WHAT IS HELL LIKE?

and other sermons

By

JIMMY ALLEN

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Dedication
To

THE LATE T. H. SHERRILL

Servant of the Master
Preacher of the gospel
Comforter of the sick
Counsellor of the troubled
Friend of the downtrodden
Encourager of the young
Lover of souls

and

The man I wish I could have called "Father"

Introduction

No man has influenced more people toward righteous living in the last few years than Jimmy Allen. Thousands of people, sinner and saint alike, have heard his stirring sermons and have been constrained to draw closer to the Lord.

The style of Jimmy Allen is unique. He speaks to the individual, while at the same time swaying multitudes. These sermons contain conviction, sincerity and compassion.

It is hoped by the presentation of these sermons in written form that the good done by Jimmy Allen in speaking these sermons can be multiplied into the thousands, if not into the hundreds of thousands through the written page.

May God help us to this end.

—ALAN M. BRYAN, *Publisher*

What Sin Can Do

Sunday, July 26, 1964

INTRODUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen, I have never felt smaller or more insignificent in all of my life than I do this evening. I feel a little like a lion in a den full of Daniels. There are so many good people here. Thousands in this audience are dedicated to God Almighty and the Lord Jesus Christ. I feel humbled that you have asked me to have a part in this meeting. You have greatly honored me in asking that I come, and, of course, I am grateful to God for the opportunity to preach the gosepl to such a large group of people. The Lord willing, I will be here for the next fifteen nights and during that time I will do my dead level best to set forth the word of God in its ancient purity and simplicity. I am going to be pleading with you every night, if you are not a Christian, to make your way to the front to obey the gospel and become a member of the church about which you can read in the Bible.

This evening I want to speak to you for awhile on the topic "What Sin Can Do To Us." By way of introduction, let me say that, generally speaking, we have the ability to recognize the evil effects of sin in the lives of others. However, in altogether too many instances, we fail to see that the same disastrous consequences will attend our lives, if we live in sin. Sin, like God, is no respecter of persons. What it will do for one, it will do for another. What it will do to the rankest sinner in this community, it will do to you, if you live in disobedience and rebellion to the will of God. Tonight, instead of attempting to make these remarks applicable to others, I hope that all of us will be able to see how they can apply to us. This is what sin will do to you and me, if we live in sin.

I. SIN ENSLAVES

In the first place, brethren and friends, if we live in sin, we will become enslaved to Satan and the works of evil. Paul,

according to Romans 6:16, said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?" The word translated "servants" in the original language is a little stronger. Literally, it means "slaves." If we yield to sin, we become slaves of unrighteousness. If we yield to obedience, we become slaves of righteousness. At II Peter 2:19, the record declares that "of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought in bondage." We are dominated or ruled by whatever has us in submission. In John 8:34 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Christ was not saying that a man who accidently or inadvertently commits a transgression is enslaved to sin. He used the present tense and this carries the idea of a continual action. Jesus was saying that whoever habitually and deliberately lives in sin becomes enslaved to wrong doing. Perhaps I can illustrate it better than I can discuss it abstractly.

I once read a fable about an Arab and his camel. One night the Arab was awakened by his camel which said, "I surely would like to put my head in the window for it is cold out here." The Arab told him that such would be all right. A little later the Arab was awakened the second time. Then the camel wanted to put one of his front feet into the house. He was allowed to do so. Still later in the evening, he was awakened the third time. The camel then wanted to put his other front foot into the Arab's room. He was permitted to do that. Well, to make a long story short, it wasn't long until the camel was in the room with the man. The Arab began to complain. He said, "It is very crowded in here." In reply, the camel said, "Well, if you don't like it, you can get out!" This shows that we may be the masters of our fate when we first begin to practice evil, but, as we continue to "dilly-dally" with sin and inquity, we become the mastered instead of the masters, We are mastered by evil and dominated by wrong doing.

The Old Testament is a book of types. In the book of Exodus, we learn that the children of Israel were in Egyptian captivity. The Pharaoh was a harsh and severe taskmaster

over them. Life was arduous, rigorous, and hard for them. Since the Old Testament is a book of types, we can expect to find its anti-types in the New Testament. My friends, the man living in sin is as much a slave to Satan today as were the children of Israel to the Pharaoh in the long ago.

It is so easy to see this principle illustrated in the lives of those around us. Take, for example, the problem of alcoholism. In the United States we have about six million alcoholics and almost a million of them are women. No alcoholic intended to become one. They continue to throw good money after bad. They lose their good names, their reputations, their businesses, their money, and after awhile they lose even their families. Why in the world would a man continue to drink when he understands that alcohol will corrupt the mind, destroy the body, and damm the soul? There is but one reason for it. An alcoholic is so hopelessly addicted to alcohol that he cannot do without it. He has a craving for it like you and I crave water. He is enslaved to an evil, wicked, and nefarious habit which will cause him to be lost eternally

As bad as alcoholism may be, I would far rather be an alcoholic than a narcotic. I have a statement from a woman judge in New York City in which she says there are thousands of teenage narcotics in that community. Some of them are as young as eleven years old. When an individual is really hooked by dope, I understand that it takes $30 to $50 a day for him to maintain his dope supply. Well, who is making that kind of money? Not many people. That simply means, if the individual is a female, she will prostitute herself to every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the country to make enough money to maintain her supply of drugs. If the individual is a male, he will lie, cheat, commit acts of bulgary and theft, and, in a few rare instances, kill to get money to maintain the horrible practice he has cultivated in his own life. He is enslaved to drugs.

Let's get a little closer to home. Take a look at the covetous man. The individual I am about to describe some of you know and you know him very well. He is well to do financially. He has a good home and a fine automobile. He has plenty of money invested or saved for a rainy day. Yet, he must work

16 hours a day, seven days a week. He has no time for God, Christ, the Bible, or the church. He has no time for his own family. He is so busy making a living he does not have time to make a life. He bows down before the shrine of money. He worships at the altar of the almighty dollar. His god is mammon. He is as certainly enslaved to money as is the alcoholic to his whiskey and as is the addict to his dope. He cannot see the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is unable to see the cross because he is blinded by the love of money and what money can do. He is like an octopus with long gangling tentacles. He is constantly reaching out pulling in more and more for himself. He is like the Dead Sea which receives that fresh flow of water from the north through the Jordan Valley, but has no outlet. One of the finest illustrations I've seen of this principle has appeared in some of the church bulletins recently. A miser is pictured with his arms spread over his hoard of gold. The cross stands in the background. The miser is looking back over his shoulder at the cross saying, "but this is mine, mine!" He is enslaved to money and what money can do.

Then, there is the gambler. I know something about gambling. When I was in the army, I was bitten by the gambling bug. I wasn't a child of God at that time. I've gone to a poker table at one o'clock Sunday afternoon and played until seven o'clock Monday morning. Eighteen solid hours of poker playing! Those galloping dominoes never did have any appeal to me, but when they began to shuffle the pasteboards, that was something else. I've taken the last nickle from a married man who needed his money. I've lost two-thirds of a month's salary in a matter of a few hours. Now, why in the world would anybody do such as that? Because he is addicted to a wicked habit. I've had people say to me, "I don't see anything wrong with gambling." Well, let me tell you two things wrong with it. In the first place, it is a form of covetousness. It is based upon and founded in lusting after that which belongs to somebody else. The Bible teaches that covetousness is not to be named among the children of God. The Scriptures also teach that a covetousness man is not to have fellowship in the church. I can assure you that every poker

game in which I participated I was after what the other players had. I coveted their money and they coveted mine. Gambling violates another rule. Our Lord, in giving the Golden Rule, said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so likewise to them." No gambling man wants the other fellows to do to him what he is trying to do to them. Gambling violates the golden rule and it violates the teaching of God's word concerning covetousness. If it had no other evil consequences, I know it can cause one to become enslaved to a bad habit which is next to impossible to break. Shortly after I became a Christian, I was walking down the hallway in one of the dormitories at Harding College. I thought I heard a familiar sound in one of the rooms so I decided to open the door and take a look. Sure enough, there was a card game in progress, a penny-ante poker game. Well, I thought I'd watch. Ha! I got in. In keeping with the desire of dame fortune, I was able to win all the pennies. By that time my conscience was bothering me so badly, I took the double handful of pennies, put them on the table, and said, "Fellows, get what belongs to you. I've sinned." I walked down the hall just as fast as my legs would carry me, turned into my room, got down on my knees, and asked God to forgive me. Now, by His grace, I haven't played since. Someone might ask, "Weren't you a Christian?" Yes, sir. So, why did I do it? Because of being enslaved to a wicked habit; that's why.

Consider the problem of petting which seems to be so prevalent among young people today. Someone might ask, "What's petting?" When I was growing up, we called it courting. But, "what's courting?" Well, the generation before me called it sparking. That leads us to ask, "What's sparking?" It's petting. As you can see, we are getting nowhere with this. Just what is petting? It's going out on a two hour date and spending your time in a two hour clinch. Or, if it's a three hour date, it's a three hour clinch. Now, sometimes such people come up for air, nevertheless, that's about what petting is. Do you know why some young people spend all of their time embracing and kissing? Such has become a habit with them. They don't know how to do any-

thing else. Do you suppose on your next date, instead of spending two or three hours in a clinch, you could stay at arm's length from one another and talk for a while? Talk about what? If you are thinking about marrying that individual, there is going to be something else to marriage besides courting. As a matter of fact, very little of marriage is going to be devoted to it. Do you suppose, since you are a Christian, you might be able to talk about the Christian religion, the Word of God, or the distinctive appeal of New Testament Christianity? Maybe you could talk about international politics or some great piece of music or literature. How are you going to learn the personality of that individual, if you don't converse with him or with her? Some people go on date after date and spend all of their time courting. As a result, most of their influence for good is destroyed. Sometimes their emotional stability is destroyed too. Frequently, they are destroyed morally. Some confuse the physical thrill in petting with love. Then, they attempt to build a home on that shoddy foundation. Needless to say, such a home will not stand. Why is it that a lot of young people simply court on a date? They don't know how to do anything else. They are enslaved to a habit, to a habit which at best is questionable, and may get them into serious trouble.

Then, there's immorality. I have known men who lived from one payday to the next. I have also known men who lived from one carnal conquest to the next. Life for them is just one adventure in carnality after another. You have known such individuals also. Several years ago, I was working with a 26-year-old unmarried man. I was attempting to lead him to become simply a Christian. He was convinced that he needed to be baptized, but he said, "I can't do it." I asked, "Jim, what's the trouble? He confessed that he was an immoral man and added, "I don't know whether I can give it up or not." That man was willing to exchange his soul for the cheap thrill of a moment. At least, that was his attitude then. I continued to plead with him. After a while it was my pleasure to baptize him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But, in essence, he had said he was so enslaved to that evil habit, he could not change.

You have heard people say the following: "I can't control my temper." "I can't keep from entertaining evil thoughts." "I can't keep from lusting." You have heard many say, "I can't obey the gospel because the Christian life is too hard to live." All of these statements, my friends, simply affirm the thesis of my proposition. Namely, that we can become so enslaved to sin that it's next to an impossibility to change. Would to God that I had the power and ability to impress on every lost man, woman, boy and girl in this vast audience that sin is not simply an innocuous isolated act of wrong. Sin, in the New Testament, is pictured as a power. It reigns as sovereign majesty over your life, if you are a sinner. Sin clutches you. Sin strangles you. You may say you can take it or leave it. When I hear a man say he can take it or leave it, I don't care what he's talking about, I know he is taking it. He's always taking it. Try to make a change in your life. Try to get out of evil. You will find that it is not as simple as falling off that proverbial log backwards. You will find there are many difficulties involved. If the grace of God Almighty were not the most powerful influence in the world, it would be impossible for a lost man to get out of sin and be saved.

Sinners sometimes fail to see their plight. Think about the man I am going to describe for you. He's seated on a pile of straw in a dungeon. His arms are manacled to the walls of that prison. Rats are running around over the place. But, in his delirium, he thinks he is a king robed in a regal and royal splendor. He is ruling over millions of subjects and his slightest wish is their greatest command. Needless to say, that man is insane. There is a man in this audience tonight who is not a child of God, one who has never been born again of the water and the spirit. When that elder, gospel preacher, or Christian neighbor approached you about salvation, you likely thought: "I have a good job, a fine home, a lovely wife, and three precious children. Everything is rosy and wonderful for me; why get in a hurry?" Yet, you are as enslaved to sin as you can be. You are traveling the broad road that leads to everlasting destruction and ruin. Unless you make a change, one day you will be cast alive into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. I am telling ycu, my friends, some of you

are exactly like the man I pictured in the dungeon a moment ago. You are enslaved and shackled to sin and unable to recognize your horrible condition.

People are willing to make great sacrifices for personal, political, and economic freedom. It seems that every few years we take the flower of our young men and offer it on the altar of Mars, the god of War. This old world of ours is literally drenched with the blood of young men. Millions have died in the name of freedom. Many of the boys who died in Union Blue, during the war between the states, died so the slaves might have freedom. Many of the boys who died in Confederate Gray, during that same period of time, died that the states might be free to resolve the issue of slavery for themselves. Right or wrong, from their viewpoint, thousands on each side died in the name of freedom.

I once read about an old Negro slave who was worn out because of many years of toil. His master decided to sell him. He took him to the auction block and the bidding started, $5, $10, $15, $25, $30. The old Negro was afraid someone was going to buy him. In the course of a lifetime he had been able to save $100, so he turned to the auctioneer and said, "I bid $100." Not a man in the audience raised the bid. They saw that he wanted his freedom. When he purchased his liberty, he was penniless, but he felt it was better to be poverty stricken and free than to be any man's slave with money in his pockets. I think he was right.

Now, when we consider the sacrifices that others have made for freedom, I wonder if we are willing to make a sacrifice to be freed from our sins? My friends, if you obey the gospel, you have to offer your bodies as living sacrifices. You must deny self. It's not always easy to be a Christian. As a matter of fact, you will have some days that will be dreary. They will be filled with darkness and clouds. By the grace of God, you can live successfully and victoriously, but don't get the idea it is always going to be simple and easy. If you think being a Christian is no challenge, don't answer this invitation. But, if you have an ounce of red blood in your veins and you are willing to live a life of self denial, submission, and godliness,

then come and do your Lord's will. Remember, there is a price to be paid. There is a sacrifice that you must be willing to make.

Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The Civil War came to an end in 1865. My grandmother and her people moved from Kentucky to Arkansas in 1870. She told me that when they arrived in Arkansas there were plenty of Negroes living in voluntary servitude. Now, contrary to the thinking of some, all slave masters were not Simon Legrees. Some of them were good to their slaves. They provided food and lodging for them. Some allowed their slaves to worship God in the same church buildings with them. They taught them the gospel of Christ. Some slaves will be in heaven with their masters in the after awhile. They were freed by Lincoln, the emancipator, yet they remained in slavery. Jesus Christ, the Great Emancipator, offers us freedom from sin this very night, but many of us refuse to let Him have his way in our hearts and lives. Jesus said, according to John 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." He also said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father, but by me." We are freed by the truth. Christ is the truth. Therefore, we are freed by Christ. John 17:17 states, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." We are freed by the truth. The word of God is the truth. Therefore, we are made free by the word of God. That simply means, if we will allow the Lord Jesus Christ, who is revealed in the word, to have an influence in our lives, we can be freed from sin. The only thing under high heaven that will break the shackles of sin is the truth; not anything else.

According to Paul's language, in Galatians 2:4, "Certain brethren crept in to spy out the liberty which we have in Christ." Notice, Paul said, we have liberty. Where? In Christ! Freedom from sin is in Christ. To be in Christ means to be in union with Christ or in fellowship with Christ. But, how does a man get into union with Christ? In Galatians 3:26-27, Paul wrote, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus for," (and that little word "for" in the original language means "to introduce the reason") "as many

of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." By faith in the Son of God and by baptism in the name of the Godhead, we come into union with Christ. That explains why those of us who are members of churches of Christ argue so strenuously and fervently that an individual must be baptized. The Bible says through faith and baptism we come into union with Christ. In Christ there is liberty. Freedom cannot be experienced by those outside of Christ. My friends, if you are living in sin, you are enslaved to it and you need to be freed from it.

II. SIN CONTAMINATES

Secondly, if you are living in sin, it makes you dirty, filthy, and unclean. When we were born into this old world, we were born sinless, innocent, and spotless. Our Lord, according to Matthew 19:14, said, "Suffer, little children and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." These little fellows are all right. We occupied a sinless state at birth, but eventually and inevitably, if God lets us live long enough, we get into iniquity and evil. That's when we get dirty. James 1:27 states, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." From this we learn that the world "spots" us. Jude 22, 23 states, "And of some have compassion making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Notice, "spotted by the flesh." In Revelation 3:4, Jesus, speaking through the apostle John, said there were some in the church at Sardis who had not defiled their garments. That indicates the rest of them had defiled or made dirty their garments.

All of us are familiar with the soap and cosmetic commercials on television. The individuals used to advertise these products always have lovely complexions. There is never a spot nor a blemish in their complexions. Maybe it's old Nick in me, but I have sometimes wondered how they look on the inside. They may have souls as black as midnight. Have you ever wondered how we would look if God turned us wrong side out? Suppose your spirit were on the outside and your

flesh were on the inside. How would you look? You have heard of the Blob and the Thing. I submit to you that some of us would make the Blob and the Thing look like pikers, if we were turned wrongside out. How do you look on the inside? My grandmother used to say "pretty is as pretty does." There is an inner beauty which should characterize us all, but if you are living in sin, you don't have it. You are dirty, filthy, and contaminated by wickedness.

The Old Testament, as I said a moment ago, is a bock of types. In Leviticus 13 we learn how the leper was to be dealt with under the law. He was to go bare headed, his garment was to be torn, and he was to cover his upper lip. When anyone came near him who was not afflicted with leprosy, he would say "unclean, unclean." This accounts for the lepers, mentioned in Luke 17, shouting to Jesus while he was a great way off. They could not get close to him since the Lord was clean and they were unclean. My friends, that leper under the law is a type of a sinner under grace. If you are here this evening and have not been born of the water and the spirit, you can truthfully say, "I'm unclean, I'm unclean." That describes your condition exactly.

Our Lord, on one occasion, wanted to picture a sinful boy to you and me so He told about the prodigal son. You remember, the prodigal went into a far country and wasted his substance in riotous living. By and by he went broke and all his fair-weather friends forsook him. He joined himself to a stranger in that country and was sent into the field to tend the swine. The Lord said the boy was sitting next to the hog pen when he came to himself. He had not been at himself. He had been living below himself. When Christ wanted to paint us a picture of a man in sin, he showed him leaving the palace of his father's love and going down, down, down until he wound up sitting next to a hog pen. I was reared in the country and I know something about raising hogs. If there is a creature any more loathesome than a swine, I don't know what it is. Our Lord, in setting forth the idea of sin's filthiness, told of a man sitting next to a hog pen. If anyone thinks that's crude, he'll simply have to criticize Christ for He gave the illustration.

David committed with Bathsheba the scarlet sin of adultery. Then, he had her husband murdered. The prophet Nathan rebuked him for what he had done. David finally realized the heinous sins he had committed. He repented. In Psalms 51 you will find his penitential prayer in which he begged God for forgiveness. Listen to him: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He wanted to be washed, cleansed, and purged. He wanted his iniquities blotted out. He felt dirty from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. Have you ever done something wrong and felt like you had dirt in your clothing because of it?

Sin will make one dirty, but thanks be to God, we can be cleansed. According to Revelation 7:14, John saw a multitude who had come through the great tribution and had washed their robes white in the blood of the lamb. There is the answer to sin's contamination. When our robes are washed white in the blood of the lamb, then we have been cleansed. You may white-wash your sins in the eyes of others, but they will never be washed white in the eyes of God until you have been dipped in the fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. When that experience takes place in your life, then all of your guilty stains will be remitted. John said, in Revelation 1:5, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." I believe that, friends. I'll always believe that sins are washed away by the blood of Christ, however, there is another passage which needs to be read. According to Acts 22:16, Saul of Tarsus was told by Ananias to "arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." One passage says that sins are washed away in baptism, the other says that sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. Someone might say, "I will take Revelation 1:5." Another might say, "I will take Acts 22:16, now, let's argue." The same Spirit who inspired one inspired the other. The same God who authorized one authorized the other. Both passages are found in the same Bible. Let's take

them both. What is it that washes away sins? The blood of Jesus Christ! About that, there can be no doubt. But the question is, "When is the Blood of Christ applied to a man's soul?" In Romans 6:3 Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" When we are immersed in the name of the Sacred Three, we come into the death of Christ. In the death of Christ, His cleansing and atoning blood is applied to our souls and our sins are washed away. Our guilt is removed not by water, but by the blood of Christ when we go to the water!

III. SIN SCARS

Thirdly, sin leaves a scar. Some of the older people in the audience can remember when Smallpox was a killer. When it didn't kill, it marked people. All of us are acquainted with polio. We have seen a child with a twisted leg or a withered arm. I tell you, my friends, I would rather have a scarred body, twisted leg, or withered arm than to have a scarred soul. You ask, "What do you mean by that?" Well, I think Peter had a scarred soul. He stood the very night that our Lord Jesus Christ needed him so desperately and denied Him. "I know not the man," he said. And, again he said he didn't know Jesus. A third time he denied Christ. About that time the rooster crowed. I imagine every time after that, even though he had been forgiven, when he heard a rooster crow, he dropped his head in shame and blushed with embarrassment because he had denied his Lord. Peter had a scarred soul.

Saul of Tarus persecuted the church. He committed both men and women to prison. He cast his vote that some might be put to death. On the road to Damascus he had a confrontation with Jesus. Three days later he was baptized into Christ. He became a preacher of the faith which he had persecuted. Years after his conversion, he said he was the chiefest of sinners. Was he saved? Yes. Had his sins been forgiven? Yes. Was he a minister of righteousness? Yes. But, still he carried that scar on his soul. He knew he had fought against God and against the people of God.

Young people, I plead with you to listen. A young man can date a fine young lady and destroy her virtue. Both he and

she may be sorry later, but they cannot undo what has been done. Still later in life they may begin living for the Lord, but what has been done cannot be changed. Be careful. You can sow more tares in a year than you can pull up in a hundred years. You can scar that soul of yours and carry the scar to the grave with you, if you're not careful. No one has ever regretted living a pure, virtuous, and godly life, but plenty of people have lived to regret the other kind of life.

I heard a fellow preacher tell a story I want to repeat. He told of a preacher who went to a congregation to conduct a meeting. In the course of the meeting, a brother was called on several times for prayer. In every prayer he used the expression: "Father, forgive us our neglected opportunities." The preacher sensed that the brother was carrying a burden, so he went to him one night and asked, "What's the trouble?" In reply, he said, "Twenty-five years ago when my wife and I were first married she heard the gospel and wanted to obey it. She tried to interest me in the gospel. I told her I wouldn't stand in her way and that she should go ahead with her plans. Because I didn't give her the necessary encouragement, she did not become a Christian. About three and a half or four years ago, I heard the truth and submitted my will to the will of God. Preacher, I am a Christian, but I can't get my wife to darken the door of the church building with me. Now, you understand why I pray, 'Father, forgive us our neglected opportunities'." That man has a scarred soul. If he has to carry the lifeless body of his wife to the cemetery and bury her; there will be no need for anyone to try to comfort him. He will know he is responsible for her lost condition and her eternal damnation. Talk about scars, sin can scar the soul!

IV. SIN SEPARATES

Finally, sin will separate us from God. According to Isaiah 59:1-2, the prophet said, "Behold Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your sins have separated between you and your God, and your iniquities have hid his face, so that he will not hear." The Hebrew people were calling upon God in

prayer. They were getting no answers. They thought there was something wrong with the ear of the Lord. Perhaps He had gone deaf. Or, maybe the hand of the Lord had been shortened. Isaiah said, "God isn't deaf and His power hasn't been limited; the fault lies with you. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. That's the problem."

We all know the story of Samson, don't we? The strong man took the jaw bone of an ass and slew a thousand Philistine soldiers. He tackled a lion with his bare hands and killed it. He caught three hundred foxes, tied their tails together, and put flaming fire brands between them. He released them and they ran through Philistine wheat fields and vineyards. The whole countryside was burned over. He picked up the massive city gates at Gaza, carried them about 35 miles away, and left them on a mountain in front of Hebron. Samson was a strong man, but he had a noteable weakness. Her name was Delilah. Now Delilah made an agreement with the five Philistine lords to learn the source of Samson's strength. Each of them promised her eleven hundred pieces of silver. She asked Samson, "What is the source of your great strength?" He said, "If I am bound in seven green switches or undried bow strings, I will be as weak as others." She tried that, but it didn't work. She asked again, "What is the source of your great strength?" He said, "If I am tied with a rope in which no man has been bound, I will be as weak as others." She tried that, and it didn't work. Again, she asked, "Samson, what is the source of your strength?" He said, "If you take the seven locks of my hair and weave them together in a web, I'll be weak as others." She tried that and failed once more. Someone might say, "It looks to me like Samson was a fool." Brethren and friends, without the slightest disrespect for God or for the Bible, I can say that's exactly right. Samson was a fool! He was so blinded by his love for Delilah that he failed to understand what she was trying to do. On three occasions she had failed so she resorted to unfair tactics. She said, "Samson, if you loved me," (That isn't fair. Fellows, we've all heard that line, haven't we?) "you would tell me the source of your strength, but you have mocked me these three

times." Finally, the Scripture says, "she vexed him nigh unto death." It was a case of "first class" nagging. A woman should have enough horse sense not to become a nag. Samson could stand no more. He said, "If my hair is cut, I'll be weak as others." Later he went to sleep with his head on her lap. A man came in from the next room and clipped Samson's locks. The Philistines, who were in still another room, rushed in to take Samson. One of the saddest verses in all of the Bible is "He arose to drive them off as he had done afore time, but he knew not that the Lord was departed from him" (Judges 16:20). Because of his sinfulness, because he had revealed the source of his strength, he separated himself from God.

Sin always cuts off fellowship and communion with the Lord. If you are not a Christian this evening, you are not in fellowship with God. You say, "Well, that's not so bad." Do you know why a man says that? Because he is eating God's food, breathing God's air, drinking God's water, enjoying God's sunshine and living in God's world. But, in Hell things will be different. Hell is a place where people are removed from every vestige of God's presence and from all of God's blessings. II Thessalonians 1:7-9 states, "and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." If we live and die in sin, we will be banished from God's presence and power. Hell is a place away from God. If you live without God, you will die without God. You will be separated from Him forever and ever. Hell is a place where God is not. Sin will separate you from God in time and in eternity.

Tonight I have pointed out several things that sin can do to you. It will enslave you, make you dirty, scar your soul, and separate you from God. Believe you me, God hates our sins. The Bible, in complimenting Jesus, says that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Through the precepts of the Lord, David learned to hate every false way. Jesus said,

concerning the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, that He hated it. The Lord hates our wrong doings with a purple passion, but He loves us. We need to be hard on sin, but we need to be considerate, kind, and compassionate with sinners.

This is the first night of our great meeting. There are people here this evening who are lost. You can't get 10,000 people together and all of them be saved. Some of you may feel that you will change later. Perhaps you are saying, "Tomorrow night or the next night." There are people here who know the truth about what to do to be saved as well or better than I. You've known it across the years. You've been taught the gospel of Christ. You're going to obey Jesus sometime. Why not tonight? Why don't you come this evening and surrender your heart and life to Christ? Stand here before this multitude of people and confess with your lips the faith which is in your heart. Then, you can be baptized into Christ and receive the remission of your sins. There are some in this audience who are erring brothers and sisters in Christ. You've drifted away from God. You need to be restored to your first love. Why not come this evening? Wouldn't it be wonderful tonight if 15, 20, 25, 30, or 50 lost friends of ours would answer this invitation? Every night in this meeting, I'm going to be pleading with you and begging you to obey the Gospel. That's what this meeting is for, and if that isn't our purpose in having it, let's quit now. We want you to come. We want you to be saved. Jesus died on the cross for your sins. Jesus will wash away your sins by his blood, if you will obey Him. Won't you submit your will to Him? Won't you come tonight while we sing "Just as I am"? Let us stand together.

How Sin Hurts

Juy 27, 1964

Last evening we had in the neighborhood of ten thousand in attendance. Attendance is down some tonight. I would estimate it to be around seven thousand. However, I would to God that I had an opportunity to speak to seven thousand people every time I stood to preach. This is the second largest audience to which I have spoken. Last evening was the largest and this is the second largest. I was in a meeting in a small Northwestern Arkansas town not long ago, a community of 12,000 people, and on the final night of the meeting, we had about six thousand present. That was the largest group of people I had addressed until our meeting began here last night.

We appreciate so much your coming. If you are not a child of God, I hope you will listen with an open and receptive heart. When we sing the hymn of invitation, it's my hope and prayer that you will step out on the basis of our Lord's promises and obey the gospel of Christ. If you are seated in the upper tiers of seats, the ushers will turn and face you during the singing of the invitation song. When you step out into the aisle, an usher will take you by the hand or arm and walk with you right down here to the front. It is a long way to the front, but Christ made a long journey from Heaven to earth to redeem us. Jesus was willing to go out to that cold barren mountain, known as Calvary, to suffer, bleed, and die for your sins and mine. You need to come tonight and make public confession for your faith. You need to obey the Gospel of Christ, if you are not saved. If you are an erring brother or sister, you need to come back home and start over again. I hope we will not have this vast group of people each night only to see little or no response to the Gospel. We are here to try to get people to obey the Lord. We want to see men and women become Christians. We want to see you baptized into Christ. We have an interest in you. If we can help you in the day time, gives us a call. Some of us will be delighted to come into your home and study with you. If you want to

consult with some of these preaching brethren, they will be glad to assist you. We are here during these two weeks in order to serve you. We are hoping, praying and preaching to the end that you will do the Lord's will.

INTRODUCTION

I believe the number one problem confronting the American people tonight is not the threat of Communist aggression from without nor the possibility of economic depression from within. I believe the major issue confronting our people today is exactly what it was yesterday and I think it is today what it will be tomorrow. Our number one problem has been and always will be a problem of the heart. Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Solomon said, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does good and sins not." Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every man to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. " Paul wrote: "By one man, sin entered into the world and death through sin. So then death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Every accountable person here this evening has sinned. That is why tonight's remarks will have relevance to your life. I want to speak to you, then, for a few minutes on this subject, "How Sin Can Hurt."

In the first place, I submit to you that sin can hurt the sinner. We've heard all of our lives that the way of the Christian is hard. So many people have said, "I cannot live the Christian life because it is too ardous, rigorous, and difficult for me." Yet, the only time the "hard way" is discussed by inspiration, we are told that "the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15). Men say the way of a Christian is hard. The Bible says the way of the transgressor is hard and I know the word of the Lord is right about the matter.

SIN HURTS PHYSICALLY

Sin is sometimes hard on a sinner physically. In the fifth chapter of John we read of a man whom our Lord healed. That man had been afflicted with a malady for some thirty-eight years. Following his healing, Jesus said to him, "go thy

way and sin no more, least a worst thing befall thee." Because of some transgression of the law of God that man had experienced thirty-eight years of affliction. He had suffered physically because of his sin.

When the Children of Israel were encamped on the Plains of Moab, the Moabite king, Balak, sent for Balaam, a Mesopotamian prophet. Balak asked Balaam to curse the Israelities. Balaam attempted to curse them several times, but in each instance he blessed them instead. Finally Balaam told Balak to send Midianite women into the Hebrew camp. Balaam knew the Israelite men would be tempted to commit fornication. He also knew that many of them would succumb to the temptation and then the children of Israel would become cursed indeed. This would happen because the Lord would withdraw His presence and blessings from them. Those who were loyal to God went throughout the Israelite camp killing those who were immoral. The Bible tells us that they killed between twenty-three and twenty-four thousand individuals in one day. Those people sinned against God and it cost them their physical lives. Sometime later the Hebrews went into battle against the Midianites. They found Balaam and cut him to pieces with their swords. Balaam sinned against the Lord and he lost his life. He suffered physically because of transgression. In the fifth chapter of the Acts we learn that Ananias and Sapphira lied to God. Because they lied both of them fell dead.

People today are suffering physically because of transgression. Take alcoholism, for an example. I had somewhat to say about this last night and I'll discuss it a little more tonight. Last evening I pointed out that there are about six million alcoholics in the United States and almost a million of them are women. One out of every thirty-one American citizens is a confirmed alcoholic. One out of every ten families in our country is plagued with the problem of alcoholism. I assume that Dallas has its "Skid Row." Every metropolitan center of which I have any knowledge has one. Go into certain areas of the mission district in San Francisco and you will find the "Skid Row." Get on the wrong end of State

Street in Chicago and you will find one there. Go to the Bowery in New York City and you will find one there. In such places men stand by the scores who were at one time doctors, lawyers, and engineers. Some of them were ministers. Now they are described as "rum-heads" and "winos." They smell so badly you can hardly stand next to them. They beg for a nickel, dime, or whatever money they can get to buy something which has alochol in it. In so many instances, men of distinction become men of extinction when they start drinking. People are hurt physically by alcohol right here and now. It has always been a mystery to me why we operate the way we do. One out of every ten million people in the United States has been bitten by a mad dog and we kill the mad dog. One out of every thirty-one in our country has been bitten by alcoholism and we license alcohol. Somehow, it seems to me, there is an inconsistency.

Immorality hurts people physically. One out of every twenty-six Americans has syphilis. One out of every twenty is afflicted with some type of venereal disease. Paul said, in I Corinthians 6:18, that fornication is sin against a man's body. Now don't ask me how, but, in some unique way, fornication is a sin against man's flesh. I believe what inspiration has had to say about it.

What I am about to say may not fall into the same category as immorality and drinking, but at least it is highly questionable and in some instances, is down-right sinful. I refer to cigarette smoking. Somebody says, "You don't know what you are talking about." I smoked for seven or eight years myself. "Well, why did you quit?" For two reasons. Number one; I knew smoking would hurt my Christian influence. Number two; I knew it was hurting me physically. Dr. Raymond Pearle of Johns Hopkins University made the following statement: "The heavy smoker pays with 34.6 minutes of his life for each cigarette he smokes. The pack a day smoker pays with 11 1/2 hours for each pack he smokes." If you smoke two or three packs a day, according to this man, who based his conclusion on facts reached from studying thousands of smokers, 34.6 minutes of your life will be cut off for each cigarette smoked. If you smoke a pack a day, you can expect

to lose 11 1/2 hours of life for each pack smoked. Dr. Alton Ochsner, who is a pioneer in the field showing the relation between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, has written, and I quote: "Proof has been piled upon proof associating the effect of compulsive smoking with cancer, with heart disease, with general respiratory and other diseases." Some men in the congress have recommended that the skull and cross bones be put on cigarette packages. Others have said instead of calling them cigarettes, they ought to be called cancerettes. I heard about a fellow who said he had read so much on cigarette smoking and lung cancer that he was going to have to quit reading or quit smoking. After mature consideration, he decided to quit reading! My friends, if it hurts you physically, you ought to quit.

I remember a young man with whom I attended high school. He was a handsome boy. He had curly hair, was well built, and quite an athlete, but that boy went into sin. He has lived a life of dissipation. He's been married three times; he's drunk enough whiskey to float a good size ship; he's been through every gate, sinfully speaking. If he were here tonight, I think you would guess him to be in the neighborhood of 40 or 45 years of age, but he couldn't be more than 36. His sinful life shows on his face. He has hurt himself physically by the kind of life he has lived.

This does not mean all of our physical infirmities or calamites are brought upon us by sin. We know that Job was a righteous man, yet he was smitten from the top of his head to the soles of his feet with boils. He had not violated the will of God. In John 9:1-2 we learn that Jesus met a man who was born blind. He wasn't blind because of his sin or because of the sin of his parents. The writer of the Hebrew letter, in the twelfth chapter of that book, wrote that God chastens those He loves. He added, if a man doesn't receive chastening, he is not a son of God but an illegitimate. So, we may have a physical calamity as chastening from God Almighty. However, it is true that some are hurt physically because of committing of sin.

SIN HURTS MENTALLY

In many instances sin hurts mentally. A lot of people seem to have the idea that they can live in disobedience to God's will and never be affected mentally. They think, "It'll never bother my intellect." But, my friends, sin can pervert a man's logical processes. For example, there is a theory held by some of the smartest men in the United States known as the Documentary Hypothesis. Reduced to its simplest form, it is the view that a redactor or an editor put together scraps of information and pieces of writing to produce the Old Testament. It makes scrap or quilt work of the Bible. It casts reflections upon the doctrine of inspiration. However, some of the smartest men in the land today hold this view. Many of them hold Ph.D degrees, and have been to seminaries. Why accept such a theory? Because sin has had its way in their mental processes; that's why.

Paul said in Romans the third chapter that some heard the gospel of Christ and concluded that a man could do evil that good might come. Now, they heard the truth, but they so misconstrued it as to say that we can do evil that good may come. Paul said their damnation was just. Can you imagine a man taking the truth of the Gospel, the story of Jesus Christ, and so perverting it as to say that one can do evil in order that good might come? In the latter part of Romans 5, Paul was discussing grace and said, "Where sin abounds grace much more abounds." A man who is not thinking correctly might reason as follows: Where there is much sin, there is much grace, so I ought to really sin, then I can get a lot of grace. That possibility led Paul to say in Romans 6, "What shall we say, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein." One who would say that he ought to really sin so as to get an abundance of grace is allowing sin to dominate his intellect. He is permitting sin to have its way in his own mind.

Some religious people tell us our Lord Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin, He never worked any miracles, He did not experience an atoning death on the cross for our sins, He was

not raised from the grave, and He did not bodily ascend to Heaven. They take all the Christ and power out of the gospel. They have a Christless, powerless, dehorned gospel that will get you no closer to Heaven than your automobile. Yet, all of this is done in the name of scholarship and learning. Sin has had it's way in their mental processes. That's all there is to it.

A college professor today has the right to stand in the classroom and teach atheism, godless evolution, and Communism. He's able to do all of this in the name of academic freedom. He can destroy the very principles which have made this nation great. He can destroy principles that are sacred to every religious person in this country. He does it under the guise of academic freedom. He deserves no rebuke. He is not being restrained. Some of us are asking, if he can do that, why can't we go into the same classroom and preach Jesus? The fellow, who defends the professor in his infidelity and his attempts to teach it, will throw a four alarm fit if we talk about going into the colleges to preach Christ, immediately he would say, "Oh, we must maintain a separation of church and state." My friends, if the state is to be neutral in religion, if I'm not allowed to preach Christ in a state college class room, then nobody should be allowed to attack God or religion in a state supported school. If I can't go in and preach the creation story, as I understand it, another fellow can't go in and preach evolution as he understands it. Why can't people see that? Because sin is having it's way in the minds of those around us. It's all right to preach atheism, but it's wrong to preach faith in God. Why? If it is wrong to preach faith, it's wrong to preach infidelity. But sin has an affect on man's mind. Sin will pervert an individual's ability to reason. No doubt about it.

About seven miles from where I live a preacher stood one night and quoted Romans 8:28, which reads as follows: "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." He said he could forsake his wife and children, leave the country with another woman, and that such would work for his good. He said further, "There's such a thing as good, better, and best. It would be good for me, but it's wouldn't be best

for me." There are two observations I want to make just here. First, he would have Paul to say that God will do what's good for His children, but not what's best for them. Second, he would have Paul to say that immorality is good for a man. Now is that what Paul said? He didn't say anything that's a forty-second cousin to it. Paul was discussing external circumstances such as persecution, trial, tribulation, sword, famine, and flame. The Lord will over rule these things for our good. Now, that's what is under consideration in Romans 8:28. The man I referred to a moment ago was taking the passage out of its context, twisting, and wresting it to his own destruction. Yes, sin works on the mind. Don't you forget it.

Free love, of course, is pretty well accepted in the Scandinavian countries, but it's getting a good foothold in the United States, too. What's free love? It's the idea that a man and woman can live together as husband and wife before they exchange their matrimonial vows, if they love one another. They must learn whether they're sexually compatible or not. If they're sexually incompatible, they're not to marry. If they're sexually compatible, they are to marry. From a worldly viewpoint, that may sound all right. Among other things, do you know what is wrong with it? God said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery!"

Men in the United States are saying that filthy literature should be written, published, distributed, and portrayed in the movies. All of this is done in the name of artistic accomplishment. Obviously, Satan controls such reasoning.

You name it. I don't care what it is, name it, and there's somebody, someplace who can give you an argument in its defense. Have you ever heard this one? "Everybody else is doing it." I don't care what it is, begin to attack something that's questionable or down right evil and someone says, "everybody else is doing it." Well, how would you reply to that? That's a gem of logic, isn't it? My friends, God and one man make a majority! Maybe I ought to change that statement. God Almighty alone makes a majority. It wouldn't make any difference if everyone else were doing a thing, that wouldn't make it right. When we are bound and determined

to do something and can't get hold of anything else to justify it, we will grab at that thing like a drowning man grasping for a straw. "Everybody else is doing it." So, it's bound to be right. Sin is working on the mind of one who attempts to justify evil.

But, sin not only perverts an individual's ability to think and reason, it is also the cause for much of the mental illness in the United States. One out of every ten Americans is mentally ill. Offices of psychologists and consultation rooms are filled with people who are willing to pay $25 to $50 an hour for professional help. Consider some of the illness with which we are plagued. Take worry, for example. We fret, and become anxious. Finally, we worry until we are ill. We worry about many things when one thing is needful. At our house we tell our children a little story about five birds. This little bird said, "I'm hungry." This little bird said, "me, too." This little bird said, "What are we going to do?" This little bird said, "I don't know." This little bird said, "Well, why all the fuss, don't you know that God, our Father, will take care of us?" Did you ever hear of a bird coming down with ulcers? How long has it been since you've read of a bird having a nervous breakdown? Jesus said, "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" He said, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" If God takes care of the flowers and birds, don't you know He will take care of us? Christ said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all of these things will be added unto you." My brethren, when we seek first to please the Lord, when we are dead set on doing God's will, as long as God has a purpose for us, we will not starve. God didn't promise to provide the luxuries, but He did promise to provide the necessities of life such as food, shelter

and clothing. He will take care of our needs. Don't misunderstand me. When we can no longer be of any use to God, He might let us starve to death. Such a view is not inconsistent in my thinking about God. In Luke 16 we learn of a beggar named Lazarus. He was a righteous man. When he died he went to be with Abraham. Apparently, he died as a beggar. When the Lord no longer has a use or a purpose for us, He may choose to let us die for a lack of food, but as long as He has a purpose for us, our needs are going to be met. Since this is true, why spend all of our time worrying? Paul said he had learned in all things therewith to be content.

Then, consider hatred. In most instances, hatred hurts the hater worse than the one hated. It's like a cancer which eats away at our vital organs. Perhaps you have heard of paranoia, a disease of the mind better known as persecution complex. A paranoid is suspicious of those around him. Eventually he reaches a point where he becomes violent. It becomes necessary to put him away. I'm thinking aloud, and I certainly can't speak with authority, but I have wondered if hatred can be the basis for paranoia. Is this disease the product of an unloving heart?

Look at the sin of self-centeredness. A little baby thinks he's the center of all activities. He feels that everything revolves around him. It is certainly a mark of immaturity when a grown person feels the same way. Many of us think it's more blessed to receive than to give. In Luke chapter 12, Jesus described the self-centered man. He was a rich farmer whose land produced abundantly. The rich man "thought within himself saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods, And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." In three short verses, he used thirteen personal pronouns. "I" and "my" were his favorite words. Then God spoke from Heaven and said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?"

Happiness is a type thing an individual cannot get, if he

pursues it. If we really try to be happy, we will be miserable. However, if we follow the advice of Jesus, if we learn it is more blessed to give than to receive, then we'll get happiness as a by-product. It comes when we give ourselves in service to God and others. When we lose ourselves doing good, then we find happiness. But, if we pursue happiness, we miss it. Self-centered people say it's more blessed to receive than to give. Everything must be coming to them. They must always be on the receiving end. Friends, such people are living on the periphery of Hell right now. They are wretched and miserable.

Unfaithfulness in marriage has produced much mental turmoil and illness. A preacher was counseling a lady who had marital problems. To use her language, she said, "I thought being faithful to one man was Hell." She decided to pursue the other course in life and learned it was "Hell". Many people think God said, "Thou shall not commit adultery" to keep them from having a good time. God gave that commandment to keep men and women from destroying themselves. Sin is sinful because it's a violation of the rules of life. In this life we are punished not so much *for* our sins as we are *by* our sins. Everyone recognizes the law of gravity and we have respect for it. A man in his right mind would not think of stepping from a cliff two thousand feet high for he knows he would be drawn to the floor of the valley and killed. God has spiritual laws which are just as real and just as definite as His physical laws. If you break God's spiritual laws, you will destroy yourself. The wreck of the Hesperus will be nothing in comparison. If you don't believe that's true, just open your eyes and look around you. Look at the people who are living in misery today because they've gone against God's spiritual laws.

Guilt is the basis for so much of our mental trouble. Time won't erase guilt. One might think his problem will be gone in six months or a year. But, it won't be gone. It will still be there a year from now unless you receive forgiveness in the meantime. One might say, "If I could get from Texas to California, things might be different. A change of scenery is all I need." Go to California and you'll carry your guilt

with you. You're not going to leave it here. It'll follow you every step of the way out there. Guilt cannot be removed by attempting to put the blame on somebody else. There is no need to blame your husband, wife, the preacher, the elders, or anyone else. You can't get rid of guilt that way. In your hardened heart you know your problem stems from a wrong relationship between you and the God above.

If you want to get rid of guilt, you must say, "I have sinned." In all of God's Bible, we read of only ten or eleven men who said "I have sinned." Furthermore, you must say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Then, take those steps necessary to remove the guilt. If you're an erring brother or sister, you need to repent and pray. To an erring disciple, Peter said, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." The alien sinner, one who has never been initiated into God's family, according to Acts 2:38, must "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." When you take those steps necessary, your guilt will be removed. Then you will have dealt with the source of your problem. Instead of cutting at the limbs of the tree, you will have cut the tree down. That doesn't mean you'll never have any more problems, however, you will be in a far better position to deal with your problems from that time onward.

SIN HURTS THE CONSCIENCE

Not only does sin hurt an individual physically and mentally, but it will hurt his conscience. Paul persecuted the church. When he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he realized what a horrible thing he'd been doing. For the next three days he neither ate nor drank. He was so wretched and miserable he could not eat. Judas Iscariot betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. When he saw that Jesus was to be killed, he could no longer live with himself, so he took his own life. A man in eastern Arkansas, a brother in Christ, took his life. On two different occasions that brother was involved in immorality. He was also caught embezzling funds of his employer. He just couldn't stand it, so he killed himself.

One day I was giving a final test to a Freshman Bible class. A boy finished in less than fifteen minutes. I knew he was very smart or he didn't know anything at all. After he left the room, I walked over, picked up his paper, and looked at it. He didn't have a thing on the first two or three pages. On the last page he had written me a note. It said, "Brother Allen, I thought I could cheat, without letting it bother me, but I have found that I can't do it. Therefore, I have made no attempt to answer the questions on this test." I had to stay in the room until all of the students had finished the quiz. Afterwards, I tried to locate him. He had already packed his bag and left the Harding College campus. He enrolled in another school because he was so down on himself for having cheated. You just can't cheat without it bothering you, if you have any conscience at all. I read about a fellow who returned his diploma to Vanderbilt University years after he had graduated. He said he hadn't earned it. He had obtained it by dishonesty and couldn't keep it another day longer.

