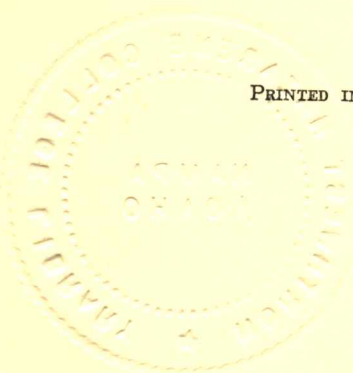
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To my wife
Louise Dale Smith

Also by Bernie Smith
Flames of Living Fire
Treasures of Truth

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

A sermon reduced to print sometimes loses the local color afforded by the pulpit and the personality of the speaker. For that reason I have been hesitant about sending forth this volume. In fact, only the insistence of friends across the nation prompts me to release it now.

With minor variations, these sermons appear in print as they have been delivered in person at various colleges, churches, and camp meetings throughout the United States and in other countries.

These sermons are not prepared for the critic. The writer has made no attempt toward profundity. Neither should he apologize for the evangelistic accent of these messages.

"The common people heard him gladly." If they should read this volume and find help thereby, I shall be forever grateful to Him.

BERNIE SMITH

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INTRODUCTION

It was my great pleasure recently, not only to read in manuscript form the sermons which are now being presented to the reading public, but to hear them delivered in person by Rev. Bernie Smith at a great camp meeting. Frequently sermons lose something of their interest when put in book form, but it is not true of these interesting and helpful messages.

Rev. Bernie Smith is a preacher of excellent address, clear thought, and with exceptional powers of description. In his presentation of scriptural truth, he is both interesting and unctuous. The sermons here presented invariably awakened and sustained interest and were always crowned with fruitful altar services. They will doubtless be read with the same interest and enthusiasm. Bible scenes are here made to live afresh before the minds of the readers, and the deep insight into human character will grip the attention to the very last. Few writers have the ability to present character sketches with the vividness and attractiveness shown by this author.

This young man is performing a great service to the church in publishing sermons such as these—sermons that are not mere theories or splendid rhetorical utterances, but deep spiritual utterances wrought out on the fields of conflict. These sermons are clear, definite, and convincing, and the spiritual messages which they contain will awaken response in the hearts of the readers. We bespeak for them not only a wide circulation but a rich fruitage in the harvest of souls.

DR. H. ORTON WILEY
President Emeritus
Pasadena College

Chapter I

Christ, the Faultless

SCRIPTURE READING:

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

—John 18:38

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

—John 19:4

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

—John 19:6

TEXT: *I find no fault in him* (John 19:4).

The name of Pontius Pilate fills one of the blackest pages in human history, for it was he who dared to write the death warrant of Jesus of Nazareth. Pilate had a choice to make and listened to the cry of the crowd. This was the great mistake of his career. Pilate was governor of the province of Judea, and he lived daily in fear of word getting to Rome that he was not equal to the task of ruling this unpredictable province. Thus when the crowd surged before him demanding that Jesus be crucified, he feared that they would get out of control and the aftermath would mean his removal from political office. So Pilate, the politician, turned Him over to the crowd. No judge who ever sat

on the bench ever witnessed a more flagrant miscarriage of justice than did Pontius Pilate when he sentenced Jesus of Nazareth to die on the cross.

But it is interesting to note that during the hectic moments of the trial Pilate found time to face an angered crowd three times, each time affirming, "I find no fault in him." And in the years that have intervened since I found Him as my personal Saviour, I rejoice that I am able to concur with Pilate—I *find no fault in Him*.

I find no fault in His *mission*. That mission is best described in John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." G. Campbell Morgan always declared that that text was too great for him, and he never attempted to preach from it. This verse is the essence of the divine mission of Jesus.

He came to give himself for us. He knew that the Cross was the only thing that could bridge the yawning chasm between the throne of God and the heart of man. Willingly He died that we might live. Willingly He ascended to the brow of Golgotha that we might ascend to heaven. Willingly He wore a crown of thorns that we might wear a crown of everlasting life. Willingly He fulfilled His glorious mission. Oh! the condescension of God to allow His only begotten Son to come from "heaven to a hovel," to allow Him to become poor that we might be made rich. How He loved us!

I confess that I find no fault in a mission that embraces the salvation of my soul.

And we must say also that we find no fault in His *life*. It means something to say that. Jesus made of himself no reputation, for a reputation fluctuates with the opinion of men. But He made of himself a character that was so spotless that successive generations have declared His to be the perfect life. No one would dare

to place a blot on divine character. No big man would be small enough to criticize Deity, and no small man is big enough to do so.

Yes, it means something to say His life is without fault. He was a *theanthropic*, that is, a composite of the human and the Divine. And from both criteria His life was faultless. He associated with men of every level of life. Daily He was teaching, healing, and forgiving—meeting a myriad of men in many different situations; and yet He remained so spotless in character and life that He could face His accusers with the query, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

His life stands at the apex of history as a monument of perfection. But we must be able to extend the faultlessness of Christ further than this. We can know no more than the Christ of history and concede that He is faultless in mission and life. We must move further to declare that we find no fault in His teachings.

His teachings were legion. In the Sermon on the Mount He touched some one hundred twenty different facets of truth. But we shall take note of the two central teachings that punctuated His ministry.

Note His constant admonitions concerning sin. Jesus vehemently denounced sin. Regardless of where He was, He lashed out relentlessly against sin, whether it was to an individual on the street or to a group of individuals in the church. He looked at the scribes, who were the preachers, and the Pharisees, who were the church members of that day, and told them that all they possessed was outward conformity. They rigidly adhered to a given set of rules—and that was all. Jesus did not denounce the standards of the scribes and Pharisees, but He denounced their calloused hearts. We must remember that a man may conform to all of the outward demands of any ecclesiastical group and still be lost, for ritualism and legalism leave the adherent's heart virtually untouched.

Jesus had only one standard concerning sin, and that was, "Sin no more." Either God cannot or He will not save us from all sin. To say He cannot is to place a limitation on Divinity, and that is an insult to the power and purpose and integrity of the Deity. To say that He will not is to say that He is satisfied to let something remain in us that is contrary to Him, and for which He gave his only begotten Son. If man can sin and still enter heaven, then God has two classes of sinners: one He will admit inside the gates of the City Celestial, and the other He will consign to the pit. Such would not be a just God.

Sinning religion is the laughingstock of hell. I could go further and say that it is a constant amazement to the angels. Do you think the atonement was a failure? Certainly not! It was a glorious success. And the blood of Jesus Christ that fell from His wounded side and formed a pool of cleansing at the base of that cruel tree will atone for every sin in the life of every individual who will dare to plunge therein. And the individual who will do that will be made free from the control and love and guilt of sin. The emancipation proclamation in the Scriptures declares that man may be made free from sin.

I readily confess that I am adherent to "old-fashioned" religion that enables us to be saved from sin so thoroughly that we will not even desire the beggarly elements of this world. It is as a great saint of yesterday victoriously cried, "The things of this world are no more than ashes in my hands."

Some years ago I was conducting a campaign in a Southern city. One night an elderly woman arose and said: "Preacher, about twenty years ago I knelt at this altar and the Lord saved me from my sins. I recall that among other things I gave up my corncob pipe. And I just want to say that I haven't had a hankering for it since!"

I still believe that it is possible to be saved completely until we do not have a single hankering for the things of the world.

Jesus' standard concerning sin is the same as it has always been. He still expects us to live a life separated from the world. He still hates sin, but He hates it because He loves us.

Another area of our Lord's teaching that is worthy of mention is the sanctification of believers. In His high priestly prayer recorded in John 17, Jesus prayed for a group who had walked and talked with Him. He declared that they were "not of the world," but He had seen the weaknesses in them that admitted of a further need in their hearts. For these He prayed, "*Father, sanctify them.*" Not only did He pray for them, but He also prayed "*for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*" He prayed for a seed of survival through the centuries. He prayed for us!

A few years ago I was speaking to the student body in an Eastern university. I felt inclined to enlarge upon this very theme. At the close of the chapel service, after the others had moved away, an elderly gentleman came forward and clasped my hand. He said: "Sir, I want you to know that I have what you were talking about this morning, but I have had it only five years. I am a superannuated minister. When I was young, I said that the other ministers could preach holiness of heart if they wanted to, but I had no time for it. I said that if my people wanted to hear it they could go to another church. O Preacher, it breaks my heart to think that I have spent all of my years in the ministry, and was never able to preach one holiness sermon nor help a single soul get the blessing."

Tears welled up in his eyes as he clasped my hand again and said, "Young man, always preach it!" I came off the campus of the university that morning more de-

terminated to mind God, fight sin, and preach holiness than I had ever been before!

