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THE WAY OF THE CROSS
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Westfield, Indiana

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FOREWORD

Our motive in writing this book is to impress upon the reader that there is a CROSS to be carried, that for the Christian, it must be carried with a smile in the light of the gospel; and for the sinner, it must be accepted by him of his own desire and delight in it also. It is only then that he will delight in the Cross when he has given his whole self to the service of the Cross and the Lord Jesus Christ, and be changed into a new creature.

I realize that we are living in an age when people have turned their eyes from the Cross to a world of compromise, skepticism, and modernism. But the Cross of Christ is just as important and a necessity to one's salvation today as it was about two thousand years ago at its glorious birth. Therefore, we trust that this book will help you to see the necessity, the joy, and the salvation that lies in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

James W. Tharp
Westfield, Indiana
Pastor -- Evangelist

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01 -- AND COME, TAKE UP THE CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME

These words were spoken to a man who was interested in the salvation of his soul. He made his way to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Having received the terms on which Christ would accept him, the rich man was sad at the saying and went away grieved. Many are going away grieved today because they are not accepting the way of the cross. But, dear reader, while infidels, atheists, and skeptics mock and make light of Calvary and its results, I wish to impress you with the fact that it is the only way to the Pearly Gates and it will never alter its true course.

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02 -- THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY OF SACRIFICE

Our text is proof of the fact that the way of the cross is the way of sacrifice. Christ, the redeemer of mankind did lay aside His glory and descended to a state which was lower than the angels. He left the presence of the Father and dwelt among the mortal. He sacrificed His glory and became sin for a sin-pressed and a sin-bound world. The immortal became mortal. From the glory of the Son of God to the sin of the son of man. From the glory of the upper-world to the shame of the underworld. From unspeakable love to unutterable lust. From the spiritual to the carnal. From the spirit to the flesh, and from grace to disgrace. But glory and praise be unto Him, it was from the remedy to the disease. Yes our lovely Christ did sacrifice and it is absolutely absurd for a man to [profess to] follow Christ and fail to sacrifice.

There are countless reasons why men and women of today are not choosing the way of the cross, but I believe it is true that the general mass of people aren't following Christ because of the sacrifice that would have to be made. The rich young ruler came to Jesus but he failed to sacrifice, therefore, he went away feeling grieved. I dare say that if the rich man had made the sacrifice and accepted the challenge, he would not have gone away grieved. Therefore, logical reasoning proves to me that a person is never satisfied unless he is following Jesus. He wasn't happy nor contented before he came to Christ, and because he failed to obey he did not go away happy. We must sacrifice before we are fully following our Christ. Nevertheless, when our ideas, opinions, and plans are all sacrificed it is going to no longer be realized that the way of the cross is the way of sacrifice. We, no doubt, will have to sacrifice some of the legitimate and wholesome things of life,

but it must be realized that in order to follow Jesus, we must do it to fulfill our calling and election.

The rich fool who failed to heed the warning of a divine call, no doubt, did so because he knew that there was a sacrifice involved. Many have asked the question, "Can a person not have great possessions and be a Christian?" I am acquainted with many people who are victorious followers of Christ, but I must say that there are those who have failed to sacrifice and have failed God, failed themselves, and failed their fellow men; Yes, there are those who have great possessions and are in the will of the master, but they have wholly consecrated their possessions to Christ and their will is subject to His command. Thousands are living for time alone, and not for eternity. It must be remembered that where our treasure is, our heart is going to be there. Let us lay up treasures in heaven, sacrifice for the Master, labor while the fields are ready to harvest, and then be rewarded for our deeds done in this life on earth.

Only one life, 'twill soon be past.
Only what is done for Christ will last.

Heaven is going to be worth every effort we put forth in order to gain it. It is going to be worth every sacrifice, every trial, every hardship, and every labor. Let us do our all for the night is coming when no man can work. Our sacrifices in this world will exceed gold-mines in the next world.

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03 -- THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY OF THE NEW BIRTH

The term, "New Birth" seems to startle some people. It startled a man once when he was seeking salvation. The Master told him that he would have to be born again and he was so startled that he asked, "How can these things be?" Jesus explained to him that it would have to be of the Spirit. We must admit that our religious leaders of the day have to a large extent, excluded the term, "the New Birth." The new birth may be called regeneration, justification, conversion, or many other terms, but it is a work that is wrought of the Spirit through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Only through His vicarious death could it be wrought. The new birth is a necessity in order for a soul to be redeemed and escape eternal destruction. Many are asking the question, "Why must I be born again?" Others are saying, "I have done nothing to deserve hell, and God is a just God, therefore, I see no reason why I should deserve everlasting punishment."

