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FROM PRISON TO PULPIT
By Philip Overstreet

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DEDICATED

To my wife, Mrs. Bertha Overstreet, who has been so faithful to me, regardless of my
sinful life, before and after our marriage, and whose life is now a great inspiration to my Christian
endeavor, this little book is lovingly dedicated

By the Author.

* * * * *

A WORD BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." There is nothing in this world that can save a soul from sin and death eternal, but the power of God as revealed through the sacrificial death of Christ. Transformed lives are the living testimonies that commend this Gospel of our salvation. Philip Overstreet, whose life's story is given in this book, is a miracle of the amazing grace of God in its transforming power. This young man in his sinful career had dropped to the low level of an underworld character, and had become a confirmed criminal; however, by the power of God he was lifted from the depths of sin into the highway of holiness. I commend this book to the reading public. Buy it, read it, and pass it on to others.

Rev. B. O. Shattuck
Pastor of Pilgrim Holiness Church
Owosso, Michigan
March 24, 1936

* * *

It has been over three years since Brother Overstreet and his wife were saved from sin. Soon afterwards they became members of the First Pilgrim Holiness Church of Cincinnati, Ohio. They have proved true to their calling and have been a blessing to the church. They have so lived and walked before the Lord and the people that the church has the utmost confidence in them as fellow Christians. God has used Brother Overstreet in revivals, and the call is upon him to preach the Gospel to eternity-bound souls. He will prove a blessing to any church. Hearers will learn afresh what God's wonderful grace can do for a soul that was deep in sin. This book will be a blessing to every reader, and ought to have a large circulation.

Yours in confidence,
J. O. Emrick
Pastor of First Pilgrim Holiness Church
Cincinnati, Ohio

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

In dealing with hundreds of criminal cases, such as daily come to be heard in our courts, we are forced to recognize our ignorance of those forces which mold personality. When a chance discovery does reveal the source of such a force, it becomes a pleasure to expose it as such. Fundamentally, the human race is still dependent upon the same old laws; and we, as individuals, still cling to those social standards which afford comfort, rather than fear and anxiety. We constantly strive to attain that which fulfills the needs of the entire being. Generally speaking, religion does not reach the delinquent, nor the community in which he moves, because social activities within the church do not fill the whole need, nor supply authentic spiritual leadership. Unquestionably, there are clergymen capable of ministering to the delinquent; however, their vocabulary is either too technical or the isolation too complete to impress upon him anything that is memorable, soul-stirring or lasting.

Waging a battle against almost insurmountable odds, a mother's love is the predominating influence in the life of the writer, through his long struggle toward rehabilitation. Hence, in this little booklet it is not his intention to attempt a solution of crime but to deal with a form of maladjustment, indelibly impressed upon his own mind. It attempts to make vivid the experiences of an individual who failed to conform to the demands of society; who has passed many times through our courts, jails and prisons, and whose record has been listed as "delinquent," "incorrigible" and "neglected". It is a description of forces in conflict, and if it can but arouse insight, quicken creative imagination in the minds of the reader, the writer will be content. Delinquency is a great public problem, but force and repression are powerless to reduce it.

Max M. Billman
Hamilton County Probation Officer
Cincinnati, Ohio

* * * * *

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
For The First Judicial District of Ohio
Judges Chambers
Cincinnati

Nelson Schwab, Judge

May 12, 1936

Rev. M. G. Standley,
God's Bible School
Ringgold, Young & Channing Sts.,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Reverend Standley:

In reply to your letter of recent date calling my attention to the fact that Philip Overstreet was released from the Hamilton County Jail on December 24, 1932, on probation.

This was one of the most unusual cases coming to my attention since I have been on the Bench. Overstreet appeared before me and entered pleas of guilty to five charges of robbery. The minimum sentences fixed by the statute for these offenses would be fifty years, while the maximum sentences would aggregate one hundred and twenty-five years.

It was brought to my attention that Overstreet was brought to the bar of justice entirely by reason of his religious experiences. The facts developed that following the commission of the crimes he had been converted in one of our local churches and had confessed these crimes to his minister, who advised him to report to the local authorities. As Overstreet placed the matter before me, he stated that he had made his peace with God and desired to make his peace with man. Accordingly I placed him on probation, and am exceedingly happy to learn that his religious

conversion was a sincere and honest one, and that for almost four years now he has devoted his energies along religious lines in an attempt to salvage others who may be inclined toward criminal careers. He has thus demonstrated to the Court that he has succeeded in rehabilitating himself and has become a useful member of society.

Sincerely yours,
Nelson Schwab

* * * * *

PREFACE

The author has written this little book for the glory of God and for the benefit of the boys and girls needing light on these serious subjects:

1. Sermon. Are parents responsible?
2. Inheritance of crime.
3. Mother's prayers have followed me.
4. A sin-bruised soul.
5. When crime governs the intellect.
6. From prison to pulpit.
7. Sermon: Christ lifted up.
8. How I got saved.

Since God brought the subject matter of this little book to the author's mind, and laid it upon his heart for publication, he believes that with the Divine blessing of God upon it, it will prove a lighthouse by life's sea which will help to warn the young man or the young girl of lurking danger, when they are tempted to enter the life of a robber, and will be an encouragement to all who may read its contents.

Philip Overstreet

* * * * *

My wife and I have prayed for more than two years for the happy time to come when I could rewrite my life story in a more complete form. I feel at the present time the Spirit is ready to help me. I may say, before continuing, that I have the blessing and it is just as real now as when I first experienced it. The Lord has marvelously blessed and kept my family and me. We have learned to carry a burden for the lost and dying that are drooping in darkness and despair, since

God so miraculously delivered me from prison and called me to preach His Gospel. I have related my life story over and over, many times in different cities and towns, city streets and jails, to large crowds and small crowds, to the rich and the poor, to the educated and to the uneducated, but never did I relate it but that I was conscious of the humility that goes with Christian character. I am glad we are "not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

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1 A DUMB SPIRIT

In forming a foundation for the writer's own life story as a child, let us notice a few things in a narrative of Scripture found in St. Mark 9:17, "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit." Notice with me at least three important facts which I feel will profit us:

1. The case of the sufferer.

2. The course adopted by the father.

3. The cure wrought by Christ.

1. The Case of the Sufferer.

The child specified in the text is a fit emblem of the sinner in his wretched and miserable condition. The poor sinner is dumb to prayer and praise, dumb to the reality and joys of salvation. He may have his speech, yet his words are not intelligent. The sufferer named in the text is not suffering because of his own knowledge of sin, but possibly for the sin of some one else, possibly mother or father, and perhaps both. I imagine I can see him as he is being thrown and tossed about by the foul spirit. It has general control of his mind and also of his physical powers.

Sin weakens the intellect, destroys personality, and ripens the conscience for hell. I have observed such where individuals were suffering the loss of health, the damage of a broken constitution; yes, the very symptoms of death were evident. Some were saints and some were sinners. Some were reaping the results of a sinful career of which they themselves were guilty. Others were suffering but did not seem to know why. That question can easily be answered. There are thousands that would give worlds, if possible, could they only retrace their footsteps in regard to their sinful past and live a different life; but the fact is they have waited so long until the devil through his clever art has been successful in getting them engulfed into his great net of doubt and despair. Now they stand a monument of sin, deaf and dumb and blind as can be, ready to scoff at the very idea of living in another world. Remember, friend, every pain that has been suffered by man, from the first born of Adam's race down to the last born of the present generation, has been because of S-I-N. In reading the yearly report of one of our county prosecutors I noticed that there had been heard in the courts of a city more than four thousand juvenile cases in the year 1935. Sad to see the youth of today going at such speed to hell. Parents will be held responsible in many cases. Some had rather see their children become thieves, and land behind prison walls for life in a school of crime, than to let God make monuments of His Divine grace out of them, and let them become missionaries.

In connection with the subject, let us notice a few things that will result in a deaf and dumb spirit. Rev. E. E. Shelhamer says that he was once talking to a well saved and sanctified preacher and wife. The couple had four or five children, one of whom was a thief and a liar and very unclean. The father said to Mr. Shelhamer, "I have to whip this boy more than all the rest put together, and it doesn't seem to help." That drew a question. Mr. Shelhamer asked for an explanation. In reply the father said, "Before this child was born, my wife and I spent the evenings reading 'Peck's Bad Boy,' and roared and laughed in doing so. Later on, it was not 'Peck's Bad Boy' but our bad boy." Poor child, possessed with an evil spirit that he is not responsible for having. Along with this incident, I might say that once while I was traveling home on a passenger bus from a meeting, I heard a child making a whining noise and it attracted my attention. I looked in the direction across the aisle, and I saw a child that looked to be about three or four years old, climbing all over its mother. The mother could not quiet it at all. I gave a more attentive ear to see if I could catch what it was asking for. Oh, how sad my heart was made. I was really sorry that I heard its cry. Listen, this is what it was saying, "Mamma, I want to go out west and be a cowboy

and a gunman." This can easily be accounted for; no doubt that mother had been taking that child and spending hours down town in some ten-cent theater. It gets to see the westerners swing their guns and capture their enemies and herd the steers all at one time to make it as exciting as possible. The devil has a trap set, so he takes this child's tender affections and leads it captive into his net, soon to become a slave to sin and a wanderer away from home.

Multitudes of boys and girls are wanderers today because of a thoughtless mother or father. I well remember that once my family and I were living in a house above a large family. There were five boys, all of whom were about grown. There was much noise, so that one could hardly read or pray. In making an inquiry I learned the most of the noise was broadcast from the mouth of one of the boys, who was only fourteen years old. I wondered how one individual could keep the entire community aroused. The facts were that he had attended so many theaters and read so much fiction that we was being driven around by an unclean spirit. His parents said that he had spells of a maniac sometimes at night. No wonder, with his tender mind filled with such filth.

Are you permitting your little ones to go to theaters and read magazines of fiction? Do you buy your boys the little toy guns and cowboy uniforms with which to imitate the westerners? I see them quite often on the streets, or running each other up an alley, with their little guns waving as if it were real. I see them occasionally, in practicing the art of robbery, jump from behind a telephone post with their guns drawn to make some of their pals raise their hands. If I should serve you justice I should say right here that mothers make a bad mistake, for in many cases they buy for themselves a crown of thorns to wear and add to their sorrow many sleepless nights. How sad it is to see the little youngsters down town on the streets asking strangers for pennies or nickels to go to a picture show or to pitch pennies to a line in learning to gamble. You are making a criminal of your boy, and maybe to face the awful tragedy of his death in the electric chair. I may say this, that since the scales fell from the writer's blinded eyes our children have knelt at least twice a day in prayer and family worship. We believe that will make character quicker than to let them run the streets embarrassing strangers by asking them for money. I believe I would be tormented to know that my children were guilty of any of these indictments in the above lines. I have noticed sad cases where babies two or three years old had their little finger nails painted red, and maybe some ten-cent jewelry hanging around their necks. I guess that helps to strengthen the theory for the evolutionist.

I have also noticed some other mistakes of parents. While they themselves go in to worship the Lord, they leave their children locked in an auto outside. That is why we see so many children that do not care for church; and a lot of them do not appreciate the mother and father, because they know they have been robbed of their early privileges.

Oh, I can say many things along this line, but I am trying to get in some of the most important mistakes that are being practiced by parents and especially among the religious people. Let us not forget at least one more thought. In my estimation it is a thoughtless error of the parents to be gathered around the dining room table with children present, and before getting up make unkind criticisms about the Christian brethren or the church; yes, and even about the preacher who is trying his best to win your child to the Lord. Oh, I imagine that I can hear some one say, "The preacher has gone mad." Well, wait now a minute and we will see if that is true. I know a certain minister who was preaching at a camp once, and who had won the confidence of a small boy. The

boy approached him one day and said, "Mr. ----, I like you; I think you are the best preacher in the world." The minister took him up in his arms and kissed him. The next day the little boy did not pay any attention to the preacher. The minister noticed the youngster's different attitude in regard to their previous friendship, and went to him, intending to talk and play with him. The boy said, "Stay away from me, I don't like you any more, and neither does my mamma or papa like you. I will be glad when you leave." You can imagine what had taken place the night before. The parents had no doubt held a wrong conversation at the table and had turned that child against the preacher overnight, and maybe drove him away from God forever, and also turned him against the church. Oh, sure I still love you, but just thought this little advice would help us to see how careful we as parents ought to be.

2. The Course Adopted by the Father

Every child that is born into the world is a bona fide citizen of the kingdom of Heaven as long as it retains its state of innocence. Parents' greatest responsibility begins with their child back in the prenatal state before personality and humanity are united. When you train a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it. From the high chair to the age of accountability, a child ought by all means to be under the influence of the Gospel. Then if the parents are true to God and to their children, they should take the child and lead him to an altar of prayer to be introduced to Christ as a personal Savior. This attention given to the youth would pave the way to their success and keep them from ever knowing the sting of the notorious vices of sin. It seems as if the father in the text is in great sympathy with his child, as any true father should be, seeing that he had long been in this miserable condition. He has employed the best earthly physicians he knew, but medicine and other human devices were all useless in this case. He then takes his son to the Master. His address to Him calls our attention to the text. "I have brought unto thee my son." He confessed a previous error. "I asked thy disciples, but they could not." Yes, friends, instruments and ordinances are useful, but only so in bringing the sinner to the Savior, the stray sheep to the right Shepherd, and the sick to the right Physician. Listen, friends, you can unite with all the churches in the universe, you can get baptized as many times as Naaman of old, you may possess as much of the morality of religion as Nicodemus, you may be as zealous as the apostle Paul, you may be as determined as was Zacchaeus the publican, you may be as humble as the centurion; but unless your faith contacts the blood of the Lamb of God, you will miss Heaven and go straight to hell. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." -- Acts 4:12. "Ye must be born again." -- St. John 3 :7.

3. The Cure wrought by Christ

As the sympathetic Savior focused His eyes upon the suffering child, He quickly saw an opportunity to destroy the works of the devil and save the child. The father fully stated the case to the Master and said, "If thou canst do any thing for us, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus then states potency of faith, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible." Faith can remove mountains. The man instantly exercised his faith. "Lord, I do believe." Jesus rebuked the foul spirit and commanded him to come out. The cure was so perfect that He forbade the reentrance of the spirit any more into him. How happy the child, and what a wave of glory and blessing sweeps over the father. Say, friends, that far surpasses a pill. Dr. Jesus took him by the hand and he arose. He

did this to comfort and encourage, to support and strengthen. Oh, listen, sinner friend, if you need a helping hand tell the great Physician about your heartaches and pains, and He will quickly respond to your faint cry as He did to the blind beggar on the Jericho road. Yes, Bartimaeus was physically blind, but that is not so bad as many being spiritually blind. We should imitate the blind beggar by crying, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." How blessed it would be to have our understanding savingly enlightened.