During the Christmas holidays one of my non-Christian students wrote to me from his home in Minnesota. He said, "Brother Allen, the next time I come to your office it will be for the purpose of being baptized." Sure enough, the first part of February he came to the office and, true to his words, he wanted to be baptized. "But," he said, "I can't do it." I asked why. He said he had cheated in a history class during the past semester. His history professor had assigned two thousand pages of outside reading. He did only one thousand pages with the intention of doing the other thousand during the following semester. He had turned in a report for two thousand pages, but he still lacked a thousand. I picked up the telephone, called his history professor, and arranged an appointment for them. They made some type of arrangement. The next Sunday morning it was my pleasure to baptize that young man in the name of Christ that his sins might be forgiven.

Sin will cause your conscience to torment you, or if it doesn't do that, it will cause your conscience to become hardened and calloused. Paul wrote in I Timothy 4:1-2, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall

depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." A boy becomes intoxicated and stays out all night long. He will not go in to be seen by his mother and daddy in that condition. He gets intoxicated the second time. Again, he's so ashamed and embarrassed that he will not go home. However, he can continue to pursue that wicked habit and after a while he can go home "dog drunk." The fact that his mother and father see him doesn't bother him. When a man gets drunk the twenty-fifth time, isn't it as bad as the first time? If anything, it's far worse. Then, why does the boy act differently? He's become calloused, hardened and seared over.

SIN HURTS SPIRITUALLY

Sin will hurt you spiritually. My brother, if you live in rebellion to the Lord's will, the Holy Spirit will leave your life. According to I Samuel 10:10, the Holy Spirit came upon Saul, but in I Samuel 16:14, we find that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. Paul said, I Thessalonians 5:19, "Quench not the Spirit." In other words, don't pour water on the fire of the Holy Spirit. When a man lives in sin, he douses the influence of the Holy Spirit. Sin will cause the Spirit to leave him.

Living in sin will kill your prayer life. It will drive you from the Bible. Do you know why a man is living in rebellion to God's will doesn't want to read the Bible? Because that old book is like a mirror. When he takes a look he sees his image for what he is. It's not distorted; it's true. But, he doesn't like to be reminded of what he is so he ceases to read the Bible. A mother, in giving a New Testament to her son, put a note in the front of it which read, "Son, this little book will keep you away from sin, and sin will keep you away from this little book." Sin in a man's life will take him away from the church services. Sin will cause him to be placed in Hell itself.

SIN HURTS CHRIST PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY

Have you thought of what our Lord suffered? Did you

know Jesus suffered physically? Of course, you knew that. The Bible tells us they scourged Him. A scourging, accordng to the Jewish law, was thirty-nine stripes across a man's back as hard as a husky individual could lay it on. Jesus, however, was scouraged by the Romans. We do not know how many stripes they gave Him. After they had beaten Him within an inch of his life, and His back had been lacerated with their whips, they drove the nails into his precious hands and feet. They suspended Him on the cross for six agonizing hours to die between thieves.

Our Lord also suffered mentally. His mental suffering started the night before the crucifixion. He led his disciples over the Brook Kidron and up the gentle slopes of the mount of Olives. He then said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." He went into the garden of Gethsemane and prostrated himself on mother earth. He prayed fervently and earnestly, "If it be possible, let this cup depart from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." He prayed so hard the sweat came from his body as it were great drops of blood. When he was on the cross the next day, He had the realization that his God had left him.

That was a part of his mental anguish. He suffered mentally and spiritually. While on the cross, He asked, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That explains some difficult things to me. Jesus in the garden, said, "if it be possible, let this cup depart from me." What would you think if I were to pray that prayer when it is my time to die? I've known people who died by the inches. Death came to them across the weeks and months. Yet, it didn't take Jesus but six hours to die. But, there was something in his death which was so fearful that He begged God to spare Him. What was it? It was the spiritual agony which He underwent on the cross. He had an experience on the cross which He had never had before and hasn't had since. He was separated from his God for six hours. My friends, Hell is a separation from God. It is my opinion that the Lord, while on the cross, underwent the pains of the damned. He was an infinite personality and in six hours He satisfied the demands of God's justice. If we reject Him and die in sin, because we are finite creatures, we

shall be punished eternally to satisfy the justice of God. The Bible says, "He made him to be sin for us." The Bible also tells us that Christ, in His own body, bore our sins on the tree. Isaiah wrote: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrow, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, But He was wounded for our transgression and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed." Jesus suffered physically, mentally, and spiritually to pay the price for your sins and mine.

SINS HURT GOD

Not only will sin hurt you, but sin hurts God. I wish everyone here knew that sin is a personal affront against God. Open your Bible and look at Matthew 25 where Jesus said, "I was hungry and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me no drink, sick and in prison and ye didn't visit me, naked and ye didn't clothe me, a stranger and ye didn't take me in." "Lord," they asked, "when did we fail to do these things?" He said, "In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." In failing to care for others, they had sinned against Christ. In I Corinthians 8:12 the Bible indicates that when we trample under foot the conscience of a weak brother, we sin against Christ. Saul, on the road to Damascus heard Jesus say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul had been persecuting the church, but in mistreating the brethren he was sinning against Christ. According to Luke 15, the prodigal said he had sinned against heaven in sinning against his father. David committed adultery with Bathsheba. In his prayer of penance to God he said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." That wicked wife of Potiphar stood in the house with Joseph one day and said, "Lie with me." Do you remember what Joseph said in response? Did he ask, "How can I do this and sin against Potiphar?" No. Well, did he ask, "How can I do this and sin against you?" No. Furthermore, he said nothing about sinning against himself. He did say, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God!" Oh, yes, it would have been a sin against Potiphar, the woman, and Joseph, but, primarily, it would have been a sin against God.

Every time I do wrong, I trample underfoot the great loving heart of God. All sin is against God. So many of us think God is an impersonal force or simply a divine energy, but God is a loving, merciful, kind, and compassionate Heavenly Father. He is like the school master who heard that his boys were breaking the rules and fasted because of it. If you want to know how much sin hurts God, look at the cross. Friends, you can carry the illustration of the father and son to an extreme, I am sure. However, the Bible does refer to God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and it describes Jesus as the Son of the living God. Fathers, suppose you had to watch one of your sons die on a cross. Is there a father here who would give his little boy on a cross for me? I have a four year old son and I wouldn't give him for any of you. I think I love you and I think I am concerned about you, but I wouldn't sacrifice my boy for you. God Almighty loves you more than I do. He loves you more than any of these Christians do. He loves you more than these preachers do. God sacrificed the most precious possession Heaven had to offer. Think of how God was pained and hurt the day Jesus died. Remember, Jesus went to that cross for you. He went there for me. He was wearing our shoes the day He died. He died not for his wrongs, but ours. You are rejecting the Son of God, if you get up and walk out of this building tonight lost and unsaved. You haven't turned your back on me or the church; you've turned your back on your best friend. You have denied the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells you how to get out of sin, my friends. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Do you believe in Jesus? Are you willing to walk down one of these aisles tonight and say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"? If you are an erring brother, come to the front and say, "I've sinned I want you to pray with me and for me that I might be restored to my first love and be filled again with the Holy Spirit. I want the fellowship of faithful and loyal brethren." In this audience, surely, there are lost people. There are about seven thousand present tonight. We are grateful for everyone of you and if you are lost, we want you to come. I prayed to that end this afternoon. I spent some

time asking God to help me say what needed to be said so as to touch and tender your hearts and bring you to a saving faith in the Son of God. There is no telling how many hundreds of prayers have gone up today in the interest of this meeting. Some of you know that your name was mentioned in many of these prayers. These Christians love you and are praying for you. I beg you, I plead with you, I beseech you, by the mercy of God, to come tonight. Do the Lord's will while together we stand and sing.

The Reality and Nature of Sin

July 28, 1964

Some of you have asked when I'm going to deal with the "Fifteen Keys" which is the theme of our meeting. I follow a pattern in every meeting. Sermons may differ, but the pattern is the same. First, I preach about sin. An individual must be convicted of his sinfulness before God. Second, I preach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. Third, I tell people what to do to be saved. Fourth, I strive to give people motivation and incentive to do God's will. The reason we call this "Fifteen Keys for Living" is the meeting will be in progress for fifteen nights. Those fifteen nights will be divided into the four categories just mentioned.

Tomorrow evening I will speak on the subject, "Immorality USA". We have a lot of young people visiting tonight. Perhaps I should have preached that sermon this evening, but I am going to use it tomorrow night. It will be directed primarily to the teenagers. Of course, it will be of some benefit to those of us who are older, too. Brother Marshall Keeble, outstanding colored evangelist, has conducted many meetings for the Negroes in our country. Many times he has started with this statement: "I intend to preach primarily to my people, but, in spite of everything I can do, some of it will rub off on the white folks." I intend to speak primarily to the teenagers tomorrow night, but, in spite of everything I can do, some of it will rub off on the rest of us. Come and be with us for that service.

The first two nights of the meeting you have heard sermons which dealt with the subject of sin. Tonight's lesson will simply be an extension of remarks which have already been made. If this sermon were given a title, it would be called, "The Reality and Nature of Sin."

SOME DENY SIN'S EXISTENCE

There are some who deny that sin has any existence at all. Take the atheist, for example. He says there's no God in

Heaven. He says we have no souls within us. According to him, man is simply a product of physical forces. He believes that human thought and action are mechanical in nature. The late Woolsey Teller, former secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, wrote that human thought and action are as mechanical as the movement of stars or the secretion of liver bile. If a man were to make an attempt on the life of an atheist, the infidel could not consistently complain for the individual would be doing what he had to do. He would act that way because his atoms were arranged in a certain type pattern. He would be driven by blind omnipotent chance. My friends, if atheism is correct there is no difference between love and hate. Love is no better than hate and hate is no worse than love. The restoration of life is as bad as the taking of life. The atheist has no moral standards, there is no right and wrong, for he has denied the foundation for determining good and evil. The atheist says sin does not exist.

In the second place, the modernist espouses a similar position. He says the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross is simply a hoax. Do you know why the modernist does not see the necessity for Christ shedding His blood to save the world? He does not believe that world is lost! Many years ago, a modernist movement in one of the large demominations of the United States attempted to rid their hymnals of every reference to the blood of Christ. A man, acting as a spokesman for that group, said, "Blood is a filthy thing. It's shocking to our education, culture, and refinement." Those people were too well educated, too cultured, and too refined to believe in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. What's the problem? They have made a virtual god of humanity. They're singing that "day by day in every way we're getting better and better". If these people recognized the depravity of the human race, if they saw we are sinners damned and doomed, lost and undone before God, and in need of divine grace, they wouldn't have any difficulty in accepting the Lord's atonement as taught in the Bible.

The Pragmatic philosophy logically concludes that sin is non-existent. Reduced to its smallest form, Pragmatism con-

tends that whatever works is right. Well, Nazism worked in Germany for a while, hence it was right. Communism is working in Russia, so it's right. What works today may not work tomorrow. Therefore, what is right today may not be right tomorrow. What doesn't work today may work tomorrow. So, what's wrong today may be right tomorrow. According to this, everything is relative. The pragmatist and atheist reach the same conclusion; namely, there is no absolute standard of right and wrong. They deny the reality of sin.

Of course, there are some psychiatrists who occupy a similar position. What I am about to say is not to be understood as a blanket condemnation of psychiatry. Many men in the psychiatric profession are doing a marvelous work. Some, however, are building on a shaky foundation. Suppose you want to do wrong and your conscience will not allow you to do it. Because of this, you become anxious and frustrated. A psychiatrist might tell you not to suppress your desires lest you become inhibited. If a doctor tells you to do wrong, he must not believe there is a standard of right and wrong. If he did, he would not give such counsel.

I am sure that some crimes are committed because people are insane. However, some doctors, regardless of the crime committed, are willing to travel the length and breadth of this land to give "expert testimony" that the accused is not responsible for what he has done. I think some of these learned men down deep in their hearts deny all human responsibility. Clarence Darrow, a noted atheist, defended Leopold and Loeb after they killed a fourteen year old boy. He admitted that his clients had taken the young fellow's life. Do you know how he defended them? He said their environment and circumstances being what they were, they could do no other. He saved those young men from the electric chair. He absolved them from responsibility to such an extent they didn't have to die for their crime. They were put in the penitentiary instead. Eleven years later, Loeb was cut to pieces by a fellow inmate and after thirty-four years Leopold was released.

There is one religious group in the United States which makes no bones about it. They say sin does not exist. They

reason as follows: "God is good, God is all, therefore, all is good." What's wrong with that? God is good: that's correct. God is all; that's incorrect. There's another personality in this universe known as Satan. God is good, but God is not all, therefore all is not good.

MEN ARE IN SIN

The Bible indicates there's something drastically wrong with humanity. There is a common afflication which has beset us all. In the first chapter of the Roman letter the apostle Paul said the Gentiles are in sin, under the wrath of God and without defense or excuse. In the second chapter, he said the Jews are in sin, under the wrath of God and also without defense or excuse. He came to his grand climax in Romans 3:23 when he stated, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." John said, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us."

Believe you me, experience upholds what the Bible has to say about sin. Consider the following facts. We spend more than twenty-two billions of dollars annually in the United States on crime. We spend twenty billion on gambling. We spend more than eleven billion on alcohol. Do you know that's thirty-three billion more than we spend on education? Furthermore, that's thirty-nine billion more than we spend on health care and death expenses. It's forty-nine billion more than we spend on all religious and welfare activities combined. The money we spend in six years on crime, gambling, and alcohol would pay the principal on the national debt. In the light of these facts, we can surely see there is something basically wrong with humanity.

Look at our moral record. Around 250,000 illegitimate births are recorded in the United States annually. America has a million abortions each year, according to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. We have over 150,000 cases of rape and assault in this country each year. Crime is going up five times faster than the population. There are more seventeen year old thugs and hoodlums in the United States than any other age. Look at

those figures and tell me everything's all right with humanity!

Take a look at disease. Many of you have had loved ones afflicted with cancer. You've stood by the hospital bed and watched them as they died by inches across the months. You stood helplessly and hopelessly. There wasn't one single solitary thing under God's heaven you could do for them, except watch them die. Do you think God Almighty intended for men to have an experience like that? I believe when God created Adam and Eve and placed them in Eden He intended for that garden to be a virtual paradise. If a man denies the reality of sin, how can he explain sickness, disease, and suffering? It would have no explanation. But, it has an explanation, if you believe in sin.

Then, there is death. During the second World War, thirty-three million people were killed. Seventeen million of them were civilians. That's not taking into consideration more than two trillion, two hundred billions of dollars in property damage. Approximately 40,000 people are killed on our highways each year. A few years ago I was driving in southern Arkansas late one night. I came upon two automobiles which had collided head on. The north bound automobile was filled with teenagers returning from a football game. They turned into the path of the south bound car. Three people died in that wreck — one was killed instantly. She was a seventeen year old girl. Her body was placed by the side of the road and a covering was put over it. That girl's mother and father lived near by. In a few short minutes they arrived. They raised the covering and looked at the body of their daughter. If you will permit this crude expression, she was a bloody mess. As long as God lets me live, I will remember the cries of that mother and father which pierced the midnight sky. That little seventeen year old had left home full of life and vitality, but then she lay dead at their feet. When I was eleven years old my mother and five other people were in an automobile which was struck by the Rock Island Rocket, a streamlined train. Mother was killed. However, she lived for two days without regaining consciousness. Mother was a pretty woman. After the accident, she was battered and bruised. All the beauty was driven from her body.

The Bible says it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah died. Paul, Peter, John, James, and Andrew died. Even the Lord Jesus Christ had to die. One day we must die. Do you know why? The Bible says by one man sin entered into the world and death through sin. So then, death passed upon all men for all have sinned. There is no sensible explanation for death, unless we believe in sin. The hardest part of the funeral comes after the audience has been dismissed. I experience the most helpless feeling when I see a grieved broken hearted family look into the cold ashen features of a loved one. I, like all other preachers, have performed funeral services for people I hardly knew; yet, when the family came by, I didn't know what to do, so I just wept with them. I have a sensible explanation for death for I believe the Bible. Man is a sinner and death follows as a result. If we get aggravated with Adam and Eve, let's try living without sin. Try one whole day. If you make it perfectly, try another day. If you make it that day, try another. It won't take you long to see the impossibility of living a sinless life. Yes, death is a reality because sin is real.

SIN HURTS

Now, I will take a few minutes to notice something of sin's nature. In last evening's sermon I talked about how sin hurts the sinner and God. Tonight, I submit to you that sins hurts not only God and the sinner, but others as well. Proverbs 13:15 says, "The way of transgressors is hard." Sin is hard on the transgressor. It's hard on the God who loves him and gave His Son to die for him. It's also hard on those around him. In the 20th chapter of Exodus there is an account of the Ten Commandments. According to Exodus 20:4-5, God said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Now, let's read another one. Ezekiel

18:20 states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." One passage says that iniquity is visited upon the children because of the sins of the father, the other says that iniquity is not visited upon the son. Obviously, you must give them different interpretations or else you'll have a conflict in the Bible. When Ezekiel said the iniquity is not visited upon the son, he meant the guilt of the father's sin is not passed on to the son. When Moses said the iniquity is visited upon the children of the third and fourth generation, he meant the consequences of sin are brought upon the children.

Take Jonah, for an example. God told him to go to Nineveh and cry against that great city. Instead, he boarded a ship at Joppa and headed for Tarshish. That little ship was tossed to and fro in the wild raging waves of a stormy sea and the people on board feared for their lives. Why were their lives endangered? Because of what they had done? No, but because of what Jonah had done. The consequence of his sin was visited upon them. David committed with Bathsheba the scarlet sin of adultery and to that unholy union a child was born. It lived for six days and died. Why? Because of what it's mother and father had done. Now, don't misunderstand me. I am not saying every child taken in infancy dies because of sin committed by the mother or father. However, I am saying in this particular instance the baby died because of the sin of its parents. The children of Israel went up against Jericho and they were successful in defeating it. They overthrew the community, but God said they were not to take any of Jericho's treasures. However, Achan saw a wedge of gold of about fifty shekels, two hundred shekels of silver, and a Babylonish garment. He took them. Joshua sent three thousand troops against Ai. They were driven back in signal defeat. Joshua lost thirty-six of his best soldiers. He fell on his face before the Lord and asked why they had been beaten. God told him he had sin in the camp. Those thirty-six men died as a consequence of Achan's sin.

Manasseh ruled Judah longer than anyone else. He

reigned for fifty-five years. Most of his life was totally given to idolatry. On all the high places there were idolatrous shrines. He went so far as to put a pagan altar in the house of God. He caused his sons to pass through fire. The heathen gods, Chemosh and Molech, were made with their arms outstretched. There was a grate across their arms and underneath one could build a fire. When you read about a child passing through fire, it means an infant son was placed on the grate, a fire was built underneath it, and he was offered as a burnt sacrifice to a pagan image or a heathen deity. God providentially overruled and had Manasseh carried away into foreign captivity. There, he experienced a genuine change and called upon God for mercy. Mercy was granted. He was returned to his throne. Then, he instituted reforms. He broke down the idolatrous images on the high places. He took the pagan shrine out of the house of God. He quit passing his sons through the fire. But, do you know what the Bible says? It says "nevertheless the fierce anger of God turned not away from Judah because of the sins of Manasseh." In 588 the Babylonian hordes, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar II, launched an eighteen month siege against Jerusalem. They hammered and hammered and, finally, in July 586, they made a breach in the city's wall. They destroyed the temple and hundreds of homes. They broke down the walls and thousands were carried away into captivity. Why? Because of the sins of Manasseh! The consequences of his sin were visited on the nation.

Many of the men in this audience know something about Hitler's Germany. You know his armies were decimated, his industries were bombed, his citizens were killed and his country lay in shambles in 1945. Why? Primarily because of the maglomania of one man, Adolph Hitler. Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." The devoted Christian is a true patriot. Do you know who gives strength and power to this country? The child of God. Our strength is not to be found in our army, navy or our nuclear striking force. Our strength is in our good people. If there had been a thin line of salt at Sodom and Gomorrah, those cities would not have been

destroyed. If you want to contribute to the overthrow of his country, if you want to contribute to the capitulation of this nation to her enemies, live the life of a libertine or a profligate, be immoral and ungodly and do everything you're big enough to do. The true patriot is the Christian. The man is unpatriotic who lives in sin. Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. If you want your children to have freedom, if you want your children's children to have freedom, live the right kind of lives. Otherwise, the consequence of your sin will be visited on this nation. According to one historian, twenty two civilizations have arisen and fallen before us and nineteen collapsed because of internal rottenness. It was Abraham Lincoln who said that if this country ever falls, she will commit suicide.

Sometimes a husband and wife are determined to divorce. Maybe a preacher pleads with them not to do it, maybe a marriage counselor tries to keep them from doing it, but they divorce anyway. If they were the only two involved, it might not be so bad, but what about the little children? Many children have been made emotional cripples because of divorce. When they grow up they may have to be cared for by a religious or welfare agency. The consequences of the parent's sin are visited on them. They never become whole people because of the mental and emotional disturbance which took place in their lives when they were children.

Sin hurts in another way; it hurts those who love the sinner. I was in an Oklahoma meeting a few years ago and met a fine Christian family. The mother, father and two daughters were Christians, but a 17 year old girl was not a Christian. I went by to visit her. We sat at the kitchen table and talked for more than an hour. She was determined to be a non-conformist. She didn't intend to be a Christian because her parents and sisters were in the church. She wanted to be different. However, in being a non-conformist with reference to righteousness she was being a conformist to unrighteousness. Her parents and sisters were the non-conformists. Such people are in the minority. Most of the world is traveling the broad road to everlasting destruction and ruin. I suggested that if she were right about it, she was going to pay a terrible price.

She won't be in Hell ten seconds until she'd give anything for the opportunity she had in that meeting. Her mother and father were broken hearted; they were crushed because she refused to become a Christian. Her action hurt them for they dearly loved her.

In southern Arkansas there lives a teenage boy in whom I am interested. I went to his house to plead with him to make a change. While he and I were talking, his mother came in and began to weep. She said, "Son, remember your brother obeyed the gospel and just thirty days later he was killed. Why don't you do the Lord's will?" He said, "Mother, you can't make me do it." Then, he stamped out of the room. I thought, "You ungrateful rascal." She'd brought him into the world. She loved him more than life itself. She was concerned about the salvation of his soul, but he simply said, "you can't make me do it." However, every time he stuck his head out the door, someone was trying to make him do evil. The forces of wickedness were around him all the time. Imagine the grief and heartache that mother and father were experiencing because he wasn't a Christian!

In this audience there are men who are not Christians. Fellows, you may have lovely Christian wives, but you're not right with God. How many times has your wife begged you to make a change? How many times has she dampened her pillow with tears because you're lost? How many hundreds of prayers has she prayed to God for you? You may say, "I don't stand in her way." You're like a millstone around her neck. Have you ever thought how you crush and hurt her? If you die in sin and she has to carry your lifeless body out and bury it, then what? That will be the tragedy of all tragedies to her. Yes, you live in sin and hurt those who love you.

A girl gets into trouble and brings shame and degradation to the whole family. Many mothers, upon learning that a daughter is to give birth to a child out of wedlock, have said in essence, "I would to God that it had been me instead of thee." They would rather bear the burden than have their children bear it. Young people, be careful about the way you live. You're not the only ones involved. Your family and its good name is also involved. Others are wounded and

grieved by your wrong doing. Paul said he could wish himself accursed for his kinsmen's sake. He was saying he would be willing to go to Hell, if that meant his Jewish brethren could be saved. He was crushed. The thought of his people being lost was an almost unbearable burden on his soul.

Sin hurts others in that they are sometime influenced to do wrong. You can no more get away from your influence than you can escape your shadow while standing under the sun at high noon. All of us have influence. I Corinthians 15:33 states, "Evil companionship corrupts good morals." You'll influence others to do right or to do wrong. If you go to heaven, you'll take somebody with you. If you go to Hell, you'll take somebody with you. An alcoholic went to work at a radio station where a Christian brother was working. The alcoholic influenced the brother to such an extent that he began to drink. Eventually the Christian became an alcoholic. At last report, the non-Christian was cured, but the brother was still hopelessly entangled in the coils of alcoholism.

Not long ago I took my family swimming on White River in Arkansas. I was walking across the sand bar when my little five year old girl, Cindy, said, "Look, daddy, I'm following in your steps." I turned around and saw her all stretched out trying to get in my tracks. I thought, "Boy, you'd better be careful where you step, because that little girl thinks you are all right." Two little cousins were talking one day. They'd heard their mother and relatives talk so much about their fathers that one said to the other, "Mike, our daddies are going to Hell." Mike said, "If my daddy goes to Hell, I want to go with him." He didn't know what Hell was like, but if his daddy was going there, he felt it would be all right. Mike lives within five blocks of the church building in his community. I've held a number of meetings there. You couldn't tie him hand and foot and get him inside the church building. Mike is about 17 years old now. His father is a professional gambler. In refusing to accept Christ as Lord, he's following in his father's footsteps. Fathers and mothers should really think about this matter.

SIN TURNS THINGS WRONG SIDE UP

Sin turns things wrong side up. In Psalm 146:9 David said that God turns the way of the wicked up side down. In Acts 17:6 we learn that Paul and his companions were criticized by the Thessalonians for turning the world upside down, and, incidentally, that charge was correct. The world is wrong side up, In preaching the gospel of Christ those men turned it right side up. But, from a worldly viewpoint, in turning it right side up, they were turning it upside down. Sin always operates this way. It turns thing wrong side up.

For example, it will put making a living over seeking the kingdom of God. Several years ago I was in an Arkansas meeting. One night, following the services, I went to a filling station to get some gasoline. While there I learned that the man running the station was a backslidden brother. Someone in his family had answered the invitation during the meeting. I asked, "Why don't you come back home and start all over again?" He said, "I can't do it for I operate this gas station." He was selling his soul for $60 to $65 a week. Apparently, the money meant more to him than the salvation of his soul. He put earning a living over the kingdom of God. In that same area I went to a restaurant one night. The proprietor came over to the table to visit. I told him about the meeting and invited him to come. He said, "Well, you know how it is running a business. You have trouble getting competent help and I have to stay here seven days and nights a week." His whole thesis was wrong! He assumed that making money comes before the kingdom of God. I wondered if he would have time to die. Do you suppose he'll be so busy making sandwiches he won't be able to die? When death knocks at his door he'll lay the sandwich meat down. He needs to be making preparation now.

Some men quote scripture in an attempt to justify this practice. They will refer you to I Timothy 5:8 which says if a man doesn't provide for his own household he's worse than an infidel having denied the faith. Talk about a classic misinterpretation of scripture, that is it. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 that if a man will seek first the kingdom of God and His

righteousness, all these things, food, shelter, and clothing, will be added to him. God has promised to provide the necessities of life. We must put the kingdom first and making a living next. The Ethiopian eunuch was a busy man, he was treasurer in the great country of Ethiopia, yet he traveled more than 1000 miles in a chariot to worship God. Some of us are operating a peanut stand and can't even close it on Sunday morning for two hours. The Ethiopian was seeking first the kingdom of God.

In eastern Arkansas there lives a poor farmer who can hardly read, but, bless his heart, he's a Christian. We were conducting a vacation Bible school in the little community near his home. He had his teenage son to get down from the tractor every morning at 8:00, bathe, change his clothes and go to the vacation Bible school at 9:00. The boy stayed until 11:30 went home, had his lunch, mounted the tractor and plowed the rest of the afternoon. The boy attended Bible school when he was needed in the field. That Fall, when crops were harvested, I couldn't tell that Brother Vaughn's crop was shorter than the others. He knew that going to vacation Bible school five mornings would be worth more to that boy than working. He had the right attitude.

I believe a man ought to provide for his family's welfare. If possible, we ought to invest in insurance, stocks and bonds. But, suppose you had to make a choice between financial investments and serving the Lord. How much money did Jesus leave his mother? How much insurance did He have? How many stocks and bonds did He have? Apparently, Joseph was already dead when Christ went to the cross. Who was to care for Mary? What did Jesus leave her? The memory of Who and What He was! I had rather my family remember me as a righteous husband and father than leave them plenty of money in the bank. If you can do both, all right. However, there are too many people saying they can't do both, therefore, they put the world first. Jesus is either first place in your life or He's no place. A lot of people are seeking the kindgom of God who will never go to Heaven. They're seeking it second, third, fourth, fifth, tenth, when the Lord said to seek it first. Sin says making a living is more important than making a life.

Sin puts the flesh over the spirit. In Galatians 6:7-8 Paul said, "Be not deceived; God it not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." If I correctly understand Paul, he was saying that the flesh or the spirit dominates one's life. I know which one is supposed to have the upper hand. In Matthew 26:41, Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation for the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." In I Corinthians 9:27 Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." He was hammering and buffeting his body. In other words, his flesh was brought into submission to the spirit. But, sin turns it over and puts the spirit in submission to the flesh.

We are so intent on satisfying the desires of the body. We spend over sixteen billion dollars each year on recreation. We spend almost seven billion dollars each year on cigarettes. We spend five times more money for recreation than we give to the churches in the United States combined. We spend twice as much money on tobacco as goes into the coffers of all American religions combined. Somebody has said that America is a religious nation. If so, her god must be tobacco. Esau was older than his brother Jacob, consequently, he had the birthright. This meant when their father died, he would receive a double portion of the inheritance. One day Esau came in from the field. He was about to faint from hunger. Jacob had a bowl of red beans. Esau said, "Give me something to eat." Jacob said, "I'll give you something to eat for your birthright." He made the trade. The Bible says Esau despised his birthright. How many of us despise our spiritual birthright? Many of us put the satisfaction of the flesh first. When we're spending money on ourselves a dollar bill looks like a postage stamp. When we spend it in the kindgom of the Lord the same dollar takes on the proportion of a bedsheet. Think about it. What's first in your life?

In Ecclesiastes 12:7 the Bible says that when a man dies the spirit goes back to God and the body returns to the dust

of the earth. In Job 21:26, Job declared, "They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." Do you see my hand? One of these days there won't be any flesh on that hand. One of these days there won't even be a bone, but I'll still be living somewhere. I've done some digging in Indian mounds. In southern Arkansas another man and I were making probes one day. We thought we had found a piece of pottery about six feet deep. Incidentally, that's very unusual for most of the pottery was buried about three feet deep. Sure enough, we found a lovely piece of Coles Creek Indian pottery. We didn't find a vestige of a bone. It was a particularly wet place. The person with whom the pottery was buried had been dead in the neighborhood of five or six hundred years. There were no bones left, but he still lives. Which is more important, the body that lasts for time or the spirit that lasts for eternity? Yet, we put the flesh over the spirit.

Here's the way some men seek a wife. They put dimensions over spiritual depth. They think sex appeal is more important than spirituality. They say ability to make love is more significant that ability to make a home. So, one of the fellows finally locates his ideal and marries her: After he has been married for six months, it dawns on him there is a being in the body he calls a wife. Then, he must learn to relate to her as a person. He must exercise patience with her faults, failures, and shortcomings. Chances are they will wind up in the divorce courts. The man begins to seek his ideal girl again. He finds her and gets married, but in six months he's back in the divorce court. He has the same experience three or four times in life. He wonders why love always eludes him. Do you know why? He's trying to build on the wrong foundation. He doesn't know what true love is. I don't want you young people to misunderstand me. You could not love and marry an individual who was not physically attractive to you. Girls, he may not look good to anyone else, but he must look good to you to be your husband. Boys, she may not look good to anyone else, but she must look good to you to be your wife. But, there's a lot more to marriage than a union of bodies. In marriage there should be a union of spirit, too.

We need to develop the ability to relate at deep levels. Some people build on infatuation of the physical thrill aroused by courting. I think my wife is pretty. She wouldn't win a Miss America contest, but she is pretty, nevertheless. However, that which attracted me to her was her inner beauty. She was dedicated to the Lord. She was a Christian, pure through and through. That's what counts in marriage.

SIN IS PROGRESSIVE

Now, I want to talk to you about the progressiveness of sin. In Isaiah 30:1, the prophet said, concerning the people who were living in his day, "They add sin to sin." Paul said the same thing in 2 Timothy 3:13 when he stated that "evil men and seducers wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived." David said in Psalms 1:1-2, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Consider the country boy who sees the bright lights of the city for the first time. How does he get into a drinking establishment? He walks up and down the street in front of the place. Then, he stands and looks in, and finally, walks in and takes a seat. He walks, stands, and sits. He doesn't come into town and make a mad rush straight for the bar. It's a gradual thing. Achan, whom I mentioned a moment ago, saw a wedge of gold, some silver, and a Babylonian garment. He kept looking until his look turned into covetousness. Then, he stole those items which belonged to God and buried them beneath the floor of his tent. Do you see how he was progressively involved in sin?

David went out to walk across his rooftop one evening and saw a beautiful woman bathing. He looked at her until his look became lust. Then, he committed adultery with her and had her husband murdered. Do you see how he progressively got into evil? The apostle Peter stood one night and told the Lord that though all men denied Him, he would never deny Him. He boasted and bragged, but later he followed Him afar off. Then, he denied Him. Finally, he denied Him with an oath and said, "I know not the man." Do you see

how he progressively got in deeper and deeper? Lot separated himself from his Uncle Abraham one day and pitched his tent toward Sodom. The next thing we know, he was in Sodom. There, he lost some of his daughters to sin. Finally, he lost his own wife. Progressively, he got in deeper and deeper.

A boy goes out with a group of fellows and a whiskey bottle is passed around. He says, "I don't want any; I've been taught better. " It comes around several more times, but he still refuses. Eventually, his cronies say, "Come on, just take a taste." Somehow he thinks he can taste it without drinking it, so he says, "Well, all right, I'll take it." Next time around he turns it up and gets an old fashioned snort himself. The first thing you know he's drinking socially. After awhile, he's getting intoxicated occasionally and, finally, he winds up as a hopeless alcoholic. Why? Because one night he tasted whiskey. Gradually he became a derelict. A young couple go out on a date. Both of them are decent and upright. They intend to do the right thing, but they court and go too far. As a result, immorality is committed. The experience leads to the same thing happening again and again. After a while, the girl, for all practical purposes, becomes a harlot and the boy lives an abandoned life. Why? Because one night they were courting.

How do you think people get away from the church? Do you think one goes to bed at night in close fellowship with God and gets up the next morning a million miles removed from God? No sir, it doesn't happen that way. A boy at Harding College came to my office and told me he had preached in northern Arkansas. He said when he moved to Little Rock, he immediately quit going to prayer meeting service on Wednesday night. It wasn't long until he'd dropped out of the Sunday night service. After a while, he quit going to Bible class on Sunday morning. Finally, he quit attending the worship on Sunday morning. The writer of the Hebrew letter said we are to take heed lest we drift away. I was reared on the river. A boat tied to the dock is tossed by the waves. It pulls on the rope and the knot begins to loosen. If you were looking at it, you wouldn't notice it. However,

you can come back forty five minutes later and the boat is a half mile down the river. That's the way people get away from Christ. The Ephesians weren't baptized one day and away from their first love the next day. John wrote to the church of Ephesus and said, "You have left your first love." That congregation has been there more than forty years. They gradually departed from the Lord. Life is not made up of big decisions. It is the little decisions that make or break us. There may be a Christian here who will be a Judas ten years from now. Your little decisions will determine your destiny. Making a decision not to pray, not to read the Bible, or to skip prayer meeting service may cause one to be in Hell in the next life. We can gradually depart from God.

Have you ever seen a cow go to the water? She walks in very leisurely, a slow step at a time. She gets in about belly deep and with tail swishing, she looks all around. Finally, she gets a drink. Did you ever watch a frog get into the water? He hops along the bank and, the first you know, he's in—head, ears, and all. We don't get into sin like a frog gets into water; we get into sin like a cow gets into the water. It's a gradual process. Sow a thought and reap an act, sow an act, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap a character, sow a character, and reap a destiny. Just as we got into sin, gradually, we get out of it gradually. Of course, we get out from under its guilt immediately. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." When you're baptized, your sins are removed as far as the east is from the west. They're blotted out from the mind of God and will never be remembered again. However, as far as the practice is concerned, that's something else. Rome wasn't built in a day and it will take you a while to get away from all wrong doing. Jesus referred to John as the "Son of Thunder." When the Samaritans rejected Jesus, John wanted fire called down from Heaven to destroy them. But, how do you and I remember John? As an apostle of love. The Lord had a mellowing influence on him and he gradually came out of his anger and fury to the point where he is known as the man characterized by love. The idea of getting an old fashioned dose of religion on Saturday night and mounting the pulpit to

preach on Sunday morning is not Biblical, unless you're talking about Paul.

I was baptized when I was nineteen. I'm now thirty four. Had I waited from that time until now, it would be next to an impossibility for me to change. I don't want to discourage any older people in doing the Lord's will. I am simply saying the longer you stay in sin, the more difficult it's going to be to change. Some say, "I can quit sin when I am ready." How do you know when you are ready to quit sin, sin's going to be ready to quit you? Sin is pictured in the Bible as an oppressive power and force. You can wait, but the longer you wait the harder it will be to break with sin. It will never be easy to make a change, but it will be easier for you to accept Christ as your Savior tonight than at any time in the future.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Are you willing to walk to the front, confess with your lips the faith that's in your heart and let Brother Jackson baptize you into the name of the Godhead for the remission of your sins? If you are a brother or sister who needs to come back home, will you come to the front? Give Brother John Bannister your hand, give God your heart, and let's pray that you might be restored to faithfulness. This is a marvelous opportunity. Do not allow the devil to hold you any longer. Come tonight, yield your will to the will of Christ, surrender your life to Jesus, obey the gospel and leave here saved. I wish I had the fluency to impress upon your hearts that the major issue tonight is getting right with God and staying right with God. If you're lost, come to the front and do the Lord's will. Come right now while we stand and sing.

Immorality, U.S.A.

July 29, 1964

INTRODUCTION

When a doctor removes a wart, he does it in a few minutes, but it takes a long time to perform major surgery. Tonight's sermon fits in the latter of these two categories. This will be the longest lesson of the meeting. The sermon is entitled, "Immorality, U.S.A." I shall speak plainly, pointedly, and frankly, but the lesson will be presented from the viewpoint of a Christian gentleman. I hope none will leave saying the service was crude or vulgar. I will speak plainly, but not crudely. This sermon is directed primarily to the teenagers in our audience. But, in spite of everything, some of it will rub off on the rest of us.

Now, I submit five assumptions as a basis for the sermon. If you believe these basic assumptions, my remarks later will be meaningful to you, but if you reject them, what I have to say from here on will be meaningless. Young people, I assume that most of you plan to marry, that you want a pure companion, that you want a happy family, that you intend to dodge the divorce courts, and that you want to do what's right for your country and your God.

AMERICA'S SORDID RECORD

With that in mind, let's take a look at America's sordid moral record. In 1960 more than two hundred thousand illegitimate children were born in the United States. In 1961 that number had jumped to two hundred twenty-five thousand. By 1963 it was in the neighborhood of a quarter of a million. Keep in mind that 25% of the states make no record as to whether a child is legitimate or not. Furthermore, there are literally thousands of people involved in illegitimate conceptions each year, but they throw about themselves cloaks of respectability in that they marry before the children are born. About one million abortions are performed in America annually and plenty of these abortions are per-

formed on unmarried women. When we put all of this information together, we can conservatively say there are eight hundred thousand illegitimate conceptions in the United States annually. Of course, these are simply the ones who are caught. Of all the illegitimate children born in our nation, forty percent of them are borne by teen-age girls and more of them are fifteen years old than any other age.

A few years ago Alabama had a meeting of some of its leading educators. They had a problem to resolve. The problem was immorality among college and high school young people in their state. The people who attended the meeting estimated that 83% of the men and women in Alabama colleges and universities had been immoral. Furthermore, they estimated that 49 % of those in the high schools were in exactly the same position. In plain Arkansas language, that is four out of five in the colleges and one out of every two in the high schools. Maybe their figures were exorbitant, maybe they didn't know what they were talking about, but when men began to use figures like those, believe you me, it frightens me silly. Billy Graham told of 120 young ladies being dismissed from one eastern high school during the same semester because they were expecting children out of wedlock. I know of an Oklahoma junior high school, 7th to the 9th grades, that had to dismiss seventeen young ladies during one semester because they were unmarried expectant mothers. A middle-sized Arkansas church, three or four hundred in membership, had five young ladies one year who were expecting children out of wedlock. Most of those girls had been going to Sunday school all of their lives and their parents were members of the church. They had been reared in good Christian families. More than one hundred thousand girls enter the profession of prostitution in America annually. In 1961 there was a forceable rape in our country every thirty-four minutes. Seven million American citizens have syphilis. That's one out of twenty-six. One out of every twenty Americans has some type of veneral disease.

Of course, America is leading the world in its divorce rate. Twenty-five percent of American marriages wind up in the divorce courts. Shortly after the end of the second world

war it was forty percent, but we've been gradually going down hill since then and we are pretty well stabilized at twenty-five percent. Why do people divorce? There are a number of reasons for it, but if the truth were known, in most instances, divorces occur because at least one of the mates has been unfaithful to his or her matrimonial vows. A triangle situation develops. The man quits loving his wife and begins to love some other woman. The woman quits loving her husband and begins to love some other man. As a result, the home is destroyed.

Perversion is becoming more and more of a problem in the United States. I intend to discuss perversion under two headings. First, we will consider homosexuality. Some might feel that word should not be used in the pulpit. The word is not found in the Bible, but the idea is there. In the first chapter of Romans, Paul discussed it in terms which cannot be misunderstood. He said the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against such. For the benefit of the youngsters who may not understand this word, homosexuality is the fulfilling of one's passion with an individual of the same sex. The practice is sinfully wrong. In the 19th chapter of Genesis we are told that two angels went to the city of Sodom and spent the night with Lot. That evening the men of Sodom surrounded Lots house and said, "Bring the two men out that we may know them." Lot said, "Take my two daughters who have never known a man and do with them what you will." Lot was wrong in that offer. He had an obligation to his daughters, but he felt his responsibility as a host so strongly he thought it would be better for his daughters to be violated than for his guests to be abused. However, those men did not want the girls. They wanted the men. Why? They were homosexuals. In the seventh verse of Jude we learn that Sodom and Gomorah were burned from the face of the earth because the people went after strange flesh. They became a stench in the nostrils of God and He destroyed them. This subject is discussed in the word of God.

Some attempt to defend homosexuality on the grounds of its being an illness. A man can die because of cancer or tuberculosis and go to Heaven. But, an individual cannot die

as a practicing homosexual and go to heaven. It is a disease, but it's an illness based upon and founded in rebellion to the will of God. It is a spiritual sickness. My friends, if that isn't the case, why is it so severely denounced in the Bible? I know a man who attempted to justify this horrible practice with the word of God. He argued that under the law it was denounced but under grace it is allowed. Of course, if he had been right, it would still be wrong to practice such outside the bounds of marriage. However, the practice is wrong in or out of marriage. About twenty years ago brother G. C. Brewer took the arguments that brother had made in favor of homosexuality and answered them in the *Gospel Advocate.* I know the man who made them to begin with. Brewer didn't know who he was answering, but I understand he did an excellent job in the article. Homosexuality is a form of perversion and it must be denounced. People need to be warned about it because it's growing by leaps and bounds.

Taking the natural desires of men and blowing them out of proportion is another type of perversion. Young people may think sex appeal is something relatively new; perhaps it is for them. However, sex appeal has been around as long as humanity has been here. Adam and Eve knew about it. The old timers knew about it and recognized it as a powerful and tremendous force. Instead of playing it up, they played it down. Today we live in a society obsessed with sex. Men, because they love money, exploit sex appeal and blow natural desire all out of proportion. We live in a country which has vice gangs. Teenagers meet on stated occasions through the week to practice sexual promiscuity. We live in an age when men trade wives by mail order. There are clubs in which one cannot have membership unless he is willing to be immoral. Let us suppose the following: You go into a restaurant. A heavy velvet curtain is drawn to one side on the stage in front of you. All of the lights are turned out. Then, various colored spot lights began to play on a table covered with beautiful tapestries. Out of the semi-darkness a hand reaches and jerks away one tapestry and then another and another. In the background the music is getting louder and louder and when it reaches its crescendo, the last cloth

is removed. Now, you see a lamb chop! What would you think about that kind of program. Doesn't everybody have an appetite? Isn't it natural to satisfy our appetite when hungry? But, a man, who would pay good money to see what I have just described, has a perverted appetite. What I have described, with reference to the bodies of women, occurs every night in America and people pay money to see it. That's perversion, pure and simple. People who witness such may not look upon themselves as perverts, but that's exactly what they are. The natural desires of men have been blown out of proportion.

I used to wonder why God was so severe with the Canaanites. He told Israel to destroy their places of worship and have no mercy on them. Israel was not to inter-marry with the Canaanites who were spared. Well, I made a brief study in Canaanite religion and now I better understand God's methods. The Canaanites were an agricultural people. They worshipped agricultural gods. Baal was the male god of fertility and Ashtoreth was his female counterpart. Those people associated the fertility in their bodies with the fertility in the soil. They actually came together, in the name of religion, and practiced immorality. God simply said that such people were to be destroyed lest Israel be corrupted by them.

Not long ago, I went to the site of ancient Corinth. Behind the ruins of that city there looms a mountain called Acro-Corinth. In the first century on top of that hill there stood a temple dedicated to Aphrodite. There were a thousand priestesses who worked in the temple. They were devoted to sacred debauchery or sacred prostitution. For all practical purposes, they worshipped sex in the name of religion just like the Canaanites did. I would not be surprised to pick up a newspaper tomorrow and read of an American group bowing down before and offering supplication to Venus or Aphrodite. We use a misnomer in calling them goddesses of love. I wonder if we will come to the point where we worship such.

WHAT HAS LED TO OUR MORAL COLLAPSE?

We've had a moral collapse in this country. People who stay in touch with current events can tell you when that collapse started. It began at the end of the first world war. We've been going down, down, down ever since. What has produced this breakdown? What has destroyed our moral stamina? A number of factors are involved. I'll have time to mention only a few this evening.

MOVIES

High, and receiving first priority, on my list is the influence of Hollywood. I don't want anyone to misunderstand me. I do not believe it is wrong to watch a picture moving on a screen. Occasionally, I go to a movie myself. The point is not the picture moving on the screen, but what is pictured on the screen. If you and I live to see the day when we capitulate to our enemies, we can turn to the producers, directors, actors, and actresses in Hollywood and say, "You people made a major contribution to our overthrow." Look at our idols — the late Marilyn Monroe, Jane Mansfield, and Brigette Bardott. These names are on the tongues of men everywhere. These women have been willing to parade their nakedness on screens in every theater throughout the whole world. Such people ride the crest of popularity now, but, unless they make a drastic change, one day they will be sunk ten leagues in Hell.

Look at the film titles: "A Question of Adultery," "Indiscreet," "Flesh and the Spur," and "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof." I don't claim to be smart, but I can tell by looking at some film titles that I have no business going to see them. When you see a film advertised for "adults only," it's not fit for adults or children. But, some of us will go to see such filth anyway.