Listen, beloved, God classes humanity under two Adams. The first Adam was a creation of God who is the head of the human race. The second Adam is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the human race. The first Adam was a failure because of the fact that he disobeyed God and sinned. Therefore man had to have a redeemer or God could never accept him in the sinful state. But our Christ paid the supreme sacrifice and accomplished the redemption for man. If man has never accepted Christ and has never repented, confessed, nor forsaken his sins he is still classed under the first Adam. On the other hand, if man has accepted Christ by the New Birth, God classes him under the second Adam, the Redeemer. When one has been born again he becomes a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

The New Birth is not Church membership, water baptism, taking communion, or just being a good moral person. These things are results of the New Birth. First, there must be that definite experience of the saving grace of God through the blood of Christ. After the burden of sins is gone, there will be an outward manifestation of the inward work. Many are trying to get in on their good works, but never will we gain heaven in that way. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8, 9) Good works will follow the New Birth but the New Birth will never be the result of good works.

Church membership is good, but it will not suffice for the New Birth. I believe that everyone in general who is following Christ will support some Church. No doubt, there are those who never affiliated with any Church, but they will make it to heaven. Nevertheless, the duty of any Christian is to get behind some orthodox group and push forth the cause of the gospel. On the other hand there are those in the Church who are prominent members, good moral persons, and hold high places in the social realm, but have never experienced the New Birth.

I believe that one of the meanest tricks a minister could pull on an individual would be to accept him into his Church as a member in his unregenerate state and expect him to act like a Christian when he doesn't know his A B C's in salvation. We have many people filling our pews whose names appear on the Church membership record, yet their names have never been recorded in the Lamb's book of Life. I want my name higher than the Church book, for the Church book will burn up but the everlasting record will never burn up when the world is on fire.

The New Birth is the passing out of death into life. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh disobedience."

Once I wandered alone in blackness of night.
Once I struggled alone far from God and the right.
Till I saw I was lost, and in my despair
I fell upon my knees in prayer.

It is like going from a dark dungeon into a beautiful spring flower-garden where the environment seems all aglow. Truly our Saviour can give that kind of experience to anyone who will confess his sins, believe in Christ, and forsake sin, and trust God for his salvation.

The New Birth is a new creation. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17) No one can make the resolution either with himself or with the whole world that he is going to be a Christian and do so without going to Jesus and being born again. Numbers have tried it but it has always failed. It takes that Spirit of God to make a new creature out of one. No one can do it by merely a resolution. Of course, he must first have a resolution involving the will with a determination resulting in the choice of Christ. Then, and only then, will he be able to receive the New Birth.

There has never been enough rain fall from heaven since the foundation of the world to wash away one sin. Never has there been enough chemicals invented by man to erase one sin, nor

has there been enough fire from everlasting to everlasting to burn up one sin. Beloved, it takes the blood of Jesus Christ, but Praise be unto His Glorious Name, His blood is sufficient! ! There is power in the blood to make the vilest sinner clean, to make a new creature out of a righteous man, and give all a new name, a new nature, a new song, a new vision, a new home, a new disposition, a new hope, a new outlook, new friends, and a new desire. Hallelujah! !

The New Birth is a spiritual resurrection. It is a newness of life, and the putting on of the new man. The corruption of the human nature requires it, and no one will enter heaven without it no matter what kind of excuse they have to offer. We are living in an age when philosophy is telling people to reason their way through, Industry says work your way through, militarism says fight your way through, science says invent your way through, fascism says bluff your way through, communism says strike your way through, hypocrisy says profess your way through but the Bible says pray your way through, and Jesus Christ says I am the way through. We may be enticed to go this way and that way, but if we go the Bible route we will not miss the way and it will lead us by the way of the Cross and by the way of the New Birth. The New Birth is the will of God, the mercy of God, and is for the glory of God, in this world and in the world to come.