The teachings of our Lord concerning sin remain the same. We must be forgiven of the practice of sin and cleansed from the principle of sin. Then there is no need to fear the penalty of sin. I find no fault in that!

Not only is He faultless in mission, life, and teachings; but, lastly, I find no fault with Christ's ultimate provision for me. He has promised me that, if I will hold true, someday I can take up my reservation in the City Foursquare. He assures me that I shall fellowship with the angels. I shall be eternally secure after I reach the City. My innermost desire shall be gratified beyond my wildest expectations, and every imperfection of this life shall be perfected. And I am assured that I shall have a reservation at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

On Victory Morning Jesus will come down, and we shall go up to meet Him. We shall gather in the banquet hall of heaven for the Marriage Supper. The ransomed, Blood-washed host, arrayed in shining garments, and wearing crowns of victory, shall assemble for a feast such as mortal man has never seen. We shall slake our thirst with a golden chalice filled with the new wine of the Kingdom. And the angels shall gird themselves and come and serve us as we dine in that festive hall. The heavenly choir shall sing praises to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. As the voice of many waters they shall sing, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth forever!"

And Jesus himself shall be there, clothed in the robe of righteousness. He shall raise His pierced hands and welcome us into the joys of the Eternal City. Then He shall say, "*Fear not, My children, for you have proved faithful. Enter into the pleasures of eternity.*"

And He shall turn to the Father and say, "*Father, these are they who came out of great tribulation and*

have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Then we shall wave palms of victory before Him and shout, "*Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna to the King eternal!*"

And He shall place His name upon our foreheads and shall lead us unto living fountains of water. And there shall be no night, and we will need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God shall give us light, and we shall reign forever and forever. *Glory!*

Yes, Pilate, wholeheartedly we concur: *We find no fault in Him.*

Chapter II

Judas, the Genius

SCRIPTURE READING:

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

—Matthew 26:14-16

TEXT: *From that time he sought opportunity to betray him (Matthew 26:14).*

A tragedian could not ask for better source material than is recorded in Holy Writ concerning Judas Iscariot. There have been other tragedies recorded in literature, but none so infamous as this. Shakespeare, whose prolific pen was capable of moving from comic wit to deep, searching pathos, tells us of some stirring tragedies. In Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, and others, Shakespeare vividly portrays some characters with noble qualities who dared to fail in spite of those qualities. All these conform to the early Greek idea of tragedy. The Greeks did not believe that a tragedy consisted merely of a villain getting his just deserts; rather, they believed that a tragedy centered around a character who failed in spite of his noble aspirations and enviable attributes. This is a perfect picture of Judas Iscariot.

The Truth About Judas

What is the truth about this man Judas? To my way of thinking he was a man who was likable, winsome, handsome, and intelligent. He was a man who was held in high regard, both by the members of the Early Church

and by the masses to whom he ministered. Judas had to possess these attributes to be able to do the things he did do.

Proof that Judas was held in high regard is found in the fact that he was appointed the apostle of finance. His was the responsibility of the purse strings of the disciples. Only a man trusted and loved would have been delegated this important task.

Furthermore, Judas had ability. The truth is he had some abilities that were direly lacking in the other apostles. I am cognizant of the fact that artists have all too often portrayed Judas as a man with a twisted countenance, a wicked eye, and a sloven appearance. But away with these antiquated ideas. Judas could not have been this type of individual.

Judas was once saved. He was one of the elect. In his early ministry he was just as much a pillar of the church as any other apostle. Jesus was not in the habit of appointing wicked men to further His work. He would never have appointed a man whose heart was not as white as the driven snow. Judas had an experience with Christ that was above reproach. If he were living today, he could well be a member of any church and serve in any official capacity.

It is well to note that the appointment of Judas was just as much a consequence of prayer as was the appointment of any other apostle. Jesus went up into the mountains to pray. After he had conversed with His Father through the long hours of night, He came down into the village the next morning. He gathered His followers around Him, and from them He chose His apostles. They were twelve appointed and anointed men who were to be the leaders of Christendom. Judas was one of the twelve, and his appointment was just as much a consequence of prayer as was any other. Jesus chose Judas, but later Judas did not choose Jesus.

The question immediately arises, "If Judas possessed these attributes, and if the foregoing statements about him are facts, then why did he fail?" We must always remember that the devil is constantly probing every recess of the heart. He is trying to find the weakness in the make-up of the individual. When two armies meet on the battlefield, each sends out one thrust after another, trying to find a weakness in the enemy line. Once found, every reinforcement is employed to gain a foothold. That is exactly what Satan does to every life. He probes until he finds a weakness, and when he finds it he calls forth reinforcements from the pit in an attempt to gain a foothold. Satan is perfectly content to let our strong points grow stronger, so long as our weak points grow weaker. Just as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, neither is a man stronger than the thing it takes to pull him down.

The Trouble with Judas

What was the trouble with Judas? Why could he not find inner strength to stand for the right in the face of corrupting temptations? To my way of thinking, his trouble was twofold.

First, Judas became a materialist. He made money his god and was willing to sacrifice upon its altar anything that stood in his way—even Jesus, the best Friend he ever had. He came to worship the created rather than the Creator. He became a slave to the god he made rather than a servant to the God that made him. When, oh, when, will men learn the insecurity of material resources? They are here today and gone tomorrow, valuable today and worthless tomorrow.

Judas, like his companion apostles, failed to understand the teachings of our Lord relative to the Kingdom He was to establish. Judas anticipated an earthly king-

dom with its related glories. One day he realized that plans for an earthly kingdom were not materializing so well. Enmity seemed on the increase against Jesus. Judas reasoned within himself that he had better get out of company with Jesus while he could—and get out of it all he could. Thus the text says that he came to the high priest to perpetrate this nefarious deed. He took the initiative in the matter. He sought an opportunity to betray his Lord.

Dr. Joseph Parker, a well-known divine of yesteryear, used to say, "If a man seeks a door to hell, he will find it." And Judas found it. For thirty paltry pieces of silver—he sold his Friend. Some have tried in vain to prove that Judas was not a materialist, but rather that he tried in this way to coerce the Lord into a premature establishment of His kingdom. But the Gospels certainly do not credit him with such a motive. He had simply fallen into Satan's super snare. He was caught in the web of materialism; and selling the Lord for thirty pieces of silver proves that a million dollars would not have to be at stake for a man to become a materialist. It was not the amount that prompted him to betrayal; his betrayal simply stemmed from a new but crass attitude in his heart.

His first trouble gave birth to his second: He was reduced to possessing nothing more than a form of religion. Judas never did admit that he was backslidden in heart. True it is that he did fling the money to the floor of the Temple before the faces of the sneering priests and admitted innocent blood to be on his hands, but that was not a confession of a backslidden heart. He went to the wrong source with the wrong story, and it was all of no avail. He never conceded his lost condition.

Pride rose in his heart. Can you not hear him saying to himself, "What will men say if I confess I am lost and have betrayed Him? I have been one of the elect—I as-

sumed responsibility in the company of Jesus' followers. What will they say if I confess my sinfulness?" Pride became allied with stubbornness, and he refused to repent.

But Judas is not the only one guilty of reducing his religion to a form. Hell has enlarged itself to swallow thousands of such victims. How many individuals there are who have no more than religion of *mind*! They know about God and they know about the church and they know about things that are holy; but there is no correlation between what they know in their mind and what they possess in their hearts. They have only this form of religion—religion of mind.

Others have no more than religion of *speech*. They talk about God and they talk about the church; but again there is no relation between what they say and what they possess.

Still others have no more than religion of *feelings*—and that is a dangerous thing. Someone has said, "When an individual has good feelings, he thinks he is better than he is; when he has bad feelings, he thinks he is worse than he is." Men need to learn that feelings are only incidental and faith is fundamental. Faith is always paramount and is never subject to feelings. Faith is the river, and feelings are only the tributaries. Faith is the key that opens the door to victory; and once inside that door, one may keep his contract with God and exercise faith and know that he is still in the fold, whether he feels like it or not.

And there are some who have religion of *habit*. They may attend church, read the Bible, and even pray—but all from habit. They do not expect, nor do they get, a fresh touch from the Throne. It is a serious thing if a minister or a member of the laity allows sacred things to become commonplace. The tragic fact is that in nearly every instance individuals who have been reduced to

nothing more than the religion of habit will never acknowledge it. Like Judas they will race madly and blindly to sure and certain destruction.

The Treachery of Judas

Oh, the treachery of this disciple! He turned traitor and sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, which was but the price of an ordinary slave. No one loves a traitor. Even the priests laughed in his face. Call the roll and Brutus, Arnold, Burr, Judas, and the other traitors step forward with shameful hearts. In a weak moment each succumbed to a wrong desire, and now he suffers an eternity of regret. Oh, the treachery and remorse of a traitor!

