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MAN'S ASCENT TO GOD
By I. Parker Maxey

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BACK COVER TEXT

The Bible reveals man as a fallen being and the nature of his future existence is determined by personal character, and this in turn by the attitude of the soul toward the atoning work of Jesus Christ. To the believer it is eternal life; to the unbeliever it is eternal death.

The Bible clearly reveals that man is blind to his lost condition. II Corinthians 4: 3,4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"

In the following pages of this book we endeavor to reveal the predicament man is in, how he got into that condition and the way out -- the steps he must take to escape eternal damnation and finally make it to the City of God.

I. Parker Maxey

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We express our appreciation to Dr. Noel Scott for writing the foreword to this work.

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FOREWORD

It is my special joy to commend to you I. Parker Maxey's latest book, *Man's Ascent to God*. It has been my privilege to know Rev. Maxey for many years, to sit under his teaching and preaching ministry, and to serve as co-worker in evangelistic labors.

His many years of pulpit ministry and teaching in the fields of Bible and Theology, along with his editorials have combined to uniquely equip him to present this vital message of salvation.

This volume gives a clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. An honest heart, a seeking soul, can find his way to God and saving grace as he follows the route herein presented. The soul not clear in the experience of heart cleansing will find light and guidance to victory in this realm. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, [need] not err therein."

Refreshing and enlightening illustrations flood light to make the path clear. His personal testimony of how God led him into the experience of holiness will help one understand the inner need of the heart after justification.

A great strength of this book is that at the same time it points the way into the initial and second works of grace, a large portion is given to the development of the soul and growth in grace. This is a much needed emphasis.

The author also gives warning concerning byways and side roads which can detour a redeemed soul. The touchy issues of legalism and liberalism are well handled. (Don't pass judgment on this until you have read the chapter.)

This book will not only assist a seeking soul but will be a blessing to all who want to make spiritual progress. It sheds light on many current issues that the church faces today. There is grist for the preacher's mill as well as new light and guidance for the Christian.

Rev. Maxey has done the church and souls of men everywhere a great service in presenting this spiritual "ladder" to point the way from earth to heaven.

Dr. Noel W. Scott
President Kansas City College & Bible School

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PREFACE

Man's time on earth is brief at the longest. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Job describes man's days on earth as being, "swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and (are) spent without hope" (Job 7:6). The length of man's time on earth and his seeming insignificance are spoken of "as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney" (Hosea 13:3).

Although there was a time when man was not, there never will be a time when man, as an individual, will cease to exist even though his time on earth is brief at the longest. The grave is only the tunnel through which men pass in order to reach the life beyond. Whether he will admit it or not, it is a fact that every man believes in the immortality of his own soul.

Man has had no choice in his coming into this world and what he knows about his origin and first years on earth, he has to be told. When an individual is born into this world he brings nothing with him and when he leaves this world he takes nothing with him. It would seem natural for a being of intelligence to conclude that somehow, somewhere there must be a reasonable explanation of his origin, purpose and destiny.

From the beginning of man's time on earth and all down through the generations there have been basically two main opposing religions -- the worship of God and the worship of man. It is Christianity on one hand or humanism on the other. The worship of man known as humanism or The New Age philosophy offers no explanations as to origins. It only deals with processes. According to some evolutionary thinking all that is known to exist today started with what has been termed "The Big Bang" theory. But no explanation is given as to what caused the "Big Bang." The Bible, which is Christianity's textbook, is the only book in the world that authoritatively and unequivocally provides definite answers to the three questions that have confronted mankind of all ages:

(1) Where did I come from? The Bible gives the answer.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26, 27).

"Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psalm 100:3)

(2) Why am I here? Again, the Bible gives the answer.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

(3) Where am I going? The definite answer to this question is found only in the Bible.

"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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16-18).

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Psalm 23:1, 6).

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

Furthermore, when one observes the wreckage of humanity that has been strewn down through the generations of his existence on earth, he would certainly be forced to conclude that something has gone wrong somewhere. The humanist, who at heart is atheistic, endeavors to explain man's existence -- what has happened and what is happening -- through the philosophy of evolution. Man, he reasons, is not a fallen being but has been and is slowly evolving until he will eventually become a god.

The Bible reveals man as a fallen being and the nature of his future existence is determined by personal character, and this in turn by the attitude of the soul toward the atoning work of Jesus Christ. To the believer it is eternal life; to the unbeliever it is eternal death. This is revealed in the two following passages:

Matthew 7:13, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:"

Matthew 7:14, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The Bible clearly reveals that man is blind to his lost condition. II Corinthians 4:3, 4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

In the following pages of this book we endeavor to reveal the predicament man is in, how he got into that condition and the way out -- the steps he must take to escape eternal damnation and finally make it to the City of God.

I. Parker Maxey 1992

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

THE NEW AGE FALLACY

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." II Cor. 4:3, 4

We are faced today with what Francis A. Schaeffer has termed "the secular humanist world view versus the Christian world view." [1] Those who hold to the secular, humanist world view are also known as The New Agers. These are humanistic in their philosophy. Schaeffer gives us

this definition -- "The term humanism means Man beginning from himself, with no knowledge except what he himself can discover and no standard outside of himself. In this view Man is the measure of all things, as the Enlightenment expressed it. In other words, mankind can only look to itself for solutions to its problems and never looks to God either for salvation or for moral direction. Humanism can be seen, then, as the ultimate attempt to pull one's self up by his own bootstraps." [2]

THE NEW AGE PHILOSOPHY

This humanistic philosophy is engulfing the "NOW generation" in America. In fact, irreligious people of earth, especially, are caught up in this New Age Movement. "At heart it is humanistic (man is the center of the universe), materialistic (self-actualization is all important), and anti-God (the God of the Bible is dismissed in favor of self-deification)." [3] These New Agers must keep a personal God out of their world. They do not accept the Bible teaching that a personal God sees and judges what man does. They choose to live an independent, self-determined life, free from the restrictions of a holy God. They have defined God out of existence and in His place have deified man. In this humanistic philosophy man is not a fallen, sinful being. The need of redemption from sin by the shedding of blood through the sacrificial offering of Christ on the cruel cross of Calvary to them is foolishness (I Cor. 1:23).

Before we begin to point out the steps of man's ascent to God a word needs to be said about New Age philosophy and its rejection of the Bible as the "Word of God" and man as a created being, dependent on God for his very origin and continued existence. For any honest student who will take the time and effort to make a thorough research, there is enough evidence to thoroughly convince his mind that the Bible is truly the Word of God; that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God; that Christianity is a supernatural religion that saves from sin.

In the book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell states, "The evidence proving the deity of Jesus Christ [and I would add, the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible as the Word of God], is overwhelmingly conclusive to any honest, objective seeker after truth. However, not all not even the majority -- of those to whom I have spoken have accepted Him as their Saviour and Lord. This is not because they were unable to believe -- they were simply unwilling to believe! For example, a brilliant but confused psychiatrist . . . frankly confessed to me that he had never been willing to honestly consider the claims of Christ in his own life for fear that he would be convinced and, as a result, would have to change his way of life. Other well-known professing atheists, including Aldous Huxley and Bertrand Russell, have refused to come to intellectual grips with basic historical facts concerning the birth, life, teachings, miracles, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Those who have, such as C. S. Lewis and C. E. M. Joad, have found the evidence so convincing that they have accepted the verdict that Jesus Christ is truly who He claimed to be and who others have believed Him to be the Son of God and their own Saviour and Lord." [4]

THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD

God identifies Himself with His Word, the Bible. It is full of promises waiting to be fulfilled in behalf of those who will trust and obey. Christianity has not, will not, cannot fail when

the simple conditions laid down in the Word of God are met. Empty are the arguments of the haughty skeptic who urges his senseless reasonings against Christianity, but will not consent to test the question by an experiential criterion. ". . . do [my] will," saith Jesus, and ". . . he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). In simple words Jesus is saying, "Submit to the requirements of the gospel; obey My commands, and you shall have evidence to convince you beyond the possibility of a doubt, that My religion is divine."

The Bible states clearly that ". . . all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The only hope for the salvation of any soul is to acknowledge and accept the fact of his lostness and need of redemption. That FIRST step must be taken, for "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10).

The Bible reveals clearly in the first three chapters of Genesis how this godless, humanistic philosophy originated among men.

ORIGIN OF THE NEW AGE PHILOSOPHY

Man was created in God's image and placed on earth to rule over the earth and to glorify his Lord in doing so. This is clearly stated in Scripture, (Genesis 1:26-28):

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

It is very clear from these Scriptures that man was never intended to be God's equal, but to be God's subordinate ruler on the earth -- a being created in God's image, with intellect, sensibility and will. Neither Adam nor his progeny were to be gods -- but only God's representatives.

In yielding to the temptation of the serpent, however, Adam was unwittingly attempting to be his own god, but instead came under the dominion of Satan. The Scripture makes this clear (Genesis 3:1-6):

1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her: and he did eat.

This Scripture makes it clear that Satan through his evil craftiness switched man from God's divine plan to the plan which Satan had originated for himself, attempting to dethrone God and deify himself.

When man fell, he fell from the original plan and image of God into what we designate as "humanism." Thus humanism, the "self-enthronement-ambition," entered the human heart and plunged man into the same lost estate that Satan had fallen into. As a result, all humans who continue to follow Satan and fail to forsake his rebellious pattern will finally share his eternal damnation.

MAN CAN BE RESTORED TO GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN

Fortunately, however, there is a way out of man's horrible dilemma that resulted from Adam's humanistic error. That way out is depicted, step by step, in the following pages of this book. If you, my dear reader, are seeking knowledge of these Bible steps that lead out of Satan's trap to a God restored life, and finally to God's holy heaven, I urge you to read thoughtfully and prayerfully this book from beginning to the end.

In Psalm 8:4-6, the psalmist asks a very important question and then proceeds to answer it: "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

It is a fact that most people do not stop long enough to ponder their origin, their duty, or their destiny. When a person wakes out of sleep it is only then that he becomes aware that he has been in a state of unconsciousness. How easy it is on occasions to drop into sleep and never realize it. Many a tragic accident has resulted from falling asleep at the wheel of a car. Likewise in the moral realm, a person can live in moral darkness and not realize it unless and until the light of God reaches his mind and heart.

THE INEXCUSABLE BLINDNESS OF MAN

Man in his natural state is in darkness because of sin:

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. 4:18

"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John 12:37-40

"But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ." II Cor. 3:14

It is very evident from the above Scriptures that man is lost in the darkness of sin, but we also read "That [He, Jesus] was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Jesus, however, sounded out a solemn warning when He said, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35).

The Bible is very clear in revealing to us how spiritual blindness and darkness have come upon humanity, both as a whole and individually. We read in Romans 1:18-22:

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them.

20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, **SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE: . . .** (emphases mine).

21. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

The word "hold" (katecho) in the above Scripture means to stifle, to restrain or resist, to hold down, and it is telling us that what little light mankind did have, they resisted, and because of this resistance put themselves in moral darkness and as a result lost God out of their mind and heart. All sin is positive resistance to God. The twenty-first and twenty-second verses (above) of this first chapter of Romans make this plain.

In the pagan world there was an intellectual awareness through nature of God's eternal power, His deity and His moral character (see Romans 1:32). Their guilt lay in the refusal to honor what was clearly known by them in the light of nature and in the constitution of their mind.

Had they not refused, God would have given further light, leading to salvation. Therefore, they are "without excuse" and as a result are objects of divine wrath and judgment (Col. 3:6).

If this is true concerning the heathen world, and it is true according to the Scripture, how fearful will the judgment of God be toward those of greater light if they resist? (I Peter 4:17).

To get a full picture of what happens to man because of his rejection of God read the rest of Romans chapter one.

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

In the book of I John and the first chapter we note the steps that a sinner must take if he is to move out of the darkness of sin into the light of God which will finally lead him to the City of God.

The first chapter in this epistle is unique in that it can be read either forward or backward verse by verse, and be equally meaningful.

Verses one and two give us a picture of the Incarnate Christ, the God-man, the Theanthropic Person, (possessing both divine and human natures). In verse ten we get the picture of sinful humanity. If we start with verse ten and ascend one verse at a time we get a picture of the steps a sinner must take to be redeemed from sin and enter into fellowship with a holy God through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

A good illustration of what we are presenting here is the experience Jacob had at Bethel as recorded in Genesis 28. He was fleeing from his brother, Esau, who had a murderous intent toward him. Jacob had grievously sinned against his brother by his deception.

While Jacob slept that night at Bethel he dreamed of a ladder a ". . . set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." There were ". . . angels of God ascending and descending on it . . . and the Lord stood above it." Here we have the sinner at the bottom and the Lord at the top and a way provided, in the instrument of the ladder, for God to close the gap between Himself and man.

This great truth as portrayed in Jacob's "ladder-vision," is pictured clearly in the first ten verses of First John which we will consider in the following pages. In viewing the chapter in this light we see the sinner at the bottom of the ladder (verse 10), and the Incarnate Christ at the top (verse 1). The intervening verses depict the steps in one's life out of sin into the grace and favor of God and the assurance of an eternity of bliss.

What are those steps that bring God and man together? Let's follow them, beginning with verse ten and ascending to verse one. Herein I believe that you, dear reader, will see a picture of "MAN'S ASCENT TO GOD."

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SECTION II

THE STEPS OF ASCENT TO GOD

CHAPTER I

The First RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

FACING ACCOUNTABILITY

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I John 1:10

The first step from earth to heaven is to believe and acknowledge what the Bible says, that ". . . all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and as a result are on the way to hell -- a place of eternal suffering and punishment. ". . . And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Before we endeavor to bring a brief exposition of the verse at the head of this chapter, we will make a few general observations of man in his original state. The verse before us describes man as a sinner, and in the previous chapter we observed how man fell from a holy state of innocence to sinfulness. Sin is twofold in its nature-- (1) The inward defilement that man has inherited from Adam, and (2) the acts of transgression which spring from that defilement. Man is not only depraved by nature but guilty by his own wilful acts. That is to say, man is sinful in two ways: **FIRST** he has inherited a sinful nature. He is born with an inclination or tendency to evil. His heart is defiled and rebellious. He prefers his own way to God's way. This depravity or disposition to sin affects every part of man's being, his intellect, his sensibility and his will, and it renders him unable by his own efforts to deliver himself from this state of defilement. **SECOND**, he commits sinful acts. Although they are the outcroppings of his sinful nature, they are committed by his own free choice.

We will endeavor to prove in this chapter that man is a sinful being. It will be helpful for us to note that before the Son of God died to be our Saviour, sin could well be defined as a rebellious breaking of God's moral law. This was the essence of sin before Calvary. But since Calvary the essence of sin can more accurately be described as a refusal of Jesus Christ. "How often would I . . ." said Jesus, ". . . and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34).

The New Testament perspective is that all personal sins are related to the basic sin of willful failure to believe in Jesus. Turning away from the only one who can lift man out of his sinful, fallen state is a "guilt-causing" sin because it means a continuing choice of self, a self-centeredness which is always sinful. In contrast to this, instead of thinking seriously and responsibly about the saving merits of the blood of Jesus, the world in its rebellion turns away from Him and clings to itself. The world's self-centered attitude and conduct, taken as a whole, is brought about by its continued rejection of the revelation of Christ, and is therefore sinful.

The world defines sin as rejection of or transgression of, its own standards and values (the humanistic philosophy -- anything that lowers self-esteem). But the world is wrong about sin. Its system is shown to be a self-protecting and self-serving mechanism which in willful unbelief hides from the very truth that could set it free. This is brought out very clearly in the discourse concerning Jesus as the light of the world, found in John 8:12-59.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN IN THE HUMAN RACE

To get a clear picture in your mind about what sin is and why man is under the curse of sin and death, let us look again at the origin of sin in the human race.

I invite you to go with me again to the first Adam and the Garden of Eden. God created Adam in His own image -- immortal, holy, a man of reason and a spiritual being capable of fellowship with his fellowman and with his Creator. He gave him dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26, 27). He placed him in the Garden of Eden -- a "paradise" of order, delight, and blessedness. But He also made him a being of free choice. He could either acknowledge God as His Creator and Benefactor and submit to Him in loving gratitude and obedience, or turn from Him into independence and rebellion, which could only end in spiritual death and eternal separation from God and from all that He had provided for man's endless joy and happiness.

Since man was a being of absolute freedom of choice, it was necessary for him to be given an opportunity to express that freedom. Would man accept God or reject Him? By the very nature of a created, dependent being, to accept Him would mean both spiritual and eternal life. To reject Him would mean spiritual death and eternal death. Death does not carry with it the sense of annihilation, but eternal separation.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed in the Garden of Eden for the very purpose of putting Adam's free choice to the test (Gen. 2:17). Adam was not to partake of its fruit and to do so would result in death-spiritual, physical and eternal. Adam partook of the fruit knowing this! Thereby he chose to turn from God. By this act Adam was actually accepting the tempter's lie (Gen. 3:4) and saying to God His Creator, "I don't believe what You are telling me that I will actually die (unbelief); I don't like Your telling me what I can and cannot do (rebellion); I don't like submitting myself to someone else's authority over me (pride); I want what I want and I want it now (lust); I'll get what I want whatever it may cost (even if I have to murder)." Adam, as the first man and federal head of his race, through this wrong choice, passed the seed of sin on to his posterity and because of this transgression and from this inherited seed "all have sinned." (Rom. 3:23)

THE ESSENCE OF SIN

Humanity's sin must be looked upon as a violation of a personal relationship between a finite being (man) and an infinite being (God). Thus, whatever violates that relationship and causes a separation between man and his Creator, is sin. From what has been said in the foregoing paragraph it is easy to see that sin, in its essence, consists of unbelief, rebellion, pride, lust, murder. Man has inherited from Adam ". . . an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). This unbelief, the root of all sin, consists of the putting of man's will at the

control of life instead of God's will. By rejecting God's Word, Adam stepped aside from God's will and lost God's way -- the way of eternal life, happiness and the complete fulfillment of what God intended him to be. It was a death to the Creator-creature relationship, a rejecting of God's Lordship. The unavoidable outcome was that some other lord be worshiped, and that primarily was himself. This put man inevitably in a self-deceived, idolatrous position.

Because this self-deception still controls man, we need God's Word, the infallible Word of the perfect Creator, to be the basis of our thinking. How is one to know that he has sinned and thus become a sinner? The issue comes down to the simple fact explained by Paul in Romans 3:20. ". . . For by the law [God's Word] is the knowledge of sin." In Romans 7:7 he continues, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law [God's Word]: for I had not known lust, except the law [God's Word] had said, Thou shalt not covet." When we know we have disobeyed God's Word we know we have sinned.

There is no doubt that God as Creator has Sovereign authority over His creation and that man's attitude should be in agreement with this. God has the right to make the rules. We have the responsibility to obey and rejoice in His goodness, or disobey and suffer His judgment.

Let us repeat it here again -- to understand what sin is all about, that all mankind are sinners, and for man to recognize sin, God gave us the law. An all-powerful, all-loving, all-gracious God has laid down for us rules by which we must live if our lives are to develop in the way they should. God's moral laws are summed up clearly in the ten commandments found in Exodus 20:1-17, and are binding upon all men of all ages. To break these laws of God is to sin. The Bible makes it clear that ". . . all have sinned [broken God's moral law], and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). As a result all are under the curse of death. ". . . The wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23).

As we have said, the very essence of sin is putting man's will at the control of life instead of God's will. How many "wills," acting in conflict one with the other, would it take to create utter chaos? For perfect harmony, peace and happiness all free-wills must submit to One Supreme Will over them all, the Sovereign Will of God.

If poor, sinful humanity will ever escape eternal death, it must not take lightly this matter of sin. God is no respecter of persons. We read in Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Looking at humanity as a whole, we see that out-and-out sinner who has never darkened a church door, but has all his life lived sinfully, not giving any serious consideration to his eternal destiny. Also it is an undeniable fact that there are many today who call themselves Christian yet know nothing about a "born again" experience. They go to church, support the church with their presence and money and often take an active part in the ongoing program of the church. They take on the outer form and exterior standards of Christianity but know nothing of a vital, radical change of heart. These are they who make an appearance of one who is of moral excellence and even of a deep religious turn. Such a one may be a law abiding citizen, an ideal father and a model husband,

an excellent church man and industrious in his life. If the hidden motive of this man's heart could be laid bare, however, we would discover a person of total selfishness, whose heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (See Jer. 17:9). A man of this turn may be exemplary from the standpoint of his outward life, but his spiritual lifelessness results from his belief that to establish and increase his own present happiness is the all-important thing. He is actually a "hedonist" in his ethical life. (A hedonist is one who believes that the sole end of living is pleasure and thus, whatever contributes to his present pleasure is right, and everything which interferes with or prevents this is wrong.) As commendable as such a eudaemonistic way of living may appear to be here in this life, the sad fact is that such a person at heart is a sinner on his way to an eternal hell. He has never accepted divine leadership and will not accept the fact that he is a sinner in need of a Saviour.

There are those in the churches of this day who do not understand what is meant when man is described as "sinful." Many preachers (blind leaders of the blind even many who consider themselves evangelical) think that the definition of sin can be limited to such things as adultery, alcoholism, drug addiction, nudity, x-rated movies and bad language. However, sin does not stop here. These, and many other things too numerous to mention are but the fruit of sin. We must understand that sin is a heart condition and pervades the whole of one's thinking and will, and therefore affects the whole of one's actions. Jesus said, "For out of your heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications [sexual immorality], thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19).

BIBLE DEFINITIONS OF SIN

The Bible pictures sin by the use of numerous specific terms. In the New Testament the Greek word "hamartia" is used to define sin and conveys the idea of a man missing the way, to err, to deviate. It suggests the idea that in the end the sinner does not find what he is seeking for. This is the meaning in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Also in Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. . . ." The term "hamartia" appears many times in the New Testament.

"Parabasis" is another term used to define sin. This term conveys the idea of "transgression," the crossing over of a forbidden line the disregarding of the laws of God. This thought is found in Romans 4:15, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Also in I John 3:4, "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

"Adikia" is another Greek word for sin. It pictures sin as crookedness, the bending or perverting of that which is right. Sin is a self-separation from God. It conveys the thought of unrighteousness -- of not being right in relationship to God, others or self. We find this mentioned in I John 5:17, "All unrighteousness is sin. . . ."

"Anomia" refers to sin as a state rather than an act a state of lawlessness. Matthew 24:12, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." "Iniquity" in the Bible conveys the thought of lawlessness.

"Asebia" pictures sin as ungodliness. It carries with it the thought of an ungodlike character because of the absence of God. Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. . . ."

The Bible rings out the truth when it declares in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." In verses 10-12 in this third chapter of Romans, we read "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." But why is this? There can be only one answer to this question. Man is born with a nature of sin. You do not have to teach a child to do wrong. It is natural for him to do wrong -- to steal, to lie, to cheat, etc. We read in Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

One of the most prominent effects of SIN is spiritual and moral blindness. We read in 2 Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Because of this blindness men call sin weakness instead of wickedness; error instead of deformity; defect instead of iniquity; liberty instead of lawlessness; mistake instead of madness; response instead of rebellion; license instead of leprosy.

We have listed only a few terms that describe what sin is as defined in the Bible. The Bible is clear in its statements that ALL have sinned. Unless a person will acknowledge the fact that he is a sinner there is no hope that he will ever take the steps toward his personal salvation. God in His mercy convicts a sinner of his sins, but at the same time He honors man's freedom of choice and will not violate that freedom.

Simply knowing, however, that "all have sinned" and are under the curse of death spiritual, death physical and death eternal, is not a total solution to the problem of sin.

GOD PROVIDED A PLAN TO RESCUE MAN FROM SIN

Adam had no sooner sinned against his Creator than God, in love, stepped in with a promise of salvation and restoration. We read in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." God is here addressing the serpent who persuaded Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit, and promises the defeat of Satan and sin through the suffering and death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary. It is the provision whereby God has made possible for every man to be redeemed from sin and restored back to the likeness and fellowship of his Creator. This is the happy privilege of each who will, of his own free choice, accept God's offer by turning away from his sins and putting his trust in the provision God has made for his salvation in the suffering and death of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Even prior to the promise God made to fallen mankind in Genesis, and even prior to creation, God had something wonderful in mind. He longed for a being with absolute freedom of

choice who would love Him because he freely and of his own volition chose to do so. God wanted to share His greatness, His infinitude, and His fellowship with a being who would recognize who He is and enter into His likeness by the choice of his own free will. In Romans 8:29 we read, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . ." I am sure that in His foreknowledge God saw that under the subtle, severe attack of Satan man would fail in the hour of temptation and would fall away from Him in disobedience and rebellion. Nevertheless, God purposed that He would still have a creature of freedom of will who would, of his own volition, choose to worship and adore Him, and so in the heart of God prior to creation, He made that provision. We read in the book of Revelation 13:8, ". . . the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Wonder of all wonders! God set the penalty and then paid the price HIMSELF for man's redemption from a fallen, sinful state. God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate in human flesh, suffered the curse of death on a cross and became sin for us. Thereby God poured out His judgment upon sin. And as all die in Adam, so all who believe in Christ's atoning death and resurrection can live in Him.

The first step, then, out of spiritual and eternal death is found in verse ten, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." We must accept and believe what the Bible says about us, that "we have all sinned," and are under the sentence of death.

Now, to be brought under conviction and consciousness that we are sinners, this in itself will not deliver us from the eternal fires of damnation "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44), nor at the end of this life from hearing those dreadful words from the mouth of our Lord, ". . . Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: . . ." (Matt. 25:41).

Being made conscious of our sinful state, and deserving to spend eternity in hell, we must take a second step if we are to be redeemed from eternal punishment.

To step aside from the ladder of ascent from earth to heaven is to step into a death trap of "sinking sand" that ends in a bottomless hell. As certainly as there is a "boundless" heaven, there is a "bottomless" hell from whence there is no escape, but a ceaseless burning fire that is never quenched and where their worm dieth not. Its inhabitants only sink deeper and deeper into hopelessness and despair.

But thank God He has made that provision for man's escape from his deserved damnation. "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" (John 3:16). We find comfort in the song written by Charles H. Gabriel entitled "He Lifted Me,"

In loving kindness Jesus came,
My soul in mercy to reclaim,
And from the depths of sin and shame
Thro' grace He lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me;
With tender hand He lifted me.