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04 -- THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY OF HOLINESS

It is surprising how many people are afraid of the word, Holiness. Just as sure as God is holy and dwells in a holy place, He is going to have holy occupants there. He says be ye holy for I am holy. I believe that God expects every Christian after he has reached the experience of regeneration from sins to go on into perfection and attain the experience of Holiness. Some have termed this experience differently. It is called Sanctification, Spirit-filled life, perfect love, heart purity, second-blessing holiness, and various other terms, but beloved, it makes no difference what it may be termed. Since it is a Bible doctrine it must be experienced by every believer. What is Sanctification? To sanctify is to make holy. Sanctification is the state in which one is in after he is made holy.

Many have approached me with this statement: "I do not believe that any person on earth can be perfect." I must say that I never expect to be perfect in man's sight but I must be perfect in God's sight. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48). Some have said, "I do not believe in Sanctification." Well, the truth of it is, that kind of people will never be sanctified because God only sanctifies believers.

I believe Sanctification is a second definite work of grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost when a person comes to the final point of consecration and is willing to say that last and sincere "yes" to the cause of the salvation of his soul. I am not going to be dogmatic along these lines and state that a man must be sanctified one certain way and proceed along one certain route. I believe that when one wholly follows the Bible teachings and attains the experiences that can be based on a Bible foundation, then, and only then will one have a clear ringing testimony that will prove effective and convincing to those who even oppose and reject such teachings.

One first must have every forgiven and under the blood of Christ before he can experience sanctification. He first must have peace with God as the result of sins forgiven. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1). We must not try to cross the bridge before we approach it. After being justified there comes the realization of the vanishing of the sin-burden. Yes, thank God He has cast them into the sea of forgetfulness, and removed our transgressions as far as the east is from the west. Beloved, that is a wonderful transaction. It is something that could never be matched by any friend, magician, or machine. It is by the grace of our glorious Saviour.

But praise God, I have more news for you. He can take the sin principle, that thing that caused you to commit those sins, and He can destroy that sinful nature. And at the same time He will fill you with the Holy Ghost! Glory be to God forever and ever! ! Sin is two-fold, therefore, it must be dealt with accordingly. There is the actual sins which must be forgiven. Then, there is the root of sin which must be eradicated. God cannot look on sin. He cannot tolerate, endure, or accept sin. He only has one remedy for it and that is to forgive them and remove them. He cannot forgive the sin principle, therefore He must destroy or eradicate it. But He can destroy it when we die out to it and surrender to Him on His terms.

There must be a consecration in sanctification. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1). God wants a consecration. The consecration is on our part and the sanctification is His job to take care of us after we are in His hands. The apostle states in the above scripture that it is only a reasonable thing to consecrate ourselves to the Lord. One of the most unreasonable things I can think of is to be living contrary to the will of God. How can one do it and expect to live with Him throughout eternity? There must be a consecration in sanctification.

Our sanctification is the will of God. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. (I Thess. 4:3). I have heard many say that they wanted all that God had for them. Yet, they hesitated when God called them into holiness. I want sanctification because God has it for me and wants me to have it. In fact He says in Heb. 12:14 (without holiness no man shall see the Lord) that I will never make heaven without it. I believe that if every Holiness fighter knew what they were opposing, that they would lay down their opposition and defend it more than they offended it.

Sanctification does not change our human nature, but it does eradicate the carnal nature. If one likes ice-cream before he is sanctified, he will still like ice-cream after he is sanctified. If one loves certain kind of clothes before he is sanctified, no doubt he will still choose the same thing. We must not be so dogmatic as to say that sanctification will change the natural or the human nature. We are human and will remain so until we reach the state of glorification which will take place when we are received as the bride of the Redeemer.

Sanctification does not prevent one from sinning. We are free moral agents just as God created man. If one was not a free moral agent, then he would be merely a machine and God would get no glory from his life. It is that person who voluntarily chooses to serve God and walk in all the light that God gets glory from. Sanctification does not make one infallible. It does not make one subject himself any more than he wills to do so, although, it should affect his will. One should always will to do the right thing. Too many have gotten the idea that Sanctification should make

one infallible, but it does not and if it did, God could get no glory from a sanctified individual because he would merely have to love and serve God and it would not be from the heart or the will.

Just as justification or regeneration from sin comes by faith, so does sanctification. It comes by wholly surrendering and consecrating to God, and asking Him to fill us with the Holy Ghost. Praise His Holy Name! !

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05 -- THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not." (I Cor. 15:34). God has always hated sin, therefore, He must have a righteous people. He will have no other kind. He paid the supreme sacrifice that He might have such a people.