But Judas was a genius—a genius of hypocrisy. One day Mary anointed Jesus, and Judas declared that this was wasteful expenditure. "Why not sell this," he asked, "and place it in the treasury for the poor?" The Gospel writer hastens to point out that Judas' concern was not for the poor. He desired more funds for misappropriation. But this I would have you note: Judas, the genius of hypocrisy, has already become a materialist, deceiving everyone in that room save Jesus. None of the others had the slightest idea that he had allowed God away from his heart. The truth is that the treacherous, backslidden Judas was so cunning and performed his work so well that he fooled his closest friends. Those who were nearest to him were deceived even to the hour of the Last Supper. When Jesus reminded them that there was one present who would betray Him, not a single apostle save Judas knew to whom He referred. If the disciples had known, they would have rebuked Judas then and there. But, in utter amazement and wrapped in mortal fear, they looked into the face of the Master, and each with trembling heart asked, "Is it I?"

The Tragedy of Judas

What a tragedy! Here was a man who could have been a spiritual giant of the ages. What a tragedy for a man who had so many things in his favor to fail—not merely to sin against the Early Church, but to sin against a great God! He knew he had deceived others, but he was amazed to find at the end that he had deceived himself. Sin is self-deception. "We have the honey today, but the sting comes tomorrow." The sinner is daily building his own gallows. Sin is committing suicide on the installment plan. Have you seen a moth flying about an old red-flame lamp? It flirts with danger. Then it moves too close and perishes in the flame. So it is with the individual who is constantly flirting with the world. He may deceive those nearest to him, but he will never deceive God. It is true that God does not pay every Saturday, but God always pays, and God is going to get around to meting out justice to every soul. He may get around to you a long time before you expect it and, like the moth, you will perish in the flame.

But the greatest tragedy of all is the fact that Judas was eternally doomed. No wonder Jesus wrote the epitaph for him when He said, "*It would have been better if this man had never been born.*"

Judas is still paying for his sins, and a million years from now he will still be paying for them.

Judas went home from the Temple, and every step he took seemed to echo betrayal—betrayal—betrayal. He feverishly found a loosely woven rope and left his house, walking across an adjacent field until he stood on the edge of a high precipice. Nervously he fastened the noose and placed it on his neck and then fastened the rope to the overhanging limb. See him standing there. Hideous specter! The whited sepulcher is seen to be filled with dead men's bones. The outward cloak of "righteousness" falls and hideous hypocrisy, sham, and

pretense are bared for all the world to see. His ability to delude people had served him until now—but now he discovered it is impossible to deceive God. There he stood, veneering removed, and a heart of black for all men to see—a monument of disgrace and infamy; the shadow of a man who could have won the game of life, but he was willing to identify himself with the forces of hell and became the son of perdition. How the black angels of hell laughed in fiendish delight as he leaped from the precipice and his body swung back and forth like the pendulum of a mighty clock! Then suddenly—the rope broke, and he was flung headlong into the seething pit! And still he paces the black corridors of perdition, groping in darkness, begging for relief, and longing for the dawn of another day.

Chapter III

The Prodigal Son, Monument of Grace

SCRIPTURE READING:

And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

—Luke 15:11-24

Jesus was the Master Teacher. He never tried to astound the multitudes with the profundity of His remarks. Rather, His teachings were marked with simplicity. He left no occasion for doubt. He constantly challenged men to come face to face with reality.

Jesus often resorted to the parabolic method of teaching, and some thirty of His parables are recorded in the Scriptures. Three of them are found in Luke 15, the "Lost and Found" chapter of the Bible. The immediate occasion for relating these parables is found in the second verse: "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Opposition was not new to Jesus. He constantly encountered it. The scribes and Pharisees and their ilk were constantly pressing one charge or another against Him. These enemies of Jesus ostracized sinners and declared them to be outcasts. But they did it under the guise of religion, and therefore they could only justify their accusation by declaring that God considered them outcasts likewise. But here came One who declared himself to be the Son of God, and dared to receive sinners and eat with them. So in answer to these fresh mutterings, Jesus proffered three parables.

He told of a lost sheep, lost silver, and a lost son. In the parable of the ninety and nine, Jesus tells of the shepherd that stood at the sheepgate counting his sheep at eventide. But, lo! one was missing. So the shepherd went out and braved the terrors of the elements to find the one that was missing. He brought it back and tenderly placed it in the fold. Here Jesus drew upon a scene that was typical and was familiar to the minds of His hearers. But it seemed to have no effect on the men gathered around Him.

So next He looked over their heads and spoke to the women present. He told the story of the woman who had ten drachmas and lost one. This was a serious loss.

The coins formed a frontlet that was given the bride in marriage. It was a sign of her honor and faithfulness to her husband. The frontlet was always worn in a public gathering, and the loss of a coin would announce carelessness or even faithlessness to the world. So the woman diligently searched until she found it, and then she called the neighbors to rejoice with her. But from all appearances, His enemies did not change their countenances. The tale of the lost sheep did not stir the men, and the story of the lost coin did not melt the hearts of the women. So He related a third parable that would be sure to move the hearts of all His hearers. He told them of a lost boy.

He said that there was a prodigal son who decided that the laws of home were too strict. He wanted liberty without restriction, and it was that liberty which devoured him. "*He had no respect for age or law.*" Young man that he was, he came to his father and demanded his inheritance, and his father bowed to his demand and divided his estate. The lad left home in anticipation of a perpetual springtime of joy. No demands made on him now—the world was his to enjoy. Law is a restriction on personal liberty, and the prodigal wanted none of that. Jesus knew more about the modern psychology of self-expression than the learned men of this hour. In this parable He portrays what happens to an individual who becomes a victim of that school of thought. Self-expression nearly sent the prodigal to the depths of perdition; and even after he was restored, he took some of the scars of sin to his grave. Just as a nation needs law and discipline, so do we. A young person should respect the demands of parents and honor them with obedience. Then it will be easier to respect the demands of God and honor Him with obedience.

Riches

The prodigal thought that riches and freedom from home would mean happiness, but much to his surprise

the riches melted away as the clouds of morning, and he found himself far from father and home. When riches were gone and his fair-weather friends had left him, there was nothing to do but to seek out some sort of humble employment if he was to exist.

Recently a metropolitan newspaper carried an account of a young man who inherited a sizable fortune. Luxurious living, high spending, and poor investments served to make him poor the same year he had become rich. Some of his early friends were startled to learn that he was working in a restaurant at a nominal salary. When he had been wealthy he sought out the bright lights and soft carpets. Friends were many and cares were few. But his "friends" left when he became poor. How like the prodigal!

Ruin

The riches of the prodigal brought him ruin. His wild living made him go the deeper into sin. The sinful life culminated in the last place in the world he wanted to be: with swine. The Jews utterly detested swine. Jewish law forbade eating them. Some historians have claimed that the Jews did not even call them by name. They would point with disgust to "those things," as they called them. Here sat the prodigal in the midst of the swine, eating the husks, which were pods of the carob trees indigenous to that area. No wonder his thoughts turned to home and father! He remembered that the servants at home had more than he. The Psalmist said, "*I thought on my ways . . . I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*" Thus when the prodigal thought on his ways and became honest with himself, he recognized that ruin had become his lot. He became convicted in heart.

Rescue

He said, "I will arise and go," and he found strength for his resolve. This is the pivotal point of the story. Good intentions were not enough. But he was rescued when he kept his word and returned to father and happiness and peace. The resolve would have been of no avail if he had not returned. He was so determined to get back home that he cast aside pride and stubbornness; he was no longer concerned about what the neighbors and his elder brother would say. He was so glad to leave the swine and husks that he declared he would be happy to be a servant for his father.

I can see his father as he went out day by day to watch for his boy. The neighbors might have laughed and said, "His boy is gone forever." But one day as the father was watching, a speck appeared on the horizon. He watched closely for a moment and, while the lad was still a great way off, he recognized his boy, and ran to him and embraced him and kissed him; and while the boy confessed his prodigality, the father wept tears of joy. He did not even answer the lad, for he knew he was penitent and wanted to be rescued from ruin and death, or he would not have returned in the first place.

Rejoicing

Jesus said, "*And they began to be merry.*" There was something to be merry about. "*For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*" The father decided that this was a day of jubilee. He called for the best robe and told the servants to put it on the boy. This meant purity of character. He then asked for a ring to be placed on his hand; this was a symbol of honor. Then he looked down and saw the lad was without shoes. In the Orient, only slaves went barefoot. In the midst of his rejoicing, the father raised

his hands toward heaven and cried out, "And get my boy the best shoes in the house. He is no longer a slave to sin." Then he turned to another servant and ordered him to kill the fatted calf. The father said that they were going to feast, which was symbolic of satisfaction.