From shades of night to planes of light.
Oh, praise His name, He lifted me!

* * * * *

CHAPTER II

The Second RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

"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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:16-17

Augustine stated it well when he said, "Thou [God] hast formed us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

When Peter was preaching his message at Pentecost, the crowd, pricked in their heart, cried out saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). What caused them to cry out like they did?

When God shook the prison doors open at Philippi and loosed the bands from off the prisoners with an earthquake, while Paul and Silas were singing and praising God at midnight, the keeper of the prison cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" What made him cry out like he did? In both of these occasions it was the mighty manifestation of the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

THE MIGHTY POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit power is the greatest power ever manifested on earth. Carnal, sinful man would have destroyed the human race from off the earth long ago but for this gracious, enabling grace of God with its restraining, convicting power. Men do not stop to think, nor would admit that this restraining, convicting power is to awaken them to their accountability to God, their Creator. It is the work of the faithful Holy Spirit endeavoring to advance Christ's redemptive purpose in bringing man back to his Creator and Redeemer by His death on the cross.

Men are awakened to their lost condition under the mighty convicting power of the Holy Spirit. It is the work of God within the heart of man. No one can be saved apart from it. So gripping is this convicting power that it makes one restless, gnaws at a guilty heart through sleepless nights, produces a fear of God, of eternity and of hell.

Under this powerful convicting influence of the Spirit of God men have reacted in different ways. Some have been driven to torture themselves, or make long, painful pilgrimages to some far off Mecca, hoping to find something that would satisfy the empty longing within. Others have broken off many of their sins in an effort to find relief. Still others have resisted, and kept on

resisting this Holy Ghost conviction until what conviction they had subsided. God warned, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3).

Some, thank God, have fled for refuge to Christ the Saviour, confessing their sins, and have found immediate relief and deliverance (Psalm 32:1-5).

No man can be saved apart from the help and influence of the Spirit of God, the bearer of "the true Light [Jesus Christ], which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

But on the other hand, God cannot save a man apart from his own willingness and cooperation. It is not that one, under the power of conviction, needs to stop and reason it all out -- one cannot rationalize himself into the Kingdom of Heaven. But all that enter in do so in like manner -- the Scriptural way. This is plainly laid out in the ninth verse that is before us now.

As we have stated earlier, empty are the arguments of the haughty skeptic who urges his senseless reasonings against Christianity, but will not consent to test its instruction book (the Bible) by reading it and following its teachings.

We have discovered in chapters one and two of this book that man is a fallen, sinful being, and in that state is subject to eternal damnation. Yet, thank God, there is glorious hope. If a man will but humbly admit the condition of his lostness and hopelessness (step one), God has provided a means whereby he can be saved. To find what man must do next we "step up" to verse nine: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Let us note the steps that are clearly set forth in this verse.

STEPS THAT LEAD TO SPIRITUAL LIFE

There are six words in this verse that are key words indicating elements in the crisis experience of the "new-birth" -- the second "rung" in the ladder of salvation.

1. "IF." The first word is a little word in size but powerful in its theological significance when it comes to the doctrine of soul salvation from sin.

This word immediately brings to mind the age old question: "Is man's eternal salvation dependent upon his own freedom of choice in accepting the provision made by Christ in the shedding of His blood on the cross of Calvary, or is his salvation determined by the eternal decrees of a Sovereign God?" Or, putting it in another way: "Is man's salvation conditional upon his own freedom of will or unconditional through the Sovereign will of God?"

PREDESTINATION -- THE TRUE vs. THE FALSE

Those who have held to a doctrine of predestination believe that God has of His own free will elected some to be saved and others to be damned. Calvin, like Augustine, defined predestination as God's eternal decree by which God's absolute Sovereign Will decided the

eternal destiny of every individual. It was God's absolute predestinating purpose that determined who would be saved and who would be damned. Calvin admitted this was a "horrible decree," but argued it was based on God's law and justice. This teaching of Augustine and Calvin, however, is contrary to the plain teaching in the Word of God. In the verse of Scripture under consideration (I John 1:9), we have a conditional "if" expressed. On the condition that one will confess, something definite will happen, but it will not happen unless the condition is met. This is the force given to the "if" in this verse. It is interesting to note that the word "LIFE" has this "if" right in the middle of the word. Eternal life will come to one only under a specified condition and that consists of his own freedom of action.

Before we go on to consider the second key word, let us pursue this topic of predestination a little further. There is a Bible doctrine of predestination that is true. God did predestinate that all who would take the proper steps to obtain salvation from sin and continue to walk in the light would be saved, and all who reject this way of eternal life would be damned. In this sense God does decide who will be saved and who will be lost. But while God sets before man either life or death, man must make the choice between one or the other.

It has been very appropriately and attractively put this way: God predestinated that the "Old Ship Zion" is going through and all who get on board and stay on will be saved, and all others will be lost.

The next word to consider in ascending to this second "rung" or step in man's ascent to God is the word:

2. "CONFESS." "If we confess our sins." Conditioned upon the confession of our sins we can expect something to take place! Having been convinced that we are sinners by the Word of God and by the convicting power of The Holy Spirit, this second step is that of confession. The ground of our forgiveness has been provided by the shed blood of Christ, and on the condition of our confession, God promises to forgive our sins. But what does it mean to confess?

THE TRAUMA OF CONFESSION

Etymologically, to confess means "to say the same thing as," "to say along with." There must be absolute and total honesty in admitting what we know to be the truth about ourselves, the sins we have committed what our conscience, enlightened by the voice of the Holy Spirit within us, is saying. Confession of sins is the acknowledgment to God of one's guilt. A person cannot turn to God without first turning away from sin and this involves a thorough repentance. Genuine repentance will involve the confession of specific sins of which one is guilty -- lying, stealing, cheating, manifesting anger, false witnessing, adultery, etc.

Honest and open confession of one's sins is one of the most traumatic experiences a person of free will must face if he is to experience forgiveness from God. This is extremely traumatic for several reasons. Primarily it is traumatic because the Presence of a holy God is severely fearful to sinners. ("It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Heb. 10:31.) God's Presence manifests a threat to human moral standards, a threat to the quest for autonomy, and a threat to the desire for concealment of sin. God's revelation invades and exposes the darkness of a sinful soul.

Because of these things confession is contrary and repulsive to sinful human nature. A sinful heart draws back from confession because of fear of exposure, pride of heart, a rebellious nature, unbelief peer pressure, carnal self esteem, or the grudge or hatred toward an individual he will not face up to. It is the nature of a sinful heart to draw back and keep hidden what he really knows himself to be and what he do es not want to expose. He draws back from facing personal blame. His sins are always someone else's fault -- as Adam blamed Eve -- the woman caused me to eat the fruit!

SOME SINS MUST BE CONFESSED TO MAN

All sinners face this problem. A fierce battle rages within one's heart when he faces his sins and knows his only hope of salvation is to reveal the truth about himself. As a lad of eleven years, on an occasion, I lied to my father. Time and again I wept, confessed before God and endeavored to believe I was saved. My father believed in me and had no idea I was a liar. I carried this false front for a year, not willing to reveal to my father what I really was -- a liar on my way to hell (Rev. 21:8). I tried every way to reason around what I knew God was requiring for my salvation confession. Was not my confession to God enough? I reasoned that it should be sufficient to settle the matter and continued to testify to being saved. But that did not meet God's requirement and I knew it wasn't settled. I was acting before my father something I knew I was not. How faithful and patient the Spirit of God is to help us in this business of confession, that we may clear ourselves. And when we do confess, how easy it becomes to believe that God for Christ's sake forgives us.

GOD'S LIGHT REVEALS SIN

There is no question but that the encounter of a sinner with the light of God's revelation of his sins is a traumatic experience. To illustrate, there is no trauma if the eyes are forever closed so that no light penetrates. But the eyes, when suddenly exposed to light, close automatically in reaction to the shock and pain of the sudden brightness. It is likewise in the spiritual realm. Men draw back from the shock and pain that the light of God inflicts when they emerge suddenly out of the darkness of their own sinful blindness into the bright, pure light of God's truth. They shrink back from the anxiety over what the confessing of their sins might cost them. John 3:17-21 is very clear in bringing out this truth. Everyone will eventually come to this light for we read in John 1:9, "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

When an individual comes to the light he either has to step up in that light or repress it.

THE DANGER OF REPRESSED LIGHT

Many, when they have come face to face with their past sinful life have made the statement, "I'll go to hell before I will confess all my past wicked life, where, and to whom it should be confessed!"

In Romans 1:18 we read, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." This verse

contains a revealing and frightening truth as was brought out in chapter one. The word that is translated hold, as you will recall, means to hold down, restrain, hinder, or suppress.

This whole passage (verses 18-32) is referring primarily to the heathen world, but also to every individual in general. It contains a warning against suppressing and thwarting God's truth -- failing to walk in the light as it is revealed to us. What little light the heathen have (I John 1:9), they tend to suppress, and by doing so plunge themselves into greater spiritual darkness, leading to eternal damnation. There is warning after warning in the Scripture against failure to keep pace with gospel light. Jesus warned in John 12:35, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

THE DANGER OF REJECTING LIGHT

Keeping pace with light is an individual and personal matter known only by God and the individual involved. Men can and do reject light by repressing truth. Repressed truth, however, is not destroyed. The memory of it will forever remain, though it be hidden in the subconscious. It remains intact though deeply submerged in the mind. Since repressed knowledge is never destroyed, if not obeyed, of necessity the rejecting mind will seek a substitution. Paul makes this plain in the first chapter of Romans. There comes first the substitution of a lie for the truth; then the love of that lie instead of the truth, and lastly, the belief of that lie in place of the truth. Out of this mishandling of truth and light we have a godless materialism which spawns atheism, humanism, agnosticism, which are the substance of the New Age Philosophy. In brief, the rejection of the light of the true God results in a perverse will, evil affections and a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28). These are they who "[profess] themselves to be wise"-- but in reality have become fools -- not in the sense of having low intelligence, but in the sense of lacking moral and spiritual judgment.

The "faith-confession," however, that is implied in this passage of Scripture produces within one's heart some wonderful experiences.

THE TRIUMPH OF CONFESSION

We are reminded in Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." As formidable, however, as the enemy of our soul is, our God is ALL POWERFUL and the enemy has forever been totally defeated by Christ on the cross of Calvary. It is up to each individual to claim that victory for himself.

All the devil can do is to threaten and lie and frighten us in every way he can. Satan threatens, "Twill ruin you to now confess your state." It was said of Abe Mulky that he went to an old-fashioned revival, got under deep conviction and said to his wife, "Mandy, what shall I do? I am lost. I am miserable. But you know we have gained our possessions crookedly. If I get religion I will have to make restitution, and if I do we will not have a shelter over our heads. The house, the ranch, every cow and sheep will be gone. But if I don't get religion I will surely go to hell. What must I do, Mandy?" Mandy replied, "Abe, get right with God." Thank the Lord for Mandy. Well, Abe got right with God. He immediately began to fix up. Soon all was gone. Not one thing

was left. Abe and Mandy were sitting under a tree eating some cheese and crackers. Abe looked across and said, "What about this, Mandy?" She immediately and joyously replied, "It beats hell, Abe!" And is not Heaven cheap at any cost? Abe later became known as "The Texas Evangelist."

King David found that there was triumph in confession. He, the King of Israel, lusted, committed adultery, and had a man killed to cover up his sin. He carried this awful weight of guilt for a year and then under the uncovering probings of a faithful messenger sent from God, David found forgiveness and personal triumph in confession. You can read about it in Psalm 32:1-5.

THE FOURFOLD BLESSING OF CONFESSION

The next four words to be considered in this ninth verse constitute a four-fold blessing that accompanies the confession of sin. We look next at the third of the six key words in I John 1:9.

3. "FAITHFUL." "He is faithful." The confession of our sins assures us of the faithfulness of God to forgive us our sins. God invites us to prove His faithfulness to His Word and His promises. "If we confess our sins," says John, "he [God] is faithful . . . to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The Greek word "faithful" is *pistos*. Vincent says of its usage here: "True to His own nature and promises; keeping faith with Himself and with man. The word is applied to God as fulfilling His own promises (Heb. 10:23; 11:11); as fulfilling the purpose for which He called men (I Thess. 5:24; I Cor. 1:9); as responding with guardianship to the trust reposed in Him by men (I Cor. 10:13; I Pet. 4:19). 'He abideth faithful. He cannot deny himself' (II Tim. 2:13). The same term is applied to Christ (II Thess. 3:3; Heb. 3:2; 2:17). God's faithfulness is here spoken of not only as essential to His own being, but as faithfulness toward us: 'fidelity to that nature of truth and light, related to His own essence, which rules in us as far as we confess our sins' (Ebrard)."[1]

How true, dear reader, are those words we sing:

Trust and obey,
for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus
But to trust and obey.

They are true because God is faithful and you can depend on Him to be faithful to you when you meet His conditions. Glory! Note next the fourth key word.

4. "JUST." The confession of our sins reveals to us the justice of God. How can God be just and at the same time the Justifier of one who has broken His law and is under the penalty of eternal punishment? God's righteousness in justifying a sinner is revealed in Christ crucified. Christ Himself fully met in our stead and behalf every demand of the law. Wonder of all wonders! Christ the just took upon Himself the penalty for sin due mankind, making possible for God to be just and the justifier of all who put their trust in Him, (Romans 3:24-26):

24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God:

26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

5. "FORGIVE." Confession of our sins vouchsafes to us the surety of sins forgiven. The word "forgive" in this verse is in the second aorist subjunctive mood in the Greek, which speaks not of a process but a single act. Our sins are not something that are to be repeated over and over again but are to be "put away" once and forever. For this reason the aorist tense is used here, referring to an instantaneous, completed act of forgiveness. When God forgives us He looks upon our sins as if they never happened. Confession of sin marks the beginning of a new life of faith. It involves public avowal and loyalty to God and to the Word of Truth through which God is revealed.

6. "CLEANSE." The confession of our sins assures us of the cleansing of our heart from all acquired pollution. It must be kept in mind that in this chapter we are dealing with the first work of grace -- the new birth experience, the forgiveness of sins committed and the "initial cleansing" of the heart of all sinful habits and practices which the sinner has acquired during his sinful life -- wickedness of all kinds, including evil habits, fornication, adultery, impure thinking, corrupt language, etc. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS" (1 John 1:9) (emphasis mine). In subsequent chapters we will be dealing with the cleansing of the heart from the inherited sin nature which is accomplished in a second definite work of grace.

The following two accounts will illustrate the cleansing that takes place in the first work of grace.

In her sinful life a young married woman had acquired the habit of a vulgar, foul, wicked tongue. She swore with almost every breath, hardly without thinking, so vicious was this habit of hers. Two or three weeks after she became a Christian she suddenly realized one day that God had cleansed this evil habit away. Another example of this "initial cleansing" in the first work of grace concerned a man who possessed a wicked mind. He seemed to have no control over wicked thoughts. The night he became a Christian he was walking the two miles from the church to his home when all of a sudden he became aware that he was singing gospel songs and bubbling over with a joy and a consciousness of the presence of God he had never known before in his life. He had been cleansed from his former sinful habits. Glory to God in the highest!

This "born-again" experience is new life in Christ, sanctification begun in the heart -- (Romans 5:1, 2; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17). The born-again believer is forgiven (Isa. 55:7; Eph. 4:32); justified (Rom. 5:1; 8:33, 34); regenerated (holiness begun) (John 3:1-8); adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5).

In this ninth verse there is the anticipation of not only the forgiveness of sins committed but the cleansing of SIN inherited. However, as we have already stated, we are dealing here with an

"initial cleansing." This cleansing does not include the cleansing from the original sin or inherited depravity. We will deal with that in a subsequent chapter.

* * * * *

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSFORMING ELEMENTS OF THE NEW BIRTH

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2 Thess. 5:17

Nicodemus the Pharisee could not understand what Jesus meant when he said "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). We understand that Jesus was talking about a spiritual birth. Genesis 5:1 refers to ". . . the book of the generation of Adam." The only way to become a member of the human race and have one's name recorded in the book of the generation of Adam is by a physical birth.

There is another book referred to in Matthew 1:1, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ. . . ." It takes a spiritual birth (i.e., a second birth), to get one's name recorded in this book. This is what Jesus was referring to when he said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

To experience physical birth and become a member of the human race is not enough. A second birth, a spiritual birth, is imperative: Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Something wonderful happens to a person in the "born again" (second birth) experience. In the crisis of the "new-birth" experience one is not aware of all that has happened to him, but he knows something wonderful has taken place in his heart. When one responds to The Holy Spirit's awakening to his lost condition under the power of conviction and confesses his lostness, he is able through a simple faith to cast himself wholly on the merits of Christ's blood to save him. Emotional responses differ according to the individual, but there is one thing in common -- all know when this happens and that they have passed from death unto life. Whatever his awareness may be at that point (he may feel a deep peace of soul or an over abounding joy or a great load lifted from his heart and mind, etc.), he still does not comprehend all that has happened to him. But just what has happened to that individual?

There are actually four concomitants that have taken place in his heart things that accompany the "born-again" experience: justification, regeneration, adoption, "initial" sanctification.

JUSTIFICATION

In the FIRST place there is the act of justification. Justification is an instantaneous, personal and comprehensive act. It includes two things: the Sovereign act of forgiveness and the

Judicial act of justification. Forgiveness is a Sovereign act of God, for there is nothing man can do to merit it. Upon confessing and forsaking our sins, God for Christ's sake freely forgives every sin we ever committed. Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (I John 1:9; Isa. 55:7). Of great interest is the account recorded by Gertrude Behanna entitled "God Isn't Dead!" She was raised in the lap of wealth apart from any church, the Bible or God. She married and divorced several times and by the time she was in her early fifties was addicted to alcohol and drugs. Christian people made contact with her, planted the gospel seed and had some Christian literature sent to her address. In 1947 a personal worker said to her, "Gert, you have so many problems, why don't you turn them over to God and let Him help you?" She answered by saying, "You talk like I have so much luggage I need a porter to help me carry it." "That's about the size of it," was his answer. There was so much concern felt and interest expressed for this poor lost soul that it put her on her knees one day beside her bed, and looking up she prayed, "Mister up there, if there is a God, please help me!" It was a sincere plea from her heart. She waited, but not long. The answer came. She said, "For the first time in my life I felt cleansed. I felt wanted. I felt forgiven!" It was then she started traveling across the land telling others of the wonders of salvation!

Along with the Sovereign act of forgiveness there is the judicial act of justification. "Justification" is a forensic term having reference to law and judicial proceedings. To be justified means that one can stand before the judgment bar of God uncondemned. His sins that would have condemned him have all been "blotted out":

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . ." Acts 3:19.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" Romans 3:24.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 5:1.

The glories of a justified experience are indescribable and are beyond any human effort to obtain:

"Could my tears for ever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.
In My hand no price I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Justification is both an act and a state. But whether as an act or as a state, the word in its true connotation is never used in the sense of making men righteous, but only in the sense of declaring or pronouncing them free from guilt and the penalty of sin.

One of the best explanations of the meaning of the word "justification" came from a teacher in a daily vacation Bible school. She explained to her class that justification meant

"just-as-if-one-never sinned!" I have taught theology for thirty years and I will have to admit that nothing that I know can improve on that teacher's simple statement.

Since God forgives so completely and justifies so freely it is nothing short of sacrilege to bring up sins that have been covered by the blood of Jesus. "Some Christians today think nothing of committing sacrilege. The most precious covering in all heaven and earth is the blood of God's Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet Christians will go beneath the blood of Jesus and dig up the sins of other Christians that God has forgiven and forgotten. They will hash and rehash these sins over and over again.

"To go beneath the blood of Christ is the worst form of sacrilege that one can commit. It is actually going against the Word of God, the blood of the Lamb, the witness of the Spirit, and the will of the Father! I was seated . . . when a lady came up to me to shake hands . . . so I stood. A person afterward said, 'If you knew what that woman once was, you would not stand to your feet out of respect. She is a former prostitute.' The truth is, I would have stood. . . . The precious blood of Jesus means so much to me that, under the blood-covering, that woman was as pure in the sight of God as any virgin who ever lived!" (From an article, "On Slander and Sacrilege," Arthur Townsend, Herald of Holiness, Aug. 1987).

Is that hard for you to accept, reader? You cannot deny that it is the truth!

How unspeakably glorious this Divine act of justification to be rid of guilt and the penalty of sin. It is nothing less than the desideratum of the human race! But this is only one aspect of the "new birth" experience.

REGENERATION

In the SECOND place, there is the parental aspect, the work of regeneration (John 3:1-5). Regeneration is the act of God whereby spiritual life is imparted to the soul. That life is a holy life and manifests itself in righteous living. I John 2:29, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

ADOPTION

In the THIRD place there is the familial aspect whereby that soul is adopted into the family of God. Romans 8:16, 17, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." It is the act of adoption that gives us an assurance of the privileges of heirship.

To the three concomitants mentioned there must be added a FOURTH one known as:

"INITIAL" SANCTIFICATION

"Defilement attaches to sinful acts, and so also does guilt, which is the consciousness of sin as our own. There must be, therefore, this initial cleansing, concomitant with the other blessings of the first work of grace, if this guilt and acquired depravity are to be removed from the sinner.

Since that which removes pollution and makes holy is properly called "sanctification," this first or initial cleansing is "partial" sanctification. But the term is not an indefinite one, referring to the cleansing away of more or less of the sinner's defilement. It is a definite term, and is limited strictly to that guilt and acquired depravity attaching to actual sins, for which the sinner is himself responsible. It does not refer to the cleansing from original sin or inherited depravity, for which the sinner is not responsible. We may say then that initial or partial sanctification includes in its scope all acquired pollution which attaches to the sinner's own acts; while entire sanctification [which we will deal with in a subsequent chapter] includes the cleansing from original sin or inherited depravity."[1]

While these four concomitants of the "born-again" experience must take place logically in the order we have presented them above -- that is, being justified depends upon being forgiven, and being regenerated depends upon being justified, and being adopted into the family of God depends upon being regenerated (made alive) -- the fact is that all these take place instantly the moment one believes. Glory be to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit!

THE REQUIREMENTS OF A GENUINE REPENTANCE

We stated earlier in this chapter that genuine confession will involve the confession of specific sins. A question may arise here does that mean that every sin a person has ever committed has to be confessed before he can be saved? No indeed! "Confession of sins is the acknowledgment of one's guilt to God. . . . Confession of sins to God should be as specific as possible; yet recalling every sin committed is neither possible nor necessary (cf. Luke 18:13). We are assured of God's forgiveness when confession is made."[2] Genuine repentance, which is a turning from sin unto God, involves a confession that one has sinned, the heart crying out for pardon and cleansing (Ps. 51:7, 10).

Even those who have been long in a life of sin, can be saved in an instant of time by simple faith in the merits of Christ's atonement for sin when they come in full realization and acknowledgment of their guilt. It may, however, take years to clear up the wrongs of the past. All the wickedness one has been guilty of in his past life will not come to one's mind all at once, but the Spirit will be faithful to recall them to mind as soon as He sees fit. When that happens there will be a desire and an effort to rectify the past as far as possible.

Dr. Thomas Scott put it well when he said, "A genuine experience of salvation will produce a genuine sorrow for sin, attended with a real inclination to undo, if it were possible, all we have sinfully done; and consequently an endeavor, as far as we have it in our power, to counteract the consequences of our former evil conduct; with a determination of mind, through divine grace, to walk for the future in newness of life, evidenced to be sincere by fruits meet for repentance -- that is, by all holy dispositions, words and actions."

EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH

All life manifests itself in some way. Forgiveness and the new birth" bring to the heart a sense of being filled with peace. The guilt of the past is gone. Every sin one has ever committed is

removed from him as far as the east is from the west, buried in the depth of the sea and never to be remembered against him forever. God looks on him now as if he never had sinned.

There is manifest in his heart all the fruits of the Spirit -- love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. He finds within his heart transformed desires and affections, confidence toward God, boldness, victory over sin, righteousness of life, the witness of the Spirit and God's daily guidance in life.

KEEPING ALIVE SPIRITUALLY

There are many backsliders in the world today -- people who once knew what it was to be truly born-again. The cause of backsliding will vary in different people -- yielding to the temptation to doubt; giving up because of feelings; the lack of understanding what is and is not required in being a Christian; having a carnal overthrow (we will deal with this matter later); getting our eyes on people and circumstances; trying in one's own strength to live above sin, etc., etc.

One need never backslide but, if suddenly overcome in a wrong, he can take a good dose of repentance right then and there and immediately be restored back into favor and fellowship with God. Living a victorious Christian life will be dealt with throughout the following chapters, but a word needs to be said at this point in one's climb upward.

All life must be nurtured if it is to remain alive and grow. When one is made alive spiritually he is not left alone, but has the constant help of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is so faithful to protect that life that has been born within. A child of God will be aware of what I have termed the impulses of the Spirit -- divine inner urges. To be quick to recognize these and obey them will assure one of constant victory. There will be the urge, an inborn desire, to read God's Word and feed upon it, to pray, to testify to what God has done in his heart, to witness to sinners, to be faithful to the means of grace and to tithing one's income. To establish a consistent, daily devotional life in response to the Spirit's urgings as well as ready and glad response to all the "impulses" of the Spirit regardless of feelings or temptations to do otherwise, is the soul's secret of continual victory.

A FRIGHTENING DISCOVERY

After one has been gloriously forgiven of all the past and the sense of fullness of peace and joy has filled his soul, he may go for days or even months with God flooding his heart with blessings upon blessings. God has been leading him a step at a time, including matters of restitution, and he has been undoing everything he has sinfully done as far as he can, as soon as he can and as God has brought them to his mind. Sooner or later, however, no matter how wonderful the "new birth" experience is, he discovers to his sorrow and dismay that there is yet within him a law of sin and death. It is the universal experience of all, without exception, who have truly entered by faith into a "born again" experience. Although he is not responsible for the presence of this "evil" within his heart, it does war against the Spirit and oft times brings him down in defeat.

It is a crucial time in one's experience and walk with God when, after experiencing the victory of a new life in the Spirit, he comes face to face with an inner law of sin he was not really aware of. What should he do now? What can he do? Is there help for him? What does the Bible say? To find the answer we must step up to another rung in the ladder of spiritual progress!

