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**FROM PRISONER TO PREACHER**  
**By H. Lawrence Runkle**

Radnor, Ohio

Third Edition Revised

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To my good wife who has stood by me and brought my children into this world, this book  
is lovingly dedicated at Radnor, Ohio, January 6th, 1954.

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Out on the broad road of sin and despair,  
Crushed neath a load of sorrow and care,  
My constant companions, were trouble and doubt,  
'Till Jesus came in and lifted me out.

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## PREFACE

For some time I have felt a deep desire to put a portion of the true experiences of my life into print and after much prayer and meditation I feel definitely led of God at this time, to give in book form a testimony of God's mercy and grace. I am not proud of many things which I shall be forced to mention, however I am relating them to glorify God, to exalt the name of Jesus, to encourage the hearts of the Saints of God, and to bring to the sinner, who seldom, if ever enters the church door; the story of God's love, and to Him goes all the praise and honor for all that may be accomplished. May God add His blessing to the effort put forth and may you as you read these true undramatized facts recognize your own condition and give your life unreservedly into the hands of Him who is able to save to the uttermost. I am dedicating this book first of all to God, and then to my good companion who so faithfully has helped me and held me up before the throne of grace in prayer; may God help and bless her, and I pray that through the reading of this brief story many precious souls may find hope and be lifted from the depths of Sin to a life of Righteousness, through Christ Jesus, who is our only hope.

H. L. Runkle

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## 01 -- MY FIRST DAY

As I look back over the pages of time my memory carries me to a familiar scene of a humble home, a five-room frame dwelling on a small farm located near a village in the central part of Ohio. Its occupants were a wiry man of medium build, a medium sized woman with jet black hair and eyes (both in their middle thirties) and four children -- one girl sixteen, a boy thirteen, one seven and one four years of age; a little girl had passed on a year or so before. In my imagination I can see them as they went about their various duties, perhaps the small children playing and the

older ones doing the chores, while the father and mother planned and managed the more vital problems, yet all enjoying the pleasures of a quiet country life.

It was on a sultry August day in the year -- that suddenly there came a husky yell, the cry of a babe announcing the arrival of a new life into this world, again the valley of death had been entered to bring into existence the writer of this story. It was in that humble home that I first saw the light of day, and there perhaps that mother and father began to plan for the future of the latest member of their family according to their own desires, but how oft the desires of parents fail, for no one knows what the future holds for them in this life. My mother was born in what is now West Virginia and came to Ohio with her parents and relatives as a refugee during the Civil war at the age of about four years. In young womanhood she met my father, who was a native of Southern Ohio, and after a courtship of about one year they were married and took up their residence in the coal mining district in Southern Ohio where they lived until three children were born, at which time they decided to come to this community, or as it is sometimes said, came up north; upon their arrival my father secured employment and for the next three or four years worked at various kinds of employment but eventually decided on farming and started to farm on the share on the place where I was born. I have been privileged to view the place many times, but some few years ago the old house was remodeled, yet it is a place very dear to me. My life up until five years of age is of course as related to me by my relatives. My parents were poor but honest hard working people, Godly, kind and generous and always ready to lend a helping hand to those in distress.

All back through the family history there is no record of dishonesty or anything of a criminal nature in any of my relatives' lives on either side as far as I can find, except that both mother and father and their relatives were very quick tempered and were not easily quieted. I bring this to your attention to prove to you that all criminal nature is not inherited, but is brought about by the enemy of man's soul, by way of poor environment, and bad associates which are the enemy's most powerful weapons in destroying the lives of young men and young women and older ones as well. In a little less than three months after my entrance into this world, my father and one of my brothers were stricken down with the serious disease of typhoid fever. Of course all that human hands could do was done but without success. Days passed, and at last with my precious mother standing by his bedside, the cold hand of death took hold of father and he passed on into eternity to give account for the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil, as each of us must do. I am told that he departed from this old world of sin and sorrow, shouting the Victory and praising God, Glory be to the matchless name of Jesus, Praise His holy name for ever and ever. I am truly thankful for a Christ that paved the way that man can have an experience with God that will make him shout His praises even in the face of death. Hallelujah! I Cor. 15:56 says the sting of death is sin. When sin is removed the greatest sting is gone.

My brother recovered from his illness in a short time, and so mother was left at thirty-five years of age a widow with many unpaid obligations and five children to care for, so she was forced to sell what grains, equipment, stock, etc. she had to meet the obligations and needs of the family, keeping only one horse and what furniture she had. From this time until I was five years old my life was no doubt about the same as that of any other poor boy without a father, but for dear old mother life took on an altogether different outlook. During those five years it seems because of the great responsibilities providing food, shelter and clothing, as well as medical care and supplies that her time was so taken that she slipped away from her worship. By the time I was three years

old, both my sister and oldest brother were married and had left home, leaving the full support of us three remaining children completely upon my dear old mother -- one ten, one seven and myself three years old. She (mother) was compelled to cut and husk corn, cut wood with an ax and cross cut saw, do washings and ironings by hand with the old fashioned wash board and sad irons, clean house, drag logs from the woods with the horse and log chain then cut it into stove wood lengths, and do various other kinds of work for the neighboring farmers for very small wages in order to secure the bare necessities of life for the family. Work that was very hard for a strong man was my mother's lot to eke out, not a living, but just a meager existence for us. This hard work and exposure soon began to leave its mark on her, and in a very short period of time, at about the age of forty years her health began to fail.

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## 02 -- CHILDHOOD DAYS

In a few short years I began to be aware of my existence in this world, in other words this was the first that I can really remember of my early life. I was five years old and I can remember the house at the intersection of two roads where we lived. It was an old log house with a clapboard roof, the upstairs or attic being unfinished just the rafters and the roof overhead and rough boards for a floor. Across the road a small brook rippled along, where I used to play and in childish glee throw pebbles into the crystal clear water. It was while living in this humble abode that I was privileged to start my limited education by attending school in an old one-room structure, where all classes had the same teacher. The school was about a half mile from our house and it was necessary to cross a railroad track to reach it. In my mind's eye I can look back and see my dear old mother as she would stand in front of our house and watch to see if I made it safely across. A few years ago I occasionally passed that way as I went to visit some friends who lived in that vicinity and as I looked at the old deserted school, now just a refuge for the ground-hogs, it brought back tender memories of childhood days. I shall never forget the first whipping I ever received after I was old enough to remember. It was during my first term in school, that one of the boys in our neighborhood who was about fourteen or fifteen years old influenced me to skip school one afternoon and mother caught me -- enough to say I never skipped school again. Only a few months ago after having preached in the vicinity of my old home, a man with graying hair came to me and made himself known, it was the same individual who had caused me to skip school and the first time I had been privileged to see him since childhood, we shook hands and thanked God for the privilege of meeting once more this side of eternity.

In the years that followed mother's health gradually grew worse and it was compulsory for me to stay out of school several weeks each term to take care of her during her sickness and to help with the needs of my brothers as they had been compelled by circumstances to quit school and assume the responsibilities of caring for the home financially. As a consequence I never had the opportunity of completing a full term of school or passing a single grade and being promoted to the next higher one, to the best of my remembrance, however in those days in the country schools they were not as strict as they are in recent years, and accurate records were not kept, so as we moved about every school term, I would jump a grade and report in the next higher grade at a new school, and in that manner I finally managed to reach the fifth grade at the age of twelve years.

I started fighting at the age of seven years. I well remember how the older boys at school would make fun of me and whip me, and home I would go crying; finally my brother (the one I shall mention quite frequently who was fourteen (14) years old and head of the house) told me that if I came home crying again and did not take my own part when the boys attempted to whip me he would give me another one. That was all that was necessary and the next day when one of the boys -- twelve years old attempted to whip me I gave him the surprise of his life; before he realized what was happening I had him on the ground and gave him a thorough working over. Only a few years ago I saw this man and we were talking of old times and he said he had never forgotten it.

This was not the last of my fighting, but only the beginning. SIN grows tremendously fast, evil traits take root faster than good ones do, weeds grow faster than the vegetables, so with sin, and before you can fully realize it you will become a slave to the habits of the world.

As I have previously stated at the age of twelve years I quit school and went to work for the farmers near our home doing practically a man's work. Plowing with a fourteen inch hand breaking plow was no child's play but that was part of my work for fifty cents a day and that ten to twelve hours. I remember on one occasion I had been working for some time and saved a small amount above my board, and had gone with my brother to the city about eight miles away and purchased my first long trousers. On our arrival home I disobeyed my brother in some small way, and he having had a few drinks had some sort of dispute with a man in town and immediately proceeded to take his spite out on me by whipping me with a rawhide buggy whip until the blood ran down my forearm and dropped from my finger tips. I relate this not because I am holding any ill feeling towards him for I have forgiven him long ago, but merely to state the conditions of my home life.

During this early part of my life much of it was spent in log houses with the upstairs or lofts unfinished. There we boys would sleep under an old clapboard roof where many times the snow would blow in until there would be snow lying on the bed covers and on the old rough board floor. Our houses were never modern, wood being used for fuel, coal being almost unheard of at our house until my brothers were old enough to secure employment in the factories. Old-fashioned oil lamps were our only means of lighting the house so by the old flickering lamp we did what reading we could. During my early life I seldom had the opportunity of attending church or Sunday school because of the distance to a house of worship and because my family rarely ever attended.

Let me say here that boys and girls of today should appreciate the opportunities they have of being able and permitted to go to the house of God and the older ones as well. If I could have had this opportunity perhaps this story would never have been written.

With all due respect to my precious old mother who is gone on, and to my immediate family I must confess to the best of my remembrance I never heard a prayer in my home during all my childhood days. May God help mothers and fathers to realize the need of prayer in the home. I started the use of cigarettes at the early age of thirteen and also of drinking when I could manage to get it. I well remember that one evening I slipped away from home and went to the city of Marion (a distance of fourteen miles) in a hired horse and buggy from the livery barn, with a man who is now serving a life sentence in the Ohio state penitentiary for murder and robbery. On our way we picked up another young man in a village we passed through and continued on our way. At last we

came to the city. At this time the sale of intoxicants was governed by local option and the city of Marion had been voted dry, but through the usual methods we were able to secure both whiskey and beer, and proceeded to drink it. About midnight we started back to the village driving the horse at a breakneck speed part of the way. Finally we reached our destination and after bidding my companion for the evening good night, I left him at the village and staggered up the road toward home. Imagine a thirteen year old boy going home at three o'clock in the morning, drunk and with clothes all covered with mud where I had fallen down. I at last reached home, slipped in, and went to bed thinking no one had seen me, but the next morning I received my reward at the end of a raw-hide whip again. At somewhere near this time my brother who was the head of the house taught me to play pool, and only a few weeks later when a certain fellow saw me and told my brother that I was playing a game with some of the boys I was reminded not to do it again with the end of a hitching strap. These are just a few of the many times that I was severely whipped in a similar manner.

It was a very short time later when I was perhaps fourteen that I began to steal. I shall never forget the first thing I ever stole. I, as all boys, had an especially keen appetite for certain things, and mine was for melon. I had gone to a neighbor's house and helped with the chores for several days without any pay. At last I mustered up enough courage to ask for a muskmelon or cantaloupe as they are called now, and was flatly refused. I had been chumming around with a boy a few years older than myself who was the grandson of an aged Civil War veteran. When I related this incident to the aged veteran, he at once suggested that his grandson and I steal all his (the neighbor's) melons. We located some grain sacks and went that night to the melon patch which was in a large garden close to the house. Stealthily we entered and proceeded to fill our sacks as full as we could carry them with the choicest ones, and returned to the boy's home. The next day we came near getting in trouble over it, as the neighbor accused us of taking them and threatened to have us arrested, however we denied having any part in it, and offered to bring the aged veteran as a witness that we had been there all evening for he had promised to protect us.