* * * * *

2

CHILDHOOD DAYS

I was born December 1, 1902, in the State of Mississippi. My parents lived on a farm out a few miles from a little town called Hattiesburg. As a child, early in life I became dissatisfied with the surroundings at the old home, and began to entertain the thought of leaving home. I had as many privileges as the average farm boy could expect. My parents were very poor. The responsibility of supporting the large family in which I lived depended upon my father's ability, and I decided that for me to leave would lighten the burden for him, by reducing the family number to nine. I began to fight my sisters and speak very unkindly to my mother, expecting my father to run me off from home or lock me up some place. They soon learned that I was just trying to see how mean I could be, and they quickly took steps to reform me. I was old enough to go to school and my parents were glad, for they expected the school teacher to bring about a reformation in my life. I remember hearing them say different times that they hoped I would get a good whipping from the teacher. I recall some real lashings, but none were good.

I did not care for school, for we had quite a distance to walk and usually without any shoes to wear, and sometimes with just a piece of bread. Some days we had nothing to eat at all. Several times I asked different ones for something to eat. I had very few friends for I already had been fighting and picking at just about every young boy on the school ground. The school teacher would whip me so often until I decided to get revenge on her. I thought to get even I would not take any interest in my studies. I was a tough little fellow. Every time I could fool my mother by telling her that I was cold I would slip on an extra pair of trousers so the teacher could not hurt me when she whipped me. It did not take the teacher long to find out that she could not beat the devil out of me. My parents undertook the job alone, and believe me I well remember a few lashings I got from father.

I was getting big enough to do more work and my father kept me busy. I believe that he thought by working me hard he could bring me under better control. He soon learned that to work me had no effect in making me a better boy, for in a short time I was doing as much work as he was. It is almost impossible to imagine one being so poor, though I do not think it is a dishonor to be poverty stricken in this world. Such will not be known in the next world, for the cheapest thing in heaven is gold; we are going to walk on it there. Praise God! We children sat around the table in the kitchen many times to eat corn bread and grease, and have gone as long as a day or two without anything to strengthen us physically. I went many times into the field to gather young corn before harvest time, and spread it out on the roof of the barn so the sun could dry it out as quickly as possible. We would then take it and grate it on a home-made instrument, making corn meal, so we

could have a piece of bread. Those dreadful days are before me as if they are never to be erased from my memory. I could hardly learn anything in school; and when I was promoted from one grade to another, it seemed to be more for pity's sake.

I was now about twelve years old and had been stealing things from the neighbors that lived in the community. My parents would quite often send me to a little store seven miles away for necessary things for the home, and I would always make a few pennies for myself by getting less of what I was to buy. This encouraged me to be an awful thief. I remember numbers of times hearing complaints from father or mother about the short measure or light weight. Declaring my innocence of having any knowledge as to why the weights were light or the measure small, I continued to steal and cheat my father as others. I told so many lies to father and mother that I soon became a professional liar. My conscience did not bother me except for a short time after I committed a crime. I was ready to quit school, as the educational laws were not so binding in those days and I was not learning very much. So I began to play hooky. My parents found it out and kept me at home, and I began to put in full time working at home.

I had a small brother at that time, and was proud of him, for I thought that he would open the way for another excuse when I got ready to leave, because he could take my place in a few years. I had made the remark before some of my sisters that I expected to leave some day and they were looking for it to take place any time.

A friend came along one day and gave me a little pup to quiet my wandering affections. Hunting in that section of the country was of great interest, and soon I could be catching rabbits with my dog. Fishing, swimming, and hunting in those days were a farm boy's greatest pleasures. My small brother had grown to be quite a lad and wanted to accompany me on my hunting trips. I will admit I was somewhat encouraged for a few months. I then began to whip my little brother every time I got him out away from the house. I was determined to leave, but did not have a good excuse more than to say my father was working me too hard and giving me nothing for my labor. Rattlesnakes, bobcats and alligators were plentiful. I thought to use this in developing a good reason for my future attempt. Very frequently we were aroused at night by the wild animals, and especially when bobcats went to war. I counted the weeks and months as they passed. I expected before long to say good-bye to the old home that had welcomed me for almost fourteen years; but now it had no more attraction for me. My father had adopted means of earning more money and had hired several men. This formed a better idea for me than ever. I thought I could easily be spared at home after all these men began to work for my father. I had never been to a Sunday School, and a very few times to church. I was very small at that time. Neither of my parents was a Christian. I had been worked hard, had been whipped by my teacher, and also many times by my mother and father, and went through other ways of punishment but nothing reformed me. I was ready to become a wanderer because I was deprived of the means of the development of Christian character, for all the family were sinners.

I had been going to Hattiesburg for my father with a wagon load of products to sell. I would have to leave at two or three o'clock in the morning so as to make it back sometime that night, for I had about eleven miles to travel. That was the only means of hauling produce at that time, as autos were not yet in use. I well remember the first man in Hattiesburg that owned a Ford car. He passed our home in the country nearly every day, and no one dared to get in my way when

we heard it coming, for I wanted to see that wonderful conveyance propelled without horses, if I had to run over someone. We youngsters were afraid to get very close to it.

I went to town one day with a load of farm products to sell. I was stealing from twenty-five cents to one dollar every time I went to town. One day I was walking down the street of this little town, in my work clothes. My face and hands were covered with dust from the city and the highways. I was en route to a theater, so I purchased a ticket for fifteen cents and went in after the cashier had looked at me so sternly. I had never been in a theater before and I did not know if they were seated or not, or how long one was permitted to stay. I entered and proceeded a step or two, when my eyes got fastened on William S. Hart using his guns. I looked down and could not see the floor, and was afraid to move, so I found myself standing there in the aisle until someone almost ran over me. That and the big guns I saw swinging around made me think that I was in a more dreadful place than where we lived in the swamps among the bobcats. I stumbled around and fell over a man and fell into a seat. The usher had not given me any attention at all. I saw the artistic ability of the famous actor and I quickly decided that I wanted to go out west and become a cowboy when I got ready to leave my home. I was rather late returning home that night and expected father to question me, but I was such a liar that I never worried about an alibi. The theater encouraged me to leave home, and my plans were developing rapidly. Probably I would have left before, but was afraid of father, and I wanted my escape to be a success. My heated desires were overwhelming to become a wanderer at the age of fifteen. This is the way I ended my childhood days, with no other hope than to become a fugitive from justice.

* * * * *

3

A WANDERER

TEXT: "When he came to himself" -- St. Luke 15:17

I am reminded of the prodigal son's experience from a palace to the hog pen. The pangs of sin had already taken hold of me and had just about driven me mad. How many have chartered a special coach on the death valley railroad, expecting a safe landing.

I was preparing to leave for a meeting; I was expecting to ride a passenger bus, so I entered the bus terminal to purchase a ticket. I noticed a young girl sitting near me. She was dressed in a riding suit which made her very attractive to the public. A friend of mine had given me some tracts to pass out on the bus, so I would look at the girl, and then I would read my tract and ask God to give me grace to hand her one. She was puffing on one of these "not a cough in a carload." I did not want people to think that I knew her, so I decided to wait to see if she got on the same bus that I was to ride; and sure enough she did. I bowed my head and asked the Lord not to let me get into trouble by handing this girl a tract. The reason I was so undecided about passing them out was that they were written about the modesty of young girls. The bus started and I began to pass them out to all. When I got back to the rear seat in which I had been sitting, the little girl was standing near my seat to meet me. She asked me what it all meant. That opened a channel for a conversation. She sat beside me as I questioned her about the way she was dressed, and also asked her name, where she was from, and how old she was. She patiently answered every question. She

said she was from a well-to-do family from Kentucky. She had finished high school, and her brother was now furnishing her money to wander over the country. I asked her how long she had been smoking cigarettes. The reply was six months. I warned her of the lurking dangers awaiting her just ahead. She was sixteen but could not see her awful mistake. According to what one noted writer says, boys and girls of that age are going over fool's hill. No one can tell them or show them their mistake, but they have not judgment enough to spit the tobacco juice off their chin. My experience as well as that of thousands of others will harmonize with this statement. They have not yet arrived to years of full understanding and of moral stability.

Now back to the story. I had bought a box of shotgun cartridges, expecting to go hunting once more before I left. My plans were to make the attempt when my father went to town instead of sending me. Early one morning, he said he was going to town, and he assigned me enough work to keep me busy until he returned home. After he left, I got the old shotgun and my box of shells and went out in front of the home. I pointed my gun toward the sky and shot it until it became so hot that I could not hold it in my hands. You may wonder why I did that. I was mad and was fixing to leave, and I did not want my father or anyone else to enjoy hunting with them. Mother came running out to stop me, but I made my get-away.

There is where sleepless nights began for mother. They made no attempt to locate me, for they thought one experience would bring me to myself as it did the prodigal son. I found employment at a sawmill at a salary of four dollars and fifty cents per week. I was to pay three dollars of that for my board. I was not so long deciding not to take much interest in work. I used what I had left from paying my boarding expense to learn how to gamble, such as playing cards, shooting dice, and playing pool. The devil has his net waiting, and it is well baited, especially for the youth. I soon gambled away my shoes and clothes, and got homesick and started back to the little home in the swamp, barefooted. Poor prodigal, when he came to himself, he said, "I will arise, and go to my father." I had to retrace my trail. Say, but I was embarrassed, for I had put on a little pride since I got out where I could see a little of the world, but did not have sense enough to keep shoes on my feet. I had eleven miles of gravel road to walk en route back home. My feet were very tender, for I had worn shoes for a few months. As I journeyed down the highway toward home, the gravel was very painful and I was just about ready to start crying. The thought of the professional racketeers taking my money with their art in gambling made me more determined to run the race with a hundred to one odds against me.

I had not traveled so far until a neighbor picked me up for a ride. He asked me where I was going, and I told him back to father's house. There was not much said about my bare feet, because he had never seen me many times when I was wearing shoes. I suppose he remembered when father and I used to get up early and go out to work among the briars and brush. Sometimes I had as good as a pair of cloth shoes, but sometimes not any, and my feet broke open many times and began to bleed. I remember times when a tough callous was formed on the soles of my feet, so tough that the graveled roads had no effect on them. As the neighbor and I journeyed toward the old farm home, we soon arrived in sight of it, and I told him to let me out because I wanted to go in from the rear of the house. I did not think that I was worthy to enter at the front. I met my father and he said, "Well, son, do you feel any better?" As good as to say, "Have you come to yourself, as the prodigal son did, when he said, 'I will arise, and go to my father'?" No doubt, the night before these words were uttered from the lips of the prodigal son standing in the pig pen, his heart was

melted under a great nightmare as the scene of the old home passed before him. He saw mother weeping, sister crying, and father pleading.

I was dealt with tenderly by my parents. One would think that just one dreadful journey such as I have described should reform a mother's boy as it did the prodigal son. One trip was enough for him. Mother heard someone talking in the kitchen and she knew it was her son, for she recognized my voice. She took me in her arms and held me real tight and kissed me on the cheek and said, "I knew my son would come back home." She looked me over and saw that I was without any shoes to wear, and she began to weep, but said, "Son, mother will get you a pair of shoes."

There was once a little boy that was very disobedient to his mother and father. The mother handed the little boy a basket of nails one day, and said, "Son, take this basket of nails and this hammer; and every time you disobey mother drive a nail in that tree. After so long a time the boy had driven all the nails. He returned to his mother and said, "Mother, I have driven all the nails. What should I do now?" The mother said, "Take the same hammer and basket and every time you obey mother draw one of the same nails out that you have driven into the tree." Not many days hence he returned to the mother, and said, "Mother, I have drawn out all the nails, but look at the scars on the old tree." Yes, young people, sin will leave wounds and scars that only the Son of God can heal.

My mother soon bought me a pair of shoes, and I was ready to leave again. It seemed as if I could not be satisfied at home any more. The one experience was not enough to convince me that I could not make a success in my plans.

Well, do not forget that the gateway to my life story is a subject about a deaf and dumb spirit. I bade the family all farewell, except father, and he was in town. I found myself working again at the same job at the sawmill, but my pay was a little more. They gave me six dollars and fifty cents per week. I had gotten a taste of gambling and could not resist the habit. It was not long until I was without shoes again. I hardly knew what to do this time as it was getting near wintertime. The devil led me by a home out a short distance from town, and said, "Now, it will soon be cold weather, and you will have to have some shoes, and you are not working so you can buy them. Just go into that house there and look behind the door, and you will find a new pair that will just fit you. No one is looking, and the people of the house are not there." I went in, and sure enough there was a pair of shoes that just fitted me. I put them on and began to wear them around in the community where I had stolen them, just as though the devil had really given them to me.

After a few days a policeman came to me and said, "Well, Overstreet, I will have to take you with me." I acted as though I did not know what he meant, until he asked me to pull off those shoes that I was wearing. He did not take me to jail, but rushed me into court the same morning. The judge imposed a fine of ten dollars upon me, that was to be paid in a certain period of time or I would have to work out my fine on the chain gang. A friend of my parents paid the fine for me, but I was without shoes again. I became bitter toward about everyone I knew but the man that paid my fine and the friend that gave me my next pair of shoes. I would not go back to work, neither would I go home. I just wandered about from house to house, and from town to town. It was getting near Christmas, and it looked as if it were just going to be another day with me. It was now late in the month of December. The holidays were approaching fast. I borrowed a gun from a man I knew,

telling him that I wanted to use it in hunting. Of course I did not tell him what my expected game was to be. I wanted some money to spend for Christmas, so I went into the forest to shoot a wild pig, intending to take it to the market. I was standing alone upon a stump of a tree and I saw a large pig as it was coming toward me, unaware of its intended execution. I drew my gun and tumbled the pig. As I walked to where it was dying, I saw that it was too large for me to handle alone. I went for help, and not having so far to go I asked a colored man if he would do some hauling for me. He asked me what was the nature of the dredge. I told him that I had been given authority by a certain man who owned a large herd of swine in a section of the community, to shoot all I could and take them to the market. I told him I had killed one about three miles away and had no way to get it to town. He accepted the hauling with his horse and wagon, and made arrangements immediately to go back with me to get the pork. We hoisted the big four hundred pounds on the wagon and started for his home, where he was to help me dress it for market. As we entered the highway that led to town we were met by the officers from Hattiesburg. They began to wave their guns, telling us to raise our hands upward. We obeyed the command, and I never heard such pleading from a colored man in my life. He knew the officers in the South usually shoot, and ask questions afterwards. We were both arrested and taken to jail in Hattiesburg. That is the way my early wanderings ended.