* * * * *

CHAPTER IV

The Third RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

THE SIN THAT DOTHS REMAIN

We discovered in the last chapter that the "new-birth" experience does not take care of the entire sin problem. It is true by universal experience that in the first work of grace the guilt of past sins is taken away, a holy life is born within the heart, and the individual is volitionally sold out to live in obedience to His Lord and Master. His life has been cleansed from all the sinful habits of unrighteousness which he had acquired. One may go for days or even weeks, and some have gone for months in a glorious and joyous life of victory over sin, the flesh and the devil. But sooner or later he becomes aware of a nature within his heart that is not in harmony with the Christ life that was born within him and that threatens to bring him down in defeat. It is then that he becomes conscious by his own experience that sin is twofold in its nature. He was a sinner by his own acts, but he was also born with the sin nature in him. King David, when he sinned so deplorably, discovered this principle of sin within him and cried out, Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

There are many ways in which this "remaining sin" is discovered, depending upon the individual and the circumstances that come in the normal course of life. A person may be falsely blamed for something he was supposed to have done or not done, lied about, insulted, betrayed, or taken unfair advantage of. Or it could be he comes under undue pressure and his patience is severely tried. Perhaps he is overlooked and not given due credit, while others less qualified are advanced and given priority. On and on we could go, but whatever provocations may come along, feelings may arise of envy, jealousy, anger, pride, hatred, etc., within the regenerated heart. These inner feelings and uprisings in the heart are contrary to the spirit of love and holiness and are extremely painful to the born-again soul.

Often these unholy feelings and dispositions erupt into retaliation or other outbroken acts of sin. One who has truly been "born-again," and has had the witness of the Spirit to his forgiveness and acceptance, and has at that point of time settled it volitionally to go all the way with the Lord, is deeply convicted and troubled by his own reaction to whatever provocation happened to him. If his repentance and turning his back on sin forever was thoroughly settled, he will fall in humbleness and confession before His Master and Lord. When this happens how quickly will the faithful Saviour lift that one up who was so unwarily overtaken by sin, forgive him, and restore to him the joy of salvation.

This kind of experience, however, cannot repeat itself very many times until that individual will realize that he has an enemy within his own heart. This question comes to the troubled soul of a sincere "born-again" Christian, "Do I have to live with this inner foe or is there deliverance?" Paul speaks of this in Romans 7:24-25, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

From the faithful Holy Spirit there comes a call unto holiness, I Thessalonians 4:3, 7-8: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification; that ye should abstain from fornication: . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. . . ."

This calls for another step that must be taken if a life of continual victory is to be realized. So we must step up to verse seven, the next rung in the ladder of man's ascent to God.

The necessity of taking a third definite step in "man's ascent to God and heaven," is found in I John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The word SIN that is used in this verse of Scripture is in the singular and refers not to an act of sin, but an inner nature we were born with. This SIN nature that one is born with, is what King David called "a birth sin," (Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.") It is revealed in many places in Scripture. For example look at James 1:2-8:

2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
3. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
4. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
7. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
8. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Also compare this with James 3:13-18:

13. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.
14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.
15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and with out hypocrisy.

18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

These passages in James are quite revealing. The writer is addressing brethren (1:2), born-again Christians brothers in the Lord, members of the household of the Lord. He is wondering about them what kind of spirit they manifest under the many and trying circumstances that come to them in life when the pressure is really on. In those times do they manifest the kind of spirit Christ would manifest or does an ugly spirit boil out of them?

The writer asks the question in verse five of chapter one, "Do any of you brethren lack wisdom?" He explains what this wisdom is in chapter three beginning with verse 13. He admonishes in verse 14 that if a Christian brother finds in his heart a nature that is not holy as God is holy, he must be honest and "lie not against the truth." In other words, he must not ignore his carnal condition. He must seek God for deliverance through the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. Absolute honesty and openness of heart are imperative if one is to receive and maintain a pure heart and continue to advance in his Christian experience.

A number of different things may happen to a person who has been genuinely born-again of the Spirit and subsequently has come to realize that not all is well within his heart. When there comes the time and circumstance into his life that triggers that inborn sinful nature and suddenly there is an ugly uprising or outburst that all but devastates the new Christian, what can he do? His joy has vanished.

a. The devil might get him to think, "I guess there really wasn't anything to religion. It was all just a big imaginary experience. I guess there isn't really anything to being a Christian after all!"

b. Or such a one may fall into the hands of false teaching concerning these "uprisings" of the carnal nature. Far too often Satan has someone around just at that crucial time who twists the Scriptures and points the distraught soul to the passage in Romans 7 where we read in verses 14-17:

14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do

16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

"So you see," these miserable comforters say, "such was the experience of the Apostle Paul and can we hope to be any better than the great Apostle?" The end result of such reasoning is "sinning saints," a teaching contrary to God's Word. In I John 3:6-9, we read:

6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin [he is able not to sin], because he is born of God.

Those who hold that one can commit sin and still be a child of God fall into the error of antinomianism. These are they who hold the erroneous doctrine known in theological circles as "The Penal Satisfaction Theory" of the atonement.

Dr. A. A. Hodge sums up [this] theory in the following essential points: "(1) Sin for its own sake deserves the wrath and curse of God. (2) God is disposed, from the very excellence of His nature, to treat His creatures as they deserve. (3) To satisfy the righteous judgement of God, His Son assumed our nature, was made under the law, fulfilled all righteousness, and bore the punishment of our sins. (4) By His righteousness, those who believe are constituted righteous, His merit being so imputed to them that they are regarded as righteous in the sight of God."¹

The great error in "The Satisfaction Theory" of the atonement is that it logically leads to antinomianism or in other words, a disregard for the law. Since it holds that Christ's obedience is "imputed" instead of "imparted" to the believer in such a manner that it is considered by God as having been done by Him. The key phrase in the above quotation is: "they are regarded as righteous." Logically then, if Christ's obedience is substituted for that of the believer, it voids the necessity of personal obedience to God. It is not hard to conclude that out of this kind of thinking comes logically a "sinning religion" which we have already pointed out as being contrary to the teaching of God's Word.

c. There are others who rest in the false security of a "one time genuine experience," resting on that regardless of anything that may have taken place subsequently. Since they have been born-again, so they reason, how can they be "un-born"? -- for "once a child of God, always a child of God." But those who reason this way do not stop to realize that if that were the case they could never become a child of God, for by nature and by act all men, to begin with, are children of their father, the Devil. How could they be unborn from him? But, they argue, if one is born to the Smith family he will always be a Smith regardless of how he lives. Such reasoning is unsound -- it compares physical birth with spiritual birth.

When one is born physically he has absolutely no choice in the matter. But no individual enters into a "new-birth" experience apart from his own personal choice or will and must continue to exercise his own freedom of choice in a continued obedience or spiritual death will follow.

d. On the other hand, many who have been overthrown in their experience drift off into some church or cult where they feel comfortable in their backslidden state, assuming a form of godliness but denying the power of a present, up-to-date experience of living above sin.

e. Still there are others who once experienced the joy of sins forgiven, but, being overthrown by the carnal mind, give up and give over to an attitude of "What's the use of even trying to live a Christian life?" These go back into sin, sinking deeper and deeper into its quagmire.

f. But, dear reader, if you are one who has experienced deliverance from your sinning life and the joy of Christ is in your heart, and yet you are having carnal battles, I would encourage and exhort you to look to another class of people who have found deliverance from the carnal nature and have discovered the secret of victorious living. When they were overcome by a carnal overthrow, they quickly took a big dose of repentance and were as quickly restored to the joy of forgiveness and peace of heart. (I John 2:1, 2). These are they who have either been fortunate enough to have come under clear preaching on the twofold nature of sin and God's method in dealing with the sin problem in two definite crisis experiences, or have themselves searched the scriptures and found the way God has provided, not only for forgiveness of sins committed, but cleansing from the indwelling nature of sin they inherited from birth. They have discovered in their hunger for a complete deliverance from the plague of their carnal heart such scriptures as James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Again, in Luke 1:73-75, "The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Still another in Ephesians 5:25-27, "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, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Also, in I Thessalonians 4:3, 7, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." I Thessalonians 5:23-24 is equally forthright in its defense of Holiness. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

They took that third step which leads to a continual victorious life here and now and to the hope of a blessed and victorious eternity with a Holy Triune God and His angelic host, and all the other saints made perfect through the blood of the Lamb.

This third step involves an acknowledgment and confession of remaining "sin" within the heart as we read in I John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This demands a determination to arrive at that point where faith can lay hold of God's promises to cleanse the heart from the "old man of sin" resident within.

The experiences of people who have come to the knowledge of "inbred sin" after they have been saved are about as varied as the number of people involved. There are a few in number who, realizing their need of cleansing, have been quick to confess their need and by simple faith have found that "second rest" (Heb. 4:9). The vast majority, however, of those who have been genuinely saved have struggled, some for years, with that inner foe. Many of these, when they were overcome, sought deliverance from their sinful, carnal nature, without first seeking forgiveness for their backslidings. When they experienced relief they testified to a complete cleansing which they actually did not receive. Thus they relapsed back into their same old pattern, half victorious -- half defeated -- in and out and up and down for years. They failed to realize that a backslider is not a candidate for cleansing.

It is clear from the verse at hand that to be delivered from SIN inherited, there must be a confession and acknowledgment of its presence in the heart. This is very repulsive to a carnal heart, especially if Satan and a deceptive heart full of carnal pride have gotten one into a profession of having been sanctified wholly, while symptoms of that old nature within still remain. And if that nature remains, there are sure to be symptoms of its existence.

There is only one way out of such a state and that is the Bible way -- a simple but sure way. The individual must humble himself to take this way. It is the way of death -- the crucifixion of carnal self -- the way of eradication of the sin principle from the heart. It takes a divine deliverance. The carnal person, with the aid of the faithful Searcher of hearts, the Holy Spirit, must be brought to the end of self. Some reach this more quickly than others. Some struggle for years before they reach that "rest of the soul" that doth remain for the children of God (Heb. 4:9). Some fail to ever enter into that rest, though the promise is to them as much as to any other of the children of God (Heb. 4:1).

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I entered my first pastorate with the testimony of being both saved and sanctified wholly, but in fact I was carnal. I had, as a lad, been gloriously saved beyond any shadow of a doubt. Shortly after that I was just as clearly sanctified wholly. However, being ignorant of how to live a day by day victorious life I became backslidden in heart but not in outward life, not having committed outward sins. From the day God saved me I was never without a testimony long at any time. But having lost the witness to entire sanctification I was plagued with doubts and fears through my college days and post graduate studies. I sought God many times for the experience of "full salvation" and just as many times claimed to have received this blessing of entire sanctification. Many, many times I would rationalize my way back into a testimony of being sanctified wholly. There was no doubt that I was volitionally all out for God and lived outwardly an exemplary life. But as the song writer put it,

"When the Spirit tried to tell me,
I would not the truth receive.
I endeavored to be happy,
and to make myself believe."

I had obtained a Master's Degree in Theology and was versed in the Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine of the twofold nature of sin and the twofold cure as taught in Scripture. When doubts assailed me I would go through the mental process -- "I'm all on the altar, Christ is the altar, His blood was shed not only for forgiveness but cleansing -- Mr. Devil, you can leave, I claim the efficacy of the blood for the cleansing of my soul this very moment!" And, as Phoebe Palmer preached, "If by faith, why not now!" I never kept count of how many times this process was repeated.

To calm my carnal heart I would reason, "Well, maybe I have been carnal, but from now on I claim cleansing in the merit of the blood." And so it was that I entered my first pastorate professing the blessing of a sanctified heart but still possessing the carnal nature.

I began my pastoral ministry, a home mission project, with great zeal. I was not trying to play the hypocrite and because of this God blessed my ministry with fruit. People were getting saved and sanctified. But I was often in trouble myself. Symptoms of the carnal nature disturbed my peace of mind and brought torment to my soul. At the same time my wife was not sanctified either but, like me, she also professed to be. Two carnal people living together under the profession of entire sanctification is a bad combination as we often found it to be.

As I have stated prior to this personal account, if the carnal nature is yet in the heart there are sure to be symptoms of its existence. And yet it is the nature of a carnal heart to hide itself from itself and rationalize its existence away. To what irrational extremes a carnal heart will go to spare itself -- all because of that primal sin of pride! It will prop itself up with all kinds of explanations and reasonings: "It is my tensed up nerves, I am under undue pressure, I haven't been spending enough time in prayer, I need to read my Bible more." On and on the reasoning would go to justify my carnal uprisings. After wife and I would have a carnal clash we would patch it up, ask forgiveness of each other and assure each other that our "head on" collision was caused by nervous tension brought on by the pressure of the ministry. I would not stop long enough to allow the faithful Holy Spirit to probe me to the bottom, but I would allow carnal reasonings to get my deep need off the hook. Later on I could see how the Spirit tried to help me, but I had allowed myself to be brainwashed by carnality's deceptiveness.

One day, however, with all praise and gratitude to God, I got tired of living such a life of doubt and fear and went before the Lord alone with an open, honest heart. I saw very clearly that I did not possess what the old time saints possessed and enjoyed. I was bound by the carnal mind and void of liberty. What I professed to have wasn't working in my own home or heart. When I went before the Lord in all honesty as the Psalmist did when he prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me . . ." (Psalm 139:23, 24), it was like a dam had broken and all the putrefaction of a carnal heart poured out in willing confession. In the following words, H. A. Baldwin pictures what I was experiencing at that time:

When to one is given this deep view of the inward workings of carnality, he will just as naturally confess it as he will confess his actual sins when seeking pardon. The fact is that such a view of self will be accompanied by confession almost as inevitably as a person is accompanied by his shadow; the discovery and confession can scarcely be separated in experience. . . .

Confession of inherent sin is a Bible requirement, the doctrine of those "holy men of old" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Dr. Jesse T. Peck, in his *Central Idea of Christianity* (pages 220-221) says: "But you will find some stubborn difficulties in your way. There are some unavoidable implications in the confessions you are called upon to make, that will be deeply humbling to the soul. You have probably been long known and recognized as a Christian -- perhaps a faithful, fervent Christian; you have been a leader in the armies of Israel a minister in the church of God -- even an eminent minister among your brethren. In either case it is not quite easy to confess that you have been all this time without a pure heart that your religion has been a religion of contests with yourself, as well as with the world and Satan, and that, though you have advocated for years a religion of purity, you have never yet fully availed yourself of the purifying provisions of the gospel.**** Nor is it upon any principle of penance, or self-mortification, or with any view of priestly absolution, that confession is required. The grand principle of this whole concession is truth, truth to the conscience; truth to the facts of the present and the past; truth to the vows you have made, and the demands of the church; all of which requires, and must have, candid expression; and you will be gratified, you will be thankful to God for the benefits it confers. Dr. Adam Clarke, in his comments on I John 1:9 says: "Guilt, to be forgiven, must be confessed; and pollution, to be cleansed, must be confessed. . . . Few are pardoned because they do not feel and confess their sins; and few are sanctified or cleansed from all sin, because they do not feel and confess their own sore, and the plague of their hearts." [2]

At that time I had not read the above. Yet all this I faced and it was so painfully true in my case. To begin with, as I went before God in my study alone, but with an open heart seeking help from God, I determined I would not leave a stone unturned in my quest for deliverance from inbred sin and for the purifying, fiery baptism of the Holy Ghost on my heart. At this point I was victorious in a regenerated experience.

Sunday was coming. I determined to face my church in all honesty and open confession of my need. The Spirit was leading me unerringly to the land of perfect rest. God gave me a message to preach on that particular Sunday morning on the subject of entire sanctification as a second definite work of grace. When I finished preaching I confessed publicly to my church that I did not possess the experience I had just been preaching about, but was a candidate for that experience of heart holiness.

When I had gone that far in my quest for deliverance from the carnal nature and the purification of my heart, God blessed me with one of the greatest blessings I had ever had up to that time. Let me inject right here that with every move a soul makes toward God, He (God) will bless that soul for it. How quick the wonderful Spirit of God is to bless and encourage an honest, seeking heart. However, I was not seeking a blessing, but a pure heart. The devil would like to have stopped me right there and had me prematurely claim deliverance from the sin nature.

I called an evangelist who came immediately to begin revival services in my church and I became a seeker at my own altar. How long did I seek? The time element is not the significant thing -- I sought until the faithful Holy Spirit led me to the end of myself; until I saw and confessed the depth of my own carnal heart. Behind jealousy, anger, carnal ambition, etc. -- behind all these

so apparent carnal traits and from which they flowed was "carnal self." I was all wrapped up in self -- I, me, mine! It took a divine revelation to reveal my "carnal self" to me. It was the first time in all my seeking over the past years that I tarried long enough to allow the Holy Spirit to probe to the bottom of my proud, carnal heart and help me to see and thoroughly confess what my heart was really like. Self held center stage -- not God and His glory! I was aware of the moment I had reached the end of confessing carnal self. I had a witness within myself of that fact, and just as suddenly my faith claimed the blessing and then the Spirit Himself sealed with His witness that my heart was cleansed. God had given me a promise to cling to (Heb. 4:9, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."). My heart had been so restless through those years of struggle! But at last I was able by simple faith to enter into that rest through the merits of the blood of Christ that was shed on Calvary's cross. Charles Wesley wrote about that rest in the second verse of that familiar song, "Love Divine":

Breathe, oh, breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into ev'ry troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest.

Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning
Set our hearts at liberty.

IT IS THE BLOOD THAT CLEANSSES FROM ALL SIN

Dear reader, if you are yet carnal, it will not be your struggling, nor self-mortification, nor agonizing over your deplorable condition nor even your confessing carnality, as important as that is, that will gain for you a pure heart. It is the blood that was shed on the cross of Calvary that cleanses from all SIN. By a simple act of faith the Holy Spirit will apply that cleansing blood to your heart.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING HOLINESS

John Wesley urged that all preachers should make it a point to preach perfection to believers constantly, strongly and explicitly. Adam Clarke made the statement that if the Methodists gave up preaching entire sanctification, they would soon lose the glory. In our day preachers in our holiness churches must not neglect to preach entire sanctification as a second definite work of grace for a number of reasons. In the first place we were raised up to proclaim this message. This is our main reason for even existing as a body of people. I fear that too many preachers have never entered into this experience themselves but are like I was when I first entered the ministry. If preachers themselves are not clear in this experience they will not preach it clearly and definitely. Many of our laymen have never been sanctified wholly and do not "groan after" the experience because it is not urged upon them by the preaching that comes from our pulpits.

Not only the crisis experience must be consistently proclaimed but also the importance of maintaining a close daily walk with God after the experience has been received. I fear that many who come to the crisis experience of entire sanctification have supposed that it is self-perpetuating. Through carelessness with respect to prayer and devotional reading of the Bible, through a lack of careful obedience to God, through ceasing to hunger and thirst continually after righteousness, or through loss of zeal to win others, they have grieved the Spirit away from their heart.

A FINAL WORD

Finally, there is both a negative and a positive side to our preparation for obtaining the experience of a pure heart. There is the confession of the presence of the carnal nature within one's heart, and along with that "step," and simultaneous with it, is the "step" of full Bible consecration of all one is and has to God and to Him alone.

As we are presenting it here, step four is but a continuation and completion of step three. It is man's part to consecrate his all to God and God's part to sanctify him wholly. It is not in the struggling but in the yielding that a seeker comes to the place where he will be enabled by the Holy Spirit to lay hold by faith to the experience of entire sanctification.

So important is this phase of Christian experience that we will deal with it quite at length in chapter six.

In chapter five we are inserting J. T. Hatfield's account of his struggles with the carnal mind and how he was delivered from it.

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CHAPTER V

STRUGGLING WITH A CARNAL NATURE

To illustrate what we have been dealing with in the previous chapter we append a chapter from the book, *Thirty-Three Years A Live Wire*, by John T. Hatfield, chapter three entitled Sanctification, pages 31-40:

For eight years I battled along against that subtle enemy of the human heart, known as inbred sin. During these years I heard not a word on the possibility of deliverance from this inward foe. One day my pastor, Rev. James Leonard, attended a holiness camp meeting at Hartford City, Ind., conducted by the National Holiness Association, and in this meeting he professed to have obtained the blessing of entire sanctification. When he returned he was not the same preacher, and his sermons were not the same. He had something new, and there was fire in it, and you could feel it burn. His theme was holiness as a second definite cleansing work of God's grace, and it made me feel very uncomfortable to sit there and listen to him. He soon had me on the fence, and he had me guessing, but still I was interested. I knew I needed something, and he seemed to have the thing my poor, hungry heart was craving. At last I became very deeply convicted for it, and told

my wife that I was going to have that experience or die seeking it. Immediately I began to seek the blessing, and often in my prayers I would become so fervent and intense that I would receive great spiritual enduements, and at times I often wondered if I had truly been sanctified wholly; but when I came to dealing with things about the farm, I would become impatient and lose my temper, and this was a clear evidence to me that I did not have it. I spent much time in prayer seeking this blessing. In the woods, in the field, at the barn, at family prayer, in church, at Sunday-school, in the class meeting and in prayer-meetings. I could pray down fire and wonderful blessings upon my soul, but nothing that would remove inbred sin.

I was walking in all the light I had, I was not under condemnation, but I had an intense hungering and thirsting for a clean heart; yet the secret of how to obtain it had never been revealed to me. I was persistent and held on like a dog at a root, but I would have my spells of fits and starts. I remember once of hearing Bro. C. W. Ruth say, "Forty fits to one start," but that did not apply to me, for I never allowed but one fit until I took a start. I always took my pain-killer (repentance) after I had my fit.

Before I received this "second blessing," one evening my wife and I went out to set a hen; we had to move the hen from her nest to a more desirable location. My wife placed the eggs in the nest while I held the hen, which, when all was ready, I very gently placed upon the eggs, then quietly withdrew my hand and up came the hen. I gently placed her back again, and again she arose, so I put her back again (only not quite so gently as before), and again she arose to her feet. I set her down this time with more authority, and the way I stuck my fingers into her old back and ribs was enough to give her to understand that there was something going to happen, but the end was not yet. By this time my wife was getting a little anxious, for she knew the fellow that was handling the hen. We had already broken some eggs, but the hen still, with all past experiences, refused to set, and I was determined that she should, and so we had it, and before we got through that hen was well-nigh picked, and feathers and broken eggs were the fragments that covered that battlefield; but that poor old hen where! oh, where! was she? "Ask of the moon." This was very clear that I did not have the second blessing, and I was very much in need of another dose of pain-killer.

At another time my wife and I went out to the barn to teach a young calf to drink out of a bucket. We went into the stall where the young calf was and I caught the calf and was very gentle with it; I put my fingers in its mouth and tried to coax it to put its nose in the bucket, but instead it would stick its nose in the air. With much effort I succeeded in getting its nose in the bucket, and giving it a taste of the milk; this made it frantic, it went wild, it pranced and jumped around, and stood on both hind legs. Presently I began to talk pretty loud to my wife, telling her first to hold the bucket up and then hold it down. At last, every other expedient unavailing, I leaped astraddle of that calf, grabbed it by both ears and downed its head in milk up to its eyes. It suddenly gave one big lurch which upset my wife, spilled the milk, threw me over its head, and we all went in one pile together. I never thought to help my wife up, I was busy in helping that calf out of that stall with my foot, threatening to kill it, but it survived the treatment and was ready for its milk at the next meal. This was again very clear that I had not received the second blessing and the calf had gotten the first.

I often said that it took my wife too long to get ready for church on Sunday morning. Invariably I found it necessary to wait for her, until at last, one Sunday morning, while she was pressing me to bring on the buggy that she would be ready to go, I said, "I will have the team here, but if you are not ready when I drive to the door, I will drive off and leave you," and sure enough she still had the old failing; she had to go back in the house after something, but when she came out I was gone, and was soon at the church.

I took my usual place in the front seat, and presently my wife came in and took a seat by my side. You would never have known anything had happened by looking at her, for she was as calm as a May morning and as patient as a jug of molasses under a kitchen table; but to have seen me you would have seen a different picture. I had a guilty conscience, the sermon didn't do me much good, I was bothered with other reflections.

After the sermon (fortunately the pastor did not call on me to pray), my wife and I got in the buggy and started for home; I felt guilty, mean, little and wretched. I could endure it no longer, so I said, "Amanda, that was a mean trick in me this morning to make you walk to church; I want you to forgive me." She knew my weakness and it was willingly done; she very well knew that I could no more keep the "old man" down than I could keep down a sick stomach. I just felt that for that one act I would like to have her take me in the parlor and pull every hair out of my head, but that would not be like her; she had a different disposition. Her even Christian life was a source of conviction to me for years. I never saw her excited, impatient, scared or lose her temper in all our thirty-eight years of married life, and she did not profess to be sanctified wholly. She possessed the characteristics before she was converted, and I still displayed mine after I was converted. I needed the second blessing, and that was what I was seeking.

The night before I received this sanctifying work of grace in my heart, while working in a revival in my home church, I received such a wonderful blessing that I ran all about the church shouting and praising the Lord, and yet, when I went to milk my cow, because she did not stand to suit me, we got into a scrap, and I lost my temper, as well as a bucket of milk. I got the milk all over me and the cow got the bucket all over her; the "old man" within, and the devil without; so, as a case of necessity, I was compelled to take another dose of pain-killer, but by the time for the service that night I had gotten relief, and was ready for another meeting. The Lord was good to me, He greatly blessed me in my soul, and gave me great liberty in working in the congregation and leading sinners to the altar to seek the Lord.

I never felt the need of a clean heart, and full deliverance from an evil temper so much in all my life as during this night's service. It was intense. My pastor called on me to lead in prayer. The altar was full of weeping sinners. I began to pray for them, but soon my prayers were turned to praying for myself. How often had I prayed for a clean heart, and how often had I been blessed in praying for it, but the "old man" still remained; but this time, by the aid of the Spirit, I was given the key to the situation. Heretofore I had been praying myself up into a blessing without exercising any faith, but when I reached the place where I said, "Lord, I do believe," instantly the fire fell, and I knew the work was done. The "old man" was killed, and I have never seen him since, and that has been more than thirty years ago.

I had passed through six months of desperate struggle amidst many a cheering hope and many a blasting fear, but, thank God! I knew I had the blessing this time. From my knees I looked across at my pastor and said, "Brother, I've got it," and he said, "Got what?" I said, "I have been sanctified wholly." Some of our people in the church were anxious for me to get the blessing, for they said they were getting tired of hearing me pray for it. No doubt they were, it was putting conviction on them. I did not have it many hours until they were wishing that I had not gotten it.