A few years ago Burt Lancaster won the outstanding actor award for his portrayal of Elmer Gantry. Gantry was a renegade Protestant preacher who preached "Hell-fire and damnation" from the pulpit and ran with a harlot through the week. When Hollywood gets ready to make some re-

ligious leader look like an idiot, they always select a Protestant preacher. They wouldn't think of doing that to a Roman Catholic priest or a Jewish rabbi. Why is it that the Protestant must be made to look like a fool? The same year Lancaster won his oscar, Elizabeth Taylor won the outstanding actress award for her part in "Butterfield Eight." I understand that she played the part of a call girl. That same year, "The World of Susie Wong" was high on the listings. Last year "Tom Jones" was the number one movie. I am told that Tom Jones was a philanderer who ran from one carnal conquest to another. Some of my brethren saw everyone of those filthy rotten movies. You went to see them all. Then, you went to church on Sunday and sang "Oh, How I Love Jesus." How you could get that filth out of your mind long enough to worship God is beyond me. Notice how the actresses and starlets dress. They wear low necklines, high hem lines and tight fitting provocative dresses. Some of our senseless sisters will stupidly follow the pattern which has been set for them. They will allow the moral filth of the world to set the standards fashion-wise.

I am not saying movies as such are wrong. I am saying we must learn to discriminate. When a man says he has been attending three or four movies a week for the past ten years and has seen no filth, without the slightest hesitation, I can say he's lying. That's all there is to it. When you allow your children to attend any and every movie that comes to town, you can expect them to be corrupted. Get Parents Magazine and read the movie reviews. Get the Green Sheet publication and learn what they say about them. Buy the publication put out by the Catholic Legion of Decency and read their reviews. Learn to discriminate. Now, for whatever it may be worth, let me say that Hollywood produces what we want to see. They are interested in getting something in the theaters which has box office attraction. They want to make money. It is strictly a money making proposition to them. When we reach the point where we will not pay to see their filth, they will cease to produce it. They are in a buyer's market. When we quit buying, they will quit producing. Let's not put all the blame

on them. Of course, the major share of blame belongs there.

PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography has also contributed to our moral collapse. The word "pornography" readily divides itself in two parts. "Pornea" which means "filth" and "grapha" which means "to write." Hence, pornography applies to filthy, salacious, lewd and wicked literature. Look at the filth on the news stands and in the book stores. The corner drug store displays it for every man, woman, boy and girl in the community to see and buy. When I was growing up pornography was sold, but it was sold under the counter. Now, it's sold over the counter. More than sixteen million sex magazines are read in the United States each month. Smut grosses more than five hundred million dollars a year in our nation. You can get sin in slick covers today. Five thousand males in seventy-two colleges and universities were interviewed and 34.5% of them said they read obscene magazines regularly. A Harding student was suspected of stealing. Another teacher and I searched his room. We didn't find any stolen items, but I found a copy of an obscene magazine. I said to the other teacher, "Harold, look at this thing." I flipped through a few pages and let him look at them. I didn't know whether the boy had done any stealing or not, but I was absolutely certain he was in trouble. You can't read such material without being in trouble with the Lord. I believe a man who reads that type of stuff would steal, if he thought he could get by with it. Sure enough, that student had been stealing!

I went to a brother's home one day following the Sunday morning service. While the ladies were in the kitchen preparing the meal, I reached into a magazine rack to get something to read. Believe you me, I got something, too! I slammed that magazine back into the stand. Do you wonder why? I'm a man; that's why. I'm not here to slap myself on the back, but, I'll guarantee you one thing, I'm trying to serve the Lord. I don't want to lose my soul. I can't

read filth like that and stay right with God. I'd rather have a rattle snake in the house than filthy literature for my children to read. I mean it. From an eternal view point, the snake would hurt them far less than the literature. It will corrupt and destroy you.

Boys, listen to this. J. Edgar Hoover said there has never been a sexual offense committed where pornographic literature was not found on the offender or in his personal belongings. Sometimes it is self-made and sometimes it is purchased, but it is always there. Read filth and you set yourself up for a sexual offense. That is what it can do. One night, following a service in Detroit, a little, sickly, emmaciated fellow came to the front and said, "Preacher, I must talk with you." He and I went to the preacher's study to talk. Finally, he told me his problem. It was pornography. He said he had reams of it at home which he poured over every day. The local preacher, Clyde Balderson, and I attempted to help him. We told him that he must destroy all of his salacious literature. The boy had never owned a Bible in his life so we gave him one. We also prayed with him. With the exception of one night, he attended every service remaining in that meeting. We didn't baptize him. However, I suggested that brother Balderson put him in touch with a Christian psychiatrist in Detroit. He had gone so far with his practice, I did not believe Clyde or I had the ability to apply the gospel to his sick mind. I knew a Christian man, trained in psychiatry, could do it.

We have a "respectable" type of pornography in this country. That's the kind you see on television, bill-boards and in the magazines. We've reached the point where we advertise everything from corn plasters to bull dozers with some woman who is hardly dressed.

IMMODEST APPAREL

Now, I want to say a few words about immodest apparel. If you are disposed to differ with what is about to be presented, I beg you to listen carefully and prayerfully. Heaven knows, the opposing forces have been bombarding you across

the years. For a few minutes, listen to the other side of the question.

First of all, let me say a word about mixed swimming. I was reared on White River in Arkansas. I learned to swim when I was eight years old. I think swimming is one of the finest body building sports in which an individual can participate. We have an indoor swimming pool at Harding College where I teach. The women use the pool at one time and the men use it at another time. In Southern Arkansas, where we used to live, the community decided to build a swimming pool. I made a few remarks about it publically. I said, "I am all for it and I'll make a liberal donation to the building of it, if we can do two things. First, let's put a big fence around it. Second, let the men go in at one time and the women go in at another time." Do you think I got to first base? I didn't even get a bat in my hand! They wouldn't let me on the baseball field! What is wrong with mixed swimming? I can't speak for the ladies, but I can speak for the men. There's not an ordinary man, who can look at a woman clad in nothing but a bathing suit for a long period of time without entertaining evil thoughts. "But," some men will say, "it doesn't bother me." One who says that may be so young his passions haven't arisen, or he may be so old they have subsided. Or, he may be so ignorant he doesn't know what is going on or he may not be normal or he may be lying! He fits into one of these five categories or he is a spiritual giant. But, spiritual giants don't spend their time at mixed swimming parties! I'm doing my best to live right, but I can't go to a swimming pool and look at half naked women without entertaining evil thoughts. Fellows, I think the same applies to you too.

In Granby, Canada, the town fathers decided they would stop mixed swimming. That was in 1950. That year, paid attendance dropped from an all time high of 4,086 to 1,651. Five years later, in 1955, attendance was down to 1,164. There are a number of reasons why paid attendance dropped, but one is obvious. I hope we are not so naive as to miss it. When that parade of nudity was stopped, many of the men simply stopped going to the pool.

What about beauty contests? A few years ago a preacher's daughter won the Miss Universe bathing beauty contest. She and her mother were being interviewed by some reporters and one of them asked, "How do you reconcile your daughter's being in the Miss Universe contest with the religion which her father preaches?" In reply, the mother said, "Anyone who would think wrong simply has a wicked mind." She had been married more than twenty years. If she was sincere in that statement, she needed a course in the fundamentals of human nature! She didn't know how anybody could entertain evil thoughs with reference to her almost nude daughter. I have always had difficulty understanding how a daughter of God, dressed in a bathing suit, could stand on an elevated platform before hundreds of men and still claim to be a Christian. A few years ago an elder's daughter in southern Arkansas was in a bathing beauty contest. Her picture was on the front page of the local newspaper. Brother, when I saw it my estimation of her and her father went down. If he wasn't man enough to keep his family in line, he didn't have any business as an elder in God's church!

The Christian Businessmen's committee in DeKalb, Georgia, an interdominational group, wrote the following: "Our burden is that the bathing suit contest be eliminated in the annual beauty, personality, and talent contest among the young ladies in our county in obedience to the word of God, which admonishes that women adorn themselves in modest apparel. We believe that you will agree for our young ladies to be encouraged to reveal and parade their bodies before the eyes of men cannot help but promote lust of the flesh, which is an abomination to God. This request is, therefore, in behalf of the spiritual welfare of our people." Do you know what those men did? They told the truth!

Personally, I feel the foundation for a beauty contest is wrong. It is calculated to appeal to vain women. It flatters the ego and appeals to vanity. Can you imagine women competing with one another to learn who is more talented or more beautiful? "I'm prettier than you are," says one girl to another. Well, so what? I attended school with a very beautiful girl. I thought of asking her for a date. If she

were here to defend herself, she might tell you she wouldn't have dated me had I asked her. I never did ask her because I learned she was beautiful, but dumb. If you had gone any deeper than yesterday's baseball scores or the latest fashions, you would have lost her. Solomon said, "A beautiful woman without discretion is like a gold ring in a swine's snout." Have you ever seen a hog with a gold ring in its nose? Ladies, look as good as you can. I tell my wife to pretty up. That's fine, but a paint box beauty without discretion amounts to nothing. I still say the very foundation for a beauty contest is not what it ought to be. It isn't right. Beautiful women competing with one another. How ridiculous can you get?

Now, a word about the twirlers or drum majorettes. Mrs. Inez Robb writes a syndicated newspaper column. A few years ago she became very upset because of what happened at a football game. The Queen of England and her husband, Prince Philip, were in America for a visit. They went to see the Universities of North Carolina and Maryland play football. During the half-time ceremony they were treated to the usual burlesque show. Mrs. Robb thought it was terrible. She said, "If parents don't have sense enough to stop it, school officials should." How a daughter of God can get on the gridiron clad in scanty attire, go through such contortions and gyrations as they do and still claim to be a Christian is beyond me. I mean it. I don't understand it at all. It reminds one of a burlesque show.

Harding College is in the Arkansas Intercollegete Conference. Naturally, we play football against other colleges in the same conference. A couple of years ago one of the AIC teams came to our field for a game. At half time their band marched. They had three or four almost naked girls to participate in the half time ceremony. Some of the other schools look on us as odd balls. They sometimes call our football players "Bible bangers" and "preacher boys." Don't get the wrong idea; our players can take care of themselves. They aren't softies and sissies. Well, I felt that maybe the immodestly dressed girls had been brought to Searcy to embarrass us. I talked with the dean of our school about the matter. I asked, "Joe, can't we do something about how

the twirlers dress when they come to our school?" I learned that a number of others had talked with Dean Pryor along similar lines. Joe wrote a letter to the school in question. He said, "We were delighted to have your band the other night. The next time you play here, bring your band along. However, we would appreciate it, if your twirlers would dress modestly." In a nice way, he told them to bring the band without the twirlers, if the girls did not want to put some clothes on. What they do on their campus is their business, but what't done on our campus is our business.

Now, please consider daily dress. In every sermon, I have mentioned David and Bathsheba. I have referred to the sin of adultery which they committed. It was an unholy union and there is no defending David. He was wrong. He was severely denounced by Nathan. He was punished by the Lord. But, ladies, had that woman been careful where she bathed, the sin would not have been committed. You have tremendous influence over men by the way you dress. Some women dress to be chaste, CHASTE. By that, I mean virtuous and Godly. They dress to please the Lord. Some dress to be chased, CHASED. There is a vast difference between the two words. The average man does not have to be around a lady long to know in which category she fits. When you walk up and down the streets, are you dressed in shorts and halter or form-fitting torredor trousers? How do you dress? Our Lord Jesus Christ said, in Matthew 5:28, "That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Where is the passage in the Bible that says, "if a woman looks on a man to lust after him, she has committed adultery with him in her heart"? It isn't there. Do you know why? Because such isn't a problem with women. It's a problem with men. "Women are to adorn themselves in modest apparel." If a bathing suit, short shorts and halter, and torredor trousers worn in public are modest, God have mercy on America when our women become immodest! I'm not going to discuss the shock-frock or topless bathing suit. I assume that this audience believes such attire to be sinful and wrong. Surely, there is no need to discuss those items. Go to Africa and you

find savages who have learned the gospel of Christ and put clothes on. But, in our "enlightened civilization," where we are supposed to have Christian influence, we take our clothes off.

Some teenage girls do not understand the passion of a male. If we can understand the difference in the temper of two individuals, we ought to be able to understand passion. Some men are high-strung and become angry easily. It takes a lot to make other men angry. On one occasion, James A. Harding was driving in his buggy. He picked up David Lipscomb. Harding had a young team and he was having a time with them. He did some jerking on the lines and his face became red. Lipscomb saw that he was mad. "Brother Harding," he said, "you had better bring that temper under control." Harding turned to him and said, "Lipscomb, I'm controlling more right now than you've had to contend with in a lifetime!" There is a difference in men with reference to temper. Some little event occurs and a high tempered man almost bursts at the seams. One who is not easily angered asks, "What's wrong with that idiot?" He can't understand why the other fellow is so upset.

As one man is more easily angered than another, so the passion of men is more easily aroused than the passion of women. Insofar as initial sexual excitement is concerned, the passion of a male is nine times stronger than that of a female. A man's passion is concentrated and a woman's is diffused. Young ladies, when you get into an automobile with a boy wearing a bathing suit, shorts and halter, or a tight fitting skirt which comes six inches above your knees when you sit down, if you don't know what such does to him, I'll tell you. It sets him on fire! It causes him to burn. If you get into trouble, you have no one to blame but yourself. Maybe your mother will share in the blame for having failed to teach you the facts of life.

Perhaps some are ready to say that the men are simply wicked minded. That reminds me of a meeting I once conducted in eastern Arkansas. There was a sixteen or seventeen year old girl in the home where I was staying. We had a Vacation Bible School in the morning and preaching

at night. After my luncheon engagement, I would come back to the house for the purpose of studying and praying so as to be ready for the services in the evening. That teenage girl would put on short shorts and come into my room. It seemed that she wanted to get as close to me as possible. Finally, on Sunday morning, I decided to let the hammer down and preached a lesson similar to this one. When I returned home that night the lady of the house and I had a discussion. She said anyone who would think wrong about her teenage girl had an evil mind. I said, "I'm not an evil minded man, but I want you to keep that young lady out of my room!" The next Wednesday night that girl came to the front and confessed her sins. That was exactly what she needed to do! She had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and wore the name of Christ. Because of dressing immodestly, she brought shame upon the Lord's name and people every time she walked the streets. She needed to make a public confession of wrong. Suppose all the men are wicked and evil minded and some woman casts a stumbling block in their way. Can't you see that the woman would be guilty before God? A young man goes berserk. He attacks a young lady. He leaves behind her broken and mangled body. We rise up as one man and say, "That fellow deserves to be put in the electric chair or in the gas chamber." Maybe that is what he deserves. But, his lust was fed day after day, week in and week out, month in and month out. Finally, he reached a breaking point and could stand it no longer. Every woman who contributed to his down fall is guilty before God. If not, why not? Do you want to make America a better place? Begin with modesty. Get some clothes on. That will be a good start. If you believe it, say "Amen." I'll get some "amens" from these Negro brethren. Negro Christians know that white people put a preacher in an ice box and expect him to sweat.

DANCING

Fourthly, some statements about dancing are in order. One might say, "I knew you would discuss dancing." Well, I intended to when I started. I have some first-hand informa-

tion on this subject. In times past, I attended the dances. That was before I became a Christian. I wasn't baptized until I was nineteen years old. I didn't have a good Christian father and mother. Yet, I knew one living the Christian life would not attend the dances. Nobody had to walk up with a verbal stick, hit me in the face with it and say, "Jim, Christians don't go to dances." I didn't know my left hand from my right, spiritually speaking, but I knew I had no business going to a dance. There are some who have been reared in the church of God, but they will attempt to defend the practice. They say there is not a thing wrong with it. When I became a Christian, without any teaching, or lectures on the matter, I realized I had no business at a dance. I wonder, why the difference? Some how a country boy who knew almost nothing had his doubts about it. But, a fellow with a knowledge of the Bible says it's fine.

If you think dancing is right for the male and female, try this. After our meeting closes, have a dance for males only. Do not invite any women. I'd like to suggest that brother John Banister be the chairman of the refreshment committee. He can make one half pimento cheese sandwich and he'll have to eat it himself. There won't be anybody there but John! I've gone to dances and seen girls dance together to keep from being wallflowers, but I never saw two men dancing together in my life. At the Blytheville, Arkansas Air Force Base the U.S.O. arranged a big dance one night. All the preparations were made. All the boys came from the barracks to the U.S.O. building But, there was one little item they overlooked. They forgot to bring the girls. Do you think they had a dance that night? Absolutely not! Those fellows didn't want to dance with one another.

Galatians 5:19-21 says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkennes, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In that list Paul mentioned "lasciviousness." Lasciviousness

simply means lewd or lustful emotions. You can't put a normal young man and woman in close bodily contact on the dance floor for hours at a time without the man sinning. I can't speak for the ladies, but I can speak for the men. The appeal of the dance is sex appeal, pure and simple. Why is it that brother and sister or husband and wife tire of dancing with one another very soon? Because the illicit spell is not there. Harry Stribes, renown champion dancer and originator of many social waltzes said, "I will say that I do not believe a woman can waltz virtuously and waltz well for she must yield her person completely to her partner." Arthur Murray, Mr. Dance himself, wrote, "The difference between dancing and wrestling is that in wrestling some holds are barred." That's suppose to be a joke. It's not funny to me!

PETTING

Fifthly, petting has contributed to our downfall. By that, I mean heavy courting. Young people, you may be good. You may love the Lord. You may be as sweet and precious as possible. But, even good people get into trouble for failing to exercise wisdom while on a date. During a courting session, you may be able to say "no" to sin at this or that point. However, you can become so inflammed that you couldn't say "no" if you knew you had to go to Hell in the next ten minutes. You'd still say "yes." Passion is an all-powerful and all consuming thing. You don't argue with it. You don't reason with it. You don't rationalize with it. You either do what it says or get out of its way. Good people can get involved. All of these gospel preachers work as counsellors. They are delighted to do it. Everyone of them has had a teenager to come to him and pour out a tale of woe and shame. When you sit across the desk from a teenager, watch hot tears course down his cheek, and listen to his sordid story of shame, that is quite an experience! I've thought instead of preaching sermons on this subject, it might be better to play a tape recording of a counselling session. Young people, if it wouldn't scare the daylights out of you, I don't know what it would take.

I was in a meeting in southern Arkansas a few years ago. One night, following the service, a young girl, I judged to be eighteen or nineteen, came to me and said, "I must talk with you." I went to her home the next afternoon. I sat with her in the porch swing and we talked for about two hours. She told me about a boy she had been dating. She thought she loved him. He had also confessed his love for her. She said, "One night we were parked and courting on a country road. *We went too far.*" Then, she made this statement: "Every time I've been with him since, the same thing has happened." Her father had been an elder in the church. She had been reared in a good Christian home. I marveled that she wasn't carrying her boy friend's child. She asked, "What am I going to do?" I said, "First of all, you must get your heart and life right with God." She had quit taking the communion. She could hardly hold her head up. I added, "Furthermore, if you two don't intend to get married, don't ever be alone with him again under any circumstances." That night she made a confession of sins and was restored. But, a day before the meeting closed, she moved to Little Rock. About two years later I heard a knock one night, went to the door, and there she stood. Again, she wanted to talk. We visited for two or three hours. While in Little Rock, she had gone through every gate, sinfully speaking. I mean everyone of them. Talk about a sordid story, she had one to tell. At that time she was under a doctor's care. She could sleep only with the help of sedatives. That girl was an emotional and moral wreck. She couldn't have been more than twenty-one or twenty-two years old. How did she get into that predicament? By going "too far" during a courting session. But you say, "It will never happen to me." Let us suppose there are twenty rattlesnakes in the parking lot. With that in mind, I propose that the hundreds of teenagers here let me lead them across the parking lot. Of course, some of you will be bitten, however, many will come through without a bite. How many of you young people would follow me? Why you couldn't be tied hand and foot and dragged across that lot! If there were a possibility of being snake bitten, you wouldn't care

for such a venture. However, with reference to courting, many have said, "I'll try it. It won't hurt me. I'm different." Many have tried it to their everlasting shame and dismay. A lot of good people have gotten into serious trouble simply because they engaged in petting. Courting cannot only destroy you emotionally and morally, it can also destroy your influence for good. If I see a couple walking down the street all armed up, immediately my estimation of them goes down. How cheap it looks.

DRINKING

Sixthly, drinking. Eighty million Americans drink. Young ladies, when you go on a date, the boy may offer you a drink. If he is an elder's son, preacher's son, or mayor's son, you ought to drop him like a hot potato. You ask, "Why?" He may be offering you a drink just to be sociable, but, on the other hand, he may know the power of alcohol and be planning to destroy you later in the evening. When you are sober, you can say right is white and wrong is black, but when you get your system full of alcohol, you don't have the ability to make a moral judgment. Black and white begin to run together and everything appears to be gray. An unmarried lady in southern Arkansas was told by a doctor that she was going to give birth to a child. She said, "Doctor, that's an impossibility." He said, "Impossibility or not, you're going to have a child." She may have been lying, but here is what she told. She said she went out with a man who gave her a few drinks. She didn't recognize the power of whiskey. Her explanation was that she was involved in immorality while so drunk she didn't know it. Let me tell you what happened to her. One day she didn't come down for work on time so the landlady went up to check on her. The door was locked, but with some assistance she forced the door open. She found that woman hanging by a bedsheet. There were a number of things which contributed to her suicide. One was going with the reprobate and getting into moral trouble with him. Drinking has led to our breakdown.

FAILURE TO TRAIN AT HOME

Seventhly, the failure to train at home. Do you know where I learned what little I knew about the facts of life when I was a teenager? I went across the road to an old country store. There, a group of dirty minded men told their filthy tales for hours at a time. I went over almost every night. I never had a daddy or mother to explain matters to me. I listened to those fellows talk. Some say, "I don't believe in discussing sex at home." What is meant by that? If by sex we mean filth, naturally, it should not be discussed. However, God made male and female, intended for them to fall in love, get married, and reproduce themselves. There's not anything dirty or bad with that. That's a clean and wholesome context and ought to be discussed. If you don't believe in discussing sex at home, believe you me, every time your youngsters stick their heads out the door, they're going to hear it discussed. Mothers need to be telling their daughters about right conduct, self restraint, and discipline. Fathers need to be telling their boys the same things. But, how is that to be done? Listen to them. They ask questions. When a child asks a question, tell him the truth. Don't tell him a stork story. Of course, you must be careful. If he asks for a dime's worth, don't give him a dollar's worth. Answer his question simply and plainly. Don't act like he's asked about something dirty. Maybe your children don't ask questions. Then, get a book, learn when they're suppose to ask the questions, and supply the information to them when they should be asking. Paul wrote, at Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord." Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he'll not depart from it." Such passages surely mean we are to tell young people how to meet their greatest temptations in life. I heard of one girl whose passions were stirred on a date. When she came home, even though it was about 11:30, she awakened her father and told him about it. It was wonderful that her daddy had been able to create a relationship with her so that she was willing to talk

with him instead of going to someone else. Such a relationship should exist in every home. We need to establish rapport between our children and ourselves. When we've been truthful, honest, and Christian before them all of their lives, then they are ready and willing to come to us.

ADMONTIONS TO THE YOUNG

Finally, I will close with a few admonitions to the young people.

DON'T DISREGARD PARENT'S WISHES

First, teenagers, I beg you not to disregard the wishes of your Christian parents. I've told you about my two children. I'd probably bore you to death, if I were to get started talking about them. I have a little five year old girl. Her eyes are so brown they're almost black. When I come in from work, she runs to the door and says, "Oh, daddy, daddy." She grabs me by the leg (of course, Jim's on the other one) and holds it tight. I pick her up and hold her close. She and Jim are made of solid sugar, as far as I'm concerned. To me, she is a sweet precious darling little girl. A few years ago I turned on the television set and saw a Senate committee which was investigating vice. A young lady, I judged to be about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, was giving testimony that day. Without the slightest hesitation, she said she was a prostitute. She had been a daddy's little brown or blue eyed darling at one time. When her father came home, she ran to the door, grabbed him around the leg and said, "Oh, daddy, let me kiss you." What happened to that girl? Something went wrong. My Cindy could turn out that way. Her mother and father have the ability to shape her life so that she can become an angel of God or a demon from Hell. Young people, your mother and father love you just like I love my litte boy and girl.

When your parents lay down rules and regulations for you to follow, it isn't because they don't trust you. They place restrictions upon you because they love you. If your parents don't give you any rules, jot this down, they don't care a whit about you! Sometimes I think Cindy has a granite head, like her mother. Marilyn isn't here so I can say that

and get by with it. We have daily devotionals at our home. One night during the devotional, Cindy had a key chain. She was sitting on one end of the couch; Jimmy was sitting on the other end; and mother was in the middle. She put the key chain on the arm of the couch. As we were singing her little hand began to slide toward the key chain. I told her to leave it alone. In order to have any semblance of a devotional, I had to move the key chain to the other end of the couch. Cindy then proceeded to get up, step over mother, step over Jimmy, sit down and get the key chain. Finally I had to take it away from her. I threw it into her bed and said, "After the devotional you can have the key chain. You can sleep with it tonight." That child was doing exactly what every child does. She was feeling for the walls or trying to find the fences. Every youngster wants to know where mother and father draw the line. They'll try you to learn whether you care for them or not. If you never say "no," that's proof you don't care for them.

I don't know whether you read Ann Landers or not, but I read her column with a degree of regularity and faithfulness. Recently a teenage girl wrote Ann a letter. In it, she said she would like to have a mother and daddy who would be strict with her. She had a date and the following morning she conducted an experiment with her mother. When she came down for breakfast, her mother was reading the paper. The teenage girl casually said, "Mother, Frank and I were married last night." Her mother said, "Oh, how nice," and kept reading. She didn't know one word the girl had said and cared less! The fact that you have rules and regulations is an indication of love. Who you date, where you go, what time you get in, and how many dates you have a week is the business of your parents. You may think your mother is a creature out of the stone age. You may feel that your father has a long beard which he kicks along as he walks, but your parents are smarter than you. They have been down life's road ahead of you. They know where the slippery place and sharp turns are located. Listen to them. I beg you to listen to them.

I'm not trying to bring sentiment to your speaker, but I

ask that you consider the following. After I was born my mother and father never lived together. When I was eleven years old mother was killed in an automobile accident. I then went into the home of a seventy-four year old grandmother who was senile and had no business attempting to rear an eleven year old boy. Bless her heart, she did the best she could. Not one time did a daddy come and say, "Jim, we don't do this or that." Not one time did a mother tell me the facts of life. Some of you young people have dedicated, godly, Christian parents. Many of you have been living with a silver spoon in your mouth. Yet, all you do is complain, criticize, and gripe. You should have been reared without parents. You ought to have been brought up as orphans. Try that arrangement. Boy, you'll not be happy with it. Your people love you more than life itself. In ninety-nine percent of the cases, they'll give you the right direction and guidance. Listen to them. Don't trample on their wishes.

DON'T KEEP LATE HOURS

Don't keep late hours. The football game is over at 10:00. You and your date go to the hamburger stand for a sandwich and malt. When you have finished the refreshments, it's 10:45 or 11:00. Now, why stay out any later? The group disbands. why stay out any later? There's just one reason for staying out after the group breaks up. That's to court and that's when you get into trouble. "Men love darkness because their deeds are evil." Parents ought to establish a curfew with their teenagers. It ought to be flexible enough for the young people to stay out a little later on special occasions. If you have trouble so you can't get in on time, get a dime, run to the telephone and call home. Tell your parents what has happened. They may be worried about you.

DON'T GO STEADY

Don't go steady, unless you are ready for marriage. A Roman Catholic school in Parsons, Kansas, stopped it's high school students from steady dating. Of course, the teachers and parents thought such was wonderful. The young people

felt the same way! They said when they went to town as a group, the Protestant kids seemed to be envious of them. They also pointed out that the temptations to be immoral had vanished. Going steady has led many into moral trouble. When sixteen and seventeen year old couples go together, they sometimes get the idea that they love one another. Then, they begin to take liberties of one another which belong only to a husband and wife. Going steady leads to moral dangers. It also leads to staying at home steady. This is true because steady dating can lead to early marriage. But, sixty percent of teenage marriages fail. Six out of every ten don't succeed.

DON'T PICK UP OR BE PICKED UP

Fourthly, don't pick up someone or allow yourself to be picked up. J. Edgar Hoover said under no circumstances should a girl get into a car with a strange man. Girls who go out with strangers are inviting assault and murder. I read of a girl who went on a blind date. Her companion was a perfect gentleman. She dated him again. Once more, he behaved himself. As he was saying goodnight at the end of the second date, a police car drove up in front of the girl's house. Two policemen jumped out, ran to the porch, and slapped handcuffs on him. They drove the boy and girl to jail. She had to spend the night there. Naturally, she and her family were terribly embarrassed. She learned to her dismay that she had been dating an escaped convict. She didn't know his background or anything else about him. To date an individual you don't know is to invite danger. Don't ever pick up an individual and don't allow yourself to be picked up.

REMEMBER

Please remember that immorality will keep you out of heaven. Think of the shame you will experience. Immorality makes great promises but brings shame, degradation, fear, guilt, and humiliation. Think of that mother and daddy of yours. If either of my children get involved in moral difficulties, that will not be the time for daddy to start preaching. That will be the time for me to stand with them and

let them know I love them. There is no need in kicking anyone when he's down. Still, if you get into trouble, you bring shame and humiliation on your family. Think how they'll feel.

Remember that these temptations are common. Every youngster in this audience has been tempted along this line, is being tempted, or will be tempted. But, thousands of people, by the grace of God, have stood. So can you. Joseph has earned my undying respect. When the evil woman said, "Lie with me," Joseph ran from her. You don't argue with this sin. Paul's language is "flee fornication." The Lord said, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." With the help of God you can stand.

Young people, do your best to keep your mind full of good things. "As he thinketh in his heart so is he." "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." "Whatsoever things that are pure, think on these things." "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." The water which runs down the side of the hill is the same as the water which bubbles forth from the spring at the top of the hill. If you have a pure mind, you will have a pure life.

GOD IS MERCIFUL

If you've made a mistake along this line, I hope you'll not feel that the world has come to an end. Last year I spoke to an Arkansas high school on this subject. In the speech I said, "If you've made a moral mistake, do not feel that the world has come to an end." Following the speech a teacher said, "I appreciated your closing remarks. We had a young lady in class who's been involved in this very difficulty. She's had a hard time getting her chin off the ground. But, I think you gave her encouragement."

Our Lord loves sinners. In the eighth chapter of John we are told of a woman who was taken in the act of adultery and brought to Jesus. Those who took her to Jesus said, "The law says to stone her. What do you say?" Jesus said, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." From

the eldest to the youngest, they left one at a time. Only our Lord and the woman were left standing there. He turned to her and asked, "Doth no man condemn thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go thy way and sin no more." She was an adulteress, but the Lord saw she was penitent. He loved her. He went to the cross and died for her sin. He didn't wink at it; He died for it. That means, if there's anyone here who has made moral mistakes, you can turn to Jesus Christ and find forgiveness. You can find peace, tranquility, salvation, happiness, and joy. You can't find these things by living the type of life I've discussed tonight.

You may be morally pure and upright. If you're a good moral man or woman living without Christ, you're lost, too. You may be an eleven or twelve year old, who has reached the age of accountability. This invitation is extended to every man, woman, boy and girl who is accountable before God. All of the lost need to answer the invitation. Confess Jesus with the lips, be baptized into the name of Christ for the remission of your sins, and you'll be a member of the church you read about in the New Testament. You will be bought and paid for with the blood of Christ. If you're an erring brother you need to come in genuine repentance and let us pray with you and for you. In this way, you can start all over again. Will you come? I beg you in the name of Jesus and in the name of everything that's near and dear to you, if you're lost, come and do the Lord's will.

The Right View of Jesus

Thursday, July 30, 1964

We are on Holy ground. Even though we are in a great coliseum, we have come here for the purpose of worshipping God. When we begin to sing, every individual who has been born again should participate in praising God through song. I beg you to listen to the preached word. Some think we go to church to see the preacher perform, but this is not true. Everyone here is performing. We are all on a stage. There is only one spectator, God. You are having a part in this service as certainly as I. We can't have a great service unless we have great listening and great singing. Let's all participate. If you must whisper, whisper to God. I believe Jesus is here. We can have a good meeting, if all will be reverent and attentive.

In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, beginning with verse thirteen we find the following reading: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that thou are John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ."

JESUS — PREACHER AND TEACHER

Our Lord Jesus Christ is one of the world's best known personalities. Yet, this is rather unusual in light of the circumstances which surrounded His life. Jesus never wrote

a book. He never ran for a political office. He never commanded an army or navy. He is not known today for having been an artist, poet or sculptor. Christ is not a renown figure for having been a world traveler. Except for His journey into Egypt when He was a baby, He never went north and south by more than 150 miles. By way of east and west, He never traveled more than 50 or 75 miles. The passage I read just a minute ago tells about one of His journeys to the far north.

The Bible says He came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. There were two Caesareas in Palestine during the first century. One was located about 30 miles north of Joppa on the Mediterranean Sea. The other was located about 35 miles north and east of the Sea of Galilee. It was an inland community. Shortly before our Lord's arrival the latter community had been refortified and renamed. It was called Caesarea in honor of the Roman emperor. It was called Philippi in honor of Philip, one of the sons of Herod the Great, who had done the work of refortification. The town was built on a limestone terrace at the foot of Mount Hermon. Hermon stretches into the heavens about nine thousand feet. It was my pleasure just a few weeks ago to look at ancient Caesarea Philippi through a military field telescope. I was unable to cross the border to see it, but at least I was able to see the crusader remains which are on top of that limestone terrace even today. When the Lord came into the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi He asked His disciples a question.

Jesus Christ has been appropriately described as the Master Teacher. I am sure that He is so described for a number of reasons, but I will have time to notice only one of them. He is called the Master Teacher because He employed various methods in teaching God's unsearchable riches. Jesus, in my opinion, was first and foremost a preacher. I imagine, when the Lord stood before an audience of people, they looked neither to the left nor to the right. Likely, they held tenaciously to every word that fell from His precious lips. God didn't have but one Son and that one Son was a preacher. I don't have but one son, and it is my prayer to God that he will be a preacher. I hope my little girl will marry a preacher. I hope every one of my grandsons are preachers. I hope all of

my great grandsons are preachers. If everyone of my male descendants are gospel preachers, that will suit me perfectly. Someone may say, "You are stuck on your profession, aren't you?" You bet your bottom dollar I am. I think it is the greatest work in the world. If the Son of the living God was a preacher, why don't you want your sons to preach? Do you really desire that your boy or boys preach the unsearchable riches of Christ? Are you constantly criticizing the local preacher in the presence of your children? Do you ever have anything to say which might commend the preacher to your children? Your boys are going to grow up one of these days and you may wonder why they despise those who preach. It may be because they got the attitude at home.

We don't have enough preachers to fill the pulpits in the United States, much less those vast areas of the world which must yet be evangelized. We need preachers today as we have never needed them before. Some might say, "I don't want my boy to preach. There is not much money in it." Maybe your boy is not qualified to preach. Maybe it is the will of God for him to do something else. I am not saying everyone must preach to please God. But, if one is to be disuaded from preaching, it should not be because there is little money in it. Don't you see the fallacy of that argument? Do you see the false assumption upon which it is based? The false idea is that we were put here primarily to make money, but that is a devil's lie! Our fundamental purpose in life is to fear God and keep His commandments. This is the whole duty of man. If we had more Hannas at home, we would have more Samuels in the pulpit. If our mothers and fathers were really burning with zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of Christ, they would be happy and proud to hear a son say, "I want to be a minister of the gospel."

Jesus was a great preacher. As a matter of fact, He was the greatest preacher who ever lived. Read the Lord's sermon in Matthew five, six, and seven, the Magna Carta of New Testament Christianity. Read Matthew, chapter twenty-three. There, he scathingly denounced the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, sham and pretense. Jesus was also a great teacher. He employed various methods in teaching God's will.

He was the master of the parable. The word "parable" comes from two other words; "para," which means alongside of and "ballo", which means throw, cast, or put. "Paraballo" literally means to throw something along side of something else. The noun is parabole. In other words, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It is taking something on the earth and paralleling it with something spiritual. Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a fishing net. In some ways they are parallel to one another. In the fishing net there are both good and bad fish. The good are put in vessels and placed in the ship's hold. The bad are thrown away. I used to think it was better to be a bad fish than a good one. I thought the bad ones were thrown back into the water. Then, it dawned on me that the bad fish were tossed on the bank to die. We do the same thing with fish to day. There are good and bad fish in a fishing net and there are good and bad people in the kingdom of God. The good will be given everlasting life and the bad will be cast into the furance of fire. Our Lord sometimes told parables.

Sometimes He taught object lessons. On one occasion his disciples were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest in the kingdom. Instead of giving them a tongue lashing, He placed a little child in their midst and said in essence, "Gentlemen, if you want to be great, be little; if you want to be big, be like this child." With the child He was able to get His point across. At another time some people came to Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful to render tribute to Caesar?" There were two classes of people in His audience. On the one hand, He had to consider the Herodians. The Herodians favored the rule of the Herods, but to favor their rule meant to favor the rule of Rome, for the Herods ruled by Roman permission. On the other hand, He had to consider the patriots who were chaffing under the yoke of Roman bondage and did not want to submit to Rome. If our Lord had said, "Yes, pay tribute." He would have satisfied the Herodians but He would have infuriated the patriots. Had He said, "No, you must not pay tribute," He would have angered the Herodians. The Lord's enemies were attempting to place Him in a dilemma. Christ called for a coin. He asked,

"Whose inscription is on it?" They said, "Caesar's." Then Jesus made the classic statement: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are caesar's" (that satisfied the Herodians) "and unto God the things that are God's" (that satisfied the patriots). Jesus said, "You can pay taxes and serve God too." He taught that great lesson by means of a coin.

On the occasion of our text, Jesus taught by means of a question. He asked "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?" Somewhere in my reading I found the statement that the question and answer method of teaching originated with some great philosopher. Well, I beg to differ with that conclusion. Teaching by means of question originated with God Almighty in the very beginning. Shortly after God created Adam and Eve, they sinned and hid in the foliage. God came into the garden and asked, "Adam, where art thou?" Don't you think God knew where they were? Do you think Adam and Eve could shield themselves from the all seeing eye of God? He knew where they were. Then why ask the question? He wanted Adam to see where he was. When Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am," He knew exactly what others were saying about Him. However, He was leading His disciples into a great spiritual truth which they would not soon forget. Peter said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and some Jeremias or one of the prophets." The people who said He was John the Baptist, Elias or Jeremias were mistaken about Him, but there were reasons for their taking those views. I shall spend the rest of my time talking about John the Baptist, Elias, and Jeremias. At the conclusion I believe you can leave with a well rounded view of the Lord Jesus Christ.

JESUS WAS LIKE JOHN

First, some said He was John the Baptist. Why did they say that? Well, they may have looked alike; they were relatives. Maybe they were about the same height, had the same color of hair and eyes, and had about the same weight. This I know, they preached alike. John the Baptist, according to Matthew 3:1-2, said, "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He preached the necessity and importance of repent-

ance and he emphasized that the kingdom was imminent. Jesus preached the same message. He said, "Except you repent you shall all likewise perish." He also taught, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." According to Mark 1:15, He said, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

John emphasized repentance; Jesus emphasized it. John taught the importance of the kingdom; Christ taught the importance of the kingdom. John was a baptizer. In Luke 3:3 and Mark 1:4 the Bible says John preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." According to John 4:1-2, the Lord made and baptized more disciples than John, though He baptized not himself but his disciples. Christ did the baptizing through the instrumentality of His disciples. John taught that people needed to be baptized for the remission of sins. Apparently, Christ taught the same lesson. John was called the Baptist because he was a baptizer, an immerser, or a submerger. He was one who dipped others in the water. He placed such great emphasis on the act that inspiration saw fit to call him the Baptizer. However, our Lord made and baptized more disciples than he did.

Those two men were alike in that neither of them could stand hypocrisy. In the third chapter of Luke, we learn that some came to the River Jordan to be baptized by John. It seems that John had an ability we do not have today. He had the power to look into the hearts of his hearers and determine whether they were sincere or not. When they came to receive baptism at his hands, he said, "The axe is laid at the root of the tree and every tree that does not bring forth good fruit will be hewn down and cast into the fire." He also said, "Woe unto you generation of vipers. Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance." In plain Arkansas language, he said they were a family of serpents, or a brood of snakes. They were insincere and John could not stand their sham and hypocrisy. He took the hide from their backs. I think he refused to baptize them. Furthermore, if we had reason to believe that an individual were insincere today, we would do wrong to baptize him even though he might demand it. Let's go to Matthew twenty-three again. Our Lord stood before the religious leaders of his day

and said, "Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites. You compass land and sea to make a proselyte and, in so doing, you make him two-fold more a son of hell than you are yourselves. Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites. On the outside you are like a cup that is washed and is clean, but on the inside you are filled with extortion, hypocrisy, and excess. Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. On the outside you are like whited sepulchres, but on the inside you are filled with dead men's bones. You devour widow's houses and make long prayers for pretense." It was Jesus who asked, "How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" Our Lord used the word "gehenna," which is translated as "Hell," more than anyone else in the Bible. He used it more than the apostle Paul and Paul penned fourteen of the epistles. This word was on the lips of Jesus over and over again! Why? Because He wanted the people to flee from the wrath which is to come. John and Jesus were alike in that neither one of them could stand hypocrisy.

John and Jesus were both men of self denial. The Bible tells us that John was clothed in leather and camel's hair. He ate locusts and wild honey. Some diet, isn't it? I used to picture John reaching out, grabbing a locust, and eating it. Later, I realized they probably had a way of preparing locusts before they were eaten. We don't eat raw fish. We prepare fish for eating and they cleaned and cooked locusts. John didn't eat them raw as I first thought. Furthermore, there is a possibility that he was eating the bean from the carob tree. This is one of the interpretations of the passage. Be that as it may, he didn't have much of a diet. The Baptist wasn't wearing a $75 Botany suit everytime he stood up to preach. He had to set an austere example of self-denial because of the peculiarity of his mission. Jesus also denied Himself. Take a look at the Lord's life for a moment. The maternity ward in which Jesus was born was a stable. His first crib was a feeding trough for stock. He was the son of poverty stricken peasant carpenter parents. Jesus went into the shop and worked with his legal father, Joseph. He had callouses on his hands. He knew the meaning of a hard day's work. Likely, He had patches on his clothes. One day a man said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go."

The Lord said, "The birds have their nests, and the foxes have their holes, but the Son of man has not a place to lay his head." When Jesus and Peter were about to enter Capernaum, they were stopped at the tax booth and asked to pay their taxes. Our Lord did not reach into His pockets and pull out the money. It is doubtful that He had any money. He turned to Peter and said, "Take a hook, cast it into the Galilean Sea and open the mouth of the first fish you catch." Peter did it and found a shekel in the mouth of the fish. With it, he paid the tax for Jesus and himself. It seems that the only thing Jesus ever owned was the robe on His back. The soldiers gambled for that the day He died. Christ was buried in a borrowed tomb. I recently completed a trip to the Middle East. In many of those areas the situation has not changed since the first century. Every individual in this audience, regardless of economic standing, is rich in comparison to what our Lord had. We talk about the depression and hard times, but we were rich then in comparison to what the people have in the east today. Consider the Indian farmer who dies at the ripe old age of thirty-six. He clears a profit of about $40 a year. Look at the Egyptian peasant who makes about $25 a year. Look at the Arab people who beg for food. Jesus lived in a similar society.

Some said Jesus was John the Baptist. Yet in Matthew fourteen, two chapters earlier, the scripture indicates that John the Baptist had been killed. John was courage personified. Herod Antipas had a half brother in Rome named Philip. Antipas, while visiting in Rome, became enamored with Philip's wife, Herodias. Antipas stole her from his half brother. As a matter of fact, it was common knowledge that those two were living in an adulterous relationship. John preached that it was unlawful for Herod to have her. As a result of that he was placed in prison. Antipas had a birthday feast to which he invited his most important people. In the midst of the festivities the daughter of Herodias, traditionally known as Salome, came and danced for them. It must have been a lustful dance for when she finished, Herod said with bated breath, "Girl, anything you want to half my kingdom is yours." She decided to talk to her mother about the matter. Of course, her mother was angry with the preacher. She was not the first nor the last

who has had that experience. Herodias said, "I want the head of John the Baptist." Salome sent word to Herod Antipas that she desired John's head. Herod didn't want to kill him, but he had made his vow. So, he took his life. John's headless body was buried by his disciples.

Antipas didn't forget John. He was a very superstitious person. When he went to his bedroom at night, he likely saw the ghost of John the Baptist. He was much like an individual who live in my part of the country many years ago. He had a fight with another man and killed him. He said after the killing he rode his horse late at night and the dead man was in the saddle with him. He could not forget it. Well, Antipas was that sort of man according to Josephus. When the Lord began to make His mark upon the people, they said, "This is John the Baptist come back from the dead." Herod Antipas heard it. He was ripe for that rumor. He believed it, accepted it and added impetus to it. The thing spread like wild fire. Jesus, they said, was John the Baptist back from the dead.

Now, they were wrong about it, but there were reasons why they confused the two. When you think of John the Baptist, what kind of man do you envision? Do you see a mamby-pamby, wishy-washy, stand for nothing and fall for everything, type personality? Do you see an individual whose complexion is so white it looks as though all the blood has been drained from his body? Do you see the frail frame of a man who would fall over if a strong wind hit him? Do you see long hair hanging down around his shoulders? Is that what you see? All of those concepts came from the medieval age. Some of the supposed pictures of Jesus make me sick. I can't believe they adequately portray what Jesus was like. In I Corinthians eleven Paul wrote that a man is not to wear his hair like a woman. Surely, the Lord had not forbidden us to do what He did. Jesus was a Nazarite; He was a Nazarene. The sculpture from the first century indicates that men cropped their hair short as we do today. Jesus probably had a beard, but His looking more like a woman than a man is not Biblical! Our Lord was a man. He was a man's man! He was an individual who could inspire confidence. Others bowed before Him in reverence and respect.

I think John the Baptist was like Andrew Jackson. Jackson was anything but a Christian, however, he would have fought a circle saw for what he thought was right. John the Baptist was that kind of man. So was the Lord. He was a strong fiery personality who impressed and influenced others. The sickly view that some have of Him is repulsive to me. I couldn't buy it in a hundred years. Some thought Jesus was John the Baptist.

JESUS WAS LIKE ELIJAH

Not only was He called John the Baptist, but some said He was Elijah. Elijah had lived 800 to 850 years before Christ came. However, Elijah never died. One day he and Elisha were separated by a chariot and horses of fire. Then, Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind. The last two verses in the Old Testament predicted that Elijah would come before the day of the Lord. The Jews knew that Elijah had not died and they had read that statement in Malachi. They understood it to mean that the same Elijah who had been here hundreds of years before was to return. Now, that isn't what God meant by it. God meant the anti-type of Elijah was to come. He had in mind one who was similar to Elijah, but not the same man. According to Luke one, John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. In Matthew chapters eleven and seventeen, Jesus said that John the Baptist was Elijah. Yet, in the first chapter of John, we learn that the people went out to John the Baptist and asked if he were Elijah. He said, "No." Jesus said he was Elijah; John said he was not, but there is no contradiction or disharmony. Jesus meant he was the anti-type of Elijah; John was denying being the literal man.