SENT TO TRAINING SCHOOL

The prisoners quickly asked me why I had been put in jail and I told them for shooting a pig. After laughing a few minutes they said to me, "You will get at least five years in the penitentiary." That frightened me until I could hardly sleep the first night. The next morning one of the prisoners asked me to come to the window. I looked out and, behold, there was the pig that I had shot the day before, stretched out in the same wagon in which we had hauled it. They wanted to be sure the evidence against me would be sufficient to send me to prison, so they were keeping it until after my hearing in court that morning. Every time I would look at it, something would seem to say, "Five years."

My mother soon visited me and prayed and wept there in jail. She had recently been converted to Christianity. One of the prisoners noticed how patiently mother was working with me, trying to show me my mistakes and make me sorry for the awful crime. He said to me one day, "Philip, you're on the wrong road. You have a good mother and if you are fortunate enough to get out of this, you go back home and stay with your parents." He had been a robber for years and said, "Philip, I am now about sixty-five years old and haven't anything to show for the thousands of dollars I have stolen." I learned later, down through the years, to appreciate good advice. I was kept in prison through the holidays, and, after the first of the year, I went to the final trial with an indictment of grand larceny against me. After the court heard the evidence against me, the judge asked me what was my plea, guilty or not guilty. I entered my plea, guilty, and was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary or to an indefinite period in the Mississippi Industrial Training School. I expected to become a successful robber some day, so I chose the prison term rather than the school where I could get an education and also have the privilege of learning any trade I desired. I thought that by being in prison with older criminals I could soon learn something about the cleverness of crime. The best lesson I ever learned in prison was that crime doesn't pay.

My father noticed the attitude I had taken and came to see me in jail, asking me if I would go to the school if he could get the court to rehear my case. I told him I would, so the judge gave

me another opportunity to choose between the two, and I preferred the school. I was soon on my way to Columbia, Mississippi, where the institution is located. I was sure of at least one thing, that I would not stay there unless they had high walls for safe keeping. I arrived at the school early in the afternoon and before they had time to tell me where I was to sleep that night I made my first attempt to escape. I did not get very far. It was raining so hard that I thought it would be clever to go underneath the floor of the dormitory. I crawled as far back in one corner as I could get, and thought that because of the darkness they might overlook me if they had any suspicion of my hiding somewhere close. Sure enough some one saw me go into the basement, and notified the faculty. Soon I heard some one talking, that seemed to be advancing in the direction where I was hid in a dark corner. The next thing I knew a large man had me by the feet, dragging me toward the hole that I had entered at the basement. I faced a large number who were waiting to laugh at me because I did not get any farther than a dark corner beneath the building. They laughed as though to say they never made such unsuccessful attempts as I had made.

A man whose name was Yates, that had taken me from Hattiesburg to the school, was present as the strong man fished me from my hiding place. Mr. Yates saw that I was mad at the man who had been delegated to the task of finding me. He asked me if I thought I could whip him. I quickly said, "Yes, sir. He was a large man, but I was so mad I thought nothing of the size.

After several attempts to get away I was successful by spending a night in the swamps among the bobcats and other wild animals. They would have eaten me up had they known where my bed was for the night. After a day and night in the jungles I started for the forty-mile hike. Reaching home, my parents warned me that if I did not go back without any expense to the state, when they did get me they would send me to prison. The family were glad to see me. I soon went back to the institution and was treated with the very best of kindness. I had learned the act in getting away, so I knew when I got homesick again I could go see mother. I did that a few times. The school authorities were using all the means possible to make a man of me. I was going to school three days a week, and working three days. I was practicing in a brass band with a splendid opportunity to become a musician. I was their favorite boy to use in apprehending the runaways. After I had been there for some time, I went alone from the school into other states to return girls that had run away from the school and had been captured in some other town. The faculty saw the making of a man in me, but after doing all they could to help me, they gave me the rope to see if I would hang myself; as though to say, "Here is the opportunity of your life; take it, or leave it." I was trusted in many other ways and given privileges which the rest of the four hundred boys were deprived of I never as much as one time thought the opportunities of that school would mean anything to me in later years, for I believed I had rather be a robber than anything the school could turn out.

I stole things the entire period of my stay there. Every time some of the boys would miss their shoes or clothes, one could hear different expressions like this, "Philip is getting ready to leave again; I lost my silk shirt last night." The next one maybe would miss his trousers. Different ones told me to let them know when I got ready to leave again, for they wanted to go with me. The farmers along the highways received a five dollar reward for every runaway they captured. In many cases the boys were caught because they didn't know but what the farmers would shoot them when they drew their guns.

I stayed there about two years, and just before I made my final escape the president was anticipating giving me employment at the institution, at a salary of fifty dollars per month, and my expenses paid. They had noticed my success in recapturing the boys and girls that would run away. I left and never did return, but I ran away from the best opportunity that ever awaited me. I went home and stayed for about two years. The faculty made no attempt to return me. I want to say a word while it is fresh on my mind, for the glory of God; I preached at that school in 1935, to three hundred of the boys and girls. I could say much more about my experience while I was there but I chose to make the story more brief.

My father had sold the old home and bought a smaller one near Hattiesburg. He quit farming and had been employed as superintendent for a lumber company. I expected to have it rather easy, for my father's income would easily furnish the supplies of the home. I was trying my best to be a respectable boy around the home and in the community. One evening my mother asked me to accompany her to a religious gathering not so far away. I complied with her wishes, except to say that I would not go inside the building. I had already laid plans to rob a man who lived near where the gathering was in progress. It was not very long until the neighborhood was aroused by the explosion of a shotgun. My mother said to some of her friends sitting by her in the church, "I guess that was some one shooting Philip." She had said many times to me in the past that I would die with my shoes on before I was twenty-one years old, indicating the death of an underworld character. Sure enough, a few minutes later, mother on her return home heard me groaning. She rushed to the spot where I was lying in my blood and asked me if I was shot. I said, "Yes, I was stealing something from Mr.----, and he shot me with his shotgun." I was rushed to the hospital, where I suffered the expectation of having my right leg amputated. Through the goodness of God I soon recovered and was out hobbling around again. Some people that knew the details of the crime were afraid I would seek revenge on the gun user. Some friends of my parents thought it would be wise of me to leave the community. I started out to wander over the country.

There was plenty of work at that time. All one had to do was just to say he wanted to work. I loafed in a city in Louisiana one night en route west, bumming money and knocking at back doors for something to eat. Before I left there, the police were notified of a man getting rapped on the head and robbed. As big as the city was, the police came straight to me where I was awaiting a train in the railroad yards, and took me to jail, putting the handcuffs on me as if I were a desperado. I was very blue. I thought of the world being so broad, and yet held nothing but thorns for me. I was identified as the boy who slugged and robbed the man. I was facing a sentence of seven years in prison, but after three days they captured the guilty one and I was released with the understanding that I would get out of town as quickly as possible. Poor boy! No friends, no place to lay his head, and discouraged as could be. It seemed as if there was upon me a mark of distinction that made it easy for the police to identify me among the thousands of others. I wished the earth would open its mystery mouth and swallow me up.

I traveled back toward home. Arriving home I told mother how I so narrowly escaped prison and was innocent of the crime for which I was about to suffer. I got a job with the lumber company where I had formerly been employed in my earliest wanderings. I worked but a few weeks. I then got acquainted with a few roughnecks and petty thieves, and began to associate with them. Soon I wound up in the little jail in Hattiesburg again. Mother was praying and running the highways daily for my interest. I had rented an auto from a "U Drive It" Company and hauled some

stolen merchandise. Someone who knew me had notified the sheriff's office about my having a Ford car. The police knew I didn't own an auto so in their scientific means of tracing clues they went to the "U Drive It" Company and identified my handwriting. I thought I was prison-bound this time, but mother in her sympathetic appeal to the court to spare her boy from going to prison won my release again.

I felt embarrassed to face the community in which my mother lived, so I pulled out to Mobile, Alabama, to sail on a ship to a strange country. I was successful in getting employment on a large cargo preparing to leave for Cuba. That experience was thrilling, for it was in the spring of the year when storms are bad at sea. I was gone for about three weeks and returned. After receiving my three weeks' pay, I entered a card game and lost my money. I knew that I was not wanted as an employee any longer, for I had talked quite rough to one of the engineers. I got ready to leave for Hattiesburg, from New Orleans, Louisiana, and I robbed one of the sailors. Let me pause long enough to ask you if you can see the demon that had control of me. I just had to steal or rob all the time. The nature passed on from about the third generation back on my father's side. But let me say this, to his honor, I never knew of a lie he told, or a penny he ever stole. My mother had a like record.

I reached home and told my people of my sea experience. I had become such an active figure in crime around Hattiesburg that I was afraid to go to town, fearing I would be picked up by the authorities. My mother requested one afternoon that I drive the old Ford to town, that she might do some shopping. I had just parked the auto when I heard a rough voice say, "Raise your hands." I looked around and saw the sheriff to take me back to jail. I was locked up without the privilege of talking to anyone, not even my mother. I went to court the next morning with a charge against me for aiding prisoners to escape jail. I was as innocent as a lamb, but the sheriff had promised two men their freedom if they would swear a lie to convict me. Both men raised their hands heavenward and swore that they saw me tie the hack saw to a cord that was let down from the second floor of the jail, and saw them as they were fished upward. The sentence was read to me; it was from two to ten years in prison. One of the men that swore the lie died and went to hell, a whiskey-soaked, paralyzed drunkard. While he gnashes his teeth in hell, the one about whom he swore the lie shouts the victory over all his foes with an ocean of joy, perfect rest, and the hope of eternal life in a world of glory and felicity.

I was to wait the action of the grand jury, which met only twice a year. Rather than to stay in jail until further action could be taken in the case, I was released on bond which I skipped on advice of my counsel. That was to keep the trial postponed as long as possible, so as to wear it out. There were people who believed I was innocent and did not want to see me sent to prison on the lies that were sworn by the men. I had built up such a bad police record that I thought the best thing for me to do would be to say farewell to all. I thought to do that I might as well do some more, so I went to a bank on Friday and got a handful of blank checks. That night I forged the names of a dozen different men to the checks, and on Saturday afternoon I passed them out to various business places and received the money. Sunday, the following day, I was to leave, for I knew it would not do for me to be near Hattiesburg Monday morning, when the people I had given those checks to began to present them at the bank. A man that I knew accompanied me to the depot to purchase my ticket to Cincinnati, Ohio, as I did not want to show my face to the cashier. We might fool the police or the bloodhounds sometimes but no man is possessed with wisdom enough

to fool God. I thought as soon as I told my friend good-bye and swung the steps of the fast mail train as it began to pick up speed that my troubles were all over and I would soon be among strange people in a large city where the police didn't know me. After riding all night, the dawn of the day welcomed me to the beautiful snow-covered mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky. When I arrived in Cincinnati, the snow was about seven inches deep on the streets and the temperature was almost zero. I had never seen but one snow before, so the strange climate, city and people were something new to me.

"Out in the wide world, somewhere roaming,
In the misty chill of this twilight gloaming,
Homeless and friendless, with only the care
Which Heaven provides for the birds of the air:
Only sad stars overhead,
And a heart overwhelmed with devouring despair --
Out in the wide world somewhere -- somewhere.

"With garments all tattered, and filthy and worn;
With feet that are blistered, and shoes that are torn;
With eyes that are heavy, and drooping, and dim;
And a heart that is veiled in the dust of his sin,
Besmeared with the slime
Of evil and crime,
You would not think it, but down deep within
A door stands ajar, and you may go in.

"In the bygone hours of the old long ago,
Before the winter of vice, with its ice and its snow,
Had chilled the faint heart, I once held the key --
This object of pity once sat on my knee;
I smoothed the fair head,
And kissed the lips so red;
Oh, cruel the hand that has taken from me
This gem from my heart -- life's sad mystery!

"O wide world so mighty, so vast, and so old!
O wide world so heartless, unfriendly, and cold!
Despise not this wretch, for once he was fair
As the jewel which decks the young maiden's hair.
Oh, rescue this one,
For he is my son,
And God will answer a mother's prayer,
As he wanders world-wide somewhere -- somewhere.

"Sin and crime, which evermore brings
Its withering woe to peasants and kings,
Hath blighted this life, so gifted and rare,

And left it a wreck, unsightly and bare.
While loving hearts must ache,
And sometimes break,
Will Heaven not heed importunate prayer,
And rescue the wanderer SOMETIME -- SOMEWHERE?"

* * * * *

4

INSANITY OF SIN

I found employment, soon after I got located, on the west side of the city. My job was not permanent, and I was soon laid off. My wages per week were twice as much as what I had earned in the south at the lumber company. I was quite encouraged for a while. At that time work was plentiful; men from factories and machine shops would come out on the sidewalk and ask one if he wanted to work, if they thought he wanted employment. I worked at a number of different jobs but none were permanent, and I lost all interest in work. I met a young lady of German descent, who became my wife three years later. I did not want her to know that I was or ever had been in trouble, so I kept it a secret from her until after our marriage. It wasn't so very long until she noticed that I was getting along as well when I didn't work as when I worked. I had found a pool hall and other places where the underworld were associated, and had gotten acquainted with some of the roughnecks and began to steal and rob. This lasted up until my conversion ten years later. I did not work on a job three months at a time ; I had jobs that paid as much as three hundred dollars per month, but I would work on them just long enough to find out whether the company paid off in cash or with checks.

Crime had taken such possession of me that I continually had to be into mischief. It made no difference to me how large or how small the crime was, if it gave me relief. Robbing with a weapon became so practical for me that I thought nothing of going in on dozens of men at a time, to stick them up; or to step in an auto up town while it was moving and take what the occupants had, then get out, leaving them the command to drive on. My heart became as hard as stone. I am supposed to have killed three men in my career, but I am innocent. About the nearest I ever came to shooting a man was once when I made an effort to rob him and he threw a quart bottle at me. I fired my gun at him, but according to the newspapers he dodged the bullet. This recital of crime is for no other purpose than to show the reader how deep in sin I had gone, and how hard it makes the heart. I would not begin to write all of the experiences of my career in crime but just a few things to give you some idea of my life.