It was not long until I had a splendid chance to tell whether or not I had the blessing. I considered my cow a bad one to milk, and I suppose the cow considered me a bad one to milk her. It was sometimes hard to tell which was worst, me or the cow, for while the cow threw hoofs and horns and milk and bucket, I was not slow in keeping myself busy playing the milk-stool to her back and my boots to her ribs. Everything went well in the cow stable that morning until the milking was done and I arose to leave the stall; I was so filled with the joy of my experience that I never thought of the cow, but she had not forgotten me, for just as I arose from my milking, evidently fearing that I intended striking her with the stool, she gave a sudden kick which struck the bucket and spilled the milk all over me, but now instead of jumping at her and trying to pull all the hair out of her back, I stepped to the front of the stall, put my hand gently upon her back and began to make my confession and tell her my experience. I said, "Lill, I have been mean to you; I have kicked you and cuffed you and beat you with milk-stools and buckets; I have pulled hair out of your back, but now I want you to understand I am sanctified; I've got the blessing and the kick is out of me; you can kick if you want to, but I'm done. I love you, Lill; you are a good old cow. It has been my fault, but you will find me a different man from now on, for I am here to tell you that I am sanctified."

The old cow seemed to understand my testimony. I convinced her that there was something in holiness, even though nine-tenths of the preachers in the country considered it fanaticism. At once she relaxed every muscle, put her head in the manger and began to eat, and I walked out a victor over the world, the flesh, the devil, the cow and myself. I did not need any pain-killer this time; I had taken a dose that night before that had killed the "old man," and that put an end to the use of pain-killers. Next to the cow, my wife was the first to understand that I had the blessing. When she saw me coming up the path that morning from the barn, my clothes bespattered with milk and my face covered with a smile, this was enough for her, she was satisfied that I had the blessing.

Over thirty years have passed away since that morning and God's grace has kept me through all the trying scenes of a busy life. I have worked balky horses, milked kicking cows, been kicked clear out of the stall, taught calves to drink out of a bucket, set stubborn hens, put up stove pipes, helped my wife clean house, sat in the carriage and waited for her to come and get in, been set down on, criticized by preachers, have faced more than a thousand backslidden holiness fighters, have had unnumbered lies told on me, preached while four or five babies were squalling at their best; but through it all I have been able to maintain my experience, and, to my best knowledge, I have never made a break in all these years. Now, let all the people say, yes, let everybody say, Amen!

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CHAPTER VI

The Fourth RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

BIBLE CONSECRATION

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I John 1:7

Step four in "Man's Ascent to God" is but a continuation and completion of step three as presented in chapter four.

In chapter four we dealt with the awakening of the heart of the newly "born again" Christian to the presence of the sin nature that did still remain. Step three in man's ascent to God involved a conscious sense of a deep heart need, the candid confession of that need, a cry for deliverance from "the body of sin" and a renunciation of every evil thing. At the close of that chapter we stated that there is both a negative and a positive aspect of the second definite work of grace. We come now to consider the positive aspect -- a complete consecration of the whole being to God (Rom. 6:13; 12:1, 2; I Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 8:5). "Consecration is the actual present surrender to God of the whole man and all that we possess. . . . Consecration is not an act of feeling but of the will." [1]

Before victory or deliverance from "inbred sin" can fully be obtained this "step" of full consecration must be complete. So important is this phase of Christian experience that we will deal with it quite at length.

It is not only imperative for a "born again" child of God to acknowledge and confess the presence of "original sin" in his heart, as illustrated in the previous chapter, but it is just as necessary that he personally take the positive step of a total and complete consecration to God of all that he has and is.

What we are presenting here is indirectly if not directly implied in the verse that is now before us -- verse seven of this first chapter of I John -- "If we walk in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth from all sin." For an unsanctified but "born again" Christian to continue to walk in the light will certainly not only involve him in the acknowledgment and confession of his carnal nature, but will also involve him in a complete consecration of his redeemed self to God "soul and body thine to be, thine for all eternity." It is imperative that these steps be taken before the cleansing baptism with the Holy Ghost in its fullness can be obtained. In fact, the prayer of death to carnal self and the prayer of a complete consecration to God are inseparable. In seeking to obtain a pure heart, John T. Hatfield relates his consecration (chapter four of his book, *Thirty-Three Years A Live Wire*, pages 41 and 42) in the following words:

I cannot frame a definition that more clearly expresses what full consecration involves than, in figurative language, saying that it means to sign one's name to the bottom of a great blank sheet as long as the span of life, and from henceforth assenting, without argument or debate, to everything that the Holy Spirit dictates to be written there. Contrastively speaking, this

consecration includes the pains as well as the pleasures, the sorrows as well as the joys, the losses as well as the gains, the subtractions as well as the additions and multiplications of life, the crosses as well as the crowns, the fiery furnaces as well as the king's palaces, obscurity as well as notoriety, abasement as well as exaltation, death as well as life.

The name of John T. Hatfield was placed at the end of just such a contract and the witnesses were God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

My consecration included all God then required and all God ever should require throughout time and it is important to understand that it is not the crucifixion of one's essential selfhood, that has often been termed self-crucifixion, that is referred to here. It is rather the old, inner self, helplessly and hopelessly deprived by sin, that dies.

The believer, however, does not stay dead. Paul goes on to say in this verse (20), "Nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is clear that Paul here gave over his right to order his own life completely to Christ and it was Christ from then on living in and through him. This is what the Scriptures mean by death to the carnal self and a full and complete consecration of one's self to God.

This is further implied by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:1 where we read, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. . . ." The word "servant" here is "doulos," more accurately translated, slave. Paul is testifying of being a "slave" of Jesus Christ. The word servant as we know it, does not apply here. There is a marked difference between a servant and a slave. A servant is one who, when "off duty," comes and goes as he chooses. But Paul introduces himself as a bonds slave.

In scripture we have two types of slaves. One -- a person encumbered with debts, unable to pay, is put on the auction block and is auctioned off to the highest bidder to serve for a term of six years. Money paid for him by the highest bidder is divided among his creditors to satisfy his debts. He is to go free at the end of six years (Ex. 21:2-11). The second -- one who during six years has been treated lovingly by his master and generously provided for and wishes to continue a slave, voluntarily becomes a "bondslave," never to be sold again. His ear is bored through as a sign that he is owned without reservation, for he has thus given himself completely and out of love, to his master.

Paul, as a bonds slave, had no purpose of his own and no prerogative of his own. He had lost himself completely in the service of his master, and now gladly and willingly served him unceasingly. Paul was Christ's property. What it means for anyone to be a bond servant is implicit in the fact that Christ is Lord. The two terms, Lord and bond servant are correlative. Such a relationship any child of God assumes when he makes a full consecration of himself to God.

Paul had taken his hands off and put the control of his life totally and absolutely into the hands of his Redeemer. Many seekers who do not get the blessing of a sanctified heart fail at this point.

An old fisherman offered to take my oldest son and me fishing one day. The whole trip would be on him -- our lunch, fishing gear, transportation, plus he promised we would return with our day's quota of fish. He wanted, above all, for my son to experience the thrill of having caught some fish himself. He took us to a fish hatchery where there were ponds of various sizes of mountain trout and where there was no doubt that we would catch fish. He chose for us to fish from a pond of nice foot and a half to two feet long trout. We would have to pay so much a pound for whatever fish we caught but, of course, our friend would pay the bill. Standing beside the pond, this man rigged up a pole and line and hook with bait and quickly handed it to my son to cast. But then just as quickly he took it back and said, "Let me show you, my little man, just how to cast the line into the pool." This he did as my boy stood, with his hands by his side, watching. Having cast the line into the pool he started to hand the pole to my boy when a large trout hit the line and before we knew it, our friend had the fish landed. He then said, "You see now how it is done but I will bait it up again and let you try." My boy, being a little hesitant and awkward in casting, the man again cast it out for him but before he could hand the pole to my boy he had landed another fish. The third time this happened my son had backed off and was standing with his hands in his pockets and looking up to me said, "Dad, this isn't any fun, let's go back home." And we did. Our friend that had promised us such a wonderful time of fishing couldn't keep his hands off the pole. And thus it is with so many people who want God to have their all, but fail to take their hands off their lives. The blessing they could have had, they never experience.

BIBLE CONSECRATION IS NOT THE ACT OF A SINNER

Bible consecration that is the groundwork for obtaining the blessing of a sanctified heart is a distinct human act by regenerated children of God only. It is not for the sinner. It is a sacred covenant between God's own people and Himself. The sinner cannot consecrate. He is dead in trespasses and sins. When awakened to his lost condition, he must renounce his sins, repent, and cry to God for mercy. In the eyes of God he is a lawbreaker and a rebel, and as such he has no right of access into the Sacred Chamber. Therefore, any offering he might desire to make would be an insult to the holiness of God and an affront to the majesty of His Throne.

Nor is this act of consecration the act of the backslider. Many vainly trying to consecrate need rather to confess their spiritual emptiness and seek afresh the favor of God. Habits not to the divine glory and all doubtful things call not for consecration, but for confession and renunciation. Their place is not the altar but the rubbish heap. They must be put away. Consecration concerns one class of people and one class alone -- namely, those who are consciously in God's favor and are walking in all present light. None else need try to present themselves on the altar, for they will meet only disappointment and despair.

"The primary meaning of these terms [consecrate, consecration] is 'to separate' someone (or something) from that which is common, ordinary, and unclean, and devote him (or it) to the exclusive use of Deity. . . . In the Wesleyan-Arminian wing of Protestantism consecration is commonly thought to be a prerequisite to the experience of entire sanctification. When a Christian brings the new life that he has received through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and consecrates it to God (Rom. 6:13, 19; 12:1), the Lord responds by cleansing the heart of inbred sin and filling it with perfect love. It is man's responsibility to consecrate himself (and this is all he

can do), while it is God's responsibility and pleasure to sanctify the heart of His obedient child."
[3]

BIBLE CONSECRATION IS LIKE THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

Again, as a third illustration, full Bible consecration can be likened unto the marriage covenant. Jesus Christ is represented as the Bridegroom, His people as the bride (Rev. 19:7). In all true marriage covenants the parties give themselves entirely to each other. All other attachments which would interfere are forever surrendered. And so it is with the "believer" making a consecration. He separates himself entirely from every thing and every person which would hinder his attachment to Jesus Christ! It is a completed once-for-all contract between two parties as illustrated by Ittai's act recorded in 2 Samuel 15:19-21 in the account of David fleeing from Absalom.

"Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

Consecration is notably symbolized by the marriage covenant between Jesus Christ and His Church. In Ephesians 5:24-27 we read:

"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 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, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

In this Scripture passage we see the beautiful comparison between the wife's submission for marriage and the consecration of Christ's bride for entire sanctification.

This great truth concerning a marriage covenant is further substantiated in Genesis 17:3-5:

"And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."

Also, II Samuel 23:5 brings out this same truth:

"Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow" (emphasis mine).

It is God's plan that the marriage union between a man and a woman should be a permanent relationship -- for better, for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till they are parted in death. It is a serious moment in life, when one makes the solemn vow to forsake all others and keep themselves only to that one as long as they both shall live.

In like manner when it comes to our relationship to God, His promise is, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you" (Isa. 55:3). Until the believer understands this he will ever be at a disadvantage in contending against the fiery darts of Satan, who will tempt him to doubt his experience or to run out on God when the going gets rough, when all feelings subside, when darkness settles in, when sorrow and suffering become his lot, when loved ones turn against him and persecution befalls him.

We can never get quite to the point of a complete consecration until we get this covenant signed and sealed once and for all. The "old man" with his self will die hard. It is then and only then that we can, ". . . work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13). Philippians 2:15, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

BIBLE CONSECRATION IS LIKE A SOLDIER TAKING AN OATH OF OFFICE

Our fourth illustration of full and complete Bible consecration is like a soldier who takes an oath of allegiance in which he promises strict obedience to bear, to suffer and to endure whatever his superiors command, even unto the endangering and possibly giving of his life. He is to strip himself of his civilian clothing, separate himself from his loved ones and friends, visiting them only by permission of his superior officers, in order to serve his country. The government furnishes him those things that are necessary for him to carry out his total commitment -- food, clothing, bed (such as it may or may not be), arms, ammunition, transportation, etc. Thus it is in essence when we consecrate our all to God and His service. When we are totally surrendered to Him, He is totally responsible for us.

BIBLE CONSECRATION IS SIMILAR TO WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH

In the fifth place consecration is likened unto what a Christian is forced to do if it were the last day of his or her life on earth. If we knew we were to die before tomorrow morning we should surely, as a Christian, resign our spirit to God. We would be forced to let go our grasp of everything in this world and commit everything to God, utterly relinquished.

A woman who had been clearly converted lay prostrated on a bed of sickness and was told by her husband, on the advice of the attending physician, that she could not get well. The woman, greatly shocked by the news, was flooded by many thoughts -- must I give up my husband, my family, my home, my friends, my possessions? What will become of them when I am gone? And then the thought came to her -- God is taking care of them now. There was a great struggle of soul for a few minutes, and then she yielded herself and all she possessed entirely to God. Instantly she felt as light as a feather. She didn't die! In that experience, however, she did make a full consecration.

BECOMING A LIVING SACRIFICE

Finally, Bible consecration involves the presenting of our body a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). The body is the instrument through which the soul works. The soul is useless in this world without a body. A consecration simply in mind is mere sentiment. Consecration cannot be practical, as it must be, unless the body is involved. The whole body is to be kept in such a manner that the soul can best serve the kingdom of God. Disembodied human spirits are of no use to God here on this earth. The Jewish High Priest was consecrated to his high office by the blood being applied to his right ear (attentive to hear the commands of God); to his right thumb (hands ready to do the work of God); to the great toe of his right foot (quick to run divine errands). Our body is the temple of God. I Corinthians 3:17, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Dr. Dougan Clark makes the following significant statement concerning consecration: "Consecration is not to God's service; not to His work; not to a life of obedience and sacrifice; not to the church, not to the missionary cause, nor even to the cause of God, but to God Himself."

HOW CAN ONE KNOW WHEN HE IS FULLY CONSECRATED?

A question sooner or later arises in the heart and mind of every sincere seeker after a holy heart how shall I know if I have made a complete consecration? One way we can know is that when we have given ourselves to God the very best we know and are even willing to give all we do not yet know, we would be real happy and willing to have God tell us what more we can be or do for Him. We can say in the following words from the depth of a sincere heart:

Lord, I am willing:

1. To receive what Thou givest;
2. To lack what Thou withholdest;
3. To relinquish what Thou takest;
4. To suffer what Thou inflictest;
5. To be what Thou requirest;
6. To do what Thou commandest:

Only then is one truly and entirely consecrated and surrendered to God.

When such a verdict has been reached in the seeker's heart and mind and he has the witness of his own spirit that the matter is forever settled and the transaction complete, the groundwork for faith has been laid. We are not capable of receiving all the light at the start, but God accepts the will for the deed.

To illustrate this, when the expedition under General Butler sailed from New York during the Civil War, sealed orders were given them, which were not to be opened until they had been several days at sea. On opening the orders on the appointed day they found a command to go to the mouth of the Mississippi and take the City of New Orleans. Without hesitation they set out in obedience to the command. They were as "consecrated" to unconditional obedience as though they had known the orders before sailing. And so it is in the entirely consecrated life. Discerning the will of God as it comes in new revelations in the course of life will issue in ready obedience.

When the groundwork for the cleansing of our heart and the baptism with the Holy Spirit in a second definite work of grace has been laid, and our own spirit witnesses to that fact, it is then that the seeker must believe, not that God can and will do the work within one's heart, but that He does NOW do what He in His Word has promised to do. It is then, after one believes what God says, that the Spirit witnesses not only to our entire consecration but also to our entire sanctification. A very crucial point in seeking a pure heart has been reached when the seeker comes to that point where faith must lay hold of the promise of God.

A FINAL LOOK AT VERSE SEVEN

Now let us take another look at verse seven and observe how its teaching is in harmony with what we have expounded thus far. As we have already indicated, it is a vital step on our way to victorious Christian living that leads to the City of God. It commences with the conditional "if." Receiving the necessary cleansing of our heart from inbred sin by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost and power is conditioned on our step by step walking in the light.

In view of what has already been presented, a continual "walking in the light" will lead to the acknowledgment and confession of the presence of inbred sin in the heart. It also will lead to a full and complete consecration of the redeemed soul with a continuing strict obedience to God. As a result, cleansing from inbred sin and unbroken fellowship with God will be possible and can become a reality.

All this is by an expression of faith and when there is a deliberate act of the will to trust God for cleansing, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." It is a present, instantaneous and a continuous cleansing as long as there is a constant walking in the light on our part. Note here that it is not one's own effort that cleanses the heart -- not even his faith. The blood of Christ is the cleansing agent. Praise the Lord!

* * * * *

CHAPTER VII

The Fifth RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

A HOLY WALK WITH GOD

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." I John 1:6

Now we must move on to another consideration in our spiritual ascent to God. This is indicated in verse six of this first chapter of I John. Before we get into a discussion of this verse we call attention briefly to that little word "walk." It implies progression and as we move through this life there is either a progression in "light," (Proverbs 4:18, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."), or a retrogression deeper and deeper into darkness. Jesus made this plain when He said, ". . . Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35).

The Bible implies that there are three speeds to the Christian life flying, running and walking. This is indicated in Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." There come those times in life when the Spirit of God lifts one above the common humdrum of daily living and enables him to "soar" in rapturous blessings until he feels he can hardly contain the mighty visitation of God's presence. He is truly "soaring" in the spirit. And then there are those times when one is down to earth but really on the move. Things are happening. In those times one is so occupied he is not troubled about anything but keeping up the best he can with the mighty moving of the Spirit. He is truly on the "run" physically, mentally and spiritually. These two speeds, however, are the exception rather than the rule. The most of our life is lived in a down to earth steady walking, one step at a time. It is in the every day walk of life that the real tests come and when character is made better or worse. What we are in our daily walk when no one else sees us but God is what we really are. Man's biggest task after he has been sanctified wholly is learning to walk with God. There are at least three things that are indicated in this verse that we need to look at closely.

A TIMELY WARNING

In the FIRST place this verse six sounds out an awesome warning -- that of claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness! God reveals Himself as Light (I John 1:5). In both St. John's Gospel and First Epistle light is set in direct contrast to darkness. Light and darkness are spiritual terms denoting opposite qualities of holiness and sin. God works to bring man out of darkness (sin) into light (holiness). It is impossible for man to have fellowship with God while living in darkness. In the light of this truth we have this frightening warning. If a man claims to be in fellowship with God and still does not have the light of God in his heart, that man, John declares, is a liar. He deceives himself. It is a fearful thing for a man to continue in deception. Paul warns against this in Romans 1:21-32, and also in 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. If one chooses the "lie" in place of the "truth," God will send strong delusions to his soul and he will come to the place where he will believe the lie for the truth. Such is the main teaching and warning of the verse at hand (verse six). To come to this state is a frightening prospect.

MAINTAINING LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

The warning so evident in this sixth verse to those who claim to be in fellowship with God but are not should also be a warning to those who drift away from "life in the Spirit" to a human level of a "do it yourself" type of religious life. This is none other than a move away from walking in the light to walking in darkness -- a stepping aside from a Spirit directed life.

The Apostle Paul warned the Galatians about this in his letter to them: Galatians 1:6-8, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

At no time in our lives are we deprived of the responsibility of exercising the freedom of our will. Our day of probation does not end until either death overtakes us or the Lord returns to this earth to catch away His bride. Willfully sinning by acts of disobedience or compromise of God-given convictions will without exception break the fellowship with God and return the soul to darkness (Heb. 10:26).

As trite as the saying may seem, yet it is true, that a person is not eternally secure until he is secure in eternity. There is, however, a security of the saints we must not lose sight of. As long as a redeemed soul keeps walking in the light as it is shed upon his pathway and continues to walk in all the light he has received in the past he remains secure in his life of victory with God. It is by continuing in the life of faith that we maintain this security (Col. 2:23).

Man's weakness has always been to seek holiness by human effort, and that is not God's plan, and it never works.

William S. Deal in his book, *Problems of the Spirit-filled Life*, tells about this danger of seeking a human holiness:

The world about us is full of human religion. Christianity has been cursed and blighted more from this than any other one evil within the Church. There are now whole segments of Christianity, historically so called, which are honeycombed with this thing. Confessionals, priests, high altars, self-denials, and many forms of works are accepted as the means by which millions expect to see God at the end of life's journey. How sad that countless millions will awake eternally shocked at their fate! Within Protestantism are more millions who depend far too largely upon sacraments and good works for their eternal salvation.

The ranks of the Spirit-filled group of believers has not escaped certain influences of this vast movement which through the centuries has placed far too much stress upon human works. One must be always upon his guard not to allow Satan to push him into a seeking after holiness by works, such as fasting, bodily abuses, self-denials, and the like. And here is the keen line of danger, in that there are times when these things are essential to growth and development spiritually and one will find that to ignore them brings leanness of soul. But there is also the ever present danger that one will allow such things as these to become a part of his spiritual program, substituting them for signs of real spirituality. This was the Pharisees' religion, you recall, and it was obnoxious to Christ. Fastings, self-denials, going the second mile with someone, and many

other things are by-products of deep spiritual living, and are also helpful means to promoting this life. But they must never become the chief ends in one's life of holiness. Separateness from worldliness, while commendable and essential in its proper place in Christian living, can, nevertheless, become a kind of badge of spirituality which one depends upon as the evidence of his Christlikeness. So may these other things. Our holiness is obnoxious to God; it savors of self-righteousness and pride, and He cannot approve of it. We cannot trust in it for security in Christ for even a moment. There is no "true holiness" but that which flows from Christ and which we take from Him moment by moment. We are in danger every moment that we trust our own good works of piety or charity, for we are then not fully trusting Christ. Let it be plain that these good works do accompany full salvation and without them one will hardly be able to survive spiritually, but the danger is that one should ever rely upon them for salvation, for even a moment. [1]

THE DANGER OF FALLING AWAY

A further word of warning needs to be sounded out at this point to those who have obtained a pure heart experience by the incoming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

If Adam and Eve fell from a state of innocence, so also may those who have experienced the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost fall from that state and be lost eternally. If the holy Angels which kept not their first estate are now "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6), what could be the only end of a man who turns aside from "walking in the light" of the gospel?

One must not allow a careless spirit, or a presumptive attitude, or the cares of life (Luke 21:34-36) or the materialism of living in an earthly surrounding, draw him away from a daily walk of fellowship with his Redeemer. Furthermore one must not allow himself to be caught up in the subtlety of spiritual pride, which has always been a fatal pitfall for the pure in heart to guard against.

FREEDOM OF THE WILL MAINTAINED

In harmony with what has already been said, implicit in this verse under consideration, is the underlying fact that man has been endowed with the personal responsibility of freedom of will. No power in heaven or on earth or in hell, not even the person himself can divest himself of this responsibility.

A question may be raised here concerning what has previously been implied when considering the matter of consecration -- especially what was said about the Apostle Paul becoming a "bond-slave" of Jesus Christ, where he considered himself not his own, having become the total property of God, to speak, to do and to go only as God would bid. How can one give his will over to God and still retain his "freedom of will"?

To give over one's will to God and yet to retain one's freedom of will (choice), as paradoxical as it appears, is an absolute fact of one who has experienced saving and sanctifying grace. When the faith of an earnest seeker after a pure heart lays hold of the promise of God for cleansing from inbred sin, at that moment, instantaneously, his will is yielded entirely and without

inner conflict to the absolute will of God, as Paul testified in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is a once and forever giving over of one's will to the will of God to the point where the human will becomes one with the Sovereign will of God -- a freedom of the will empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to do God's will and God's will only -- a freedom from the carnal self-centered and self-seeking will.

It is not, however, a giving up to a life of passivity, but rather a life of actively and constantly yielding to God without struggle or inward opposition a consistent, joyous and happy living out the will of God day by day and step by step. The battle ground has been removed from the heart, where there had been an opposing, inborn rebellious spirit against God. In the sanctified heart there is constant readiness to do God's will and God's will only. The only remaining problem is to know what His will is, as one faces unavoidable decisions in the course of his life.

LEARNING TO WALK WITH GOD

Now with this sixth verse of I John chapter one under consideration, we see also implicit in it a warning against falling back on a past definite crisis experience of heart cleansing instead of maintaining and cultivating a daily conscious walk with God where the Spirit continues to witness to His Presence and cleansing. After that crisis experience it is possible to get into spiritual darkness instead of maintaining what the present state of heart should be. There is a human tendency (not necessarily carnal) to make too much of the CRISIS experience in comparison to the WALK -- to live in the past and avoid the challenge of the immediate moment to keep the keen edge of our present experience. We point back or fall back on the crisis experience instead of walking with Jesus in the present NOW. The secret of the victorious living of a holy life is to learn how to WALK with God. We can allow Satan to bring false condemnation on us by suggesting generalities. God points to particulars and deals with us thus. He wants us to live step by step -- the past under the blood and the future in His keeping. Given the main destination, what matters is the next step. We have often heard it said, and have said it ourself, that "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." Many times we may not be able to comprehend the why's and where's of God's leading but we can know and follow His leading for each step along the pathway of life. The following account of the call of God and the strange providences in one young woman's life illustrates just what we have mentioned:

THREE TIMES TO INDIA

A young woman felt the call of God in childhood to go as a missionary to India. She went to college to prepare herself, and her parents encouraged her and gladly furnished the means. Near the close of her last year in college a telegram came telling of the sudden death of her father. She left college not to return, for her mother was an invalid. For nearly ten years she took care of her mother. When her mother died, the daughter again made plans to go to India. She was accepted by the missionary board and was nearing the time to go when she received a letter telling of her sister in the west who was near death with an incurable disease. Her widowed sister wanted her to come and stay with her till her death. The woman who as a girl had hoped and prayed for service on the mission field changed her plans and went to help her sister who was so critically ill. This sister

had three children, the oldest only ten. When her sister died, there was no one to take care of these children and no means with which to care for them. So she took the place of both father and mother, sending them to school, and then to college. The years went by and she knew that she was too old to be accepted as a missionary any more.