And so it is. There is rejoicing in the midst of angels when one soul turns toward God and seeks peace and satisfaction and freedom and honor and purity of character, as did the prodigal.

*I've wandered far away from God;
Now I'm coming home.
The paths of sin too long I've trod;
Lord, I'm coming home.*

*I've wasted many precious years;
Now I'm coming home.
I now repent with bitter tears;
Lord, I'm coming home.*

*I'm tired of sin and straying, Lord;
Now I'm coming home.
I'll trust Thy love, believe Thy word;
Lord, I'm coming home.*

Chapter IV

The Rich Man, the Devil's Fool

SCRIPTURE READING:

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

—Mark 10:17-22

In the halls of New Testament writ, we find three references to rich men. One of the three rich men became *anxious in heart* and ran to the Master to ask Him the way to life eternal. Later we see a rich man standing on a hillside to take inventory of his crops and considering the building of new barns to hold them. This man is *hardened in heart*. Still later we hear the cry of a rich man from the depths of hell begging for a drop of water. He is eternally *doomed in heart*. These references well portray progressive damnation. Some theologians feel that they refer to the same individual. For the sake of this study, we adopt the same viewpoint.

This rich man could well have been a combination of a ruler, merchant, and landholder. Materially speaking, he had all the resources a man could ask for. He seemingly had the Midas touch, and every investment paid enormous dividends. But Jesus did not condemn him because he had money; He condemned him because money had him. Ours is a jealous God and He will not allow anything to take precedence over Him.

But the rich man also had fabulous resources from the mental standpoint. He was a ruler and possessed intelligence commensurate with his position. He was a member of the intelligentsia. His learned opinions were sought after and respected. He was no mental dwarf; he was a mental giant.

And he was a man of high moral rectitude. He was not a wicked man who had lived in open and flagrant sin. Rather, he was a church member who had been complacent with no more than membership until now. When he asked Jesus the way of life eternal, Jesus quoted *some* of the commandments to him: Mark 10:19—*Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.*

You will note that Jesus quoted only those commandments that have to do with man's relationship to man. We cannot be right with God until we are right with our fellow man. But note that this man said, "*I have observed these since youth.*" But his moral standing was not enough. There was something lacking. He had "coin, culture, and creed," but he did not have Christ. Jesus touched the cancer of his soul when He pointed to his riches. Proof that His diagnosis was correct was found when the man turned sadly away, "*For he had great possessions.*"

Note the pattern of reasoning that threads its way through the scripture references. The rich man waited

for the price to become cheaper. No doubt he thought that he could work out his salvation without having to relinquish his wealth. Waiting for a cheaper price for salvation is waiting for a tomorrow that will never come. God does not run a bargain counter. He still demands our all and is justified in being satisfied with nothing less than that. Salvation is worth everything it costs. The individual who has not paid much does not have much.

The rich man could have thought within himself that at a later date conviction would be deeper. But this is foolish reasoning. Conviction is constantly on the wane. The fires of conviction burn lower each passing day. The truth is that this man moved further from conviction and forgot about God altogether. He became so engrossed in self that his conscience was seared, and he thought he could live without God. When a nation or an individual attempts that, it is foolish, fatal, and futile. An irrevocable law of God affirms that they who forget Him must suffer the inevitable consequences.

That was true in the case of the Roman Empire. In the fourth century under Constantine the Great Christianity became the established religion of the empire. When the empire later refused to recognize this, it plunged downward. The empire failed, but the Church stood—and still stands.

A number of years ago the nation of France forgot God and decided to expound reason. During those ignoble and trying hours, France made her pulpits bare and erected temples of reason. Louis XIV, Marie, and others went to the block. The nation was bathed in blood. Historians have called it the Reign of Terror, and that is not a misnomer. That is exactly what it is for a nation or an individual who forgets God.

Evangelists of my boyhood days used to tell a story that intrigued my childish heart. It concerned a man whose adopted son graduated from college and sought

admittance to the bar to practice law. The father asked his son about his plans for life. The boy quickly replied that he wanted to be a lawyer in a given city and to be respected by the populace. The father answered, "That is well, Son, but what then?"

The young man said that he would work to have a home and to afford his children the same privileges that his adopted father had given him. But the father countered with, "But what then?"

The lad said that he would continue to work until it was time to die. Then the father leaped to his feet and cried out, "And, O Son, what then?"

Here was a young man who was making the mistake that so many have made: he was building his plans for life and ignoring God.

But the rich man's reasoning continued along this line: *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* He was only half right. The goods were in store but not the years. He was a man with no thought of dying. He looked forward to a long life of ease. Yet at that moment the angel of death was sweeping toward him.

Is it not amazing how individuals think of death in a purely impersonal and abstract manner? They know death comes to all, but they like to feel exempted. Yet even now as you read this page you are nearer to it than you have ever been in your life. As in the case of the rich man, it may be much nearer than you expect. In the final analysis, nothing will stop the black angel of death from performing his mission.

Death is a stark reality. Not long ago I was preaching in Fairbanks, Alaska. During the course of my campaign there I visited one of the cemeteries. The Alaskan sun was beaming brightly that afternoon in June as we drove into the cemetery. Suddenly I stopped in amazement and asked about the long row of open graves before me. The minister told me that it was customary to prepare a

number of graves in the summertime to be used in the ensuing winter. He explained that the ground was frozen so hard in the wintertime that it was impossible to prepare a grave. As I stood there looking into those open graves, waiting to swallow their victims, I realized afresh the reality of death. That date with death is a date that will not be broken.

It was fatal for the rich man to refuse God. He never had a better opportunity than the one he had that day when he fell at the feet of the Master and asked Him the way of life. When Jesus told him what to do, he refused and departed. Is anything more sad than to see an individual this close to victory turn and walk away?

I remember at the close of the second global war, there was a story told about a soldier who had been in some of the hardest fighting in the Pacific. After the conflict he was en route home, only to die in a car crash a few miles from his destination. He was so close to home, but he did not make it. And the rich man was just across the border from victory, but he refused to yield. He loved his wealth. Money is a good servant but a poor master.

His departure brought disappointment. Sadness was etched in every line of his countenance. No man has turned away from God and rejoiced in doing so. His disappointment brought degradation. He did not become better; he became worse. He did not get nearer to God, but every day he moved farther away from Him. But his degradation culminated in the one thing he least expected—*death. This night thy soul shall be required of thee.* The late Dr. Godbey often referred to the marginal translation: *This night do they require thy soul of thee.* That is, this night do the demons require thy soul. The demons are always on hand to claim their rightful prey.

In one of my early pastorates I was quickly sum-

moned to a local hospital. I was immediately ushered into a room where a young girl lay dying. That scene is stamped on the walls of my memory, and I shall never forget it. As consciousness would come and go, that young girl would shriek loudly, asking her mother to "get these devils off of me." She would give no heed to what anyone said. She was too busy dying to do that. God help the old to know they must die and the young to know they may die. How it behooves every individual to be ready to stand in the presence of God at any given moment!

*Methinks I hear the moaning wind;
It seems so very near.
An ill foreboding it could send.
What's that? Death cried, "I'm here."*

*"O Death, hold back thy chilly dew;
I'll give you wealth untold."
But Death shrieked back, "I've come for you;
I care not for your gold."*

*"Oh, no, Grim Reaper, strike not me;
Let not this frame grow pale."
But Death shrieked, "I have come for thee;
My mission cannot fail."*

*"But, Death, let not this form turn cold,
And worms my flesh consume;
If thou dost make these bones to mold,
I'll know eternal doom."*

*"Death, place me not beneath the sod.
Give me a single hour;
I must prepare to meet my God.
Oh, do not yet devour."*

*Trembling, he felt his fevered brow—
“Blow not that chilly breath!”
Black angels shrieked, “The time is now!”
And struck the blow of death*

Chapter V

Paul, the Glorious Fool

SCRIPTURE READING:

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For I think that God hath sent forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

—I Corinthians 4:1-10

TEXT: *We are fools for Christ's sake* (I Corinthians 4:10).

Some years ago I read the story of a young man who stood on Times Square in New York City carrying a sandwich sign. On the front it proclaimed boldly, "I am a fool for Christ's sake." Passers-by murmured one to another that this man was mentally unbalanced and should be psychoanalyzed. Still others said that he should be confined and not allowed to roam at will in the midst of society. If they were surprised at the first reading, how much more surprised they were when they passed him and turned for a last fleeting glimpse, only to read on the other side of the sign, "Whose fool are you?"

And so it is. We are fools for Christ or fools for the devil. I have seen men who were slaves to tobacco; I have heard men take the name of a holy God in vain; and in the business world, I have seen businessmen promote unfair personal interests. Such men are clay in the hands of Satan. Let three worlds take note that I would rather be a fool for Jesus than a fool for Satan any time.