I never had to drink anything intoxicating or to get dope injected into my arms to get courage enough to rob a man, for I was hardened to crime at an early age. People that my wife and I knew were afraid of me. My wife had one sister that said she would not let me in her home except my wife was with me. This was after I married and my wife's people suspected me of being a robber. I was working when I married, but that was only for a sham. I worked just a few weeks after the wedding, and told my wife I was going to gamble for a living. We have three little girls who were also afraid of me, and would run to their mother for refuge when they saw me coming. I showed very little interest in my family, as I gambled, smoked, swore and drank; but my wife

worked and kept the babies a home. I have been so drunk that I would lie down across the street car track just to make the motorman sound his bell or get out and pull me off the track. I was a maniac in sin and crime. I became a bank robber, kidnapper, check forger, counterfeiter, burglar and hijacker. During the last two years of my career I had become such a slave to sin that my health was very poor. My nerves were wrecked. I smoked from two to three packs of cigarettes per day, and stayed out many nights all night, drinking and gambling. I wound up being the loser of the best thing I ever owned, that was my health. Thank God, I have been to the great Physician and have been healed.

The last two years of my course in crime I was more desperate than ever, for the six hundred police of Cincinnati were looking for me day and night with the authority to shoot me down anywhere they saw me. A man with whom I was acquainted had gone to the police headquarters and told them that they could not take me alive, for I was going to shoot it out with them. The detectives asked me later if what they had heard was true, and I said, "Yes, for I thought that was my only way out." I had never read a chapter in the Bible in my life. I didn't know that God had so ordained a channel for our redemption and a way for such a wretch as I to escape hell. I was waiting for the police and had my guns where I could get them at a moment's notice. I slept with my shoes and clothes on, but never slept so soundly but what most any kind of strange noise about the building would arouse me.

One night about ten o'clock I lay down but could not rest. I heard the rough voices of men, and I sprang to my feet to look out at one of the windows where we had lowered the shade to the sill. I saw across the street, opposite my house, a special car load of police, called the riot car or the cruising squad. They keep well armed with artillery so that a single man or two have no chance in a battle with them. I thought they were fixing to surround my house; so I grabbed my two guns, kissed my wife good-bye, went down to the rear entrance and waited by the gate with both guns drawn, ready to get them one at a time as they passed through the yard. Old conscience, that has caught hundreds of bad men, was at temporary ease; for I found out that the police were after a thief next door. I went back to my apartment, but could not sleep for dreaming of hell. God was showing me that my cup of iniquity was full, my career ended, and my course finished. After men have become impiously and daringly profane, God has been slow to punish, and has given extended time for repentance. This was a night of supernatural warning.

I was having to stay off the streets as much as possible, depending on some of my associates to let me know when they had located a place to rob. I had the police to look straight at me many times, but they could not identify me because I would sometimes have on work clothes, then sometimes a mustache. I had a number of aliases; I was better known as Edward Thompson, in Cincinnati, than by my real name. Because of the threatening danger of getting captured, my wife and I had to move sometimes twice a week. Thank God, we have moved from old Egypt's sand into Canaan-land. It was very expensive to be moving so often, and I wanted my wife and children to board with my mother-in-law; but she knew her time with me was limited, and she wanted to be present when the end came.

I went out one afternoon to rob a collector of several hundred dollars. When I returned home my wife handed me a letter. After some time I broke the seal and this is what the letter said. "Come home, son; your father is dead." That was like a stab with a knife, as I knew my father had

always been in good health. I paused to read for a moment, and as I continued I saw the news that erased all excitement. The letter explained how father had been converted nine months before. The day of his departure he stood up in a little church on Sunday, and made this request known to the congregation: "I want all the Christians to pray for Philip that God will convict him and save him." He instantly dropped to the floor dead with high blood pressure. I said to my wife, "Bertha, I would go home if I could get out of town without getting captured."

After a couple of months of such fear, the white caps of justice were getting so close on my track that I had to be rushed out of Cincinnati across the river into Kentucky. I hid out in the country at a farm home for a few days, expecting to leave for some other city. To my surprise, the third day there came a patrol load of police to arrest my pals and me, but I escaped by running into the swamps. I ran about two miles and came out on a street. There I met some more of my buddies en route to my hide-out to assist in getting me out of that part of the country. They picked me up, and I quickly told them that the police were out at the house to which they had started. In turning around one of them said, "You don't want to go back over in Cincinnati, do you?" In reply I said, "Just long enough to tell my family that I don't expect to come back to the city any more and don't know when I will see them again."

Arriving back in the city, I found that my wife had already moved from where we lived together last. Through a telephone call I soon found out where she had moved. She knew that the police would continually be questioning her as to where I was, so she had to move to a new address. I went to the new address and found her. I stayed three days and nights, and didn't go out of the building. Most of the police knew my wife, since she was small, and Cincinnati was her original home. My time was limited at the address where she lived, for I knew they would soon trail her, expecting to find me. I sent for some more of my pals, as I knew many of them and it was no question to get in touch with any one I wanted to see. These boys were driving an auto with puncture proof tires, which we used in the racket. We also had beneath the floor board in front a specially built box that would hold several guns, which we usually kept full. The car arrived at the address just in time to see the police riot car cruising around the block in which I lived. I was watching them from a glass door. My pals blew their horn and I dashed out to the car, and was taken that night one hundred forty-five miles. I had no money, my clothes were all rags, and my shoes were very much worn. I was headed for Hattiesburg as an outlaw. I caught the blinds on a fast train in Danville, Kentucky, having to ride about seven hundred miles. I had no money, no friends, and had to knock at the back doors to get a handout. It hardly seemed real as I had been so elevated in self-sufficiency and pride, having been very well fixed a few times, financially speaking. It took me a long time to learn that crime doesn't pay.

I reached home safely, but my face and clothes were so black that my mother could hardly distinguish me as her son. My sisters began to tell me how my father died and what his dying request was. I knew they were trying to see if my old stony heart could be melted, but I did not show any signs of emotion. Mother asked me to go to church with her but I said no, the church could not help me. She said, "NO, son, but JESUS can." I would not go with them. Soon after they were gone some boys that I knew when they were small came to spend the evening with me. One of the visitors requested that we have fried chicken while my people were gone. I consented without any persuasion. We then went to a home near by; I entered the poultry house, fastened on to the largest chicken I could find and started back to the home to prepare it for lunch. We had to be

speedy about it, for the family would soon be returning from church. I remembered what my brother had told me about his religion and how he had to make restitutions. I laughed at him and said, "I do not believe in your kind of religion because I could never make my past life clear." I reminded the visitors that if they got the kind of religion that my brother had and mentioned my name in this chicken theft, I would get them the next time I saw them. I said, "You know that I'm a robber and kidnapper, but don't want to be known as a chicken thief."

I stayed at home for about four weeks, as close to the old shotgun as I could, for I was looking for the white caps at any time to come for me. During these four weeks at home, while dodging the Cincinnati police, I read my first chapter out of the Bible. I got ready to leave Hattiesburg and felt led to go back to Cincinnati, knowing the police in the east were looking for me day and night. As I left I asked mother to pray for me. That was the first time I ever humbled myself at any time. My shoes had worn out while I was in the south, and my brother gave me a pair of his that were much too large for me. I had a few dollars that had been given to me, but I kept it and stole my way back to Cincinnati.

After several days of riding, and walking, I reached the city. En route to the new address, I met a man I didn't want to see me, for I knew he would notify police authorities that I was back in the city. This resulted in my having to stay in the house again and not be seen on the streets. This time, instead of three days, it was almost three months that I did not see the sidewalk. My wife would have to walk miles out of the way en route home to keep the police from capturing me. I could hardly rest day or night; you can imagine how miserable I was. I was so sure that something was going to happen in my life that I told my wife to take out a large insurance policy on me. I thought I was going to be killed or kill someone and get electrocuted. I instructed my wife to take my body to the potter's field and keep the insurance money for the support of the home, if I should get killed.

One day I asked a pal of mine if he owned a Bible. He said, yes, and that he would give it to me if I wanted it. My wife was a Roman Catholic and did not believe in the Protestant faith; so I had to get her converted to the Protestant faith first, which I thought would be quite a job. The little Testament was given to me and I began to read and study it, receiving much comfort, as I found so many promises that formed the prospect of a way out of all my trouble. My wife was very proud and would laugh at the very thought of being converted, which made it rather difficult for me. Such conviction took hold of me that I didn't care whether my wife was converted to the Protestant faith or not; I was going to get saved if God could save a wretch like me. I didn't want my wife to hear me pray; so I would send her and the children out for a walk, but did not let them know the reason for my strange move. I wanted to pray, for that is the only way man will find relief. Tears would fall from my cheeks but no witness came. That continued for a few weeks.

The police wanted me for at least six robberies, and I couldn't bear the idea of going to church. I asked my wife one Sunday afternoon if she would go first. We knew where just one Protestant church was in the city. She consented to go to it, if I would keep the children. That was not hard for me, for I was having to stay in anyway. I asked her if she would please go to the altar and get saved and tell me how it felt, and if it felt good I would go with her the next night. Police or no police, the thing was getting serious. When we lose sight of the surroundings, regardless of what they may be, then God can do something for us. My wife returned after the service. I was

sitting up, awaiting the news. Sure enough, she came in running, with her hat in her hand, a smile across her face, a sparkle in her eyes, a spring in her heel. She began to tell me how much better she felt. I said, "You will have company tomorrow night, for I shall go with you."

It was in November, and almost zero weather. I didn't have as much as a topcoat to wear; the shoes my brother gave me were worn-out, and one of my feet was exposed to the street. The little coat I was wearing was given to me, and it was much too small. It struck me up about the belt. My hair was grown long down my neck. I was a spiritual corpse. The very symptoms of death were evident. We wandered through the city for about three miles in November, lightly dressed, both of us, and the police looking day and night for me. Entering the place of worship, we were seated near the rear. I was the prominent figure of the congregation. It seemed that I had attracted the attention of the whole audience. The song service was opened, and the people quit looking at me for the time being.

I looked up as they were singing an old-time song, and my eyes caught sight of a painted portrait of JESUS, with a crown of thorns about His head. I looked beneath, and there was a little motto that read like this, "When all else has failed try religion." I looked down at the floor and as I did I saw my big toe sticking out of my shoe. I also got a glimpse of my ragged trousers. I instantly made up my mind to try religion, for I knew that every thing I had ever tried had been a failure. After the minister delivered the message, they asked for volunteer seekers that wanted to find pardon for sin. I was the first one at the altar. I quickly began to pray and ask God to have mercy on me and save me, for I was the meanest man in the city. It seemed as if the heavens were brass. There was no response. I was praying and calling for God's help, when suddenly one of the altar workers asked me to get up and take it by faith. I got up from the altar that night defeated, maybe to be shot down on the street as I walked out. I don't know how you felt when you got saved, but I was expecting a witness. If I couldn't feel my religion, I would still be a candidate for the kind that one can feel three hundred sixty-five days a year. Reaching home successfully without a policeman noticing me, I decided to try it again the next night if I were still living, as death was staring me in the face.

The following evening I asked my wife if she intended to go with me. She said, "Yes." We started out for the same little church. I was their first seeker again that night, but was not praying long until a man asked me if I was not at the altar the night before. I said yes, but that I was not satisfied. He again told me to take it by faith, so I was defeated again. I told my wife as we started home that I would never go to that church again. This is a sad picture of the formal churches. It is embarrassing to their congregations for a ragged sinner to kneel at their altar. This was Saturday night.

Sunday early I said to my wife that I thought God would lead us to a church where we could get an experience that would satisfy. That evening at seven o'clock my wife and I went for a walk, looking for a different church. As we walked east from the west side of the city, we were soon within hearing distance of some music that attracted our attention. We thought it was a parade coming down the street, so we walked with more speed. As we paused for a moment on the next street corner, looking up and down the streets, we noticed a little group of people standing on the opposite corner singing. I turned to my wife and said, "I'm going over to see what that is." I had never noticed a street meeting before in my life. Just as we stepped up close, a man pronounced the

benediction. A lady whom I had never seen before took me by one arm and my wife by one arm and said, "Both of you come in and hear the message tonight." She added that it would not cost us anything for a seat. That just suited us, for we didn't have a dime.

We went in without looking to see what the name of the church was, as we had never noticed any there before. There was a large attendance, and the seats had all been taken except in the rear. We had to sit so far back that we could hardly hear what the preacher was saying, but there was something fascinating about the service. I liked the service fine, but didn't make a move toward the altar that night. We were the first ones out when dismissed, and I looked for a name so that I might know where we were. I saw a sign above the door that had these words, "Back to Christ and the Bible." We turned in the direction of our home in the west end, and I said to my wife that I was coming back again tomorrow night. I noticed we had been in a Holiness church, and that was what I was looking for. Holiness is the only thing that can cope with such a sin-warped culprit as I was.

The following evening came, and it was time to go again. I had just about a mile to walk to this church. My wife stayed at home with the babies and I went alone. I was one of the earliest ones there, and I moved down within three seats of the front. No one sat with me, as I looked so odd to the audience. My clothes were very much worn and none of them fit me; but thank God for soap and water, my clothes were clean. The evangelist, whose name was . Rev. M. L. Goodman, spoke from a subject about Divine protection and happened to mention St. Paul and Silas, who were singing and praising God at midnight in the did Philippian jail. That made me mad when he said that, for I did not believe that was in the Bible that I knew. I could never sing in any of the jails I had been in, except to sing, "I had rather be on the outside looking in, than to be on the inside looking out." I would have walked out, but I didn't want the audience to see me; and it was left for me to pass them, for I was so far toward the front. Jesus, who foresees all events, surely knew the circumstances of my case and just how to reach me. I kept my seat but gave little attention to the message.

After a forty-five minute message the minister asked for those to raise their hands who wished the Christians to remember them in prayer. My hand was one of the first ones to be raised, with at least a dozen more. The evangelist came straight to me and said, "Young man, you step out and give your heart to God." I said, "Mister, I'm a cigarette fiend." Of course, he could no doubt tell that, for he moved close enough to shake my hand and I guess he smelled my tobacco-soaked clothes. My teeth, fingers, and countenance exposed my relationship to the tobacco worm. The devil was about ready to take me and go fishing with me. The preacher said, "Young man, don't you want to be a Christian?" I said, "Yes, if I'm ever successful in quitting tobacco." He replied that I could not quit the habit, but that Jesus could take it from me and cure me of the want-to. I stepped forward to the altar and knelt to pray. I was "altar broke" already, and it looked as if I would have a diploma coming at the close of my knee college course. As I began to call on God, all my past came up before me. The big chicken I had stolen flew upon the altar and looked as big as a Thanksgiving turkey. I knew of a man to whom the police attached the lie detector so as to get a confession about a murder, but when they took the instrument off he had confessed at least six other crimes at which the police were astonished. I was under God's spiritual detector when I was shown by the Lord what I must do. I backed down, said, No, I cannot pay the price," and got up and left for home. I was so afraid that night that I could hardly rest.