The day came when the oldest of her sister's children, a girl, was to graduate from college. After the graduation was over the girl called her aunt aside and said: "Auntie, the Lord is calling me to India. Will you pray for me that I may go?" With joy the aunt saw the application accepted, and with happiness mingled with tears saw her sail for India. Later the second child, also a niece, came and said, "Auntie, I too feel the call of God for India. " After several years of preparation, she too went to serve in India. The third child, a nephew, said: "Auntie, I'll not leave you. I am serving the Lord, and I want to be a Christian doctor in our own land." After graduation from medical school he said to his aunt, "Auntie, God is calling me as a medical missionary."

This girl who had been disappointed in her own desire to go to India saw, in the thwarting of her own plan, a wider sphere of usefulness for India than if she had gone herself.

It is not hard to see behind this account the mysterious workings of God and the importance of being careful to keep pace with God in every step we take in life.

SATAN'S SUBTLE TACTICS

Satan is the arch-enemy not only of Christ but of His Church and each individual member of that Church. We need only to observe how Satan sought to destroy Christ the Saviour of mankind, to see how he will work to damn a soul in hell. The devil tried to keep Christ from becoming incarnate in human flesh. He used Cain to destroy righteous Abel through whom the lineage of Christ could have become established, but Seth was given to fill Abel's place. He corrupted man's way on earth until God was forced to destroy the human race -- all but Noah and his immediate family whom God spared. Satan caused David to be hunted like an animal to be destroyed. Often there was just a step that stood between him and death. And so we could go on. As Satan did his best to keep Christ from becoming man through the incarnation, likewise does he endeavor to keep a sinner from becoming a child of God. He does this by keeping him from hearing the Word of God -- getting him involved in a church that does not preach salvation from sin, or keeping him out of church altogether. If he does hear the Word he will do his best to snatch it away from him. He manages to get some so deeply involved in sin -- lying, stealing, embezzling, murdering, etc. until the price of repentance seems too great to pay. Thus he discourages that one from even trying to get saved.

When Christ came as a babe Satan plotted to kill Him. Likewise does Satan do his best to snatch that new life from one who has become a child of God. When Satan's plan failed to destroy Christ as a babe, he did his best to kill Him before he could make it to the cross to die for our salvation. And likewise will that enemy of man's soul attempt through false teaching and doctrine to keep him from dying to self and sin. When Christ died on the cross and was laid in the tomb, Satan did his best to keep Him in the tomb. The same pattern holds for a child of God -- Satan will keep him in the tomb of a "do nothing" form of religion rather than to allow him to "walk with God" in the newness of the Spirit.

Through all of Satan's efforts against the souls of men, the Holy Spirit remains faithful. One must be sensitive to Him and to the life in the Spirit. Cares of life press in and circumstances arise which we may have allowed, though we intended no wrong, but which tend to lead us away from the position we need to maintain. A red light (warning) comes to us from the faithful Holy Spirit which we must heed. To ignore that warning and to go on carelessly can bring a soul into a "darkness" that must be heeded or a permanent spiritual loss will result. Thus the warning in verse six. We need to be absolutely honest with ourself and God or we lie and do not the truth (I John 1:6).

A number of years ago a friend of mine, a sanctified, Spirit-filled brother, an evangelist, had his three children in a holiness college. Monthly tuition fees were past due and he received a notice from the business office of the college that he must "pay up" or his children would have to withdraw from the college. Between revival meetings this brother, to help meet expenses, had a sales route he could go on which covered two states and part of a third. Being under pressure and between meetings he drove hard for two or three weeks to cover this route and hopefully make enough money to keep his three children in school. He did not fully neglect his personal devotions. He did take out time to attend mid-week prayer service in the area he was in. He did faithfully keep the Lord's day and attended the church services. However, under the pressure, his devotional life and his attendance at the regular weekly services became mostly mechanical and spiritless.

He made the route in record time, obtained the needed funds to keep his children in school, but when he got back home, by his own testimony, he could no longer sense the presence of God in his heart. That close fellowship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit was gone. He fasted most of a week as he wept before God, seeking that intimate fellowship he had carelessly lost. Did this man backslide in his heart? He did not willfully break with God but his soul, under the pressure of the circumstances, became lean. The faithful Holy Spirit allowed a darkness to come over his soul as a warning of danger. He heeded the warning, did something about it and thus kept his relationship and walk with God.

We can thank God for this kind of faithfulness of the Holy Spirit. He is jealous over us to guard that holy life within our heart, whether it is for discipline to guard us against spiritual loss or for testings to help us on to deeper depth and higher heights of spiritual attainment. What a glorious privilege it is just to "walk with God!"

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CHAPTER VIII

The Sixth RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." I John 1:5

In the preceding chapters we have presented five steps necessary for man to take if he is to be rescued out of sin and made worthy to dwell with a holy God in a holy Heaven:

1. Facing Accountability -- (a recognition of man's lost and sinful condition)
2. Life Out of Death -- (a new-birth experience)
3. The Sin That Doth Remain -- (an acknowledgment of the inherited sin nature that still remains after the new-birth experience)
4. Bible Consecration -- (preparing the believer to receive by faith the cleansing from the sin nature through the baptism with the Holy Ghost)
5. A Holy Walk With God -- (a life of holiness sustained by the power of God through a continual walk of obedience).

In the chapter just preceding, the discussion concerned our walk with God. In this chapter we want to discuss this same matter more in relationship to God as a being of pure light.

The Scriptures make three declarations that, taken together, represent some of the most momentous statements ever made concerning the nature of God: God is spirit -- in His essential nature (John 4:24); God is light -- in His self-revelation to man (I John 1:5); God is love -- in His redemptive, work of salvation (I John 4:8). God is also presented as the only Being who possesses unoriginated, eternal life (John 5:26; Acts 17:24, 25).

In both the gospel according to St. John, and the First Epistle of St. John, light is set in direct contrast to darkness. God's purpose in His self-revelation is to invade the area of darkness and to dispel it with light. Both light and darkness are spiritual terms denoting the opposite qualities of holiness and sin. God is Light, Holiness, and Purity, and He has revealed Himself for the purpose of imparting His life and light to man, so that man's character may be brought into correspondence with the divine nature. No man can have fellowship with God -- the fellowship of eternal life within -- while still living in darkness. It is clear in the revelation given us in God's Word that what He is infinitely in His personality, He wants us to be finitely.

We want to consider just this one thing about what God is like as revealed in this verse we now have under consideration -- ". . . God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

WHAT GOD IS LIKE IN HIMSELF

As "light," God in His own personal being is luminous with truth. In Him within His own being -- there is no darkness at all. There is absolutely no varying, no change in God. He is immutable (unchangeable) in His Being. He is never anything less than pure, unadulterated LIGHT. The very fact of God's immutability is a great comfort and source of peace to the heart of every Christian living in this world of constant change and decay. Where can you look for changelessness, stability, dependability or security today? Only in the One who never differs from

His original self and that One is God. He assures us in His Word: ". . . I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6).

There isn't a man living on earth who is not subject to change in one of three directions:

He must go from better to worse or from worse to better; or, granted that the moral quality remain stable, he must change within himself, as from immature to mature. . . . It should be clear that God can move in none of these directions. His perfections forever rule out any such possibility.[1]

Man's heart cries out for someone unchangeable he can anchor to -- that someone is God! "In coming to [God] at any time we need not wonder whether we shall find Him in a receptive mood. He is always receptive to misery and need, as well as to love and faith. He does not keep office hours nor set aside periods when He will see no one." [2]

Let us repeat what we said above -- God has revealed Himself for the purpose of imparting His life and light to man, so that man's character may be brought into correspondence with the Divine Nature. The truth then becomes self-evident that ". . . if we walk in the light, as he is in the light. . ." (v. 7), we cease to walk in darkness.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PURITY AND MATURITY

When we speak of purity we are referring to the one experience known theologically either as "entire sanctification," a term which applies to the aspect of a cleansing from sin, or "Christian perfection," which refers especially to the standard of privilege secured to the sanctified believer by the atoning work of Jesus Christ. To further clarify what is meant by Christian perfection:

We mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of graces which compose the Christian character in the Church militant. In other words, Christian perfection is a spiritual constellation, made up of these gracious stars: perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity, for our visible enemies, as well as our earthly relations; and above all, perfect love for our Mediator, Jesus Christ. . . . Here the word perfection used in connection with the graces of the Spirit, must be understood to refer solely to their quality, as being pure and unmixed, not to their quantity, as precluding further growth and development.[3]

God imparts His life and light not only so that man's character may be brought into correspondence with the divine nature but also to aid in the maturing of a heart already made perfect. Dr. J. B. Chapman makes the following comment on this essential distinction:

Purity and maturity. The words are similar in sound, but they are very distinct in meaning. Purity may be found in the earliest moments after the soul finds pardon and peace with God. But maturity involves time and growth and trial and development. The pure Christian may even be a weak Christian, for it is not size or strength that is emphasized, but only the absence of evil and the presence of elementary good. Purity is obtained as a crisis, maturity comes as a process. One can be made pure in a twinkling of an eye; it is doubtful that anyone in this world should be listed as

really mature. Growth is addition, purifying is subtraction, and even though one may approach holiness by ever so gradual a process, there must be a last moment when sin exists and a first moment when it is all gone, and that means that in reality sanctification must be instantaneous.[4]

God's dealings with man, a finite being created in His Image, are glorious beyond words to describe. He wanted a being who would love him, glorify Him, and enjoy Him of his own free will. We read in Romans 11:33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Man's heart having been made pure, God's design is that we should continue to ". . . walk in the light, as he is in the light. . . ." We need to understand that purity in a finite being such as man is not maturity and this leaves plenty of room for growth and development.

In the minds of some there is confusion at this point. If a man is made perfect (Christian perfection) in his moral character, so they reason, how can he be made more perfect? The question, however, lies not with the question of perfection but with the maturity of perfection. To illustrate: A young man in a Sunday morning church service sought and obtained a pure heart experience. He was invited home for dinner by an older matured sanctified saint of God. While awaiting dinner the host took the young man to his garden where there was a cabbage head bursting with maturity and ready to be reaped. With his pocket knife he cut the plant off at the base and holding it up said to the young man, "Here is a perfect and mature head of cabbage. I have kept it free from all parasites. It is pure cabbage through and through." He then took the young man to another section of the garden and there showed him another cabbage plant. This one had only a leaf or two but was a healthy, perfectly pure cabbage plant. Then he said to the young man, "You are now like this little plant. Today God has cleansed from your heart all the impurities that were in your heart when you were born. And now He has brought you into the 'light, as God is light.' My task is to keep this little cabbage plant free from all that would mar its purity and continue to tend it as it progresses to maturity. In like manner, now that you have a pure heart, the Spirit of God, with your continued cooperation, can proceed with the unhindered process of maturity in your walk with Him."

PROGRESSING IN CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

The key to a continual process of maturing in holiness of heart and life, after the crisis experience of heart cleansing, is to keep pace with light as the Spirit of God sheds it on our pathway. Jesus warned, ". . . Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." (emphasis mine)

How often God's book refers to God as light, to Jesus Christ as light, to the Spirit of God as light, and to the saints as light. By sanctification God places us in the light that He is in, the light in which our Lord Jesus lived His life.[5]

In commenting on Psalm 97:2, in "Clouds and darkness are round about him. . ." Oswald Chambers writes:

The only possibility of understanding the teaching of Jesus is by the light of the Spirit of God on the inside. . . . Jesus said: "The words that I speak unto you," not the words I have spoken, "they are spirit, and they are life." The Bible has been so many words to us -- clouds and darkness -- then all of a sudden the words become spirit and life because Jesus respeaks them to us in a particular condition. . . .Whenever any light is given you on any fundamental issue and you refuse to settle your soul on it and apprehend it, your doom is sealed along that particular line [putting yourself in spiritual darkness].[6]

But when we accept the truth that comes to us, we continue our walk in the light. When God speaks to us specifically there is nothing more to do but obey if we want to continue to walk with God no matter what it may cost.

To illustrate, Dr. Schauffer relates:

A boy in my Sunday School, about fifteen years of age, a son of a liquor dealer, came to me and said, "Father says that I have to serve the bar now on Sundays, What will I do?" I said, "My boy, what do you think you ought to do?" He said, "I ought not to serve." "Well," I said, "I have nothing to say to you." Then he said, "But Father says if I don't serve the bar on Sundays I can pack and get out." What do you think I ought to do?" I said, "What do you think you ought to do?" He said, "I ought to pack and get out." "Very well," I said, "I have nothing to say to you excepting, when your father asks you to serve his bar you answer respectfully and say, 'Father, I will do anything for you that is not contrary to the laws of God and man, but that is contrary to both.' " I never told the boy I would care for him; I simply threw him back on his own sense of duty. The next Sunday the command came to serve the bar, and the suggested reply came. The boy's father angrily said, "Then march!" So my boy put up all that he had in a red handkerchief, and marched out into the streets of New York, with no place to sleep and nothing to eat. Now I say that was grander faith in God than the faith of Abraham when God told him to go out into a land that he knew not; for Abraham went with his flocks and herds, and my boy had not a single mutton chop or a single place to sleep in." (Source unknown)

The Spirit of God is faithful to protect God's right over us. This statement from Exodus 20:5, ". . . I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. . . ." appears several times in Scripture. This shows in a most expressive manner the protective love of God for his people. He feels for them as the most affectionate husband could for his spouse, and is jealous for their fidelity, because He wills their invariable happiness. Because God is jealous over us, He wants to guard us against getting into spiritual darkness.

He does this step by step through the operation of His Holy Spirit within us and by revealing to us truths out of His Word. He puts within us the inner urge to read and feed upon His Word, to pray, and to praise and glorify Him in testifying and witnessing. God is zealous to protect His life within us.

The Holy Spirit of God guards this holy life within us by revealing to us secrets of keeping His light shining within us. We are anxious for God to bless us and forget that we are to bless the Lord. David said, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 34:1). We bless the Lord when we praise Him, when we are quick to obey Him, when we

bow humbly and without complaint before the providences that come to us from the hand of God even when they cause us pain and anguish. How the book of Job helps us here! We bless the Lord when we put utmost faith in Him whether He blesses us or tests us.

There are times when God puts us through the discipline of darkness, allowing darkness to come upon us, to teach us to heed Him (Isa. 50:10). A young married couple who had been redeemed out of a life of deep sin and were rejoicing in their newly found life of victory were one day plunged into an inexplicable darkness. They could not understand why their joy so suddenly left them. When their pastor visited them in their home he saw the walls in their living room were filled with replicas of dragons. In their former life they had been associated with the occult, but of course had given that up. The pastor suggested to the couple that they run the references in the Bible (they had come to love God's Word) that had to do with dragons. It was clear in God's Word that dragons are associated with the occult. Immediately the dragons came off the walls. Christian pictures and mottoes were put up in their place and the darkness they had experienced was lifted. They were back in the light with God.

At other times God sends clouds to teach us to walk by faith. "Our Lord is constantly taking us into the dark that He may tell us things. . . . There is no short cut to the life of faith, which is the all-vital condition of a holy and victorious life. We must have periods of lonely meditation and fellowship with God. . . . What shall the believer do in times of darkness -- the darkness of perplexity and confusion, not of heart but of mind? Times of darkness come to the faithful and believing disciple who is walking obediently in the will of God; seasons when he does not know what to do, nor which way to turn. . . . The first thing to do is to do nothing. This is hard for poor human nature to do. . . . When you run into a spiritual fog bank, don't tear ahead; slow down the machinery of your life. . . . We are to simply trust God. . . . We put our hand in the hand of God like a little child, and let Him lead us out into the bright sunshine of His love."7

In Isaiah 45:3 we read these strange words, "I will give thee the treasures of darkness. . . ." There are those who have interpreted "the treasures of darkness" as those spiritual riches and blessings that come to one whom God has enabled to triumph in battle over the enemy -- especially those battles that brought to the soul such darkness and despair that it seemed there was no way out. Chief among those spiritual blessings was the conscious approbation of God when faith held steady in the dark hour. Whoever was privileged to hear Brother Clyde Flewelling preach before he went on to heaven will never forget the question he often asked: "Have you ever had the Holy Spirit hug you?" A hug from the Holy Spirit dispels the horror and darkness of the battles and floods the soul with the LIGHT of heaven. How much better off we are and how much we have learned from our Heavenly Father, having come through the battles victoriously.

This "God of light" permits hard, difficult circumstance to overtake us. "I will make all my mountains a way . . ." (Isa. 49:11). We all have mountains in our lives "people and things that seem to bar our progress in the Divine life . . . that thorn in the flesh, that daily cross -- we think that if only these were removed we might live purer, tenderer, holier lives; and often we pray for their removal. 'Oh, fools and slow of heart!' These are the very condition of achievement; they have been put into our lives as the means to the very graces and virtues for which we have been praying. . . . Submit thyself. Claim to be a partaker in the patience of Jesus. Meet thy trials in Him. There is

nothing in life which harasses and annoys that may not become subservient to the highest ends. They are His mountains."[8]

THE SECRET OF CONSTANT VICTORY

Our victory is conditioned upon keeping our hearts in the light regardless of the mental darkness that God may permit to come upon us. There is absolutely no victory back of light (I John 1:7). Right here is where trouble often starts. We are not necessarily sanctified now because we were a number of years ago, but only if we are still walking in the light today. It is fatal to burn incense to a past experience while either stepping aside from some past light or failing to keep pace with new light. Carelessness with light brings a hardness. There is a clear warning about this in Hebrews 3:12-15. The trouble starts when we quench the Spirit (I Thess. 5:19). The most godly are not exempt from the subtle attacks of the enemy nor the weaknesses that accompany humanity. God warns us in His Word, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). Our only safety is in constant dependence on the ministry of the faithful Holy Spirit to keep us in the light of God and out of any shadows that would come from carelessness with that light.

When Jesus said, "Ye have no life in you," He meant the life He lived; -- Holy Spirit life. The Holy Spirit will take us, spirit, soul and body, and bring us into communion with God; and if we obey the light He gives, He will lead us into identification with the death of Jesus, until we know experimentally that our old man, our right to ourself, is crucified with Him and our human nature is free now to obey the commands of God.[9]

We must never lose sight of the fact that man was created in the Image of God and when he is redeemed from a Godless life it is to show forth the glory of God. . . . his whole bodily temple, every corpuscle of blood, every nerve, every sinew, . . . was to manifest the Image of God. . . . The image of God in man is primarily spiritual, yet has to be manifest in his body also. Man's chief glory and dignity is that he was made "of the earth, earthy" to manifest the image of God in that substance. . . . God "formed man of the dust of the ground," and the Redemption is for the dust of the ground [Phil. 3:20-21] as well as for man's spirit. We do not further our spiritual life in spite of our bodies, but in and by means of our bodies.[10]

LIVING TO GLORIFY GOD

We quench the Spirit and bring darkness into our heart when we cease to have an eye single to the glory of God. This can and does happen, even to the most godly. If we fail to continue to ". . . walk in the light as he is in the light. . . , we cease to have an eye single to the glory of God. This happens when self gets in focus with our interests coming first in place of God's will. This can come about in various ways: When parents will compromise a holy standard of living in a futile self effort to spare their children from the reproach of being separated from the world. Some people will let their job get in focus, allowing money or the bread and butter question to become more important than keeping the glory on their soul. With some, position gets in focus until they become more interested in gaining status among men than in maintaining the conscious possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit. When popularity gets in focus there are those who will forsake the narrow unpopular way to seek approval of men in place of the approbation and blessing of God.

When unsaved loved ones get in focus still others compromise a Bible standard of living rather than face the reproach a holy life produces. Then there are those who when church problems get in focus will take a stand on the basis of some personality when they are ignorant of the facts involved. When defending standards of holy living get in focus there are others to whom this defense becomes more important than right attitudes and holiness of heart and life.

It is possible for a person who has been entirely sanctified to either grieve or quench the Spirit, and do it unintentionally. When this happens a heaviness comes over their spirit. It is the faithful Holy Spirit warning them lest continuing on in that which caused the heaviness, they fall into a backslidden state.

These are perilous days we are living in and people who have been brought up under the Scriptural teaching of heart holiness and have experienced the cleansing of their hearts from inbred sin must continually be on their guard lest they lose from their heart that pearl of great price the purifying and empowering Presence of the Holy Spirit.

WHITEWASHED CHRISTIANITY

In the context of the scripture passage found in Matthew 23:23, Jesus was pleading for something better than whitewashed Christianity, nice appearing on the surface but full of sinful attitudes. The Pharisees were externalists (Luke 11:39-44). Jesus' chief indictment against them was their lack of inward sincerity. Their righteousness was entirely on the surface, therefore it was a sham. The Pharisees started out with pure, holy intentions. They ended up self-righteous, hypocritical, pretending to be highly moral and virtuous, but void of true righteousness, and Jesus pronounced woe after woe upon them (Matt. 23:36). In their determination to be loyal at all costs to these externals they let their spiritual light go out.

If we are to escape the same scathing condemnation, our hearts must be clean and our lives must be genuinely holy. We must, first of all, be beautiful within in God's sight. Nothing short of a sanctifying Saviour and an abiding indwelling Holy Spirit will suffice. It is nothing less than Christ in you, the hope of glory! (Col. 1:27). How wonderful -- this Christ life! How attractive! How refreshing! How exciting! How revolutionizing! How challenging! How convincing real life is amidst the debauchery and degrading sins of this day! How convincing! How exposing! Oh, the wonder of wonders of the Christ life!

The Pharisees who in their beginning were determined to be loyal to God's law, were in the end enslaved by their own meticulous rules and regulations and found themselves bound by a self-imposed law that even led them to murdering the Son of God -- the very Giver of life. In their extreme externalism they had missed the very life God in Christ came to impart to them. There is a Pharisaism in our day externalists who put their whole stress on the outward such as tithing, church attendance, and Bible standards of living (as important as these are), but fail to have the life of Christ within. One of the sure evidences of spiritual life within is the willing conformity to both the outward demands of the gospel and to the standards of holy living written in the Word, as the light is gradually revealed to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

THE DANGER WE FACE TODAY

Sad to say, this spirit of Pharisaism is being manifested today in the midst of some of God's faithful people. There is a tendency for them to measure their lives in the sight of men rather than humbly seeking the approbation of God. When this happens people consciously or unconsciously seek honor from one another in place of the honor that comes from God alone.

Jesus' life and words rebuked this hypocrisy. He sought not His own honor but the honor of His Father who sent Him. One of the most disturbing sayings of Jesus came in the form of a question, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). The startling thing about this statement is that the desire for honor among men makes belief impossible.

It is possible, dear reader, to be bound by the opinions of men-- what they say and think. The fear of man is a snare that can rob a soul of integrity and security in God. In Matthew 6:2 Jesus said, "They have their reward." That is, they have the honor and esteem of men. God is under no obligation to them they did not do their works of righteousness with an eye single to His glory, and from Him they can expect no reward. They had their recompense in this life and could expect none in the world to come.

Let me ask, dear reader, are you locked into a system where you are "held hostage" (maybe unconsciously) to opinions of men or has the Spirit of God so unshackled you from this bondage that you are free to honor the Holy Spirit in your life no matter if it costs you disfavor, rejection, or loneliness? That is what it cost our Lord! It may also cost us that if we stay in perfect step with Him.

To fulfill the purpose for which God created man the sin question must be dealt with. God has poured out His love toward humanity in sending His only begotten Son to be a sin offering, that man might be delivered from the sins of his life and from the nature of sin inherited, and thus restored back to the image of His Creator. We have dealt with this in the first chapters of this book. Beyond that, there must be a continual walking in the light. Otherwise the problem of the carnal nature that issues in legalistic Pharisaism on the one hand or liberalism on the other will return to the human heart. We must realize the dangers in wrong relationship to light. We quench the Spirit when we trifle with light. When selfish desires get in, human reasoning takes over and then we are already in defeat.

It is light that dispels darkness (John 1:1-9). One's deliverance from sin depends on his coming out of sin's darkness into the light of God.

IT WAS LIGHT THAT SAVED THEM

Four men drove in a pickup truck out into the mountainous country of Pennsylvania early in the morning one late autumn day to hunt big game. Parking the pickup, they paired off and headed into the mountains on foot. Two went one way, the other two another way. They agreed to meet back at the truck not later than 4:00 p.m. When that hour came, only two of them arrived at the set meeting place. By dark the other two still had not showed up. Out of fear that the missing men were lost and would perish in the treacherous wintry mountains, help was sought. Down the road they

met a native of that region who told them the two lost men would more than likely perish, for no one could long survive in that mountainous country in such dangerously cold weather with as little equipment as these men had. However, there was one hope of rescuing them. Farther down the road was a man who owned a powerful carbide searchlight that could project a powerful beam of light high into the heavens. If they could borrow that light, take it back to where they had promised to meet, and set that powerful light where its beam would shine up into the sky, there might be a chance the lost men would see it and be able to make their way to it.

The two took that man's advice, borrowed the light and set it up at the agreed meeting place, turned the powerful beam heavenward and then waited. After an agonizingly long time they heard off in the distance from across that rugged terrain, somewhat faintly but definitely, a gun fire. This was followed by another long period of silence and then again came the sound of a gun fire, but louder and more distinct. This was repeated several times with the sound always getting closer. And then they heard faintly a voice calling out "Keep the light on." It was in this manner they were led out, down through deep valleys and up across high ridges, to safety. That beam of light had saved them!

And so it is, by the light of God's Word the blessed Holy Spirit leads a soul out of the depth of sin into the purity and presence of a Holy God!

KEEPING IN THE LIGHT

To come out of sin's darkness into the light of God is one thing, but to keep in the light of God is another. Our continuing victory is conditioned upon our staying in the light.

I was out on the west coast of the U.S. in the summer of 1973 in a revival meeting at the time the "Enterprise" -- the largest ship our Navy had in service -- was coming into the Bremerton, Washington shipyards to be dry-docked for repairs. Since our son Lee was aboard that ship I planned to meet him at the dock when the ship came in. The huge flat-top could come into the harbor only at high tide and that would be near midnight of that exciting day. I stood right along side the berth where the ship was to dock and watched it come in under its own power. I had one problem. How could I find Lee? Several thousand sailors lined the decks, all with their white sailor caps and uniforms, and in the darkness they all looked alike. The dock was crowded with hundreds of people all waiting to meet someone aboard the ship. Lee knew I had planned to meet him, but how were we to get together! There were huge spotlights placed at intervals to light up the dock, so I decided to pick a spot directly under one of those lights. I knew that Lee would be looking for me and although I could not spot him, I knew he could spot me if I stayed under that light. And sure enough, almost immediately after that great ship was docked and the gang plank was put in place, Lee and I ran into each other's arms.