Paul was branded as foolish for some of the same reasons that a gainsaying world still brands Christians as foolish.

We Believe in God

In my lifetime I have seen two infidels. I do not know whether bitter circumstances of life brought them into a state of infidelity or not. But this I do know: they not only lived but they died as infidels. Man needs to be reminded that it is possible repeatedly to reject Deity until the heart becomes sabled in darkness and becomes bound in the clutches of Satan, until one lives and dies in utter disbelief.

But they represent the minority. Men have always conceded that there is something higher than the human. Science states that there is a Higher Power; philosophy

admits a First Cause. Regardless of terminology employed by science or philosophy, we know that the Higher Power and that First Cause represent the living God, who sits behind this moral order and sees to it that righteousness emerges triumphant.

Believe in God? Certainly we do! You may tear down every church and steeple, burn every Bible, make a mockery of the ministry, attempt to humanize Jesus and deify man, laugh at open sin, and bow before the devil himself, but my faith in God will stand!

Why, to shake this conviction of mine you would have to pull the stars out of the heavens; you would have to blot out the sun and hide the moon; yea, you must dry up the oceans and level the mountains; even yet you must roll up the sky and cast it into space. Then hush the singing of the birds, and erase the smiles of children, and still my faith will stand. For you must persuade me that this burning in my breast is not fire, that this heart that beats wildly at the very thought of Him is actually full of sorrow; that this peace I possess is only strife; that this newly found power is but weakness; that this glorious light in which I walk is but darkness; that the tears of joy that freely flow are not there; that I am not free from sin, but actually shackled to it; and that this boundless love that surges through my very being is only hate.

You would have to persuade me that things I have seen I did not see, and things I have felt I did not feel, and things I have heard I did not hear. You must persuade me that answered prayers were not answered at all—and all the black angels of hell could not do that. Glory and honor and power and majesty be to the living King, eternal, now and forever!

Few indeed would brand us as foolish solely because we believe in God. But let us notice how the "foolish" crowd grows smaller as we progress.

He Saves from All Sin

We believe that our God can save us from all sin. Without an atonement that provides for such as that, the Bible becomes no more than an exalted code of ethics. It is reduced to a philosophical prescription for living. We believe it to be these, but we believe it to be more. It is the compass that points the storm-tossed vessel toward the Haven of Rest.

Conviction, confession, repentance, forsaking, restitution, and faith are embraced by salvation. Conviction is a necessary prerequisite for salvation. *Conviction* is that deep sense of guilt that seizes the heart and reminds the individual that he stands in need of salvation, and it is impossible to be saved without first realizing the need of the heart. Then comes *confessing* our sins to God. This does not mean necessarily to enumerate every wrongdoing of our life—all may not come to mind. But we can tell the Lord that we confess every sin, great and small, known and unknown. And *repentance* means that we are sorry that we ever committed any transgressions against known laws of God. We must be penitent to such a degree that we are willing to *forsake* the things of the world *in toto*.

Then comes the matter of *restitution*, which is no more or less than making things right with God. Some things cannot be made right. Dr. Chapman used to say that if the situation would be better when restitution was made, then God would get glory from it. And that is the purpose of restitution. After this, we need only exercise our faith to be saved from every sin. Then we will know what the song writer meant when he said:

'Tis done, the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and He is mine.
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess that voice divine.

Before we continue with another truth, let me tell you of the restitution of a man who used to belong to a church I served as pastor many years ago. During a revival meeting he came to the altar to pray. He soon stood up and announced that God had taken him on credit. Let him tell the story:

"I told the crowd that for ten years I had been carrying tools away from my work. I promised God before that crowd that I would take every one of them back to work the first thing the next morning.

"Early the next morning I went to my garage and saw that the walls were literally 'papered' with tools. I took them down one by one and placed them in the back of my car, and I confess that I was feeling better all the time. I hurried to work. The first thing I did on arrival was to ask for the boss. I took him to my car, showed him the tools, and told him the whole story. He told me that I had thousands of dollars' worth of tools, and it would be all right for me to take them home again, and that he would keep quiet about it. I told him I couldn't do that. I reminded him that the tools did not belong to him or to me. They were the property of the business concern, and I told him that the Lord demanded I leave them there. He seemed startled and told me where to put them. I started unloading those tools, and every time a tool hit the floor, my heart would leap with joy. I stood there singing, 'Peace, peace, wonderful peace!'

"When the last tool was unloaded, I shouted aloud, 'The burden is all gone!'"

And that young man drove down the main street of the town waving his handkerchief in the air and shouting to everyone he saw, "The burden is all gone—the burden is all gone."

We believe it is possible to be saved from *all* sin by responding to conviction, confessing our sins unto God,

repenting over them and forsaking them, and making all humanly possible restitution, burning every bridge behind us, facing God with a heart as white as the snow. When we exercise faith for an experience such as this, we have something to be happy about. Not long ago a certain minister stated that we were bound in sin and always would be. He said that he didn't appreciate people getting too stirred about it. There is no danger of anyone's getting too stirred while listening to a message such as that. But when we note that it is possible to be saved from all sin and be separated from the world, then we have something to shout about!

We Believe in Holiness of Heart

The man never lived who came to the close of life's little day, raised his hand toward heaven, and declared that he was thankful that he had not possessed a holy heart; nor has the man lived who has cried out in his dying hour that he was happy that he had opposed such preaching and teaching. If the Bible makes any emphasis, it is here. The Word is replete with second-blessing holiness and would not be complete without it. This experience is required to free the heart from the last vestige of the sin principle.

The reasons I believe in holiness of heart are legion. Here are but a few of them. I believe it because the Bible tells it.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

—Hebrews 10:10-14

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

—John 17:17

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification

—I Thessalonians 4:3

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

—Hebrews 13:12

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

—Ephesians 5:25, 26

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

—Acts 9:17, 18

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

—II Corinthians 7:1

For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

—II Corinthians 13:9

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

—I John 3:3

These are only a few of the many verses of the Bible concerning holiness of heart.

I believe in this salient truth because it is the will of God. In I Thessalonians 4:3 we read: "For this is the

will of God, even your sanctification . . .” If we wanted to make the statement even stronger, we could remind ourselves that the word “even” does not appear in the original, which means that the text affirms that this is the will of God, *your* sanctification. If for no other reason, individuals should be sanctified because it is God’s will for them. If it is God’s will, then I must accept it as such; otherwise, I am rebelling against the will of God.

I further believe in this doctrine because it makes me one with God in will, desire, and motive. There is a unity between my heart and His that is compatible with the possession of the Holy Spirit; that unity removes cross purposes with self; that unity removes spiritual frustration. The personality can never know the force and drive that it should possess until this unity becomes a reality.

In connection with this thought, I may further state that I contend that it is almost as dangerous for an individual to neglect getting this experience as it is to reject it. The Christian’s life is not a standstill proposition. We are not to be stagnant water, but streams of living water. Thus, in our Christian life, we are pressing toward the goal or we are slowly but surely losing the ground we have already gained. Matthew records a statement of Jesus to the effect that “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” We readily concede this to be true. Does it not follow that *a man divided against himself cannot stand?*

The heart that is not sanctified is marked with inward division. The unsanctified individuals should flee to God and implore Him to give them an experience that will bring a unity between the heart and the heart of God.

To say that our heart is as God’s does not say that we are like God *in toto*. We contend that the heart alone

is Godlike. A drop of water is like the ocean, but it is not the ocean. A spark is likened unto the fire, but it is not the fire. A twig is as the mighty oak, but it is not the oak. Thus, this experience gives us a holy heart, making us one with Him in will, in desire, and in motive.

I believe in this experience because the song writers have been singing about it for years:

*Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.*

*Now wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow.*

*Breathe, oh, breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast.
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.*

I believe this cardinal truth is strengthened by testimonies of others.

Bishop Asbury said, "My heart is melted into holy love. I live in the perfect love of God."

Adam Clarke, the great Bible scholar, victoriously declared, "I regard nothing, not even life itself, in comparison with having my heart cleansed from all sin."

John Fletcher of Madeley, a spiritual giant of the ages, said, "I am now dead indeed to sin and alive unto God; He is my indwelling holiness, my all in all."

The great divine, James B. Taylor, testified thus: "I am ready to testify to the world that the Lord has blessed my soul beyond my highest expectations."

Some, I expect, are a little disaffected to think that I profess the doctrine of perfect love. They do not understand because they have not experienced it. If the men

of yesterday found this experience to be a glorious reality in their lives, then we today may do likewise.

And may I give one more reason why I believe in their experience. I believe it because *I have it!* Devils may cry out, "You don't have it; you only think you do." But that is just like looking at a lad eating an ice cream cone and saying, "Son, that isn't ice cream you are eating. You only think it is." The boy knows better because he has already tasted it. Thus, we who have tasted the high and holy experience of a sanctified heart know its wonderful reality. And as long as our consecration is complete and as long as our contract with God remains unbroken, every devil in hell cannot break one link of the golden chain that binds our hearts to the glittering throne. Glory to the King!