I got ready the next evening to go again. My wife had asked a neighbor to keep the children, so she went along with me. We were rather early and we got the seat I had occupied the night before. After the message I made for the altar again, threw up both hands, and could have been heard a hundred yards away. I did not see how I could possibly straighten up some things that the Lord showed me. I wrestled, but not with God, neither with a sack of Dukes Mixture, nor with a corn cob pipe. I thought God would be a little partial to me because of my ignorance and sickly condition, but all creeds and colors must go by the way of Calvary. I went home again, with six hundred police looking for me and some of them with my photo from the identification bureau. One of the men that had shown a lot of interest in me at the altar advised me to pray that night before I retired that God would show me what I was holding onto. I didn't have to pray for that, for I knew; but I prayed as he told me to, and the next night I was one of the early ones again. I would get there a little early each evening and get my seat, so I would not attract so much attention.

As I entered I saw the man who had asked me to pray at home before I retired the night before. I motioned with my hand for him to come, that I had something to ask him. I asked him, "If a man had ever wronged another, would he have to make it right before God would save him?" He said, "Yes." The quick answer brought me to the end of myself. I didn't care if I would have died just then. I was serious. The song service was started, then someone was called on to lead in prayer, and I knelt at the seat I had occupied several nights. This was my prayer. "Lord, if you will save me just now, I will make the restitutions required of me." I was rejoicing before the man had finished praying. I no sooner had uttered those words than I was conscious of the fact that my faith had contacted the blood of the Lamb and I was a new creature in Christ. I arose from the bench, pulled off the little coat and threw it straight up. It seemed as if God had employed some of the angels to saw the bottom out of heaven, for I thought it was all falling on me. I was crying as I went from the audience to the front, where the preacher was. He told me later that because of my fearful looking appearance I frightened him. I told him that I had found the Christ. I then put my arms around him, hugged him real tight, and said, "You are the best preacher I ever heard." I did not realize what I was saying until the next day someone told me. I said, "Oh, no wonder I said that. He is the first preacher I have heard in many years, and the first evangelist I ever saw." He said to the audience of about three hundred that I had a testimony. I braced myself, looked over the large audience and said, "Everybody here is as pretty as angels to me." God had not changed the people, He had changed me. The apostle says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. " -- II Cor. 5:17. I could have licked honey off both sides of the face of the ugliest man there. I was an alien by birth, a sinner by choice, an heir to the poorhouse, a candidate for the potter's field; but now my name had gone down in the Lamb's Book of Life, and I became an heir to a mansion in the sky.

I took my seat again but I could not be still. Glory to God! It was a happy meeting to me. I could not remember one word the preacher said as he proceeded to deliver the message. I was making quite a lot of noise, and those sitting near me could hardly hear what the minister was saying. After the message he asked for seekers to come forward that wanted to be saved. I knew that didn't mean me, for most all were convinced that my conversion was real, or one could not go through the performance that I had. I saw a man coming toward me and I arose to meet him. I didn't know if he was going to give me my diploma or just shake hands with me, have me sign a card as a member, or unite with them by testifying to the witness of the Spirit. Here is what he said, "Young man, God has forgiven you of all your sins that you were guilty of, but come and get sanctified." I

didn't know what he meant and I said, "Mister, if that is something to make one feel better, I feel good enough." Bless His name forever! I didn't care who saw my ragged clothes or worn shoes, I had something that far surpassed people's opinions. It was fine, and is working real well just now. The man explained to me what it meant to get sanctified. He went on to tell me that it is a cleansing from inbred sin. I made for the altar again and fell upon my knees like a bag of salt and raised both hands heavenward. I had forgotten what the man called it, and I cried for God to give me what I had coming to me. In a moment's time I received the cleansing and was filled with His Spirit. I shouted up and down the aisles of the church for fifteen or twenty minutes, then thought of my wife. I took my cap in one hand and ran almost all the way home. I just stopped at the stop signs at each street. I wanted my wife to see me performing like I was, so she would know that I got saved.

I met a gentleman once who said he believed in growing into sanctification. I told him how I made it from gang-land to Canaan-land by getting a Red Sea experience in the early part of a service, and at the close of the same service crossing over the river Jordan into the promised land that is flowing with milk and honey. That is quicker than Mr. Lindbergh can make it in his airplane. The reason so many believe in growing into this wonderful experience of grace, or receiving it at death, is that it demands self-denial, self-abasement, and humility. You can so get beyond yourself and the surroundings that you will think to go to the poorhouse would be a promotion. The Master can so fill, thrill, and beautify you that you won't have to go to a beauty parlor or a plastic surgeon to get your face lifted. The devil would have to throw a bear skin over you to get his hell hounds to chase you.

As I reached home, I saw that my wife was entertaining some visitors. I didn't want them to see me laughing, I was afraid they would think I was laughing at them; so I put my hand over my mouth and spoke to them as I passed through to the bedroom. I lay down across the bed with my face downward, but I saw that would not block the channel in which the blessing was coming. I then wrapped the comfort about my head, and that still didn't stop the blessing; so I began to laugh aloud. One would be just as successful in trying to stop the Mississippi River with a toothpick, as he would to try and smother out a blessing that God sends. The visitors heard me and left. My wife came running to see what was the matter with me. I said, "I'm cranktified." I meant I was sanctified but could not remember what the proper name was. I was so blessed that I could not sleep until sometime next morning. I shouted and praised God, telling my wife how good I felt. She could not sleep either. I was kicking the bedding so much that I kept her without cover. About two A. M. I kicked it so high that it partly fell on the floor. The next morning my wife was so hungry for the same kind of experience that she became a seeker for sanctification the following night at church.

"Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind." -- Luke 8:35.

Jesus Christ came into the world to accomplish a threefold object. He came to glorify His heavenly Father, to save sinners and to destroy the works of the devil. Yes, I was clothed and restored to my right mind. I recall that once I was speaking in a church, the weather was very pleasant and a number of men and women were standing on the outside listening. One of my old pals happened down the street, and in passing the church he looked in and saw me. He said to a friend of mine that was standing near him, "I know that fellow that is preaching. He is a bad man

and may start using chairs on his audience any minute." My friend quickly replied, "No, no; he has met the Man of Galilee and has been delivered from sin." I had made the tombs of sin my habitation, I had deserted the habitations of the living, and wandered among the sepulchers of the dead; naked, homeless, in a state of pain and distraction. A sinner ruins his reputation, destroys his health, embitters his life and murders his soul. I was dangerous to others, exceedingly fierce; no man could tame me. I had often been bound with chains and in fetters, but would break them asunder. So the sinner is beyond recovery by any human device or power. Philosophy has tried and failed; legislators have failed; civilization and education have failed.

The power of the Son of God is, alone, sufficient to deliver from sin and save from the wrath to come. The instrumental means of the maniac's deliverance specified in the text was Christ's voice. He spake, and said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." What a powerful word! He tried it on the deaf, and they heard; on the dumb, and they spoke; on the blind, and they saw; on lepers, and they were cleansed; on the winds and storms, and they were calmed; on the dead, and they lived; and now, on devils, and they trembled and fled before Him! The man was found, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. No longer wandering abroad -- no longer driven by the foul spirits -- calm and composed. A soul found of Christ, and restored by Him, finds rest. Clothed! Yes, he was sensible of his shame, and he obtained a valuable garment -- not one from Paris, France, but one from above, the garment of salvation. Yes, he is in his right mind. Eye no longer wild, but beaming with intelligence; tongue no longer raving, but speaking words of soberness; feet ceased to wander; hands no longer maimed; himself entirely and completely changed.

I had committed more than a hundred major crimes, had been in more than a dozen jails and prisons, had spent about twenty years in thievery and other crime. When the stray sheep found the true Shepherd; the sick, the great Physician; and the sinner, the Savior, there was no more fear of me. My sister-in-law was not afraid of me, neither was my mother-in-law. People that knew me no longer watched their valuables. I had threatened my wife a number of times, but she saw the change and was not afraid. The little girls ran to their grandmother and told her they had a new daddy, "For he called all three of us little dolls." Glory to God for His saving grace that can reach a poor sinner such as I, and fill his soul with the overflowing wells of joy. My wife and the children and I started to church the following night after my conversion. It was very cold and the baby asked her mother to take her, as she was cold. The mother said, "Ask your daddy. See if he will take you." I said, "Sure I will, dear." The other two became jealous and asked me if I would take them. I said, "Sure, I will take all of you." I went up the street to church with three children in my arms, and six hundred police looking for me. I was clothed and in my right mind.

The prophet Isaiah stood upon the mount of inspiration and said to the sinners of his day, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow . though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." -- Isa. 1:18. I'm glad one does not have to be sent to a school of reformation or to the desert of Sinai, but it is said of Jesus, "This man receiveth sinners." Come just as you are; no amount of guilt or enormity can overtop the power and willingness of Christ to save sinners. The disease is not too universal, neither is depravity so desperate but that His power is more than a match for it.

"The mistakes of my life have been many,

The sins of my heart have been more,
And I scarce can see for weeping,
But I'll knock at the open door.

"I am lowest of those who love Him,
I am weakest of those who pray;
But I come as He has bidden,
And He will not say me nay.

"My mistakes His free grace will cover,
My sins He will wash away,
And the feet that shrink and falter
Shall walk through the gate of day."

"I grieved my Lord from day to day,
I scorned His love so full and free,
And tho' I wandered far away,
My mother's prayers have followed me.

"O'er desert wild, o'er mountain high,
A wanderer I chose to be,
A wretched soul condemned to die,
Still mother's prayers have followed me.

"He turned my darkness into light,
This blessed Christ of Calvary;
I'll praise His name both day and night,
That mother's prayers have followed me.

"I'm coming home, I'm coming home,
To start my wasted life anew,
For mother's prayers have followed me,
Have followed me the whole world through."

* * * * *

5 UP FROM THE DEPTHS

Four days after my conversion, which occurred on the 13th of November, 1932, about eight P. M., I told my wife that I had promised God that I would make restitutions, if He would save me. We didn't have any money at all and very little to eat. Her faith faltered and she didn't want me to go to surrender to the police. I said, "Let us look for a promise from God's Word." We turned to the ninety-first division of the Psalms, and began to read the fourteenth and the fifteenth verses. These two verses were my bank. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will

answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him." I thought that, if God could crowd four great promises in such a small space, I would be courageous enough to believe them. I told my wife if she wanted to go with me to the police headquarters, to ask someone to keep the children, for I was going. I would rather have Jesus and live in a dungeon the rest of my life, than to live in a palace without Him.

We started and got as far as the church where I was saved, and went in to pray. It is the dearest spot in all the world to me, and will always hang on the walls of my memory. After praying, we were met there by our pastor, Rev. B. O. Shattuck, who walked with us to the police station. Some thought I was going crazy, but I was just looking for Straight Street, that the apostle Paul landed on, after he was struck down on the road en route to Damascus. He was directed to go into the city, and it would be told him there what he must do -- not what he might have to do but rather what he must do. I get from this that if a person gets genuinely saved, he won't be asking questions when God tells him to do something. The question came up, just before reaching the station, as to how I would make a clean sweep in my confession without implicating some of my old pals. I told the pastor I didn't want to name any one, but had rather take the load on myself. The pastor replied that I should come clean. I will admit my knees were smiting each other ; yes, my whole body was trembling as did Belshazzar's the night of the supernatural warning.

Reaching the station, I saw many white caps, who would have won a popular name had one of them recognized me. I entered the building and went to the detective chief's desk. There I told him that God had marvelously saved me four nights previous, and I wanted to make a confession of some robberies. The chief looked astonished, then asked me if I had finally come to my right mind. I said, "Yes," for I knew I had been cleansed, lost the carnal mind, and was clothed and in my right mind. I confessed one crime and the chief said, "Lock him up." My wife and I both began to cry. We kissed each other, which we knew could have been our final kiss had we not trusted in those great promises. I was thrust into a little cell with a wooden board for my bed. While sitting on the board with perfect joy, peace, and rest, facing a sentence of from now on, I reached into my coat pocket for some Christian literature. This Scripture, which I had read, came to me, "And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." "And he said, My presence shall go with thee. . . . for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name."

Lots of comfort and more publicity than I had ever gotten! The newsboys all over the city of more than a half million population were yelling, "A Man Gets Religion and Surrenders to Police. Wife in Tears as Husband Is Locked Up in Station X." Say, don't think because you are a member of a Holiness church that you are out of date. God counted the case good enough to go down in the newspapers for five days straight. It was front page news. I am getting blessed just now. Glory to God and the Lamb forever! The police began to crowd around me, expecting to get a lot of news about other criminals before I was sent to the insane asylum, for they thought sure that would be my destination. If God has such a thing as an insane asylum, I would rather be there than to live again in the shackles and fetters of sin and in bankruptcy in which my soul was for many years. I confessed a dozen more crimes, and then signed the confession the same day. I was going to confess crimes in other cities and states, but the authorities thought there was no use, for I never would get out of the Ohio prison. I mentioned about three or four of my pals in my confession, but I may say right here, they all were released. None had to go to prison. I was the main one they wanted. I was supposed to be the brains of all the gang. I went for an examining trial in court, was

bound over to the grand jury under a \$30,000 bond, and was transferred to the county jail to await trial.

"Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." -- Acts 12:5. I had a little group of people praying for me, and that was better than all the financial backing of the universe. The jailbirds all laughed at me as soon as I entered the large jail. Some asked me where I got that kind of religion that would force one to make such a confession. Some said the guards should have put me in the insane cell. I was assigned to cell number twenty-three, and lay down to rest; but the prisoners desired to hear me testify, and there is where I preached my first sermon. I told them how completely God had delivered me from cigarettes and other unclean habits. I had my cell full of listeners, and after a couple of days they were convinced that I was not trying to deceive the public or form a scheme to escape a long prison term.

It was now getting late in November, and I was soon to go before the court to answer to the indictments of the thirteen crimes to which I had confessed. A few days before I was called by the court, Rev. Shattuck, his wife, and my wife called at the office of Judge Schwab, who was to hear my case, to have an interview with him in regard to my trial. In discussing the matter, the notable jurist said my case looked to him like an old-time conversion. I received the encouraging news from Rev. Shattuck soon after the office visit. That is the nature of a real Christian, to always leave a message of encouragement instead of crepe on the door knob. I saw from this I had won the sympathy of the court, and that God was going to work through the judge in giving me my liberty from jail.