What kind of man was Elijah? He was a man who stood for right when almost all of Israel had gone into digression and apostasy. Israel was attempting to worship God and Baal. They were trying to hold hands with heathenism and the true worship of Jehovah. Elijah came to them and said, "Why do you go halting between the two opinions? If Jehovah is God, serve him; if Baal is God, serve him." As my little boy once said, "Choose your choice." Elijah wanted to know if they were going to serve Baal or God. He made the prophets of

Baal a proposition. He said, "Let's go to Mount Carmel. You offer a sacrifice to your god and I will offer a sacrifice to my God. The god that answers with fire, let him be God." His statement pleased the multitude.

Baal's 450 prophets built their altar, cut some wood, laid it in order and put their sacrifice on top of the wood. However, they put no fire underneath. They began to call upon their god saying, "Baal, send down the fire. Send down the fire." They yelled for fire until about noon, but not a thing happened. The Bible says Elijah mocked them. He said, "What's happened to your god? Has he gone to sleep? Maybe he is pursuing or maybe he is on a journey. What about your god?" That infuriated them! They took their knives, cut themselves and the blood flowed. They jumped up and down on their sacrifice. They screamed until the time of the evening sacrifice. The people had long since failed to listen to them. Elijah went to the altar of God which had fallen into disuse. He took twelve stones, each one representing one of the twelve tribes of Israel, and built again the Lord's altar. He cut up his wood and laid it in order. He cut up the sacrifice and put it on top of the wood. Then he dug a trench around the altar and said to those standing nearby, "I need four barrels of water." I used to read that and wonder what possessed the man. It hadn't rained in forty-two months and he was wanting four barrels of water. Later, it dawned on me that Mount Carmel juts out into the Mediterranean Sea. All they had to do was run down the mountain and get salt water. Well, they got four barrels of water and poured it on the sacrifice. Elijah said, "It isn't enough; I need four more." They went back down the hill, got four more and poured it on. Elijah said, "It still isn't enough; I need four more." They made another trip for water. They poured twelve barrels of water on the altar. The sacrifice was drenched, the wood was soaking wet, the rocks were glistening with water, the dirt under the altar was turned into mud and the trench was full of water. The Bible doesn't say it, but I know Elijah moved away from the altar. He looked up to God and said, "Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, send down the fire that they may know I am Your prophet and I have spoken at your word." Scarcely had the words fallen

from his lips when the fire fell from heaven, hit the sacrifice and devoured it. It also consumed the wood and the rocks. The fire of God ran along the ground and when it had finished its work, it was as dry as tinder. Those watching the demonstration probably had their eyes out on stems. They said, "Jehovah he is God. Jehovah he is God." There was no doubt in their minds then. Elijah turned to the prophets of Baal and said, "Don't let them escape." He went down the scuth-eastern edge of the mountain to the brook Kishon. There, he took a sword and personally killed every last one of them.

When our Lord walked down a road, heads turned and people whispered. One fellow said to the other, "There goes Elijah." It seemed that some of them thought they saw a holy zeal in Jesus which would prompt Him to kill in the name of God. There was something about His personality and nature that caused them to reach that conclusion. Elijah fought evil tooth and toenail, if you please. He stood almost alone. He and 7,000 others did not bow a knee to Baal. He stood for an unpopular cause. He served God when it was difficult to do so. He let nothing hinder him in doing his duty. He was severe and stern. Jesus was like him.

One can go to an extreme along this line. One could wrongly conclude that Jesus is a harsh and severe taskmaster seated at the right hand of God with the soul of man suspended on a string, swinging it back and forth over the boiling caldron of Hell, anxiously awaiting the day He can snap the string, watch the soul fall into the fire and laugh with a hellish glee. I think Jonathan Edwards almost did that in his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." There is a religious group in the United States which does not pray to God through Jesus. They pray to God through Mary. Do you know why they do not pray through Jesus? They look upon Jesus as a stern and hard personality of justice. They feel if one attempts to approach God through Him, he can expect to receive justice only. But we want mercy, not justice. They say Mary is sweet, compassionate, loving, tender, patient, understanding and kind. This is no attempt at caricature. They pray to her and say, "Holy mother, take this prayer to your son Jesus and intercede for us." She goes to the Lord and says, "These people have

sinned, but they are penitent and sorry. Son, I beg you to have mercy upon them. Also remember that I am your mother." Then His stern countenance relaxes and He smiles. He says, "All right mother, I'll do it for you."

If our religious friends knew that what they are seeking in Mary can be found in Christ, they wouldn't pray through Mary anymore. Ladies, what do you look for in a man? Do you want him to be bold and courageous, daring and aggressive? Do you want him to stand for right although the forces of Hell come against him? Men, what do you look for in a woman? You want a woman who is kind and understanding, tender and, above all things, patient. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was not simply a man. He was humanity. He was black and white, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female. Since He was the representative of all humanity he had the outstanding traits we look for in men. He also possessed the gentle traits we look for in women. He had compassion, sweetness, love, tenderness, kindness and understanding.

JESUS WAS LIKE JEREMIAH

That leads me to say a word about Jeremiah. Some said Jesus was Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet of doom and pessimism. He, like Elijah, stood against an avalanche of evil. He told the people of Judah not to make an alliance with Egypt. He told them not to fight against Babylon, but to submit to her. Because of that, he was considered unpatriotic. As a matter of fact, he was arrested because the people thought he was going to betray them to the Babylonians. They threw him into a cistern. There wasn't any water in it, but he mired up in the mud. A good Negro man named Ebed-Melech went to the king and asked that he be allowed to save the prophet. He was granted permission to do so. He let ropes down and Jeremiah was brought up. Jeremiah continued to plead with the people to trust in God, turn away from backsliding and give up their sins. Finally, in 588 B.C. what he had been predicting happened. The Babylonian armies, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar II, laid seize against Jerusalem for 18 months. In 586, they made a breach in the wall and hurled into the city with all of the force at their disposal. They destroyed the

temple and hundreds of private dwellings. They killed thousands of people and carried many others into Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah, inspired of God, wrote the book of Lamentations. In it, he tells of looking over Jerusalem, a destroyed city. He saw destruction and chaos as far as the eye could reach! He saw little children running up and down the streets trying to find something to eat. He witnessed old people fainting because of starvation. Likely, he had seen blood running in the streets like water. He had probably seen the dead stacked up like cord wood. The Babylonians delighted in taking an infant from its mother's arms and throwing it head downward against the stones to literally batter its brains out. Hundreds of Hebrew children died at the hands of the Babylonians in that way. They were blood thirsty, cruel and merciless.

Jeremiah looked over Jerusalem and wrote Lamentations. He didn't cast any reflection on the wisdom of God. He knew that God had done right. The people had sinned and had to suffer the judgment of God. Yet, the heart of Jeremiah went out to his people. "Oh, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep night and day for the slain of the daughter of my people," said Jeremiah. Today we know him as the weeping prophet. I have read that he ought not be described as the weeping prophet for that suggests weakness. But, he wept because of the suffering of others. Such suggests that he had compassion, understanding, and love. Those are marks of strength, not weakness. If you were in trouble, for whom would you send? Would you want a successful general who had led his troops in one battle after another? Would you send for a baseball star or a prize fighter? Who do you want with you when death is stalking a loved one? Who do you send for? You send for someone with an understanding heart. It might be a humble elder or a godly cornfield preacher.

Jesus Christ was called Jeremiah. He was a friend of sinners. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He commanded us to weep with those who weep and He practiced what He taught. In Matthew chapter twenty-three, after He had taken the hide from the backs of the Pharisees, He concluded by

saying, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not." I was reared in the country. My grandmother had some Rhode Island Red hens around the place all the time. Naturally, the hen had little chickens. When storm clouds gathered and thunder rolled, the hens began to cluck and all their little biddies ran under their wings for protection. Jesus was saying that He wanted to care for the people as a hen cares for her chicks. Then, with tears in His eyes, He said, "You would not!"

Lazarus, Christ's friend, died. Four days later He visited Bethany, the home and burying place of Lazarus. When He saw Mary and Martha, Lazarus' grief stricken sisters, He wept. I have heard people say, "I know the shortest verse in the Bible, John 11:35, "Jesus wept." Do you think they know it? With such a flippant attitude, it is obvious they do not know it. That passage means our Lord was so touched with human affliction and suffering that His heart went out to those two broken hearted sisters. His feeling for them caused hot tears to course down His cheeks. He wasn't weeping over the dead man. He knew we must all die. He also knew He was going to raise him from the dead. It was pure simple unadulterated sympathy for those two girls. I hope you will excuse personal references. I've made a statement or two about my mother. Loosing her was a tragic experience for me. When I was eleven years old, my mother was killed in a car wreck. I cried until I couldn't weep anymore. When I went to the church building for the funeral service, I didn't know how to act. I sat on the back row. Someone took me to the front of the building to sit with my relatives. With the perspective of twenty-three years, I can say the Lord stood by that eleven year old boy. He sustained and strengthened him. I lost my second mother, my grandmother, after I was grown and had become a preacher of the gospel. I know, as a matter of fact, Christ was there on that occasion.

People argue about the existence of Christ. Some are wrapped up in the quest for the historical Jesus. I know Jesus lives; I talked to Him this afternoon! We must have an experience

with Him. He must become a part of us. Believe you me, His hand stretches out to all of us. You may be the vilest, meanest, most ungodly individual who ever lived, but Christ desperately loves you. He pities you and wants to save you.

There are two sides to the nature of Christ. There is the stern and severe and the sweet and compassionate. What I have said can be summed up in Romans 11:22 which speaks of the goodness and the severity of the Lord. So many people today, like those in ancient Athens, are worshipping and unknown God. They are not worshipping the Jesus or the God revealed in the Bible. He is either all sweetness and will not condemn anyone, or He is a tyrant and will hardly save anybody. Both views are extreme. But, unite the two and you have the right view of Jesus.

One day you and I are going to be judged by Him. The Father has committed judgment to the Son. When you stand before Him on the day of judgment, if you have lived in rebellion to His will, if you have lifted clenched fists before the throne of God and said, "God, you are not big enough to make me do right," the Lord will condemn your soul in less time than it takes to tell about it. On the other hand, if you submit your will to His will, if you do your best to serve Him, even though you may make many mistakes between now and judgment, our Lord will extend grace, mercy and compassion to you. You will be saved for all eternity. All of us have to meet one side of the nature of Jesus. Compassion or condemnation, which will it be? What you do with Jesus tonight may determine what He does with you at the judgment. Will it be a Lord of mercy who says, "Well done," or will it be a Lord of severity who says, "Depart from me you cursed, I never knew you?" You have the power to make the decision. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." You can come to the front and make your confession of faith in Him. Brother Jackson will baptize you now for the forgiveness of your sins. Then, you will be a member of the New Testament church and your life will be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you are a brother or sister who has erred from the faith you can come back home tonight. Come in true penitence, make a confession of your sin and be restored to the joy of your salvation.

It is an issue between you and Jesus. Get up and walk out of this building in a lost condition and you have rejected Christ. He's the One who said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It was He who said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the Door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." Will you do the Lord's will tonight? Will you let Him come into your life? Will you let Him save your soul? Will you let Him redeem you and make a Christian of you? I hope you will do it.

The Seven Words from the Cross

Friday, July 31, 1964

If you are not a child of God, you need to think seriously and soberly about obeying the truth. You may have another opportunity, but, on the other hand, you may not. This meeting is getting away from us twenty-four hours at a time. We are one day closer to the judgment this evening than we were this time last night. We are twenty-four hours nearer death than we were this time last evening. Time and opportunity have a way of getting away from us. I hope you will listen to the lesson carefully, and I hope you will become a Christian tonight.

During His personal ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ chose many varied and picturesque places from which He did His preaching and teaching. In tonight's sermon I shall refer to those places as pulpits. For example, while traveling through Jericho, He chose one of its crowded streets as His pulpit. On another occasion, while near the shore of the Galilean Sea, the people pressed upon Him to such an extent that it became necessary for Him to step into the bow of Peter's craft, shove out into the sea, and teach the people from the boat. The greatest lesson which ever fell from the lips of any man is recorded in Matthew five, six, and seven. It is referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. His pulpit on that occasion was a mountainside. Our Lord, while in Samaria, taught an unnamed woman near the well of Jacob. He did most of His preaching and teaching at Jerusalem in the temple area and perhaps near the gate called Beautiful. Jesus demanded that His last sermon be presented from a pulpit which people would always remember, and that demand was fulfilled. The last message delivered by the Christ was presented from the pulpit of the cross. The cross was a crude and unlovely thing made of out of two rough and unhewn pieces of wood bound together with cords or spiked together with Roman steel.

Before Jesus was crucified, He was scourged. A scourging, according to Jewish law, was thirty-nine stripes across the naked back as hard as a husky man could lay it on. Christ was not

scourged by the Jews, but by the Romans. How many stripes they placed upon Him, I do not know. The instrument used to beat the Lord was called a flagellum. The flagellum was similar to our cat-o'-nine-tails. It was a whip composed of several pieces of leather. The leather tips were weighted with broken bits of metal or bone. When that whip was thrown across an individual's back, it cut into the flesh, and warm blood filled the air. Many men never survived a Roman scourging.

Following His beating, they placed the cross upon His beaten and bloody back. They commanded Him to carry it down the narrow winding streets of Jerusalem out to Golgotha's height. According to tradition, He broke down under the weight of the cross, not because He was not every inch a man, but because of the terrific beating He had been given. He had lost so much blood, it's a wonder He was able to carry that burden one step. Simon of Cyrene, an individual who was passing, was compelled to assist Jesus in carrying the cross. A group of women were following Jesus and Simon and lamenting the death our Lord was about to experience. Jesus stopped, turned and mildly rebuked them. He said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." Christ knew that in forty short years God's vengeance would be fulfilled in Jerusalem's destruction. He knew when such happened that many of those good women would experience indescribable horror. So, He said, "Weep for yourselves instead of weeping for me."

Finally, they came to the place of Calvary. A hushed silence probably passed over the whole group. They were about to witness one of the most ghastly forms of execution ever devised by the wicked mind of man. The Son of God was spread-eagled upon the cross. The soldiers raised their mallets in the air and slowly began to drive the thin slivers of steel into His precious hands and feet. When his body was secured to the cross, they began to raise it slowly, slowly, slowly; finally, when it reached its apex, it fell into the bottom of the hole which had been prepared for it with a dull and resounding thud. Those who stood near by heard the tearing of holy flesh. They may have heard a holy groan. The soldiers rushed to the foot of the cross, threw a few spades of dirt into the hole and stepped back.

When the Savior lifted His pained and tortured eyes, a few yards in the distance, He saw Jerusalem with its majestic walls. Likely, on those walls were groups of idle curiosity seekers gazing nonchalantly upon history's greatest event. As He looked closer, on the outskirts of the crowd, He saw His timid disciples like poor frightened sheep. Looking closer, He saw the temple priests who had ridiculed, the Scribes and Pharisees who had blasphemed, Mary Magdalene out of whom he had cast seven devils, the apostle John whom He dearly loved and His own mother who was grieved as only a mother can be grieved.

While on the cross, the Son of Mary uttered seven statements. In dying, the Son of God actually slew death itself. He had something to say. It is significant that in the four thousand years of recorded Jewish history, the dying words of only three men are recorded. They are Jacob, Moses, and Stephen. Jacob was the first Israelite, Moses the first law giver, and Stephen the first Christian martyr. Jesus was more than Jacob, more than Moses, and more than Stephen. He was more than all three of those men combined. He was the personal representative of all humanity; therefore, it is fitting and appropriate that His dying words are recorded for us in the Bible. His words, unlike the words of other dying men, never died. They were uttered for eternal publication and consolation. Those words swept back into Jerusalem, out into Judea and Samaria and, finally, into the uttermost parts of the world. The words spoken by the Lord from the cross had a part in turning the first century world upside down. Thanks be to the good providence of God, we have those words tonight for our mutual edification and benefit. All the efforts of atheism, skepticism and an apostate church have not marred the incorruptible word of God. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Peter said, "The word of the Lord endureth forever." For a few minutes we want to consider the seven statements spoken by Jesus from the cross. There was never a pulpit like the pulpit of the cross. There was never an audience like that assembled at Calvary. There was never a preacher like the dying Christ.

"FATHER, FORGIVE"

The first word was spoken to His enemies. The second word was spoken to a sinner, and the third was spoken to a saint. It is a fact of human psychology, which none can successfully deny, that when a man is at the point of death, he wants to speak to those who are near and dear to him. It is significant to me that Christ spoke first to His enemies. The hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees in the audience expected Him to say something. Men always spoke when dying by crucifixion. Sometimes a man dying on a cross would curse his executioners, curse those who were witnessing his death, curse his mother and father, curse the day he was born and spit upon any near him. Occasionally, one dying by crucifixion became so vituperative that his executioners pulled his tongue out and cut it off at the roots. All those present expected Jesus to say something. The hypocrites who had a part in putting Him to death probably thought, "He said, 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. If a man smite you upon one cheek, turn the other. If a man take away your coat, give him your cloak also. If you are compelled to go with a soldier one mile, be willing to go with him two.' But He will forget all of that nonsense now. Don't you know He will denounce us? Don't you know He will have some hard things to say now?"

Yet, when Jesus spoke, He spoke words of mercy. He said, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." Forgive whom? Forgive the Jews who clamored for my blood. Forgive Herod who robed Me in the garment of a fool. Forgive Pontius Pilate who denied God in the flesh to maintain popularity with the people. Forgive those who smote Me on the face in the palace of Caiaphas. Forgive the soldiers who suspended Me on the cross. Why? "They know not what they do." I believe, had they fully understood that they were putting to death the Son of God, forgiveness would have been an impossibility. At II Peter 2:4 the scripture says that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Have you ever wondered why the angels were

not given an opportunity to repent? It's my opinion that they knew exactly what they were trying to do. They plotted high treason and conspiracy against God. They intended to remove the Lord from His throne and take control of the universe. Because of this, they were not given opportunity to repent. I believe had the Jews known they were killing the Son of God, forgiveness would have been an impossibility for them.

When was that prayer answered? It was not answered while Jesus was on the cross. It was not answered during the three days He was in the tomb. It was not answered during the forty days He sojourned with His apostles after His resurrection. It was not answered during the ten day period after His ascension and before Pentecost day. If you will look in the second chapter of the Acts, you will find it answered. The apostle Peter, on the great Pentecost day, stood before a vast audience of people and said, "Ye men of Israel hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Some fifty days before, many of those hearing Peter had said of the Son of God, "Crucify him, crucify him! Let his blood be on our heads and the heads of our children." But, when they realized they had put to death the promised Messiah for whom they had been looking over a thousand years, when they understood they had killed the innocent and spotless Son of God, they came like broken hearted lambs and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It was then that Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Brethren, this business of parroting Acts 2:38 is not for me. That is one of the most powerful passages in all of God's word. I have been a Christian since 1949. In preaching, I have never been interrupted by one wanting to know what to do to be saved. However,

the first time the gospel was preached as an accomplished fact, the preacher was unable to finish his sermon. They stopped him with "What are we going to do?" In response to their inquiring cry he said, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." That is as powerful as anything in all of God's word. The scripture says that three thousand of them gladly received the word and were baptized. That is when the Lord's prayer was answered. He prayed, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." Fifty days later three thousand of them surrendered their wills to the will of Christ and were baptized. Then, they received forgiveness.

You and I had a part in the crucifixion of Jesus. We are as responsible for the death of Christ as were those people because He died for *our* sins. The man who drove the nails into His hands was a sinner, and I am a sinner. Jesus died for him and Jesus died for me. If those people had to repent and be baptized to be exiled from their guilt of killing Christ you and I must repent and be baptized for exactly the same reason.

"WITH ME IN PARADISE"

Secondly, Jesus spoke to a thief. A tradition grew up in the early church concerning the two thieves crucified with Christ. According to the legend, when Jesus, Mary and Joseph were returning from Egypt, they traveled a dark road past a robber's camp one night. Two of the thieves awakened. One said, "Let's wake the others, so we can rob this party." The other said, "No, allow them to pass in safety." An argument followed. Finally, the one pleading for their safety said, "I will give you money, if you will leave them alone. After all it's just a man, his wife and boy." The transaction was made and the argument ended. They went back to sleep. The legend concluded that when Jesus died, the robber who had pleaded for Him was crucified at His right hand, and the one who wanted to rob the Master's family was crucified at His left hand.

While Jesus was on the cross, He was abused. People standing at the foot of the cross mocked Him saying, "If thou be the Son of God, why don't you come down from the cross? You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in

three days, why don't you save yourself? You saved others, but yourself you cannot save." The thieves railed against Him, too. However, one of the thieves had a change of heart. He turned to the other robber and said, "You and I suffer justly for deeds we have done, but this man has done no wrong." Then, he turned to the Master and begged, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." I wouldn't have been surprised had that been Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead, or had it been the widow of Nain whose son Jesus had raised, or had it been Bartimaeus whose sight Christ had restored, or had it been Peter whom Jesus had saved from drowning in the Galilean Sea. But the only individual on that occasion who had the intestinal fortitude to own him as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Captain of salvation and Savior of the soul was a thief! As the end drew nearer for Jesus, His silence deepened. He said almost nothing to Pontius Pilate. He did not open His mouth when brought before Herod Antipas. He made no attempt to reply to those who abused Him, but when the thief spoke, the silence was broken. The Son of God turned to him and said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

I have heard people argue whether the thief was saved or not. Brethren, I believe with all my heart that he was saved. What's the meaning of paradise? If it weren't so serious, a materialist would look downright amusing in dealing with that word. The materialist believes that when we die, we are like the proverbial dog Rover, dead all over. They are driven to the position that "paradise" refers to the grave. But, a windowless, lightless hole in the ground by no conceivable stretch of the imagination could be defined as paradise. Furthermore, Jesus and the thief were not placed in the same grave. When people die, whether righteous or wicked, they go to Hades. Hades literally means unseen. It is not to be confused with "Gehenna" which is properly translated as Hell. Hades, fortunately, is divided into two parts. On the one hand, there is the waiting place for the righteous dead; on the other hand, there is the waiting place for the wicked dead. If I correctly understand the scripture, Jesus was telling the thief that he was going with Him to the waiting place for the righteous dead. They were going to paradise together. In Luke sixteen we read about the death of

the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man lifted up his eyes being tormented in the flames of Hades. He was on the side of Hades reserved for the wicked. Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom. He was in the paradise part of Hades. The word "paradise" originated with the Persians, and it means a beautiful garden. According to this, Jesus said to the robber, "Today you are going with me into a beautiful garden." Surely the thief was saved!

Someone raises the question, "Can I be saved like the thief?" Well, do you want to be on a cross, turn to the Lord and beg for mercy? "Oh, no, that isn't what I meant." I know what you meant. You meant, can I be saved without being baptized? One cannot prove that the thief was or was not baptized. There is more evidence in favor of his having been immersed than there is for his having not been immersed. Matthew 3:5-6 states that all of those in Jerusalem and Judea went out to be baptized by John in the river Jordan. The thief was crucified near Jerusalem. He may have been one of those baptized by John. But that isn't the issue. In Hebrews 9:16-17 the scripture says, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." When man makes a will, the will doesn't go into force until after he dies. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not make the new covenant binding until after He had died. He had to die to seal the new covenant with His own precious blood. The thief was saved under the old covenant. However, the great commission, in which baptism in the name of the Lord is commanded, was not given until after the resurrection of Jesus. In the great commission we learn to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:38, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, we learn to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln did not pay income taxes. Suppose I wrote the Internal Revenue Department the following letter: "Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln did not pay the income tax. I'm not going to pay it anymore either." Do you think I would get by with it? Those men lived before the

income tax law was enacted. You and I have to pay tax because the law has come into existence since their time. If we can understand that, we can understand the question of baptism. The thief lived and died under the law. Jesus saved him then. But, under the new covenant, Jesus says we are to believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16).

"BEHOLD THY SON"

The third word was spoken to His mother. It was probably uttered about noon. The crowd had dwindled away; the shouting had ceased, but the soldiers were still there sweltering in the noon day heat. Likely, the centurion in charge of the affair was sitting on his horse as motionless as a statue. Mary was still there. I know some people venerate and adore Mary, and I don't subscribe to such a view, but Mary was one of the best women who ever lived. She was blessed among women. We need to preach about her; we need to respect her memory. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, He died as her Savior as well as yours and mine. But the flesh that hung on the tree had been in her womb. That was her son. She couldn't wipe His feverish brow with a damp cloth, and she couldn't give Him a drink to cool His parched lips and burning tongue. All she could do was watch Him die. She saw blood, sweat, and tears stream down His face. She watched warm blood pulsate through His wounds every time His great heart beat.

A lot of things must have flooded Mary's mind as she witnessed the crucifixion. She probably remembered His birth in Bethlehem's stable and fleeing into Egypt when He was a baby. She probably recalled the popularity which was His for a season and the events which attended His death. I am certain the words of Simeon were in her thoughts. When Jesus was taken into the temple, Simeon told Mary that because of Him a sword would pierce her soul. That sword pierced her soul the day Jesus died. Our Lord spoke to His mother. He said, "Woman, behold thy son.". The first time I read that, I read it carelessly and had the idea He was saying, "Mary, look at me. I am dying on a cross, I am fulfilling the mission for which I came into the world." But of course, that isn't what

He meant. "Woman, behold thy son." In other words, from this day forward John is to be considered as your son. Then, He said to John, "Behold, thy mother." From that day Mary stayed in the house of John. Jesus was speaking as a son; He was committing the care of His mother to one of His disciples. He had brothers in the flesh, half-brothers, but He did not commit the care of that holy woman to them. I wonder why. They were unbelievers, that's why. I have two little children. If my wife and I were killed, I would rather have them reared by Godly Christians I've never seen as to have them brought up by relatives who are not faithful to the Lord. Someone might say, "I thought blood was thicker than water." It may be thicker than water, but it is not thicker than the ties that bind us in Christ.

Do not interpret what I am about to say as a slam against church supported homes for the aged. However, I want to say a word about our responsibility to our parents. Christ felt a responsibility and made arrangements for Mary's care. I am afraid some of us think the primary responsibility for the care of our parents belongs to the federal government, a state agency or some home five hundred miles away. If an older person wants to go to an old folks home, well and good. But trying to shove an elderly parent off on somebody else is sinful. The Bible still says if a man doesn't provide for his own house, he is worse than an infidel, having denied the faith. There is not a church in this vicinity that would fellowship an infidel. Yet, we will fellowship those who have shirked their responsibility to their mothers and fathers. Some no good children hit the ceiling if they have to spend $5 or $10 a month to care for their own parents. Ungrateful offspring argue among themselves concerning who will provide for an aged mother or daddy. A Christian lady who was past seventy had a telephone in her home. That was the only communication she had with the outside world. Her children, some of them members of the Church, had an argument among themselves about who was to pay the telephone bill. Guess what happened. She lost the telephone. Listen, it is our duty to care for our aged parents. If they want to go to a home for the aged, that's all right, but they shouldn't be shoved into one. Jesus

saw that His mother was provided for. He committed her care to one of His disciples.

"WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

The fourth word was probably spoken about three o'clock in the afternoon or the ninth hour. Darkness covered the face of the earth from the sixth until the ninth hour, or from 12:00 until 3:00 p.m. Years ago a flying boxcar fell and more than eighty young men were killed, but the sun shone in all of its power and force. Another of those planes fell and more than a hundred were killed, but the sun kept on shining. March 21, 1952 was an unusually hot day in Searcy, Arkansas. There wasn't a breeze stirring; none of the leaves were moving on the trees. About 5:15 in the afternoon, as unusual as it may sound, the sky took on a greenish hue. About 5:25 it began to blow. I thought the trees across the road from our home were shaking hands with one another; at least they were bowing to each other. It rained so hard you could hardly see. It didn't last long. As soon as it stopped raining, a Christian friend and I got into the car and began to drive to the north. I was supposed to preach at a place about sixty miles away. On the edge of Searcy, we saw telephone poles snapped like match sticks. We drove a little farther and saw a wrecked filling station. We stopped a woman who was running down the road. She told us that Judsonia had been flattened. We turned from the main highway and drove to Judsonia. We didn't drive very far into the community. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but destruction and chaos. Bricks were piled up in the streets three and four feet deep. Then, the grisly work of digging out the dead and the injured began. Thirty-eight people were killed in that little town. We filled two Searcy hospitals, Harding College gymnasium, the National Guard Armory, and two of our dormitories with injured people. On the following Sunday the mass funerals began. That Sunday the sun was shining in all of its brilliance and glory, but the day Christ died, the sun hid its face in shame. Nature was touched by the awfulness of that crime. How did the hypocrites feel when the sun went down at high noon? Perhaps they said, "Maybe He was the Son of God. Maybe we have

made a mistake. Maybe He was what He claimed to be."

In the darkness Jesus uttered this pathetic cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I think I have a partial explanation of this expression, but it will not satisfy all the questions you might raise. Jesus, in the Garden of Gethesemane, prayer fervently and earnestly that if it were possible, to let the cup depart from Him. The sweat came from His body as it were great drops of blood. There was something about the crucifixion that He desperately wanted to avoid. Apparently, that something was more than simply physical death. All of us must die. The Bible says God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. I believe when the Lord was on the cross, God did actually withdraw from Him. He was separated from Christ and all of the sins of the world pressed upon His precious heart. He made Him to be sin for us. Jesus died as a propitiation for our sins. A lot of people, apparently, don't understand the meaning of that word. Propitiation carries two ideas. He died to appease the wrath of God and He died to satisfy God's justice. When the law is broken, justice demands that the offender be punished. However, God said instead of our having to pay the penalty for our sins, He would provide a substitute. Jesus died on the cross as that substitute to propitiate for our sins. It is my opinion that Jesus suffered the pains of the damned. He was separated from God and that's what Hell is, a place away from God. In six hours, being an infinite personality, He was able to satisfy the demands of God's justice.

"I THIRST"

The fifth word was not an expression of reproach for His disciples. He did not denounce His executioners. He did not speak a word of love to John nor did He offer an expression of farewell to His mother. He said very simply, "I thirst." Jesus could have said, "In the beginning I was with God and I was God and all things were made by me and without me was not anything made that was made." He could have said, "In the beginning I created the heavens and the earth. At my finger-

tips tumbled worlds and planets. I threw the stars into their orbits and the spheres into space. At one time the world was like a trinket on my wrist." Jesus was God and man. Our Lord didn't have two natures. He had only one nature and it was both divine and human. When He said, "I Thirst," that was His humanity speaking.

I am glad that statement is in the Bible. You and I are not attracted to Jesus simply because of His fidelity to duty and His superhuman nobleness. We are drawn to Christ because He made Himself one of us. He lived as we live. He was tempted as we are tempted. He knew what it was to be hungry, thirsty, weary, and worn. He knew what it was to be angry on occasion. That means when we call upon God in prayer, we have an individual at God's right hand who knows and understands us. He is happy to represent us. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

The Lord wanted a drink and was given vinegar mingled with gall. I used to think that was barbarism, but, really, it was a show of mercy. That mixture was intended as a sedative to deaden His senses to pain. However, He refused to drink it. Why? Because He had to experience anguish and pain to atone for our sins. They gave Him another drink just before He died and He took it. It didn't make any difference by that time for His agony was over.

"IT IS FINISHED"

The sixth word, "It is finished." The scheme of redemption was completed. The old covenant with its ceremony, animal sacrifices, and human priesthood was finished. The purchase price for the church had been paid. The sealing of the new covenant had been accomplished. The battle was fought and won. It was a very unusual kind of battle. When David went to battle Goliath, he had five stones, but the day Jesus died, He had five wounds in His body. It was not a battle where you could hear steel ringing against steel, but if you listened carefully, you could hear the incessant dripping of the blood of the Son of God. It was not a battle where you could see the sun glistening upon the armor at noon time, but where the

body of the Son of God hanged like purple rags in the sky. It was a battle in which he who slew the foe actually lost the day. I can imagine that Satan and all his cohorts laughed with a hellish glee, but they were the ones who were defeated. Jesus entered into the strong man's house and spoiled his goods. He destroyed the power of Satan through His death. Yes, the battle was over; it was finished.

"INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT"

Finally, the seventh word, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Like a planet that had almost completed its orbit, He was ready to return. Like the prodigal son who went into a far country, He was ready to arise and go to His father. He could have said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of authority which the father will give me," but He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He was a loving, dutiful Son down to the very end. He commended His spirit into the hands of the Father.

The Lord's disciples were crushed by His death. They saw his lifeless body sag against the ropes and their eyes filled with tears. Likely, they turned and slowly made their way home. They thought, "He who came to give Israel hope is dead, dead, dead!" But, I am grateful to God, that isn't the end of the story. Christ was buried in the rich man's tomb, but by the power of God, He was raised on the first day of the week! He was victorious over death and triumphant over the Hadean world. In His resurrection, He planted the rose of immortality upon the bosom of every grave. We must speak of a risen and living Lord.

His work is finished, but what about ours? He laid the foundations; we must build thereon. He built the ark of safety; we must enter therein. He has knocked at the door; we must open and allow Him to enter. If you and I are to be saved, we must experience what He experienced. He went into the Garden of Gethsemane and we must go to the garden of sorrows. Can you be truly sorry for the way you have lived? He was crucified, so we must be crucified. We must crucify the lusts, passions, and selfish ambitions of the flesh; that is

repentance. He was buried and we must be buried. Have you been buried in the watery grave of baptism and raised to walk in newness of life? Not long ago, I went into the cave where Jesus may have been buried. It was a wonderful experience, but if you never get to go into that cave, you can have something far better. You can be buried with your Lord in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. As He thirsted on the cross, so we must hunger and thirst after righteousness. As He was robed in the garment of a fool, we must be willing to become fools for Christ's sake.

Jesus is still on trial in the hearts of man. Every time we choose to do evil, that is simply a selection of Barabbas rather than Christ. There are still Pilates who will deny Christ to be popular. There are still Herods who will make fools of Jesus and His people. There are still Judases who will disown and betray Him. There are still those who will gamble away eternity, even though they know about Christ and Him crucified. Thank God, there are still some Johns who stick with Him through thick and thin, who love Him dearly and live the obedient life which He demands. Into which category do you fit?

In order to be freed from your sins, you must climb Calvary's hill. You must bow at the foot of the cross and say, "Lord, I put you there. You died for me." That is going to be hard. The hardest thing you will ever do is make a break with Satan and sin. But, it was harder to hang on the cross! The issue is between you and Jesus. You can reject the Son of God and the Savior of the world. After a while you'll go to Hell for it. You can come to the front and say, "My Lord and my God, I want to confess Your name. I want to be baptized because You have commanded and authorized it. I want to be a member of the church You bought and paid for with your blood. I want to serve you the rest of my life." You can attempt to give back to Him the life that He has given for you. If you live as though Christ never died, one day you will die as though Christ never lived. I am hoping that this sermon has touched your heart and will lead you to become one of His followers. The way has been explained. Come to the

front, confess His name and be baptized. If you are an erring brother or sister, come back home now. Please come right now as we stand and sing.

What Must I Do to be Saved?

Saturday, August 1, 1964

I am pleasantly surprised by this excellent Saturday night attendance. There are about 8,000 present this evening. We are especially glad to have those of you who are not members of the church. We hope you can stay long enough after the service to get acquainted with some of our people. It would be good for us to get better acquainted with one another. We are having a good meeting. The preaching isn't much, but everything else is going well. We have had some good singing. Brother Epps does an outstanding job. Last night Brother Jack Hardcastle waxed eloquent in making the closing announcements. We are having a good meeting, and we are going to have even a better one.

Tomorrow evening I am going to preach a little sermon entitled, "The Folly of Delay". The sermon will keep us about 35 or 40 minutes. However, Monday night will be our crucial night. You will be badly needed Monday evening. The sermon at that time will probably deal with repentance. If we can get a good crowd back Monday night, we will have enough momentum to carry us through the second week.

SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS

By way of introduction to the lesson, I call attention to a few questions. These are challenging questions which confront every serious minded American citizen. The first one is, can America survive economically in light of her tremendous indebtedness? Not long ago, Congressman Wilbur Mills of Arkansas rightly said, "It is foolish for a congressman to vote for a larger appropriation and then refuse to vote that the debt ceiling might be increased." Of course, if a man votes for an appropriation understanding that the money is not on hand, there is but one way to get it, and that is by borrowing. Do you know that the United States is in debt more than three hundred billion dollars? A billion one dollar bills stacked on top of one another would reach higher than the Empire State Buiding. Multiply that by about 320 and you know something

of our indebtedness. By virtue of the fact that a child is born into our society, he comes under a $1650 indebtedness. The average family in the United States owes more than $7000 in federal indebtedness. Perhaps some are saying, "I am not particularly concerned about that." It ought to be a subject of concern for us. We need to be praying about it. If I were going deeper into debt, after awhile people would lose confidence in me. Since that is true concerning an individual, it seems that it would also be true concerning a nation. I no more believe a nation can spend itself into prosperity than I believe a man can drink himself into sobriety. If I were getting deeper and deeper into debt, I ought to pursue two courses. First of all, I ought to cut down on my spending. Secondily, I ought to begin paying some of my debts. The largest item on our federal budget each year is more than 50 billion for defense. The second item totals almost 11 billions of dollars. It is used to meet our interest payments. What is going to happen to us? I wish I knew the answer.

Will the Communists one day dominate the world? Some think that such could never happen. Friends, we have read too many books and seen too many movies which ended with "and they lived happily ever after". There is a distinct possibility that the world could be conquered by atheistic forces. Some feel that God would not allow this to happen. Well, He allowed the brutal, cruel, merciless, and blood thirsty Assyrians to rule the world for about a hundred years. He allowed Rome to reign for several hundred years. Rome was anything but Christian. If God has allowed evil powers in times past to dominate the world, in His wisdom, He might see fit to do it again. I know this, in 1940 the Communists controlled about 140 million people. In 1964, just 24 short years later, the Communists have more than one billion souls under the iron heel of red totalitarianism. Thirty-five percent of the earth's population is behind the iron and bamboo curtains. If the next 36 years go like the past 24 years have gone, by the turn of the century there will be no free world. Someone has said that since the end of the second world war the Communists have brought under their power an estimated 4000 people an hour. They eat, drink, and sleep communism.

They are dedicated to their ideology. I would to God that we had the zeal and dedication they have. Will the Communists one day dominate the world? I don't know the answer to that question. I wish I did.

Will there be another war? If there is another war, will our sons die on foreign battlegrounds as they have in times past? Or, to state it more seriously, will the next war be brought to our shores? Will our factories be bombed and our cities leveled? Will our civilians be killed? Some think we possess the power now to annihilate ourselves. One fellow said he didn't know what they were going to fight the next war with, but he knew what they were going to fight the one after that one with. Some one asked, "What's that?" He said, "Stone axes." He may be right. Of course, the Communists make much of such ideas. They want us to think it's better to be red than dead. Still, there is the distinct possibility that we may blow ourselves into smithereens. Will there be a nuclear war? Will there be an atomic holocaust? Will people die by the hundreds of thousands and even millions? I hope and pray to God that such will not happen. We don't have the ability to read the future. Let us hope that such never occurs.

What about cancer's future in the United States? One out of every four Americans can expect to die of cancer. Perhaps you have seen someone die with this disease. In some instances they die by the inches across the months. There are four in my family. If one out of every four Americans can expect to die with cancer, that means my boy or girl or wife could die with it. It might kill me. There is a possibility that two or three of us will die with it. We spend millions of dollars each year in cancer research in the hope that we will find the cause and cure of this horrible malady. Maybe one day it will be found. When and if it is found, millions of people will wonder why it wasn't discovered earlier.

These are all serious questions, but the most serious question anybody could possibly consider is found in the Bible at Acts 16:30. The Philippian jailor, in speaking to Paul and Silas, asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" If we had the ability to comprehend what's involved in that question, all

other queries would fade into relative nothingness and insignificance. Let me show you why. Let us suppose that our nation sinks economically.. Let us suppose there is war between the free and Communist world. Let us suppose the Communists dominate the world. Or, suppose you die with cancer. Let's take the most pessimistic view we could possibly entertain. If all of these horrible things happen and you die as a child of God, who is the loser? On the other hand, let us suppose we survive economically,, the purposes of Communism are thwarted, there is no war, and that you are never afflicted with cancer. But, you die without Christ. Who has gained? The most important question in all the world is, "What must I do to be saved?" If I didn't believe that, I would quit preaching tonight. All other things are secondary when we consider our soul's salvation.

ANALYSIS OF ACTS 16:30

"What must I do to be saved?" I want to spend a little time analyzing that question. Notice, the jailer asked, "What *must* I do?" He didn't ask what *may* I do, what *might* I do, or what *can* I do. He recognized that something was essential, necessary, obligatory, or mandatory in the salvation of his soul. Secondly, he asked, "What must *I,"* perpendicular pronoun I, "do to be saved." He didn't ask about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He wasn't asking about the thief on the cross. He didn't ask about his dead grandparents. He didn't ask about the man who lived down the block who was supposed to have experienced death bed repentance ten minutes before he died. He asked about himself. It isn't wrong to be concerned about others. It isn't wrong to ask questions about Old Testament worthies or the thief on the cross. But, if you use them as an excuse for not getting right with God yourself, they are wrong. A man talks to you about your soul, and you ask a thousand and one questions. Well, jot this down on your memorandum pad. You are simply attempting to evade and dodge your own responsibility. Get right with God yourself. Then, be concerned about helping others.

Thirdly, he asked, "What must I *do."* It seems that a lot

of people would like to cut that word out of the Bible, but it's there to stay. I can imagine some modern day theologians talking to the jailor on that occasion. He was begging and pleading to be told what to do. Likely, they would have replied, "Hold on good man. There's not really anything you can do. If you attempted to do anything, you would be trying to earn your salvation. Just trust God. You can't do anything to be saved." That man in pagan darkness knew more about the plan of salvation than some fellows who have been to a seminary. He knew there was something to do. Jesus said, according to Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Again, Christ said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" James said, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving your own selves." Religion is not something you *get*. Religion is something you *do*.

The Philippian asked, "What must I do to be *saved?*" One of the most frightening words in the English language has only four letters, L-O-S-T. How horrible to be lost in the forest or to be lost in the mountains. How tragic for a ship's crew to be lost at sea. But, it is far worse to be lost in sin and in that horrible hell which is to come. He wanted to know what to do about his salvation.

Fifthly, in raising that question, he recognized that direction was to come from above. He didn't say, "Here is what I am going to do, and God will have to honor it." He didn't say, "You take your road and I will take my road." He didn't say that one thing is good as another, if you are honest and sincere. He had the attitude of the young man Samuel who said, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth. Command, and I will obey." He had the attitude of the prophet Jeremiah who wrote, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." He was like clay or putty in the hands of God. He was pliable. He was willing to bring his will into submission to the will of God. When you really get serious about going to Heaven, that will be your attitude. You will simply say, "Lord, speak to me. Command, I will obey. I want to be right with

Thee." When you learn what the Bible says, you won't argue about it either.

HEAVEN'S CONCERN

God has done so much for us. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Again, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would ever dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God loved us. God gave his son Jesus Christ to suffer, bleed, and die on the cross for us. Jesus was willing to undergo that death. On one occasion He said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The Bible also says, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Christ said, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." God loved us so much that He gave Christ. Christ loved us so much He was willing to go the the cross for us. The Holy Spirit was so concerned about us He inspired the apostles to set down upon the sacred pages of the New Testament the word of God. We can read it today and learn how to be saved and how to live the Christain life. Heaven is interested in us, Heaven is concerned about us, but man must do something, too. On one side of the ledger we have the part Heaven has played and is playing in our salvation. On the other side of the ledger we have the part played by man. God's part plus man's part is equal to salvation. That last statement is true, however, one might come to a wrong conclusion because of it. He might say, "Well, one plus one is equal to two. God's part plus man's part is equal to salvation. Hence, the part played by man is as great as the part played by God." But, that is not so. For sake of the analogy, God's part would be one trillion and man's part would be one over one million. That equals salvation. Man must do so little, but if he refuses to do his little, he will be lost.

MAN IS A SINNER

What must I do to be saved? In the first place, I must recognize I am a sinner. According to Luke 5:8, Peter, in speaking to Jesus, said, "Depart from me Lord for I am a sinful man." In Matthew 21:31-32, our Lord, in speaking to the religious leaders of His day, said, "the Publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." The religious leaders of His day were not going to enter the kingdom, but the tax collectors and prostitutes would enter the kingdom. Why? When John the Baptist preached, the publicans and harlots saw they were sinners and repented to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messianic kingdom. Those other fellows confessed that they had no sin. Maybe you heard about the man who came forward at a church service one night. He said he would like to confess that he had no sins, but he wanted to pray for the church! That was the attitude of the chief priests and elders in Jesus' day. The greatest of all faults is to be aware of none! I heard a lady say she had never done anything of which she was ashamed. She was nearing forty when she said it. Could you say that? Could you be honest and say you have never done anything of which you are ashamed? If you can say it, you have a short memory, or you are terribly calloused, or you must be perfect. There's not a perfect person in this audience. I once met a brother who seriously said he was perfectly satisfied with himself. Umph! Boy, I thought, "You are a mighty small package, too." Anyone who is satisfied with himself isn't going to attain much. Even the peerless apostle Paul wasn't satisfied with himself.

If we are going to be saved, we must see that we are sinners. The Bible says, "For all have sinned and came short of the glory of God." The Scripture declares, "There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that doth good. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us." You are just poor, miserable, good for nothing sinners in need of the grace of God like I am. Once in a while you run into one of these "good moral fellows". He turns

his lily white hands up before God Almighty and says in essence, "Lord, there is not a blemish on them." He is so "nasty nice", he has never done anything wrong. He says, "I don't drink, I don't gamble, I don't cheat, and I don't go to the road houses." Because he has sort of a negative goodness, when he gets to the pearly portals, Peter is going to have to open the gate and let him in. God will have to save him. Why? Because he didn't drink, gamble, cheat, or steal! Do you know why the good moral man doesn't do those things? Simply because they don't appeal to him. He is as much in rebellion to God's will as is the alcoholic. He may not be a drunkard, but he is a rebel against God. I tell you quite frankly, I would rather work with a low down sot drunkard who admits he is a bum before God and needs grace than to work with one of these "nasty nice" fellows who is all right and doesn't need a thing. The good moral man who justifies himself upon the basis of his morality is an arrogant, egotistical, haughty fool!

The Bible says, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." There is but one class of accountable people, and that class is sinners. Thank God, it is divided into two groups. On the one hand, there are saved sinners, on the other hand, there are lost sinners. We are all sinners. Someone asks, "If we all sinners, why aren't we all lost or all saved?" Saved sinners sin in spite of themselves. They don't intend to do wrong. They are in submission to God's will, but they make mistakes anyway. Lost sinners are in deliberate stubborn rebellion to God's will, and a rebel cannot go to heaven. Brethren, we should never talk to a lost man like this, "Come on into the church, we need you. You could do so much good as a Christian." He will say, "Well, after all, I am a pretty good fellow. If I don't get into the church, it will probably sink. They need me so I believe I will go to the water." So, what happens? He goes down into the water dry and comes up wet, but he hasn't experienced a change of heart! It's not a matter of our needing him. He needs God! I obeyed the gospel in 1949. Do you know why? The preacher said, "Jim, if you don't obey the gospel and become a member of the church, we won't be able to struggle along without you."