No doubt this incident was soon forgotten by all except me, but that scene shall linger in my mind as long as I live. A few uneventful weeks and then one evening I became involved in a fight with a young man several years my senior and broke his nose for which I was barred from the village under threat of arrest and also the young man was carrying a dangerous weapon and had threatened me. A short time after this we moved to the city of Marion where my brothers were employed.

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### 03 -- YOUNG MANHOOD

After moving to the city I worked at various kinds of work and helped at home by paying my board and the rest I used to buy clothing, etc., yet I was not allowed to go to town neither day nor night without someone being with me. This was orders from my oldest brother at home. However I began to slip away and to go to town for which I would receive a brutal beating. I have been knocked down with a stick of wood, kicked, and on one occasion my brother threw an old bone-handled fork across the table and as I jumped to escape it, it stuck in my back and I was forced to pull it out, this because of a minor infraction of what he called rules. These abuses were

only tending to harden me, and I was coming to the place where I did not intend to continue taking so much of his unnecessary abuse.

The neighborhood in which we lived was not the best, and much crookedness was going on in that vicinity so one evening as a boyfriend and I were on our way home from town he suggested that I take his twenty-two pistol along to protect me on my way home as I had several blocks to go through dimly lit streets and at one time had been stoned along this same street, so I consented. However nothing happened on my way and nothing was said on my arrival as my brother had gone to visit his girlfriend who later became his wife.

The next evening it had been raining and I went to my room, dressed and placed the pistol in my pocket with the intention of returning it to its owner. When I came down stairs my brother looked up as he was starting to put on his shoes preparatory to going out, and inquired where I was going, to which I simply replied that I was going to my boy friend's house calling him by name. I was quickly informed that I was not, and when I again stated that I positively was, he (my brother) started after me and ran me out of doors and through the rear yard, cursing and threatening me; in his angry rage he had not taken time to finish putting on his shoes, but came charging at me through the mud with nothing but his stockings on his feet, like an infuriated beast. In a flash my thoughts were directed to the pistol which I had forgotten about in my haste. The next instant I halted and with lightning-like speed whipped the gun from my pocket, whirled and threw the gun to my hip in a shooting position, with finger tightening on the trigger a brief second; I shall never forget it and my brother seemed to literally freeze in his tracks.

I was facing the man who had beat and abused me, I was no longer the boy who ran with fright; in a brief moment's time I had been changed to a young man -- cool, grim, collected, unafraid and determined. As he stood realizing his position and with a look of complete surprise on his face, I began in a voice without emotion, as one who is not afraid, to tell him I had taken my last abuse from him. He said nothing as I spoke, perhaps he was too much taken back by the turn of events, but apparently he saw something that caused him to believe me for that was the last time he ever attempted to whip me.

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#### 04 -- LEAVING HOME

A few weeks after the concluding incident of Chapter three, my brother left home to get married. My other brother next older than I had previously enlisted in the United States regular army because he too received some abuse. He and I were good pals when he was home and now that he was gone I seemed to have no one to take my troubles to. Mother seemed to be afraid, because of my brother being the main support of the home, so she said very little to him lest he would leave, but at last he left as I have already told you in the first of this chapter. I had just turned the fifteenth (15th) milestone of my life in August and this was the following March.

My mother had been keeping company with a man for some time and about two or three weeks after my brother left home, mother got married. The next day after her marriage my step-father came to me saying that he and mother were getting old and would like to be alone, so he

gave me an invitation to leave at once. I said nothing of this to mother but went immediately to my room and dressed in what was called my best clothes, which consisted of a shirt, tie, cap, high button shoes and a salt and pepper suit which was about two years too young for me, the trousers coming about two inches above my high button shoes, the coat being short and the sleeves reaching only to about two inches above my wrists. The balance of my earthly belongings I put in an old fashioned canvas telescope such as was used in those days by what was known as pack-peddlers; this along with a one dollar (\$1.00) bill was my entire possessions. As I look back it is sometimes amusing as I picture in my mind what I must have looked like, then again it is a picture of sadness as I think of it from a serious standpoint, for, imagine if you can a tall slender country boy fifteen (15) years old who had never been away from home alone more than three or four nights in his life, saying good-bye, leaving mother's door -- not for school, not for a vacation but going out into this cruel world of sin and sorrow, alone, with no one to guide or instruct, with very little education, no experience in the world, and scarcely any knowledge of God.

My heart aches for the boy or girl that fits this picture, and it doesn't take long for the whirlpool of sin to draw them in and then down into the cesspool of filth that will steal their self-respect, take their happiness, ruin their character, break their health and destroy their good name, (Prov. 22:1 says "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," and I am sure no one can fully realize this until it is too late.) and last but not least will eventually land their soul in a devil's Hell. May God look down with mercy upon children like this for there are many of them on the downward path today with no one to instruct or encourage them to speak about their soul. Remember every drunkard, every thief, every gambler, every harlot and every murderer was at one time the idol of some mother's heart, pure and free from the corruption of this world. Father, Mother, may God help you to understand your children that you may encourage them instead of discouraging them and driving them away from your door.

If you want your children to be honest, be honest yourself; if you want your children to stay sober, stay sober yourself; invariably children want to be like mother or dad, so if you expect your children to live upright it's up to you to set the example. God's word says bring up a child in the way it should go. Father, Mother, be a real pal to that son, that daughter, explain the things they should and have a right to know, love them and give them some attention. If they do not receive the love and attention their young hearts desire at home, they will go out into the world sooner or later seeking it and will eventually find that they have been tricked by the enemy and are broken in health, have lost confidence in mankind, are troubled in mind, perhaps diseased in body, or possibly come home with a fatherless child, because you have been too timid, too bashful or too careless about instructing them in a kind and loving manner. You may say that speaking to them on such vital subjects may cause such things to come into their minds where otherwise it would not; children of today learn one way or another, and learning by experience is an expensive way.

You may say again, "I will give my child a good whipping if I catch him doing such and such;" let me remind you that there is no such thing as a good whipping. While sometimes it is necessary yet it is not good. God's word says "Spare the rod and spoil the child;" again I say sometimes the rod is necessary but you can never win a young man or young woman with excessive whipping. Some of you stern people who were always a Model Child yourself (to hear you tell it) may not agree with me but I am speaking from a personal experience and I say one word of kindness spoken at the right time will do more good than all the strapping and abuse that



can be given. I received most of my correction at the small end of a raw-hide buggy whip as I told you before but it did not produce the desired result but only helped to harden me and it took many years for me to find forgiveness in my heart and then only through Christ saving me were the last traces of hatred removed.

As the years rolled along by the time I left home at fifteen years I was well schooled in the art of rough and tumble fighting and was well able to take care of myself against full grown men and in fact I was always ready to try almost any one for any reason. Most of my associates were much older than myself and many times they would cause me to have a fight with someone just to have some what they called fun. It only took a short while for me to learn what they were doing but it was expensive experience. Young man, young woman, always remember there are no free scholarships in the school of experience. Every thing you learn will cost you in some way -- either by physical effort, financially, morally, or spiritually, but of these the spiritual cost is greatest for it pertains to eternity while the others effect only this life.

The experimenting with sin is the most expensive, sin is no respecter of persons and if you participate in the sinful lusts of the world I repeat you will pay with health, money, character and the loss of your soul eternally. Are the pleasures of this world worth it? Gal. 6:7 says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man (or woman) soweth, that shall he also reap." The social ladder that you have climbed, the financial rating that you have gained, the political position you have acquired; in other words your greatness as man calls great will have no power at the Judgment bar of God. Again I warn young men and women and older ones also, you can sell your character very cheap or even give it away, but let me remind you that all the gold, silver and wealth of this world combined can never purchase it again.

Character is one of the greatest of earth's treasures. Let me quote again from Proverbs 22:1 "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"; the best way to retain a good name is by obeying God from your youth up. Praise His precious name, He is not only able to protect your name and character but He will do it if you will let Him.

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## 05 -- THE FANGS OF SIN

After leaving home I worked in my home town at various jobs for a few weeks, then I decided to go to Toledo, Ohio, where I secured employment in the largest and most up-to-date Department store. I being a green country boy, naturally the city boys and girls took advantage of my ignorance. However I managed to get along until I had been promoted and transferred to another department, and in a very short time I had a fight with one of the clerks and was demoted back to my old job, at which time I quit and prepared to return to my home town. While waiting for a train home someone stole my luggage with every thing I had except what I was wearing.

During this time the habits of the world began to fasten their grip upon me: first drinking, then gambling along with wild parties and all the other things that accompany such a life until there was no room left for anything good.

It was about this time that wanderlust took hold upon me and I began to drift from place to place, making my living by hustling (gambling) at pool and small time rackets. At this time I had become what was known as a "shark" or slicker, in other words a very good pool player, sometimes playing from early morning until closing time at midnight without taking time to eat or drink other than a sandwich or a cold drink. Sometimes winning and occasionally losing, I would stay in a town a few days and then drift on to new territory, where I was not known, always on the lookout for easy money.

The first racket I ever worked was going into the five and ten (5 & 10) cent stores and buying flashy rings and selling them on the streets as sapphires, with a hard luck story, sometimes getting as much as a dollar or dollar and a half for a ten cent ring, from individuals who were not familiar with jewelry and who were in sympathy with me because of my youth and the pitiful story I had given them.

On one of my trips to northern Ohio I decided to go to work for a short time and upon my arrival in a certain city I secured employment in a saloon. The young man that I was traveling with was a young boxer out of Cleveland, he and I had met in Toledo, Ohio and became friendly so we decided to travel together. I became enraged at him because he had stolen some jewelry from me, and proceeded to "beat him up" as it is termed, for which I was arrested for the first time and sentenced to sixty (60) days in the county jail without parole and fined twenty-five dollars and the costs. I was at this time just sixteen (16) years old, and it seemed quite a severe penalty for a first offender. However the business men of that city knowing the character of this young man, and that he had been in trouble there before for theft came to my rescue, paid my fine and were successful in securing my release after serving only about a week of my sentence. I at once left this city and traveled for several weeks before returning to this same city. I had visited my mother just before I came back and she asked me to tell her where I was going in case of emergency, and I had given her the address there. On my arrival there I met a saloon keeper that I knew and went to his place of business preparatory to going to work for him. Upon our arrival at his place I was informed that I was wanted at home, as my brother a soldier in service at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana was dead. There was a train leaving for home in about fifteen minutes so I rushed to the station and secured a ticket and returned to my home with a saddened heart because of my best friend and brother being gone.

The following year at the age of seventeen (17) I had been working in my home town for a few weeks as a boiler-makers helper but had quit, so I went to visit my mother for a few hours and as evening came I decided to go to Galion to the skating rink, and I promised mother I would be back in the morning and see her before going away. Catching a train I arrived in Galion and met two other boys and we immediately decided to go to New Orleans, La. This was my first long trip away from home; about a month after we started on this trip I found myself in the small town of Carriere, Mississippi a short distance above New Orleans, with a bone felon on my hand, practically broke and with no one to help me; one of our buddies had left us but the other one and I caught a freight train and went to New Orleans to the hospital where I was treated and sent on my way.

I at last decided to write to my mother and let her know where I was. As I look back now I can picture in my mind that precious old mother walking the floor, anxiously wondering where I,

her wayward son, could be, wondering if I were alive, if I were well, if I were in trouble. Oh! what torture that must have been; little did I realize the sorrow I was causing my loved ones. I was of the opinion that I was hurting no one but myself, but I have long since found that when we hurt ourselves we hurt others also. But that was just the first time, for years and years that same thing happened time after time, traveling over the United States and Canada, traveling thousands upon thousands of miles, in almost every conceivable way. I have ridden log wagons, bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles, freight and passenger trains and many times have been forced to walk in my travels over this land, in search of something to satisfy but not finding it, because I was searching in the wrong places. Living by gambling or some cheap confidence racket, making money to purchase the paltry pleasures of the world, feeding on the husks of life, and associating with men and women that make their living any way they could without laboring with their hands.