I appeared in court, and was asked how I wanted to enter my plea, guilty or not guilty. I said; "Guilty." I was then asked to enter my plea, "Not guilty," so the court could appoint me a defense counsel. Of course I knew that was a matter of business, but I said, "No, for I'm guilty." I knew that it was not in the power of any created agent of justice to release me. It had to be a divine deliverance, and I already had the great "Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" -- Isa. 43:2. As I returned from court to the jail, the boys met me at the door to see my indictment papers. I had only a few, .but they were enough to draw me a fifty-year prison term. After looking at them some said, "He is just kicking the hinges off the penitentiary doors, and hasn't got sense enough to realize it."

After a couple of weeks I went to trial; The church was still praying, and had called for a special season of prayer for me. There were quite a number of spectators. There were some to share their sympathy, and a few that thought society would be safer if I were sent to prison. As I took the stand to answer the charges, a little lawyer the court had appointed to speak in my behalf stepped forward and asked the court if I would be any better reformed than I now was, if I spent twenty-five years in prison. The judge looked at me and said, "I have never experienced a case like this, Philip, and the court sees it necessary to refer your case to the probation authorities." The boys again wanted to know the details, and how many years I got. They scoffed at me every time I told them I was going home by Christmas.

A lady from the probation department came to question me about my past police record. That is when I confessed many other crimes. I asked her if she thought I would make it out by Christmas, if at all. She said, no, that it usually took four or five weeks to investigate a case like mine, especially when having to get information from cities in four or five other states. It was getting late in December and I was soon to know what the decision would be. The authorities were to let me know some time before Christmas, if possible. It was rushing them to get information sufficient, as they had only about two weeks. My wife visited me on Thursday before Christmas and said the probation department still didn't have any encouraging news. I said, "Bertha, I will get out not later than Saturday, and you have the food necessary to prepare the Christmas dinner, and we will stay up Saturday night, which was Christmas Eve, and cook."

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands." -- Acts 12:7. The apostle was sleeping in chains between two soldiers, at the verge of his execution by King Herod. The church must have gotten their prayers through, for the angel told him to put on his shoes and clothes and follow him. The deliverance no doubt took place when the soldiers were changing watch, for no one knew about it until the guards who came on duty noticed his bed vacated. On Friday night I could not sleep, as I saw something would have to take place at the eleventh hour and the fifty-ninth minute if I was to get out by Christmas. All God has to do is to speak the word, and the thing is made to order. The angel said to Peter, "Arise up quickly." I arose up quickly and began to praise God, but not loudly enough for the guards to hear me. I put my few clothes in a newspaper, all except one shirt. God seemed to have showed me that night that the court would hear my case at ten-thirty on the morning of the day before Christmas, and that I would get out. I was out of my cell as soon as the safety doors were opened. I was singing "Happy Day," with my soul flooded to capacity with heaven's sunshine and peace. I got mad at the preacher for saying Paul and Silas were singing at midnight in prison; I couldn't imagine one being so happy in prison. One cannot see in a barrel at the bunghole, but if he gets in the barrel he can see out.

I didn't go to breakfast, and some of the boys wanted to know why. I told them I would eat my next meal with my wife and three babies at twelve o'clock, that I would be called at ten-thirty and would be dismissed. I asked one of my prison pals if he wanted to buy a shirt for twenty-five cents. He then asked me if I needed some postage or what I needed. I let him know that I wanted it for car fare home, as it was raining. He said, "Overstreet, this is Saturday, and also Christmas Eve, and the court wouldn't consider your case at all before the first of the year." At ten-thirty an exhausted man came running upstairs and yelled loudly enough that everybody in jail could have heard him, "37 A, get ready for court." I yelled, in answer, that I had been ready ever since the night before. I took my package of clothes and went running. I was asked by the guard at the door to leave my clothes, inasmuch as I would perhaps be back.

As I entered the court room, it looked almost deserted, as no outside friend, not even my wife, knew that I was going to trial. She was trying her best to believe that what I had told her would come true. There were just five at the trial: the judge, the prosecutor, the probation chief, the Lord and I. You can see, beloved, that when God's people pray until heaven is moved, God has to respond. The judge looked at me and said, "Philip, the court is convinced by the investigation of your past that you have had a spiritual experience with God, and the court is moved to place you five years on probation." The Lord said, "Loose him and let him go." I started for a door, but the

chief said he wanted me in his office for a few minutes. I then signed my confession that I had made to the probation officer. The chief, who is a Roman Catholic, asked me if I had car fare home. I said, "Yes, I sold a shirt this morning for twenty-five cents." He looked at me as much as to say, "How did you know you were going to be tried today?" Say, friends, we can still hear from heaven, if we will just believe God. He followed me to his office door and whispered in my ear, "I don't know what kind of religion you have, but it looks like the real thing; hold to it." I have found out that it will hold to you if you get enough of it.

I started down the steps from the fourth floor, for I didn't care to wait for the elevator. It was so hard to believe that it was all true. I thought I saw a vision, as did the apostle Peter when led by the angel into the street that led unto the city. I walked east from the courthouse in the opposite direction from my home. After walking a distance, I came to myself and realized that God had sent a cortege of angels, headed by Brother Gabriel, and shook the old jail so hard that the chains that held me fast fell off. I rushed home in the rain, didn't take time to wait for a street car. As I walked in at the door of my home, the bells were ringing twelve o'clock. I knelt down in my wet clothes, for the children to hug and kiss me. I then went to the bedroom and lay down across the bed, and took me a fifteen-minute cry. As I got up, I asked my wife who had whitewashed the rooms; everything looked so new and sanitary that I thought everything I looked at had been born again.

I was the most at liberty that I had been in twenty years. I spent almost twenty years in crime, committed more than a hundred major crimes, was in more than a dozen jails and prisons, was expecting to be shot down any minute by some of the six hundred policemen that were looking for me on six pay-roll robberies, with the authority to kill me I wandered into a church, was marvelously converted, surrendered to the police, was bound under a \$30,000 bond, stayed in jail thirty-seven days. A spiritual earthquake was sent from the skies upon the prison I was in, and I was set free for the first time in my life, because the angel said, "Arise up quickly," and I obeyed.

GOD OF THE FATHERS

"He had been a robber and, apparently, was quite safe from the consequences of his sins. For the robberies had been committed months ago and had fallen into the oblivion of unsolved crimes. He walked these streets a free man and the passing policeman held no terrors for him. He had committed a dozen robberies, and no policeman of the six hundred in the city had detected him. But the other day he wandered into the service of a church in which, it appears, God is the personal Deity of old. There God still sits on the altar and looks at the hearts of men. He frowns on the sinner; He smiles on the righteous. Men speak to Him face to face and ask Him for what they want. They listen and are sure they hear His voice. So this man listened and became aware of God speaking to him. God was speaking of all those robberies. God frowned. God spoke. The police had not caught him but he stood convicted before God as long as he kept his crimes a secret in his own heart. . . . He must confess. . . . And straightway he went to the police and surrendered and confessed. This is to the credit of the might of the stern old God of the fathers. The newer God that modern men have created is an impalpable, impersonal being of philosophers. He has no eyes to see the hearts of men, no voice to accuse them, no arms to embrace them. Certainly he could not have convicted this robber and sent him to the police."

(The above was taken from the Cincinnati newspaper.)

FERVENT PRAYERS OF MOTHER

"I was once a wicked sinner far from Jesus,
Without a hope of Heaven or of God;
I had no peace, no joy, no satisfaction,
For soon, I knew, I'd sleep beneath the sod.

"I was longing for a peace and satisfaction,
My heart was very sad, I knew not why;
I only knew that I was very wicked,
I knew that I was not prepared to die.

"Then one day I found my dear old mother's Bible,
Such sweet and tender mem'ries o'er me stole,
And it seemed that I could almost hear her saying,
'Dear son, your mother's praying for your soul.'

"I took the Book and gently turned its pages,
And found a treasure there in words so blest;
'Come unto me,' I heard the voice of Jesus,
'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.'

"I'm so glad I heard those loving words of Jesus,
So glad to know that He included me;
Now Jesus is my own dear loving Savior,
And soon His face in Heaven I shall see.

"O sinner, don't you hear the voice of Jesus?
He's calling you to come and follow Him,
He's calling now but will not call forever,
His blood can wash away your guilt and sin.

"He's standing at your heart's door now awaiting,
An entrance to your heart He waits to gain;
For you, dear sinner, has my Savior suffered,
For you, He bore the cross with all its pain."

* * * * *

6

CALL TO PREACH

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." -- Psa.
119:165.

I was called to the ministry soon after I was released from prison. One night after my wife and I retired, we talked until about twelve o'clock, discussing the matter. I told her that I did not feel qualified to preach, as my educational ability was not sufficient. I thought one should have at least a college degree. I turned over with my face to the wall, very much perplexed over the problem. A still, soft voice said, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." I did not remember whether I had ever read those words in the Bible or not. Soon after breakfast next morning I went to a Bible student who lived across the street opposite me. I repeated the same words and asked the lady if those words sounded familiar to her. She said, "Yes, that is the apostle Paul's advice to the young preachers." It really looked as if the next thing would be a problem for God. How would He take nothing and make something out of it?

I'll tell you, friends, if God could just keep us in His soak pot until He gets through skimming off what the devil has put on us, providing we didn't turn all to skimmings, then God could use us. One man said, "The reason God cannot make something out of some people is because He cannot get them down to nothing." When we get to the end of ourselves, and God starts an orchestra in our souls, then He can use us as Christians, equipped with qualifications suitable to His service. The apostle to the Thessalonians wrote, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." Thank God, one can have the Holy Ghost without taking up a collection, or filling out an application blank as a candidate. He is a gift of God that the regenerated believer receives. The poorest man this side of heaven can have Him, if he meets the conditions required of God. Whether or not one is out of kindergarten, he may receive the Holy Ghost; an education is not essential. God brought the writer from gangland into Canaan, and gave me this great peace that comes down from the Father above; and I'm sure He can meet your heart's need.

I was required of the officials to report each Monday for five years, unless my life of reformation won my release before my five years expired. The third time I went to the courthouse to report, I was told that the investigator for the prosecutor's office desired to see me. When I responded to the request, the man introduced himself to me, then asked me if I had ever been in much trouble before. He didn't know of my confession to the probation officer. In reply I told him I had been in trouble practically all my life. He was astonished, and said he had never heard of anything like my case, and didn't see how I escaped the penitentiary. He also said, "God has certainly been good to you, Philip. You ought to get right out and begin telling your life story, for you have the most convincing testimony to put before the public I have ever known. People will be persuaded to believe it, as it is backed up with evidence from so many different angles." He had enough faith in me, that he asked me a few months later to recommend to him a lady for a maid in his home. The officer I reported to each week said my experience had been of the greatest interest to him. He said he had known many boys who professed to be converted in jail, but as soon as they were out for a little while they were back in the racket of sin and crime; but my case had been different.

Soon after my release from prison, my wife met some of the police that knew us and asked how much time I got in the penitentiary. She replied that I was at home reading my Bible. They said, "We do not believe you." She invited them home with her to see for themselves. One of them opened the door of their auto and asked her to get in, that they might take her home and be

convinced. When . she started to enter the auto they said, "We will take your word for the truth." On another occasion a policeman was shown one of my books of the first edition by a friend of mine at a barber shop. The policeman also argued with my friend that I got twenty-five years. The barber declared that I was preaching, and finally won the dispute. The officer then said, "Well, I know he is a bad man, and I wouldn't give him a chance to draw his gun, if I caught him in a robbery." My friend told the policeman I was not carrying my guns any more, but had a sword under my arm, referring to my Bible. The smoothness and the quietness with which my deliverance from the jail occurred account for the many doubts and different opinions of the Cincinnatians who were familiar with my case. That was what caused such an uproar at the prison from which the apostle Peter was delivered. No one know when or how he was delivered, or what became of the apostle.

I was called to speak in a church not long after my call to the ministry. It was the first Sunday night after a revival, and it looked doubtful if there would be an altar service. At the close of the service there were twenty-three who knelt to pray, and the Lord made it a great night of victory. My next call was for a two-weeks' revival. I surely butchered up God's Word, and thought seekers should come running to the altar, as they did the first time I preached. Because they didn't come, I became impatient and began to use the weapon. I was slaying them as if using a broad ax, declaring they must serve the Lord. No one would make a move toward the altar. Finally my congregation became so small that I began to be personal. The result was, I learned I was out of the Spirit. The devil will try his best to overthrow a young preacher, and in many cases he is successful in doing so. He likes a talent for a target. I was walking up town next day on an errand and the Lord spoke to me again and said, "Son, you will have to be as patient with your sinner friends as I have been with you." I hurried back home and told my wife that God had spoken to me, and that I would have to apologize to the congregation. As I entered the church that night, I saw Brother and Sister "pickle," and some with their lips hanging like a shoe tongue. Before I announced my text, I asked the audience to forgive me for the way I had preached the previous night. The great appeal of today among our church leaders is for an educated ministry, but my conception is that our greatest need is a consecrated ministry that will lift the Bible standard above the standard of education.

A few days after the first revival, a man called me for a two-Sunday meeting, which continued over three Sundays. I preached in the afternoon of the first Sunday, and God gave me two seekers. By Wednesday of the following week the meeting was getting so hot that about two-thirds of my congregation were standing on the outside. The ones who were sick of sin and wanted salvation stayed inside. One night a young mother of five children knelt at the altar and prayed until she struck the life-giving stream of salvation. She quickly sprang to her feet and started down the main street of the city, speaking with such a tone of voice that she had the people parking their autos to hear her. She was saying, "I have found Him, I have found Him whom my soul loveth. Glory to God." May I ask you, reader, if you have found Him? If not, keep seeking; but remember the latch-string to the door of your heart is on the inside. It is left up to you to open the door and invite Him in, as He will not make Himself an unwelcomed guest. The lady ran for a mile through the city, went into a church where the people were worshipping, and changed around the program by turning the service into a praise meeting. The following night I saw a policeman standing across the street with part of my outside congregation. I was quite demonstrative and an ex-gangster besides, and that naturally drew the attention of some of the authorities, mostly to see if

I was some visiting fanatic or a magician who was causing the people to perform like the new convert did the night previous.