And so it is in living a Christian life. The secret of continual victory and of keeping in contact with God is to live in the light of God (I John 1:7). A similar thought is borne out in Jude 1:20-21, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

While the truth that God is "light" is a terror to men living in the darkness of sin, it is a comfort to those who have submitted themselves to the light of God and are now walking in that light. In this is the saint's security. As we have already mentioned, while a person is not eternally secure until he is secure in eternity, there is eternal security in constantly walking in the light of God, and keeping in the center of His will. If we continue in the will of God, then we will be undergirded with the "everlasting arms of God" (Deut. 33:27); we will have His protecting wings over us (Ps. 91:4); His grace will be within us (I Cor. 1:4); As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord will be round about us from henceforth even for ever (Psa. 125:2); righteousness will go before us (Isa. 58:8); the glory of the Lord shall be our defense (Isa. 58:8); God will place a hedge about us within the surrounding mountains (Job 1:10); the angel of the Lord will encamp round about us (Psa. 34:7), and the Lord will be a wall of fire round about us (Zech. 2:5). If this is all so, and it is, how could the devil or his imps ever get to us to defeat us? They cannot as long as we continue to walk in the light and the blood of Jesus Christ continues to cleanse from all sin (I John 1:7). Praise the Lord! We read in Romans 8:24, "For we are saved by hope," but this is not the empty hope of the unsaved. It is a "hope that maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5).

All glory be to God for His beloved Son, Jesus Christ who is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9)!

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CHAPTER IX

The Seventh RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

THE FULNESS OF JOY

"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." I John 1:4

We come now to an interesting rung in the ladder that is ever carrying us to new heights in Christian life and maturity. It is the fulness of joy! Fulness of joy? Perhaps you have wondered how this could be considering all the suffering and heartaches and sorrows we face in this life. But that is exactly what this verse is saying to us. God designs that we should experience the abiding fulness of joy. Jesus prayed to that end, John 17:12, 13:

12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Jesus' joy? How can that be? That is contrary to the picture the prophet Isaiah gives of Jesus in chapter 53:3:

3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Hebrews 12:2, however, expresses the joy Jesus was anticipating after cruel hands inflicted suffering and death on Him:

2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Yes, paradoxical as it is, Jesus speaks of His joy and prays that we may have His joy in its fulness.

Not only does the Bible picture Jesus as a man of sorrows and full of grief, but man's days on earth are also depicted as days full of sorrow, suffering and anguish. How can all this be reconciled with fulness of joy? What is the answer -- the key that unlocks the mystery of this paradox?

VANITY OF VANITIES

In the book of Ecclesiastes we find that The Words of the Preacher view our life as meaningless. The oft repeated text is "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." "Vanity" carries with it the thought of futility, fruitlessness, aimlessness, and emptiness. But why this conclusion? It is a logical outcome of seeing earthly life as man's only life.

There are, of course, hours -- and sometimes days and weeks -- when the theme of Ecclesiastes expresses the mood of the soul. But these are hours and days of depression. They occur in times of loss and discouragement. Such moods are temporary and emotional reactions which in time give way to a truer understanding of life. They become life shaping attitudes and life forming convictions only to the man whose whole life is under the sun, whose outlook is entirely worldly and secular.[1]

Oswald Chambers adds these words of enlightenment when he says:

The Bible talks plentifully about joy, but it nowhere speaks about a "happy" Christian. . . . Joy is different from happiness, because happiness depends on what happens. There are elements in our circumstances we cannot help, joy is independent of them all.[2]

Looking at life from the standpoint of earthly existence only, "The Preacher" was not wrong when he concluded that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." But man was not created for time only. The sobering fact is that man's existence will be endless.

Reading through the first eleven chapters of Ecclesiastes, it is interesting to note that the phrase under the sun appears some twenty-eight times, and refers to an outlook of life that is entirely earthly and temporal. Along with this "under the sun" outlook, the words vanity, vanity of

vanities, or vanity and vexation of life, appear at least an equal number of times. The word sorrow also appears in this book a number of times.

THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE COIN

Keep in mind that we are dealing with this fourth verse in I John chapter one -- "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." "These things" concern the Incarnation of Christ His becoming man that He might die in our stead, so that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This "everlasting life" has reference to a quality of life as well as to its duration, and can be ours here and now. By faith in Christ and His shed blood, we can have born within us that heavenly life, that life from above, that transcends the mundane, carnal life which knows only life "under the sun." We read in Ephesians 2:5, 6, "Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The Greek verb (for "quickened") in this verse (verse five) is in the aorist tense and assures us that we can here and now, in this present life in the flesh and on this earth, enjoy within our heart this heavenly life. While we live physically "under the sun" we can in our heart enjoy a heavenly atmosphere. The Christian's joy comes not from earth but from heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are merely passing through this vale of tears, heartache and suffering. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17, 18).

For thirty years we spent most of the summers traveling in evangelism and in interest of the Bible College in Rock Island, Illinois. We were always in a hurry to reach some specified destination. A number of times these travels put us on both the east and west coasts of our United States in the same summer. Before the freeways were built we traveled the two-lane highways. These roads did not by-pass the towns and cities. It slowed our travel time considerably to pass through them, and especially if there was any kind of a celebration going on, which often there was. As travelers, we were anxious only to be on our way. The festivities that were attracting the local dwellers had no attraction or meaning for us. And thus it is for those who are on the highway of holiness, traveling to ". . . a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10) -- the pleasures of a worldly, sinful life have no attraction for the true saint of God! Paul reminds us that ". . . the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). The Christian's joy comes not from earth but from the "heavenly life" that is implanted in the heart and is founded on a right relationship with both God and man.

EARTHLY LIFE NOT ALL "VANITY AND VEXATION"

As puzzling and contradictory as it may appear to be, it is still true that we can experience two opposing emotions at the same time. Look at the third verse in Isaac Watts' song, "When I Survey," where it states concerning Christ as He hung on the cross, "Sorrow and love flow mingled down." Look at what the Scripture says in II Corinthians 6:10, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. . . ." Even life in the here and now for the Christian is not ". . . vanity and vexation of spirit." Life on earth often is tragic because of sin. Even for the Christian there are heartaches,

suffering and sorrow, but there are also in a Christian life days renewed with fresh enthusiasm, new interests, new services, new devotions, and new rewards. But we want to consider mainly the JOY a Christian can have NOW in this present life.

THE WAY OF JOY

Much is said in the Bible about the JOY of God's people. In the days of Ezra believers ". . . shouted aloud for joy " (3:12). We read in Isaiah 61:1-3 concerning Jesus:

1. The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Furthermore, Isaiah gives his own testimony by saying,

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. Isa. 61:10

Again in Isaiah 35:10 we read concerning the redeemed:

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Paul proclaimed:

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17).

The fact is, there are two classes of Christians in the world. The Bible speaks of these two classes. Jesus said ". . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Some have life; others more abundant life. Some have joy; others fulness of joy. It is the sanctified believers who have abundant life and fulness of joy. Paul prays that we might be filled with all the fulness of God. Full salvation is consistent with everlasting joy a joy that is not worked up, but implanted in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

THE SOURCE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY

The eternal, omnipotent, immutable God is the Source of the Christian's joy. If our joy is from God we have nothing to fear. Its source is unfailing. He never will, never can fail. Six hundred years before Christ, Habakkuk saw the coming of Nebuchadnezzar with his mighty army upon the Jews. He saw the whole country devastated and laid waste herds destroyed, flocks scattered, fruits, grains and every vegetable swept away, his own people in chains, suffering slavery and starvation. Could a man rejoice amid such a scene of dire suffering and calamity? If so, it would take more than human power; yet we read in Habakkuk 3:17-18:

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Habakkuk's joy was in his God, and while God remained his joy also was sure to remain.

THE JOY THAT SALVATION BRINGS

Real joy, as Habakkuk, Paul, and Isaiah expressed, is the joy that our salvation brings. It is foreign to the one who is not experiencing the saving grace of God. The result of salvation is joy -- continual joy. Full salvation is fullness of joy. Genuine joy necessitates an unfaltering faith. Peter put it this way, ". . . believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8). But what is it we are to be believing?

-- Believing that our sins are all pardoned.

-- Believing that our sin-stained heart is washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

-- Believing that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

-- Believing that ". . . if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).

-- Believing that an all-wise, all-loving, all-powerful God rules and overrules in all the affairs of His children and nothing that results in harm can ever come to any of them as long as they continue to walk in obedience to Him.

--Believing that God can take all evil, even the mistakes and sins of a penitent child of God, and by the alchemy of His divine grace so transform them that they boomerang against Satan, enhance the character of the saint, and redound to the glory of God.

David cried out, ". . . restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Ps. 51:12). He had grievously sinned and lost his salvation and could see nothing but darkness and hell. When his salvation was restored God opened his lips and his mouth showed forth the praises of God. He could ride upon the high places and see brightness and heaven.

The joy of the entirely sanctified under the most dire calamities has been a wonder to many. "The miracle of the Christian life is that God can give a man joy in the midst of external misery, a joy which gives him power to work until the misery is removed." [3]

Furthermore, it puts a heavenly shine on one's face. It is said of John Fletcher that he had on his face this heavenly shine. Many went to hear him simply because they wanted to look upon his shining face, although they could not understand a word he uttered.

Beverly Carradine said he saw this beautiful look upon the face of a lady who had been an invalid seventeen years. She sat in a wheelchair at that time, quietly waiting for death to relieve her suffering. Six more years were added to this. Hundreds of people all marked the pure, unearthly joy which filled her, was seen in her eyes and heard in her voice. The secret of the Lord kept her through nearly a quarter of a century of suffering. She had transformed an invalid chair into a throne.

THERE IS POWER IN JOY

". . . The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). Joy is power. A joyless Christian is a powerless Christian. A joyless church is a powerless church. There is no attraction whatever in a long-faced, gloomy, melancholy Christian. Such Christians (?) are repulsive. But there is a drawing power in joyful Christians that is wonderful to contemplate. A good example of this is pictured in contrasting the disciples of Christ before and following Pentecost. Christian joy manifested sends conviction to the hearts of sinners!

JOY THAT IS CONSTANT

The Christian's joy is abiding. It is not diminished by nor dependent on surroundings. Thus can one rejoice in temptations. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3). This joy aids one in developing Christian graces, settles and establishes one upon the rock, Christ Jesus, and gives a glorious outcome. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12). This joy is not destroyed by the onslaughts of the devil. It is the fruit of a holy heart. Although a holy heart provokes the wrath of Satan and the imps of hell as well as the opposition and fire of unclean hearts, yet this same holy heart can still have joy in the Lord, for by faith it can see final victory. From what has been said one can see that a Christian's joy need not be destroyed by his circumstances.

JOY THAT ABIDES AMIDST SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION

The joy of the sanctified abides in the midst of sufferings and persecutions. ". . . All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). There is an odium that goes with being sanctified wholly and following closely the Holy Spirit. But there is a real joy and a romance that springs from the consciousness of being led by the Holy Spirit no matter the circumstances or suffering involved. It is those who oppose the doctrine of perfect love and the ones who do not possess that experience who are miserable and unhappy. Who do you suppose

suffered the most when the three Hebrew children were cast into the furnace of fire, they or their opposers? Who suffered the most the night Daniel spent in the lions' den -- Daniel or the King? Would you not rather have suffered with Joseph than with his wicked brothers when they were found out? The Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ, while their tormentors raged and gnashed their teeth. It is the persecutors and not the persecuted who have unremitting sorrow.

Although there are a thousand things that will bring sorrow to the heart of all true saints, yet in the midst of all these we may rejoice in the Lord with joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Peter 1:8).

Speaking of the present salvation of God that the Christians enjoyed following Pentecost, Peter states: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (I Pet. 1:6). Adam Clarke has this to say: "Those to whom St. Peter wrote rejoiced greatly, danced for joy, while they were grieved with various trials." [4] The word "heaviness" signifies "to grieve," "to make sorrowful." Clarke further states, "Perhaps heaviness is not the best rendering of the original word, as this can scarcely ever consist with rejoicing; but to be sorrowful on account of something external to ourselves, and yet exulting in God from a sense of His goodness to us, is quite compatible: so that we may say with St. Paul, always sorrowing, yet still rejoicing." [5]

THE FOUNDATION OF JOY

The basis of Jesus' joy while on earth was the absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice of Himself to the will of His Father, the joy of moment by moment doing exactly what the Father sent Him to do. He prays that His disciples may have this joy fulfilled in themselves (John 17:13). It was foretold of Him in Psalm 40:8, "I delight to do thy will." Again we read in John 8:29, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." He relied wholly on the will of His Father. "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

"A man never knows joy until he gets rightly related to God. Satan's claim is that he can make a man satisfied without God, but all he succeeds in doing is to give happiness and pleasure, never joy." [6] The thing that starts the joy flowing in the heart of a Christian is the consciousness of sins forgiven and the heart cleansed from inbred sin. "And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:1-3).

The basis of the Christian's joy can be illustrated by the following interesting account:

An old master violinist trained a lad, who had once been a street urchin in a large city, to play the violin. The night came when this lad was to make his debut. The huge theater with its three tiered balcony was filled to capacity. The great crowd was so enthralled with the visible and audible talent of so young a musician that they were carried away in their emotions, shouting approval and throwing money at the lad's feet, but he paid them no attention. Then someone noticed a strange and steady gaze on the lad's face. Following the gaze they looked up in the third balcony and there the old master stood nodding his approval of his student's performance.

To be conscious of our heavenly Father's approval -- what else do we need to keep our hearts full of joy!

My mother was expecting her eighth child. As her time of delivery approached the attending physician confided in my father and us older children that he did not expect my mother to live through the birth of this eighth child and we prepared our minds and hearts as best we could for Mother's impending death. It was a Cesarean birth and although Mother lay at the point of death for days, she finally rallied, to the surprise of the doctor, and recovered enough to be sent back home. She was not home long, however, until one day in the middle of the morning she suddenly died. To say the least, to have a mother of eight children suddenly taken away is a traumatic experience. That night I walked out under the starry heaven all alone, emotionally torn. The moon and stars seemed to blink back at me in mockery and then suddenly I heard a voice. It was not audible. It spoke only one word -- CALVARY! I cannot describe the peace this brought to my heart at that time of sorrow. That is the answer to all of earth's sorrows. While sin brings death and separation in this life, Calvary brings the hope of a reunion that is endless. As the song writer expressed it:

I cannot tell thee whence it came,
This peace within my breast;
But this I know, there fills my soul
A strange and tranquil rest.

Sorrow may be heaped upon sorrow as we pass through this life but because of CALVARY, underneath it all the heart can experience a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is no wonder the Apostle John wrote the words we find written in this fourth verse of his first epistle, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." Thank God for this glorious possibility!

* * * * *

CHAPTER X

The Eighth RUNG in the Ladder of Salvation

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." I John 1:3

As a soul makes its journey from the "City of Destruction" to the "Celestial City" of God, that soul will ever be experiencing steps that will lead him into deeper and richer experiences of grace and mercy and peace as he keeps pace with an ever increasing revelation of knowledge and light. To God be all the glory and honor and praise!

Some people progress far more rapidly than do others in their grasp of spiritual realities and in their love for their Master. When we approach this next rung in man's spiritual progress it speaks to the very heart of the "why" of man's existence and epitomizes the potential of riches that can be and are meant to be his. This is indicated in verse three of this first chapter of I John as quoted above. The key word in this verse is "fellowship," and implicit in it are depths of meaning almost beyond human conception. To be brought into and to enjoy fellowship with the Blessed Trinity -- God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit -- is one of the primary purposes of God in creating mankind a free agent. St. Augustine stated it succinctly when he said of The Creator, "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." The only ultimate explanation for the creation of mankind that satisfies the heart of a thinking man is that God formed us for Himself. The old New-England Primer asks the ancient question, "What is the chief end of man?" It then gives the answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

"With this agree the four and twenty elders who fall on their faces to worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, saying, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created'" (Rev. 4:11).

"God formed us for His pleasure, and so formed us that we, as well as He, can, in divine communion, enjoy the sweet and mysterious mingling of kindred personalities. He meant us to see Him and live with Him and draw our life from His smile."[1]

When we come to consider this matter of Christian fellowship it involves the relationship and type of communication that is meant to exist between brothers and sisters in the Lord and the fellowship that is meant to exist between Christians and their Lord. In this chapter we want to consider fellowship that exists between the people of God and their Lord. In a subsequent chapter we will deal with fellowship that should exist between those of like precious faith.

DEFINING THE WORD

First let us look at what is meant by fellowship. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (Second College Edition), Copyrighted 1986, fellowship is defined as: "companionship; friendly association; a mutual sharing as of experience, activity, interest, etc.; a group of people with the same interests; company; brotherhood."

In the Christian sense fellowship is communion, a common participation. It is a life that we declare and the purpose of our declaring it is that others who are strangers to Christian fellowship

may become common sharers in that life. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ a mystical participation of a common life with God through Christ Jesus. Fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with the brethren constitute the ground of our highest joy and the joy is made full or complete through unbroken fellowship. Jesus' coming back to life means fellowship cannot be broken with death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:55-57).

In further defining "fellowship," as St. John uses it in his epistles, we find it to be an illuminating word concerning our friendship with God and our friendship with Christ, or, more accurately, our friendship with God through His Divine Son, Christ Jesus. The word "fellowship" comes from the Greek word *koinonia*, and carries with it various shades of meaning such as "partnership, participation, social intercourse, communication, communion, distribution." Forms of this word have been translated "partakers, partners, companions."

One of the simplest meanings of "fellowship" is illustrated in Acts 2:44 where it states that the disciples "had all things common. G. Campbell Morgan puts it this way, "What is fellowship? Having all things in common. What is it to have fellowship amongst men? To have all things in common with them. What is it to have fellowship with God? Although the statement is a stupendous and amazing one, I am constrained to make it -- it is to have all things in common with Him. That word is the one that indicates the perfection of our friendship with God." [2]

THE TWOFOLD MEANING OF FELLOWSHIP

Considering all the different shades of meaning that the word "fellowship" embodies we could sum them up (as does G. Campbell Morgan) under two representative words: "Communion" and "Partnership." The eighth RUNG of ascent in our spiritual progress is an invitation of the Spirit of God to enter into communion and partnership, not only with those of like faith, but with our Heavenly Father, Himself.

"We use the word communion in the realm of friendship; we use the word partnership in the realm of business. . . . Fellowship with God, then, as to privilege, is communion with Him; the actuality of friendship and fellowship with God, as to responsibility, is partnership with Him. . . . Fellowship with God means we have gone into business with God, that His enterprises are to be our enterprises." [3]

It has been my privilege to travel throughout the North American continent as well as to a number of far off lands. I have stood on vista points and looked out on the vast, apparently endless expanse of oceans. I have stood on heights of what seemed to be but the rim of seemingly endless sweeps of land -- scenes of grandeur and breath taking beauty. I have come upon those signs along the highways of our land, "scenic overlook ahead." There has always been the urge that comes with those experiences -- Stop, Look -- take some time and see what it is all about; go, explore, what is there more to see, to know, to experience? God has created humanity with a deep hunger of mind and heart that is continually reaching out to the unknown and unexplored. The Preacher declared, ". . . the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (Eccl. 1:8).

And so it is in the verse we are now dealing with. It is an invitation, a sign along the highway of life -- stop, look, listen-- enter into the vast infinitude of God Himself. We are invited into the fellowship, the communion with a Personality of spiritual vastness and infinitude. The Christian life is more than just a routine of earthly living that does not rise above the earthly and mundane. God invites us to a communion table of spiritual blessings and insights that far exceed our most fond imagination. God puts the very hunger for fellowship with Him into our heart as is indicated in Psalm 42:1-2, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. . . ." And may it ever be said of us as in Psalm 63:8, "My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me." God wills that we should enter into His Presence and live our life there. To do so, to experience that blessed assurance that we are in God and God is in us, exalts our living far above our earthly existence and constitutes a cure for most of our ills.

FELLOWSHIP VIEWED AS COMMUNION

Let us now look at fellowship with God as communion. After we have progressed through the initial stages of salvation we enter into a daily walk with our Lord. "Every now and again, not often, but sometimes, God brings us to a point of climax. That is the Great Divide in life; from that point we either go towards a more and more dilatory and useless type of Christian life, or we become more and more ablaze for the glory of God." [4]

When we look at all those who profess to be Christians, questions arise as to why some persons "find" God and commune with Him in a way others do not. Why does God manifest His Presence so wonderfully to some while others struggle across the years of life with an imperfect Christian experience? God's will is the same for all. He has no favorites. What He does for one He will do for all.

When we observe the well-known Bible characters and Christians of post-Biblical times -- Enoch, Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Elijah, David, Isaiah, Paul, Luther, Wesley, Bresee, (and we could go on) we are struck instantly with their unlikenesses. The differences are as wide as human life itself differences marked by race, nationality, education, temperament, habit and personal qualities. Yet they all walked, each in his day, upon a high road of spiritual communion, far above the common way.

When we look closely at these differences we find them to be incidental and in the eyes of God, insignificant. Close observation reveals in these diverse characters one quality of likeness. What is it? Their likeness (as A. W. Tozer points out) is found in their spiritual receptivity. They possessed a spiritual awareness and they were eager, yea, they went on zealously to cultivate it until it became the greatest thing in their lives. In those special times of divine visitation they acquired the life long habit of spiritual response and rose to further spiritual heights as did David in Psalm 27:8, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." They avoided the mediocrity that leads to spiritual death by an acquired habit of ready response to that inner voice of God. They were not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19). May God stir us up to realize the potential that is ours in this matter of communion and fellowship with God.

Fellowship with God as He has designed it can be known in its fulness only by the pure in heart. (Matt. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Heb. 12:14, ". . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.") In both of these passages, "seeing" God means in life here as well as in the life hereafter. Entire sanctification, however, is not an end but an inception. For after sanctification there begins the glorious pursuit, the heart's happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead. Observe the men of God as you peruse the pages of sacred writ and feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned, they prayed, they hungered, they sought, they found Him and their finding was sweeter because of their earnest seeking. David's life was more than an initial encounter with God. It was a torrent of spiritual desire. Read what is said about him in Acts 13:22, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will." The Apostle Paul possessed a continual burning desire for Christ. The Scriptures list at least seven desires that Paul expressed as the goal of his heart concerning Christ: "For me to live is Christ"; "that I may know him"; "that I may win Christ"; that I might "be conformed" to Him; that I might "be found in him"; "that I may rejoice in the day of Christ"; that I might ever "be with Christ." And to this end he sacrificed everything. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

In this vein, George Brown, a dear friend of mine who has recently gone to be with Jesus, commenting on Song of Solomon 3:1-5 wrote the following:

I found Him, I held Him, I would not let Him go;
Thru weary days I sought Him, and longed His grace to know;
And when my faith beheld Him, my heart was set aglow,
I found Him, I held Him, and would not let Him go.

I held Him: His chamber my loving heart became;
Wherein devotion's altar was kept a burning flame.
'Twas His alone: no rival, no idol would I know:
I found Him, I held Him, and would not let Him go.

I would not let Him go; Tho' Satan tempted sore,
Tho' friends avowed me foolish, and walked with me no more.
I felt His love within me, His mercy round me flow;
I found Him, I held Him, and would not let Him go.

God wills that we should push on into His Presence and live our whole life there. This is to be known to us in conscious experience. A. W. Tozer; in his book, *The Pursuit of God*, deals clearly with the privilege of dwelling in the presence of God here and now. He reminds us that while the tabernacle stood, only the high priest could go beyond the "inner veil" and that only once a year. The greatest fact of the tabernacle was that Jehovah God was there -- His Presence was waiting within the inner veil. It is likewise in Christian experience. The central fact in our life is the Presence of God and He invites His children to push on into deeper conscious communion.

So many who profess to know God know Him only in theory. It is sad but true that the world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and by and large the Church is famishing for

want of His Presence. At the same time, God is everywhere present (Psalm 139:7-12). However the Presence of God and the manifestation of that Presence are not the same. Jacob found that out when he fled from the wrath of his brother, Esau. The first night out at Bethel he saw a vision of God and cried out in wonder, if not in fear, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not" (Gen. 28:16). It is sobering to suddenly realize we are never out from under the all-seeing eye of God. God wants His Presence to be a conscious reality in our heart and life. What unspeakable joy and glories beyond description come from roaming in the boundless sea of God's eternal being His immutability, His omniscience, His omnipotence, His mercy, His righteousness and His holiness. Eternity will not be long enough to exhaust the infinitude of God's glorious Being.

There are some who, wondering what God is like, have pictured him as old, somber, touchy, hard to please. It is a proven fact that we become like the God we perceive. The Bible pictures God as a Being of "everlasting joy," unending, life giving one on an eternal celebration. What is He celebrating? HIMSELF! -- His perfections, His infinite love, His wisdom, His holiness. He delights in the magnificence of His mighty power. His everlasting joy is reflected in creation -- the universe as an expression of His Being: the beauty of nature, the song of the birds, the spinning of planets all in harmony, the instincts of the animal kingdom. These are all plugged in to move as He commanded. He created man, a being of free choice, to enter with Him into His endless celebration of everlasting joy, simply because he chose to do so!

In the face of all this, why are some hearts still cold? Far too many live out their lives in a mechanical, routine existence. A. W. Tozer points out that behind this, however, there is a reason. What is it but the presence of a veil in their hearts that has not been removed. It is not something they do or do not do. It is but the threads out of which an inner veil is woven, fine threads of a self-life -- self-righteousness, self-pity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love, and a host of others things that dwell deep in their inner being and are so much a part of their natures that they never come to the light until the light of God is focused on them. That self-life is the veil that hides the face of God from them. It is the plague of the human heart.

We must realize that we, in ourselves, are powerless to rend this veil. God must do it for us. We must confess, forsake, repudiate the self-life, and then reckon it crucified. It is a painful process that must not be evaded -- the rending of the veil of our carnal self. There must be no lazy acceptance apart from the real work of God. The cross is rough and deadly, but essential to make us ready for spiritual resurrection. There comes that moment when the work of crucifixion is finished. It is then the veil is taken away and we have entered into that fellowship with God in all its richness of communion. God grant that it may be so in your life.