We Believe He Can Keep

If God does anything, He keeps His children. He has not promised us a flower-strewn path, nor has He promised all sunshine. But He has promised to stand by us and to give us grace commensurate with the need of the hour. We shall pass through Gethsemane; we shall drink the bitter cup, for being a follower of Christ does not mean that we are immune to sickness, sorrow, trials, tribulations, tests, or tempests. We must not expect to go to heaven on "flowery beds of ease," while those who have gone before us have "fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas."

It would help some folks to remember that God cannot trust everyone with suffering and sorrow. He often puts us to the test to see how much we actually love Him. And how will He know unless He tests us? You may often think your cross is heavy, but remember that He is carrying the heavy end for you. Even in life's darkest hours we can have the presence and the smile of God and the firm knowledge that He will keep us. One of the best

examples I know of His keeping power is found in the life of the Apostle Paul, whose words we are studying. This apostle blazed trails across the known world of his day, carrying the message that man could be fully and freely forgiven forever. While his ministry remains unparalleled from the human standpoint, we must remember that he encountered numerous difficulties that would have caused most men to turn back and quit.

Paul was never able to get away from his experience on the Damascus Road—and it was never able to get away from him. He often referred to that day when a light and a voice from heaven brought him to his knees before God. A short time back I was reading a book on the life of the Apostle Paul, and the writer contended that the sun was shining so brightly that Paul suffered from a sunstroke. If he did, I want to say that I have seen a lot of people in this world who need a good, old-fashioned sunstroke!

Neither was Paul able to get away from what happened in the house of Ananias. Here the scales fell from his eyes and here his heart was filled with the blessed Holy Spirit.

Paul was a man of enviable blood, citizenship, prestige, social position, and education. He had been a member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the day. No doubt many of his old friends whispered among themselves that "Saul has lost his mental balance." They couldn't understand why a man as brilliant as he would identify himself with this group that was fighting sin and preaching holiness. Can't you hear them say, "Poor old Saul is a fool"? But Paul declared that he was a fool for Christ's sake—a wonderful, a glorious, a magnificent fool!

Paul was preaching one day and the townspeople became stirred. They came to the conclusion that if Paul was going to preach like that they would simply

have to put him out of his misery. They set him against the wall, gathered handfuls of stones, and proceeded to pelt him with them. This was a new experience for Paul. He once held the coats for the men who stoned Stephen, but now the stones were coming the other way. After Paul had slumped over and lapsed into unconsciousness, the crowd, thinking he was dead, departed. If we could race back across the centuries and stand by the side, we would hear one say, "Paul, are you all right?"

Paul would stagger to his feet and brace himself against the wall as his inquirer would continue, "Paul, you are preaching the truth and they don't appreciate it. Why don't you turn back?" Paul's eyes would flash as he would say: "Turn back? There is nothing to turn back to. I must continue; there is so little time and so much to do, and my God will keep me until my work is completed."

Some time later another group that was irritated with his preaching said that the stones did not kill him but they had something that would. They bound Paul and gave him thirty-nine lashes with an angry whip. Each time the whip made contact with the flesh it would bite it open and blood would rush forth. Again, after the crowd had departed, one would say: "Paul, we told you that you should quit when they stoned you. Now they have beaten you and left you for dead. Now surely you are ready to quit." Paul would say: "Tattered garments and coagulated blood cannot stop me. I must continue to preach. There is so much to do and so little time, and I still believe that God will keep me until my work is accomplished."

Thus was Paul stoned, beaten, despised, rejected, shipwrecked, and jailed; but he had enough victory on board to call them "light afflictions."

Toward the end of his ministry, everything within the apostle cried out, "Go to Rome and preach." Go he did

and preach he did! While he was preaching, word was sent to Nero that Paul was causing quite a commotion with his preaching. Nero decided to stop that once and for all; he would send Paul to the block.

If one could stand outside the prison door and talk to Paul, he might say something like this: "Paul, if you had quit a long time ago you would not be here. Did you know that Nero says you are to be beheaded?" Paul never winced, nor did he cower in the corner. I can hear him quickly answer, "I have always said that He would keep me until my work was accomplished; if my work is through, then I am ready to go home." There is wonderful peace in knowing that we are ready to go home any time He calls for us.

Paul sat down and wrote young Timothy and told him to live and preach the old-fashioned gospel that his grandmother and mother had lived before him. When most folks would have been feeling sorry for themselves and thinking someone ought to write them, Paul wrote to a young preacher and encouraged him to hold true. Paul wrote Timothy his dying testimony: "*I am ready to be offered.*" Then he continued on a high note of victory, telling Timothy that he would soon claim his crown. Paul saw the valley, but there were no shadows. It was all light.

The morning of execution came. Profane history tells us that Paul was executed about a mile out of the city. My heart beats wildly within me each time I think of what must have happened when Paul walked the last mile of the way. He was not downcast. They did not have to push him along the trail. He was in a hurry, for he was going to see his King. But as he went down that dusty trail, I can hear him as he preached to the crowd. I can hear him as he would say:

"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel"; "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power

of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Brethren, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." O beloved, to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. "For we know that if . . . this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." Praise the King!

I am not looking for a hole in the ground, but I am looking for a hole in the sky; and when Jesus comes down, I expect to go up. Angels, get my mansion ready! Death has no terror, the judgment has no fear, and eternity has no uncertainty; He is coming back! He is coming back! And when He comes, death will be obliterated, sin will be eradicated, holiness will be perpetuated, and the city of God will be populated!

I believe Paul had time to sing while he was walking to the block. I do not know what he was singing, but I believe it had a message in it something like this:

*Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation, sink heart and voice op-
prest:*

*I know not, oh! I know not, what joys await us
there,
What radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare.*

*They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song;
And bright with many an angel, and all the martyr
throng.*

*The Prince is ever in them, the daylight is serene,
The pastures of the blessed are deck'd in glorious
sheen.*

*There is the throne of David; and there from care
released;*

*The shout of them that triumph, the song of them that
feast;*

*And they who, with their Leader, have conquered
in the fight*

Forever and forever are clothed in robes of white.

*Oh, sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect;
Oh, sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect!*

*Jesus, in mercy bring us to that dear land of rest,
Who art with God the Father, and Spirit, ever blest.*

Thus came Paul to the end of the trail. The burly executioner spoke and asked him if he had any last words. Paul with his head pressed against the block declared: "Well, if I had a thousand lives to live, I would live them all for Jesus. 'Had I a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they would all be Thine.' 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'"

The executioner raised the ax and brought it down. He turned around to the crowd and said, "You can go now—he is dead."

But what that executioner did not know was that, before Paul's head fell in the basket, God had already crowned it with everlasting glory; and before his feet grew cold, they were already walking down the streets of heaven; and before his tongue grew stiff, he had already joined with the angels singing praises to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; and before his ears grew numb, he had already heard Jesus say, "Welcome home, Paul; we have been waiting for you."

Beloved, when a gainsaying world brands you as "foolish" because you believe in a living God that can save and sanctify and keep, do not grow weary in heart. Rather, cry out in triumphant tones with Paul: "We are fools for Christ's sake."

Chapter VI

Zacchaeus, the Courageous Seeker

SCRIPTURE READING:

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham.

—Luke 19:1-9

Jesus was on His way to Bethany. His journey brought Him through the city of Jericho, where He was to claim another trophy for His Heavenly Father. The usual crowd of curiosity seekers, interspersed with skeptics and some believers, was on hand. His fame had been noised abroad, and there were many there who wanted to see this Galilean. So the hostile wicked, the neutral watchers, and the faithful worshipers stood at a point where Jesus must pass. With anxious hearts they await-

ed the opportunity to see His look of love and compassion. And who could tell? This could be a day when He would pause long enough to display His miraculous healing power. Little did the crowd know that this would certainly be a day of the healing of a man they held in disrepute—for the soul of Zacchaeus would be the recipient today.

Who Was Zacchaeus?

Zacchaeus was "chief among the publicans." He was a Jew who had sold out to Rome for the right to assess and collect taxes in Jericho. Tax collectors have never been held in too high esteem, and Zacchaeus was no exception. Truth reveals that the other Jews detested this man because he had allied himself with Rome, and he was often unfair in his assessments. When they saw him in the market place, they would shun him. When they beheld him walking down the street, bitter hatred would rise in their hearts, and they would say: "There goes that tax collector. He ought to be a prosperous publican. He has been promoting his own interests at the expense of other people long enough. When that publican dies, we shall declare a holiday in Jericho."