My next meeting began very soon after I closed this one. A noted minister told me there was no use in my going to this little town expecting to get the people resurrected, as they were all beyond recovery. I accepted all the open doors that others didn't care for, and am still doing it. I would rather preach on the street corners and vacant lots than to ask a pastor of some church to give me a meeting. I have never had to ask for one yet and don't expect to. I preached a few nights without much results. The pastor came to me and was going to tell me what the trouble was. I refused to hear him, and told him if the Holy Ghost could not locate the trouble there would be no use of my trying. The meeting continued with about half of my congregation sitting out under the trees, as it was during the month of July. I preached one night on the subject of restitutions. I noticed over near the pulpit a woman who had been well spoken of to me, who would not sanction my preaching. I was getting blessed and seemed to have a double portion of God's Spirit upon me. The Lord showed me she was going to be my first seeker. I made a plea for seekers, and sure enough she was the first one. What had held up the meeting? Jonah was on board, and the ship could not proceed until the cargo was unloaded. After she unloaded some confessions to the church members and neighbors, the revival broke out and many sinners found salvation. As long as the old man is on board, God has no channel through which to work. My outside audience threatened to pelt me with bad eggs, or ride me to the river on a rail and dump me in. I expected them to carry out either of the threats, for I was preaching near a river. The apostle Peter prayed, "Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" -- Acts 4:29. I took my pulpit outside and stood on the steps of the church and showered the Gospel truth right at them until some of them began to crawl off through the grass like worms.

I was called from there to a small town where the Mayor turned the town hall over to another preacher and me to conduct a revival in. The weather was very warm and the attendance was not so good. I suggested to my friend one afternoon that he start running up and down the aisles about seven o'clock, and I would throw a few chairs at him, the people would be attracted and come out to hear us. They quite often had stage plays there which drew a large attendance, and I thought by creating some commotion we could get them out to hear us. We didn't carry out our plan, for the people began to gather in the hall earlier than usual. I was to preach that night, and I had both barrels loaded, for it was my last night, as the other minister was to preach the next week. I got blessed and jumped off the stage, which was three and one-half feet high, ran up the aisle, and an immense bulldog opened his mouth to take hold of me. When I quit yelling we had some of the most refined people of the town inside to hear me, and standing out on the sidewalks and on their porches. God had been using me, and I have been holding up before the public the God of all grace, who can save to the uttermost all that will come unto Him.

Two years and two months after my deliverance from jail, my probation officer told me the court was going to renew my case, to see if I deserved to remain any longer under obligation to them. I appeared in court before the same judge that heard my case and placed me on parole. These are the words he said. "Philip, the court recalls your case as one of the most unusual of Hamilton County. Because of your religious convictions, more than two years ago you surrendered to the police and confessed to some of the vilest of crimes, and later the court was moved to place you five years on probation, being convinced that if there is anything to religious faith you have

demonstrated a real act of it. The court sees it necessary to discontinue the rest of the five-year sentence. You are dismissed with my congratulations."

My wife and I began to lay plans for a trip south to see my mother, as she had never seen my children. We were soon traveling toward Hattiesburg, where I knew the police had a warrant for me. I wanted to hold a meeting while there, and I decided the only thing to do was to surrender to the sheriff and find out if the County still wanted me. I could hardly entertain the thought of a policeman coming to a pulpit to put the handcuffs on a Holiness preacher. I went to the sheriff's office and inquired as to where the chief was. An officer asked me to be seated, saying that the chief would be in soon. After a few minutes' waiting, a man with an iron-looking countenance came in and said he was the sheriff. I introduced myself as Rev. Philip Overstreet. After telling him how wicked and ungodly I used to be, I then presented some articles to him that were taken from the newspapers in Cincinnati, Ohio, which stated some of the facts about my conversion and how I surrendered to the police. He looked at them very patiently and then looked at me, as good as to say he could see the change. I asked him to step into the clerk's office and find out if I had an old indictment against me. He was gone about three minutes, and returned with the news that there was a charge against me for aiding prisoners to escape jail. I said, "Sheriff, I'm innocent of the charge and I want you to help me, as I am trying to get a clean slate once again and be a gentleman." He asked me when I could appear at his office again to see him. I told him I could come in about two days. My word was my bond, and it was good with him.

I returned the second day and he directed me to the county prosecutor's office. As I entered I told him I was Rev. Overstreet, and that the sheriff had sent me to see him I had not told him half the story until he reached over his desk, took my hand and bade me Godspeed, saying they didn't want me any more. He said, "I will also co-operate with you in helping to get a place to hold the meeting." He helped me get a hall and I started the revival, and began to fire at the devil with the old-time Gospel there in my home town, where the people used to hide their pocketbooks when they saw me coming. If anyone had ever told me that would have happened, I would have thought him insane.

The meeting continued for three weeks. One night before the service began, I saw sitting back in the audience an elderly lady whom I recognized as Mrs. Brown, the juvenile probation officer who sent me to the reformatory school at Columbia, Mississippi, eighteen years before. After speaking to the officer, it was then time to enter the preliminaries of the evening service. I asked Mrs. Brown if she wished to say a word. She replied by standing to her feet and telling the audience about sending me to the school, and speaking of how she saw the making of a real character in me at the time, and also saw that I was rather bent to the ideas of crime. She went on to express how glad she was that God saved me. I preached that night on restitutions, and at the close of the service she came forward and shook my hand and said she believed that I had the real thing and that she loved the doctrine I was preaching.

The same evening she asked me if I would consider speaking one night at the reformatory. I quickly replied that I would consider that more than just an ordinary opportunity. She communicated with the president of the institution, and soon let me know the date that was arranged for me to speak. She accompanied my wife and me on the trip, as we had only a short distance to drive from Hattiesburg. We were entertained as guests by the president and were

treated to a chicken dinner. What a difference! The last time I was there I was stealing shoes, trousers, silk shirts, and climbing through windows to steal a jar of fruit for an extra lunch on Sunday. It is just like Jesus to change a man from a sinner to a saint! I spoke that night to about three hundred students and faculty members, not touching so much on my checkered past life.

I was walking by the police station one morning in Cincinnati, and the detective chief to whom I surrendered saw me and walked across the street to speak to me. Such a calmness of heavenly peace swept over my soul that I began to cry as I walked down the street. Glory to God! "Great peace have they which love thy law." Just a few months before I would have shot him to death had I seen him coming toward me, and he also would have shot me. Yes, it is great peace that passeth understanding! A man I had never seen before walked up to me on a street corner in a little town and said, "Mister, you look like the happiest man in all the world." I told him I was one of the happiest men, for I had the Author of peace enthroned in my heart.

God has given me grace to go back to individuals that I had robbed and sell them one of the first edition of my life story. In one of my robberies I stole a little desk clock and put it on my mantle at home. After my conversion, it seemed as if every time my wife wanted to know the time she would ask me if I was near. Every time I looked at it I would think of the place where I stole it ; although I had confessed the crime, I still had the wages of my iniquity. One day I traded it to a friend for another one. It quit keeping time soon after I had it, and I bought a new one and gave the old one away. The second one stopped and I bought a new electric clock. It disappointed us, and a friend of ours gave us the third one. Up until then I was never led to preach about restitutions. This occurred during a meeting I was conducting near Cincinnati. During the meeting the Lord gave me a message on restitutions, and this was my text, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have take anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" -- St. Luke 19:8. "If;" yes, "If I." That is what many are saying today, trying to smooth over, and keep things hid that are hindering the cause of Christ.

After I was given the subject, I asked my wife if she had made all of her restitutions possible. She said, yes, but for me to look at the other clock; it had quit running. I said, "Yes, no wonder the rest of them have failed to keep time. Don't you remember that little clock I stole before I got saved and later traded it to a friend? I will have to get that clock and return it to the people I stole it from; then our clocks will probably run all right." I promised the Lord I would return it the next day. It was getting rather late in the afternoon, but I wanted to prove to God that I meant business, so I started for the little clock that I had traded. I called at the lady's home and told her that I wanted to buy that clock back that I traded her a few months ago. She said, no, I wouldn't have to buy it, that she would gladly give it back to me; that it was no good to her, as it wouldn't keep time. That night I announced the text, after requesting prayer for myself that I might not get put in jail the next day, for I had to make some restitutions The Lord blessed the message, and six people stood up in the audience and said they were going to make some things right that God had shown them.

The next morning I wrapped the clock in a newspaper and started to town to consult my probation officer about the best thing to do -- take it to the police station or back to the factory where I stole it. I told the officer the whole story, and he asked me what I wanted to do about it. I said I wanted to take it back to the people from whom I stole it. We then went for a five-mile drive

to return it. The officer took the clock in, told the people the whole story, and handed the clock to a lady at a desk. She took it as if it were a jewel. After making over it a few minutes, she wound it up and set it down where I had taken it from; and it began to tick, tick, tick, as if it were a new one. The officer returned to the auto smiling, and said, "Philip, the little clock is running fine." He said he had four clocks at home that had all stopped, and asked if I thought that could have any effect on his. I said, "Hardly." He then requested that I call him by phone if my clock at home started. Arriving home, I wound mine and it began to tick, tick, tick ; it has ticked for three years and is still ticking. May I ask you, dear reader, if your clocks are in good ticking order? Maybe something you have in your attic or basement has hindered you from getting blessed when the minister preached about restitutions; that could also account for your up and down experience. I called the officer thirty minutes after my clock had been running, and told him it was ticking real good, and that my wife told me to ask him if he had taken anyone's clock that stopped his from ticking.

We cannot be saved without repentance. But do we really repent of our injustice when we refuse to repair it? Is it not mockery to profess to bewail our own sins, and yet persist in keeping the wages of our iniquity? Can we be in a state of grace and salvation, and yet be in rebellion against the orders of God? But whoever retains the property of another sins doubly; both against the law which commands him to restore it, and against that which forbids him to keep it. Thus he tramples on the law of God, and persists in wronging his neighbor. Restitutions should be prompt. They must not be deferred to some future time. Zaccheus did not say, "I will restore it," but "I restore it;" that is, now, immediately, without delay. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

"Have faith in God! Have faith in God; for He who reigns on high Hath borne thy grief, and hears the suppliant's sigh; Still to His arms, thine only refuge, fly.

"Have faith in God!
Fear not to call on Him, O soul distressed,
Thy sorrow's whisper woos thee to His breast;
He who is oftenest there is oftenest blessed.

"Have faith in God!
Lean not on Egypt's reed; slake not thy thirst
At earthly cisterns, seek the Kingdom first,
Though man and Satan fight thee with their worst.

"Have faith in God!
Go, tell Him all! The sigh thy bosom heaves
Is heard in Heaven. Strength and praise He gives,
Who gave Himself for thee. Our Jesus lives.

Have faith in God."

* * * * *

CHRIST LIFTED UP

Text: Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. -- Acts 8:5.

One of the greatest needs of this present age is Spirit-baptized ministers with a vision and a burden for the lost, who dare to preach Christ to the dying millions. Just as God commanded Moses to lift up the brazen serpent upon a pole in the wilderness to bring healing to the snake bitten Israelites, He has also commanded His servants to lift up His Son Jesus, with the preaching of a Gospel that brings deliverance to the sin-afflicted. The serpent was provided for the whole camp of a half million Israelites, and it came to pass that each of the afflicted who beheld the dazzling serpent with an eye of faith was immediately restored

God looked down upon this earth and saw it populated with inhabitants doomed to misery and death. The woes of the world rose up before Him. Mercy and justice moved Him to give His only begotten Son as the propitiation, not merely for a camp or a nation but for the whole human race. Jesus came and preached His Gospel. He had no financial or political backing, and He built no churches. He was taken captive and led as a lamb to the slaughter; elevated upon Calvary's cross to suffer, bleed and die for a guilty race, while a darkness came over all the earth and demons and devils began to rejoice and announce in hell that He was going to fail. Jesus looked out over the fickle multitude who were one day saying, "Hallelujah to the King"; but were now clamoring for His blood, and He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He gave up the ghost, and was taken down from the cross, and laid away, while the final announcement was being made by the devil that the Son of God was dead and being buried.

Before His friends had time to erect a monument for Him, Jesus took the keys of death and hell away from the devil, shook them in his face and said, "I lived, and was dead; but, behold, I am alive for evermore." He ascended back to heaven, to the right hand of the Father, and became the only mediator between God and man. Say, friend, let me leave some good news with you-- He is coming again some day, not to wear the crown of thorns, not to be mocked, scoffed at or spit upon, but as King of kings. He is a wonderful Savior. I am persuaded that after nineteen centuries He is the central figure of all human history.

Philip's main object was to preach Christ. Ministers are standard bearers. We are to lift up Christ and hold up a standard for the people to live by that is pleasing in the sight of God. Philip was qualified as a minister; he was filled with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and had an honest report. These three characteristics enabled Philip to have a keen discernment, so that when God spoke he knew His voice, and let no grass grow under his feet but moved quickly. When God told him to go down to the city of Samaria, he didn't confer with flesh and blood. His object was not to preach Holiness to those Samaritans, for it was conversion that they needed. Yes, the main thing is to get forgiveness first. He was to go ahead and witness and preach the saving power of Christ, while Peter and John followed him up and preached "Holiness or hell."

I recently called at the office of Judge Nelson Schwab, the judge who heard my case. Having only a few minutes to visit with him, I thought I would get a short testimony in first. I said,

"Judge, I am still saved; the Savior keeps me every day, and I have been preaching, witnessing and lifting Him up to the perishing multitude." He said, "Philip, there is nothing that gives me so much comfort as to know that you are still living true, for I received much criticism when I dismissed you at your trial. I could have given you over a hundred years in the penitentiary, but I would have had to deny that there is such a thing as religion." I was lifting up Christ. On another occasion I was introduced to a mayor of a small town. I had an opening to witness to him through a few words of personal testimony. When I was through he opened his bill fold and handed me a bill. You see that it pays to preach Christ.

Yes, it is Christ we need. When we get Him, socials, entertainments, suppers and other parties among the religious people, and especially in the church basement, will be done away with and the amen corner will be re-occupied and the old-time altar rebuilt. People are tired of hearing so much about the social activities of life; yes, and even matters which ought to be buried and forgotten are often repeated over and over. What I am getting at, I am trying my best to prove our great need. In some parts of the country ministers are seldom recognized as servants of God. There are many reasons for this, but we will just mention about one. Listen, the church is under a financial burden, no one getting blessed, no fire, every one dry and formal; yes, if the pastor dries up, sometimes even the saints will. But why? He has formed some mechanical way of raising funds to save the church property. A lot of times the pastor preaches the message the congregation rather desires.