We are living in an age when the world and society look on sin as a social development which must be partaken of. The social leaders and endorsers have invited through publications and radio programs and national advertisements the nation to partake and indulge in the social sins of the day. Some think because such people will endorse such things that it is perfectly wholesome to follow such endorsement. But, dear reader, sin is still sin in God's sight. Sin is just as black today in God's sight as it was 6000 years ago. It is just as blackening, deceiving, damning, and separating today as it was 6000 years ago. Customs and traditions will never affect God's opinion of sin and His judgment on it. No dance sponsor, social leader, liquor retailer, hypocrite, or movie star will ever alter God's outlook on sin. God hates sin. He will get rid of it one of these days. Then righteousness and peace will take its place.

It must be remembered that sin is just the opposite of righteousness. Therefore, if sin must be shunned and abstained from, then righteousness must be pursued and sought. After being born again by the Holy Spirit, the Christian must hunger and thirst after righteousness in order to obtain the experiences which God has for him and wants him to experience. One of the greatest privileges I can think of is for a free moral agent to be whole-heartedly seeking God continuously and invoking His blessing and favor on everything that he does. Praise God for a God who is mindful of us and is willing for us to seek Him in such a manner. It is not enough for a Christian to abstain from all appearance of evil and unrighteousness. It is not enough for a Christian to be satisfied with his normal relationship with God.

It is not enough for a Christian to camp on the same ground every night. There must be a progression of righteousness. I am not advocating an evolution of religion but I am advocating a development and progression in the Christian pathway. We must seek righteousness with the whole heart. "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matt. 7:8). We can be sure of one thing, that God never leaves the thirsty soul ungratified, nor the hungry heart unsatisfied. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28). He is the one who healed the broken-hearted, raised the dead, caused the blind to see, made the lame to walk, cast out demons, restored the sick, and set

the captives free. Praise His most Holy Name! ! ! Yes, it is for us all today, if we will only meet the conditions.

Righteousness is a reality in every heart that wants God more than the world. It can work and manifest itself just as well as it did when Christ walked the shores of Galilee. It can be just as real to a Twentieth Century Christian as it was to the Apostle Paul or Peter. Beloved, righteousness still has its place and there is certainly no substitute for it. All the devils in hell can never hatch up a substitute for the real thing and make it work. Hypocrites know the real thing, and are deceiving no one. The devil knows the real thing when he sees it, and he doesn't like it. He has suggested all kinds of substitutes for true righteousness but none of them will work. We must meet God on His own terms and then follow in His precepts. Unless we do such, we will never be of any value in the Christian realm, nor will our influence for Christ be useful. If we are to take the way of the cross, we must follow Christ all of the way through righteousness and make our calling and election sure and certain. Hallelujah! ! Yes, there may be some professors and hypocrites who profess righteousness and holiness but I know there are some who really possess these Christian qualities. There must first be a genuine dollar before that counterfeit one can appear.

Righteousness is a rival for hypocrisy but an undefeated one. Righteousness will stand its own ground under pressure. It will fence off all substitutes until they have shown their color and are of no avail. Oh, for a righteous Church! If only people would see the necessity of putting under all sham and formality and get the real quality of righteousness in the pulpits, pews, and hearts, then would we see a real progression in this present evil world. God, give us a Church that will thirst after righteousness and not be satisfied with anything that any Satanic power tries to give them; but will only wait until God turns the power-hose on from above and fills up to the top of man's satisfaction that longing for what only God can give. We must be led in the paths of righteousness, have on the breastplate of righteousness, and walk before God in righteousness.

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06 -- THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE

If ever there was any one quality that must be possessed in the Christian realm, it certainly is obedience. It seems to be one of the hardest things to do. But on the other hand, it is one of the greatest things that a human being can do -- obey God. Just as Adam did back in the Garden, so is man doing today. Instead of obeying God, Adam being influenced by Satan, tried to reason his way out instead of obeying his way out. God wants obedience and there is no other characteristic which will fill its place.