Yes, *he was rich*. The emoluments of his office had made for great personal gain, although he could well have acquired a portion of his wealth by inheritance or some other legitimate means. But in any event, *he was rich*, and rich men are often held in disdain solely because they have wealth. But Zacchaeus is to be commended because he was not wedded to his riches—as we shall see.

There was a longing for something more than material gain. There was a vacancy in his heart that could never be filled by gold; only God could fill that. That emptiness yearned to be filled with perfect peace and unspeakable joy.

This morning Zacchaeus had talked with a man who had come in to pay his taxes. The man told him that Jesus would be passing through the town. He told of wonderful things that the Master had done. Zacchaeus decided at once that he would close his tax office and join those who were waiting for one glimpse of Jesus. As he walked from his office, he realized afresh that wealth and a government appointment had not given him the satisfaction he had thought they would. Something was lacking, and he knew it. Perhaps just one look at the Master would renew his courage.

Zacchaeus was bound, not to his riches, but to sin. He did not know it as he strolled toward the crowd, but this very day Jesus was going to set him free. He was going to see Jesus, but he did not know that Jesus was going to see him. Today this Jesus was going to put a song in his heart, a sparkle in his eye, joy in his soul; He was going to break the fetters that bound him, and set him free. He would soon storm the citadel of Zacchaeus' heart and bind him to himself. Then while the bells of heaven were ringing and the angels were singing, he was going to inscribe his name on the roll of heaven!

The Press Would Have Kept Him Away

He couldn't see Jesus for the crowd. He was short of stature and he was lost in the press. He could not push the crowd aside, so he climbed above their heads! And so must you. If you would know victory, you must leave the lowlands and climb upward above the crowd.

The religion of Jesus Christ has never been the religion of the crowd. It has always demanded total surrender of self, and it has always called for sacrifice; and the crowd has never been willing to follow these demands! Noah was able to get only eight people on board the ark; only two individuals actually stepped inside Canaan; Jesus preached for better than three years and only one hundred twenty people continued to the Upper

Room. I say again that it has never been the religion of the crowd, but it is the road to victory and home. God's minority is more powerful than the devil's majority. They are on the winning side, and God shall lead them out to eternal triumph!

The crowd is still the major obstacle that keeps most individuals from getting to Christ. The crowd calls to the world. The crowd says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die." They forget that after death comes the judgment. The crowd says that life is one great game. They contend that this body is no more than a funhouse. But this body is far more than that; it is a veritable tabernacle, and we shall answer for it. We do not have ownership of anything we possess; we are stewards only.

The crowd follows the line of least resistance, and anyone can do that. The demons of perdition can do that. But it takes a resolute individual to take his stand against the crowd and allow his life to be dictated by principle and not by policy.

The crowd often causes individuals to backslide. After an individual gains an experience in his heart, he sometimes loses it because he has not mastered enough strength and courage to take his stand against the crowd. There is daily pressure brought to bear by those with whom they work, by friends and relatives. The easiest thing in the world to do is to fail to withstand that pressure, give in to compromise, and return to the crowd.

This matter of backsliding is worthy of brief enlargement. Backsliding is a reality. Never be deceived, for it is possible, and it is pathetic to lose your relationship with God. The Bible tells us of a host of individuals who lost their grip on God. King Saul could have been a spiritual giant, but he lost out and died a suicide. Judas had an experience beyond all doubt, but he lost it and is still paying for it this very moment. Demas at one

time was living up to Paul's preaching; and if he was doing that, he had an experience beyond reproach. The last brief word we have concerning him says that he had turned back and he became a victim of the trend of the times.

I readily realize that there are various reasons for backsliding, but I feel they can all be broadly classified under the general heading of "the crowd." Some individuals lose out because of the lack of prayer. Others lose out and give in to the crowd because they have not found the strength that comes from regular Bible reading; still others have lost out because of a lack of tithing, testimony, church attendance, and for many other reasons. When an individual lets down because of any of these reasons or others, it becomes an easy matter to give in to the crowd.

Some results of backsliding are fruitless lives and departed peace. The most tragic result is that the soul is hell-bound. Backsliders who die in that condition do not go to heaven. But there is a glorious remedy for backsliders! Christ is the Divine Remedy, and He will return to the individual who will return unto Him. Pick up your cross where you left it and flee to the arms of Jesus! Repent, forsake, and believe, and you can hear again the song of victory that once echoed in your heart!

Broadly speaking, it is the crowd that keeps some individuals from getting sanctified. The fear of what the crowd will say and what the crowd will think holds them back. The truth is that some folks may be greatly surprised to learn what some people have already said and what they have already thought.

In the final analysis, it is not what the people think or say that will get you past the judgment bar, but it is what God thinks and what God says that matters for eternity! Forget about the crowd and press on to perfection of heart, lest you fall back to perdition. Zacchaeus

got above the crowd by climbing into the sycamore tree. No doubt many who stood around him laughed and whispered to one another about the prosperous publican who was "up a tree." But Zacchaeus did not care what the crowd said; he was *above* the crowd and he was determined to see Jesus.

The Victory of Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus was not only seeking Jesus, but Jesus was seeking Zacchaeus, and they found each other! As Jesus drew near, He looked up into the tree, for *He knew where the hungry soul was!* He spoke to Zacchaeus and called him by name, for *He knew who he was!* He further knew *what he was*, but He was more interested in *what he was going to be!*

The anticipation of seeing Jesus thrilled Zacchaeus' heart; but the realization that Jesus had seen *him*—a despised taxgatherer, loved by no one, save Rome—and the thought that Jesus would invite himself to dine in his house made his heart beat wildly!

Jesus did not force Zacchaeus out of the tree. He invited him to *make haste, and come down. And he made haste, and came down.* Zacchaeus could not get out of the sycamore tree quickly enough. He hurriedly pushed the branches aside and came down. Then the Saviour met a sinner face to face, and took him home and made a saint out of him.

Proof that Zacchaeus was not married to money was found in his willingness to give half of his goods to the poor; and *if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* Roman law required that he make such restitution if a wrong assessment had been proved; but this was not a matter of Roman law. This stemmed from his saved heart, and he wanted to keep peace with man and peace with God.

Thus, with the shadow of the Cross already stealing over Him, Jesus populated heaven with one more soul. The next and last for His earthly tenure was the thief on the cross. Then as now, He was seeking and saving the lost. That explains why He sought Zacchaeus and why He called him by name and why He challenged him to Christian living. And He who called for Zacchaeus even now is calling for you.

*Away from the fold, lost and alone,
Somebody calling, Come home, come home.
Oh, who could it be that's calling for me?
Nobody would but Jesus.*

*I made the sad choice, no one to blame,
Somebody calling, calling my name.
Oh, who could it be that's calling for me?
Nobody would but Jesus.*

*Out there and alone, hungry and cold,
Somebody calling, from the sheepfold.
Oh, who could it be that's calling for me?
Nobody would but Jesus.*

*With deep night shadows, birds hush their song.
Somebody calling, How long, how long?
Oh, who could it be that's calling for me?
Nobody would but Jesus.*

Chapter VII

Christ, the Wonderful One

SCRIPTURE READING:

For 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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

—Isaiah 9:6-7

TEXT: *And his name shall be called Wonderful*
(Isaiah 9:6).

Since the dawn of history there have been many wonderful names, but none other so wonderful as the name of Jesus. There have been many wonderful events, but none other so wonderful as those events that surround the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Looking down the telescope of the centuries, the prophet cried out, "They shall call His name Wonderful." Succeeding generations that have intervened between that writing and this glad hour have served to corroborate that prophecy. The wonderful Christ came as was prophesied. He lived, died, and arose, as was prophesied. He is still known for His wonderful victories and is known by the wonderful people that He has chosen to call His own. If one now asks, "Who is this wonderful Christ?" we can answer that He is the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star; He is the Rose of Sharon, the Day-

spring from on High, the Saviour of the World, and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; He is Comfort amid sorrow; He is Strength for weakness; He is the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Conquerer of Death, the Prince of Peace, and the Liberator. He is the Captain of our Salvation, our great High Priest, and the Author and Finisher of our Faith. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the Rock of Ages, the glorified Lord and the coming King! He is Alpha and Omega, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. No wonder Isaiah said, "His name shall be called Wonderful"!

Not only should we note His *wonderful name*, but let us note His *wonderful love*. The love of God is "greater than the measure of man's mind." We cannot possibly fathom how much He actually loves us. He has always loved us, even before the foundation of the world. The loftiest expression of that love is found at Calvary. But we must remember that the atonement was the effect and not the cause of God's love.

His love stretches from eternity to eternity. It reaches from the highest heaven to the lowest hell. The orator's tongue can never tell, nor the author's pen describe, nor the artist's brush ever depict the love of God for man.