Say, friend, it is on me to preach this message to you, and you are getting it just as God gives it to me. I hate sin with all my heart. We are living in an age of apostasy. God's once red-hot, fire-baptized ministers are now cold and indifferent. Many are occupying pulpits and drawing a large salary, without a speck of the unction and glory of God upon them. I am serious just now, when I stop to think of the fire that was falling only a few years ago; but now if one gets blessed, he must be careful how much noise he makes, or some one will ask him what is the matter with him I repeat, what we need is Christ. Glory to God, I am glad that when He comes on the scene people are moved and things are adjusted! A friend of mine said he got saved and that he knew it; for he stopped at a saloon and bought a glass of beer to find it out, but it didn't taste good. Listen, if you get saved you won't have to taste of beer to find it out; you will have joy bells ringing down in your soul that will witness. Praise God, it works real good, and not just at a camp meeting but among my friends and neighbors and at home. I am still preaching Christ. He is the soul's stronghold. It isn't the leagues of nations, for one of them has already been declared an outlaw. Neither is it the church organization, for we have failed to get them united. But it is Christ.

Philip preached Christ to those Samaritans, and I doubt if he had a beautiful rug to stand upon or a pulpit to stand behind. He was not so timid or backward, and he was dead to the opinions of the people; so he preached the Word with boldness, as it had just been prayed by the Apostle Peter that the servants of God might do. I suppose he used one of his favorite texts. He announced his text and began to preach, and all the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spake. Yes, he had a message that all received. Friends, health, beauty, church organizations, nations, empires, governments, wars, have all failed and are passing away; they have failed to bring peace and happiness to the human heart and life. But He who reigns on high has never failed and never will fail. He is from everlasting to everlasting. Look up, friend, and trust Him as your Savior and Pilot through life.

You who do not believe in sudden conversion, I remind you of the thief in the morning. At morning he was reviling Christ, but that evening he was rejoicing in Christ. At morning the thief was dead in sins, but that evening made alive for evermore. At morning doomed to die, but in the evening eternally set free by Christ. At morning the thief was condemned by men to die because unfit to live on the earth, but that evening God reckoned him good enough to live in Heaven. Read Romans 4:1-8. That morning he was nailed to the cross, but in that evening he was in the Paradise of God. That morning the thief had curses heaped upon his head, but that evening he had a crown of glory with the Lord. That morning the thief was ostracized by earth's society, but in the evening a member of the society of Heaven. In the morning there was nobody to pity or sympathize with the thief, but that evening he was washed in the Blood of the Lamb. In the morning the thief was an outcast among earth's citizens because he was a desperate criminal, but that evening Christ took him to Paradise and they walked the streets of gold together, because Jesus said: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Just as Lazarus "died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22), so God's cortege of angels headed by Gabriel and his chariots hastened down and brought to Glory the soul of the penitent, saved thief, who as the friend of Christ on earth confessed Him as "Lord" and as his Savior before all, and later went with the angels sweeping through the gates of Glory, because Christ said: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." -- St. John 1:29.

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8

SAVED BY GRACE

I was born February 11, 1909, in the city of Cincinnati. I was brought up in a Catholic home, reared by Catholic parents. My parents were very much opposed to the Protestant faith; therefore I was never inside of a Holiness church until my conversion, which took place in the year 1932. My parents were very strict with me, and would not allow me out at night later than nine o'clock, and then had to know with whom I was, and where I was going. I attended Woodward High School in Cincinnati, and my father's desire was that I get a good education. I didn't care much for the course I chose in school, and attended only one year and seven months.

Just before leaving school I became acquainted with a young man who is now my husband. It was a peculiar way in which we met, but I will not go into details about that. The moment we met I loved him. I went home and told my parents about him, but they just told me to shut up and forget it. I never kept company with anyone, and I suppose they were afraid that is what would happen. As time went on, we were together quite frequently. It seemed as though from the very beginning my people were not in favor of my going with this young man. Try as they would, they could not keep us apart. After we had kept company quite a while, my father began to suspect him. He knew that he never held a job very long, and always had nice clothes and money. My mother tried to talk to me and reason the thing out. I could not see a fault in him, and it never crossed my mind that he was connected with the underworld.

After quite a long courtship we decided to get married. As I was not of age, we could not get married in Ohio; we had to run away and get married in Newport, Kentucky, giving my age as twenty-one. After the marriage was performed I returned home to tell my parents about it. My father refused to speak to me. Mother talked to him and told him since we had taken that step for him to just make the best of it. After a couple of days my father began to speak to me, but very little to my husband. Just before our first child was born my husband left and went back to Mississippi. He said he wanted to see his mother. He left me crying, and it seemed as though it didn't touch his heart a bit. It was only a couple of weeks until he was back again.

After a few months I discovered the life my husband was living. Oh! But it was such a shock to me. I asked him about it, and he finally confessed to being connected with characters of the underworld. I didn't want to leave him because I loved him so much, and yet didn't see how I could stay with him. Finally I consulted my brother, as he and I were real pals. He said, "Sis, you love Phil and you stick to him." I decided then and there that come what may I would stand by my husband. I couldn't begin to tell the sleepless nights I spent from then on. Only God knows. We most always had fine clothes and money, but that will never bring happiness. What a fear was always hanging over me! I never knew when the police would capture my husband, or when he would get killed. Every time someone would come up our steps or knock on our door, it seemed like my heart would stop beating. We had to live in furnished apartments because we had to move so often to keep the detectives off our trail. We moved as often as twice a week.

After a while my husband was arrested and put in jail at Newport, Kentucky. There I was left with three little girls to take care of, and besides was almost helpless because of arthritis. I went home to my mother, but it was hard to stay there as they were so against my husband and would continually talk about him. I wouldn't stand for that at all. It just kept a friction between us. I remember as well as if it were yesterday, one Sunday afternoon I took the three girls and went to the jail to see my husband. Having no money, I had to walk from Cincinnati to Newport, Kentucky, which is about three miles, and besides had to carry the baby in one arm, as I had my other arm in a sling. The baby at this time was only about nine months old. Arriving at the jail, the children were so tired from having to walk, but I was very glad to see my husband. After talking to him a few minutes, he told me not to come back to see him any more. I never have had anything to hurt me as had as that did. We left and started for home, crying about two-thirds of the way. I made up my mind that I would take him at his word and not go back any more. I stayed away for a couple of weeks and just had to go back. He was then glad to see me. During his stay in jail I left my mother's and got a furnished apartment, and there I worked to keep my babies together.

After being released from prison my husband came to where I was staying. Talking things over that night, he promised to quit the racket he was in and go to work and try his best to be a good father and husband. This he tried to do, but within a couple of weeks he was back at the same thing again. Sometimes he would leave me and again I would leave him, but neither of us could stay away from the other. Things continued as they were for some time. I soon obtained a job again, and hired a girl to keep the babies. At this time my husband was gambling so much that I could never depend on him for any money for food. Both of us got to a place where we were so contrary to each other, neither giving the other a kind word. This goes to show the condition into which sin will get a person. But I'm just so glad the Holy Spirit was faithful to our hearts and continued to strive with us until we surrendered.

It was during the last three years of our sinful life that God had to get us down to nothing in order to get us to see our lost condition. My husband had to stay up in the house for three months, and not so much as go down on the sidewalk. Many a time I had to walk miles out of my way to keep the detectives from trailing me home, as the most of them knew me, Cincinnati being my original home.

At this time the Lord was dealing mightily with my husband. He was under deep conviction. Since I was ignorant of the ways of salvation, I just laughed at him. A friend of ours, who had once known the Lord, told me I was making a big mistake in laughing. This didn't help, as I continued to laugh and make fun. One Sunday morning my husband suggested that I go to church that night and get saved. We knew of only one Protestant church, and I consented to go. That night I put on the gayest dress I could find and my hat, which had a big red feather in it.

God had been dealing with me for some time, but as I was a Roman Catholic I didn't understand. I remember one incident which I now know that God used in order to get me to see my lost condition. One evening, while waiting for my husband to return home, I began to read some stories to the children. After I had finished, the baby looked up at me and said, "Mamma, if my two sisters die, will they go to heaven?" I said, "Yes." She then asked me if she would go to heaven, if she were to die. My reply was the same. The baby then looked up at me and asked if I would go to heaven if I were to die. Such an awful feeling came over me and I knew I was not ready. I answered, "No." The girls then began to cry and said they didn't want to go to heaven without me. They were then getting hungry and wanted to eat. Not having anything in the house, I put a pan of water on the stove and covered it up, and told them if they would go to sleep for a while I would call them when supper was ready. That was the only way I had of consoling the babies. When they would awake in the morning, no doubt husband would be home and there would be something for them to eat. I didn't have to do this, as the most of my people are well off, financially speaking; but I knew how they felt about my husband, and for that reason wouldn't ask. I would like to stop long enough to say that, since God saved us, we haven't missed a meal. God has supplied every need.

Now back to the story. Arriving at church that night, I took a seat near the front. I suppose I really wanted to be seen more than anything else, for I was very proud and felt as if I were a little better than anyone else. When the altar call was made, I was among the first to go. I didn't know what to do to get saved, but someone told me to kneel down at the altar and confess my sins to God. I did as I was told. As I got up from the altar, one of the sisters told me as soon as I got home to mark down in my Bible when the Lord saved me. I was so afraid I would forget it that I ran two-thirds of the way home. As soon as I walked in the door, I got the Bible and put down the date. I thought to myself, "I will never forget it now." I was smiling quite a bit when I got home; that was unusual for me, and my husband felt sure God had done something for me. The next day things didn't go to suit me, and I acted as usual. My husband said he didn't want that kind of religion at all. I got in one corner and he in another; we turned our backs to each other and pouted for a long time.

The night before he had promised to go to church with me if I got saved. He kept his promise and we both went that night. On the way to church I made up my mind that I would go back to the altar again, for I realized I didn't get saved the night before. When the altar call was given,

my husband was the first to step out. I also went, and that night I settled it to go through with the Lord. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that my sins had been forgiven. I immediately began to make restitutions. I would like to say right here that my husband and I made restitutions before we were saved that would have sent one to the penitentiary if the hand of God hadn't been in it. The next day I had an old-fashioned house cleaning. I used to love to read "True Story" magazines. I believe I would have gone without something to eat in order to buy a book. I immediately disposed of the books and other things that were of the world.

My husband tried to quit the habit of smoking. One day he denied himself of smoking as long as he could, then took a cigarette and was going to smoke it. I told him not to do that, as he had promised God he would quit the habit. He threw the cigarette down, but it wasn't long until he took another one. I began to cry, and asked him not to smoke it. He took one draw off it, and it made him sick. He then threw it in the fire. This all happened before his conversion. I repeat that old-time conviction will make you sick of sin.

On a Sunday evening God led us to a Holiness . church. We enjoyed the service, and the next night were back again. The night of my husband's conversion I was not there. I often wish I had been. After the service he came home and was laughing, and I could see a great change had taken place in his life. He let out a big yell, and I went in the bedroom to see what was the matter with him. He told me the Lord had "cranktified" him. I had never heard that before, and didn't know what to think. We soon retired and my husband began to make confessions to me. He asked me if I would forgive him, and I said I didn't know. I wouldn't answer him any more that night, and just lay there as if he weren't talking to me. Nevertheless before morning I had decided that I wanted to be "cranktified" also, if that's what you call it. I soon learned that it was sanctification, and I began to call on God for that blessing. I'm so glad Jesus heard my cry and gave me my heart's desire. I love the Lord with all my heart and am determined by His grace to go every step of the way with Him.

After four days my husband surrendered to the police. It was awfully hard for me to give him up, as I couldn't get faith enough to believe God would deliver him. Leaving the police station, I stopped at my sister's home. I told her what had happened. She said, "Sis, maybe Phil has gone crazy. You know religion sometimes drives a person insane." About that time my brother came in and said, "Sis, Phil will get twenty-five years." This was the discouragement I was getting. I went home, but that night I couldn't sleep. I just walked the floor and cried. It seemed as though the enemy would say to me, "He will never get out." I had gotten to a place where I was just about to agree with him.

One night I got on my knees and told God I was going to trust Him and believe He would deliver my husband. That night I went to bed and slept. Before it seemed as though I just couldn't rest. The babies and I then began to pray. Each morning the baby would come over to the bed and raise the cover expecting to find her father. Such a look of disappointment would come over her face. Each night the babies would pray that the Lord would deliver their father.

Soon a date was set for the hearing. After seeing one of my husband's pals dismissed, who was as guilty as he, I began again to doubt. I went over to my husband and told him I didn't think he would ever get out. He often tells me I was like Job's wife. This didn't hinder his faith at all, for he

looked at me and smiled and said he was trusting and believing God to deliver him. It was not very long until a date was set for the trial. When the time came, the judge said he was going to turn the case over to the Probation Department. We knew the Lord was working, and that gave us both new strength and encouragement. After a little time the Probation Officer, who was a woman, went to see my husband. I want to say before going any farther that nothing was talked over between my husband and me as to what either of us would say concerning the case. We were going to tell the truth and trust God to work it out. I am thankful that when we put our trust in the Lord He will never fail us. I also want to say that the Lord supplied every need while my husband was in jail. We were in need of quite a few material things, but they all came in at the time when they were needed. It seems as though I cannot thank and praise God enough for all He means to me. It was not very long until the Probation Officer came to see me. She asked me quite a number of questions. Some of them were very hard for me to answer, but I just prayed and asked the Lord to give me grace and help me. I didn't want to say anything that I thought would hurt my husband, but I knew I must tell the truth if I expected Jesus to stand by me. After the last question was answered, the officer looked up at me and smiled. She said, "All the questions you have answered harmonize with your husband's." She thought all of this strange, but I knew the Lord was going to work it out for His glory. She immediately went to our pastor's home and told him all about it.

The officer doubted very much if my husband would make it out by Christmas, but said she would do her best to complete the investigation. On Christmas Eve the Lord delivered my husband. He walked in at the door just as the bells were ringing twelve o'clock. The babies and I all tried to get our arms around him at the same time. We were all so happy to see him that all of us had a real good cry. That night as we gathered around the table to partake of the food God had been so good to provide for us, we were certainly one happy family. We then started to have family worship. God has been wonderfully blessing and keeping us, for which we are all thankful.

"What shall I render to the Lord
For all His benefits to me!
Or how shall I His love reward,
Since He from bondage set me free!

"My service, Lord, though small it be,
If but my best I know I've done;
I'll bring my talent back to Thee,
Increased, yea doubled, though but one.

"My cup, if small, shall overflow
And stay as full as large ones be;
I'll keep my tiny blaze aglow,
That someone in the dark may see.

"Through thickest fog, or darkest night,
My tiny blaze shall keep aglow;
With outcasts I will share my light
And then my cup shall overflow."

Psalm 116:12

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THE END