All the time I was watching, listening, and learning different methods and tactics used in the various rackets. I went to the various cities, and visited such notorious neighborhoods and resorts as the section of New York City known as the Bowery, Hinky Dinks in Chicago where some of the most notorious and treacherous men in the world hung out in those days, and many other places including St. Louis, Kansas City, Detroit, Buffalo, Memphis, Tenn., and many others. It was on my return trip from New Orleans that I stopped in Memphis, Tenn.

It was there that I first came in contact with narcotic addicts; men and women there would do almost anything for a shot of M. (Morphine) or a blow of C. or H. (Cocaine or Heroin). I have seen some terrible sights in that city -- beautiful and talented young women who had become addicted to the drink habit, when it failed to satisfy, turned to narcotics and became addicted to them in some form. I have seen these same young women sell their bodies for fifteen cents, the price of a small box of cocaine, and it did not much matter who or what race the purchaser was. Some might say that those girls were of the lower class, but many of them came from highly respected homes, but sin had come in and taken all that was good and grand out of their lives. It would be impossible for me to describe some of the things I have experienced in my travels so that you could fully realize what is going on in this world. It was on this trip that one evening in one of the villages where I happened to be that I came close to an old-fashioned southern revival meeting and paused to listen a moment. They were singing an old song and something in it seemed to attract my attention; in my mind I can hear it yet ringing out in true southern fashion, as only the southerner can sing; as I listened I heard these words,

Bye and Bye when dat mornin comes  
When all de saints of God does gather home,  
We'll tell de story of how we overcome  
And we'll understan it better bye and bye.

I decided to go home so I left Memphis and went up into Kentucky where I was arrested again and sentenced to the country road gang for a short period of time. I served my time, was released and made my way home. By the time I was eighteen (18) I had traveled over some twenty (20) or twenty-one (21) states during my travels over the country. I tried show and carnival life and became what is known among show folks as a trouper, knowing the "office" or password and speaking the show latin, a peculiar language known only to show folk and never revealed to

anyone else. This language is accepted ordinarily as an evidence of the speaker being a genuine Trouper.

I have never revealed their secrets and have the confidence of some of them because of it. May I say here that not all carnival and show folks are bad, and if our church professors would unite themselves together and do as much for each other as they do, we would have more prosperous revivals with many souls praying through to definite Victory. An old pal of mine and I met on the street one day and decided to go to Massachusetts: so after brief preparations we set our faces toward the east. He being a pianist and singer and I being filled with the devil's poetry, we began to entertain in saloons and wine rooms, in various cities along the way; our remuneration was far above what we could make working but drink, gambling and wild parties took it as fast as it came.

When we arrived in New York state we were arrested for breaking the state law and were sentenced to the stone pile for a short term. When sentence was pronounced I was given double the time of my buddy because I was accused by the arresting officer of being sarcastic. After being there a short time, one day my pal and I found the food for our lunch tainted and unfit to eat so we decided to go on strike, just us two and for punishment were handcuffed and hung up by the wrists just so our toes would touch; we were hanging in this position for about three hours but finally were forced to promise to work to avoid further punishment which would have been given us when we were taken to our cells after work. It would be impossible to tell you of the agony we suffered in those few hours, and how pain-wracked our bodies. As the guard in charge (a professed Christian) released our shackles our bodies sagged, and our arms almost paralyzed, dropped to our sides.

As I think of this incident it brings to my mind the sufferings of the blessed Saviour as He hung on the cross; I had no nails in my hands, no spikes in my feet, no spear in my side, yet I suffered untold agony. How much more did the Lamb of God suffer for you and me? While serving in this institution I was using an assumed name and after my friend was released an extra guard was put on in the work shop to prevent any attempt that I might make to escape because I had caused them considerable trouble in the short time I had been there -- once by striking an inmate (a very large man) with a four-pound stone hammer. Since that time I have been privileged to meet a lady who at one time was a prison-worker in this same institution. She was surprised to learn of my treatment in that place but prison workers do not see the things that actually happen under cover, back of barred doors and gray walls, only those who have actually experienced them can know.

After my release I again returned to Ohio for a few days and was given a fine for assault and battery, after which I again set my face in the direction of Massachusetts. I had not gone many miles until I was picked up and given a suspended fine for a misdemeanor. At last I reached Massachusetts without any serious trouble. There I met my old pal and we went to Springfield where we were arrested on suspicion but were later released, then I took to the road again alone and was picked up again on suspicion but released after a reasonable alibi, on again through New York state, then Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky and then Old Virginia where I was again sentenced with another young fellow to the state road gang for a short period of time. After my release I again returned to Ohio and after visiting my relatives a few days I again looked in the direction of

Massachusetts, back through the state of Pennsylvania and into New York state where I was arrested and sentenced to the rock pile again for a misdemeanor to serve a short sentence; this rock pile was in another city.

The time eventually passed and I was released to go again to the road. I finally arrived at the home of my friend's mother only to find he (my friend) was not there, so I decided to seek employment for awhile and wait for his return which I thought would be soon. Fortunately I secured employment in a waxed-paper mill in the village of Cushman near the town of Amherst, Massachusetts.

While I was employed there I often visited my friend's parents and on one occasion I was introduced to a young lady from a nearby town by the mother of my friend who encouraged us and in fact persuaded us to become engaged on our first meeting -- as a consequence inside of two weeks we were married, I at that time being just a few weeks past my nineteenth (19th) birthday. My employer would not give me permission to lay off from my employment on the day of my wedding so I quit my job and on the following day after the ceremony we went to her home town (Altho, Mass.) where I secured employment in a shoe factory and we made our home with her relatives.

I was young and unsettled and continued to gamble and drink. On one occasion I recall going to the city of Greenfield, Mass., on a gambling expedition and during an argument with a very large man over the game I struck him on the head with a pool cue and was forced to leave there in a hurry, rushing from the scene to the depot of the Boston and Maine railroad where I boarded the head end of a passenger that was headed toward my wife's home, but I kept this incident a secret not knowing whether the man was alive or dead until some weeks later when I returned to the town. I learned through an acquaintance that the man had survived, however he had been taken to the hospital and after almost an hour of treatment he finally regained consciousness.

My wife was a fine young woman, talented in music and singing and a wonderful worker, but my unsettled life and fiery temper made me a black sheep with my in-laws, consequently my wife was influenced by her relatives who as she told me herself were practically infidels, and so our lives became very unhappy. While she went to the movies and dances I continued to go to the rum saloon; finally one evening I became engaged in a fight and after whipping my opponent I was taken into custody by an officer, but, being angry and partly intoxicated, I decided not to go so I turned my wrath loose on the officer and he was forced to call for help and a group of citizens at last overcame me and I was led off to jail where I was given a fine the next morning and allowed to return home with a promise to pay.

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## 06 -- WANDERLUST

The desire to travel came upon me again and there was something seemed to say 'go and leave it all behind' but you cannot run away from some things and one of those things is sin or wickedness; the only way to get rid of it is to have it taken out of your heart and life by the applying of the precious blood of Jesus.

The urge to go eventually became so strong that I yielded, bade my wife good-bye and started for Ohio using different means of transportation and ways of securing the necessary funds for the journey; in New York state I was arrested on suspicion but after some questioning I was able to give a satisfactory account of my actions and was released. I continued on my way and reached my home without any unusual incidents.

Seeking to satisfy the desires of my wicked heart. I began to meditate on a course of action to organize a gang and go into the burglary business. I immediately sought out two young men and we laid plans to start in a wholesale manner. Plans completed, alibis rehearsed and distribution of spoils agreed upon, we set out to the selected place of action. Our first job was the burglarizing of thirteen (13) homes within six hours time, and inside of a week we were all behind the jail bars awaiting trial. At last after several weeks of waiting for the Grand Jury to indict us and date to be set for our trial, we having entered pleas of guilty were called to the court for sentence. I acting as spokesman made a plea before the court for leniency. After hearing our plea and it being our first known felony, and because of our youth, we were shown leniency and given a work-house sentence for a short period of time. Once more the iron doors closed behind me, but soon they opened and I was free again, still I continued to travel on in the crooked path.

Shortly after this incident a friend of mine and I decided we would see how long we could stay drunk, so we started in drinking on the day before New Year's and continued day and night until the 29th of January when we were picked up in Columbus, Ohio and given a suspended fine, after which we started drinking again but soon boarded a southbound Hocking Valley train for southern Ohio. It was while on this train that I began to have delirium tremens, and oh the terrible sights I saw! As I think of them now it makes me shudder -- faces, terrible faces, staring, grinning, hideous without bodies, laughing at me. The awfulness of it can never be realized by any except those who have endured them. As I look back I just wonder can it really be true. I do want to thank God again for the cleansing blood of Jesus, praise His precious name.

This same friend and I started for Massachusetts and when we reached the state of Pennsylvania we were immediately picked up again. However I had no desire to go to jail and I played one of my usual tricks and left my friend and the Police Officer on our way to the police station; it was on Saturday afternoon and after he had placed us under arrest it was necessary to cross the main street as we were being marched to the station and as we were crossing it, I struck him in the stomach with my elbow and while he was collecting his balance I made my escape through the crowded street. I saw no more of my friend but later on learned that he had been released and had returned home.

I continued on my way to Massachusetts and took up my life as a married man again, but the gap between us kept getting wider and wider until at last we decided that our hasty marriage had proved a failure. Three (3) children had been brought into the world, a pair of twin boys lie in a little green mound back in the Berkshire Hill region in Massachusetts. A young man now twenty-eight (28) years of age lives near Boston, my own son, may God bless and keep him.

After our separation I started roaming again doing the things I had formerly done only getting more bold as well as more desperate. My crimes consisted mostly of the burglary of homes

and occasionally a store, but each job I did was planned more carefully and the spoil I would receive would be used for drinking, gambling and wild parties, but nothing satisfied and I was almost continually moving from place to place trying to find something to satisfy but without success. I have long since learned that I was searching in the wrong place for the sin-world has nothing that satisfies permanently; that is why rich men's sons and daughters become drunkards, dope fiends and degenerates, because peace and satisfaction cannot be purchased with money and they are willing to try anything in hope of finding something to satisfy. When one thing fails they try another but Isaiah 57:21 says, "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked."

Before long I found myself in Ohio again but in the early spring I returned to Massachusetts where I located my old pal and we started drifting, but in a few days we were arrested again and sentenced to a state penal institution under an assumed name. In the spring of 1917 when the registration for the world war No 1 took place, I was forced to reveal my true identity and register for service; a short time after this registration we were given our release from this institution and still the same old life continued to be followed as before.

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## 07 -- A SOLDIER

I started to work in the city of Northhampton, Mass., the home of President Coolidge. One evening after having some disagreements with a man that I worked with I went to the saloon and proceeded to drink. Finally meeting the man again we had a drunken fight and after (as I termed it) I had worked him over, I staggered up the street and entered the recruiting station for the U.S. Army. I enlisted as a single man in the United States regular army, and two days later I found myself along with many others, in Syracuse, N.Y. where I successfully passed the final examination, took the oath of enlistment and became a soldier of what is known as the World's War No. 1.

During my time in service which covered about sixteen (16) months, I refrained from stealing but gambled at every opportunity and won quite large sums at different times; however it all went in the usual manner, drink, wild parties, etc. I was considered a very good soldier. About three weeks after my enlistment I received my first stripe as a private 1st class, but it was some time before I received the second one because my top Sergeant had taken a dislike to me because I would not pay him for evening passes from camp and he would help to hold me back, but eventually I was made a non-commissioned officer and many times acted in the capacity of commissioned officer when our company was short of officers.

When in service I admitted that I was a married man and made what was called a compulsory allotment to my wife and child, and also gave a small allotment to my mother, so when my deductions were made I had only thirteen (13) dollars a month for my own use. We were for some time in special detached service in Washington, D. C. but in August, 1918 were transferred to Camp Seviere, S. C., to train drafted men.