We love Him because He first loved us. He loves us because we are the masterpiece of creation, the tabernacle of the soul, and an eternal entity.

That love is so great and so far-reaching that it will cause Him to provide for all our needs according to His riches in glory.

Dr. Henry Clay Morrison used to say that when he was a small boy he had five meals every day. He was an orphan, and he often came in from play and told his grandmother, who reared him, that he was hungry. He said she would take him to the old corner cupboard, open the door, and start to get down a jar of cookies. He asked, "Grandmother, what is that on the top shelf?"

She looked down at him and answered, "Henry, that is my plum cake. I didn't intend to cut it, but you can certainly have a slice if you want it."

The lad had already had his breakfast, but he sat down and feasted on the cake. He had his regular meal at noon, but in midafternoon he would be back for another piece of Grandmother's cake from the corner cupboard, and still he would never fail to report for the evening meal. Dr. Morrison used to say that a young man needed five meals a day such as that. He affirmed that, when he grew older, he would often hear of various young men who had left home. "But," he said, "I could never do that. Every time I would start to leave, I would think of Grandmother's corner cupboard, and something within me just would not let me go. And later in life after the Lord saved and sanctified me, I sometimes heard of individuals who had turned back to the coarse fare of this world, but I could never do that. For my Heavenly Father keeps me completely satisfied. I come to Him and say, 'Father, Henry is hungry.' Then He opens the corner cupboard of heaven and gives me platters of joy, dishes of love, bowls of glory, and cups of gladness. He gives me wine and milk and honey until my soul becomes fat at His table."

Yes, God loves us enough that He will provide for us according to His riches in glory. The bank of heaven is not bankrupt. God has resources that we have never tapped.

His love is wonderful enough that it will sustain His children in life's darkest hours. When closest friends misunderstand, isn't it wonderful to know that He loves and He cares and He understands!

I do not remember that it was habitual, but I do recall one time it happened. I was very small at the time; it was night and it was very dark. Suddenly the thunder turned loose with all its fury and the very heavens

seemed to quake. Then the lightning streaked across the sky, and to my childish mind the heavens seemed filled with dancing ribbons of fire; then it was dark again! I called to my father and said, "I am afraid."

How well memory brings back the hour! My father answered and said, "Son, do not be afraid. I am right here." And then he quickly added, "And, Son, it isn't long until morning."

I confess unto you that in later years when I have been thousands of miles from loved ones, loneliness and heartache would steal upon me and I would find myself asking God if His love still reached me. It is a wonderful thing to talk to Him, but it is even more wonderful to have Him talk to you. I have heard Him say, "Fear not, Son. I am right here." And then there breaks in upon my thoughts the words of my earthly father: "Son, it isn't long until morning."

O ye saints of God, His wonderful love will sustain us in the most trying hour. Let us continue to press forward into the fray and do all that we can for Him, before time shall end and eternity shall begin. I believe with all that is in me that it is not long until morning. Hold true! His forbearance will soon end; the skies shall split asunder, and He shall return to claim His own.

He offers man a *wonderful salvation*. He knew that sin was deeper than the outward act. He knew that sin was twofold. Thus, He set up a twofold cure that we may be free and free indeed!

The sinful acts of life demand forgiveness. God never has minimized sin, and He will not do it now. The wages of sin remain the same. He still expects us to have every sinful act of life covered by the Blood. God help the people to get an experience that will save them *from* their sins—and not in the middle of them! Men need an experience that will separate them from the world, and

that separation will be so complete that the things of the world will become infinitesimal.

A few years ago I was returning to the West from Washington, D.C. That morning as I boarded the air liner I had been thinking of this very theme. As the ship pulled into the heavens, I looked around and saw many of the familiar landmarks of the nation's capital. There was the Washington Monument, the Capitol Building, the Library of Congress, the Lincoln Memorial, and others. It soon seemed that I could reach down and hold the entire city in the palm of my hand. Soon the pilot announced that we were over Baltimore. After we had flown over the city, I took note of those beautiful farms that dot the Eastern countryside. The land seemed to be laid out as patchwork in a giant crazy quilt. Beautiful farm buildings were no larger than a matchbox.

Suddenly my heart was moved to boundless joy as this thought came to me: The nearer we get to God and heaven, the smaller the things of this world appear. And God expects us to have every sin under the Blood, and He expects us to turn our backs on them until the world becomes meaningless. We are living *in* this world, but we are living *for* another world. *Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

And as we are saved from the sinful acts of life, it becomes necessary to allow God to cleanse our hearts of the inward principle of sin, for that is the thing that caused us to commit the sinful acts of life in the first place. The Bible commands and commends man to be free from the nature of sin and to be holy in heart. Heaven is a holy place, and only those who are holy in heart shall enter therein.

Years ago I read the testimony of the late A. B. Simpson. He was a young preacher and knew that he was saved. He could not fully comprehend holiness of heart, but he wanted to know more about it. When he

heard of a holiness revival in a near-by city, he immediately boarded the train and hastened to attend the meeting. Folks knew where the meeting was and told him. That was back when folks kept their cups right side up and often shouted aloud at the thought of full salvation. The rain may come down in torrents, but if your cup is wrong side up you will not get a drop.

Young Simpson hurried to the meeting and watched the people pray, testify, and sing. The preacher arose and preached on second-blessing holiness. The longer he preached, the more the young man realized that he was diagnosing his case. The preacher said it was possible to be saved from all sinful acts of life and then you would feel the stirrings of carnality within the heart. He elaborated on the difficulties that could stem from this, but he ended by telling of a glorious cure. He said there was a cleansing process by which God, the Holy Spirit, came into the heart and removed the last trace of carnal dross and made the heart pure and perfectly free.

Young Simpson hastened to the altar and prayed with the holy men and women gathered around him. The fire fell, his heart was cleansed, and he stood and testified to this new experience.

When he boarded the train to return home that night, he heard someone speak and say, "Did you see A. B. Simpson tonight?" He looked up and there sat two of his old college friends. Their backs were to him and they did not know he was there. One of them remarked that A. B. Simpson was the most brilliant fellow in their class, and he could not understand why he had identified himself with the holiness people. The lad knew he had the experience, so he raised his head and asked the Lord to send him some assurance. In the twinkling of an eye, his soul was flooded with glory and he had a veritable camp meeting in his heart.

Here was the assurance that God gave him. In an instant He reminded him of the pups that played around

the door when he was young. One day his mother gave him a jar of cream to give to the pups. The pups gathered around the jar, but they could not get any cream because their heads were too big. One little fellow on the outer edge kept crowding his way in until he reached the jar. His head was not so big as the others', so he reached in and drank all of the cream. Bishop Simpson said he saw in an instant that he simply had his head in God's cream jar, and he was determined to preach and live and sing holiness as long as he had breath—and he did just that! What a wonderful salvation! Man may be forgiven for every sinful act and then cleansed from the sinful nature and have a heart as white as the snow.

In conclusion, let us note the *wonderful hope* He has given His children. He has promised His own that they shall come rejoicing in that day; they shall see Him and they shall know Him. He has promised His own that they have a reservation that no one else can claim. He has promised them that they shall take part in the great coronation celebration.

Some years ago an elderly colored man visited a Nazarene church in the Midwest. It was prayer-meeting night and various individuals were giving their testimonies. He asked for permission to give his own, and it was granted.

He told the crowd that he was born in slavery. He remembered the day they sold his parents across the block and led them away. He remembered days when he was cold and hungry and lonely. Then he told of the joy that came to his heart when President Lincoln declared that he was a free man.

But he soon learned that he was another slave—a slave to sin. With tear-dimmed eyes he told of the time he met the Galilean and He set him free. He said, "I have been set free twice!" Then in trembling tones he said, "White folks, I am no more than a former slave. I

have had very little of this world's goods. I know that I am the least among you, but I am so happy tonight to know that they will never crown Jesus until I get there!"

When John E. Moore, the well-known song evangelist and song writer, heard this testimony, he wrote these words:

*There is soon to be a meeting,
Free from trouble, care, and sorrow,
When the saints shall all assemble in the air.
There'll be prophets, priests, and sages,
Saints that lived down through the ages,
But they'll never crown Jesus till I get there!*

*Tho' the way be long and lonely,
Deep the valleys and the shadows,
Many times the trials seem more than my share;
But if I am true and faithful,
Keep my trust in God, the Father,
They will never crown Jesus till I get there!*

*We may suffer many sorrows,
Often meet with disappointments,
But the losses and the crosses gladly bear.
Matters not how long the journey,
There's a day that's surely coming,
But they'll never crown Jesus till I get there!*

*They will come from every nation,
Every tribe of God's creation;
Through the blood of Christ their souls are pure and
fair.
Of the multitudes that gather,
I may be the least among them,
But they'll never crown Jesus till I get there!*