FELLOWSHIP VIEWED AS PARTNERSHIP

The other side of fellowship, as we have already indicated, is that of partnership, which speaks of responsibility -- the responsibility we owe as a member of a partnership in business. Fellowship in the sense of partnership means that we have gone into business with God -- His enterprises are to be our prime concern. Looking at fellowship with God from the standpoint of partnership involves three things: "mutual interests; mutual devotion; mutual activity."

Fellowship viewed as partnership with God means mutual interests: In the first place it means that God is interested in me. We read in Psalm 8:4, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Fellowship with God means that God is interested in my being in all its parts -- in my spiritual life, in my mental powers, in my physical needs. Matthew 6:31, 32, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

We go to our own private "closet" to commune with God. We attend church and if it is what it should be, we go there to commune with God. Our expectations are that we will meet God as we worship in prayer, in praise, in song, in mutual sharing and in hearing God's word expounded. But we do not leave our God behind in the private place of communion, nor do we leave Him behind in the place of public worship when the benediction is pronounced. God will not leave us when we leave those places, but will go with us; He is profoundly interested in the work our hands have to do and in the problems our minds have to face in the work days of the week, just as much as in the place of private worship or in the sanctuary of worship. God is as interested in the work your hands have to do, in the problems your mind has to grapple with and in the struggles you face in physical existence, as well as with your spiritual growth and development.

Most people conceive worship as the one hour on Sunday morning when they are in church. For a child of God, worship in its fullest sense is a twenty-four hour a day expression of the life of God within his heart on the job, at home, at church and wherever he may be and in whatever he may be occupied.

It is equally true that I am to be interested in the things of God -- His ultimate ends and His present enterprises. God's ultimate realization in me is that I shall be presented perfect before His throne. Thus, my fellowship with God demands that my eyes shall ever be on that goal, and on that time yet to come when all sin and evil shall be put away, His kingdom established and the heavens and the earth filled with His glory!

Partnership with God means mutual devotion. God's resources are all at our disposal and our resources ought always to be at His disposal. How amazing! God's resources His wisdom, His power, His knowledge -- all are at our disposal. In this light, how meager the benefits we ask of Him! What fathomless possibilities lie within the vastness of an infinite God! What small requests we make of Him! How often we settle for our own wisdom and fail to ask for what we really need while He is waiting and wanting to supply that need. How sadly we dishonor Him because we do not appropriate all of the benefits He has placed at our disposal!

But, on the other hand, have we responded to the other fact that all our resources are to be at His disposal? All of them, not just the tithe, the ten percent, but all our resources and our possessions, one hundred percent, are rightfully His. We are nothing and own nothing in and by ourselves. All we are and all we possess comes from the hand of our Creator. The virtue of man's role in his partnership with God issues solely from his God-given freedom to choose. There are several Scriptures that bear this out, such as Isaiah 26:12, "Lord, . . . thou also hast wrought all our works in [and for] us." Again in I Corinthians 3:9, "For we are labourers together with God: ye are

God's husbandry, ye are God's building." It is clear in these Scriptures that in this partnership man is the channel through which God performs His divine, miraculous works in and for mankind.

There is one other Scripture we should consider in this matter of fellowship viewed as partnership. We find this in II Corinthians 5:19-6:1, ". . . God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." In this passage it is clear that man as an ambassador (an official messenger with a special mission) in behalf of Christ, is given, and is responsible for, the ministry of reconciliation. The task of winning the unreconciled to God is committed to us. We can only fulfill our task by the authority and power of God. This will allow for no excuse nor discouragement in the great task that is ours in this partnership with our Lord. Let us illustrate:

A very wealthy man dwelling in a large city met a young, ambitious lad and proposed going into partnership with him in the shoe shining business. The man of wealth would furnish all the equipment necessary to carry on an "on the street" shoe shining business. The lad's part was to shine the shoes as customer business demanded. Business got under way and with the best equipment money could buy, the venture was more than promising. A would-be competitor, however, beat up the young lad and stole all his equipment. Discouraged and ready to quit the venture, with despair and hopelessness written all over his countenance, he hunted up his partner and announced his misfortune and their bankruptcy. To his chagrin his partner reminded him that in a partnership both parties share in either profits or losses and since they were partners they were in no wise bankrupt and were not about to go out of business. It would be no problem for the senior partner to set them up in business again.

Is this not a picture of our relationship with God viewed as partnership? The efforts on our side of the partnership may at times be very non-productive to the point of failure, discouragement and even backsliding. But these do not bankrupt an infinite God. The meager amount of gain for the kingdom of God from our labors does not end the partnership. Neither would even backsliding have to keep us out of business if we come back with humble repentance and experience a joyful restoration. God does, however, require of us faithfulness on our part of the partnership! We read in I Corinthians 4:1, 2, "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 let us look at another illustration right out of the Bible. All four gospels record the account of a lad who had a lunch of five barley loaves and two small fishes, and with these he went into partnership with Jesus. When we read all four accounts carefully it becomes clear that the lad, of his own free volition, turned the entire lunch over to Jesus for whatever He wanted to do with it. Amazingly, when the lunch got out of the lad's hands into Jesus' hands, when it passed from human hands to divine hands, from the finite to the infinite, from the natural to the supernatural, from the hands of a creature to the hands of the Creator, there was no limit to the multitude it could feed. Before the lad took even one bite for himself, he gave it ALL to Jesus. By this act he took up partnership with the Infinite One. Did the lad have to go hungry by giving all he

had to Jesus? Certainly not! Matthew tells us "they did all eat, and were filled." The lad was part of the "all" who ate and were filled. Where can one find richer, fuller and more satisfying fellowship than in partnership with an Infinite God?

There is one more thing to consider in this matter of fellowship in relation to partnership with God. That is -- Partnership means mutual activity -- God adapting Himself to human weakness and human weakness cooperating with God's mind and strength. Consider the following Scriptures: II Samuel 22:36, "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great." Psalm 18:35, "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great." II Corinthians 10:1, "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you." "Gentleness" has been defined as God's strength held in reserve, and placed at the service of weakness.

G. Campbell Morgan puts it this way, "All [God's] processes are slow, as they appear to us, because of the gentleness of God. He waits for men. If it be a marvelous thing that Enoch walked with God, it is a more marvelous thing that God walked with Enoch, waiting for him as for a weak little child along the way. Just as you, father -- strong man, equal to great speed -- walk by the side of your child who is just beginning to walk, accommodating your strength to the child's weakness, your speed to the child's slowness, so God forever accommodates Himself to our halting pace . . . [God] is waiting, always waiting . . . I have kept Him waiting when I ought not, but He has waited even then. Always waiting -- so patient with my foolishness, my weakness, my fear. Our fellowship is with God, and fellowship is friendship, and friendship means that partnership which, on His part, is the accommodation of His strength to my weakness. . . If God accommodates Himself to us in gentleness, He enables us to rise to new activity with Him, in almost overwhelming power."[5]

FELLOWSHIP AND THE SILENCES OF GOD

There is one more thing about this partnership in fellowship that must not be overlooked. That is the silences of God. In human relationship there is the place that can be reached where two can become so much one that just to be in each other's presence without a word spoken can be a satisfying experience. Likewise partnership with God can reach that place that whether God speaks or chooses to remain silent, the soul of man can bask in His presence, satisfied that all is well. God's silences are no cause for alarm. Comfort comes from knowing He is there, though silent.

Two lifelong friends met for an evening together. As they sat by the open fireplace, they basked in each other's presence throughout the evening. Not a word was spoken. As the one who had come to pay the visit rose to leave he said to his friend, "Thank you so much for this wonderful and pleasant evening together." And thus it can be and will be in this partnership with our Lord and Master when we can fellowship in silence, satisfied just to be in His presence.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XI

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." I John 1:3

Fellowship with the Lord and fellowship among the saints of God constitutes the ground of our highest joy, and this joy is made full or complete through unbroken fellowship.

In this chapter we will consider fellowship that should exist between those of like precious faith.

THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship flows out of right relationships and is grounded in vital Christian experience. We read in I John 1:7, ". . . if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another . . ." (emphasis mine). The fellowship spoken of here is primarily that which exists between a redeemed soul and the Creator. In verse three John writes about a fellowship that exists between children of God as well as ". . . with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Jesus' prayer in John 17:18-21, is quite revealing:

18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (emphasis mine).

In these verses we note that the key is "unity of spirit" which is made possible by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and is so vital to genuine Christian fellowship. Christian fellowship does not necessitate unity of mind or opinion. On many issues Christians may not think alike, but they can love alike. Unfeigned Christian fellowship is of the heart, not the mind. Of the early church the Scripture states, ". . . they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people . . ." (Acts 2:46-47) (emphasis mine).

THE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

For fellowship to remain and mature among brethren there first must be the absence of negative, carnal traits -- envy, malice, wrath, unkind temper, malign affection, pride, haughtiness of spirit, self-will, love of the world, lust, idolatry, inordinate affection, evil surmising, hatred,

bitterness, resentment, desire for revenge, covetousness, uncharitable conversation, and peevishness.

Of necessity, however, there must be more than the mere absence of the negative which can be summed up in "self sovereignty." There must be the positive -- harmony of the individual with God, others, and himself. Christian fellowship must have the ingredients of a "give and take" nature, respect and interest in others, a likeness to God as related to others in terms of love (Rom. 13:10). All of these ingredients to be genuine must be accompanied with the spirit of sincerity. "John Wesley was almost willing to equate entire sanctification with sincerity, especially if it be given its full New Testament implication. It is no more than sincerity, he says, 'if you mean by that word, love filling the heart, expelling pride, anger, desire, self-will; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks.' "[1]

Love must be at the heart of genuine Christian fellowship. Love is a relationship of openness. Love is not self-generated, but a fruit of the Spirit that is characterized by a complete openness with all interpersonal relationships.

Christian fellowship is a freedom from self-domination and a blending into a community of like spirits by the inner working of the Holy Spirit Himself.

THE MINISTRY OF FELLOWSHIP

I have often defined Christian fellowship (as I heard it defined in my younger years) as two fellows in the same ship going in the same direction. This meagre definition, however, is too simplistic and too misleading. Christian fellowship is broader than everyone abandoning their particular ship (church or denomination) and getting together into one particular ship (church) as the simple definition given here infers. True Christian fellowship as mentioned in the Bible should issue in a furtherance of the gospel among the unsaved. Such is inferred in the verse quoted above in John 17:21, "That they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Besides the eighteen times the word fellowship is mentioned in the Bible, we also find such words as "fellow citizens," "fellow disciples," "fellow heirs," "fellow helpers," "fellow laborers," "fellow prisoners," "fellow servants," "fellow workers," and "fellow soldiers." All these terms speak of fellow Christians united in a common interest and a common cause. Paul speaks of this when he writes in Philippians 2:1-2, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." The word "therefore" in the above scripture refers back to Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." The bottom line of Christian fellowship among those of like precious faith, regardless of church affiliation, should be found in the ministry of divine love in holding fast and holding forth the Word of Faith, "striving together for the faith of the gospel." Fellowship is (Ephesians 4:12-13) "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Christian fellowship among the people of God during the time of Christ on earth was devastated by the Pharisaism of that day. Jesus said to His followers, ". . . except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). Their profession and personal heart experience did not agree. Jesus called them hypocrites and pronounced woe after woe upon them (Matt. 23). They were the holiness movement of their day, pure in its beginning. "Like the Holy Club which appeared at Oxford centuries later, these men began to discipline their lives, making rules for daily living, setting special times of prayer, designing a form of dress by which they might be known, and in general seeking to conform to the then recognized canons of piety which would mark them before the world as being loyal to Jehovah and His cause." [2] They never wavered in fundamentalism. They were, however, ". . . like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but [were] within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27). They were spiritually dead, having dried up in their spiritual experience, void of vital godly fellowship. They were destitute of an unadulterated love that would reach out to lost men of their day. Their "narrow spirit" led them to proselyting people into their own legalistic ways rather than into true fellowship with God. Sad to say, their counterpart can be found among some professed holiness people of this day.

Christian fellowship was strained to the limit in the days of St. Paul on earth. His two most controversial church situations, Corinth and Galatia, revolved around perverted understandings of the Spirit-filled life.

There existed in Corinth a subnormal Christian spirituality. The Corinthians viewed spirituality in terms of charismatic signs and gifts, whereas Paul saw normative spirituality in terms of Love (I Cor. 13). Only where divine love exists can there be genuine Christian fellowship. Where carnality exists under a false profession of holiness there is the tendency to develop an emotionalism, a charisma, that is considered a bonafide sign of spirituality. It is at heart an exaltation of a carnal self rather than a glorifying of the Spirit of God in an experience of holiness of heart and life. It ultimately issues in a charismatic, tongues-speaking phenomenon that is so prevalent in this day. This is what Paul was facing in the church at Corinth and why he contrasted what they actually were, carnal, with what holiness should be as expressed in I Corinthians chapter thirteen.

"At Galatia, it seems that the Christians there found life in the Spirit, as they understood it to be, insufficient to guard against the flesh and hence were tempted to resort to the Mosaic law as a means of avoiding [licentious living]. Here Paul had to argue for the adequacy of the Spirit as an ethical principle, so one did not have to resort to legalism." [3]

We find the counterpart of this group existing today among those who add rule to rule in an effort to conserve the outward fruits of holy living. But it is the Holy Spirit, Himself, that is the conservator of holiness of heart and life and the ongoing fellowship between those of like precious faith. Without question Bible truths concerning holy living must faithfully be preached in balance with the whole scope of Biblical truth. On the other hand, however, there are those who feel it will

never work if they take the external pressure off people and rely on an internal work of the Holy Spirit to guide the sanctified individual in holy living. In fact, experience has proven that when external manipulations have been taken off, some people do forsake the outward evidences of a holy walk with God and move inevitably into open sin. They begin to do what was in their heart all along. As painful as this is to watch, it is the revelation of an unredeemed heart that they possessed while outwardly living in conformity to Bible standards of holy living.

Unfeigned Christian fellowship of this day is being hindered by a shift in one of two directions -- either to the left into liberalism or to the right into legalism. Either direction is an indication of having left their first love. (Rev. 2:2-4) Legislating rule upon rules has never in the end conserved deep spirituality. On the other hand, softening up on "the narrow way" has never won a world to God. Neither way will nurture a deep fellowship among those of like precious faith.

THE "NARROW WAY" OF FELLOWSHIP

We must never lose sight of the fact that the way to heaven is a "narrow way." This is in harmony with Jesus' teaching in His "Sermon on the Mount." Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in Thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The "narrow way," that is taught in the Scriptures, however, is not in harmony with a "narrow spirit." Unity of spirit made possible by the indwelling Holy Spirit is the vital element in Christian fellowship. John Wesley preached, "I will not quarrel with you about any opinion. Only see that your heart be right with God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked; and I desire no more."

We give here a few excerpts from *The Narrow Way, Yes! A Narrow Spirit, No!* by H. E. Schmul to further illustrate what we mean by Christian fellowship as presented in the Word of God, and also as a warning against that which would nullify the fellowship God intended to exist among the redeemed. (used by permission)

Mr. Wesley knew the dangers of spiritual bigotry. . . . In a letter to the Vicar of Shoreham in Kent [he] writes what he entitled as, "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists." In this letter, one paragraph states his concern for his people pertaining to the danger of a narrow spirit and of action taken to prevent it.

Mr. Wesley said,

"The thing which I was greatly afraid of all this time and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing was a narrowness of spirit, a party zeal, a being straightened in our own bowels; that miserable bigotry which makes so many so unready to believe there is any work of God but among themselves

The following excerpts from his sermons show he aimed at keeping to the "narrow way" while avoiding a "narrow spirit."

The Father of Methodism's sermons reveal an understanding heart, wisdom and grace while demonstrating a sanctified spirit and good common sense.

Throughout Wesley's writings, Christian love constitutes the irreducible point of similarity among all believers, past and present, and the source of motivation for future acceptance, appreciation, and cooperation. The classic statement of Wesley's openness to fellowship among the diverse traditions of Christian belief may be found in the sermon entitled, Catholic Spirit. By a "catholic spirit" Wesley meant universal love towards others. Such love should be directed not only toward God and one's neighbor but especially toward the Christian neighbor despite differences in theological opinion. Catholic or universal love should represent a bedrock of Christlike love shared among all Christians. It is the nature of love to unite us together and the greater the love the stricter the union and while this continues in its strength nothing can divide those whom he has united. It is only when love grows COLD that we can think of separating "from our brethren."

Wesley describes "the Narrow Way" as first inward religion, namely, our spiritual relationship with God and all that this relationship implies for living. . . .

In one of his last sermons he wrote that Methodists should accept into their fellowship all who love God and live righteous lives in accordance with that love.

And in order to their union with us, we require no unity in opinions, or in modes of worship, but barely that they "fear God and work righteousness," as we observed.

Some throw out the above pronouncement as unfit liberal trash; however, when Wesley's teachings are considered in the context of his lifestyle, experience and practice who would dare call the Father of Methodism a compromising liberal?

What is a "narrow spirit"? It is a parochial, pharisaical, quarrelsome, critical, censorious attitude. It is the attitude and disposition that Mr. Wesley abominated.

God saved Britain from a bloody revolution through the powerful ministry of Methodist preachers proclaiming the "narrow way" of Jesus Christ. It is hard to fault a man and his teaching who has had outstanding success in soul winning and whose own lifestyle in outward dress and disciplined life reveals holiness that is Biblically sound.

The Christian's personal development is dynamic through the indwelling Holy Spirit. . . . The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ in us and the heartfelt experience of perfect love accompanied by common sense enables one to meet the challenge to Christian maturity and Christlikeness. The indwelling Holy Spirit is the Keeper of Orthodoxy and through Him we remain in the "narrow way" and maintain right relations with other people although they are not as perfectly enlightened, as we are.

Since we are human and intellectually limited, we may err defining or discerning what is spiritual. Wesleyan scholars, Wesley, Clarke, Fletcher, Ralston, Pope, Godbey, Wiley and others did not share a common understanding of all God's truth, yet these men did not equivocate on the fundamentals of the faith and neither should we. . .

Grave dangers surface when teachers elevate lesser truths to the level of primary truths and judge one another's spirituality by their limited understanding of the Scriptures. A truth preached out of focus and out of balance with all the Scriptures is to err; a parched spirit and warped lifestyle is the result.

There is a lack of complete unanimity among Wesleyan scholars regarding many matters including the sacraments, water baptism, the second coming, the millennium, nonviolence, the church, etc. The earnest Christian may not be fully persuaded regarding some of these truths, but his uncertainty is not fatal. . . . But it is fatal to reject the authority of God's inerrant Word, the miraculous virgin birth of Christ, the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin or to scoff at the bodily resurrection of Christ. One cannot be truly Christian and deny fundamentals of the sanctified life; therefore, "speak the truth in love" on these issues.

We need not sacrifice personal God-given convictions for fellowship. True Christians do not compromise Bible fundamentals but earnestly develop a holiness fellowship based on them.

Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart though we are not of one opinion? If thine heart is as my heart, if thou lovest God and all mankind, I ask no more: give me thine hand. [Sermons on Several Occasions.]

We are challenged to surrender to "The Narrow Way" of Jesus and to take up His cross and follow Him. Those who take His "Narrow Way" find grace and glory, and strength to do His will and pleasure in His service. The "narrow spirit" furnishes neither grace nor glory, only rules and ruts without the righteousness of Christ; disciplines, without the Lordship of Christ.

The "narrow spirit" is not companion to "the narrow way of Jesus." It is the "narrow, puckered, peeved spirit" Wesley feared, not "the narrow way," Jesus preached. The "narrow spirit" usually emphasizes a truth out of balance or insists people embrace an extra-Biblical notion, tradition or some aspect of a culture, but he has no grace to impart to help one meet his personal demands. This "narrow spirit" is foreign to soul burden, passion, missions and an understanding heart in reaching the lost. The letter killeth, but the Holy Spirit gives life.

"The narrow way" of Jesus shows God as our Father; The Holy Spirit as our guide into all truth demonstrating the life of Jesus in holiness and forgiving love. The "narrow way" of Jesus becomes the Way of Holiness and takes one all the way to the City of God. . . .

Since we follow in the "narrow way" of Jesus and because we desire a careful, holy walk with God, we need to take Wesley's warning against a "narrow spirit" seriously. -- end of quote --

The Psalmist David testified (Psa. 40:2, 3), "He [the Lord] brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

To reveal God's plan and purpose to rescue mankind from the "horrible pit" of sin where a soul is forever sinking deeper and deeper, and to bring him into fellowship with God and all others of like precious faith, has been the purpose of the author of this book. Let us repeat here the opening words of this chapter: "Fellowship with the Lord and fellowship among the saints of God constitutes the ground of our highest joy, and this joy is made full or complete through unbroken fellowship." When a soul enters into this unbroken fellowship through the unmerited grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has reached the zenith of his ascent. From that point on it is a maturing and an expanding of what he already possesses.

In the first two verses of this first chapter of First John, the Apostle had something to say about who this Christ is. We deal with this in Appendix A.

The final chapter of this book deals with the matter of being a Christian. This is taken up in Appendix B.

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SECTION III

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE THINGS JOHN DECLARED

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

"(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:)" I John 1:1,2

We come now to examine verses one and two, which are the last to be considered in dealing with the subject of man's ascent to God. In Jacob's dream (Gen. 28:10-22), he saw the Lord at the top of the ladder that reached to heaven -- "the Lord stood above it." When we ascend verse by verse in our study of the first chapter of I John we come to verses one and two and are confronted with the same Lord Jacob saw. John declared this one he was writing of to be Christ Incarnate in human flesh. He is the One of whom Isaiah said "his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). He is the One who stands at center-stage in the history of humanity on this earth. He is "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). He is the Hope of mankind, the only Door into eternal life. He came to bring mankind back to God. His mission to this earth involves the entire triune Godhead. This is clearly revealed in Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ,

who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

In the chapter now before us we will be giving a brief recapitulation of the chapters that have preceded this one, and then consider the significance of the Incarnation of Christ whom John had heard, seen, and touched.

RECAPITULATION

In the beginning of this book we looked at man in his lost estate, groping in moral darkness and blinded to his sinful condition, thinking himself to be wise but actually, as the Bible describes him, a "fool." The word "fool" in the Bible does not indicate a person of low intelligence. Isaiah calls that person a fool who contemptuously breaks off fellowship with God and becomes an atheist. Such a one's only hope of rescue from a continuing descent into an eternal blackness is an awakening by the Holy Spirit to his lost, sinful condition and a personal acknowledgment of his lostness. Man's second step upward was a genuine repentance and forsaking of sin. This was followed by an awareness of an inherited sin nature for which cleansing has been provided in the blood of Christ. The sin problem being settled by forgiveness and then cleansing in two definite crisis experiences, there followed a life of continued obedience and trust as the soul kept open and victorious by walking in the light, partaking of the joy of the Lord and fellowshiping with God and others of like precious faith. The soul came to its zenith of ascent by continuing in unbroken communion and fellowship with its Creator and Lord of life. As a result there comes to that one a ripening and maturing of perfection.

A SUMMARY REVIEW OF MAN'S LOST ESTATE

We read in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." In the Garden of Eden man lost the approval of God, the nature of God, the knowledge of God, and the Paradise of God. This resulted in a threefold tragedy: Selfward, condemnation; Satanward, enslavement; Godward, estrangement. To sum it up briefly, the loss of fellowship with God is the loss of life's meaning and value, but in Christ man can, by taking the proper steps, gain back all that was lost in the fall and more besides.

Immediately upon the fall of Adam into sin God promised a way back into fellowship and communion (Gen. 3:15), and He worked through four millenniums of human existence on earth to bring to pass the means of man's salvation from sin.

Even before God ever created man, a being in His own Image, He had anticipated his fall into sin and in His heart made provision for man's recovery (Rev. 13:8). Mankind was not left hopeless in his estrangement from God. We get a picture of this in the dream Jacob had that night alone at Bethel when he was fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau (Gen. 28:12, 13). Jacob's own sin had driven him into solitude but not from the presence of God. Awakened out of sleep Jacob said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." Here we have a picture of "the reaching up of earth to heaven, and reaching down of heaven to earth." The "ladder dream" revealed to Jacob that heaven was not closed to man; that heaven and earth were not separated by an impassable gulf. It assured him that there was a way of reconciliation between God and man;

that the love of God was above all the darkness of sin and evil. It imparted to him a revelation from God.

There is nothing more horrible nor saddening than man apart from God. As a consequence of Adam's disobedience sin, suffering and death became the lot of the entire human race. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). A personal relationship had been violated, a law had been broken and the result -- man, a sinful being, had been separated from God his Creator. There was absolutely no way God could restore sinful man back to fellowship with Himself. Sin with its Divine penalty had barred the way; God could not remain just and justify the ungodly; to overlook the penalty of broken law could only result in universal moral chaos; there was no way for man out of his predicament; no way-- UNLESS --!

GOD'S WAY BACK FOR MANKIND -- THE INCARNATION

The recovery of fellowship between God and man is the supreme objective of the redemptive enterprise. This is what the Apostle John was writing about here in I John 1:3: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

What was it that John declared? That is what we want to look at next. What would it take to restore man back to fellowship with his Creator?

The only way God could restore His fulness to the human race is that He, Himself become a part of that race. Hebrews 2:14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

What marvelous, glorious truth! Jesus Christ, the second person of the Triune Godhead came, virgin born, into the human race. He came, pure God, and laid hold of the seed of Abraham and became as well, pure man -- the GOD-MAN, the Theanthropic Person. And then, because of who He was, He was given The Spirit without measure. Once again the Spirit of God had returned to a member of the human race Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man that He might pay man's penalty and redeem a lost race from the quagmires of sin by shedding His blood on the cross of Calvary -- the just for the unjust. He took upon Himself the penalty that was due a sinful race of mankind. He came to die that man might live. As we have already stated, the recovery of fellowship between God and man is the supreme objective of the redemptive enterprise. Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." And He did that very thing! He did it by dying -- the just for the unjust. He took upon Himself the penalty of broken law -- death! "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In coming to this earth incarnate in human flesh Christ Jesus came to reveal to humanity God as our Heavenly Father; He came to be an example of how God intended us to live; He came to train apostles to carry on the work of the kingdom of heaven. But primarily and supremely, He came to atone for the sins of man. With arms outstretched on the cruel cross of Calvary He shed

His blood to open the way for man to return to God -- man's ONLY way and man's ONLY hope of eternal life. He gave His life; He shed His blood. Man's way back is the blood way -- the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross.