A few weeks later in October, 1918 when the flu epidemic was at its worst, I had stayed up practically all night gambling and had won quite a large sum of money. The next morning I

received a telegram that my wife was seriously ill, so I applied for a leave of absence but the officers thought because I had won some money that the telegram was only a fake and would not grant me a leave, however in three or four days I succeeded in persuading them to give me a ten (10) day furlough, so after brief preparations I went to Greenfield, S. C., and boarded a train for Massachusetts. It was quite a long ride and took me through several states and cities including Washington, D.C. and New York City. Finally I arrived at my destination and had only gone about a block when I met my brother-in-law who told me that my wife had died and was buried several days before. Her remains lie near the grave of the two little babes that God saw fit to call away and spared the trials and sorrows of this world of sin.

While on this trip I had a severe hemorrhage of the lungs and so when I returned to camp I was put on sick call and sent to the base hospital for thorough physical examination. Upon being xrayed a spot about the size of a half dollar was found on my left lung. I had previously been recommended for a higher rating but when my physical condition became such that I was no longer fit for military service, my rating recommendation was canceled. I was discharged at Camp Seviere, S. C., on November 12, 1918, the next day after the Armistice, on an S.C.D. (Surgeon's Certificate of Disability). While my discharge read Chronic Bronchitis in reality it was Tuberculosis, disabled, abuse, punishment and fast living. In other words sin had begun to leave its mark.

I should like to report that only a short time ago I was examined at the T.B. Sanitarium at Mt. Vernon, Ohio and the X-ray showed no sign of Pathology in either lung, Glory to God, to Him goes all the Glory and Praise, nothing short of God could do such a MIRACLE.

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## 08 -- EXPENSIVE EXPERIENCES

It would be impossible for me to find words to give you a complete description of all that I saw and endured up until this time, but I sincerely believe that through it all God had His mighty hand over me, seeing in me something He could use out there in the future; you may not agree with me but I am determined to give God all the glory and praise for sparing my life through those terrible years. Praise His holy name. The next short period of time was uneventful so far as outstanding events are concerned. I had been given an examination by the Veterans' Doctor in my home and he diagnosed my case as Active Tuberculosis for which I received a temporary total disability allowance of eighty dollars (\$80.00) a month.

Early the next spring I started roaming again; however I managed to stay away from the arm of the law for quite some time, in fact something better than a year, but the longer I was free the bolder I became and the more I did -- stealing, robbing and pilfering, but it was not long until my sins found me out again. Numbers 32:23 says "Be sure your sin will find you out", and so I received another lesson in the cost of sin and crime.

This time I found myself in a hospital in one of the mid-western states where I was forced to lay for twenty-three (23) days because of a bullet from the pistol of a police officer. I had been placed under arrest and was making an attempt to escape from the officer when he shot me. After



being shot I was dragged for almost a block on my way to the jail because I was unable to walk. I was placed in the hospital department of the jail which was just a large vacant room except for a cot and chair; for three days I lay in this room with no medical treatment, consequently infection set in and it became necessary to transfer me to the hospital where the doctors after a consultation said it would be necessary to amputate my limb at the hip, but after further examination they found they could not administer ether because of my lung condition and so decided, to attempt an operation under local anesthetic to remove the bullet and the shattered fragments of bone. I shall never forget it. As I lay upon the table, the anesthetic had not deadened my limb as it should and I suffered untold agony as I lay, and great beads of cold sweat broke out over my body. About an hour later I was removed from the surgery to my own ward. A few days revealed that the operation was a success and my limb was saved, however I was crippled for almost a year because of it but today I praise God for two good legs, Praise His name. After lying twenty-three (23) days I was returned to the jail where I was held for some time to await trial. Finally the day came and I was led to the court room, found guilty, sentenced and in a few days taken to a state institution to serve my sentence.

I was given a number, some prison garb (clothes), was given me and I was assigned to the dining room because of being crippled. Of all the institutions I have ever been in this one was by far the worst; the food was terrible, the place unsanitary and the guards brutal, the chief diet being beans and there were soup beans, brown beans, speckled beans and beans with specks in. Time and again I have seen men beaten with a loaded cane carried by most of the guards because they would accidentally spill something or become nauseated because of bugs in their beans. This is not an exaggeration but facts that I have witnessed with my own eyes. May God use these brief statements to open the understanding of someone to the fallacy of sin and wickedness which is the cause of crime, and crime is the cause of much suffering.

One day while we were scrubbing the dining room with lye water using the large old-fashioned brooms such as were used in livery stables some years ago, I was attacked by another inmate who was a (what is called a rat or stool pigeon) pet of the guard, and when I proceeded to give him a thrashing the guard beat me with a wet broom until I was black and blue in several places from my shoulders down to my waist. If I stood still he would beat me and when I started to walk away he kicked me and fractured the lower end of my spine; I realized that if I should attack the guard that I would be shot or beaten half to death so there was no other way out only to stand the punishment. No treatment was given me so I was compelled to suffer the pain until it knit together again. I was then transferred to the brick yard where I finally finished my sentence and was released.

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## 09 -- INTO THE DEPTHS

After visiting home, I started for Hot Springs, Arkansas, still determined to follow the crooked path. I arrived at my destination and was only there a few days until I received a message from my old pal of former days urging me to return to Ohio and make a trip through the east with him. I immediately started back and upon my arrival at Broadway Station at St. Louis I left the train amidst a group of plain clothes detectives who were looking for suspects as some passenger

on the train had been robbed of seven (7) (grand) thousand dollars, however I was not bothered and soon was on my way again heading in the direction of Ohio.

Upon my arrival I looked up my pal and we began our plans for a career of crime through the east; after completing our plans we started on our way and by careful planning we were able to keep out of the hands of the law for a short period of time but after covering nine (9) states we were finally apprehended in the city of Baltimore, Maryland on two (2) serious federal charges; after several weeks of waiting we were tried and sentenced to a term in the federal prison at Atlanta, Georgia. So again in less than four (4) months after my release from the mid-western institution I found myself behind prison walls and known as inmate number 13287 of the United States penitentiary. During my confinement in these different institutions I studied and read as much as I possibly could and especially in Atlanta where we had access to a fine library furnished by the Institution for which I am very thankful. While confined there, I was assigned to the tailor shop where I was taught how to make shirts, but after a few weeks was successful in getting transferred to the Duck Mill where canvas is made for the government for use in making mail bags; here I was given the place of chief timekeeper and checker.

While this place treated the inmates better than any place I had ever been, yet it was prison and the men that one was forced to associate with, were all types -- murderers, mail robbers, counterfeiters, white slavers, dope fiends and moral degenerates of all sorts. Here I may say again that I believe the hand of almighty God was over me protecting me from the habit of narcotics. However I did try them but something seemed to tell me when to say "No". Many of the boys behind the walls were selling dope or as it was called "peddling stuff" and on occasions I have helped them in hiding and also in destroying many dollars worth when they were in danger of being caught, and on other occasions I have seen addicts that were not able to get hold of a hypodermic needle, that would press a safety pin into their flesh and have me or some one drop the narcotics into the opening with an eye dropper and then rub until the entire dose was absorbed into the flesh. This may seem impossible but yet it is absolutely true, and many times guards make large sums of money smuggling narcotics in to the inmates, but the saddest is when they are caught and are given what is called the "cold turkey" cure, which means not a tapering off of this most terrible habit, but the taking away of the drug completely which causes the poor unfortunate soul to almost lose his mind. Many times their cries and screams can be heard for hours at a time. Such sounds as these along with harsh voices of the guards, the cursing and threatening of some of the inmates, the clang of steel doors closing, the tramp, tramp of the prison shod feet of the men as they go to and from work, the planning and scheming on how to make an escape, or the weird tale of some poor soul under the influence of narcotics telling of a great amount of loot hidden away on the outside.

This is the monotonous routine of prison life day after day, week after week, and year after year until one begins to wonder if his mind will be able to stand it. Oh! the sadness of it all -- freedom gone, forsaken by friends, caged up like a dangerous beast, with nothing to look forward to except the day of release. May God help you who read this to realize that sin is the cause of all such suffering. Days, weeks, months and years finally passed and at last came my day of release; we were given a prison-made suit of clothes, a ten (10) dollar bill and transportation to our destination.

My friend being released at the same time decided to go to Florida, while I returned to my home town in Ohio, where I stayed over night with my dear old mother and again said good-bye and left for Pennsylvania, still determined to live without working. By this time my heart had become hardened and I had lost practically all confidence in humanity, the world had lost its attractiveness and my conscience was so seared that nothing seemed to matter much -- practically deserted by humanity, watched and oftentimes hounded by the law enforcement officials, with pictures, fingerprints and Bertillon measurements in every city of any size, life had a dreary outlook. The thing that was uppermost in my mind was planning and scheming, trying to find a new method of securing my desires, and planning revenge on those who as I thought had wronged me and caused me to suffer pain and also to serve so much of my time behind the bars and walls of various institutions. But praise be to God, I am glad that the Master has said "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord." A few weeks later after having spent all my cash but a few cents on gambling, drinking and wild parties, I returned home again still gambling and cheating, working only long enough for an alibi in case I should be questioned.

A few days after my arrival home I met a young lady, and in just six (6) months from the day I was released from Atlanta, Georgia, we were married. A few hours after we had heard the words, I now pronounce you man and wife, we were on the train traveling toward a large city. Because of my past and a slight difference in our ages of about eight years, some of my in-laws objected to our marriage and even tried to have our marriage annulled, so again on our return home we were forced to pack quickly and travel on for a healthier place of abode. Let me pause here to say that I thank God for a wife that did stick to her companion, even though she was in sin, still she kept her oath sacred, until death doth you part. May God help men and women to realize the sacredness of the marriage vow. Matthew 19th chapter verse 6 says, "What God therefore hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

A few days later we again returned to our home town where I was given an offer of a position with a nationally known concern that had a branch store in my home town so I was bonded by a bonding company in New York City and went about my employment, but again my sins and crimes were following me. This time a certain city official knowing my past record and wishing to make a showing for himself notified the bonding company that I was an ex-convict and caused my bond to be canceled at once. This was a clever plan that he had laid, which gave him an opportunity by me being unemployed and without visible means of support to accomplish the thing he had in mind, which was to protect his reputation and job as an officer of the law at the expense of an innocent man.

I was in the past of the opinion that all men that were sent to prison were guilty, but after this incident I was satisfied that I was mistaken. Many times men are falsely accused (framed) and sent to prison or even to the electric chair because of past records or circumstantial evidence. Just four (4) months after our marriage I was arrested, falsely accused, bound over to the grand jury on my plea of not guilty, indicted, tried and convicted by false identification and perjured evidence for the crime of assault with intent to kill and armed robbery (hold up). My brother secured an attorney for me and at once he began searching for evidence to prove me innocent. At my trial I had been able to get fourteen (14) witnesses stating where they remembered seeing me from time to time during the evening and at the time when the crime had been committed; while the state only had two (2) witnesses against me, and one of them being a poor fellow afflicted in mind and body.

After having waited some time for my trial at last the day came, then the selection of the jurors, the regular routine of the court, the giving of testimony, cross examination of witnesses and finally the pleas of the defense and prosecuting attorneys, the charging of the jurors, then their retiring and considering (if it can be such) the evidence given. After about one hour a vote was taken, eight being for acquittal and four for conviction. They were then permitted to go out to a restaurant for their evening meal, each one going to the place of his or her choice. This gave opportunity for outside influence which I am convinced was used, for after returning to the jury room they voted unanimous for conviction in just forty-five minutes. Something or someone had changed their minds very suddenly, and after the returning of the verdict my attorney spoke to one of the jury women and asked her if she really thought I was guilty by the evidence given, and she immediately said NO but he has been in trouble before.

Too many times people are influenced by appearances or the thoughts and speeches of others and do not weigh the true evidences, and many times bring sorrow and heartaches to the heart and home of innocent people. Again my past was following me and my sins were finding me out. Allow me to quote again: Numbers 32:23 "Be sure your sin will find you out," and truly it is so, and this time I was to pay with a severe sentence.