To obey God means to obey His voice. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. (Ex. 19:5). God has always desired a creation that would worship Him. He ordained that man should worship Him; and in worshipping Him, obedience is a standing fact. Had God created man and not given him his free moral agency, he would have been merely a machine and God would not have gotten any glory from him. God's object in creation of man was to get glory from him. It seems that it was a failure, yet looking below the surface and above the natural vision, one can see that God has stayed several jumps ahead of Satan and will never be defeated by him,

even though he influenced man and caused him to fall. Still, Satan is influencing men to disobey, yet in man's free moral agency, he does not have to submit to Satan. It is a wonderful fact, that man does not have to bow down to Satan but can obey God if he desires to do so

To obey God means to obey His law. One can never please God and break His commandments. Yet many are trying to do this very thing. One thing sure is that they will never succeed in it. To obey is better than sacrificing. It is better to obey God than to suffer the consequences of disobedience. No man ever disobeyed God and continued unnoticed by God. Whether a sinner or a believer disobeys, it must come to the front and be dealt with either in this life or in the next. There is no detouring the consequences of disobedience. David insisted on disobeying God and his suffering was far greater than his pleasure of disobedience. Jonah disobeyed and suffered untold agony as the results of his disobedience. Samson disobeyed the Lord and had to endure intense humility, pain, and regret. To obey God is cheaper than to disobey Him. The rich man failed to obey Christ and went away sorrowful. Any man who disobeys the Lord will never be in a contented state of mind. It pays to obey.

To obey God means to obey the gospel. Since God provided a redemption for mankind, it is only rational that man should accept, cherish, and obey its story. Many are making shipwreck of their Christian experiences through disobedience of the gospel. Beloved, if ever there was anything man should cherish and accept, truly it is the gospel story. It is the power of God unto salvation to all them who believe. (Rom. 1:16). It has never lost its power, it will never lose its power, and it will never cease to be. If we fail the gospel, we have failed the most important thing this side of Heaven, and we will never be able to make up for its loss. Nothing will substitute for it and if we fail it we disobey. If we disobey we must sacrifice. May our Heavenly Father give us grace if we furnish the man to carry it through whatever be the cost, sacrifice, or hardship. We must obey the gospel.

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07 -- THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY OF SEPARATION

"Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17,18). God demands a separation. He isn't going to separate us but we are going to have to separate ourselves. Man must employ his free moral agency again in the matter of separation. In this present day, it is hard to tell the Christian professor from the movie star in Hollywood. Take a look at the fashions, styles, and actions of the movie world and then compare the Church with it.

Dear reader, it is too bad that the conditions are such. It is time that the ministers proclaimed the situation and cry out against it. Watch that young Jezebel as she drives her large automobile through the city and out to an evening party. She has a steering wheel in one hand, a cigarette in the other, a poodle dog on her shoulder, and a radio is going full blast pouring out some rough, loud, boisterous, vulgar, hellish jazz music. Her lips look as if someone had hit her in the mouth with a red paint brush and her eyebrows look as if a monkey was looking through two button holes, and her cheeks look as if she just came out of the bakery. May God help our

American women to get a glance at such women and see the shame, immodesty, and immorality in it and clean up for God. Walk up and ask such a woman if she is a Christian, and she'll probably reply "I belong to a certain Church." You see, that is what is hurting our religious movements. People want the benefits of them but they don't want to come out and separate themselves from the world.

It is time preachers preached on separation and let the world know that we do have standards which do not run parallel with their standards. May God help us to clean up for God and act like Christians. A person who has never separated from the world will never have an influence on the world. They class the person who looks, dresses and acts like the world right in their own category. That is where such a person belongs. I realize that this kind of message is not very popular but what does popularity amount to anyway? It all vanishes in thin air. Most of our preachers have become soft-peddlers, white washers, compromisers, and know how to handle the crowd to reach their pocket book. May we see an old fashioned confessing out among our ministry. Before we see the Church clean up for God, we need to have a pulpit cleaning.

Beloved, the day is fast approaching when the spirituality of even our so-called spiritual Churches is dropping and going to drop right into the mire of sin. Why? Let me give you the answer. Men aren't separating themselves into and unto the gospel of our Lord. Until they do, they will have no influence on the Church or the world. When I see a man, woman, boy or girl get saved and start separating themselves from the world, I say that person has an experience with the Lord. Praise God, real salvation will make you pull off some things and put on some new things. The things you once loved you are going to hate and the things once hated you are going to love.

It does make a change in the person of an individual when he gets genuinely converted. If it doesn't, then there is no conversion in it. To convert is to change. God will change your disposition, your attitudes, your character, your heart, your nature, your motives, your looks, and ideas if you will only let go and let Him have His way. OH, for a change about from sin to righteousness and then to prove it by separating ourselves from the world unto godliness, cleanliness, righteousness, and holiness. Dear reader, you have something to do to keep yourself spotless from the world and obey God and the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

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THE END