We are not sufficiently a praising people. How we should be lost in the sense of adoration and praise for the wonder of "The Blood," and the Lamb of God who shed it. Revelation 5:9-14:

9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, [be] unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four [and] twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

The Bible is the message of redemption through the blood. There are well over six hundred texts in the Bible that have as their theme the atoning, redeeming power of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ! In the Old Testament, containing the first four thousand years of man's history on the earth, The Blood is there on almost every page, pointing forward to Christ. The Old Testament is a prophetic mirror of Christ and the New Testament. As has oft been quoted, "The New is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed." In Exodus chapter twelve we have a picture in type of deliverance from death through the shedding of blood. In Leviticus we have the account of blood shedding to atone for sin. In Isaiah chapters fifty-two and three we have an account of the suffering Saviour. We read in Hebrews 9:22, ". . . almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Under the law, every morning at nine o'clock a lamb was slain and again at three o'clock in the evening. Jesus, The Lamb of God was nailed to the cross at nine o'clock a.m. on His crucifixion day and at three o'clock in the evening, He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30), fulfilling the type. We are people of one nature but He, Christ Jesus, is a person of two natures. His blood was not the blood of a common person. It was God's blood shed on the cross in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. " John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the Word was God." Colossians 2:9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Christ came and was worshipped as a babe. He was given a body that He might die for the sins of the people. It is worthy to note where the blood was presented. The High Priest once a year took the blood of the bullock and the goat of the sin offering into the Holy of Holies and there, before the mercy seat, presented it before God. Jesus, having shed His blood, arose from the dead and presented His blood before the throne of God in heaven (John 20:17). And now it is there pleading for you and for me (Hebrews 13:20, 21). It is atoning, redeeming, cleansing blood. We were the children of darkness, sin and of the devil, but the blood has prevailed and now every blessing that comes to us comes by blood and by faith. It is as fresh and efficacious today as ever. It will never lose its power.

The blood propitiates. Romans 3:25-26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Propitiation has reference to the divine nature. This nature is holy love. Before He could save sinners, God's nature required Him to deal with their sins and satisfy His holy demands against them. The blood of Christ appeased the wrath of offended Deity, whose just laws had been violated. To propitiate simply means that through the blood of Christ God can now, by the repentance and forsaking of sin and faith in the BLOOD on man's part, restore communion and fellowship to that individual. "One must never look upon the death of Christ as an act of vengeance on God's part to enable Him to be merciful. Christ's death is God's love expressing itself in glad removal of the barrier to the showing of His mercy to guilty man."

The blood justifies. Romans 5:9, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Justification is a legal term. Because of sin man stands guilty before the judgment seat of Christ but through His blood he can stand uncondemned if he will, by simple faith in Christ's shed blood, confess and forsake his sins. When he does, God, by a gracious and judicial act, grants to that soul full pardon of all guilt, releasing him from the penalty of committed sins. Praise God!

The blood redeems. Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

An important personage in Old Testament times was the Go'el, "redeemer," the nearest kin charged with the responsibility of buying back a lost inheritance -- the payment of the lutron. Mark 10:45 and Matt. 20:28 tells us Jesus is our lutron, our ransom to free us. Man, caught in the grip of sin and quite incapable of releasing himself, is rescued. His redemption is through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7).

Through the blood we have peace. Colossians 1:20, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Our day has become increasingly characterized by depression, despair, restlessness, but the Bible assures us of an open door to an inner peace. We need not have an unholy fear of God. It is no wonder Charles Wesley wrote the song, "Arise, my soul, arise. Shake off thy guilty fears. The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears."

Through the blood we have purity. Zechariah 13:1, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Hebrews 9:13-14, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Read again I John 1:7, 9.

Through the blood we have power. There is the power of privilege (exousian) -- John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. . . ." There is the power of authority (ten exousian) -- Luke 10:19, "Behold, I give you power. . . over all the power of the enemy: . . ." There is the power of ability (dunamis) -- Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: . . ." There is the power of access -- Hebrews 10:19-22, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And [having] an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water:"

There is the power to overcome. Revelation 12:9, 12, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The Devil can tempt us, i.e., he can abstract from us the potential of response. No state of sanctification can secure us from temptation. Even Jesus was tempted (Heb. 4:15). The Devil can oppress us; he can vex us, which is more fearful than oppression.

There is the power of advantage in the blood -- access to all the blessings and promises recorded in God's Word that are not available to those who are not of the household of faith. God has made a covenant with His people and of this He assures us in Psalm 89:34, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Again we read in Hebrews 13:20, 21 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] glory for ever and ever: Amen." What more could we say? We sing it, "There Is Power in the

Blood." Every blessing that comes to us comes by faith in the BLOOD of the LAMB of God. This is what John declared in verses one and two.

Hallelujah for the Blood, for the sin-cleansing fountain!
For the Lamb has been slain, and the ransom price paid.
Fully canceled was the debt when on Calvary's mountain
All the sins of this world upon Jesus were laid.

Hallelujah for the Blood! Sing for joy all ye nations,
And rejoice that the work of redemption is done.
Here is pardon free for all, and a perfect salvation
Thro' the sin-cleansing blood of the Crucified One.

Hallelujah for the Blood! Hallelujah forever!
We shall sing it anew in the kingdom of God,
Where the anthems of delight shall be silent, no never,
Ever more hallelujah for Christ and the blood!
-- Mrs. C. H. Morris

CHRIST'S BLOOD OBLIGATES US

Matthew 22:42 asks the question, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? This is the question that will determine our future both here and hereafter.

"It has been estimated that some forty billion individuals have lived upon this earth since Adam. What a contrast can be seen in this vast multitude of humanity. It includes black men, white men, brown, and yellow men. These men have explored and settled every corner of their earth. They speak dozens of languages, practice multitudes of religions, and have formulated numerous cultures. But every single human being shares one vital thing. His purpose of life down here and his eternal destiny afterward depends completely upon his personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, absolutely impossible to overemphasize the importance of his life. Thus the key question, "What think ye of Christ?"[1]

When Christ's mission to earth as the Incarnate Son of God was nearing completion He (Jesus) "lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 1:17).

At the time of this prayer Jesus was on His way to the cross to die and shed His blood to provide redemption for the lost race of man. He had gathered His followers around Himself and began praying, not for the world, but for them who had left all to follow Him. The gospel (the good news of redemption) must be taken to all men everywhere. (Gen. 12:1, 2; John 1:29; 3:16, 17; 6:33; 8:12; etc., etc.) The burden of Christ's prayer was that the Father might glorify Him by sending "the promise of the Father" upon His followers to cleanse them, to set them apart, and to unify them for the one great task of evangelizing bearing the news of redemption from sin through the blood of Christ, to all men everywhere!

Paul caught the vision when he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:14-17).

The blood of Christ obligated Paul. It obligates every child of God. "For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:7, 8). There is no way we can separate, isolate, detach, divorce ourselves from our influence or obligation to help other members of the human race. When God saves us we are not our own. We become His stewards. "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" (I Cor. 4:1, 2). "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another: as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Sanctification is the work of the Spirit, and its goal is the production of ethical character seen in Christlikeness. Christlikeness will involve us in the great redemptive program as faithful witnesses (Acts 1:8). In the chapter on "How to Keep Sanctified," J. A. Wood in his book Perfect Love, wrote, "It is the nature of perfect love to long to go with God for the salvation of souls and if you do not go with God for the salvation of men, your love will cool into apathy and indifference, and you will lose the evidence of entire sanctification all together." [2]

CONCLUSION

And may all who have been partakers of the benefit of the provisions of God's great plan of redemption in and through Jesus Christ, and have been faithful to their obligation of stewardship of the ministry of reconciliation, say with the great apostle Paul, when they come to the end of their sojourn on earth, "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."

Just beyond the top rung, through the opening of the sky, are the waiting arms of God!

* * * * *

APPENDIX B

WHY SHOULD I BE A CHRISTIAN?

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . .

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
Revelation 20:12, 15

Most people, especially young people, who become Christians, are brought into the Kingdom of Heaven under the heat of conviction. Before cold metal can be forged heat must be applied and likewise, a soul cannot be "forged" into the likeness of Christ until that soul, dead in trespasses and sin, is awakened to its lost condition under the heat of Holy Ghost conviction.

However, after a person has become a Christian and the initial thrill has passed, feelings have subsided, and he gets into the daily grind of living, he will be tempted to wonder, Why did I become a Christian? What is there to this Christian life? Maybe what I have experienced is all just my imagination. It is not an uncommon experience for a new-born child of God to be confronted with these thoughts and feelings. This does not make his Christian experience any less real, but the enemy of his soul will be sure to visit him with such thoughts. We trust the following pages will be of help to the new-born Christian as well as help to all who are endeavoring to live a victorious Christian life now, and maintain a hope of eternal life to come.

The great need is for people to stop and THINK! Beware, reader, of the temptation to rush through life at such a pace that there is no time left to think. Satan fears to have us think life through. The greatest one act of any individual is to accept the Creator's lifetime program. One young man I knew, a rare exception to the masses of young people, when he was beginning his high school years dared to stop long enough to look around and then think upon what he saw. His father had become an habitual drinker. His brother was running with the "fast" crowd and was already bound with habits of evil and sin that were having an adverse effect on him physically, mentally and morally. Although temptation was heavy on him to travel the way the masses of young people were going, and living in a home where no one attended church or had anything to do with God or the Bible, he made up his mind at that tender age that he didn't want to, yea, he would not go the way his father or brother were going. Oh, how faithful the Spirit of God is to plant the right seed in the mind of individuals in their early years. He heeded that inner voice of the Spirit. There was a price to pay -- loneliness because of aloneness -- but not for long. God opened a door that soon put him in a group that was traveling the way he wanted to go, and today he is a wonderful clean cut Christian and a blessing in this world. His father eventually suffered a tragic death as a sinner and today his brother is a wreck physically and morally with no real peace of mind or soul in this present life nor hope in the world to come.

A man in his early forties was hospitalized with a very painful sore throat. When the doctor examined him he called the man's parents who were Christian people, and advised them to contact their pastor and go with him to the hospital and tell their son that he did not have just an ordinary sore throat. He had a serious, advanced case of throat cancer that could not be treated and he had about three months left to live. When the man received this news he broke down and wept and said to his parents, "Mom and Dad, I have always wanted to be a Christian but when I was a young man, I began socializing with the crowd I worked with clean, moral people by the standard of the world, but people who had no time for God, the Bible or church. I have just been drifting through life with no God, no hope, and no strength to break away from the hell bound crowd I am traveling with. It hardly seems possible that I am approaching middle life and now I am fast approaching the judgments of God unprepared!"

With the help of his parents and their pastor he prayed through and was gloriously saved. But true to the doctor's predictions, he died within three months.

This man was a rare exception and fortunately for him, he had praying people who had been praying for him and God was merciful enough to grant him time to prepare to meet Him at the judgment. But people by the multitudes are in the drift. They don't mean to lose their soul in hell but are drifting toward the brink of that place of eternal torment.

Thongs are fumbling the ball -- making animal decisions -- shutting God out. Youth is the best time for decision making. While there have been those in later years and even up into old age that have found peace with God and died in victory, they are the rare exceptions. Most people who get right with God do so in their youth or childhood.

Up in the state of Montana there is a small mountain stream that flows to the north. Imagine if you will, two drops of water falling into this stream and flowing side by side. They soon come to where this stream divides and becomes two separate rivers. Will they continue to flow together as they started out? They are destined to flow into one or the other of those streams. If one of those water drops happened to follow the stream to the right it would eventually end in the Atlantic Ocean. If the other drop follows the stream that flowed to the left it would eventually find itself in the Pacific Ocean. They started out in their journey together but ended a continent apart. And so it is with man. The only difference is that his destiny, either heaven or hell, depends on his own choice. Many are living frivolous lives of pleasure seeking -- not extremely wicked -- just aimless. All you can say of them is that there was a birth and a death and in between were years of aimless living with no preparation made for the endless life to come.

THE ONLY LIFE OF COMPLETE SATISFACTION

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes testified that he had experimented with every conceivable avenue open to men in this life and discovered that they all ended in ". . . vanity of vanities . . . all is vanity . . . and vexation of spirit."

Wealth does not satisfy the soul of man. Ask the men of wealth. However much of this world's wealth a man may possess, it always takes "just a little bit more." The wealthy man is never satisfied with wealth alone.

If a person had the means and time to travel to all the places in this world, that alone could never fill an empty void within the heart.

Neither can education, a music career, the sports world, sex, drugs, self-punishment, spiritualism and the like, satisfy. While some of these are commendable as far as this life is concerned and some are a wicked way of life, none really satisfies the deep longings of the heart. Only Christ can satisfy the heart of man. The Apostle Paul found this out. Read about his conversion as recorded in the ninth chapter of The Acts and also what he has to say in the first chapter of the book of Philippians. Complete satisfaction is found in Christ and in Him only!

There are FIVE reasons one should be a Christian.

IN THE FIRST PLACE THERE IS AN APPOINTMENT WE CANNOT AVOID

Without exception we must all appear before God. Life is made up of appointments dentists, doctors, lawyers. Some appointments you could cancel, but not the appointment with God. In II Corinthians 5:10 we read, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

In a day that is not far
At the blazing judgment bar,
Even now the awful summons I can hear;
I must meet the mighty God,
I must face His holy Word,
I must stand before the judgment bar.

God deals with men in all dispensations with judgment in view. Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." What Christ does with me depends on what I do with Him. If a person rejects the salvation offered by Christ and steps into a Christless eternity he will be among those spoken of in Revelation 6:15-17, "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (emphasis mine)

Yes, there's a great day coming. Are you ready for that day to come? It is the wicked that fear to meet God!

I dreamed that the great judgment morning
Had dawned, and the trumpet had blown;
I dreamed that the nations had gathered
To judgment before the white throne;
From the throne came a bright shining angel
And stood on the land and the sea,
And swore with his hand raised to heaven,
That time was no longer to be.

And Oh, what a weeping and wailing,
As the lost were told of their fate;
They cried for the rocks and the mountains,
They prayed, but their prayer was too late.

IN THE SECOND PLACE EVERY INDIVIDUAL MUST FACE HIMSELF

There is one person that you will never, never be able to get away from, either in time or eternity, and that is yourself. This is one reason why the Psalmist cried out, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:23, 24). It is only a Christian who will be able to face himself with peace of heart and without terrifying forebodings.

1. A Christian is not afraid to face his intellect, his reasoning powers. He is not afraid to stop and THINK. God invites us to reason with Him, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:18-20).

The thoughts of death and what is beyond death, although sobering to any normal individual, do not strike fear to the heart and mind of a Christian.

2. Every individual must face the question of intrinsic value. Real value lies not in money or what it can buy, neither does it lie in one's reputation nor even life itself. True value lies in our personal relationship with God.

Real value for mankind is found only within the will of God. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . the world passeth away, and the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15, 17). It is not what a man has that is of intrinsic value but what he is, and what he is in his character is all he can take into eternity with him. Without personal faith in God he will be cast out as refuse into an eternal place of torment where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3. Every individual must face his memory. It is only a Christian that can do so without torment or qualms of conscience. Every minute of one's life will go into eternity with him, never to be erased from his memory. The Christian can sing, "I remember the time, I can tell you the place, when the Lord came in and saved me by His grace." But to the unsaved the saying, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been,'" are words of torment.

To step out into a Christless eternity with the memory of those moments and opportunities when and where one could have been saved -- that will be hell in itself, and every recalling of them will only imprint them more indelibly on memory's wall. To go back in memory and sit one more time where you once sat and recall the messages of salvation, of warning and of invitation and hear those invitation songs sung, "Just As I Am," "Coming Home," "Tell Mother I'll Be There," "Almost Persuaded," will ring in the mind, but now without hope! Reader, stop now and consider, lest memory haunt you forever!

Memory is necessary in God's program, but it is a peril if we disregard God. Luke 16:25, "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Materials for future judgment are in the constitution of the human mind. Memory is wed with conscience, truth, and eternity. What could be worse than an eternity in hell with the memory of misspent time, misused

talents, omitted duties, committed sins, neglected privileges, rejected warnings? Such will be the torment of the unsaved in eternity. But on the other hand, memory is a triumph if one builds into his life holy memories -- the spirit of repentance, of following God's will, dying to carnal self, living by faith, winning spiritual battles. We should respect memory and seek help from God -- it is the gladness of the glad and the sadness of the sad.

4. Every individual must face his conscience. At the judgment bar of God your conscience will either be accusing you or excusing you. Your record will be there to face.

I must meet each broken vow,
That I hold so lightly now,
Every heartache I have caused, each sigh, each tear.
Things that time cannot erase,
I must meet them face to face
When I stand before the judgment bar.

Every secret evil tho't
There shall be to judgment bro't,
When the Lord in all His glory shall appear;
All the deeds of darkest night
Shall come out to greet the light
When I stand before the judgment bar.

We can smooth things over and "get by" here, but conscience will never let one rest where sin is covered up. Proverbs 28:13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Conscience can be so hardened in this life that the most heinous crimes may not disturb one's mind, but at the end of life conscience will come back with all its force.

5. Every individual must face his volitional powers. Revelation 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (emphasis mine)

The power to choose is one of the most powerful things God gave to man. With the power of choice comes awesome responsibility. Of the many capacities God gave us, to choose is the most potent of them all. This power involves a personal responsibility that no man can escape. We are living in a day when men endeavor in every way possible to shift the responsibility for their acts to unavoidable circumstances or some other person or Satan and his power, but that is an impossibility. The responsibility of one's own acts stops at his own heart's door.

6. Every individual must face his own moral nature. Sin robs one of virtue, integrity, honesty, purity and eternal life. But these can be restored through the miraculous new-birth experience and cleansing of the heart from the very nature of sin. I Thessalonians 5:23-24, And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be

preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

7. Every individual must face his capacity for love. Love is twofold in its nature -- it is the nature of love to give all, but it also demands all. Sin-damaged love still demands all but will withhold from giving in like manner as it has received. It refuses to accept responsibility, and when it does it becomes perverted and begins to justify itself by saying, "I think," "I feel," "I guess," "Here's the way I look at it." But the Bible says, "Thou shalt not"-- commit adultery, lie, steal. The great danger of corrupted love lies within the carnal heart. A Christian, however, with a holy heart can love as God loves and as God wants him to.

IN THE THIRD PLACE EVERY INDIVIDUAL MUST FACE THE WORLD HE LIVES IN

This world is not a friend of grace and there is and always has been a reproach to face if one is to be a follower of the meek and lowly Lamb of God. Neither riches, nor honors, nor pleasures, were promised the followers of Jesus, but toil and poverty, tribulation and ignominy, persecution and death. Jesus said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). In 2 Timothy 3:12 we read, ". . . all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." However, we are encouraged to know that God's grace will be sufficient whatever we may be called upon to face while we go through life on this earth. God imparts courage and strength through the indwelling Holy Spirit, not only to give boldness to face death and the hereafter but strength and boldness to face a world that is an enemy of God and a despiser of God's saints. We are reminded of this in James 4:6, ". . . Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And again we read in I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it."

IN THE FOURTH PLACE, SOME DAY WE WILL HAVE TO FACE DEATH

A Christian can face death triumphantly. The righteous die well. Many are like Balaam who said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Yet he died tragically because he failed to be numbered among the righteous when it came his time to die.

There is only one way any one will make it to the City of God and that is through the merits of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The following account has been told. During the famous battle known as the Belgian Bulge during World War II a platoon of American soldiers had been cut off, but they had made it back to allied territory -- all but one man. By hiding during daylight hours and traveling cautiously during dark hours he was finally able to reach his platoon. As he approached one of the outer guards, he recognized one of his close buddies, and called to him. One of the German tactics was for their men to infiltrate the ranks of the allied forces, so to protect against this, those coming into the ranks must know the password or be killed on the spot. Every day a new password was given. The guard called to his friend, "The password, sir." He said to the guard, "But I don't know the password. It has taken me several days to get back. You know me, please let me come on in." "But I can't unless

you give me the password for if I do I will be killed." The guard was a Christian and his buddy was not and he begged the guard, "Let me pray, I'm not ready to die." In desperation he begged God to have mercy on him and soon found the peace of pardon. Rising from his knees he said to his buddy, "The blood! It has covered my sins, I can now face death, go ahead and shoot." "Man, said the guard, "blood," that is the password." The blood of Christ is the password to get through the gates that lead to the city of God.

IN THE FIFTH PLACE, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WE WILL ALL HAVE TO FACE AN ENDLESS ETERNITY

Who can contemplate eternity? The very thought of it is mind-boggling. It is a fearful thing for the unrepentant even to think upon. Someone has said that it is the single biggest word in human language. It is perhaps the most sobering word to think upon. As I have traveled across this great American country, often I have come upon a billboard or sign with the question in large letters, "WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?" But you can't spend eternity. You can spend money until it is all gone and even time will all be spent and then eternity -- timeless, limitless, boundless, endless duration.

It would be good to frequently consider how much of our life do we live with eternal values in view. We read in 2 Cor. 4:17, 18, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

A famous Scotch preacher, Duncan Mathison prayed, "O, God, stamp eternity upon my soul." We all, without exception, should make this our prayer. It would draw us away from the sin of pampering the flesh, living only for the things of time and help us to keep eternity's values in view. Jesus, the Eternal One, whose habitation was and is eternity, stepped out of eternity into the capsule of time to prepare us to step out of time into eternity with Him to enjoy all the glories of His boundless grace throughout eternity. The saying is true and should be our motto in this life: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

It is not so long since the creation of man -- approximately six thousand years, only around 2,190,000 days, 52,560,000 hours, 3,153,600,000 minutes since Adam lived. Not long! Time had a beginning but will have an end. The angel set one foot on the land and one on the sea and swore ". . . that there should be time no longer" (Rev. 10:6-7).

HOW LONG IS ETERNITY? Unanswerable. We speak of great numbers, "How much is a million -- dollars -- years? A million is a thousand thousands. A billion is a thousand millions. A trillion is a thousand billions. To count to a trillion would take 31,688 years if you would count at the speed of one given number every second. A quadrillion is a thousand trillions. A quintillion is a thousand quadrillions. Staggering! Incomprehensible! Certainly, but so is eternity. After this bewildering duration of a quintillion years as we measure time, has flown by, eternity would only have begun.

You perhaps have heard the allegory of the little bird that would fly from a distant star to this earth and would take a thousand years to make the journey. There he would light on the shores of one of our seas, or lakes, or oceans or rivers and pick up in his bill one single grain of sand and make the journey back to the distant star from whence he came, taking another thousand years, and there deposit it. Then after another thousand years had passed, he would repeat the same thousand year journey to earth and again pick up another single grain of sand and take it back to the distant star. He would keep this up and by the time he had stripped the beaches of all the lakes and rivers, and seas and oceans, of every grain of sand, it would not even be mid-morning in eternity. Yet, in the face of all this, men go on in their sins during the short span of life with no hope of spending this "dreadful" eternity with God and all the holy angels and saints, but in a hell where demons hiss and men wail and weep over their lost estate! Hell is a place of torment (Luke 16:27), a place of unquenchable fire (Mark 9:47-48), a place of unrest (Rev. 14:10-11), a place where people are cast alive (Rev. 19:20), a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth -- where they gnaw their tongues for pain and blaspheme the God of Heaven because of their pain and their sores (Matt. 22:11-12), a place where they curse God (Rev. 16:11), a place of everlasting punishment (Matt.25:46).

WHAT THEN?

When the great plants of our cities
Have turned out their last finished work,
When our merchants have sold their last yard of silk
And dismissed the last tired clerk;
When banks have raked in their last dollar
And paid the last dividend;
When the Judge of the earth says:
"Closed for the night,"
And asks for a balance --
WHAT THEN?

When the choir has sung its last anthem
And the preacher has made his last prayer;
When the people have heard their last sermon
And the sound has died out on the air;
When the Bible lies closed on the altar
And the pews are all empty of men
And each one stands facing his record --
And the great Book is opened --
WHAT THEN?

When the actors have played their last drama,
And the mimic has made his last fun,
When the film has flashed its last picture,
And the billboard displayed its last run;
When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,
And gone out in the darkness again --
When the trump of all ages is sounded,

And we stand up before Him --
WHAT THEN?

When the bugle's call sinks into silence
And the long marching columns stand still
When the captain repeats his last orders
And they've captured the last fort and hill,
And the flag has been hauled from the mast head,
And the wounded afield checked in,
And the world that rejected its Saviour,
Is asked for a reason --
WHAT THEN?

We are now creatures of time but will soon be creatures of eternity. All must spend this awesome eternity somewhere. God's inspired Word declares that this will be in one of two places, and they are both places. One is the good world above and the other is the lost world below. One is Heaven, the other is Hell. There is just one supreme question in life; that is, "Where shall I spend this fearful eternity?"

When the old-fashioned ships would pass each other on the high seas the trumpeter would call out, "Whither bound?" We call to you, O fellow-traveler to eternity, "Whither bound?" In the little country cemetery there was an epitaph which read, "Reader, stop and think. I am in eternity and YOU ARE ON THE BRINK."

I lingered and silently listened,
To the dull heavy tread of the years;
And thought of the fate of the guilty,
When Christ in His glory appears.
A shudder came over my spirit,
As I thought what a moment might cost;
For eternity's stillness was broken,
By the groans and sighs of the Lost."
-- W. M. Tidwell --

When death changes your time on this earth for eternity will the Holy Spirit claim you? (Rom. 8:11). The nature of your eternity will be decided by you when you face the Cross. It is not the heinousness of your sins that will condemn to hell, nor the beauty or strictness of your morality that will bring you to heaven. Eternity will be decided by your relation to a crucified Jesus. Do you know this Jesus as your own personal Saviour?

The last step in man's ascent in the ladder of life, if he takes the intervening steps will land him on heaven's shore. Only God was there eternally and by personal right. Now through mercy and blood the way is open for man. Why shouldn't we ascend the ladder that leads to eternal life? God has provided the way and furnishes the grace!

Are you washed in the blood,

In the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?
Are your garments spotless?
Are they white as snow?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

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THE END