Two or three days after my trial I was called before the judge for sentence and after the usual routine I was asked if I had anything to say and I spoke a brief word stating I was innocent; the judge stated (with their usual dignity) that it was his painful duty to pronounce sentence, saying if he was certain that I was guilty he would not hesitate one moment to give me the extreme penalty of the law but, said he, "there may be a doubt in my mind so I am going to give you the minimum sentence of not less than ten years or more than twenty-five years and I will recommend you for parole at the earliest possible moment". What I had sown I was reaping and oh! what a harvest and while I was not guilty of the particular crime for which I was tried, yet I was paying for some I had done and had not been caught doing. Every day is not pay day but the longer it is between pay days the larger the pay. Another two or three days and then I was hurried away to start serving my time, again the taking of pictures for the rogues gallery, the finger-printing and Bertillon measurements, again the issuing of prison garb and I became known as No. 17079 on the criminal records of the state of Ohio.

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## 10 -- SEEDS OF HATRED

Only the blessed Lord can know the misery and heartaches that I was going through, again the clang of prison doors closing behind me, the monotonous routine of prison life along with being deprived of all that was worth living for brought untold mental agony, as well as putting hatred into my heart. Serving time for something you are guilty of is hard enough, but for something you did not do is much harder; picture in your mind if you can, married only four months, forced to be separated from my wife, serving time for some other man's crime and with my freedom gone made the picture of the future a dreary one with nothing to look forward to, but with plenty of time to plan and scheme for revenge if I was ever fortunate enough to be released. Hatred, fury of such a violent nature that my whole being seemed to cry out for the blood of those who had falsely

accused and persecuted me. As I worked and as I would be in my cell it seemed that something inside of me kept saying "kill, kill, kill". This maddening thought seemed to be with me constantly; many times I was tempted to try to make an escape but something restrained me. I had already seen the punishment given others who had tried to make their get-away and I decided to await a better opportunity.

Through all this I believe God was working out His plans and I thank Him that though I was yet a sinner yet He did protect me from doing anything desperate. Along with this I owe much to my good companion who so faithfully stayed by me through this period of time and never once disappointed me; had she failed me possibly the last hope of my ever having confidence in mankind would have been destroyed. My companion knew some of the hatred I had penned up in my heart for the world, but she kept visiting me at every possible opportunity, and encouraging me that she was doing everything possible for my early parole.

Finally I took on a little courage and began to study, taking a course in bookkeeping and accounting. I was employed in the printing department as stock estimator and time keeper, so I used all my spare time for my studies and completed my course and secured my certificate in about two-thirds of the allotted time.

Not long after this the hand of the Lord began to work again -- the institution was terribly crowded and so to relieve the condition, the governor of the state of Ohio decided to give conditional releases to a certain number of men that the institution officials would give a recommendation. My good companion had no knowledge of the action taken by the governor yet she had been securing letters from city and state officials acknowledging their doubts as to my guilt and recommending consideration of my case at the earliest possible time.

About this time my wife was ordered to the hospital for an operation and the institution was contacted and asked if it would be possible for me to come home; this was an unusual request but again I believe that God was working out His plan and looking down on the scene touched the heart of that man and I was called to his office. I can remember his words as though it were yesterday. When I had entered his office I said "Number 17079 reporting, sir," and he said, "Sit down, Runkle. Some men talk better sitting, some standing and some lying. I guess you know what I mean?" To this question I replied, "Yes sir." After a few brief questions about my charge and confinement he eventually told me why he had called me in and after giving me definite instructions, he finished by saying he was going to grant me a three-day leave on my own promise to return. This was an unusual privilege and I was overjoyed at the thought of three full days of freedom; freedom, freedom -- the thought thrilled me beyond expression.

In less than three hours I had bathed, went to the barber shop and had a hair cut and shave, and dressed in an up-to-date suit including Florsheim shoes that some one had worn into the institution. I was loaned money from the office for transportation and was soon on my way to the railroad depot accompanied by a guard. At the station I secured my ticket, bade the guard good-bye and began to pace the platform nervously smoking one cigarette after another until at last after what seemed ages to me the train pulled into the depot and I boarded it heading for home. It seemed impossible, seemed like a dream and I was afraid of waking but at last the train arrived at my destination at five-fifteen p.m. and I was met on the platform by my sister-in-law and oh! how good

it did seem to be free and to see some of my own loved ones again. As I look back and view this scene, tears fill my eyes and thanks unto God fills my heart for His bountiful mercy. Praise His name.

Three blessed yet sorrowful days; blessed because of freedom and being with loved ones, and sorrowful because of sickness and the realization that I must return to the gray walls again not knowing how long it would be before I would have freedom again. One day, two days, three days filled with a mixture of happiness and sorrow; days that passed all too swiftly, and now the time had come for me to return as I had promised. This was one of the fiercest conflicts of my life. I had a great desire to not return and yet something seemed to tell me to return for the sake of others if for no other reason. Finally I listened to my better judgment, bade my wife and loved ones good-bye, walked to the station, boarded the train and returned voluntarily to my prison cell.

Immediately after my arrival I was told that I was on a special list to appear before the board for a hearing for Parole. Again the waiting for several days which seemed like years, at last I was called before the board, asked a few questions that I had been asked at my trial and told that was all; again a wait of two or three days before I would know the result, however an office clerk who was a friend of mine informed me that I had been granted a parole, but this only increased the anxiety for this was not official.

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## 11 -- FREEDOM

One evening a few days later while I was in my cell an inmate clerk gave me my notice of a conditional parole to take effect in forty-five days, in other words I was to be released forty-five days from the day of my hearing before the board. These days needless to say were exceptionally long, but one day the gates opened and number 17079 became a free man once more. Thank God when that gate closed behind me I have been a free man ever since. Glory to God forever and forever; however I was taken into custody twice since then on minor charges but released on payment of a small fine.

Waiting at the gate on the day of my release was my good companion and as I stepped out into the open it was like walking on thin air, FREE; free to do and be what I wanted to do or be; so it is today, we can either be free or otherwise as we choose. I had secured permission to take up my residence in Columbus, Ohio, and found employment there as a shoe worker where I remained for about three years.

The following spring after my release I was examined for tuberculosis and found to have an active case and was ordered to the National Military Home at Dayton, Ohio, for treatment by the Veterans Bureau of Columbus, Ohio. I was placed in Annex No. 1, a building out by itself for tubercular patients where I stayed for a short period of time but I became anxious for home so I left and returned to Columbus. Only a few months later I secured a final release and restoration to full citizenship again.

I was still harboring hatred and malice in my heart for the law and so-called society in general. Some of the most brutal and inhuman plans of revenge that man could devise were hidden away in my heart. I some way managed to avoid the major crimes but I was continually watching for some way to make a few easy dollars. I tried bootlegging for a while and made quite a lot of money but I soon became my own best customer and so gave it up as a bad business. One evening while we were visiting a place of not too good reputation I had a fight with a man whom I knew slightly. I left him lying unconscious although I had only hit him three times. The next day as I passed his place the blinds were all drawn down and I began to wonder what his condition was. Later in the day I learned through a friend that his nose was broken, both eyes were closed, his lip was severely cut and eight teeth were missing. His wife also sent word for a settlement or she would have me arrested, so I was forced to draw all I could on my soldier's bonus and settle to keep my freedom.

This same year we were visiting our relatives in the city of Marion, Ohio, and while there I was out drinking with a relative whose reputation was considered bad for several reasons. This young man was seven years younger than I and weighed about twenty-five pounds more than I. For years he had been hoping to give me a whipping and this day brought the opportunity and he took it, but to his disappointment in about five minutes he was willing to say "enough." I went into my mother's house and was sitting talking with her when I heard this relative's voice calling me vile names and threatening to shoot me. I immediately started for the door, with my mother warning me that he would shoot. Disregarding her warning I continued on and as I ran out on the porch I saw him throw his gun into position. As he did so I rushed and he pulled the trigger; as I quickly jumped to one side three successive shots rang out, each one missing its mark.

As I continued to rush at him he pulled the trigger several times with his gun trained directly on my mid-section, but his gun was either jammed or empty. We were by this time fighting like demons, he using his gun in a clubbing manner, and was successful in hitting me three times on the head with it, cutting great holes in my scalp; but even with blood streaming I continued to press on jabbing and punching with rights and lefts until the opening came and I landed the punch that finished the fight.

The following spring my wife and I decided to leave Columbus. We had accumulated five rooms of expensive furniture on which we owed only about two hundred dollars but we closed the doors and left it set, taking only our clothing and small personal property. We went to Akron, Ohio and in a very brief period of time our home was broken because of booze, etc., creeping in, and for several months we were separated. I was then driving a vegetable truck between Willard, Ohio, and Cincinnati and for weeks I would go without sleep except what I could get in the truck driving almost day and night and stopping along the way for an hour or two to rest, and practically living on bootleg liquor I secured along the way.

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## 12 -- ON THE ROAD

At last we patched up the breaks in our family troubles and went on the road traveling over a large part of the United States in a shady sales racket; while it was legitimate in the eyes of the

law yet it was far from honest. Our earnings were almost unbelievable -- from one hundred to two hundreds dollars a week when we would keep busy, but gambling, drinking and the pleasures of the world took it almost as fast as we made it. However we would manage to save enough to bear our expenses for two or three months in the South during the most severe weather after the holidays. Most of our winter vacations were spent in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where we would rent a cottage or an apartment and I would live a large part of the time under the influence of "Mountain Dew" as the bootleg liquor was called in Arkansas. We would go over the mountain to the moonshiners and secure it by the gallon, then drink, play cards, dance, etc., and imagine we were having a good time, but let me say here that I never knew what it was to have real enjoyment and happiness until I found the lonely Galilean, Jesus Christ, and His pardon from sin.

During the early spring of our first year on the road we had come up through Tennessee and Kentucky and were on our way up north after having spent some time in the south and were taking subscriptions for a southern farm paper (writing sheet) in the daytime and had just helped open a show with Princess Olga's Carnival and were working it at night, when one morning as I went to the post office I received one of the greatest shocks of my life.

It was at Mounds, Illinois that I received a letter from my mother saying my best pal had been burned to death in the terrible penitentiary fire at Columbus, Ohio, where he was an inmate at that time. This was the fifth one of my pals that had gone out into eternity in a terrible way, and this was the second of my closest pals to die back of prison bars. I can imagine the screams as the flames were reaching out burning, scorching and smothering out the lives of almost four hundred souls. What a terrible thing it must have been. But, friends, that is not to be compared to the tortures of a burning, sizzling "HELL." That burning was for only a few brief moments, but the torture of a lost soul shall be for ever and ever." Matthew 25:41. Men and women, are you aware of the fact that this could have been you or your son or daughter? This is just one example of the cost of sin in this world, but the final cost for sin is eternal punishment in the lake of fire. Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As I look back into the past I truly thank God for sparing me and giving me the hope of seeing Him (God) in peace, and then I look again and see this one with whom I had served years behind the bars, with whom I slept and ate, had traveled thousands of miles, with whom I had shared happiness and sorrow and if one had money both had, in other words we would always share equally what we had without any thought of returning it, and now to hear that he was gone was more than I could bear, and as hard and seared as I was yet I broke down and wept like a child.

As I have previously stated four others had died terrible deaths. The first one died of lingering tuberculosis aggravated by abuse and exposure, the second went to a midwestern state where he contracted a dreaded disease and lay for months until he practically rotted away, the third lay paralyzed for over a year before he passed on while the fourth one was a talented boy who played the piano and sang when we entertained in wine rooms; I had traveled with him many, many long miles, together we had served time in two institutions; this was the boy who had been punished so severely with me while serving time on the rock pile in New York state. We had done many things that no living person knows, and I had found him to be a real pal. He and I were



separated at the time and I received the news that he had taken seriously ill of pneumonia and was placed in a hospital for treatment while awaiting trial for first degree murder. He had made an escape from the hospital while yet very sick, was caught in a severe storm and was found the next day lying in the mud in a dying condition in the state of New Jersey. So far as is known none of these poor men had a testimony unless it was in the last moments; they were all under thirty-five years old, so it is true that the old must die and the young may. The last one to date was one of my old pals that I had gambled and drank with in our earlier days, who was one of the F.B.I.'s most wanted men, who was captured and tried after killing one police and wounding another in Louisville, Kentucky. Last February he walked the last mile of the way, sat down in the electric chair in Eddyville and with a smile and a wave of his hand, said good-bye to this time world. Three others of my old friends are serving life in the Ohio Penitentiary for murder or bank robbery. Each of these incidents as they are brought to my remembrance, remind me to thank God again for sparing me from such a fate. Praise His precious name.