Do you believe that? It's not so. He said, "Jim, we need you in the church, furthermore, it will help your business." No, that isn't what happened either. He came with this, "Everybody in this community who is decent, everybody who amounts to anything is a member of some church, and we are the biggest in town. You need to be with us." Thank God, that approach was not made either. I came to the conclusion that I was lost and undone, wrecked and ruined, damned and doomed and without any hope. When you get to the point in life where the flames begin to jump around your bed at night, you will be ready to make a change. My wife called me today. She intended to fly down this afternoon, but our little girl became sick yesterday and she took her to a doctor. Do you know why? Because she recognized that child was ill. No man has ever gone to the great Physician who had Gilead's balm to heal the sick soul until he first saw that he was spiritually ill. No man has ever been saved who didn't first see that he was lost. If I wanted to be saved, I must see that I am a sinner. I am in need, and I can't be saved unless I recognize it.

HUMILITY

Secondly, I must humble myself before God. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah the prophet said, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord high and lifted up and his train filled the temple." The foundation of the threshold were shaken, the house was filled with smoke and he saw the seraphim or "burning ones." Each had six wings. "With twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." They flew around the throne of God saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." After Isaiah saw the majesty, splendor, glory, and holiness of God, he say himself. He said, "Woe is unto me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." One of the seraphim flew to the altar, picked up the tongs, grabbed a live coal, flew back to Isaiah, and touched the coal to his lips. That signified that he had been purged of his sins.

Then, Isaiah heard the Lord say, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I, send me." First, he saw the greatness of God. Secondly, he saw himself. Then, he was ready to serve God. Had he not humbled himself before the Lord, he could not have served Him.

Jonah went to the city of Nineveh and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." From the king on the throne to the beggar in the streets; everybody humbled himself before God. They put sack cloth and ashes upon their bodies. By their actions, they postponed destruction for at least 150 years. They humbled themselves before God. Peter said, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he exalt you in due time." Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Solomon said among the seven things hated by God is a proud look. How do we look on others? Do we look down our noses on them? Do we look upon them as inferior? Do we feel superior? A proud look will keep a man out of Heaven. The Lord isn't going to tolerate egotism, haughtiness or arrogance on the part of any of us. My two little children think I am all right. Daddy is bigger than they are and they have to look up to him. When we reach the point in life that we are little enough to be big enough to look up to God Almighty, we are in position to be saved. However, some would place themselves on a level with or above God. Those who think they can give direction and guidance to their own lives, cannot be saved. Yes, we must humble ourselves before the Lord.

God of our fathers, known of old—
Lord of our far flung battle line—
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Kipling wrote that when Britian ruled the greatest empire the world had known. The sun did not set on it. He was telling the British to realize they ruled because God allowed it.

The tumult and shouting dies—
  The Captains and the Kings depart—
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
  And humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Kipling was in India. Some British dignitaries had come over for a visit. Their visit had been attended with a great deal of pomp, ceremony, shouting, and tumult. Now, they had left and all was quiet. Kipling was saying, "God, help us to understand that the important thing is a humble and a contrite heart." That's true for nations. It is also true for individuals. Kipling knew wherein he wrote.

SACRIFICE

Not only must I humble myself before God, but I must be willing to sacrifice anything that stands between me and the Lord. In Matthew 19:16-21 we read that Jesus walked down the road and a rich young man ran to overtake him. The boy fell down before Him and worshipped Him. Jesus looked on him and loved him. The young man asked, "What good things must I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus said, "Keep the commandments." The young man said, "Which?" The Lord said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The young man said, "These things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Then, the Lord went to the heart of his problem. He said, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come and follow me." The Bible says the boy "went away sorrowful for he had great possessions." Riches stood between that young man and his God. He should have forsaken them for Christ. Whatever stands between you and your Lord, must be forsaken.

One of the major problems among us today is the love of money. That is what was bothering the rich young ruler. I wish we could get the love of money out of the church of the Lord. A Christian friend of mine called on a well-to-do

member of the church. He presented his plea in behalf of Southern Christian home at Morrilton, Arkansas. That is a home dedicated to caring for orphan children. My friend told me that while he was talking that brother just walked the floor and wrung his hands. Finally, the wealthy brother said, "I know you're right, but I just can't help." It was obvious why he couldn't give; he was married to the almighty dollar. I know a brother who, according to Dunn and Bradstreet, is worth between 75 and 100 thousand dollars. On Sunday morning he put one great big fat dollar bill into the collection. Of course, his wife matched it. They gave two dollars every Sunday. The man had been an elder in God's church. We had another fellow in the congregation who made in the neighborhood of twelve thousand dollars a year. He gave forty or fifty dollars a week! If you love money and what money can do, you will have to give that up to be a child of God. Someone might say, "You people haven't been taking any collections here at night." But, don't get the idea that Christianity is inexpensive. Please don't think it will cost you nothing financially. Every child of God ought to give at least a tenth of his income to God's church. If you obey the gospel, you will hear sermons on giving. Don't think you come into the church of the Lord and never be out anything from a monetary viewpoint.

Young people, in order to be a Christian, you may have to give up a sweetheart. I teach at Harding College, consequently, I have opportunity to counsel with a lot of young people. A sweet, lovely teenage freshman girl came into the office one afternoon. I talked with her about the boy back home. He wasn't a Christian. Furthermore, he hated the church. He despised it and fought against it. Yet, she was seriously thinking about marrying him. I said, "No one ever told you that being a Christian was going to be easy. In order to please the God of Heaven, you may have to give up that boy." Can you imagine her planning to marry a fellow who was going to make life a virtual hell for her? She needed to make that sacrifice to please her God, and to have a happier life herself.

To be a Christian, you may have to go counter to wishes of

your husband or wife. You may have to destroy the serenity of your home. In eastern Arkansas, I decided to get some bait and go fishing. I went to a home and talked to the lady there. Lo and behold, she was a member of the church. I had been in the community for several months and didn't even know she was a Christian. She had lost her first husband, remarried, and had moved to our community. I asked, "Why don't you come to worship? Why don't you come and be a part of us?" "Oh, no," she said, "I couldn't stand to argue with my husband." I didn't have the grit to tell her, but I thought it would be better to argue with him than to argue with God. She'd quit the church of God because of him. It is better to have trouble at home and be at peace with God, than to have peace at home and be in trouble with God. While conducting a meeting in another eastern Arkansas community, I learned there was a young lady in town with whom I had attended Harding College. She wasn't working and worshipping with the church. She lived close enough to the church building, I could have stood in the church yard and thrown a baseball into her yard. I went to visit her. I asked, "What's the trouble?" She said, "My husband just hates the church and he doesn't intend that I take the children, so I have quit." Well, I pleaded with her to come in spite of what he said. She said, "Jimmy, you don't want me to have a divorce do you?" In reply, I said, "He is not going to divorce you, because he knows he will lose you and those two little children he loves so dearly. But, if it came to that, there's one thing worse than a divorce. That is going to Hell!" I hate to see people have trouble at home, but our Lord said He didn't come to bring peace. He came to bring a sword. Our Lord taught that a man who loves his relatives more than he loves Him cannot be His disciple. The Lord must come first. Sometimes you will have foes in your own household.

To be a child of God, you may have to go counter to the wishes of your parents. A few years ago I was in a meeting at West Memphis, Arkansas. After preaching one night I was standing in the foyer shaking hands with the people. A sixteen year old girl came by with tears in her eyes. I asked, "What's wrong?" She said, "I want to be a Christian." I said,

"well, why don't you do it? The baptistry is here in the building and we will be happy to baptize you." She said,

was doing? I was trying to get the salt in front of the cow.

baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." Why the difference in answers? Because of the difference in the situation of the people when they asked the question. What time is it? You say, "It's five minutes until nine." Two minutes later, what time is it? Now, it's three minutes 'till nine. A couple of minutes later, what time is it. You reply, "One minute until nine." You gave me three different answers for the same question. Why the three different answers? Because time marches on. Suppose you are going up the Empire State Building in an elevator. How many stories to the top. Forty. How many stories to the top? Ten. How many stories to the top? Two. What's the

The Folly of Delay

Sunday, August 2, 1964

We don't mind waiting to get all these people seated. It's the first time I have ever experienced anything like this in my life. I hope it isn't the last time, though. When we get a place that will seat 11,000 people and have trouble getting

times, while on the side of that hill, I said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When we foolishly placed ourselves in danger, we are tempting God. In your refusal to obey the gospel of Christ, you are tempting God to let you die in a lost condition.

We can tempt God in the sense of trying His patience. According to Numbers 14:22-23 God said, "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." In Psalms

come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Felix

the Samaritans or to the Gentiles. According to Mark 6:12, while on the limited commission, they preached that people ought to repent. Tonight, those of us who have been born of the water and the spirit labor, not under the conditions of the limited commission, but under the great commission. According to Luke 24:46-67, the great commission is as follows: "Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." I could not be faithful to the commission with which the Lord has entrusted me if I failed to emphasize the necessity of repentance, for it is part of the great commission.

Furthermore, repentance is a part of the gospel of Christ. That raises the question, what is the gospel? As I Corinthians

times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: for he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Romans 2:4 states, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering; not knowing the goodness of God leadth thee to repentance?" You could go on mutliplying passages which show that repentance is important. I hope that point has been sufficiently proved.

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

What is repentance? As a preface to answering that question, let me say that, generally speaking, the Bible teaches in two ways. The Bible will tell us what a thing is and what

Lord. Someone may ask, "Do you mean in the sense of being scared?" Partly, but that isn't all of it. A Christian fears God in that he reverences Him, respects Him and obeys Him. What a horrible thing when a man has no fear of God before his eyes. Some have no concern for God or man, and apparently, they never worry. Yet, dedicated Christians are fully conscious of the possibility of falling short and missing Heaven. The man who has no fear of God before his eyes has reached the most dangerous position one can occupy. You and I need to fear God. Jesus said to fear God who can cast both body and soul into Hell. Repentance is embraced in Godly fear. There is no doubt about fear. If we fear the Lord like the Bible teaches, we will repent. But, we can be simply scared and not repent.

Do you remember the first time you rode in an airplane? If you haven't been on one yet, you are in for an experience. I remember my first trip. I was eighteen years old and stationed in San Francisco, California. About sixty miles north of us was Fairfield. I think it is now called Travis Air Force Base. At any rate, I had a furlough and wanted to go to Arkansas. I went to Fairfield and started hitch hiking. About ten o'clock on Friday night I caught a C-54 for San Antonio, Texas. Before we boarded the plane, a lieutenant helped us to get harnessed in our parachutes. He said, "Boys," if anything happens while we are up there, I am going to be the first one out." That scared me a little because, if anything happened, I wanted him to help me out first. I was like the boy who was asked how he liked his first plane ride. In reply, he said, "I guess it was all right, but I never let my full weight down on that sucker." Well, I didn't let my full weight down for awhile. Remember, I am describing a night flight. After we had been airborne for awhile I ventured a peek out the window. The fire was really flying from those engines. I thought the plane was on fire. I called one of the crew members and said, "Uh-uh-uh do you see this?" He said, "That is the way it's suppose to be. That is the fire coming from the exhausts." Well, I felt some better but I wasn't completely satisfied. Have you ever tried to sit on a parachute for two hours? Everyone else took his off; they

were hanging all over the plane. I didn't take mine off for awhile. I knew if I took the thing off, I'd never be able to get it back on again. I didn't know what the man was doing when he put it on me in the first place. Listen, I was petrified with fear. There were two reasons for it. Number one, I didn't want to die. Number two, I knew if that plane smashed into the ground, I had a one way ticket to torment for I wasn't a Christian. I was scared, but I didn't repent. You can be fearful and not repent.

In Jackson County, Arkansas, a fellow was drafted into the army and sent to France during the first world war. He had a good Christian mother, but he wasn't a child of God. When he arrived in France, the bullets were flying thick and fast and he got an old fashioned dose of battlefield religion. He wrote to his mother and said, "Mother, just as soon as I get out of this place I am going to church every time the doors are open." Well, the Armistice was signed in 1918 and it is now 1964, but he is still not a Christian. He was really scared in combat. He promised God the moon, but he didn't make a change. I was in a meeting near Newport, Arkansas and told the story about the service man who became scared and promised to change his sinful ways. However, I failed to specify what war I had in mind. There was a non-Christian man in the audience who had a sweet Christian companion. When they returned home that evening, he gave her a tongue lashing because he felt she had told me about him. I didn't even know he was in the audience. However, during the second world war, he had a similar experience. He had written home and made glowing promises about doing the Lord's will. He'd been out of the service several years and hadn't made a change. Incidentally, that story has a happy ending. It was my pleasure to baptize that young man. He is now a deacon in one of the finest churches in Jackson County. That was used simply to illustrate the fact that we can be fearful and not really repent.

There is a man living in Northern Arkansas whom I have been trying to convert for at least ten years. I think a lot of him. His name is Allen, but we are not related. He will come to hear me preach. He will listen attentively. He has

almost taken the first step during the singing of the invitation song. For some reason, I haven't been able to reach him publicly or privately. One day he was crossing the White River bridge at Newport. He was driving a gravel truck with four or five yards of gravel on it. As he started down the bridge on the Newport side, he checked his brakes. Lo and behold he didn't have any! At the bottom of that bridge is a service station. He said his wicked life passed before him in a few seconds. He could see himself being plastered on the side of that service station so that it would be necessary to scrape him off with a putty knife. There he was, barreling down the bridge with no brakes. Well he managed to go to the right of the station. When he came to the rear, he cut the truck back to the left. When he came to the next corner, he turned hard to the left again. At the highway, he turned sharply to the right. The marvel of it all is, although he may have aged five years, he never turned over! Brother, he was really scared. While on that bridge, he fully intended to get right with God, but he is still lost in sin. James 2:19 says, "Thou believeth that there is one God; thou doest well: The devils also believe; and tremble." The devils tremble, but where is the indication that any devil has ever repented? No, repentance is not simply fear.

REPENTANCE IS NOT SORROW

Third, repentance is not sorrow. There are two kinds of sorrow. II Corinthians 7:10 states, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." There is Godly sorrow; there is worldly sorrow. The sorrow of the world is the type experienced by many people in jails and penitentaries. They are sorry for what they have done, but many of them are sorry simply because they have been caught. I saw a picture of a lady who had tears coursing down her cheeks. I wondered, "Why is she weeping?" I looked a little further to the left and saw why. The custom officials had opened her bags and found some diamonds she was trying to smuggle into the United States. She was sorry about it for she had been caught.

When I was in high school, I had a good friend named Billy Graham. He's not the one you know, but his name was Billy Graham, nevertheless. I am three months older than Billy. We were about the same height, same weight, and same physical strength. You know what that meant. Every few weeks we had to get into a scrap. When Billy whipped me, he just barely did it. When I whipped him, I just barely did it. We were about even in every respect. One day we had a substitute teacher in class. She was a good sized lady. I pulled some devilish stunt, I don't remember what it was, but I remember being the one who did it. The substitute teacher thought Billy had done it. She walked over to him and began to beat him. I thought it was the funniest thing I had ever seen. However, before the class was over, some little tattle tale told the teacher who had done it. She came to my seat and administered the same treatment to me. Honestly, that lady had arms on her like stove pipes. When she hit you, you stayed hit. Boy, was I sorry! I would have given anything if I hadn't misbehaved. However, if given the same opportunity, I would have tried the same thing the next day. Yes, I was sorry. That is worldly sorrow, not Godly sorrow.

The Bible says, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." What is Godly sorrow? If I correctly understand it, it's grief and sorrow which comes into our hearts because we have offended God. Whether we are punished for it or not, we are sorry about it. We have trampled the great heart of God under foot. It breaks our hearts to know that we have mistreated and offended him. Can you find it in your hearts to be sorry for having lied, for having gossiped maliciously, for having had a part in destroying the good reputation of another, for having cheated, for having stolen, for having committed immorality?

Can you find it in your heart to be sorry for the way you have treated the church? The church is the spiritual body of Christ. We think those men who drove the nails into the precious hands and feet of our Lord were horrible men. We think the soldier who pierced his side with a spear did an atrocious thing. All of this is true, but what about those of us

who live in such a way to bring shame and reproach on His spiritual body? I would rather have had a part in destroying His physical body than to have a part in destroying His spiritual body. Do you live in such a way that when people see you walk down the street they say, "If that individual is a Christian, I will have no part of the church"? Are you a oncer? I mean one who shows up only between eleven and twelve o'clock on Sunday morning. Do you have just enough religion to be miserable? Do you deliberately lay away from church services on Sunday and Wednesday nights? Do you deliberately refuse to share what you have financially in the program of the church? Is the church in your community more important to you than anything else? If you really get into the church of God and get busy working, you haven't the time for a lot of other organizations. If you really get into the church and put your heart and effort into it, you will find that your activities are curtailed in other fields. Really living the Christian life is a seven-day-a-week job. Can you be sorry for the way you have treated the church, the elders and faithful gospel preachers? Some of us have trampled under foot the Son of God. We have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified an unholy thing. We have denied our duty longer than we were even in duty. We don't have a real degree of faithfulness in our lives. There are scores of people here who need to answer the invitation to be restored. You will never do it until you are sorry for trampling under foot the Son of God. We have counted the blood of the one institution, the church. It's the most important institution under Heaven. Do you feel sorry for the way you have treated and abused it? Have you made it tenth place in your life?

Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." When the apostle Peter recognized that he had sinned grievously against his Lord, he went out and wept bitterly. Some of us need to let our joy be turned into mourning. We need to express some Godly sorrow. When you are mourning over sins committed, don't be ashamed of your tears. I have seen many walk up the aisles shedding tears. Someone may say, "We don't want to be too emotional." Some of us

are scared to death of emotionalism. We have seen some people go to an exterme emotionalism and we don't want it to happen to us. However, if we aren't careful, in our reaction to emotionalism, we may fall into the ditch of formalism and legalism. I am not afraid of tears. I am not afraid of a little emotionalism in the Christian religion. Whether you shed tears or not, you must experience Godly sorrow or you will never repent. Godly sorrow leads to repentance. Godly sorrow is not repentance.

REPENTANCE IS NOT REFORMATION

Fourth, repentance is not simply a reformed life. An individual can reform his life who has not repented. A man realizes that whiskey is making a fool of him, so he decides to quit. He has been throwing good money after bad. He's been taking things from his family which they need, so he says, "I am going to quit drinking. I am going to earn a position of respect in this community." Still, he doesn't know God is in His Heaven. He doesn't know that Christ died on the cross for him. He doesn't realize that the Bible was written to direct him to eternal life. Such a man has reformed, but he has not repented. If you really repent, you will do some reforming. If a man repents of his drinking, he will quit drinking. If he repents of his stealing, he will quit stealing. If young people repent of petting, they'll quit it. That does not mean once you repent of a wrong you can never be tempted by that sin again. You can truly repent of a sin, quit it for a while, and go right back to the same old sin. If that isn't true, once an individual truly repented, he would be sinless the rest of his life. Furthermore, "once saved always saved" would follow.

You can genuinely repent and go back to sin. However, at least for a time you will bring forth the fruits of repentance. John said, "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." My Aunt Mary lived across the road from us. She had an orchard. I could tell a pear tree from an apple tree or a peach tree, especially during the fruit bearing season. If one really repents, he will bring forth the fruits of repentance. If he steals $10 from

another and repents, he will give the money back. Everybody understands that.

What if he steals another man's wife? A lot of times we simply wink at that sin. I know a Christian man who lost his first wife because of death. Naturally, he was lonely, so he began to seek companionship. However, he became interested in a married woman. He took that woman from her husband. He destroyed another man's family. The only thing he did about it was trot down the aisle in a church building and say he had sinned. If that man is right with God, I am reading the wrong book. Perhaps someone is ready to say, "Maybe the other man wouldn't want her back. " If she was stolen, can he keep her? He was supposed to be a Christian. He thought the brethren were narrow-minded in not allowing him to take an active part in church services while he was dating a married woman. If any thing, they should have been a lot harsher with him. After pleading with him to give up his sinful pursuit, they should have withdrawn fellowship from him. We understand this point in dealing with money. We can understand it if one steals another man's horse, but it seems to be perfectly all right for one to steal another man's wife. I refuse to subscribe to such a view. When we genuinely repent, we will bring forth the fruits of repentance. We will do everything in our power to straighten up the past and live right in the future. In discussing this question, inevitably, someone will say, "Suppose you kill another man." Obviously, the life cannot be restored. You can't bring a man back from the dead, but you would have an obligation to do everything possible for his widow and orphans. I repeat, if we really repent, we will produce the fruits of repentance. How long I don't know, but we will bring forth fruits for a while at least.

REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF WILL

What is repentance? I have been talking about thirty-five minutes to get to this definition. Repentance, simply stated, is a change of the will. According to Matthew 21:28-29, Jesus said, "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, "I will not; but afterward he

repented, and went." What did he do when he repented? He said, "I will." Repentance is a change of an individual's will. In the fifteenth chapter of Luke we read of the prodigal son who went to a far country and wasted his substance in riotous living. By and by, he went broke and a famine swept the land. He joined himself to a stranger and was sent into the field to tend the swine. He sat next to the hog pen and would fain have filled his stomach with the husks the swine were eating, and no man gave to him. Then, he said, "I will arise and go to my father's house, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: Make me as one of thy hired servants." Notice, he said, "I will arise and go to my father's house." That's repentance. He said, "I will tell my daddy I have sinned against heaven." There is Godly sorrow which leads to repentance. Then, the Bible says, "he arose and came to his father." There is the fruit of repentance. He was sorry for the kind of life he had lived. He had a change of will when he repented. Then, he arose and came to his father. That is the fruit of repentance.

Repentance is a change of will. It's so easy to tell you what it is, but it's so hard to do it. Repentance occurs quickly, but is difficult to reach the point where it can happen. When you repent you say, "Not my will, but Thine be done." You say, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth. Command and I will obey." You become as clay or putty in the hands of God. You are pliable. You die to your own selfish ambitions, aspirations and aims in life. You take everything you are, everything you possess and everything you ever will be in the future and offer them on the altar of sacrifice to God Almighty. You stack your arms in rebellion. You surrender to the Lord. You quit fighting God. You say, "I am inadequate to give direction and guidance to my own life. From this day onward, Lord, you must direct my steps. You guide. I'll do exactly what You say. I am going to get out of the picture. From now on, You are going to rule my life." The word which best sums up this idea is "surrender". A man can't be saved who does not surrender. The unwillingness to sur-

render is the problem of humanity. Our rebellious attitude will keep us out of heaven. True repentance is surrender. When you really repent, the battle is 95 percent over. Show me a man who has genuinely repented of his sins and let me study with him before someone misleads him, and he won't argue about what to do to be saved. He won't argue about it when he finds a plain statement in the word of God, he is ready to obey it. He wants to do God's will if he has really repented.

IS REPENTANCE ENOUGH?

Someone might ask, "Is repentance enough?" When I repented, I felt so much better. I've heard others say, "When I repented of my sins, I felt like a burden had been lifted from my soul." Of course, that is right. Do you know why they felt that way? Because they had quit fighting God. But, the question is not how did you and I feel. This question is how does God feel. Suppose I sinned against Brother John Bannister. Thirty minutes later my conscience smites me. I am sorry; I truly repent. I feel so much better. But, am I forgiven? Forgiveness takes place in the mind of Brother John, not in my mind. I have sinned against him. He is the offended party. I must go to him and say, "Brother Bannister, please forgive me. I have done you wrong." Of course, he would say, "I forgive. I never did hold any enmity in my heart against you anyway." Surely, we can see it's not how we feel that counts because forgiveness doesn't take place in our minds. Forgiveness takes place in the mind of God. The only way to know how the Lord feels about the matter is to open the Bible and read it.

Is repentance enough? Let's see if it was sufficent for the Jews on the Pentecost day. Then Peter said unto them, "Repent", is that all? "And he baptized for the remission of sins." Well, repentance was not enough. Peter said to repent and be baptized. Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the road to Damascus and asked what to do. Christ told him to go into the city and there it would be told him what to do. For the next three days and nights he did not eat. He was miserable and wretched. He brought forth fruits of repentance. He had already believed in the Lord. He had already repented of his

sins when Ananias walked in. Ananias said to him, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." Was repentance enough for Saul? No, following his repentance, he was admonished to be baptized to wash away his sins. Repentance is not enough for an erring Christian. According to Acts 8:22, chose who have erred must repent and pray if perhaps the thought of their hearts will be forgiven them. No, repentance is not enough. Following repentance, if you are an alien sinner, you need to be baptized. If you are an erring brother, you need to pray.

WHAT LEADS TO REPENTANCE?

I want to close tonight's lesson by raising and answering one more question. I am going to let the cat out of the bag as far as preachers are concerned. Do you know how preachers get you to change? Do you know the approaches I have been using in this meeting trying to get you to repent? I don't mind telling you. Generally speaking, there are three ways we can appeal to you to get you to repent. Number one, we can tell you what God has promised. God has promised you salvation. He has promised you the gift of the Holy Spirit, the hope of eternal life, peace, joy, happiness, tranquility and serenity. He has promised you happiness in this life and eternal life in the next one. You have the right to ask, "What's in it for me?" If you can't be reached through God's promises to you, we have a second approach. We talk to you about Jesus. We call your attention to the cross. We show you a naked and crucified Savior. We picture Him as writhing on the cross for six agonizing hours to pay the price for our sins. According to Romans 2:4, the goodness of God leads us to repentance. God is good. God loved us so much he gave his only begotten Son for us. We can appeal to you through the avenue of God's goodness and love. Now, if that doesn't work, we tell you about Hell. We picture people being cast into Hell fire alive. We consider them being tossed to and fro in liquid flames of fire day and night forever and ever. We call your attention to the fact that they scream and beg for mercy and none is granted. We point out that

it is a hopeless and helpless situation from which none can be delivered. Our approaches are: One, God's promises to you. Two, God's goodness and love as seen in the cross. Three, God's wrath as revealed in the fires of Hell. If you forget about these appeals, one day you will wake up in torment.

I was preaching in Detroit a few years ago and trying to get a young man to obey the gospel. He was from Tennessee. He said, "Brother Allen, when I go to church I don't feel anything. He added, "I used to get the feeling down in Tennessee." I said, "If you will come Friday night, I guarantee that you'll get the feeling." He looked at me like I was crazy, but he said he would come Friday night. Friday night when we sang the hymn of invitation, he walked down the aisle. He got the feeling? He heard a sermon based upon and founded in the word of God. I said all of that to say this, God is not going to reach out and grab anyone here and give him a good shaking. You are not going to have an electrifying thrill sweep over your soul. No miracle will be worked to lead you to repentance. If a man were standing here who had spent the last five hundred years in Hell, he couldn't do any more in motivating you to obey the gospel than I. His hair might be burned from his head. His eyebrows might be gone. The smell of smoke might be on his clothing. Maybe you wonder why I said that. Because in Luke sixteen, the rich man wanted Lazarus sent back to warn his brothers. Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded through one rose from the dead." If you won't listen to the word of God, you wouldn't give heed to a man back from Hell. God's isn't going to work a miracle for you. You must use the good common sense with which the Lord has endowed you to make up your own mind. It is as simple as that.

If you are disposed to leave the building without Christ, please do me a favor when you get home. In the interest of your own soul, write on one side of a sheet of paper what you can gain by staying in sin. Then, turn it over and write what you can gain by being a Christian. Give your reasons for staying in sin and give your reasons for being a child of God. Then, act upon the basis of your wisdom and judgment. If

you will do that, you will come to Christ tomorrow night.

But, we want you tonight. All you have to do is walk down one of these aisles, stand at the front and confess your faith in Christ. The baptistry is here behind the curtain. You can be baptized and leave this building a child of God. If you are a backsliding brother or sister, you need to come to the front and we will pray with you that you may be restored to your first love. You can start over again and live the dedicated and devoted Christian life from this day forward.

You are here tonight because you are interested in your soul. You may have said subconsciously this afternoon, "Tonight will be my night." You are concerned about your soul or you wouldn't be here. We are concerned about your soul or we wouldn't be here. Why don't you act upon the basis of your good impulse and come this evening? Won't you come to the Lord Jesus Christ as we stand and sing?

Bible Baptism

Tuesday, August 4, 1964

There are more people here tonight than were present last evening. We had about 7,500 last night. There are probably close to 8,000 tonight. My brethren and friends, I continue to be grateful to you for coming from night to night. I am humbled by the experience of preaching to so many people in this meeting. It's almost impossible for me to imagine that such large crowds have come to listen to me speak. Of course, I know that you have not come simply to hear me. You have come because you have an interest in the word of God. The most powerful influence in the world today is God's word, the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. I appreciate the interest you have in it. I am glad you are concerned about the salvation of your souls.

ONE BAPTISM

Tonight's text is found in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, beginning with verse three. Paul wrote, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This passage has been appropriately described as the Christian's seven-fold platform for unity. If you followed the reading carefully, you noticed there were seven words, each of which is preceded by the word one. The text says there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one body, one hope, one faith, and one baptism. Tonight, I am particularly concerned about the expression "one baptism."

When our brethren went to Japan shortly after the end of the second world war, they had a great deal of difficulty in convincing the Japanese people of the fact of one God. In Japan there are approximately 600 million gods. There are more gods than people. In the United States one doesn't have difficulty in convincing people there is but one God, but one has a tremendous task in getting across the idea there is but

one baptism. My friends, when the Bible says one baptism, it means exactly the same thing, in so far as "one" is concerned, as it means when it says one God. Whatever the Bible means when it used the word "one" to modify the Lord, it means when the same word is used to modify baptism. Whatever that word one means in connection with the Spirit, it means in connection with baptism. A lot of good and well meaning individuals say, "That is right, there is but one baptism. But, you can choose to be sprinkled if you like, and that is the one baptism for you. Or, you can receive pouring and that is the one baptism for you. Or, you can be immersed and that is the one baptism for you." Well, if that reasoning is sound with reference to baptism, then the same type of logic will work with reference to God. That would mean there are three personalities known as God. You can choose one and He will be your God. I can choose another and he will be my God. Someone else can choose another, and he will be his God. Then, when the Bible says one Lord, that would mean you could choose one being known as the Lord. I could choose another being known as the Lord, and someone else could choose another being known as the Lord. We would all be worshipping one Lord when actually there are three different personalities known as the Lord. Then, when the Bible says one Spirit, that would mean you could select one and he would be your Spirit. I could select one, and he would be my Spirit. Someone else could select another, and he would be his Spirit. Hence, instead of three personalities in the God-head (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), there would be nine. You would have three fathers, three sons, and three spirits. My friends, what does the Bible mean when it says one God? It means there is one Being known as our Father. What does the Bible mean when it says one Lord? It means there is one Personality who is our Lord. What does it mean when it says one Spirit? It means there is one Being known as the Holy Spirit. "One" means the same thing when connected with God, Lord, Spirit, and baptism. There is but one baptism. I believe in one baptism because I believe in one God. I believe in one baptism for I believe in one Lord. I believe in one baptism for I believe in one Spirit. If that one baptism is

sprinkling, then pouring and immersing are excluded. If that one is pouring, then sprinkling and immersion are excluded. If that one is immersion, then sprinkling and pouring are excluded. But, whatever the one is, that is the only one authorized by God. Everything else, in the light of that one, is bound to be erroneous.

Now, we have another problem. What about baptism in the Holy Spirit? Isn't that discussed in the Bible? Yes. Weren't there people in the first century who received baptism in the Holy Spirit and baptism in water? Yes. The apostles on the day of Pentecost were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Apparently, they had already received water baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. At the house of Cornelius, some three or four years after Pentecost, a group of people were baptized in the Holy Spirit and then they received baptism in water. The apostles and those in the house of Cornelius received two baptisms, yet after the experience of the apostles and the family of Cornelius. As a matter of fact, it was written from a Roman prison in A.D. 62. In it, Paul said, "There is one baptism." He meant there was only one which was binding and valid. My friends, there has been only one since that time.

Well, that raises the question, what is that one? Is it baptism in the Holy Spirit, or is it baptism in water? In Matthew 28,19-20 Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Our Lord was first person on that occasion. His disciples were second person. He did the speaking. They were the ones addressed. He told them to go, teach, and baptize. Lord, how long will you be with your people? "Even unto the end of the world." Then, how long are we to go, teach, and baptize? "Even unto the end of the world." Our Lord has made us a promise. He has promised to be with us as long as this old world stands providing we meet certain conditions. What are those conditions? That we go, teach, and baptize. My friends the baptism under consideration in Matthew 28 is to last as long as the world stands. Well, what kind of baptism is it? It's one that a man can

administer. He said, "You do the teaching. You do the baptizing." It's one that a man can administer and a man cannot administer Holy Spirit baptism. According to Matthew 3:11-12, the only one who can baptize in the Holy Spirit is the Lord Jesus Christ. But, he told men to baptize, and that he would be with them to the end of the world; therefore, the baptism that a man can administer is to last as long as the world lasts. There is not but one baptism a man can administer. That is baptism in water. My friends, in A.D. 62 when Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned the fourth chapter of the Ephesian letter, he said, "There is but one baptism." That is the one that lasts as long as the world stands. That is the one administered in water by man. The one baptism revealed in the Bible is water baptism. That is bound to be right. There's just no way around it. As Brother N. B. Hardeman used to say, "That isn't nearly it, that is it." Without the slightest equivocation, I say the one baptism is water baptism. Every individual I know who claims to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit also practices a form of water baptism. Well, let's count them. Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism. That makes two, but Paul said there is just one. How can an individual maintain that he has been baptized in the Holy Spirit and in water and still believe there is just one baptism? Paul said there is but one. Paul was right! Paul was being directed by the Holy Spirit. There isn't but one. If that one is baptism in the Spirit, we might as well forget about the water. If that one is baptism in water, we might as well forget about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. I don't want anybody to misunderstand me. I claim tonight, by the grace of God, to be full of the Holy Spirit. I claim to be a Spirit filled preacher. I maintain that every individual here who has been born again of the water and the Spirit has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, it's one thing to be filled with the Spirit and another to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. We are not spiritless people, but we maintain that nobody is being baptized in the Holy Spirit today.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

I have to raise and answer three questions. Number one,

what is the one baptism. I have already indicated it's water, but I want to go further. In Acts 8:35, the Bible says that Philip opened his mouth and preached Jesus to the Ethiopian. "As they went on their way they came unto a certain water, and the Eunuch said, See here's water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?" So, as we have already indicated, it takes water to baptize. Secondly, it takes much water. In John 8:23, the Scripture declares that "John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was much water there." The word "much" must be defined relatively. For example, if I had a glass of water, that would be much in comparison with a teaspoonful. If I had a bucket of water, that would be much in comparison with a glass of water. If I had a barrel of water, that would be much in comparison with a bucket of water. I am simply saying that we don't prove anything by the expression "much water." The argument I am attempting to develop is cumulative in its force. By that, I mean to offer several lines of reasoning and draw a conclusion by taking all of the facts into consideration. Now, the Bible says it takes much water. You don't prove sprinkling, pouring, or immersion by that expression alone. However, it's almost inconceivable to me that the amount of water necessary to sprinkle or pour would ever be described as much.

But, let's go further. In New Testament days, they went to the water. In Acts 8:36 the Bible says "as they went on their way they came unto a certain water." Fourthly, they went down into the water. According to Acts 8:36-38 the Eunuch turned to Philip and said, "See here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The Eunuch answered and said,, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then, "he commanded the chariot to stand still and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch and he baptized him." Notice, Luke being directed by the Holy Spirit, tells us that they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch. He used the word "both" twice! He let us know beyond the shadow of any reasonable doubt that when baptism was administered both the candidate and the administrator were in the water! Somebody says, "That proves nothing." As far

as the lesson is concerned up to this point, I am willing to admit it; but the same thing that keeps sprinkling preachers out of the water today would have kept them out of the water then had they sprinkled then. If not, why not?

Now, they both went down into the water. We have located them. They were actually in the water. What takes place while people are in it? In Romans 6:4 the Bible says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." In Colossians 2:12 Paul said, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The scripture declares that while in the water, baptism involved a burial. We have been to the cemetery too many times not to understand the meaning of burial. We are buried with Christ in baptism. Not long ago I had opportunity to study with a student at the University of Arkansas. We read these passages together. He said, "I believe we are buried all right but we are buried spiritually." I said, "Now, look at what the passage says. The passage doesn't say we are buried spiritually; it says "buried in baptism." In the act, in obedience to this command, we are buried. Buried in what? In baptism. The Bible also says we are raised to walk in newness of life, or we are raised with him through faith of the operation of God. My friends, baptism is a burial and a resurrection.

Now what? They came up out of the water. In Acts 8:39, after Philip baptized the Eunuch, the Bible says "and when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip so that the Eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing." At Mark 1:10, following our Lord's baptism, the Bible says that straightaway He came up out of the water. Now, let's put all of our information together. Baptism takes water, much water, going to the water, going down into the water, a burial while in the water, a resurrection from the water, and finally a coming up out of the water. Friends, if you had never seen a Bible before in your life, if you had never heard the subject of baptism discussed before in your life and you had to cast your vote right now in the light

of Biblical evidence in favor of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, which way would you vote? How would you vote?

In the original language there are three words we want to briefly consider. The word for pour is "keo." It never properly appears alone. You find "epikeo" which means to pour on or "ekkeo" which means to pour out. "Keo," then, means to pour. Had our Lord intended for us to be poured, He would have said, "He that believeth and is keized shall be saved." The word for sprinkle is "rantizo." Had our Lord intended for us to be sprinkled, he would have said, "He that believeth and is rantized shall be saved." The word for immerse is "baptizo." Had He intended for us to be immersed or submerged, He would have said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now, what did He say. Everyone here knows what He said.

Really, the Greek verb "baptizo" has never been translated. It has been transliterated. It has been anglicized. By that, I mean it has been carried bodily from the Greek language over into the English language. The only difference between the English word baptize and the Greek word "baptizo" is the last letter. In Greek it ends in "o" and in English it ends in "e." That word has not been translated. Had it been translated, here is the way the Bible would read: "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved." "Repent and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." John the "Immerser" preached "the immersion of repentance for remission of sins." Every time the word baptism appears it would be immersion. Every time baptize appears it would be immerse. Every time baptized appears it would be immersed or submerged. There is but one baptism and that one is an immersion. But, what does this mean? It means that anyone who has had water sprinkled or poured on his head has not been baptized like the Bible teaches! There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it, such a person has not been scripturally baptized. Now, that leads to the second question.

WHY BAPTIZED?

First, we raised the question of what is baptism. The second

question is "why be baptized?" In talking with other people about the Bible, I have found many who say, "I was baptized because Jesus was baptized." I think that's a marvelous motive. Why do it? We ought to do it because Christ did it. Yet, a lot of good and well meaning individuals have a fallacious idea in their minds when they say they were baptized because Christ was baptized. Here is the way they reason. They say, "Jesus was the Son of God and he was baptized. So, I was the Son of God and I was baptized. Since Jesus was the Son of God before baptism, I was the son of God before baptism. But, since I was the son of God before baptism, then I was saved without baptism." Now, let's see if that reasoning will stand. Jesus was born the Son of God. The people, who take the position that we are saved without baptism because Christ was the Son of God before he was baptized, argue that we are born sons of the Devil. They believe in the doctrine of hereditary total depravity. According to them a child is born wholly, totally, and completely evil. He can't even entertain a good thought. He can't even perform a good action. Christ was born the Son of God, but, according to their position, we are born sons of Satan. The analogy breaks down, doesn't it? Jesus sustained a right relationship to God in eternity before his incarnation. I don't know whether you could call him the Son of God prior to His incarnation or not, but He sustained a right relationship with God at that time. Now, what about us? Did we sustain a right relationship to God before we were conceived? No. Why? Because we didn't have pre-natal existence. I am attempting to prove that our Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God in a special and unique sense. He was the only begotten of the heavenly Father. There is not a person in this audience tonight who is a son of God in the sense as was Jesus. We are the sons and daughters of God by adoption.

Furthermore, our Lord was the Son of God without repentance. Can I be the son of God without repentance? Can I? Now, he didn't repent. Where's the passage in the Bible which indicates that Jesus ever repented? It isn't there. He didn't repent for the simple fact He didn't have any sins from which to turn. Now, since he was the Son of God without repentance, may I be a son of God without repentance? My friends if I

can be saved without water baptism because Christ was the Son of God without baptism, than I could be saved without repentance because Christ was the Son of God without repentance! If not, why not? There is one fallacy in this argument. The fallacy is that Jesus was not the Son of God in the same way that you and I are.

It doesn't make any difference to me what a man believes with reference to water baptism. When he gets to the Lord Jesus Christ, he is going to say that He was an exception to the rule. For example, if a man believes that one ought to be baptized to show that his sins have already been forgiven, he'll not say that about Jesus. He'll not say that our Lord was baptized to show that His sins had already been forgiven for the simple fact that Jesus didn't have any sins to forgive. I take the position that a man ought to be baptized in order to have his sins forgiven, but I can't apply that to Jesus. Why? Christ didn't have any sins to forgive. He was an exception to the rule. All of us believe that, and that is exactly what the Bible teaches.

If you will open to Matthew 3:13-17, you will learn that our Lord went to John the Baptist, who was baptizing in the River Jordan. He demanded baptism at the hands of the Baptist. John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" I wonder why John said that. For at least two reasons. In the first place, John was a humble man. On one occasion he said he was not worthy to even touch the Lord's shoe laces. In the second place, John knew the purpose of his baptism. According to Luke 3:3 and Mark 1:4, John baptized "for the remission of sins." However, Jesus, the Son of God, was standing in his presence and had committed no sins. In essence, John said, "I am the sinner, not you Lord. Why don't you baptize me instead of my baptizing you?" Listen to the Lord's reply. He said, "Suffer it to be so now: for it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Christ was saying, "John you are right about it. I am no sinner, but suffer this to be done." What does the word "suffer" mean? It means to make an exception or to allow. At I Timothy 2:12 Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." A woman is not allowed

to teach or usurp authority over the man. The King James translators used "suffer" for "allow." Jesus said to John, "Suffer this to be so now." He meant that John was to allow him to be baptized. He was to make an exception of Him. Why? "For it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Now, why was our Lord baptized? To fulfill righteousness. What does that mean. At Psalms 119:172 David said, "All thy commandments are righteousness." Christ was baptized to fulfill righteousness, God's commandments are righteousness, therefore, Jesus was baptized to obey the commands of God. He did it as an act of obedience. Luke 7:29-30 divides those who heard John into two categories. Some of them justified God being baptized of John, and others rejected the counsel of God against themselves being not baptized of him. Friends, our Lord had to fit into one of those categories. He either justified God being baptized or He rejected the counsel of God against Himself being not baptized. But, He was an obedient Son. Hebrews 5:8-9 states, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Our Lord, the Son of the living God and the Savior of the world, had to yield, with reference to this matter, to obey God. I want you to think about this. Have you ever met one of these people who is so spiritual that he doesn't need this external ordinance? He says, "I have such a marvelous relationship with God, I wouldn't think about being baptized. My relationship to God is a spiritual thing and baptism is a carnal act. It would do me no good at all." Such doesn't speak well of any man's humility. The Son of God had to be baptized as an act of obedience, yet some men feel they are so spiritual they don't need it! I refuse to believe it! If God's Son had to do it, you and I are not going to get by with less! Now, why was our Lord baptized? To fulfill righteousness. He did it as an act of obedience.

I think God put baptism in His plan to test our faith and to see if we would obey. A few years ago, while in a meeting in St. Louis, a young lady was converted. We couldn't get her brother inside the church building. Do you know why? He said the idea of one's getting into water to be saved was the

most idiotic and ridiculous thing he had ever heard of in his life. My friends, the Lord put baptism in His scheme to see if we trusted Him enough. He intended to learn if we would be fools enough for His sake to obey His commands blindly, if need be, to please Him. Our Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Do you and I believe His words strongly enough to do what He said in simple child-like trust without arguing, doubting, and questioning? One of the reasons for this command is to check us out with reference to obedience. Are we willing to obey? Are we willing to submit? Are we willing to surrender? If this is the will of God, will you do it? A lady told a friend of mine she wouldn't believe such a proposition if the Lord Jesus Christ told it to her. My friend said, "Mam, an attitude like that toward the Savior will cause you to be lost." That is exactly right! An attitude like that toward the Savior will cause anyone to be lost. If one takes the position that he wouldn't believe if Jesus said it, right or wrong on that particular question, an attitude like that toward the Lord would cost him his soul's salvation.

In the second place, you need to be baptized to get into Christ. I had been reading the Bible for some time before I learned what the expression "in Christ" meant. It is found repeatedly in the New Testament. One day I was reading an off-brand translation of the scriptures, I think it was Weymouth, and instead of saying "in Christ," it said "in union with Christ." All at once, it hit me like a bolt out of the blue — to be in Christ means to be in union with Christ. It means to be united with Christ or in fellowship with Christ. Now, please consider some of the blessings which can be found in union with Christ. At II Corinthians 5:17 Paul said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." If an individual is in Christ, he is a new creature. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." There is no condemnation in Christ. In II Timothy 2:10, Paul wrote, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." In Colos-

sians 1:14 we read, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." From that passage I learn that in Christ we have redemption and forgiveness. Ephesians 1:3, says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." So, all spiritual blessings are in Christ. At II Corinthians 1:20 Paul said we have all promises in Christ. In Ephesians 1:11 he said we have an inheritance in Christ. Now, let's see what's in Christ. In Christ we are new creatures. In Christ there is no condemnation. In Christ there is salvation, redemption, forgiveness, all spiritual blessings, all promises, and an inheritance. If we are new creatures in Christ, out of Christ we are old creatures. If there is no condemnation in Christ, out of Christ we are condemned. If salvation is in Christ, damnation is out of Christ. If redemption is in Christ, we have no redemption out of Christ. If forgiveness is in Christ, we have no forgiveness out of Christ. If all spiritual blessings are in Crrist, we have no spiritual blessings out of Christ. If all promise are in Christ, we have no promises out of Christ. If the inheritance is in Christ, we have no inheritance out of Christ. All of those things are found in union with Christ.

Question, how does an individual get into Christ? Notice that word is I-N-T-O, into. It's a preposition which denotes motion from without to within. How does a man get into Christ? What is the act by which one is brought into union with the Lord? There are two verses in the Bible which tell how to get into Christ, and they both say the same thing. Romans 6:3 says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Galatians 3:27 states, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." My friends, if you live to be as old as Methuselah, if God lets you live until all your hair has turned white or turned loose, when you get through reading your Bible, there will still be just two passages that tell how to get into Christ, and they will both say exactly the same thing. How does a man get into Christ? The Bible says he is baptized into Christ, and I believe the Bible. I believe what the Book has to say about it. What I am about to say will sound like a

broken record, but I just beg you to listen. You will have a hard time forgetting it. We are new creatures in Christ, but we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to become new creatures. There is no condemnation in Christ, we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to get into the state of no condemnation. Salvation is in Christ, but we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to be saved. Redemption is in Christ, but we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to be redeemed. Forgiveness is in Christ, but we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to be forgiven. All spiritual blessings are in Christ, we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to receive all spiritual blessings. All promises are in Christ, we are baptized into Christ, therefore we are baptized to receive the promises. The inheritance is in Christ, we are baptized into Christ, therefore, we are baptized to receive the inheritance. One who takes the position that baptism means little or nothing, must also believe that one can be saved without being a new creature, without salvation, without redemption, without forgiveness, without spiritual blessings, without the promises, and without the inheritance. Water baptism stands between you and every last one of those blessings.