That same year my step-father died in early spring while my wife and I were somewhere in the central states I believe, then along in August while we were out on the Illinois and Iowa line I received a telegram, on my birthday, saying mother had passed away; the telegram had been delayed and so it was too late to go home, but I was told that she had made her peace with God. Friends gone, mother gone, health practically gone, character gone and our married life none too happy because of sin, again life had a gloomy outlook.

The next year I made a trip to one of the central states, not telling my wife that I was going to get revenge on the police officer that had shot me; however I had my plans made and my pistol which was a thirty-eight was well loaded, for years this hatred had been in my heart and now the time had come for revenge. Over a period of years I had carefully planned an entrance into the city, the method of revenge, and my line of cover and escape. As I traveled toward the city the thought kept turning over in my mind, revenge, the time has come at last. I had also planned how I would make up fictitious names and ask about people who never existed in order to cast off suspicion as I inquired for my intended victim. When I arrived in the city I carefully sought out a young taxi driver that I thought would be able to give the desired information and proceeded to inquire the location of my much hated enemy.

After a few moments time I learned that this man that I had driven so far to locate had committed suicide about three months before. To this I remarked "That saves me a job." The taxi driver catching the meaning of my words said, "I see" and smiled as I thanked him and walked away. Again God had intervened and placed His protecting hand over me to keep me from committing a terrible crime, while even though I only intended to cripple him as he had me, yet God alone knows what the outcome would have been. My wife and I continued on the road until the year of 1933 when the depression became so severe we were forced to quit traveling.

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## 13 -- FACING DEATH

After leaving the road we started housekeeping again in our home town. Work was out for there was none to be had and finances were bad so I borrowed a "still" from a friend of mine,

secured some mash barrels and began to make and sell moonshine liquor, but as usual I was my best customer and kept drinking more and more and became more abusive until at last our home became so miserable and our lives so unhappy that we were compelled to give up and quit housekeeping, yet many of our so-called citizens and church folks will endorse the sale and use of the stuff that wrecks homes and damns souls. After several weeks we finally went back to housekeeping again.

During all these years of carnival life, crime and working rackets, I had always drunk very heavily and in December of 1933, I went on a drinking spell, starting about a week before Christmas. On the twenty-third (23rd) which happened to come on Saturday that year, I was in a bootlegger's home and as I stepped out of the door I was struck across the forehead with a five cell flash light, making a deep cut. (This former bootlegger is at this time a saved man.) I went to my home and took my last drink on Christmas Day.

I was taken to my bed the night of the twenty-sixth (26th) with infection in my head, and seriously ill from poison liquor. I was blind for forty-eight hours and hope for my recovery was given up by two doctors. Oh, such thoughts as ran through my mind as I lay there; blind, my eyesight gone but praise God, like Paul of old, while my natural eyes were closed, my spiritual eyes began to open, Glory be to God, and I began to see the folly of sin. My fever ran around 103+ to 104 yet I was conscious, and for two days large numbers of relatives, friends, acquaintances and curious people came in to take what they thought was their last look at me alive. I could hear them as they would leave my bedside and gather in the other room and begin to whisper and I could imagine they were saying I would never get well; but "hallelujah", God had other plans and sent some praying people in to see me, some who believed in divine healing, Praise the Lord.

Then I was asked why I did not pray. I replied that if a man could not pray when he was well and not in trouble it was a poor time to start when he was down. I shall never forget one of them asked me, "What if you should die?" I remember very well my answer. I said, "I have lived that way, and I will have to stand the consequences," but little did I realize what it would have meant if God had not been merciful to me and spared me, and oh! how thankful we should be for an all-merciful God. Some may not believe in sinners being prayed for, for healing, and in some cases I do not myself; but where a man had lived in ignorance as I had, I am sure it pleased God for He answered their prayer. At this they asked if they might pray and as I gave them permission and they began to pray, I said in my heart, "Lord, if You will spare my life to get out of this bed, I will never take another drink (of intoxicants) as long as I live." Glory to God, that promise still holds good after almost twenty (20) years at the time of this writing. God so mercifully gave me back my eyesight, and in three or four days after that prayer I was up on my feet again. Too many times when God is good to folks and heals their afflictions they turn their back on Him as soon as they are able to get around again. But during those years in sin and crime I was not known as a double crosser, and when I promised the devil and his gang anything I usually kept my word, and so when I made the Lord that promise I settled it down in my heart to keep it.

Recently I was stopped on the street of the city of Marion by one of my relatives who cursed me and called me almost all manner of vile names, as well as threatening me with bodily harm, but thank God the blessing is still working. I have often said that my own relatives treated me better when I was a JAIL BIRD than they do since I am a SPECKLED BIRD. Jesus said in

Mark 6:4 "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own KIN, and in his own house." So I should not expect everyone to accept me with open arms, especially when I do not compromise with their ungodly ways.

Again I say that old-fashioned Salvation will do for you what nothing else can or will do, it gives you victory over IN-LAWS and OUTLAWS and keeps one sweet in the face of opposition: Glory to God.

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## 14 -- DELIVERANCE

The second Sunday evening after that promise, I was well and feeling fine physically (Sunday, January 7, 1934) so my wife and I started out and walked to the little church where the folks attended that had prayed for me; it was only seven or eight blocks from our home, and as we went in and sat down many curious eyes were cast in our direction, but I had determined in my heart to seek Christ. At last the services started but what the text was or how long he preached I do not know, but it seemed to me that the message was terribly long. Finally he closed and it was not necessary to make an altar appeal; no one had to ask me. I had seen my need and was hungry for God.

I almost ran to the altar and fell on my knees and began to cry out to God to forgive me. How long I prayed and cried I do not know; the time, the people, and my surroundings were completely forgotten by me, but when I had finished praying and arose I found my companion had followed her convictions and had stepped out and made her peace with God at that old-fashioned altar. I am thankful for a few churches that still believe in repentance and have an old-fashioned altar where men and women and boys and girls who are sick of the sin business can weep their way through to Calvary, and have the blood applied and ALL their transgressions blotted out and cast in the sea of God's forgetfulness to be remembered against them no more, and to have their names written down in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The first five years of my Christian experience were very shallow. I first attended a large Holiness church for about a year but no one would be able to tell it except by name. I eventually froze out there, and then we enlisted with a non-holiness organization and it was equally as cold. When passing it I feel like tipping my hat in reverence to the dead. Anything alive cannot last long in a refrigerator.

Every service was an endurance test for me; however it was a good lesson in patience. Still I was longing for something better, and I shall never forget one evening we went to a small Holiness Mission where I knew the pastor and God gave me a little glimpse into Canaan land -- there were eight or ten running and shouting and with tears streaming down their cheeks and I knew that God had sent me there to show me there was more for me. Certain folks whom I had confidence in had warned me against holiness and caused me to shun the very place and thing that I needed. It seemed I could not understand the scriptures and consequently depended on someone that I had confidence in, but I warn you be very careful of depending on others in the matter of

salvation, for that is the way many are led into false doctrine, but line up with God's word and let Him give you wisdom in the things you need to know.

I had not been able to overcome some of my habits and my temper would get away with me and on three occasions in those first five years I lost control of my reasoning and had three fights; in the last one I struck my boss because he made a false report on me and fired me and I knocked out several of his teeth.

Still I held on and God kept telling me to go to a humble mission that was on fire for God, but we had said we would not go where that bunch of fanatics and hypocrites were. Perhaps it was because I realized they would not encourage the habits and temper that I had, but at last after trying almost everywhere else we finally minded the Lord and made our way there one Sunday evening and I immediately requested prayer for myself that God would undertake and deliver me from my filthy habit. Of course a man of my type and reputation in a town of thirty-five thousand) most of the folks knew about me and many of them knew me personally. I realized that I must either be delivered or quit professing for I had done my best but without result. I had been an habitual smoker of cigarettes for over thirty years and the devil had his fangs deep in me. All the other habits had fallen off except smoking when I went to the altar that first night -- lying, stealing, gambling, swearing, filthy stories, drinking, etc. While in the last institution I had paid as much as a dollar for a half sack of smoking tobacco and took a chance of losing thirty days good time if I got caught smoking it, so I can truly say it took God to deliver me.

I was talking to a minister at the factory where I was working one day and he said he quit all his habits, made all his restitution's, and separated himself from worldly pleasures before he was saved. I said, "God did not do much for you then, you did it all yourself," but I am praising God for all my victories, "Hallelujah." Some folks would say I was not even saved because I had not been able to give up my smoking, but to that I could never agree. God knew my heart and also my ignorance about real salvation. However I am not saying that a man or woman can continue with the habits of the world and retain their justified state very long after they have received the light, for I read in II Corinthians, chapter 6:17 to 7:1 "Come ye out from among them saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the FLESH and SPIRIT, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

Well, thank God, after my request for prayer some one took me on their heart and prayed through for me and God mercifully gave me full deliverance and victory over my habit, but don't misunderstand me for I had to do my best and trust God for the rest and it was really a tough fight. I shall never forget, I kept it secret for three or four days to make sure God had delivered me and then came prayer meeting night and what a blessing as I arose to my feet and with tears streaming down my face I began to praise God and to thank the praying people for deliverance, and as the report came in of another victory won shouts of praise and thanksgiving came from every corner of the building.

A very short time after my deliverance from my habits, and I had said good-bye to the Devil's playthings, I began to feel there was something more for me; so one evening as an

old-fashioned revival was in progress at this little mission, God definitely told me to accept the blessing, so as soon as the message was finished I went to the old-fashioned altar and consecrated my all to God, and died out to the world, the flesh and the devil, to my own self and opinions, to my own likes and dislikes, and put everything I was or ever would be in the hands of God. In other words I put everything on the altar and. praise God I left it there.

I had read in the scripture where all gifts and callings were without repentance, so my life being clean, having cleansed myself from ALL filthiness of the flesh according to His commands and by His help, I felt that the gift of the Holy Spirit was mine and accepted it. Someone said to me since then, "How did you know when you had it?" To which I replied, "Because I believed God's word." Praise the Lord, since that time I have never doubted my sanctification. However, the devil has tried to make me doubt, and I have been tempted time after time, but I have found that HIS grace is sufficient :in every test and under every condition.

Not many months after my sanctification I came in contact with a blacksmith at the plant where I was working. He was a large man and always ready to argue so he found an excuse and tried to start an argument with me, eventually calling me some of the worst names he could think of, names that at one time would have meant fight regardless of his size, but God had done such a good job on the inside that I did not feel a single stir. Some of the men who had known me in former days stood and watched to see what would happen, and later one said to some of the boys, "Runkle surely has got it." I am not boasting, only in Christ.

I waited an hour or two after this man had treated me so brutally without any cause and then I went to him and told him if I said or did anything wrong, I was ready to apologize and make any necessary amends; he merely snapped out a few cutting words and walked away. The next day I came through his department again and he called me and when I came to where he was he put his big arm over my shoulder and talked to me as though we had always been the best of friends. Some months later I went into his home, stepped quietly over to the corner of the room and looked down on the cold still form of this same individual, but his soul had crossed this line of worlds; tears of gratitude filled my eyes and I silently thanked God that there was no condemnation in my heart, for by the help of God I had been able to live the life before him and I had not said or done anything that I should regret.

Prior to my sanctification I was laid off a few months from the factory where I was employed and while at home one day as I was doing some repairing around the house I had spent a portion of our last dollar for groceries (my work at the factory was extremely hard and I was really not able to do it), so as I was meditating where the next dollar would come from I said, "Lord, if you will give me a job I can stand, I will tithe." The very next day a knock came at my door and as I opened it, I recognized the personnel manager from the factory who came to call me back to work, but they not only called me back to work but transferred me to a place where the work was light, and so again God's hand was over me leading me to the place where He wanted me to be; and as a testimony, not boastfully but to glorify Him, we have been tithers ever since and when the depression was over, He, (God) brought us out without any financial obligations, Praise His name. We had in the meantime purchased a small home in the suburb of Marion, Ohio, with my soldier bonus, it was just a humble abode but a happy one with Christ as the head of it; Praise the Lord. We had some chickens, a few hogs and a dog. I mention this to show you how God works

when He wants something done. One day upon my return home from work my wife told me that the chickens had turned cannibal and were eating each other, and asked my advice what to do about it. I immediately said, "Sell all of them for they are too much bother anyway." So we called the poultry man and sold them all. Only a few days later we advertised some weaning pigs for sale. When a man came to look at them he said, "What will you take for them, sows and all?" I set a price and to my surprise he bought the entire group. A few days later some one poisoned our dog which was the last of our livestock; this removed everything out of the way that could be used as a legitimate excuse for having to be home at any given time. God never makes a mistake, nor does anything at the wrong time. He knew that I would no doubt try to excuse myself, and again I say He does all things well.

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## 15 -- THE SECOND CALL

A few weeks after my being sanctified God spoke to me about doing something for Him. I tried my very best to ignore the call, but the more I tried to avoid it the stronger the urge became until I was hardly able to eat and pitched and tossed in my bed at night. God was pulling on my heart-strings so finally I told my wife that I believed the Lord wanted me to take up some kind of music; here I was a man above forty years of age and without any knowledge of music, trying to choose my call. Anyway we went to the music store and ordered myself a new piano-accordion and I began to try to read music and practice, but God had not called me to play the accordion, He had called me to preach the Word.

By this time I was almost sure what God wanted, but I kept it a close secret, as much as I possibly could from everyone including my own good companion, but finally the urge was so great that I was forced to mention to my wife that God was asking me to do something else. This was perhaps three months after the first call. At last we went to prayer and asked God to show us exactly what He would have me do.

My wife told me later that she asked God that if it was preaching, that He would cause someone to leave their pulpit and turn it over to me. Nothing was said to anyone, but that same evening at the factory where I was working there was a brother-preacher, a Nazarene, who had a small church in a nearby town who was employed in the same department as me and as we came in contact with each other in the course of our duties he told me he was going to the southern part of the state to conduct a week-end meeting and asked me to go to his place and fill his pulpit for the evening service. I began to stammer and to search for an excuse, and finally I said, "Brother, -- I have never preached in my life." But he said, "I still feel led of the Lord to invite you to fill my pulpit." I promised to give him an answer by twelve noon the next day which was Saturday. Immediately after work that night I hurried home and told my wife what had happened. She then said, "It is a direct answer to my prayer", and she told me what she had prayed. Again I went to prayer and began to agonize with God, declaring my lack of education and scriptural knowledge, but God's call was still there and something kept saying you must go. At five minutes of twelve the next day I started for his place which was several blocks away and arrived there at the stroke of twelve and consented to go.

After much prayer and meditation through the day, early in the evening we drove to the town and made our way to the little church. We were total strangers except for one young preacher from my home town who happened to be there. As we entered we were welcomed by the pianist and song leader who inquired if I was the preacher for the evening to which I replied I was to take one's place. As soon as we were seated the young preacher who knew me, realizing I was sent there to preach tucked his big Bible under his arm and started for home, eighteen miles away. This of course was not very encouraging for one, especially on his first night in the pulpit, but God's word says, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you;" my wife realizing my feeling, looked at me encouragingly, quoted that scripture, smiled and said, "There goes the woe."

God had called me to preach my first sermon in the very same town where I had been convicted the first time of a major crime twenty-four years before. I was not afraid out in the world but this was altogether different. I fully realized my weakness and the great responsibility I was facing souls headed for eternity, and me an uneducated man, my first time to ever take active part in a service, and to stand behind the sacred desk knowing not more than eight or ten verses of scripture yet attempting to preach the Gospel; this required the grace of God. Just before the service started I left the pulpit and asked my wife to pray. No one else knew that this was my first message, and I certainly did call on God that night, and told Him to remove the fear if He wanted me to preach.

The enemy was certainly on hand trying to defeat me, my voice trembled and my knees seemed to grow weak. I said, "Lord, if you don't want me to preach let me fail tonight and I will never try again." There were two other young preachers there one of which took charge of the preliminaries, the other one leading in prayer, after which I was introduced and took my place behind the sacred desk. I had chosen for my text, I Thessalonians 5:24, "Faithful is he who calleth you," a very appropriate text for the occasion and I was surely trusting Him to be faithful on that all important occasion. I was as I have already stated very nervous as I began to read, but after reading two or three verses my fear disappeared and again my calling was verified. As I proceeded with the message God came on the scene and began to bless my soul and I began to weep until the few notes I had managed to get together were of very little use to me; I was crying until I could not see them, but God surely was faithful and we had a wonderful service. After the benediction several of the church folks were talking with me and would hardly believe me when I told them it was my first message.

On the following Sunday when I went to the services in my own church the pastor asked me where I was on the last Sunday and I was forced to admit my calling. I thought that it would take the church by surprise but it seemed that everyone had felt my call for some time and so I was elected to preach in my home church that evening and God blessed us with eight precious souls.

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## 16 -- IN HIS SERVICE

He lifted me out of the deep miry clay,  
He settled my feet in the straight narrow way,  
He lifted me up to a Heavenly place,

And He flooded my soul with His marvelous grace.

Some short time later I was preparing for Ordination in an interdenominational association and as I was going up the main street of our city I met an old cell-mate of mine and in the course of our conversation I told him I was going to be ordained the next day. He was surprised and it gave me the opportunity to warn him. I called him by name and said, " \_\_\_\_\_, if you don't quit the racket you are in, you will go back of the gray walls for a long stretch." He merely smiled and stated that he knew I was going (on the legit) the straight way but didn't think I was that serious; about a year later he was given life in the Ohio penitentiary for bank robbery, and has retainers from other places waiting for him. I am saying this that you may see that it is only by the grace of God that I am not in his place for before I had been offered an opportunity of working with him in the rackets.

For the next two years the Lord blessed me with places to preach, in various denominations of the Holiness faith and seldom did I have a spare moment to listen to the messages of others. At that time I took a pastorate with a little church of the Denomination to which I then belonged. For almost two and a half years I worked six days a week and much of that ten hours a day, studied the Word, took my studies of Theology, Church History, Bible and Doctrine, that was necessary for the examination that I was to take later on for my Ordination, then on Sunday we drove seventy-two miles each way or one hundred and forty-four miles a round trip, taught the Adult Sunday School class, preached from two to three times, visited the sick in the afternoons and then drove home after service in the evening, and truly God blessed us and we saw some souls get a definite experience with the Lord and they are still serving Him for which we are truly grateful. One young man from my congregation felt his call to the Ministry and after his return from service in World War Two took up scholarship in God's Bible College in Cincinnati. After his graduation, God gave him three years of wonderful ministry and then took him home to Heaven at the age of twenty-seven (27) years. During my Ministry in this little Church I made the statement that I intended to obey God if it took my job, my home or even my wife, to whom I owed much, had it not been for her faithfulness and prayers God alone knows where I would be tonight. In 1943 I passed my examination with a class of thirteen, of which seven were successful for Ordination in the organization to which I belonged. At that time I felt my call to the Field of Evangelism, and consequently gave up my job where I had worked for seven years, so the first part of my statement was fulfilled, as well as giving up my pastorate. However I do not regret giving them up for God has been blessing us and we have been privileged to see many precious souls find their way to Christ. God has said in His word, I will take the weak things to confound the mighty and the foolish things to confound the wise. In other words if we will yield ourselves into His hands unreservedly, He can take the most ignorant of us and make us useful vessels. Man's glory is great and seemingly it has no limits, but God's glory is so far superior that there is no comparison. Jesus told us in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, and I quote, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Man's education may be great but James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." From a social standpoint, the Christian belongs to the Aristocracy of the skies. Politically they are Ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). And in finances we are the children of THE KING and with the old song writer we can sing,

My Father is rich in houses and lands,



He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands,  
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,  
His coffers are full He has riches untold.

Praise His blessed name forever and forever.

The first revival we were called for after our entering the Evangelistic field was in the western part of the state so we packed our things in our little trailer house car on Friday expecting to leave on Saturday morning for our appointment, but late Friday afternoon my father-in-law was stricken with paralysis and brought to our house, so consequently my companion of necessity had to unpack her personal property and stay at home and care for her father, while I met the appointment alone. At the close of this revival I had six (6) days to meet an appointment in Baltimore, Maryland. On my arrival home my sister-in-law consented to take care of her father so my wife could accompany me to Baltimore. She (wife) had not been feeling very well physically and after some persuasion she finally consented to go, and just before our departure she said, What if I should get sick? I replied, There are hospitals in Baltimore. Gas ration being on we could not take our trailer but we did drive through, arrived safely, contacted the pastor and were given comfortable quarters in the home next door to the parsonage, owned by the pastor's son a policeman and his good wife and daughter. On my previous visit to Baltimore I was forced to stay with a group of policemen, but on my return I was given a welcome into this fine man's home, quite a contrast in these two visits to the city of Baltimore. God is well able to change all things. His grace is sufficient to make the crooked straight, to bring rest to the weary, to give joy to the discouraged, peace to the troubled, happiness to the sad and life everlasting to those that will obey Him. Praise His name.

About five or six days after our arrival my wife took seriously ill and was ordered to the Hospital by the attending Physician. Two specialists were called in and both brought back the diagnosis of cancer in the advanced stages, radium was given and the best possible treatment was given her, but the physicians gave us very little hope for her recovery. I do want to pause here long enough to thank those precious people in Baltimore that we were laboring with in the Church for their kindness, hospitality, prayers and gifts of love. May God's richest blessings be theirs for the marvelous Christian spirit manifested by them in the time of need. Day after day I would walk the streets with tears streaming down my face pleading with the Lord, asking why such a thing had to happen to us when we were both doing every thing we could for the Lord, until one day something seemed to definitely speak to me and say, "My will must be done", and as I had unquestionable faith in God, I said, not my will but Thine be done, and left the result in the hands of God. Wife had heard a part of the conversation between the doctor and me, and immediately questioned me regarding her condition. I made an attempt to avoid her inquiry but she insisted that I tell her so, in as gentle a manner as was possible I told her the truth, we had always promised each other that we would not keep anything secret. Her only change of expression was a tightening of the lips. In a short period of time she improved until she could be moved, by the aid of a wheel chair and ambulance, she was taken to the depot and placed on the train in the berth reserved for her, until a drawing room was vacated a few miles out of Baltimore, which she took to Mansfield, Ohio, from there she was taken by ambulance the distance of thirty-eight miles and placed in a room at the home of one of her sisters. Two of my sisters-in-law had come to Baltimore and while she was accompanied home on the train I drove through to get things ready for her arrival. One sister though

not a Christian did every thing she could and manifested a fine spirit through the following months of suffering, ministering to my companion in every possible way in an attempt to make her comfortable. May God help her and reward her for her efforts.