A few years ago I was in a religious discussion with a man and asked him, "How do we get into Christ?" He took the position that such occurs simply by our believing in the Lord. Faith is involved in it, friends, I am not denying that. Baptism unattended by faith means nothing. However, he meant that the very instant we believe, without any further acts of obedience, we are in union with Christ. Friends, if the very second I believe in Jesus I am in union with Christ, how could I later be baptized into Christ? There wouldn't be but one way it could be done. Obviously, between my belief and baptism I would have to get out of Christ and then go back in again. The Bible doesn't teach such an absurdity. The Bible teaches that by faith plus baptism we are brought into union with Christ. You need to be baptized.

There is a third reason for baptism. You need to do this to be saved. In Mark 16:15-16 our Lord, in giving the great commission, said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the

gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." I am not much as an English teacher. As a matter of fact, when I begin to discuss grammer, about all I do is expose my ignorance. However, I learned a little about diagraming a sentences a long time ago. If I remember that instruction correctly, "he" in Mark 16:16 is the simply subject. "Shall be saved" is the simple predicate. "He shall be saved," is the independent part of the sentence. "That believeth and is baptized" is the dependent clause. "He shall be saved." What "he" shall be saved? Is it just any "he"? If it's just any "he", then universal salvation results. All will be saved. Well, Jesus didn't say that. Did he say, "He that believeth shall be saved"? No. Did He say, "He that is baptized shall be saved"? No. What did he say? He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." We don't have Jewish grammar, Protestant grammar, and Roman Catholic grammar. We simply have plain old grammar. What grammar says to a Protestant, it says to a Jew. What grammar says to a Catholic, it says to a Protestant. In this passage, "he" is the simple subject and "shall be saved" is the simple predicate. If you want to know who that "he" is, digram the sentence and you will learn it's the one who believes and is baptized. Good people, I mean it with all my heart, that will stand when the world's on fire. We can't pray around it. We can't reason around it. We must accept it for exactly what it says. Our Lord said there are two conditions essential to our salvation. They are belief and baptism.

Some time ago a gospel preacher was conducting a meeting in Mississippi. Following one of the evening services, he was standing in the vestibule shaking hands with the people as they left the building. A lady walked by who taught English in the local high school. She said, "I appreciated what you had to say tonight except for one thing. I don't believe a person needs to be baptized to be saved." He asked, "Would you stay and talk with me for a few minutes?" She replied in the affirmative. The two of them went back to the study and sat down. The preacher opened his Bible to Mark 16:16 and said, "Please diagram that sentence for me." She took

a quick look at it and said, "It is a complex declarative sentence with "he" as the simple subject and "shall be saved" as the simple predicate." She added, "You know, you are right!" That lady was baptized that night. Do you know why? When she read the word of the Lord, she was not disposed to argue with Him. What Jesus had to say about it was right. That settled all the controversy with her. It was our Lord Jesus Christ who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," not I. Had I written it, it wouldn't make any difference whether you believed it or not. But, Jesus, the one who went to the cross for you said, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Suppose Mark 16:16 read this way: "He that believeth and is baptized receive a new house." Or, "he that believeth and is baptized shall receive a new television set." My friends, if it read that way, we wouldn't have controversy about it. It says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Which is more important to you? A house or salvation? Television or salvation? Our Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Let's reason again. One plus one is equal to two. One minus one is equal to nothing. Belief plus baptism is equal to salvation. Belief minus baptism is equal to nothing. Baptism minus belief is equal to nothing. There are two conditions essential to salvation. They are belief and baptism. Notice, our Lord did not say, "He that believeth and is saved may be baptized." He said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." That is the Lord's order.

Please consider a fourth argument on the necessity of baptism. This was very impressive to me the first time I saw it in the Bible. Every time that God has seen fit to connect baptism and salvation in the scripture the order is baptism and then salvation. Six times in the Bible God tied them together. I want to read those six references to you. Mark 1:4, "baptism for remission of sins"; Luke 3:3, "baptism for remission of sins"; Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"; Acts 22:16, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins"; I Peter 3:21, "The like figure where-

unto even baptism doth also now save us." Six times God put them together. In every instance, and there is no exception to this rule, baptism is first and salvation is second. Now, if a man is saved without being baptized, why doesn't God reverse that order? Not one single solitary time in all of God's word, when the two of them are tied together, do you find salvation first! It's never that way! It's always baptism first and salvation next. Do you know why? Because that's God's truth on the matter. We weren't saved until after we are baptized.

You need to be baptized to get into contact with our Lord's death. According to John 19:34, when Jesus was on the cross, the spear was plunged into his side and forthwith came blood and water. In other words, the Lord shed His blood in His death. If I want to reach the blood of Christ, I must get into the death of Christ. How do I get into the death of Christ? Romans 6:3 says, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." In the act of baptism we reach the Lord's death. Those 17 individuals who went down into the water last night were baptized into the death of Jesus.

When we understand that, Acts 22:16 means a lot more to us. That passage says, 'Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' Those 17 individuals who went into the water last night had their sins before they were baptized. They came out of the water without sins. Perhaps someone is ready to say, "That is one of the finest illustrations of water salvation I have ever heard." Well, that isn't what was intended by it. The Bible says, at Acts 22:16, when we are baptized our sins are washed away. Washed away by what? Water? No! Washed away by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for in baptism we reach His death. There is where we reach the cleansing and atoning benefits of His blood, and His blood takes our sins away. Not by water, but by the blood when we go into the water! My friends, if that isn't right, when does a man reach the death of Christ? There are two ordinances in the Christian religion that point up our Lord's death. One is the Lord's Supper and

the other is baptism. Many religious people have almost completely overlooked them both.

Why be baptized? Number one, because Jesus was. Number two, to get into union with our Lord Jesus Christ. Number three, to be saved. Number four, because every time baptism and salvation are mentioned in the word of God, it's baptism first and salvation second. Number five, to get into the death of Christ where the benefits of Christ's blood are applied to the soul. There is no power in water. There is no Power in faith. There is no power in obedience. When we believe, repent, and are baptized, then the blood is applied to us and there is power in the blood to take away our sins. That's why 1900 years ago the brethren were so insistent in getting people to be baptized when they heard the mesage. They didn't wait. They didn't delay.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Finally, who ought to do this? In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Those who are baptized must first be taught. That excludes infants because infants cannot be taught the gospel. As Mark 16:16 the Bible says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." So, baptism is for those who are old enough to believe in Jesus. We says religion is a personal matter. We talk about receiving Christ as a personal Savior. That's all well and good, but how personal is it with a little eight day old baby? He's not old enough to believe in Jesus, therefore, he is not a candidate for baptism. Suppose, when we sing the hymn of invitation, a 200 pound man came to the front, gave one of these preaching brethren his hand and said, "I want to be baptized." Suppose, in answer to the question, "Do you believe in Jesus," he said, "No, I don't believe in Jesus, but I want to be baptized anyway." What would you think if we baptized? Suppose a men weighed 150 pounds and we had a similar experience with him. Suppose he weighed 100 pounds and asked for baptism without believing in Christ.

Suppose a mother carried her child to the front and asked us to baptize him. If it's wrong to baptize a 200 pound man in the absence of faith, it's wrong to baptize a 10 pound baby in the absence of faith. If not, why not?

Baptism is for those who are old enough to repent. In Acts 2:38 the apostle Peter, directed by the Holy Spirit, said, 'Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." That excludes infants for two reasons. In the first place, they're not old enough to have committed sin. In the second place, if they had sinned, they don't have the ability to turn away from sin. They don't have any sins of which to repent, and if they did, they don't have the capacity to repent. In the Bible, people confessed Christ prior to baptism. Before the Ethiopian nobleman went down into the water to receive baptism at the hands of Philip, he said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then, he was baptized. So, one has to be old enough to believe on the Lord and to make this type of a confession. Finally, baptism is for one who is lost. It's not the first act of Christian obedience. It's not the first thing you do after God saves you. It's what you do in order to become a Christian. You have trusted the Lord. You have made up your mind to give up your sins. You have come to the front. You have confessed with your lips the faith which is in your heart. Then, you are baptized in the name of the sacred Three and raised to walk in newness of life. That newness of life does not begin until after you are raised, according to Romans 6:4.

Friends, I beg you to listen. Tonight, I have preached a sermon which distinguishes churches of Christ from other religious people. I hope we are able to disagree with our religious friends without being disagreeable. Please understand that I am not angry with anyone, but I believe with all my heart that what I preached tonight is the truth! If it is the truth, you must accept it. Do you believe it? Is this what the Bible teaches? Are you willing to humble yourself at the hand of God and obey His command? Now, what are we going to do? We are going to ask everyone of our Dallas brethren to remain in the audience until we have finished singing the hymn of invitation. As I said time after time, this is

the most important part of our service. There are men, women, boys, and girls here tonight who are not saved. They may be disposed to come forward this evening and we don't want a lot of racket and irreverence. Please be quiet and reverent. We want to do everything to encourage the lost to come and answer this invitation. Our ushers are stationed all around the building. When we begin to sing, they will turn and face you. If you want to do the Lord's will, step out into the isle and one of the ushers will lead you down to the front to obey the Lord. I am begging you to receive Christ the Savior. Accept Jesus on His terms. His terms are, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If you have wandered away from home, you can come back tonight and start all over again. Won't you come this evening while we stand and sing? Let us stand together.

Excuses -- Part I

Wednesday, August 5, 1964

The basis for our study is found in the fourteenth chapter of Luke, beginning at verse sixteen and reading through verse twenty. These are the words of Jesus: "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come: for all things are now ready. Any they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

A certain man had a great supper and invited his friends and neighbors to attend the supper. However, they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first man said he couldn't attend because he had bought a piece of ground and had to go see it. There are two glaring inconsistencies in the man's statement. In the first place, he implied that he had bought the land without seeing it. Now, how many people do you know who would buy property without seeing it? In the second place, he said he was going to see the land at night. After all, he declined the invitation to attend a *supper* meeting. How could he survey his property at night? He was simply making an excuse.

The second man said he could not go because he had bought five yoke of oxen and had to prove them. In my part of the country we do some plowing at night, but we have lights on the tractors. I feel sure they didn't plow with oxen at night in the first century, but that was the man's implication. How could he have plowed with those oxen at night without light? Of course, he couldn't have. That was simply an excuse. Then, the third fellow said he couldn't go because he had married a wife. If there is anyone who needs to be interested in a free meal, it's a newly-married man. When he marries, his financial responsibilities begin to press upon him to such an extent

he'd better take every hand-out that comes in his direction. He'd married a wife; therefore, he could not come. That is the most foolish excuse of them all.

They all with one consent began to make excuse. There is a vast difference between an excuse and a reason. According to Webster, an excuse is to make an apology for or an attempt to remove blame from. In other words, If I am making an excuse for my action, I realize that I am worthy of blame or guilt and I make an apology in an attempt to get rid of the guilt. A reason, according to Webster, is justification for an act. If a man has a reason for what he does, he is justified in doing it. If a man offers an excuse for what he does, he is simply making an apology for his action.

In so many instances we offer excuses to God when, from our viewpoint, we may consider them as reasons. If there is an accountable person here who has a reason for not being a Christian, you'll go to Heaven as you are. If you have a reason for not being a child of God, you are all right. God is a reasonable God; He does not demand that which is unreasonable. But, I know that there aren't any accountable people in this audience with reasons for rejecting the Savior. If you have some, there isn't any need in my preaching to you. There isn't any need in our praying for you. There's no need in my pleading and begging you to obey the gospel of Christ, for you are all right just like you are. You may have a thousand and one excuses, but you don't have a reason for not being a child of God. Brother Gus Nichols, an outstanding preacher of the gospel from Alabama, says, "An excuse is not a thing in the world but a lie wrapped in tissue paper." I think he's right. When you rip away all the paraphernalia from an excuse, it stands as a bold-faced fabrication or lie. We must be honest with ourselves and honest with God to distinguish between an excuse and a reason. Ever since man has been in the world he has offered excuses to God for not being obedient. Adam offered an excuse to God, Eve offered an excuse, Moses gave an excuse, Saul gave an excuse, the apostles gave excuses, and today we are still offering them. Why aren't you a Christian?

TOO NARROW

I want to notice some of the excuses which have been offered. I don't know whether I've ever heard a non-Christian say what I'm about to mention; however, I feel that many people are plagued with it nevertheless. Here's the thought: "You people teach a lot of Bible. I think you are closer to the New Testament than any religious group in town, but you're a little too narrow. If you would be more open-minded and tolerant toward others, I would obey the gospel and be one of you. You're simply too narrow." Of course, when an individual suggests that another is narrow-minded, that can be interpreted in two ways. It may mean that one is bigoted and intolerant. From this viewpoint, it denotes that which repels; it suggests the unpleasant; it smacks of the distasteful. Immediately, when one is described as narrow-minded, most of us envision a dwarfed intellect or stunted mind. I believe the mind, like a parachute, functions only when open. Each of us should be willing to listen to the other man's point of view. We ought to give him an unprejudiced hearing. However, an open mind is not a catch-all like a wastebasket or garbage disposal. We must learn to discriminate; we must learn to investigate. If one is teaching false doctrine, it must be rejected. It must be rejected regardless of the character and personality of the person who teaches it. If, by narrow-minded, we mean an unwillingness to consider an opposing viewpoint, of course, that isn't good.

If, by narrow-minded, we mean the view that we must live in harmony with God's word, that's good. Some people are too narrow. Some of my brethren, in an attempt to get back to Jerusalem, have overshot it and run headlong into the walls of Jericho. Likely, that's why they are soreheads. We must be as narrow as the scriptures. We must not be any narrower than the scriptures.

Our Lord said in Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The way from here to Heaven is strait; that is, it's rugged, arduous, difficult, and hard. The Christian religion is a restricted way. God's way has always been narrow. In the days of Noah it was so narrow that eight people were saved and probably twenty-five million perished. At Sodom and Gomorrah it was narrow. There were four individuals who escaped Sodom, and one of them became a pillar of salt when she disobeyed God. The way of the Lord was so narrow that of the more than 600,000 men who came out of the land of Egypt, only two of them were able to go into the land of Canaan. I hope the mortality rate is not as high today as it was then. It was narrow in Babylon when the king issued the decree that no man could pray to his God for a period of thirty days. What was Daniel to do? He had been getting on his knees three times a day and praying to God, but the king said the people could no longer pray. What was he to do? The Bible says he prayed as he had done aforetime. He was cast into a den of lions for it, but the Lord's way was demanding and he obeyed God rather than men. Our Lord Jesus Christ followed the way of duty. One day He was confronted with a cross and the way was so narrow He could not side-step it. He had to mount that cross and die on it.

Truth is narrow in any realm. Two plus two is four. Two plus two makes four in Texas and in Arkansas. Two plus two makes four at the Equator and the North and South pole. Two plus two is four 50,000 feet above the earth and 10,000 feet beneath the earth's surface. Two plus two is four in China and in the United States. Why? Well, two plus two just happens to make four. That is the truth of the matter. H_2O makes water, ice, or steam. It always does that. Have you ever done any duck or quail hunting? I heard of a fellow who fired into a flock of ducks and killed thirty-four with one shot. Do you know how I felt about that? I felt he needed to tell another one in a hurry to prop that thing up. I have done enough hunting to know if you are going to kill any ducks, you must narrow down on one and shoot him. Then, you narrow down on another and shoot him. That is the only way to kill ducks.

Several years ago it was my responsibility, as campaign

chairman, to raise $100,000 for Harding College. That necessitated a great deal of flying. Brother Harry Risinger, pilot of the college plane, and I traveled all over Arkansas and into the adjacent states in the interest of the campaign. I think a lot of Harry. He is one of the most narrow-minded individuals about flying I have ever seen. He thinks when you land an airplane the wheels must go down, and I feel that way about it too. He thinks an airplane should be landed right-side up instead of wrong-side up. He is pretty narrow in landing an airplane. I appreciated him for it because he has taken good care of me. Are we too narrow in religion? That is the question. There are about four points which cause others to refer to us as narrow-minded. If we would surrender our views on those four propositions, immediately all talk of our being narrow-minded would die.

What are those views? Here is one. We feel that when we worship God Almighty, we should have acapella singing; that is, singing without instrumental accompaniment. Someone asks, "Do you mean that instrumental music in the worship of God is out of place?" Absolutely. Perhaps you wonder why we feel that way. In the New Testament there are nine passages which command us to simply and only sing. Someone may ask, "What about the Old Testament? Isn't it in the Bible?" Surely, it is. In the Old Testament God not only allowed people to use instrumental music in their worship; He actually commanded it. But, we don't live under the teaching of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament times they had a human priesthood. They offered animal sacrifices. They burned incense in their worship. God even tolerated polygamy. If we are going back to the Old Testament to get instrumental music, why don't we bring over those other items too? Let's bring over the human priesthood. Let's bring over the animal sacrifices. Let's bring over the burning of incense and the tolerance of polygamy. None of us want to bring those things over. When Jesus went to the cross, He blotted out the old law. He did away with the old covenant and instituted the new covenant through the shedding of His blood. We are not under the old covenant today. We are under the New Testament. We should study the Old Testa-

ment. We should learn all about it we can, but it was not given to direct us in faith and practice today. Follow the Old Testament and you will be a good Hebrew; follow the New Testament and you will be a good Christian. Instrumental music was authorized in the Old Testament, but it is not authorized in the New Testament. Why did God drop it? I am not sure I know, but I could as easily ask, why did God drop the human priesthood? Why did He drop the burning of incense?

Nine times in the New Testament God has said simply to sing. One might ask, 'Did He say not to use instrumental music in worship?" No. "Well, what would be wrong with it?" Let me see if I can give you a parallel. Suppose I were to declare that I am going to be the head of the church. How would you react to that? You wouldn't like it, would you? What is to keep me from making myself head of the church? Where is the passage in the Bible that says, "Thou shalt not be the head of the church? Here it is, Colossians 1:18: "He (that is Christ) is the head of the body,, the church." If Christ is the head of the church, that eliminates and excludes all men from the picture. Any man who attempts to set himself up as head of the church sins; he is guilty of blasphemy. No man can be head of the church. Why? Because Christ is the head of the church; that excludes all men. Nine times the Bible says to sing, and that excludes all other kinds of music in worship except singing. If not, why not? If instrumental music is not an addition to God's commandment, what would a man have to do to add to God's commandment?

I believe in singing with instrumental accompaniment. Ephesians 5:19 says we are to sing and make melody in the heart. All of our singing is to be accompanied with the heart. God has specified the instrument. What is the instrument? It is the heart and not the piano or the organ. I believe in having music in the church. Generally speaking, there are two kinds of music, mechanical music and vocal music. We have vocal music in the church. If we would quit our opposition to instrumental music in the worship, this would cause people to stop saying we are narrow-minded. There are about 100-million Greek Orthodox people who do not use

instrumental music in worship. The Reformed Presbyterians don't use it. The Primitive Baptists don't use it. So, we don't stand alone on the question. You don't prove anything by counting noses, but I wanted you to know that there are others who feel about this matter as we do. It is a known fact that the New Testament church managed without instrumental music for more than 600 years after its establishment. It isn't wrong simply to sing. It isn't wrong not to use instrumental music in worship, and I have never heard anybody argue otherwise.

We take communion on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 says that on the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread. Some are quick to point out that it doesn't say they met on every first day of the week. Suppose you are driving down the road and see a sign which says Rotary meets on the first day of the week. How often would Rotary meet? Every week has a first day; therefore Rotary would meet the first day of every week. Suppose you hire out to another. You say, "I want to be paid on the first day of the week." How often will you go by for a check? Once a month? Every six months? Twice a year? Every week has a first day; therefore, you would go for your check the first day of every week. The Bible says they met upon the first day of the week. Every week has a first day; therefore, they met upon the first day of every week to break bread. If not, why not? Here is an illustration from the twentieth chapter of Exodus. God said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." A fellow went out to pick up sticks one Sabbath day and they brought him to Moses. Moses prayed to God about the matter. God said the man was to be stoned for violating the Sabbath. Did He say remember every Sabbath day, or did He just say remember the Sabbath day? He said to remember the Sabbath day and that meant every Sabbath. A man paid with his life because he worked on the sabbath. Acts 20:7 says upon the first day the disciples met together to break bread. What's the difference between the expressions "the Sabbath day" and "the first day" as far as frequency is concerned? There is none. As the Sabbath day meant every Sabbath, so the first day means every first day. One can read

second century literature and prove that in the early days of the church the brethren met on the first day of the week to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus through partaking of communion. Is it wrong to take communion every Sunday? No. Is that what the New Testament church did? Yes! But we are considered narrow-minded because we do the same.

Churches of the Lord are also considered narrow-minded because they teach that a man must be baptized to be saved. Six times in the New Testament God tied baptism and salvation together. In every instance He put baptism first and salvation second. There is no exception to that rule. I want to read those six passages to you. Mark 1:4 says, "Baptism for the remission of sins." Mark 16:16 says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Luke 3:3 says, "Baptism for the remission of sins." Acts 2:38 says, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." Acts 22:16 says "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." First Peter 3:21 says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." Six times and, in every case, it is baptism and then salvation. In reply, one might say, "The order is not important." Our home phone at Searcy is CH 5-2746. If you were to call CH 5-2476, you wouldn't reach us. I don't know who you would get, but it wouldn't be us. 5-2746 and 5-2476 are the same except their order is different. Surely, all of us recognize that order is important when ringing a telephone number. If order is not important, suppose a fellow thought, "I know red at the traffic light means stop, but it means stop on the other side of the intersection." Suppose he tried following that philosophy. He might get through a few intersections, but he would have a battered automobile. With such a notion, he might even lose his life. Is order important? The order *is* important. When you see a red light, that means stop on this side, not on the other side. Is order important when people get married? First, you get the marriage license; then you begin to live together as husband and wife. However, a lot of scoundrels would like to change the order. Is order important? It is. Six times God said baptism, then salvation. What uninspired man *knows* that

order is unimportant? Where does he get his information? If God wanted to tell us that a man had to be baptized to be saved, how would He have said it other than the way He has said it?

Furthermore, we maintain that an individual must be immersed to become a child of God. We contend that sprinkling and pouring are unacceptable to God. In Ephesians 4:5 the Bible says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." How many? Just one. In Romans 6:4 we learn that baptism is a burial. Colossians 2:12 says baptism is a burial. Whether you know anything about the Greek language or not, you can come to the right conclusion by reading the English Bible. There is just one baptism. What is that one? A burial and a resurrection. That one is immersion, submersion, or dipping in water.

What have we discussed? Number one, we simply sing. Is it all right to sing without instrumental music? Number two, we take communion on the first day of the week to commemorate the death and suffering of Jesus. We have Easter service fifty-two times a year. Is that wrong? Number three, we teach that an individual must be baptized in order to be saved. Number four, we teach that one must be immersed to be scripturally baptized. If we will surrender what we believe on those four propositions, we will no longer be called narrow-minded. However, the question remains, are we too narrow at these points? If we are too narrow, have nothing to do with us. If we are right, become a part of us. Why? Because it is God's truth! My brethren are really trying with all of their hearts to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where it is silent. They are striving to call Bible things by Bible names and to express Bible thoughts in a Bible manner.

I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH

Some, when asked to obey the Lord, say, "I don't know enough yet!" That raises an interesting question. How much does one have to know to start? Robert Ripley, in his "Believe It or Not" column, said it would take a skilled reader more than 300 years to read the titles of all the books which have been published. A large percentage of those books were written on the subject of religion. Must a man know all that's

in those books before he can start? Must an individual know about Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Confucianism? Must he know about Zoroastrianism and the Moslem religion before he can start. Let's get closer to home. Must he know all about Protestantism before he can start? What is hereditary total depravity? What is the doctrine of indefectibility? What is anti-nomianism? What do they mean when they talk about demythologizing the New Testament? What is existentialism? What is neo-orthodoxy? Likely, you don't know what those expressions mean. However, modern day Protestant theologians use them all the time. Must a man understand all that before he can begin? Does he have to know all about Roman Catholicism before he can begin? What do the Roman Catholic people mean when they discuss the infallibility of the pope? What is the doctrine of indulgences? What do they mean by the treasury of merits? Why must their clergy practice celibacy? What do they mean by "Ex-cathedra?" You can go on and on. Do you have to understand Catholic doctrine to start the Christian life?

Do you understand everything in the Bible? How many creations were there, one or two? I am of the opinion there were two. I am not dogmatic about it, but I think there were two. How about the origin of the races? From whence came the races? I have had people ask, "Where did the Negro come from?" I usually put the question back by asking, "where did the white man come from?" One is as much of a problem to me at the other. Actually, white people are in the minority if the whole world is taken into consideration. Someone might say, "I have all the answers concerning race origins. I have studied Genesis." I've heard men who can give all the answers with references to the races, but when it is all said and done, we just don't know about racial origins. What about Revelation twenty? In it, reference is made to a thousand year reign. Do you understand it? I have some ideas, and I think I am right, but I can't be dogmatic for I might be wrong!

How much must one know to begin the Christian life? Well, let me tell you what I knew when I became a Christian. I had read through Matthew and half way throught the Acts.

Had a man walked up to me and said something about Deuteronomy, I would have asked, "Is it contagious?" I didn't know a thing about Deuteronomy. I didn't know whether it was a book in the Bible or something else. But, I had read about Jesus and I had read half way through Acts. I knew what to do to be saved. To become a child of God, there are three things you must know. One, that you are a sinner. Two, that Christ Jesus the Lord is the Savior. Three, what He said to do to be saved. That is all you must know to start. Maybe you are ready to ask, "Do you mean if a man were to come to the front, argue that the Lord will reign on earth a thousand years and ask to be baptized, you would baptize him?" Yes sir! Absolutely! Well, don't you think he is wrong on the millennial question?" Yes, but being wrong in one area does not invalidate the truth he holds in another area. Get him on safe ground; then talk to him about the millennial question. "Suppose he felt that instrumental music in worship were scriptural and right, but he wanted to be baptized. Would you baptized him?" Yes sir! You don't have to be 100 percent correct in everything to be scripturally baptized. "Do you mean you would baptize someone who holds error?" My brethren, that is the only kind I have ever baptized! That is the only kind you can baptize!

We don't need to know everything to start. If you will permit me to stretch the figure a little, a baby in its mother's womb doesn't know much, but it knows enough to be born. You don't have to know much but you must know enough to be born again. If you know what to do to be saved and don't do it, is God obligated to show you any new truth? What would you do with it if you learned something else? If God led you into more truth, what would you do with it? Exactly what you are doing with what you already know — nothing! God has no obligation to lead us into more knowledge if we refuse to act upon the basis of the truth we already have. Remember this, if you wait until you know everything before you do anything, you will always do nothing. How much do you have to know to start? That you are a sinner, that Christ the Savior and that Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. " Of course, after you take these

steps, you will want to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. You will want to develop and mature in the religion of Christ.

How much of this sermon do you suppose you will be able to recall? About ten per cent, maybe. If I were sitting there and you were doing the talking, I would probably remember less than that. That isn't a reflection on your intelligence. We just don't have the ability to recall much of what we hear. Did you know that 1900 years ago people heard one sermon and obeyed the Lord? How much did they know? The Jews on the Day of Pentecost obeyed after hearing one sermon. The Ethiopian obeyed after he had heard one lesson. The Philippian jailer obeyed after he had heard one lesson. Lydia and her household obeyed after hearing one sermon. So, you don't have to know much to begin.

I'M WAITING ON MY MATE

Perhaps you are not a child of God because you have a non-Christian companion. Many say, "I am waiting on my mate. When my mate gets ready to do the Lord's will, I will be ready too." In Southern Arkansas, a man had a serious heart attack and was in the hospital at Prescott. He was at the point of death. He sent for me. Upon my arrival, he said, "Forty years ago I was baptized; I have hardly darkened the door of the church building since." He added, "I want to get right with God. What should I do?" I told him, since he was a brother of Christ, all he needed to do was pray to God. He said, "Pray for me." I knelt beside his bed and prayed that God would forgive him of all his sins and let him live if it was His will. The attending physician didn't think he would live. However, he fooled us all; he lived. A few weeks later he was dismissed from the hospital. I had encouraged him to begin worshipping with the congregation near his home just as soon as he was able. He assured me that he would do it. He had to stay home a few weeks before he was strong enough to go to church, but one Sunday he went to worship. He attended regularly for awhile and then missed a Sunday. He missed the next Sunday, too. Brother J. B. Lancaster, who was preaching for the church, went to see him. In ex-

plaining to J. B. why he was absent, he said, "Brother Lancaster, my wife is not a Christian and it's so hard to serve the Lord alone." A few month before, he had been at death's door, begging God to have mercy on him! The Lord must have been with J. B., for he looked that gentleman in the face and said, "Now, you listen to me. Our Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross by Himself and you may have to live the Christian life alone." The brother was back the next Sunday, and he attended regularly from that day onward. In less than a year, he converted his wife to Christ, and they are both dedicated Christians today.

It is bad to have a divided home. I don't know what I would do if my wife weren't a Christian. I would be afraid to leave home, afraid she would corrupt the children, but she is a godly Christian woman. She is a far better woman than I will ever be a man. I know it must be difficult to live in a divided home where the husband or wife has to bear all of the spiritual responsibility alone. But there is one thing worse; that's when the home is united in sin and every member of the family is headed for torment. Surely, that's worse than being in a divided family.

If you are waiting on your mate, what's going to happen to your little children in the meantime? Aren't they lovely and precious? You care more for them than for life itself. Remember, those little ones will one day be grown. Time has a way of marching on. They will be accountable before God. They will stand before the Lord and give an account of their deeds. If you don't direct them spiritually, if you don't teach them the Bible, if you don't set a good Christian example before them, what's going to happen to them? You may think I'm trying to take advantage of you. I am trying to lead you into an advantage, an advantage for you and your family. You may have the blood of your children on your hands, if you don't take the lead.

I have had three meetings at the Bristol Road Church in Flint, Michigan. Bristol Road is a fine congregation. They have some peculiarities, though. I have noticed that some of the women sit at the front while their husbands sit at the back. In those three meetings, I have seen more families

united than any place I have ever been. Here is what I have seen happen when we were singing the invitation song. A man at the back would put down his song-book and follow his wife, who had responded from her place near the front. I've seen a man respond from the back of the building and his wife step out into the aisle behind him near the front. I said all of that to say this. Generally, a husband and wife don't come together. Most of the time one leads the other. In a Little Rock meeting, I watched a man and his wife step into the aisle, clasp hands, and walk to the front. It was a beautiful sight, but it doesn't happen very often. Each one confessed faith in Christ and was baptized that night. But, usually one takes the lead and the other follows.

If you are waiting on your mate, your mate may be waiting on you. I read about a preacher who was in a Tennessee meeting. He was trying to lead a couple to Christ. The lady was ready to obey the Lord, but the man wasn't. The preacher said, "Regardless of what he does, you need to become a Christian now." She said, "No, I am not going to obey if he doesn't." That night, as they were singing the invitation, the lady walked to the front and gave the preacher her hand. She leaned over and whispered in his ear, "I want you to talk to my husband one more time." The preacher simply grinned. Her husband was right behind her! She didn't know he had followed her every step of the way! Yes, it's bad to have a divided home, but remember, there is one thing worse, a home united in sin where all are traveling to eternity away from God.

I WILL OBEY LATER

Finally, some offer the following as an excuse: "I am going to do the will of Christ later." If there is anyone here who is disposed to say, "I am going to do it later," I challenge you to set the date. If you are not going to become a Christian now, set a date for doing it. Write on a slip of paper, "On this day I will obey the Lord." If you are willing to set the date for obeying the gospel, that simply means when you say "later", you don't mean later. If you will put down the date, you will have made a promise to yourself and to God. If you are unwilling to write a date, when you say "later," you mean

never. Satan is shrewd. He's been around awhile and he knows how to deceive people. You don't live but one day at a time. If Satan can get you to postpone your obedience until tomorrow, tomorrow he will insist that you wait another day. He will keep you saying "later" until your life will have come to a close without your turning to the Lord. These days get away from us and some of us will eventually look into our graves without Christ as our Savior.

I read of a preacher who was preparing a sermon and went to sleep in the process. We expect you to stay awake and listen to them, but we sometimes go to sleep preparing them. At any rate, while he was asleep he dreamed about a conference of devils. The demons were trying to decide how to deceive the world. One said, "Let me go. I'll tell them there is no God in Heaven." Another said, "No, let me go. I'll tell them that Christ was a deceiver, fraud, and an imposter." Another said, "No, let me go. I'll tell them the Bible is a book of fabrications and fairy tales." There was another old devil present. He was as wise as a serpent, but he was not as harmless as a dove. He said, "Let me go." I will tell them that God is in Heaven, that Christ died on the cross for their sins, that the Bible is the word of God, and that they ought to do the Lord's will. But, I will tell them to wait awhile." He's the devil they sent!

A friend of mine was conducting a meeting with a church in central Arkansas. Five or six teenagers misbehaved during almost every service. My friend didn't want to do it, but he had to correct them publicly. None of them would listen to him. Shortly after the meeting closed, one of those teenagers was killed in an accident. The next Sunday the others confessed faith in Christ and were baptized. But, what about the teenage boy who was dead? He didn't intend to die without the Savior, but that's what happened to him.

Several years ago, I conducted a two-weeks' meeting for a Negro church. A thirty-two year old man came every night. Toward the latter part of the meeting we baptized him. He didn't remain faithful very long. He went back into sin. I continued to preach at his home congregation every Thursday night. One Thursday evening he was restored. He said,

"Brother Allen, I have sinned. I haven't been living right and I want your brethren to pray for me." We had prayer. As he went home, his Christian mother said, "Listen, Bernice, you can't fool the Lord." He said, "Mother, I am not trying to fool the Lord. I mean business." The next day he was dead. While cutting timber, a tree fell on him and killed him. I was the only preacher he had known; so they asked me to preach his funeral. I went to the funeral home and talked to Dan Anthony, a colored man who was in charge of the funeral service. Dan said, "Brother Allen, isn't it a shame? Bernice was never a member of any church." I told him about Bernice's restoration. In preaching that young man's funeral, I said, "There are plenty of you who don't know that Bernice was a Christian. However, about ten months ago he was baptized into Christ. He went into sin for awhile, but he was restored the night before he died." I believe that Negro brother went to Heaven. I believe he is safe in the arms of Jesus. He never had much chance spiritually, economically, or educationally. But, nevertheless, he died in a saved condition. Suppose his attitude had been like yours? He would have said "later" and died and gone to Hell. But, he didn't say "later." He said "now" and made his life right with God.

What about you? Are you living in such a way that the preacher doing your funeral would have to perjure himself before God and man to get you to Heaven? How about it? Even in speaking to a broken-hearted family, I don't intend to extend hope to them when there is none. Some of you have no hope. Tomorrow is the Devil's nursemaid to lead you to eternity unprepared. You say, "By and by I am going to change," but the road of by and by leads to the town of never. The Bible says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; Behold, now is the day of salvation." If you know the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for your sins, if you are willing to trust Him and turn away from your sins, why not come and be baptized? If you are one who has erred from the faith, why not return to your Father now? Get right with the Lord while you have time and opportunity to do so.

Excuses -- Part II

Thursday, August 6, 1964

The basis for tonight's sermon is found in Acts 8:35-36 which says: "Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" You will notice that the Ethiopian asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" By lifting that question from its context, I ask, if you are not a child of God, what doth hinder you to be baptized? If you are not a Christian, what stands between you and the Lord? Really, this is an extension of the remarks made last evening. Last night's sermon dealt with excuses. Tonight's lesson deals with the same subject. What is it that keeps you from being a Christian? Why are you outside the church of God? Remember, there is a difference between an excuse and a reason. An excuse is an apology for or an attempt to remove blame from, whereas, a reason is justification for an act. We offer thousands of excuses to God, but we consider them as reasons. If, as an accountable person, you have a reason for not being a Christian, you will be eternally saved in your present condition. You don't need to hear the gospel. There is no need for people to plead with you and pray for you that you might make a change. But, without the slightest fear of successful contradiction, I say you don't have a reason. You may have a thousand and one excuses, but you don't have a reason for not serving God.

DO NOT UNDERSTAND

Some people excuse themselves from responsibility to the Lord by saying, "I just don't understand what the Bible teaches with reference to the plan of salvation. I certainly don't know anything about baptism." I believe that such is an excuse and not a reason. The New Testament can be read in about ten hours. You can start at Matthew one and read through Revelation twenty-two in ten hours, if you read rapidly. There

are about 120 references in the New Testament on the subject of baptism. If those 120 references were typed, you could read them word for word on three or four single spaced type written sheets of paper. It wouldn't take you more than twenty minutes to read them all. The life span for the average American male is about sixty-seven years. The life span for the average female, the weaker sex, is about seventy years. If we can read the New Testament in ten hours, there is no reason for our not understanding the scheme of redemption. If you stand before God in the day of judgment and are weighed in the balances and found wanting, then of course, its your own fault.

There are three areas of misunderstanding which will hinder you from being scripturally baptized. In the first place, if you were baptized as an infant, and if you hold the view that such is scriptural, that will hinder you from being baptized like the Bible teaches. Acts 18:8 says, "The Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." In Acts 8:12 we learn when the Samaritans believed Philip's preaching concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. According to Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptism, then, is for believers. It's for one who is old enough to place trust and confidence in Christ. Infant baptism is not authorized in the scriptures. If you think your baptism as an infant is all right, that will hinder you from being scripturally baptized.

If you feel that sprinkling or pouring is baptism, that will hinder you from being baptized like the Bible teaches. In Ephesians 4:5 Paul said, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." How many? Just one. If the one is immersion, that excludes sprinkling and pouring. If it is sprinkling, that excludes pouring and immersion. If the one is pouring, that excludes sprinkling and immersion. There is just one baptism. Romans 6:4 says we are buried in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. Colossians 2:12 says we are buried in baptim and raised with Him through faith of the operation of God. Only one baptism and it is a burial and a resurrection. Yes, if you feel that sprinkling or pouring

is baptism, that will hinder you from being scripturally baptized. Such a view is not in harmony with the will of God.

Thirdly, you may feel an individual is saved without baptism, but this is not correct. In the second chapter of the Acts, the apostle Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Some say, "The expression 'for the remission of sins' means 'because of remission of sins.' For example, a soldier is decorated for bravery. He is brave and then decorated because of his bravery. When Peter said, 'Repent and be baptized for remission of sins,' he simply meant they needed to be baptized because their sins were already forgiven." Let's see if that is right. "Repent" and "be baptized" are joined together by the conjunction "and." "And" joins together verbs or phrases of equal rank. The prepositional phrase "for the remission of sins" is found only once. It modifies "repent" and "be baptized." Peter didn't say to "be baptized for the remission of sins." Peter didn't say "repent for the remission of sins." What Peter said was this, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." "For the remission of sins" modifies baptism and repentance. If "for the remission of sins" in connection with baptism means we are to be baptized because our sins have already been forgiven, then it means the same thing with reference to repentance. This would mean that one is to repent because his sins have already been forgiven. Hence, you would have a man saved without repentance or baptism! What proves too much, proves nothing. Acts 2:38 says "repent and be baptized for remission of sins." "For remission of sins" mean into remission of sin, in order to obtain remission of sins, or to secure remission of sins. The Greek word translated "for" is always prospective; it is never retrospective. Salvation comes after baptism, if we believe the Bible. The view that one is saved before baptism is an erroneous concept.

Let us suppose that you have held one or more of these unscriptural concepts. What should be done? If I were in your position, here's what I would do — I would be baptized like the Bible teaches. Perhaps you will ask, "Do you have

any authority for that?" I think so. In Acts 19:1-6 the Bible relates that Paul came into the community of Ephesus and found twelve individuals who had already been immersed once. However, they had all received the baptism of John. John's baptism had been abrogated or superseded. It had been done away. Do you know what Paul did? He took the twelve and immersed them the second time. One might say, "A moment ago you said there is only one baptism. The people at Ephesus were immersed twice. How do you harmonize one baptism with the fact that they were immersed twice?" There is only one valid baptism. There is only one acceptable to God. When you get that one, you don't need to be immersed again. The twelve at Ephesus had not received the one baptism authorized in God's word. That is why they went to the water the second time. If I were you and had not been baptized like the Bible teaches, I would make it safe, certain, and sure. Do it like God said. What did God say? God said baptism is a burial. God said it is for believers, and God said it stands between you and salvation. When you do it that way, there is no doubt about it.

NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Maybe the thing standing between you and obedience to the Lord is that you feel you are not good enough. I know a fellow in Jackson County, Arkansas. As a matter of fact he married a cousin of mine. He is a big raw boned individual. For years I tried to get him to be a Christian. When I talked with him about his soul, he would say, "Jim, I am just not good enough." He had been a rounder. He has drunk enough whiskey to float a good sized battleship. Consequently, he didn't feel he was worthy to be a Christian. He didn't think God could be interested in him. In reply to him, I said, "Jack, if you aren't good enough now, when will you be good enough?" The Bible says evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. If you are not good enough to be a child of God now, will you be good enough tomorrow? In living without Jesus you will get worse and worse. You are not going to get any better.

When one says he is not good enough to be a child of God, even though he may not recognize it, he is saying in essence, "I must not go near the water until I learn how to swim." How can one learn to swim without going to the water? Can one learn to play basketball without going to the gymnasium? How can a man learn to be good without Christ? He can't. What you are saying is, "I am going to live a good Christian life, then, I will accept Christ as Savior." It doesn't work that way. In learning to play basketball, you must go to the gymnasium. In learning to swim, you must get into the water. To learn to be good, in the truest sense of the word, you must get into Christ. If the one who says he is not good enough to be a Christian would obey the Lord, he would make one of the very finest Christians. Why? Because of his feeling of unworthiness. His attitude of unworthiness would cause him to serve the Lord faithfully, loyally, and obediently. He would be so filled with an attitude of gratitude that he would want to do God's will. His disposition would be, "God have mercy on me, a sinner unworthy of your divine grace." Peter said to Jesus, "Depart from me Lord for I am a sinful man." Peter said he was not worthy to be in Christ's presence. Did the Lord leave him? No sir. First, He called him as a friend. Second, He called him as a disciple. Third, He called him as an apostle. Jesus saved him and made him one of the greatest preachers in the first century. Our Lord said that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If you feel you are not worthy to be saved, you are the very individual for whom Christ died. He came to die for those who are not good enough to be saved. If you would turn to the Lord, if you would surrounder and obey the gospel, you would make a marvelous Christian. This attitude, put in the right context, is a good one to possess.

CHRISTIAN LIFE TOO HARD

Others excuse themselves by saying, "The Christian life is too hard. I can't live it." Where did you learn that? Did you learn it in the Bible? Do you happen to recall the passages which says the Christian life is too hard to live?

It isn't in God's word. I will tell you what the Bible does say about the hard way. In Proverbs 13:15 it states that the way of transgressors is hard. When the hard way is discussed, we are told that it is the way of sinners which is hard. Did you learn that the Christian life is too hard from a faithful Christian? Suppose a faithful Christian were standing here, and I were to say to him, "Brother Blank, is the Christian life too difficult for you to live?" He would say in reply, "There are some difficulties involved. I have had to make some sacrifices. I have lived a life of self-denial, but by the grace of God, I have lived successfully for the Lord thus far, and I am going to gain the ultimate victory." You didn't learn the Christian life was hard from the Bible or from a faithful Christian. Where did you get the information? From someone who deserted the Lord, betrayed the church and went back to the beggarly elements of the world. You learned it from a modern day Judas! He is the one who says the Lord's way is too hard. Find a man who can't live the Christian life, and I will find one who, by the grace of God, can live it.

It's always been amazing to me that a man who has never been a Christian knows more about the difficulties involved in living a Christian life than the man who has been a Christian for twenty years. How do you know how hard it is, if you have never tried it? Consider two armies drawn up in battle array one against the other. The army on the left begins to stream toward the rear. We stop one of the soldiers and ask, "What's the trouble?" He says, "The opposing army is too strong for us." How does he know? There hasn't been a shot fired. He hasn't engaged them in combat. What's his problem? He is afraid. The whole group is afraid.

Some of you have boys who play on Dallas high school football teams. Suppose your son were to say, "Dad, our team is not going to play the team from Fort Worth." You would ask, "Why?" Suppose he were to reply, "They're too hard for us. They have won so many games, we wouldn't have a chance against them. We've decided not to play them." What would you think if your boy said a thing like

that? I don't know how you would feel about it, but if it were a son of mine, I would take him out to the wood shed. The very idea! How would such a boy know the strength of the other team, not having played them? Of course, teenage boys don't react that way. When a team comes into the community, they're not reading their press clippings. If you will permit a crude expression, they are out to tack the hide of the opposing team on the hen house door. That's the attitude young men ought to have. They should play to win and be good sports if they lose. Yet, when it comes to the Lord's way, some insist that it's too hard. Do you know what's the problem with a man who has that attitude? He is a spiritual coward. With the help of God, with the strength of Christ, with the power of Spirit and the encouragement of brethren, yet, you can't live the Christian life!

When someone tells me I can't do something, I am determined to try it. We had a young man at Harding a couple of years ago who played rag tag football. He was about twenty or twenty-one years old. He had kidded me a lot about how he could outrun me. One day, when we were both on the field he said, "Let's race to the fifty yard line." I was 32 years old at the time, but I beat him! He was a couple of steps behind when we reached midfield. Had I not beaten him, I would still be trying. Likely, you have a similar attitude. However, when Satan tells you that you can't live the Christian life, you throw up your hands and say, "That is right, Satan, I can't serve Jesus."

There are so many passages in the Bible Satan doesn't want you to know about. First Corinthians 10:13 says that with every temptation God will provide a way of escape. Did you know that is in the Bible? After you come into the church of the Lord and are tempted, God's there to provide a way of escape for you. One might say, "I have seen brethren who didn't take the way out." Nevertheless, God being true, the way was there. In most instances it will consist of praying to God or citing a passage of scripture. God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able. Second Peter 2:9 states that the Lord knows how to deliver the Godly out of temptation. Jude 24 declares that the Lord

is able to keep us from failing. In Matthew 28:20 our Lord said, "I will be with you always even unto the end of the world." He said in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You're not expected to stand alone. Christ has promised to go every step of the way with you. Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." At First John 5:3 we read, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." We have been told that the commandments of God are hard, difficult, and arduous, but the Bible says His commandments are not grievous.

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." We say the yoke of the Lord is hard and heavy. Christ said it is easy and light. Now, who's right? One may ask, "Do you mean to tell me that it is easy to be a Christian?" If you have the disposition and attitude implied in Christ's statement, yes. Consider a lady with an afflicted son. Go to her and say, "Oh, what a burden you have. I feel so sorry for you." She would be insulted! Why? Because she loves her son and provides for his needs because of her love. I heard of a lady whose afflicted son died. For days she wept. She said, "There's not anything I can do for him now." Is it difficult to rear an afflicted son? Yes! But, if borne in love, it is not a burden after all. When our Lord said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," He meant that one who loves Him with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength finds it is relatively simple to serve Him. If you have the right basic attitude, serving your Lord is not so difficult after all. Suppose I were talking to an eleven year old boy and said, "Son, if you will wash my car, I will give you $50." It's rather hot outside, especially in this part of the country. The boy would have to stand in the hot sunshine for an hour and a half or two hours to wash the car, but it would seem like nothing because of the $50 to be given when the job is finished. When we serve God with the anticipation of going to Heaven to be with the Father and all the redeemed, the Lord's burden is easy and light.

TRIED AND FAILED

In answer to the question "What hinders you being baptized," some say, "You don't need to talk to me about being baptized. I have already been baptized. I tried serving the Lord and failed." A Negro church has a placard hanging in its foyer which reads, "You're not as close to the Lord as you once were. Who moved?" The Lord is right where he was the day you obeyed the gospel. If you are not as close to the Lord as you once were, then you have done the moving. You say, "I have tried and I failed." Maybe we find in that statement why you failed. Did you let God help you, or did you depend on yourself? Did you think the arm of flesh was sufficient to sustain you? You tried, you failed. You are putting the blame in the right place. God didn't fail you. You failed God.

If you are a back slidden brother or sister, have you ever failed as miserably as David? He committed adultery with another man's wife. Then, he killed her husband. Have you ever failed like that? Well, God forgave David. Have you ever failed as badly as did the apostle Peter? He said in the presence of our Lord's enemies, "I know not the man." He denied the Lord three times and cursed and swore. Jesus forgave him. Have you failed as seriously as did those Jews who crucified Him? They nailed Him to a cross; yet, fifty days later when they obeyed the gospel, the Lord forgave them. As He forgave David, Peter, and the Jews, He will forgive you and me. Of course, He will.

On one occasion Peter went to the Lord and asked, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother? Seven times?" The Rabbis taught that one was to forgive another three times. However, if sinned against the fourth time, one was free to act as he pleased. Peter intended to be better than the Rabbis. He said, "I will forgive seven times." Then, the Lord said, "Not just seven times, but seventy times seven." Someone could say, "Let me get my paper and pencil. Seventy times seven is 490. Well, that means one had better look out, if he sins against me 491 times." Of course, that isn't the meaning of the Lord's statement. The idea is that we

must be willing to forgive over and over again! Don't you know if God expects us to treat one another that way, He will deal with us in a similar fashion? Many times I have prayed this prayer: "God forgive me for prayerlessness. Forgive me for failing to read my Bible. Forgive me for not being enough interested in those who are lost in sin." I will do a little better, but the first thing you know, I am praying that same old prayer again. I feel that God has forgiven me of these sins over and over again. Maybe you think that such is hypocritical. I don't think so. I am striving to do right, but I drift into carelessness and negligence. If I'm sincere, God hears those prayers every time they are prayed. One of the grandest passages in all of God's word to me is found in Hebrews 4:14-16, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmitives; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." If you have made a million mistakes, you can boldly go to the throne of God upon the basis of repentance and God will hear your prayer and forgive your sins. That is the marvelous thing about being a Christian. You have opportunity to start over again! If you have tried and failed, why not try again?

Suppose your boy said, "Dad, I failed mathematics. I am going to quit school." Likely you would reply, "You just think you are quitting school. You are going right . . ." "Wait a minute, Dad, you said you tried to live the Christian life and failed, therefore, you quit the church. So, since I failed mathematics, why can't I quit school?" Suppose your boy had the ability to argue in that fashion, what would you say to him? You fathers who have quit the Lord because of failures, what would you tell that child? You would not be able to say one single solitary thing. You might turn eight shades of red and clear your throat a little, but you couldn't answer him. If a child can't quit school when he fails, you can't quit God Almighty simply because you failed.

There are thousands of us here who have failed. We have failed time after time, but that is why we are Christians. We need the mercy of God. We couldn't be saved without it. If you have tried and failed, try again. Come back to Christ. Let the Lord have His way in your life.

TOO MANY PROBLEMS

"Preacher, I just can't see my way clear. I have so many problems, I couldn't think of becoming a Christian." There was a little short fellow in Jackson County, Arkansas, who gave me that excuse for years. He couldn't see his way clear. Believe me, he had some problems. But an individual burdened with problems needs the Lord all the more. The Bible says we are to cast our burdens on the Lord for He cares for us. If you are really beset with serious difficulties in life, that is all the more reason for your turning to Christ. Let Him help you here and now.

When you leave the auditorium, will you be able to see from here to your house? No. How are you going to get home? You will follow the illumination of your car lights a few yards at a time, and you will get from here to your house. Jesus said in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Why don't you turn to the Lord and begin to walk down life's pathway? He will illuminate the path for you a step at a time and lead you all the way from here to Heaven. You may not be able to see your way through all of life's problems and difficulties, but you can have the Lord at your side. He has promised to enlighten the way. We sing the hymn, "One step at a time, dear Savior, that is enough for me." Why don't we practice what we sing? Why don't we walk by faith and not by sight? Why don't we let the Lord lighten the way for us?

I went down a church house aisle in 1949 and confessed my faith in Jesus. I was baptized that afternoon. Do you suppose I could see that I was going to be a preacher? That afternoon, if someone had said, "Jim, you are going to preach," I would have laughted at him. I can assure you that all of my friends and associates would have laughted at him too.

They would have said you have to draw the line on stupidity somewhere. They wouldn't have entertained that idea for a moment. I couldn't see my way to the point of becoming a preacher. When the Philippian jailer accepted Christ as Savior, do you think he could see very far? How far could he see? Just far enough to do the Lord's will and become a child of God. You don't need to see all the way. You just need to see one step at a time.

Many have the idea that being a Christian is keeping ten million commandments, but that is not true. Can you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself? If so, you are ready to be a Christian. Can you forget those things that are behind and reach forth unto those things which are before and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Then, you are ready to become a Christian. Are you willing to lean no longer upon your own understanding, but to trust in the Lord with all of your heart? If so, you are ready to become a Christian. That attitude will carry you successfully through all of the trials, tribulations and hardships of life. I hope you will be able to see your way to obey the Lord tonight.

I heard of a fellow who was invited to church by a preacher, the elders and his Christian friends. To all of them he said, "I am coming when I get all straightened out." Sure enough, one day he came to church, a man of his word, "all straightened out." He was dead as a hammer and as cold as a wedge, but he was "all straightened out." If you wait until you get everything straightened out, that is what will happen to you. That man didn't have any more problems in this life because he was dead.

RELATIVES ARE NOT CHRISTIANS

"Preacher, it's my people. They are not Christians." That raises a question. Are your people living or dead? I know a sweet lovely lady who read the New Testament, who heard a great deal of gospel preaching, who was convinced she needed to make a change, but said, "I can't do it because my beloved dad would roll over in his grave." Finally, she saw

the folly of her view and confessed Christ as Lord. She was baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Can't you see if her daddy died saved, her obedience to the gospel didn't cause him to be lost? If he died lost, her obedience didn't cause him to be saved. What she did had absolutely no effect on him. His destiny was fixed when the breath left his body. Some say, "I can't obey the gospel when I know my parents never did it. I wouldn't want to judge them." Why don't you get out of the judging business? Your loved ones are in the hands of God Almighty and He will do right about them.

If there is some indication that your loved ones died without Christ, answer this question, were they honest? You say, "Yes, they were honest." Think about the following. In your store you have a yardstick used by your father. An inspector comes to your place of business and says, "I want to measure your yardstick." You might say, "Why do you want to measure my yardstick? My father used it and he was an honest man." However, the yardstick is measured and you learn it is only 35 1/2 inches long. Does that mean your daddy was dishonest? No, it means he honestly used a yardstick that was 1/2 inch too short. If you continue to use it, you will be dishonest. If your loved ones were basically honest and died without obeying the truth of God, are you as honest as they were? If you know the gospel and reject it, are you being honest? If your relatives and loved ones who left this world without Jesus were given the same opportunity, what would they do? Surely, they would do the Lord's will. Yet, you won't. Then you are not doing what they would do. You are not as honest as they were.

Perhaps your relatives are living and oppose your becoming simply a Christian. Our brethren in Japan have converted a number of young people to Christ. When those youngsters obeyed the gospel, their families disowned them. Their families practice ancestor worship. When the youngsters accepted Christ as Savior, their elders would have nothing to do with them. They did the Lord's will in spite of opposition. Will you do the same?

I had a big overgrown boy in Bible class at Harding Col-

lege a few years ago. He came to school to play football, but he was injured and was not able to play. He was not a Christian. After class we would go to my office and talk. I begged him to make a change. He said, "Jim, my mother's not a Christian. If there is anyone who can convert her, I am the one." I said, "Dick, why don't you obey the Lord and then convert your mother?" You say your people differ with you religiously. Who's going to teach them, if you don't do it? That's another reason for your obeying the gospel.

Someone's relatives are going to torment. There are too many people going to Hell for everyone's mother, daddy, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, and cousin to miss it. The Bible tells of a rich man who died and lifted up his eyes in the flames of Hades. He said to Abraham, "Send Lazarus back to warn my five brethren lest they also come into this place of torment." If you have a relative who left this world lost in sin, he never wants to lay eyes on you again. He's praying now that you will not join him there. It would be terrible to meet mother, daddy, brother, or sister in that horrible place. Someone's relatives will be eternally lost. Somewhere in the United States my father is still living. He is past seventy. He's not a Christian. I saw my father when I was twenty-three years old. I was with him for about three hours. I had an opportunity to do a little preaching. Whether it did any good or not, I don't know. He is a man accountable before God. If he loses his soul, I still want to be saved. I still want to go to Heaven.

HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH

In my limited experience, I have heard a number of people say in essence, "There are hypocrites in the church and they stand in my way." In times past, when a man would make that excuse, I would join right in with him. I would say, "That is right. We have hypocrites in the church." I am afraid I gave some the idea we are loaded with them. Really, we don't have many hypocrites. We have a lot of weak people, but there is a difference in being weak and being hypocritical. We can be so weak as to be lost. I am not

attempting to defend weakness. However, when you charge a man with hypocrisy, you have made quite a charge. A non-Christian might say, "I heard a Christian say something he ought not to have said." Yes, but he didn't see the same brother get down on his hands and knees in the closet with tears in his eyes and beg God to forgive him. He saw a part; he didn't see the whole. If you were to remotely suggest that the one who brings this accusation against a brother is a hypocrite, he'd say, "Judge not that ye be not judged." He doesn't mind judging someone else. He doesn't mind condemning a brother to an everlasting Hell by accusing him of hypocrisy, but if you suggest he is a hypocrite, you'll hear, "Don't judge me!" What in the world is he doing? He's judging in the very sense that God said not to judge.

Anything of value has its counterfeit. Have you heard of counterfeit pennies? I haven't. Counterfeiters make five, ten, and twenty dollar bills, but they don't counterfeit pennies. They are not worth enough. When it comes to religion, you can expect to find some counterfeits there. Have you quit using a doctor? There are a few quack doctors. Have you quit using bankers? There are a few embezzling bankers. Have you quit using money? There is some counterfeit money in circulation. Yet, you say, "I won't have anything to do with the church because it has some hypocrites in it." That is terribly inconsistent. You continue to use doctors, bankers, and money knowing there are counterfeits in each realm, but you refuse the Lord and His church because of the hypocrites. Now, that is foolish.

Suppose you were on the fifth floor of a burning building and could not escape by the elevator or stairs. The only way down is to jump into the net being held by the firemen below. They say, "Jump," but you see that two of them holding the net are hypocritical church members. I suppose you would say, "Humph, I'll stay here and burn to death rather than jump into a net held by those hypocrites." Oh Yeah? Suppose you were in the river and about to go down for the third time. A boat comes by and a life preserver is thrown to you. Someone shouts, "Grab it and we'll save you." But you see some hypocrites in the boat. Would you say, "No,

I'll drown first"? You don't reason that way about your life.

One night I heard Brother John Harris, a big Negro preacher from Alabama, speak on the subject of Noah's ark and Christ's church. He pointed out that there was one ark and there is one church. He said everyone saved in Noah's day was in the ark and all saved today are in Christ's church. Concerning hypocrites in the church, he said, "Old Noah had some stinking pole cats in the ark. If Noah could put up with those skunks in the ark, I can put with with a few hypocrites in the church." I thought his point was well made.

What's going to happen to the hypocrites? According to Matthew twenty-three, our Lord said to the hypocrites, "How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" The hypocrite is without hope. We know what will happen to him. I would rather live with hypocrites for a few years here than to live with them eternally in the next life. If you have ever used hypocrites as an excuse, do you believe our country would be better if everyone in it were Christian? "Yes." Do you believe a man is a better man for being a Christian? "Yes." Do you believe a woman is a better person for being a Christian? "Yes." Do you respect a man who is devoted to the Lord? "Oh, yes." And, you're not a Christian? "Oh, no." Now, who's hypocritical? What is hypocrisy except to say one thing and practice another?

TOO YOUNG

Maybe you say, "I am too young.' It is true that some of you are too young to become followers of Christ. But don't forget that Solomon wrote, "Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth." Mothers, fathers, boys and girls, most people are converted between the ages of twelve and twenty. When one waits until he is past twenty years old, the odds begin to mount against his ever doing it. If he waits until he is past thirty, the odds go higher. If he waits until he is past forty, they go even higher. One day I was called to the hospital in a South Arkansas town. There had been a wreck. I went first to talk to the husband and father. As

I walked into the room, he asked, "Are you the preacher?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Preacher, as soon as we get out of here, I want you to baptize my little girl." I told him I would be delighted to baptize her. The summer prior to the wreck the man and his family had been living in Arizona. During a gospel meeting, their daughter (who was twelve at the time) asked if she could be baptized. They said, "Let's talk to the visiting preacher." That preacher said, "She's too young to obey the gospel." After I had visited the brother's room, I went down the hall to the little girl's room. I knew nothing about medicine, but I knew she would never be baptized. She had a broken neck. To state it very frankly, that little child was pulverized. That night I went back to the hospital and stayed until she slipped into eternity about midnight. I was not telling you that she was lost. But, I am saying that the preacher had no business in saying "no" to her. It would have meant a great deal to that mother and father had her wish been granted.

The eleven or twelve year old son of a preacher stepped into the aisle one night during the invitation song. He intended to obey his Lord. His father, a friend of mine, shoved the boy back into his place. The preacher is a good man, but I think he was wrong in not letting his son go that night. A child brought up in a Godly home is ready to become a Christian at eleven or twelve years of age. Brethren, these youngsters know a lot more at twelve today than you and I knew when we were twelve. Television has brought the whole world into the home. They are better educated. They are better trained in the word of the Lord. When they are eleven, twelve, or thirteen years old, it's time for them to make a change.

The little daughter of a preacher friend came to him and said, "Daddy, I want to be baptized." He said, "You are too young." Several days later she said again, "Daddy, I want to be baptized." He replied, "You're too young." She came the third time and said, "I want to be baptized." Then, she added, "If you don't let me do this, I am going to Hell." Needless to say, they got her clothes and went to the river. How can you tell whether these little fellows are old enough

to do the Lord's will? When they have a consciousness of having done wrong, when they feel lost, when they know what to do to be saved, let them do the Lord's will.

TOO OLD

"Preacher, my problem is I am just too old. I've let the years get away from me. You know you can't teach an old dog new tricks." Do you know what's wrong with that statement? In the first place, we are not dealing with dogs, and in the second place, we're not teaching tricks! I have heard people say, "Don't give the scraps to the Lord." We sometimes use the illustration of a dog and cat getting the scraps from the table. It would be better to give the Lord the full and complete life. It would have been better to have obeyed the gospel when you were twelve or thirteen years old. However, if you are past sixty-five years old and all you have left is scraps, give them to God. God loves sixty-five and seventy year olds like He loves twelve and thirteen year olds. You have all the more reason for obeying your Lord. He will extend mercy and grace to you just as readily as He would have extended it years ago. You say you are too old. As long as there is life in your body, you can do the Lord's will. A preacher, while in a meeting, said, "A fellow, who would wait until he is fifty or sixty years old to become a Christian, ought to find a hole, crawl in it and pull the hole in after him." There was a man in his audience past sixty who had brought his overalls for the explicit purpose of being baptized, but the old timer walked out of the building without obeying the Lord. It was certainly unwise for the preacher to make such a statement. If you are past fifty, sixty, or seventy and not a child of God, obey the Lord now. God wants to save you too.

We will sing the invitation song in a moment. If you are ready to make a change, if you want to come this evening and obey your Lord, all things are now ready. The baptistry and garments are here. You can leave this building a child of God and a member of the Lord's church. You can leave here saved. There are some of you who have erred; you can return to Christ now. You can do the Lord's will. This in-

vitation comes from Jesus. I hope you will not turn it down. Won't you come right now while we stand and sing?

What Is Hell Like?

Friday, August 7, 1964

INTRODUCTION

We have an excellent attendance again tonight. There are probably 8,500 to 9,000 people in our audience. We thank you so much for coming.

This evening I shall speak to you on what I think is one of the most serious topics in all of God's word. The lesson is entitled very simply, "What is Hell Like?" Before reading the text, or beginning the sermon, let me say that in tonight's lesson I will make no distinction between the waiting place for the unrighteous dead and Hell itself. As far as I can see, there's no difference between the two except one is limited to time and the other is in eternity.

In the 16th chapter of Luke, beginning at verse 19, we find our text. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, with Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and like-wise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren;

that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

I have read that passage tonight not because I intend to elaborate upon it to any great extent, but to get before you three facts. Number one, two men lived; number two, two men died; and number three, the situation of those two men in the next life was exactly the opposite of what it had been in this life. The rich man on earth became the beggar in Hell. The poor man on earth became the rich man in Paradise. The rich man here was clothed in purple and fine linen. In the next life he was robed in a garment of fire. The poor man was attended by the dogs here, but in the next life he was attended by the angels. The rich man here fared sumptuously every day, but in the next life he couldn't get a drop of water to cool his tormented tongue. The poor man here suffered evil things, but in the next life he was comforted. In the discussion this evening, I will have time to raise and answer only one question. The question is, "What is Hell like?"

I. HELL IS ETERNAL

First of all, by way of answering this query, I submit to you that Hell is eternal. In Matthew 25:46 our Lord said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." At Romans 16:26 Paul described God as the everlasting God. In Hebrews 9:14 we read of the eternal Spirit. We have before us now three passages and four expressions in those three passages which must be considered. Here they are: "everlasting punishment," "eternal life," "everlasting God," and "eternal spirit." The only difference between the words "everlasting' and "eternal" in the English language is a difference in spelling. They mean exactly the same thing. The word translated as "everlasting" or "eternal" in these three passages is a form of the same Greek word. That word in the original language is

"aionios." "Aionios" means eternal, everlasting, without end, never to cease, or indeterminate as to duration.

My friends, there's not one single solitary argument a man can make against the Bible doctrine of Hell which cannot be applied with equal force against the Bible doctrine of Heaven. For example, if a man takes the position that Hell is going to last for only 1000 years, then at the end of that period those who are in Heaven will cease to be blessed. How do I know? Because the same word used to modify Hell's punishment is also used to qualify the bliss and happiness of Heaven. If Hell is going to last only 1000 years, then Heaven is going to last for only 1000 years. When the wicked cease to be punished in Hell, at that same moment God Almighty and the Holy Spirit will go out of existence. The same word used to describe the duration of Hell's punishment is also used to describe the duration of God's life and the life of the Holy Spirit. How long, then, is the punishment going to last in Hell? It's going to last eternally or everlastingly. The punishment will continue for ever and ever and ever.

There are people who argue against that position. They say this is too long. They argue that it isn't right to take a man who has lived five years in disobedience and punish him for ever. Well, if it's wrong to take a man who has been disobedient for five years and condemn him for ever, then it's wrong to take a man who has lived five years in obedience and bless him for ever. And, if not, why not? The same argument which is used to get rid of the Bible doctrine of Hell can be applied with equal force against the Bible doctrine of Heaven. Now, let me repeat that. If it's wrong to condemn a man eternally for five years of disobedience, then it would be wrong to bless a man eternally for five years of obedience. Those who argue that eternal punishment is too long may not recognize it, but they are taking a slap at every system of justice in the world. How do you determine the hideousness of an act? By the time it takes to perpetrate it or by the act itself? For example, if I had a six shooter on the pulpit stand, I could raise it and start firing. I'm not a very good shot with a pistol, but

I could kill three or four people before anyone could get to me. Let's suppose it would take me thirty seconds to kill three or four of these individuals on the front row. How should I be punished? Should I go to the penitentiary for thirty seconds? Should I be put in the penitentiary for sixty seconds? Let's triple it and I would go to prison for ninety seconds. Quadruple it and I would go for one hundred twenty seconds. Would that satisfy the demands of justice? If I were able to escape the electric chair, they'd put me away in the penitentiary for the rest of my natural life. I might have to serve forty or forty-five years for doing something which took only thirty seconds to perform. Now, how do you determine the enormity or heinousness of an act? By the amount of time it takes to do it or by the act itself? Obviously, by the act itself. When a man says Hell is too long, he's overlooking one basic fact. He fails to see sin for all of its ugliness. He fails to see it for what it is. The most horrible thing anyone can do is live in rebellion to God's will. Live five years, five months, or five weeks in stubborn disobedience to God's will, die in that condition, and you'll be punished in Hell for ever. Yes sir, that's precisely what will happen.

Somebody says, "Hell's too ugly." If Hell is too ugly, then Heaven is too beautiful, for Heaven is on the one hand what Hell is on the other. Someone else says, "Hell is too horrible." If Hell is too horrible, then Heaven is too wonderful, for it's the extreme on the one hand exactly as Hell is on the other.

Another individual might say, "Listen, preacher, I am in agreement with much of what you have said in the lesson up to this point. I believe that Hell's fire is going to burn eternally. I also believe that the punishment is everlasting. However, I think you misunderstand the meaning of the word punishment." The people who hold the position I am about to deal with believe that when a man dies he is annihilated or cut off. According to them, the dead cease to exist. They argue that when a man dies he goes back to where Adam was before he was created. Well, where was Adam before he was created? He wasn't! If, when we die,

we go back to where Adam was before he was created, then we are annihilated. We do cease to exist. Incidentally, when Adam was brought forth, was he resurrected or created? Obviously, he was created. Now, if, when I die, I go back to where Adam was before he was created, how in the world could you talk about my resurrection? You couldn't discuss my resurrection. You might talk about my being recreated, but you couldn't discuss my resurrection. The doctrine of annihilation logically denies the resurrection of the dead. But, be that as it may, these people say when we die we're just like the proverbial dog Rover, we're dead all over. That which is let down into the grave is the whole man. When the Lord comes again there will be a resurrection. Then, all of the wicked are caught up before God to give an account of the deeds done in the body. They're weighed in the balances and found wanting. Then, they're cast into eternal fire. These people argue that in an instant the unrighteous are burned up. Hence, when they read the passage concerning the second death, they understand it to be a second physical death. We experience one physical death here. Some will experience another physical death there when they're cast into the fire and burned up. They sometimes use the illustration of a dog. They say when a dog is dead he is absolutely unconscious. He is dead eternally, you might say. So, when people are cast into the fire they become like that dog, dead forever. Everlasting punishment, then, means to be dead eternally.

Now, I wanted you to see that argument in all of its force and power. There's not but one thing wrong with it. It's false to the core! It just isn't so! But, how do I know it's false? Let's go back to Matthew 25:46 where Jesus said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." The word here translated "punishment" is from the Greek word "kolasin." Kolasin, in turn, is derived from the verb "koladzo," which means "I chastise" or "I torment." At I John 4:18 it is translated "torment." Let's read a few passages in this connection. According to the 16th chapter of Luke, in Hades the rich man lifted up his eyes "being in torments." Furthermore, he wanted a drop of water to cool

his "tormented" tongue. He also wanted Lazarus sent back to warn his five brethren lest they joined him in that place of "torment." Abraham said the rich man was being "tormented" and Lazarus was being "comforted." Four times in Luke 16 the word "torment" appears. Revelation 20:10 says, "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Revelation 14:11 states: "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever and they have no rest day nor night." Six times I have found the word "torment" used to describe the state of the wicked after death. The word "kolasin," found at Matthew 25:46, means "torment" or "chastisement." That's exactly what it means! Incidentally, I mentioned that dog a while ago. In the place where I was reared we used to torment dogs. Sometimes we'd tie a string of cans on a dog's tail, or put a little "high-life" on him so we could see him move on. Let's suppose we have a dead dog. Put a string of cans on his tail, on every paw, and on both ears. Drench him in "high-life." What have you done to him? Not a thing. Why? Because there is no consciousness. He cannot be tormented unless consciousness is present. He cannot be tormented unless consciousness is present. The import of "everlasting punishment," as found in Matthew 25:46, is everlasting, conscious, suffering torment! Now, that's what Hell is!

II. HELL IS A PLACE OF DARKNESS

Secondly, Hell is a place of darkness. II Peter 2:4 states that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." In Jude, verse 13, the writer, in describing the false teachers, said, "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." In Matthew 25:30, a master, in dealing with his unprofitable one-talent servant, said, "He is to be cast into outer darkness." Put those three passages together. Do you see how the figure intensifies itself? Not simply "darkness," but the "blackness of darkness." Not simply the "blackness of darkness," but "outer darkness."

The last expression seems to suggest that Hell is the place farthest removed from the source of light.

I used to wonder why Hell had to be dark. Now I think I know. James 1:17 states that God is the "Father of lights." I John 1:5 says "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." But, God is not in Hell. In II Thessalonians 1:7-9 Paul wrote: "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." In Psalms 139:7-12, David wrote: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." David was saying that God is omnipresent. He taught that it's impossible to get away from God. Jonah learned that truth the hard way. But there is one place where God is not. God is not in Gehenna. God is not in the place of everlasting destruction. God is not in Hell. Where God is not is bound to be what the Bible calls Hell. That must be Hell, if God isn't there. There won't be any God to listen to your oft-repeated prayers in torment. There won't be any God to listen as you scream and beg for mercy. None will be granted because God will not be there. Since God is the source of light, where He is not must be a place of darkness.

I don't think you like darkness. I have sometimes thought we have an innate fear of darkness. It seems like we're born fearing darkness. When our first child was born in 1959, my wife's sister and her two little girls came over to stay with us until Marilyn was able to be up and around the house again. I had never been around children in my life. I went

in home one evening about 7:30 and noticed the hall light was on. I didn't feel there was any reason for the light being on, so I flipped it off. Those two little girls were in one of the back bedrooms trying to go to sleep and they gave me to understand there was a reason for the light being on. So I turned it back on post haste! I didn't argue with them about it. They were afraid of the darkness. But, someone says, "That's just a couple of children."

Let me tell you about a teenager I used to know. I knew him well. Really, I'm describing myself. I lived seven miles from the little community where I went to school. The last bus ran north toward my house at 9:38 in the evening. Well, a lot of nights I wasn't ready to go home by that time. That meant I had to hitch-hike. Sometimes I had good luck; sometimes I didn't. I've walked every step of those seven miles. Regardless of my luck, I always had to walk the last mile and a quarter for it was that far from the highway to my house. I had to go through one of the blackest and darkest creek bottoms you've ever seen. I've gone through those bottoms about twelve or one o'clock at night and heard a rabbit rustle in the cane. I'd look all around. Boy, I could imagine something terrible was going to get me. About that time the Phantom Killer was on the loose at Texarkana. I sometimes thought he might be out there in the woods. Now, I didn't really get scared, but, somehow, I couldn't convince my feet that such was the case. Really, I didn't run, but I walked a lot faster than normal. Friends, I never went through those creek bottoms in the day light afraid, but I went through them at night scared. Why? Because it was night. "Oh," you say, "that's a teenager." Well, why is it so much harder for an elderly person to suffer through the long hours of the night than in daylight? It seems there's something which causes us to rebel against the idea of being in darkness. If there were not another word in all of God's Bible on the question of Hell except its being a place of perpetual darkness, that would be enough to convince me that one should strive to avoid it. I don't want to live in a place of darkness and endless night.

III. HELL IS A PLACE OF FIRE

Thirdly, Hell is a place of fire. In Matthew 13:42 it is described as "a furnace of fire." In Matthew 25:41, "everlasting fire." In Mark 9:44-45, "the fire is not quenched." In Revelation 20:10, "fire and brimstone." In Revelation 20:15, "the lake of fire." At Matthew 3:12, "the baptism in fire." But, someone asks, "Do you understand these passages to refer to Hell?" Read them in context; there's no doubt about it. FIRE, FIRE, FIRE, FIRE! That's what all of them say. But how do we reconcile the idea of having darkness and fire in the same place at the same time? If you were to step outside the building tonight and kindle a fire, it would illuminate, give light, or dispel the darkness. How can there be fire in Hell and darkness too? Well, really there's not any problem there. Man, by his own chemical ingenuity, has been able to create a fire which does not illuminate. If a man can do this, surely God would not have any problem with it. Of course, it is possible that God has prepared a special type of fire. In the 3rd chapter of Exodus we read that Moses was tending his sheep one day, looked back toward Mount Horeb, and saw a bush burning, but it was not being consumed by the fire. When he drew nearby to investigate, God told him to take off his shoes for the place whereon he stood was holy ground. Now, the miracle could have been performed on the bush, but on the other hand, God could have used a special fire on that occasion to accomplish His purpose. Had that been the kind of fire with which you and I are acquainted, it would have consumed the bush. Perhaps He prepared a special fire. Well, if He could do it there, He can do it in eternity.

It is likely that Biblical writers used the word "fire" as a metaphor. What's a metaphor? It's a likeness or similarity set forth as a reality. Jesus said, for example, "I am the door." He didn't mean He was a literal door, but He meant He was like a door. He said, "I am the vine." He didn't mean He was a literal vine, but He meant He was like a vine. He said, "I am the good shepherd." He meant He was like the good shepherd. On one occasion he described Herod

Antipas as a fox. He didn't mean that He was a literal fox, but that he was like one. Herod was cunning, treacherous, and wily. Metaphors are found repeatedly in God's word. It is possible that fire is used in a metaphorical sense to describe Hell. Perhaps you are wondering why. God is an infinite God and Hell is an infinite place, but we are finite creatures. Really, God is attempting to describe to us what cannot be described. I don't believe there is an absolute description of either Heaven or Hell in the Bible. Both must be taught by analogy and metaphor. God has to say that Hell is "like" this or that. He must reason from what we know to what we do not know. To show you the problem, suppose you make a trip to New York City and rode the subway. Upon your return home you try to explain to your little three year old son what a subway is like. He's never been on a subway. He doesn't know anything about one. What will you say? You might tell him the subway is like the tunnel a mole burrowed under your front yard last summer. Is a subway like that? Sort of. Have you exhausted the description of a subway with that analogy? No, but he's in a better position to understand what's involved than he would be if you tried to give him a technical and literal description of a subway. Suppose you lived in western Kansas and had just returned from a trip to New York City. You're trying to tell your little boy about a sky scraper. He has never seen one. You say, "Son, it's like a silo." He doesn't completely understand it, but he's nearer to the idea of what a sky scraper is like. Suppose you were trying to describe a Boeing 707 Jet airplane to a man who lived before the Civil War. What would you say to him? He doesn't know anything about an airplane, much less a jet, and you're trying to explain the matter to him. There's not but one comparision you could make. You'd have to say it's like a bird. But he might get the idea that it flapped its wings to fly! When you say an airplane is like a bird, have you completely exhausted the description of the jet? You've hardly started. Now, that's the problem with reference to Heaven and Hell.

Heaven is said to have jaded walls, golden streets, and gates of pearl. Are we to understand that literally or is that

John's way of telling us Heaven is far more wonderful than anything we've ever known? Surely, the latter is correct. The Biblical description of Hell is God's way of telling us that Hell is far worse than anything we've ever considered. The nearest thing to it in our vocabulary is fire. The nearest thing to it in human experience is that of a burn. If you want to know what Hell is like, strike a match and hold your finger in its flame. Or, when you get home, turn up the over to 500 degrees. Let it burn for about ten minutes, then put your hand in and leave it for a while. Sometimes we go fishing late in the afternoon. We set up our camping equipment and set out our lines for the night. We let the camp fire burn down real low. I've sat by the fire just to see how close I could get my hands to the coals before having to jerk them back. One might say, "That sounds a little sophomorish to me." I've done it to convince myself again that I'm in the greatest work in the world; saving people from Hell which is like a burning fire! Brother Marshall Keeble, outstanding Negro evangelist, once said that a man could build the hottest fire possible, remove the damned from Hell, place them in the man-made fire and in ten seconds they'd freeze to death. That has a note of levity in it, but I believe he was right. My friends, if Hell is just one tenth as bad as the description found in the Bible, that should be enough to produce fear in the heart of anyone. But, the truth of the matter is, it's a thousand times worse than any description found in God's word! It is worse, just like heaven is far more beautiful and wonderful than any description found in the Bible.

When you think of fire, you think of smoke. That's why, in Revelation 14:11, the Bible says, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." This simply completes the figure of fire.

HELL IS A PLACE OF PAIN

Fourthly, Hell is a place of intense pain. At Matthew 25:30, in describing the punishment of the one talent man, the Lord said, "there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth." When individuals undergo great and severe pain, they weep

and grit their teeth. They can hardly bear it, and that's what our Lord was saying.

NO REST IN HELL

Fifthly, there is no rest in hell. Revelation 14:11, the passage I've used several times, says, "and they shall have no rest day nor night." Do you know why? Well, Revelation 20:10 tells us that the wicked are tormented. There's not anything I enjoy more than going home after I'm completely worn out, sitting down in that big easy chair, taking off my shoes, propping my feet up on the foot stool, and unrolling. Or, better yet, go to bed, fall across it, and sink into the oblivion of sleep. Rest is wonderful when you're tired, but how horrible to be perpetually exhausted and have no opportunity to rest. Such a place is Hell!

NO RELIEF IN HELL

Sixthly, there is no relief in Hell. The rich man wanted a drop of water to cool his tormented tongue but he didn't get it. Robert Ingersoll, an infamous skeptic around the turn of the century, said had he been present, he would have given that rich man some water. There's one little item Ingersoll overlooked. The rich man didn't have to be there. He could have received ten million gallons of the water of God's salvation in this life, but he neglected his opportunity and finally wound up in torment without water. You can stay out of Hell, my friend, but if you ever get in, you can't get out. There'll be no relief for you, if you ever go there.

NO HOPE IN HELL

Seventhly, Hell is a place where there is no hope. Look at Matthew 25:46 again. It says, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." How long is eternity? Those of us who preach can't even discuss it sensibly. We stand in front of audiences and talk about spending eternity. You can't spend eternity. You can spend a dollar, but you can't spend eternity. If you could spend eternity, that would imply that it has an end. We talk about living throughout eternity. You can live throughout a lifetime or throughout a century,

but you cannot live throughout eternity. A little fellow said he wished he had a piece of peppermint candy with only one end on it. That's a good definition of eternity. It has but one end on it — the beginning end or starting place. I don't know when God puts immortality into the human heart. It may be at conception, during the time the embryo is in the womb, or at birth. But, whenever it's put there, from that time onward we live. Some place we will maintain an existence even after death.

Suppose this old world were made of solid steel. Put an ant on the equator and start him walking. He travels at the rapid pace of 1/17 of a mile an hour. This solid steel ball is 25,000 miles in circumference. How long would it take that ant to wear down a path a half inch deep? How long to completely wear the earth in half? Well, that's not eternity. That's less than eternity. Suppose this great building and everything in it were made of wood. How long would it take one termite to eat this building? Suppose Dallas were made of wood. How long would it take him to eat the city of Dallas? Suppose the state of Texas were made of wood, how long would it take him to eat the state? Suppose the nation were made of wood, how long would it take him to eat the country? Suppose the world were made out of wood, how long would it take him to eat the world? Suppose the sun, moon, stars, Venus, Neptune, Jupiter, and all the celestial bodies were made of wood, how long would it take one termite to eat all of them? I don't know, but that's not eternity. That's less than eternity. Suppose we had a ship of 30,000 tons displacement and filled its hold with English peas. Let's sail it at the rate of 25 knots an hour and throw out an English pea ever 10,000 miles. How long would it take to empty the ship? I don't know, but that, my friends, is not eternity.

If Hell were only a hundred years, I could stand it. After I'd been there one day, I could say, "I have only 99 years, 364 days and I'll get out of this place." If it were only a thousand years, I could bear that. After a day in torment, I could say, "Just 999 years, 364 more days and I'll get out." If it were a million years, I could bear it. After a couple of

days there, I could say, "999,999 years, 363 more days and I'll get out." That faint glimmering ray of hope would cause me to hold on. But, after a man has been in Hell a hundred, thousand, million, billion, trillion years, he has no less time to stay. The Bible speaks of everlasting and eternal punishment. Dante, in his famous poem, "The Inferno," said the sign hanging over Hell's door ought to be "Thou Who Enter This Door Leave All Hope Behind." Hell is a hopeless and helpless place!

When you look at a man or a woman, how do you consider that individual? Do you simply see a white person or a Negro, one well dressed or poorly dressed, some one with money or without money? We ought to see an individual as one made in the image of God for whom Jesus died and who will live in the presence of God in Heaven or burn in the fires of Hell. The only thing in this world that's going to last is people. Nations rise and fall, cultures come and go, but people live on and on. How many people do you know who have died this year without Christ. How many loved ones? How many relatives? How many friends? How many people are in Hell now because you never opened your mouth one time to turn them to the Lord? Oh, the tragedy of all tragedies and the calamity of all calamities is to die without Christ! The number one issue facing everybody in this audience is to get right with God and stay right with God. Yet, we are cumbered and worried about food, shelter, and clothing, when only one thing is needful. We must become children of God and serve the Lord. Friends, I don't want to be lost and I don't want you to be lost either.

IN HELL MAN RETAINS HIS MENTAL FACULTIES

Eighthly, Hell is a place where man retains his mental faculties. After the rich man died, he could feel, see, hear, talk, and remember. Abraham, in speaking to him, said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." Furthermore, he remembered his five brethren, who were still alive on the earth, and he wanted them to be warned. If he could remember his five brothers and the good things he experienced

before he died, I have reason to believe that he could remember the times he neglected to do the Lord's will. If you lose your soul and wake up in torment, one of the horrible things about it will be a haunting memory to plague you. You will think: "If I'd listened to the pleadings of my wife; if I'd paid attention to my husband; if I had listened when that Christian came to my house and begged me to do the Lord's will; if I'd answered the invitation that night in Dallas." Yes, you will say, "if, if, if," but it won't change your situation. In 1941 five other people and my mother were driving a new Ford. They pulled up on the railroad track in front of the Rock Island Rocket, a streamlined train. According to one of the ladies in the car, my mother saw the train and said, "Oh, my, there's a train." Then, she opened the door and was about half in and half out when the train struck the rear of the automobile. It pitched the car into a deep depression located near the railroad tracks. Mother was under the car and, out of six people, she was the only one killed. If she had been a little faster, she would have cleared the automobile and would not have been injured at all. Had she been a little slower, she would have stayed in the car and sustained an injury, but would not have been killed. However, she was caught half in and half out. I've been "if-ing" for 23 years, but it hasn't brought her back from the dead. Her body is still in the cemetery. "If" is a mighty big word! In torment, you may say, "If I'd obeyed the gospel," but "ifing" is not going to change your eternal destiny. Your memory will plague and haunt you day after day.

But, further, this man not only could remember, he could also recognize. He recognized Lazarus. I've had people ask me, "Do you think we'll recognize one another in eternity?" My answer is "yes." But, if we recognize one another in eternity and our loved ones aren't with us in Heaven, wouldn't we be unhappy? Well, let's consider the other side of the question. If we don't have any recognition in Heaven, we'll know only ourselves. We'll think that all of our loved ones missed glory. Take the position of no recognition in the next life and you will have far more difficulties than with the position of recognition. I believe we'll recognize one

another in eternity. The rich man recognized Lazarus because he had known him in this life. Many of us have tried to lead people to the Lord Jesus Christ only to hear them say, "I couldn't make a change because daddy, mother, brother, or sister wasn't a child of God." There couldn't be anything worse than meeting mother, father, brother or sister in the torments of hell! You would simply add to their affliction and to your own. In Jackson County, Arkansas, where I was reared, an atheist died and a friend of mine was in charge of the funeral service. The daughter of the dead man came to the casket, fell across his body, and said, "Oh, daddy, daddy, I'll meet you out yonder some day." Of course, we understand that the girl was heart broken and grief stricken. Likely, she didn't realize what she was saying. My friend said when he screwed the lid down on him that was the last time he wanted to see him. Why? Because he knew if he ever saw him again, he'd have to see him in Hell. Needless to say, he didn't want to meet him there. Wouldn't it be a catastrophe to run into a loved one or a friend there? If you have any relatives who've left this world unprepared to meet Christ, believe you me, they never want to see you again! The rich man was praying that his five brethren would not join him in torment. Surely, you don't want to go to Hell because a relative has gone there.

HELL IS WORSE FOR SOME THAN OTHERS

I believe in degrees of punishment. Why? For two reasons; number one, it's reasonable, and number two, it's scriptural. Criminal jurisprudence recognizes degrees of guilt. If a man perpetrates a premeditated crime, he is punished more severely than the man who commites a crime of passion. Of course, a crime of passion is never planned. There are degrees of guilt under our system of law and surely God recognizes such. But the Bible also upholds this view. According to Matthew 11:21-24, Jesus said: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon

at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Our Lord taught that in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for some than for others. Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility. When we have the ability and are given the opportunity, then we have great responsibility. At Luke 12:47-48, our Lord said, "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whom soever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Some are going to get many stripes and some will receive few stripes. Dante, in "The Inferno," divided Hell into ten parts. In the very center the most intense punishment was being meted out. In the second circle the punishment was not quite as severe as in the first one. In the third, it was not as intense as in the second one. He followed that reasoning into the tenth and last circle. Where did he get his ten circles? I don't know, but I do know where he got the principle for them. That came from the Bible. My friends, if I had to pick a place tonight from which to depart this old world unprepared to meet Christ, it wouldn't be Dallas. I'd rather die as an African savage who'd never heard about Jesus than to die in your unprepared condition. You and I have no reason for refusing Christ. If we lose our souls, we'll get the most severe punishment God can place upon us.

HELL IS A PLACE OF DIVIDED FAMILIES

Finally, Hell is a place where families are divided. When we think about our families, a lot of us are overcome with sentimentalism. I'm sure you remember the following words from an old hymn: "Will the circle be unbroken, by and

by, Lord, by and by, is there a better home awaiting in the sky, Lord, in the sky?" I don't know how you feel about that, but I think for most people, it's a lot of nonsense. How can we sing "Will the circle be unbroken by and by" when the circle is broken right now? How can we sing about being united in Heaven when we're not united on earth? Some people sing the song, "If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again." How many of you ever heard your mother pray? Some of you have. You ought to thank God, if you had a good Christian mother. I never heard my mother pray one time. When we think of the family, we are sometimes overcome with sentimentalism and fail to be realistic.

I don't like to be away from home, but I do like to preach the gospel. Still, I despise being away from home even to preach. Many times I have left home knowing my wife was in the front room shedding tears because I was to be gone for two or three weeks. In our 13 years of marriage, we have never had to be separated more than five weeks at a time, but we have had a lot of these short separations. I don't like them and she doesn't like them either. Any man who likes to be away from his family is not much of a man. I tell you what would break my heart. That would be to stand before God in the day of judgment and see my beloved go in one direction as I go in another. It would be a terrible tragedy to see the woman I had loved in life, who labored with me, who had helped me to rear my family, led away to Hell as I was ushered into Heaven. In many families, this very thing will occur. A father and son will go to Hell and a mother and daughter will go to Heaven. The father and daughter may go to Heaven and the mother and son go to Hell. Families are going to be split and you need to think about it.

Have you ever really become serious about converting your own relatives? I like to see anybody obey the gospel, but I am especially interested in my own flesh and blood. Where do you think I held my first meeting? Back home. Incidentally, I couldn't preach elsewhere. But, my primary reason in holding that meeting was to get the man who had been my guardian, my uncle. After four of five nights of preaching, I went to see his wife and asked, "Aunt Dora, how

am I doing?" She said, "He has been talking to himself at the woodpile." I knew, if he started answering himself, we would get him. Sure enough, before that meeting was over, he walked down the aisle and did the Lord's will. He had heard many sermons, but had done nothing about saving his soul. However, when the little fellow who had grown up at his feet began to put the gospel to him, he could resist no longer.

I've heard people say, "I can't talk to mother and daddy about Christ. I can't discuss religion with my brothers and sisters." If you can't talk with your own relatives about salvation, pray tell me, with whom can you talk? Who will lead them to Christ, if you don't do it? Some people have said, "If I get to heaven and my loved ones aren't there, I won't be able to stand it." Can you stand it now? What are you doing to try to save them now? A lady came to me one night after a preaching service and said, "I want you to talk to my daddy." I said, "all right." That woman was about 30 years old at the time. She had never married. She had been living under the same roof with her daddy since she had a being in the world. I asked, "Is your daddy religious?" She said, "I don't know." I asked, "Does he have membership in any church?" Again, she replied, "I don't know." I asked, "How has he reacted to the preaching?' Once again, she said, "I don't know." Well, I was visibly perturbed. That woman had lived with her father all of her life, probably half of that time she had been a Christian, and had never spoken to her lost daddy about his soul. I said, "Lady, I'll be out tomorrow afternoon, but don't expect me to grab him by the nape of the neck, throw him into water, and baptize him." It upset me to think she had never told her daddy about Jesus and what to do to be saved.

A lady in Southern Arkansas was a "member of the church." I needed a verbal club to get her out to worship for an hour every three or four Sundays. She used to say, "I don't know why I can't convert my husband." I didn't have the grit to tell her why. That sorry example living under the roof with him kept him away from Christ. I talked to her husband about Jesus, I saw him cry when he heard the

story of the cross, but he never obey the gospel. Surely you know why. The bad influence of his wife kept him from changing. When I talked with her about her duty to the Lord, she said, "Well, Jimmy, I say my little prayers." Yes, I knew what they were. "Now I lay me down to sleep." You say, "That's mean." Do you think that's half as severe as God will be with her in the day of judgment? She could save her soul and the soul of her husband, but what's she doing for him? Unless she has made a change, absolutely nothing. Think of how terrible it will be for that man to be lost eternally when he could be converted, if she were simply a Christian.

A brother in northern Arkansas was talking to a preacher friend of mine and said, "Brother Henderson, I don't know why I can't convert my wife." He was talking to the wrong fellow. Obert looked him straight in the face and said, "I'll tell you why you can't convert your wife. If she wants to go out of town over the weekend, you load up and leave. You forget about the church and your contribution. As a matter of fact, you'll put anything before the church. It's no wonder that you can't convert her." That man wasn't the dedicated, loyal, obedient, and godly Christian he should have been. He couldn't lead anybody to Christ with that disposition and attitude. What's going to happen to his wife? She will go to torment, if she isn't converted. She will go because he didn't care.

There are some good women in this audience. Bless your hearts, you've really had to carry a burden across the years. You haven't had any help from that husband of yours. You've had to teach your children to pray. You've had to teach them the word of God. You've had to carry them to Bible school on Sunday morning. You've had to carry them to Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday nights. Everything those children know, spiritually speaking, you've taught them and lived before them. Your husband hasn't given you a bit of help. Of course, he has said, "I'm not in the way." Did any of you non-Christian husbands and fathers ever try to plough with a dead mule in the hardness? Still you say, "I'm not in the way." Some of you ladies have done

everything in your power to convert your mates. Ladies, all I can say is "God bless you." The Lord loves you and the Lord's going to honor you. Just keep on keeping on. Continue to teach those children. Rear them to serve God. If your husband wants to lose his soul, I guess he will have to lose it.