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## 17 -- TESTING TIMES

A short time after our arrival home I secured a position with a large chain store as manager of the shoe department in order to defray expenses. For several weeks she was in condition that she could be up a small part of the time, and consequently was not so much care, but soon she became serious and we were forced to call the ambulance at about two-thirty in the morning and rushed her to the hospital forty-five miles away where we had made arrangements for more treatments of radium. In a few days time we were permitted to bring her home again, while it was the home of my sister-in-law yet we called it home. While she had been in the hospital we had ordered her a hospital bed and had it placed in our room. Expenses had begun to mount, with Deep-Ray Therapy, Radium, sick room necessities and all, and not knowing how long the sickness might continue, I began to search for something better in the way of employment. I finally accepted employment in a war plant operating a turret lathe at an hourly rate, but on the following day I was surprised to learn that I had been placed on one of the best and highest bonus jobs in the entire shop, where we would make almost as much from bonus as we would from our hourly rate. And again I am praising God for His marvelous love and mercy for I am convinced that He saw my need and gave me this job that when our sickness was finished we could go back into the Evangelistic field without any obligations. Praise His name. Yet expenses continued to mount and at last I advertised our home for sale, and immediately sold it, including the furniture and everything except our own personal belongings; this was no easy task, all that I had accumulated in my life looked as though it was going at once, here was the second part of my statement fulfilled, job gone, home gone. Her condition continued to grow worse and worse but not once did she complain with her lot, I must say she showed the greatest faith in God of any individual I have ever seen. At the hospital in Columbus, Ohio where she had taken the last radium, as she was coming out from under the anesthetic she seemingly had some sort of vision, for she said this world is too dirty, I don't want. to get well and from that day on she never asked for life, only that God would take her from this world of sin and sorrow. Some of you modernists may say there is no such thing as a Vision, but how about Peter, Stephen, Saul of Tarsus and John on the Isle of Patmos, if God could give these men visions, could He not do so today? He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Prayer was offered unto God from almost all over the nation in her behalf but God always knows best.

One afternoon as I was preparing to go to my work my sister-in-law came to me and said that my wife did not want me to go to work as she was feeling very bad. For months the attending physician had said that it was only the matter of a few days at the most, but God had spared her for a purpose, for during the time of her illness two of her sisters were saved, one had been operated on and after I had dealt with her about her soul without any apparent success, we prayed that God would send someone in who could help her to find God and that same day one patient was transferred out and a Christian girl transferred in and she from her hospital bed was successful in praying her through. The other one was taken seriously ill suddenly, I rushed to the hospital and I

believe God heard our cry and saved her a few short hours before she passed on into eternity. However I stayed home that day which was Saturday. Sunday she insisted that I fill the appointment I had to preach at one of the local churches, and on Monday as she lingered between life and death I decided not to go to work until some change took place. On Wednesday I went to our room to care for her needs and after having given her a sedative as the doctor had ordered, she asked me to pray that God would take her out of her suffering at once. I finally found courage enough to ask the Lord to take her to Himself if it was His will, there upon that bed a mere skeleton, normally she weighed around one hundred and forty pounds, now just a shadow weighing fifty pounds, suffering untold agony yet without complaint, such courage, such unfaltering faith in God. Presently she said you can go down stairs now while I rest, returning to my reading and meditation for my messages for the following Sunday. I had been reading only a short time when I heard a moaning sound coming from upstairs. I rushed up the steps to find my Wife in terrible agony, I stepped to her bedside and said, "I believe the Lord is going to deliver you out of your misery." She was too sick to answer but nodded her head and immediately I could see the look of death come into her eyes, I called her sister from another part of the house and in a brief moment she had taken her flight across the line of worlds. As I stood and gazed upon the cold, still form I realized that the third part of my statement had been fulfilled, job, home, now wife. Gone! alone in the world; only those who have suffered such loss can fully understand, the loneliness and sadness.

After the funeral, I went to the factory where I had been employed and tendered my resignation, of course they had known why I was in their employ, and the condition at home and they gave me my release without any hesitation with the assurance that if I ever needed employment they would gladly hire me.

During all these long dreary months I had been working eight hours a day arriving home at twelve o'clock midnight and caring for my wife's needs until nine. Night after night I have been called out of my bed from two to six times of from fifteen to thirty minutes each time, then during the day I would run the errands and study for messages as I preached almost every Sunday. Several times the doctor, (who by the way was a Jewish man) asked me how I ever stood up under the terrible strain, then he would say, the good Lord is surely helping you. I am not complaining, it was my duty and I was trying to do for her as I would like to have her have done for me under reverse circumstances.

During her illness I have seen many Ministers of the Gospel come in with the thought of being a blessing to her, but when they left their testimony would be that she was a blessing to them, as one entered the room there was something sacred about the atmosphere. One lady Minister and her husband a man of God came, and that evening at the service he testified that he felt like bowing at her bedside and asking her to pronounce a blessing on him. I state this to glorify God and to testify of the victorious life that she lived through Christ, because of her wholehearted consecration to Him. At the side of her casket I bowed and said, "Lord, if I can live a life, and leave the testimony that she left, I will not be afraid to lay down this old temple of clay at the end of life's journey. Praise God for some that live lives that stand out, after they have passed on to the other side."

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The next few days were busy ones as I was preparing to move into my trailer car and it was necessary to dispose of every thing that was not needed, so I left all of my wife's clothing for my in-laws to use or dispose of as they saw fit, and moved the rest into the trailer that was to be my future home. The day following my wife's death I received a call from Detroit, Michigan, asking me to come for a revival and so I answered immediately and told when I would be able to come and made preparations to again enter the field of Evangelism. A Ministerial Brother accompanied me to the place and made me acquainted with that fine group of people, and we went into the work with all the zeal we had, in an effort to win souls for the Lord and also to try to forget our own sorrow and loneliness, and thanks be to God for three weeks of marvelous services in which many precious souls found God, backsliders were reclaimed and believers were sanctified, and to God goes all the glory. After this meeting was over I returned to my trailer in my home town and about an hour after my arrival, God opened another door, to go into a needy place for a meeting. Opportunities have been presented, and as they come I have promised the Lord that I would fill every open door where they will receive my doctrine, whether it was large or small.

Months passed along, dreary months of loneliness, filled with memories of other days, the long months of strain and sorrow had had their effects on my physical and mental strength, many nights I have walked the floor of my trailer, weeping and crying with loneliness, nights that no one knew about at that time except God and me. Other nights I would start out in my car by myself and drive until two or three o'clock in the morning trying to find some way of dispelling the lonely hours, and during all this time the enemy was trying to defeat me, and to cause me to break with God, and while I did make some bad mistakes I am glad to say, that every one of them is under the blood, "Hallelujah" and I am still a child of The King, Praise the Lord.

As the months passed I kept busy in the work of the Lord, but I began to feel the need of someone to help me in my work, (one of the last requests of my companion was, that if I could find a good woman to help me in my Ministry that I should remarry) so after much prayer and waiting on the Lord, He (God) sent me a fine Christian Preacher lady for a companion. She is qualified in the field of child Evangelism, and plays the accordion, along with being a real housewife, God knows what we need and when we need it. I had been acquainted with her for several years and here I want to thank God for supplying our need and giving us such a fine companion. We are traveling over this land telling the story of redeeming grace through the blood, in an attempt to help others find the Christ that satisfies every longing of our hearts.

A few weeks after our marriage we were called to speak for a social organization in our home town, and for lack of place to meet they were permitted to assemble in the County Court room. As I stood before that assembly of people, I realized that I was standing on the same identical spot, only with my face turned in the opposite direction, where I had stood some twenty-one years before and heard the Judge say, "It is my painful duty to pronounce sentence on you, and I am forced to give you not less than ten years or more than twenty-five years." But praise God my face was truly turned the other way, where I had stood and faced the Judge's seat, now I stood with my back to it. Floods of joy swept my soul as I realized how God had so marvelously turned me about and set my face like a flint toward a new life of peace and joy without any condemnation or hatred in my heart. I had not only been changed outwardly, but also inwardly, and

was truly a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things had passed away and all things had become new, according to the Scripture as given us by the Apostle Paul in 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 5, verse 17. With Formalism on every hand, the great need of today is the "New Birth" an experiential knowledge of the saving Grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We have colleges and seminaries that are milling out, so called Clergy by the hundreds that never have had a change of heart, and many of them denying the Virgin birth of Jesus. We do not need more Theology but mere kneeology, nor so much information, but more divine revelation, the God that was powerful enough to set this world and the stars in place is surely able to give us a "know so" experience of real Salvation. One man from New York City told me several years ago that he had been a Sunday School teacher for seven years, but could not accept the doctrine of salvation because of the mysticism of it. I said it is not of the head but of the heart, and if we could understand the entire Bible we would be as smart as God, to which he replied, I had never thought of it in that way before. Our minds are finite and we cannot understand all things, but we can know for a certainty that we have been born again, and that every sin is under the blood. In proof of this, I refer you to the following Scripture, 1st John Chapter 1 verse 7, the last clause 1st John 3:14. How sad when we have so many "blind leading the blind" Matt. 15:14 says if the blind lead the blind they SHALL both fall into the ditch.

We have been traveling for nearly ten years in the field of evangelism, over seven of that since wife and I have been married. Some one said after hearing my life's experience, "How can he preach when he has two or three living wives?" To this I reply, My first wife died during the first world war, my second wife died during the second world war and I have my third wife and I am not looking for a third world war. Praise the Lord. We have traveled from Canada to Mexico and from the east coast to the deep middle west preaching the Gospel that is able to save to the uttermost. God has given us two healthy children, little Sue is five years and Larry Lee is eleven months at this writing. I do not feel worthy of the fine companion and children that God has given us, but I am doing the best I can by God's grace to be the right kind of companion to my precious wife, father to my children and above all to be the kind of Christian and minister that will glorify God and win souls for Him.

About three months ago while in a Holiness Association convention in Michigan I was stricken with hemorrhaging ulcers and lost a great amount of blood, wife thought I was dying and ran to call the doctor. During her absence one of the fine pastors we were working with came into the trailer and prayed for me, when the doctor arrived he ordered me to the hospital at once, but I refused then he said it would mean at least three weeks in bed with perfect quiet, with no reading or activities of any kind, again I said, if you folk will pray God will help me. Praise the Lord He touched my body and I did not miss a service. The following week we pulled our trailer house car over six hundred miles in two days across Canada into New York state for our next series of meetings. It is now over four months and we are still continuously in services. While we are not completely healed we are sure our God is ABLE.

We are thankful to be in the service of the King doing what little we can to exalt the precious name of Christ and to help lost souls find their way to God and happiness. So far in my Ministry I have been almost constantly in His service seldom having a day to relax and feed from the messages of others. I am not complaining, I am thanking God that He has seen fit to use me as

His humble servant. Our home is a trailer house car dedicated to God and His cause, and while it is not our privilege to enjoy the comforts of a real home, yet with the song writer we can say,

A trailer or a cottage, why should I care,  
They're building a mansion, for me over there,  
Tho' exiled from home, yet still I can sing,  
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.

As we come to the climax of this brief sketch of my life, I again want to thank God for His marvelous love; for His Son Jesus Christ, and for the fellowship and guidance of the precious Holy Spirit, Who abides in my heart just now. Again as a last warning let me say, "Beware of the cost of sin." It is the destroyer of homes, lives, health, freedom, and all that is near and dear to men, women, boys and girls is in danger because of this monster, SIN.

This story has not been written with the idea of great profit, neither in a boastful spirit, but as a warning to those who read it, and may God's blessing be added to it that as it is read some precious soul may be added to the kingdom of God. May every one that reads this be awakened to the fact that this could happen to you and possibly may unless you turn to God and accept the cure. You may say, that will never happen to me for I am a good moral person, or I have never stolen anything in my life, or even say I am a farmer and this cannot come to me because I am not associated with that class of people. But remember I, too, was good morally, I was a farmer boy, and had never stolen anything, nevertheless, it happened to me and only the grace of God delivered me.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me,  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.

Resolutions fail, man's reform fails, but the transforming power of God that makes you a new creature in Christ Jesus never fails. If you are bound with the habits and desires of the world and have been searching for something to satisfy, TRY JESUS -- and joy, peace and happiness such as you have never found in the world will fill your heart and life and in the end be your passport to Heaven.

As we travel over this land trying to win souls, I pray that we may meet some souls that have been benefited by this story, and to God goes all the glory, in this world and world without end.

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THE END