After having said that, let me say this. There are some in this audience who don't want their loved ones converted. That's quite an accusation. It's true, nevertheless. Perhaps you are ready to say, "I get down on my knees every day and say, 'Oh, Lord help me to convert John'." But what are you saying down deep in your heart? You are saying, "Lord, don't touch him. Leave him alone because, if he were to become a Christian, I'd have to get out of my negligence and indifference. I'd have to become a devoted and dedicated Christian and I don't want to be that. No, Lord, don't touch him, leave him alone." Is that what you subconsciously pray concerning your husband or wife? Are you living the kind of life that will bring your mate to Christ or the kind that will cause him to wonder if Jesus Christ is that Son of God?

Families are going to be divided. You should want to save yours. There may be a husband here tonight who is not a Christian. Perhaps your wife and children are already disciples of Christ, but you are on the outside looking in. There may be a lady here who is not a child of God. The rest of the family is Christian, but you aren't. There may be unsaved young people who have Christian parents. That family ought to be united in Christ. Talk about a little bit of heaven on earth, that comes when you have a devoted Christian family. Certainly, in the next life you will never regret it. Remember this, if you don't get anything else from the sermon, families will be divided in the day of judgment! I hope yours will not be divided. I hope you and everybody in your family can go to heaven.

In just a moment we are going to sing the hymn of invitation. We have a vast audience of people. We ask that you be very quiet. Please remain in your places, unless you want to come to the front and answer this invitation. No one should leave because the next few minutes are the most im-

portant part of the service. Now the ushers are taking their places. They will stand and face that part of the audience where they have been stationed. When you step out into the aisle, one of the ushers will walk with you to the front. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to every lost person in this audience, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If you will trust the Lord and be baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins, you can leave here saved. The Bible says to every erring brother and sister, "Repent and pray, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." There are several hundred people here who are lost. I wish everyone of you would come while we stand and sing.

The Great Meeting All Will Attend

Saturday, August 8, 1964

We have about 8,000 this evening, a pretty good Saturday night audience. If we have as many tomorrow evening as we had last Sunday night, in the course of this fifteen day meeting we will have 125,000 in attendance. That is good by anybody's standards. We have had a great meeting because you worked, invited others, prayed, and attended yourself. Tonight I am looking forward to another great service. If the good Lord will extend to me the grace and strength I need to properly present this lesson, there ought to be scores of people come to the front and do the Lord's will this evening.

My brethren, I am so grateful that you invited me to come and have a part in this revival effort. I have never participated in anything just like this. I have been in one large cooperative meeting in northwestern Arkansas prior to this one. We had a great meeting, but, in so far as visible response is concerned, we didn't do as much as we are doing here.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

This sermon is entitled, "The Great Meeting All Will Attend". By way of introduction, let me say that it is customary for churches of Christ to have gospel meetings. By gospel meetings, I mean concentrated efforts to reach the lost. Some churches have one meeting a year, some have two, some have three. I am of the opinion that if a church maintains its evangelistic edge, it ought to have at least two or three evangelistic campaigns a year. One of the greatest meetings ever held in Texas was conducted by Brother T. B. Larimore at Sherman. That meeting was six months long. Another Texas church had a 365 night meeting. Perhaps many of the brethren were worn out as a result of such an extended effort, but at the end of the meeting that congregations had quadrupled its membership. Churches grow in direct proportion to the amount of preaching and teaching they have.

Of course, when we are planning a meeting, we must take into consideration who is to do the preaching. There are at

least two qualifications a visiting evangelist must possess. In the first place, he must love the truth; he must belong to the word of God. I don't care about his other qualifications; if he doesn't have that one, you don't want him for a meeting. In the second place, he must have the ability to touch and tender the hearts of the lost and bring them to a saving faith in the Son of God.

In order to have a successful meeting, we must do a great deal of advertising. As I indicated a moment ago, we are having a great meeting. Why? Because you have advertised. The brethren in this vicinity have spent more than thirty thousand dollars on advertising. The Dallas Christians have also done a lot of personal advertising. They have gone into homes. They have been on their telephones. The reason the Pentecost meeting was so successful, from the viewpoint of response, is that the word was noised abroad in the community. When the people came together in the temple area, they heard the apostle Peter preach, and three thousand of them were baptized into Christ that day. Brother G. C. Brewer was one of the greatest preachers I ever had apportunity to hear. If Brother Brewer were living, and if you were to bring him to Dallas for a meeting, it would end in dismal failure without advertising. So, we must advertise.

There are thousands of people in this community who ought to be at this meeting. They have not come. They need to hear a gospel sermon. They need to accept Christ as their Savior. But, they are watching television or reading newspapers. Go to their front yards, erect a sign twenty feet long and ten feet high, print an announcement of our meeting in blood red letters, but still they would not come. I hate to say it, but there are some people who simply do not appreciate our efforts to impede their progress on the road to Hell. Some people are determined to be lost and they will be lost in spite of everything we can do. The very people who ought to be here tonight, the very ones who need this message so desperately, are not here. This evening I am talking about the great meeting all will attend. The people who for some reason or another couldn't get here tonight are going to be present for that one. You and I will be there, and all the

multitudes who have lived or will live are going to be present on this day of all days.

NO POSTPONEMENT

A number of years ago I went to the little rural community where I was reared to conduct a meeting. One night, while driving toward the church building, I noticed black clouds hanging low in the heavens. The ominous rumblings of thunder could be heard and zig-zag streaks of lightning filled the air. When I arrived at the church building, there was just a hand full of the faithful present. After a hasty consultation with the brethren, it was decided to postpone the meeting until the next night. In reply to that, someone might say, "You people didn't have much faith." Maybe so, but you couldn't preach in that church building today because it isn't there. A few months after the meeting came to a close, a tornado struck the community and the church building was blown to the ground. I live in that part of Arkansas aptly described as tornado alley. It looked like we were going to have a tornado that night. I said all of that to say this. We postponed the meeting, but the great meeting all will attend isn't going to be postponed. There isn't going to be one day's delay regardless of what you or I have in mind. You may be planning to enlarge your business. Perhaps you intend to add to your home. Maybe you are going to take an extended vacation. Maybe you are about to launch a new profession. However, this meeting will occur on schedule It's not going to be postponed or put off for anyone.

All of us are concerned about the situation in Laos and South Viet Nam. In the prayer a moment ago, Brother Cawyer asked God to bless this world that we might not have another world war. What about the crises which have arisen? Will these be the sparks to fan the whole world into a solid wall of flame? Will we be plunged into the holocaust of a third world war? The United States and Russia are in a great arms race. Each nation is attempting to create the ultimate weapon first. It seems that each side wants a weapon that can be fired twelve or fifteen thousand miles and zeroed in on a target a quarter of a mile square. Both sides are very

interested in intercontinental ballistic missiles. Who is going to win? I don't know.

Of course, we wonder who is going to get to the moon first. Are the Russians going to get a cosmonaut or will the United States get an astronaut there first? I don't know about that either. We are confronted with the fall election. Who is going to be the next president of the United States? Will Johnson or Goldwater win? I have a sneaking suspicion there are some Democrats in the audience tonight. Likely, there are some Republicans here too. If you really want a profound answer. I don't know. But, all of these matters concern us. Regardless of who wins the arms race, regardless of what happens in Southeast Asia, regardless of who is elected next November, the meeting under consideration is going to occur as planned by the God of Heaven.

IT HAS BEEN ADVERTISED

Before our meeting started, we advertised it. We spent a great deal of money so the people in this vicinity would know about the Dallas Memorial Auditorium meeting. The meeting that all will attend has been advertised too. In Hebrews 9:27-28 the Bible says, "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The passage indicates that a man, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wanted others to know that judgment was coming and he was advertising it. In Acts 24:24-25, we read, "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered. Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." What was Paul doing? Among other things, he was advertising the fact that there is going to be a judgment. When he told Felix about the coming judgment, he was terrified. He shook in his boots. He shook like a leaf in a windstorm. He was a grown man, but he was scared at the thought of standing before

God and giving an account of the deeds done in the body. Paul, according to Acts seventeen, spoke to the wisest and smartest men of the first century world. Paul was on Mars Hill at Athens and said, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given the assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Paul didn't talk about Roman tragedy. He didn't spend his time discussing Greek culture. He discussed the subject of judgment. He wanted those philosophers, educators and poets to know about standing before God on the day of judgment. He was advertising.

NO ONE KNOWS THE TIME

In advertising this gospel endeavor, we announced when it would start and when it would conclude. We also announced the time of the service each evening. However, the time of the meeting all will attend has not been announced. We don't know when it will occur. In Mark 13:32 Jesus said, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Nobody knows when the judgment is going to occur. I have a book in which the author cited Mark 13:32. Following the quotation he had about a half page of comments. At the bottom of the page, upon the basis of Mark 13:32, the author said he knew when Christ was coming again. I thought, "Maybe I have misread the passage." So, I went back and read it again. Once more it said that no man knows the day or the hour. Then, I read his comments again. Without too much difficulty, I concluded that he was a false teacher. When a man tries to tell you when the day of judgment will occur, you don't have to be as wise as Solomon to know that he is not teaching the truth of God.

The Bible says no man knows the day or the hour. Because we don't know, many of us are going to get caught unprepared. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, our Lord, describing the end of the world, said it will be as it was in the days of Noah. They were eating, drinking, marrying and

giving in marriage, and they knew not until the flood was upon them. I used to have a lot of trouble with that passage. Jesus said they didn't know about the flood, yet, 2 Peter 2:5 describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness. You can't be a preacher unless you preach. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. What was he preaching? Obviously, he was preaching about impending doom. He told the people the flood was coming, but Jesus said that they didn't know. How could he have preached the message and the people not know? Here's the reason: they didn't know in that they didn't believe. They didn't accept what Noah had to say about it. That is why they didn't know.

It was a plain ordinary routine day, but it became cloudy and started raining. I can imagine a couple of men talking. One said to the other, "You know we have been needing this rain. I surely am glad to see it. The farmers will be helped by it." The next day the same two met on the street and it was still raining. One of them said, "My, isn't this wonderful? We are going to have enough rain to last us for several weeks." They met again the third day and one was heard to say, "I think we have had enough rain. It seems to me that it is about time for it to stop." But, the Bible says the windows of heaven were opened and it rained for forty days and forty nights. We are also told that the fountains of the deep were broken up. That likely means the subterranean caverns, in which underground streams flow, burst asunder and the water beneath the ground surged to the surface to aid in flooding the world. The highest mountain in the world went under water. As a matter of fact, it went under by fifteen cubits. In our language, that is more than twenty-two feet. The Bible says that all flesh died. Our Lord said when the end of the world takes place, it will be like that. People will be caught unexpectedly.

In I Thessalonians 5:1-6 Paul wrote: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not

escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." Paul said the day will come as a thief in the night. Many people will have found security in worldly affairs. They will be saying, "peace and safety". But all at once, time and timely things will come to an end. It will be like labor pains striking a woman who is about to give birth to a child. Suddenly judgment will come upon the whole world. Many of us will be caught unexpectedly. We will have made insufficient preparation. We will not be ready to meet our Lord. John Wesley was asked what he would do if he thought the world were going to end. He said he would do what he had already planned for the day. I differ with him theologically, but I respect him for his conscientious attempt to live in harmony with his convictions. The Boy Scouts have a motto, "Be Prepared." We need to be prepared. Whether we are living when the Lord comes or not, when death comes to us, for all practical purposes, that is judgment. That is the end of the world, for our destiny is fixed and sealed then and there.

EVENTS TO PRECEDE THE MEETING

Even though I don't know the exact day when judgment will occur, I can tell you some events which are going to precede it. First, our Lord will come again. In John 14:1-3 Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." Our Lord has said He is coming again. We also have the testimony of the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews 9:27 the Spirit said the Lord will appear the second time without sin unto salvation. We have the testimony of the angels. Shortly after Christ ascended, the little band of Galilean apostles were standing on the hill side gazing into the sky. Two men standing nearby, clothed in white apparel,

said unto them, "ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into the heavens, for this same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go." Those "men" were probably angels. So, we have the witness of Jesus, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of angels that one day Christ will return. I would to God that I had the fluency of speech to impress upon your minds the fact that Christ is coming again. This is not a fairy tale, fabrication, or falsehood. This is fact.

Christ is coming again, and the Bible vividly describes His second coming. In Revelation 1:7, John said, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." In Mark 13:26, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." A word used repeatedly to describe the second coming of Christ is apocalypse. It literally means a revealing or an unveiling. Those of you who have attended our meeting know there is a baptistry behind this curtain. In a few minutes we will pull a string, the curtain will be drawn aside and you will be able to see the baptistry. That will be an unveiling or a revealing. The Bible says He will come with great power and glory. It seems that some were unable to see Christ's splendor, majesty, holiness, and glory when He came the first time. But, when Jesus comes again, the blindest of the blind will see Him for what He is. The hardest hearted individual who ever lived will be able to see Him for what He is. That will be an unveiling, revealing, or apocalypse. Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 states, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengence on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Let's put all of this together. When our Lord comes again, He will be the central figure in the skies. There will be angels as far to the left and right as the eyes can see. He will be in the clouds; His great power and glory will appear

to all. The clouds will be strewn with fire. If you heard Gabriel's trumpet right now, if you knew that time and timely things were to come to an end in the next thirty seconds, how would you react? If you were to look into the heavens and see what I have described, would you be ready? One might say, "You are attempting to be melodramatic." I am trying to get you to think for you can lose your soul! Christ is coming again. He is going to take vengeance upon those who have not obeyed the gospel. Have you obeyed Him? Are you a Christian? Are you faithful and loyal? Do you put the kingdom first in your life? What about it?

The second coming of Christ will precede the judgment. Second, the dead will be raised. In John 5:28-29 Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." All the dead will come forth simultaneously. Third, before this great meeting, the living will be changed. Paul said in I Thessalonians 4:13-18, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." In I Corinthians 15:51-52 he said, "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." He also said, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed

up in victory." Those who are living when the Lord comes again will undergo an instantaneous change. Those who are dead will experience a similar change in the resurrection. The dead will be raised; the living will be changed and then this meeting will occur.

ALL WILL ATTEND

People have all sorts of excuses for not attending church services. They really use the weather. When it's hot, it's too hot. When it's cold, it's too cold. When it's wet, it's too wet. When it's dry, it's too dry. Then, there is the problem of little Tommy having the sniffles on Sunday morning. If an eight year old has a slight cold, he can keep a family of nine from going to church. Everybody is so concerned about his needs they must all stay at home to wait on him hand and foot. Of course, if he has the sniffles Monday morning, that's tough because mother and daddy will both go to work. All of his brothers and sisters will go to school and he will be left at home to manage by himself. Then, there is the headache that hits on Sunday morning. It arrives about 8:30 and it's unbearable for a few hours. Around 12:00 it vanishes. But, about 5:30 in the afternoon it comes back again, and it's so severe you can hardly see. Then, about 7:30 it's gone. If we could miracuously change Sunday to Monday, the headache would make the adjustment.

Some say, "I have a hang nail and can't go to worship." Then, there is the fellow with a peanut stand who can't close it for two hours to attend divine services. Others can't attend because of a heavy dew. One of the most absurd excuses I ever heard was told me by a preacher who was working in Mississippi. He said he was trying to get a lady to go to church. She said, "Brother Clyde, I just can't go. We have a sick tom cat here and I can't leave him." Clyde didn't tell that with tongue in cheek. She actually offered that as a reason for not attending church services. Surely, everyone knows a sick tom cat should come before the Lord and the Lord's church! If it wasn't so serious, it would be downright amusing to listen to people, who have offered his type of an excuse, present them to God. How far would such tripe

get with the Lord? We make excuses here, but all will attend the great meeting there. You and I are going to be there. We may be rubbing elbows with one another. We will all be there because God is going to round up the strays and He doesn't overlook anyone. The Bible says everyone of us shall give an account to God. The scripture says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. You are going to be judged! You will give an account individually to God. We are not going to be judged congregationally. We are not going to be judged as families. We are not going to be judged as nations, but we are going to be judged as individuals. When you stand in the presence of God, you will not have regretted being an obedient Christian.

THE PREACHER AND HIS SERMON

When you have a meeting, you must have a preacher. The greatest preacher who ever lived will speak at the meeting all will attend. Of course, I refer to Jesus. In II Timothy 4:1-2 Paul said, "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." In Acts 17:31 the Bible says, "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Jesus is going to be the judge. Jesus is going to deliver the sermon on that occasion. And I know what he is going to discuss.

Those of us who preach attempt to be sensational at times. We give our sermons fancy titles. A friend of mine has a sermon entitled "Giving the Pig a Permanent Wave". He bases it on the prodigal son. When the prodigal left the hog pen, he turned and gave the swine and sin a permanent wave. He never returned to that place again. Likely, most of us have heard of the sermon, "Nots in the Devil's Tale"; N-O-T-S in the Devil's T-A-L-E. It's based on the story of Satan's tempting Eve in the garden. The old timers used to preach a sermon entitled "No Infidels in Hell." The

people wondered what it was all about. The catch was when an unbelieving man stands before God, he will know God exists and will not be cast into torment as an infidel. His infidelity will have fled when he is confronted by God. So, no infidels will be in Hell for they will all believe in God.

The sermon to be preached by Jesus doesn't have a catchy title. As a matter of fact, it can be summed up in one word that has only five letters, W-O-R-K-S. In Revelation 20:12 John said, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Someone says, "Works are not important." Let's see if that is correct. James said, "Faith without works is dead." He also said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Paul, in the book of Titus, said we should be careful to maintain good works. Furthermore, he said we are to maintain good works for necessary uses. In Philippians he wrote that we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Jesus in writing to the seven churches in Asia, said at least seven times, "I know thy works." In Revelation 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Over and over we read of works. We are going to be judged upon the basis of our works. According to Matthew 25:41-43 Jesus will say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; For I was hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." What are those? Works! But, still some contend that works are not important. Are clothes important on a cold winter day? I would far rather stand without any clothing on my body in the severest blizzard you can imagine as to stand before God without works! If you stand before the Lord in that condition, you will be naked of righteousness. We are going to be judged upon

the basis of our works. That will be the Lord's sermon.

REACTION TO THE SERMON

There will be various reactions to the sermon which I am preaching. When you leave some of you will say, "I enjoyed it. I thought it was a good sermon." Some will say, "I didn't like it. I didn't appreciate his emphasis at a given point. I didn't like his closing remarks." That's your business. Go right ahead and criticize. Preachers criticize others. We ought to be able to take some ourselves. Shortly after conducting his first meeting, a young preacher was talking to an older preacher. The veteran preacher asked, "Son, what kind of meeting did you have?" In reply, the boy said, "We had a good meeting." The old timer asked, "Did you make anyone mad during the meeting?" The youth said, "No sir." Then the old timer said, "Did you make anyone sad? Did you see any tears shed?" Again the youngster answered, "No sir." The veteran then asked, "Did you make anybody glad? Did you have any shouting?" Once more the young preacher said, "No sir." In conclusion, the old timer remarked,, "Son, you didn't have much of a meeting. If you don't make them mad, sad, or glad, you're not doing much." That is right. When one preaches the gospel of Christ, it will produce one of those three reactions.

After our Lord has spoken in the meeting of all meetings, there will be reactions to his sermon. Some are going to like it. Consider the five and two talent men whom you can read about in Matthew twenty-five. Do you remember the story? A certain Lord called in three of his servants and gave one five talents, another two talents, and another one talent. The master then went into a far country, but after awhile he returned for a reckoning with his servants. The five talent man had used his and had five more. In other words, he had increased by one hundred percent. The two talent man used his so that he had two more. He had also increased by one hundred percent. What did the Lord say to those two? "Well done good and faithful servants. You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

That is a picture of judgment and it deals with works. They used the talents which had been committed to them by the Lord. Don't you know such people will rejoice to hear Christ's lesson on works in the day of judgment? Take Paul, for example. He said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Paul will be happy when judgment takes place for he will be permitted to sweep through Heaven's pearly portals and tread upon its golden streets. He will be allowed to bask in the sunlight of God's love with all the redeemed of all the ages while eternity rolls on.

But, some will not like our Lord's sermon. Consider the one talent man. When he gave an account to his master he said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth." Remember, this is a picture of the judgment. The Lord has given His discussion on works. The one talent man complained. What was his complaint? He said, "Lord, you're too hard." I have heard people talk about hard preachers. Incidentally, I am not sure what hard preaching is. Some of the hardest preaching I have ever done has been on love or my responsibility to pray faithfully and loyally day by day. But, generally, when we talk about hard preachers, we mean men who tear large strips of hide from the backs of the unprepared. There is not a preacher on the top side of the Lord's earth who can approach the severity and hardness of Jesus when He is dealing with a rebel. You can lift clenched fists before the throne of God. You can say day after day, "God Almighty, I am not going to live right." If that is your attitude, Christ will deal severely with you! Millions, like the one talent man, will say, "Lord, you are a hard man."

The uncharitable will not be happy with Christ's sermon. In the day of judgment, Jesus will discuss feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, caring for

strangers, and visiting the sick and imprisoned. The uncharitable will ask, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" In reply, the Lord will say, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Those who have not been benevolent will not care for Christ's lesson on works. We are doing a lot of arguing about how to take care of the needy. I suppose it's healthy for us to argue about some of these things, if we don't carry on the discussion ad infinitum. But for whatever it's worth to you, I would rather have done right in the wrong way than not to have done it at all. Even in Hell, I would have more respect for myself for assisting the needy in the wrong way than for not having assisted them at all. Some fellows are doing a lot of knocking who are not doing any practicing. There is no argument about the fellow who preaches something he doesn't practice. There is absolutely no room for debate there. Obviously, he is not what he ought to be. If we don't take care of the needy, we will miss Heaven.

After hearing the Lord's discourse, some will say, "Let us in anyway." Do you remember the parable of the wise and foolish maidens? Jesus said a girl was going to get married and she had ten bridesmaids. The bridegroom tarried in his coming. They all went to sleep. About midnight the cry went forth, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." The girls awakened and begin to trim their lamps. The wise had plenty of oil, but the unwise did not have enough. Their lamps were about to go out and they said to the wise, "Give us of your oil." The wise said, "We can't. We would not have enough for ourselves." So, the foolish left and went to buy some more oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom took his bride and the five bridesmaids to his father's house. They shut the door and had the marriage ceremony. Then they began the marriage feast. The five foolish girls came a little later and heard the music inside. They rapped on the door and said, "Lord, Lord, open to us." That is a picture of judgment. Many of us, after hearing what Jesus says, recognizing that we are going to be lost eternally, will say

"Lord, you must open up and let me in. You just have to let me in."

Some of us gold bricked our way through the army. We cheated our way through college. We have evaded and dodged every serious responsibility in our work. As a matter of fact, we have drifted from one job to another. Every time a serious situation arises, it seems we are able to find a knot hole and squeeze through. Abraham Lincoln once said, "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time. I submit to you that you can't fool God any time. However, a lot of us think when we stand before the Lord, we will find that proverbial knot hole. We seem to think that somehow justice will be perverted. You will not pull the wool over God's eyes. What is your name? That doesn't matter to God. What kind of a family did you come from? That doesn't matter to God. How much money do you have? That doesn't matter to God. It's character that counts with the Lord. You might say, "Lord, you must let me in. After all, look who I am." It's what you are, not who you are, that will count with God.

Then, there are those who will be unhappy because they have followed humanly devised schemes. They have not obeyed the will of the Lord. According to Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus will say, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Those are religious people. But, Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you." What's the trouble? They have religion, but not the religion ordained by God. Every religion is to be tried by fire. When the storm of judgment sweeps across your religion, will it stand? Is it authorized? Is it ordained by the scriptures or is it something built upon the foundation of men? We need to get back to the Bible. What saith the scriptures? What saith the law? Your religion and

mine will be tested. The only religion that will stand is the one in harmony with the teachings of the New Testament.

CONFESSIONS AND DISMISSAL

The Bible says that it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment. We have two divine appointments, death and judgment, and there is no second chance in between. On judgment day, no invitation song will be used to get people to accept Christ as Savior. The invitation, of course, is extended in this life. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The time for accepting the invitation is now, not then. Please do not misunderstand. There are going to be plenty of confessions on that day. Philippians two teaches that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father. Wouldn't it be better for you to say now, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God", than to be forced by God to say it on the day of judgment? You are going to confess Christ. It's just a matter of whether you will do it now when it will count or do it then. Every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall confess. You're going to confess Jesus one day, but we would rather see you confess Him now so you can be saved.

If you will allow me to press the figure a little, when our Lord has delivered the lesson, when the people have given their reactions to His sermon, there will be a dismissal prayer. In a few minutes, we will call on a brother to dismiss us. We will all bow our heads and the brother will say, "Dismiss us with Thy care and keeping and bring us back together tomorrow night at the appointed time," or words to that effect. Well, our Lord will lead the dismissal prayer. He will say, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and His angels." He will also say, "Come ye blessed of my Father; Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then, that assembly will be dismissed. We will go home. Some will go to a

home of everlasting Hell, from which there is no escape. Some will go to everlasting life to be with God, Christ, the angels, and all the worthies of all ages. In that home, there will be no sorrows, tears, unhappiness, or crying for the former things will have passed away.

My friends, what you do with Jesus here will determine what He does with you there. We are a marvelously blessed people. This evening I ask you, "What are you going to do with Jesus?" You can sit here in the comfort of this air conditioned auditorium and decide what to do with Jesus. But, in the day of judgment the question will be, "What will Jesus do with you?" You will want Him to receive you then, therefore, you must accept Him now. Christians are hoping and praying that you will obey the Lord. Please come to Christ as we stand and sing.

Tomorrow

Sunday, August 9, 1964

It will be necessary for us to exert an extra special effort to be quiet since we have such a large attendance tonight. When we begin to sing the hymn of invitation, it will be imperative that you not make a rush for the doors. This is the last night of our meeting. We would like to see scores of people answer the invitation and be saved. Our primary purpose in being here is to say and do those things that will bring men, women, boys and girls to a saving faith in the Son of God. When we begin to sing the invitation song, please be very quiet and reverent. For the benefit of those who are visiting with us for the first night, when we start singing, our ushers will turn and face the audience. If you want to answer the invitation, step out into the aisle and one of the ushers will take you by the hand or arm and assist you in getting to the front to do the Lord's will. We have a lot of people at the front. I'm sure the people in the first three or four rows will not mind moving into the hall during the singing of the invitation. In this way, those who are lost in sin can come and be seated here at the front.

GRATITUDE

Before beginning tonight's lesson, I shall express my gratitude to some of those who have made this endeavor a success. I am grateful to the elders of the Sunset church for the wisdom and forethought they have put into this meeting. I am deeply indebted to them for exercising the oversight of this great effort. Secondly, I am thankful to Brethren Loyd Smith, Jack Hardcastle, and Eugene Smith who have worked so hard behind the scenes to make this effort a reality. Thirdly, I am grateful to Brother Paul Epps for the tremendous job he has done in directing the singing. The success of this meeting, to a large extent, is due to the outstanding work Paul has done here each night. I am grateful to Brother Jack Banister, the silver tongued orator of Dallas, for the splended way in which he has handled the responses. I am grateful to Brethren

Hulen Jackson and Eldred Stevens for doing the baptizing each night. I hope Eldred gets a baptizing cramp in his arm this evening. I appreciate the scores of ministers in this vicinity who have assisted us with the responses each night. I am grateful to the hundreds of men who have served as ushers in this meeting. Believe you me, these men have done their work well. There is one group that might be overlooked. The ladies who have worked in the nursery deserve a hearty thanks. Right now, they are fighting 150 to 175 wild young'uns. I want you to know that those women have made a tremendous contribution to this meeting. Jim Ellender is with the children now in his clown costume. He has been back there since six o'clock entertaining the youngsters. He is also making a terrific contribution to the success of this meeting. All of us really appreciate the work that's been done in the nursery. I have two little ones and I can appreciate what the ladies have done here. I am grateful to all of the Christians who have come from a distance to be with us. We have had bus loads of brethren to come from Fort Worth, Ardmore, Lubbock, and Shreveport. We have had a lot of others to drive their own automobiles. I am thankful to you for the prayers you have prayed, for the services you have attended and for the invitations you have extended to others. I am particularly grateful tonight for God, our Father, who gave Jesus for our sins. I am thankful for Jesus who was willing to suffer and die on the cross that we might be saved. I am grateful to the Holy Spirit for inspiring men in the long ago to write upon the sacred pages of the New Testament the very words of God. We have had a great meeting, my friends and brethren, and I hope it will be a greater one before we come to the close tonight.

"TOMORROW" HAS BROUGHT DISASTER

If you are not a Christian and an individual says something to you about getting right with God, you might be tempted to say, "Well, I am going to attend to the matter a little later. Perhaps I'll do the Lord's will tomorrow." When you say you are going to do something about saving your soul tomorrow, four things are evident. In the first place, you recognize the

need for making a change. Secondly, you see that change is rather distasteful and unpleasant. Thirdly, you believe it's going to be easier to change tomorrow than today. In the fourth place, you believe there is going to be a tomorrow for you. If you didn't believe you had another day to live, then, of course, you would answer the invitation today instead of putting it off until tomorrow.

May I submit to you, in the very outset of this discussion, that tomorrow has been disastrous for literally multitudes of people. It has been disastrous for some in the academic realm. Next month we will begin a new semester at Harding College. We will have about 350 to 400 freshmen students come to the school for their first time. Semester assignments will be made. After a day or two in classes they will know they are to write several term papers, make a few book reports, and do several thousand pages of outside reading. However, some will say, "We have four and a half months to get all of that work in; why get in a rush?" Somehow time has a way of marching on. About two weeks before the final examinations it will dawn on some of those young people that the term papers have not been written, the outside reading has not been done, and the book reports have not been made. So, they will have to work night and day to do all of this work. In addition to it, they must prepare for the final examinations. Of course, you know what's going to happen to many of them. They will get one legged A's. For the benefit of those of you who haven't been initiated into that kind of terminology, a one legged A is an F. In most instances, they are given to students who counted on tomorrow. When I was a student in college two of my friends passed a Chemistry course in one night. They stayed up all night long and drank several pots of black coffee, but they passed their final exam in Chemistry. Each of them made a D—, if you call that passing. Maybe you wonder how I know they stayed up all night. Well, I stayed up until 3:30 in the morning studying on a literature examination myself!

Tomorrow has also been disastrous to people in the medical realm. The father of one of my uncles accidentally shot himself one day with an old shot gun. He went to the doctor.

The doctor gave him some medication for his wounded knee. The man went back home and used some home remedies in addition to what the doctor had given him. He continued to get worse. Sometime later he returned to the doctor. When he arrived the second time, it was too late to do anything for him. Gangrene had set up in his knee and in a short time he died. He waited so long he lost his life. A mile from where I was reared there lived a boy about three years my senior. One night he lay in bed cramping to death. He begged his mother and daddy not to take him to the doctor or hospital. They lived about 13 miles from the nearest doctor and hospital. They didn't have a telephone or an automobile. Likely, they thought, "We will take him to the doctor tomorrow. There isn't any need in getting in a rush about it. After all, he has had these cramps in times past." But, that young man didn't live to see the light of another day. His appendix ruptured that night. The poison spread throughout his system and he was a corpse before morning. It seems that his mother and daddy counted on tomorrow, but tomorrow was too late for him.

Tomorrow has been a calamity for people in the military realm, too. My hobby is the Civil War. I have visited Savanah Tennessee on two different occasions. While there, I went out to the Shiloh battlefield. In April, 1862, two large armies were maneuvering in the same vicinity near Savanah. Bright and early on Sunday morning,, April 6, a Confederate patrol overran Union pickets. That was the beginning of the Battle of Shiloh, if you are from the South, or the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, if you are from the North. The South named their battles after man made edifices. They named this one after the Shiloh church building. The North, however, named their battles after natural sites so they called this one the Battle of Pittsburg Landing. At any rate, the battle started early that Sunday morning. Young men fought one another with all of the tenacity of their souls. Hundreds of them fell to the ground never to rise again. By mid-afternoon it was obvious that the South was going to win a great victory. However, in the course of the afternoon's fight Albert Sidney Johnston, one of the South's brightest military minds, was struck in

the leg by a Minnie ball. He had sent his personal physician to attend Confederate wounded, hence, he had no one to see after his needs. He was carried to a little ravine located nearby, and, in a few short minutes, he bled to death. P. G. T. Beauregard took control of the Confederate forces and directed them for the remainder of the day. By night fall it was almost certain that the South would win the Battle of Shiloh. However, Beauregard reasoned, "My troops are weary and worn. They've fought hard and well all day long. I am going to allow them to rest tonight and tomorrow we will renew the battle." He should have pressed his opportunity. He should have taken advantage of the enemy. He had Grant's army under the banks of the Tennessee River. But, that night the situation changed. Don Carlos Buel reinforced Grant with 25,000 troops. Lew Wallace, who later wrote Ben Hur, had been unable to find the battle during the day, but he found it that night. He brought 5,000 more troops across the Tennessee River. The next day when the battle was renewed, Grant had 30,000 fresh troops. It was a different story. Personally, I feel that the Battle of Shiloh was fought to a draw, but it was a tactical victory for the North. Why? Because a general said, "I will wait until tomorrow." On April 7, the Southern forces had to pull back to Corinth, Mississippi. Just a year later Vicksburg fell. At the time Lincoln said, "The Father of Waters flows once more unvexed to the sea." The Confederacy was split down the middle. Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and two Confederate territories were on the western side of the Mississippi. The rest was on the eastern side. If one man had not said, "Tomorrow," it might have been a different story at Shiloh. It might have been different at Corinth. It might have been different at Vicksburg, and it might have meant a difference in the outcome of the Civil War. I don't want anybody to misunderstand me. Since I live a hundred years this side of the Civil War, surely, I can make this statement without being in danger — I am glad it turned out like it did. But I still say it might have been different if one man had not said, "Tomorrow."

There is a story like that one in the Bible. Perhaps you remember that Absalom plotted against his father David. The

conspiracy was so strong that David had to leave Jerusalem. He went across the Jordan River. Absalom arrived at Jerusalem, turned to his two counselors, Hushai and Ahithophel, and asked, "Men, what's my next move?" Ahithophel said, "Give me 12,000 troops. I will find David and kill him. Your opposition will be destroyed. Then, you can reign as king over the land." Absalom then asked Hushai's counsel. Hushai pretended to be with Absalom, but his heart was still with David. He said, "This is not good counsel. Wait awhile. Get a vast army together as numberless as the sands of the seashore. Then, cross the Jordan River and fight against David. If you attack David now, since he and his men are like bears who have been robbed of their cubs, they'll fight so strongly you will be driven back in defeat." That was poor counsel, but Absalom accepted it. He waited. Finally, he and his army crossed the Jordan and engaged his father's army in the forest of Ephraim. In the course of that battle Absalom was signally defeated. Furthermore, while riding his mule his head became entangeld in the boughs of a great oak tree. The mule ran out from under him and left him suspended in mid-air. When Joab found him, he plunged three darts into his heart and killed him. His body was thrown into a hole in the ground and rocks were piled up over him. When you go to Jerusalem and they point at the tomb of Absalom, you may be sure that isn't Absalom's tomb. He was buried a long way from Jerusalem. He counted on tomorrow. Because he waited, he lost the battle and his life.

How many people have lost their souls because they have counted on tomorrow? In Acts, chapter 17 we read that the apostle Paul spoke to the Athenian philosophers on Mars *Hill.* When he finished that great lesson, some of them said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." But, there is no indication that those people ever heard the peerless apostle again. They should have accepted their opportunity that day, but they waited. I was in a meeting with a rural church in Eastern Arkansas. A middle-aged man and his wife attended the first night of that meeting. They were fine people in many respects. They were successful farmers. They were looked to as leaders in the community, but neither of them were Christians. Many

of the brethren were greatly encouraged because that fine couple attended the meeting. At the start of the meeting the two of them sat in the back of the auditorium. As the meeting progressed, they moved closer and closer to the front. Finally, before the meeting came to a close, they were sitting on the second row. The last night of the meeting arrived. I finished my sermon, and we sang an invitation song. They didn't respond. I took some time for exhortation and we sang another hymn. Still, they didn't come. Well, we sang and exhorted for quite awhile and that meeting came to a close without either of them obeying the gospel. Had I been a gambling man, I would have given you odds that we would have baptized both of them, but we didn't reach either one of them. Shortly, after the meeting was over the man was speaking to a Christian friend of mine and said, "Ottie, I should have become a Christian." Ottie said, "Well, of course, you should have been baptized during that meeting." A few years later I received a telephone call from the man's niece. She said, "Jimmy, Uncle Blank was injured in an accident. We took him to the hospital and thought he was getting better, but he took a sudden turn for the worse and died. We want you to preach his funeral." She added, "Remember, he wasn't a Christian." I said, "All right, I'll be there." So, the next day I went to the funeral home to do the service. When I walked in the door, the mortician came to me. He said, "I have a letter for you. You must read it before you do the service." I opened the letter and read it. It was from the niece. She wrote, "Please remember, he was not a Christian." Well, I knew that. I had been in the meeting when he was almost converted. She was scared silly that I would stand and tell everybody what had happened to him. Suppose you had to preach a service for a man like that. He was fully persuaded and convinced that Jesus was the Christ. He intended to do something about it, but just never did get the job done. Now, what would you have said? Talk about a problem; preachers have a problem when they have to preach that kind of funeral. If you want us to preach you into heaven, live so we can. In that funeral sermon, I said almost nothing about the deceased. I simply "went everywhere preaching the word." He intended

to die saved, but his confidence in tomorrow ruined him.

One of the sweetest women I have ever known was speaking to a Christian sister and said, "Sadie, I haven't been living right. I need to make a public acknowledgment of my sins." This I know, before she ever made that public confession, she was dead. When Brother E. R. Harper preached her funeral he said, "Sister Blank was a Christian. She didn't always live as she should. She made mistakes, but we hope, as a child of God, she called upon the Lord in prayer and received forgiveness." He used that line of thought in an attempt to comfort the family. "Tomorrow" is dangerous business. Someone has written: "On the plains of hesitation lie the bleached bones of countless millions who at the very dawn of victory sat down to rest and, in resting, died." If vice has slain its thousands, surely procrastination has slain its tens of thousands. If you are counting on tomorrow, I hope you will quit counting on it.

WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING

Solomon said in Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Don't boast about what you are going to do tomorrow. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. Tomorrow you could be so hardened and calloused as to make it almost impossible to change. I once read about a poor farmer in Texas. Incidentally, I didn't know they had any poor people in Texas until I read that article. He wished he had money so he could give it to the church. Shortly after that, oil was found on his property and almost overnight he became very rich. Well, he wasn't giving any money, so one of the brethren went to him and said, "You remember what you said?" In reply, the farmer said, "When I had the desire, I didn't have the money. Now that I have the money, I don't have the desire." Perhaps you have the desire to do the Lord's will tonight. Maybe you are almost persuaded. Maybe you are about convinced, but tomorrow that desire may not be there. My friends, it's a matter of acting upon that good impulse or it may leave you. It may flee from you.

I read that there's a road sign in Canada which reads, "Be careful which rut you take for you'll not get out for the next

25 miles." That's a pretty good set of ruts, I'd say. I believe the sign erected along life's highway ought to be: "Be careful which course you pursue or you may never change." Habits are atrocious things. They get a hold on our lives. When first begun, they are like silken threads which even a child's finger can snap, but, as they are persisted in day after day, they become steel cables that even the giant's strength is unable to break. If I had a piece of string, I could go to Brother Loyd Smith and put the string around him. With little difficulty, he could get up. I could put another string around him and he could still get up. However, if he'll just sit there long enough, I can wrap enough string around him so he can't get up without lifting the chair with him. Habits are that way. I have two sheets of a sermon outline on the platform. Very easily I could tear them in half. Add another sheet and I could tear them. But, let the thing get as thick as the Dallas telephone directory, then try to tear it in half. When you start trying to change sinful habits, when you start trying to get out of evil, you will learn it's more of a problem than you may have anticipated.

I was in a gospel meeting where nine grandparents were baptized. Seven of them were over 70 years of age. All nine of those people went back into sin. They all went back into the world. One old timer was baptized the last night of the meeting. I went back to the community the next year for a similar effort and I learned that he hadn't been inside the church building since the meeting the year before. Do you know why they went back into sin? Because they had been in sin so long they found it next to impossible to change. Now, I am not trying to discourage any older people. If you are past 70 or 80 and want to do God's will badly enough, you can do it. But, I am saying it's harder for a 70 year old to make a change than it is for a 13 year old. I obeyed my Lord when I was 19. That was 15 years ago. Sin had such a strong hold on my life then that it was difficult to change. Had I waited from that time until now, I don't know whether I could have changed or not.

I know a boy who enrolled at Harding College in 1946. The first two years he was at Harding he went to a Bible class

five days a week. The last two years he attended Bible classes three days a week. All four years he went to chapel services five days a week. Most of those chapel services had a religious orientation. He was graduated in 1950 and was not a child of God. Here it is 1964. I know he has been saying "No" to God for 18 years. He was a fine athlete, a fierce competitor, a very good friend of mine, one who has been successful in Arkansas business, a man you can't keep from loving, but he's not a Christian. I hope I am wrong about it, but I think he'll die and go to Hell. I don't think he will ever change. He's said "No" to God so long he probably won't change.

Some people say, "Well, I can take it or leave it." Have you ever heard somebody say that about a questionable practice? Believe you me, when a man says that, he is taking it. I don't care what it is. He's taking it. Others say, "I am going to quit sin when I get ready." How do you know when you get ready to quit sin, sin is going to be ready to quit you? So many people think getting out of evil is as simple as falling off the proverbial log backwards. Sin is pictured in the Bible as a tyrannical and dictatorial power which exercises absolute authority and sovereign majesty over the souls of those who are living in disobedience. The longer you stay in sin, the harder it's going to be for you to get out. It will never be easy to make a break with Satan, but it will be easier tonight than at any time in the future.

I once read about a carrion bird on an ice floe. The floe was drifting down the Niagara River above the falls. The bird was feeding on the carcass of a dead animal, as the floe came near and nearer the falls. I suppose if birds think, he thought that at the last moment he would flap his mighty pinions and fly away. Sure enough, when the ice floe came to the edge of the falls, he began to flap those wings with the intention of flying away, but it was too late. His feet were frozen to the ice and over he went. So many of us, I am pursuaded, are going to change at the eleventh hour, but we fool around and die at five minutes till eleven. Somehow, we don't quite get the job done.

Paul said, in I Timothy 4:1-2, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the

faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Some of the older people here can remember when the blacksmith was an important individual in the community. A blacksmith could put a piece of metal in the forge, let it get white hot, grab the end sticking out, throw it up on the anvil, hammer it into the shape which suited him, and throw it into the water. When I was in Physical Science class, I learned that if you heat one end of a piece of metal, by a molecular process, the heat is transferred to the other end. Whether you have been in a science class or not, you know that is true. When one end of a piece of metal is hot, the other end will be hot, too. How could a blacksmith hold hot metal without being burned? He had a seared hand. Paul said a conscience can get that way.

When I was a little fellow, we didn't have but eight months of school. I guess some of you young people would be delighted to have that today. We had eight months of school and four months to work. Just as soon as school was out, my shoes came off. I am probably talking to a "high falootin" group tonight. Likely, you have never been barefooted in your life, but I went barefoot. When I first took my shoes off, I had to tip toe across the gravel road next to the house because my feet were so tender. However, by the time summer was over some of us could run down the road and you could almost see the sparks fly from our heels. Do you know why? We had callouses on our feet. We used to sit on the front porch and see how far we could push a needle into those callouses before hitting the quick. The Bible indicates that a man's heart can get that way. It can become callcused and seared over. There's not anything worse than hearing a gospel sermon which doesn't affect you at all. Some people hear gospel preaching and say, "I am bored stiff. I wish I were some place else. I surely would like to go to sleep." That is a serious condition to get into, believe me. If you can't feel the cutting edge of God's word, there's not a situation any worse than that. When you get to the point where hearing the gospel is like pouring water on a duck's back, brother, that is pathetic indeed. I have heard people go out of the assembly and say, "If I hadn't been a Christian, I would have obeyed the gospel tonight."

Just maintain that attitude, brethren. Yet, men preach, beg, plead, and pray for the salvation of the lost and some hardly bat an eye. They say, "Why get excited?" Their hearts are calloused and seared. They are hardened in sin.

In Ephesians 4:19 the Bible speaks of those who are past feeling. Brother Walter Calvert is here tonight. A couple of years ago, I was in a meeting with Walter and the church in Benton, Arkansas. They have a fine dentist in that congregation. That dentist was working on my teeth in the morning and I was trying to preach at night. One day about noon the doctor finished with me and said, "Jim, let's go eat." I said, "Let's call Walter and he'll go with us." The three of us went to a restaurant, ordered steaks and sat down to eat. I was really enjoying mine until it dawned on me that I was biting my own cheek. Did you ever do that? Do you know why I did it? One side of my face was dead! There was Novocain in that jaw and I couldn't feel a thing! I believe a man can get that way with reference to his own soul. I think Satan is a pretty good dentist. He has shot some of us through with spiritual Novocain. We can't feel anything.

In the community where I grew up there was an old timer who at one time had been a pillar and bulwark in the church. However, when he was old, he became wicked. All the meanness is not in the youngsters. There's not anyone any meaner than a mean old man or a mean old woman. This man became wicked. He was past 70. When I went back home to conduct my first meeting, he came out to hear me. I thought, "That man used to be faithful to the Lord. Maybe I can do something with him." I went to visit him. I said, "Brother Blank, you used to be strong in the church. You were a leader in this congregation. You would get on horseback and ride 15 or 20 miles to hear a religious discussion or to listen to a gospel sermon. Why don't you come back and start over again?" He asked, "Jimmy, do you know about the man mentioned in Hebrews 6?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "That is me; I can't change." What does Hebrews 6 say? It says, "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come and then

fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." That brother said, "It's impossible for me to repent." I said, "You are bound to be wrong about it. You have attended the meeting. You have shown some concern for your soul. Surely, you can make a change." He insisted that he could not. Well, the meeting came to a close. He didn't make a move. A few months later, I went back into that community. I was driving down the road and saw his good wife, a fine Christian woman, standing in her front yard. I stopped the car and said, "Hello, Sister Blank, how are you getting along?" She said, "I am fine." I asked, "How's Brother Blank?" Now, that was a terrible mistake. I put my foot in my mouth. She said, "Jimmy, we buried him a few weeks ago." That man went to his grave saying he could not repent. He may have been wrong about it. Maybe he could have repented, but for all practical purposes he couldn't! He didn't do it! He had a calloused heart. Tomorrow you could be in the same predicament.

Tomorrow you could be dead. There are probably 12,000 people here tonight. It could happen to one of us between now and tomorrow. Hebrews 9:27 states that "it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment." Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We must die sometime. Every figure used in the Bible sets forth the view that life is brief. Life is like a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. It's like a tale that is told. It's like grass that withers in the heat of the noon day sun. It's like a shadow upon the earth and there is none abiding. One day we must die and you could be dead tomorrow. In I Samuel 28 we read that King Saul had his troops drawn up for battle near Mount Gilboa. He was preparing to meet the Philistine troops at Shunem. He called upon God in prayer and asked for direction. The Lord didn't answer him by prophets. He didn't answer him by Urim and Thumin. He didn't answer him at all. What was Saul to do? He asked, "Is there a medium or sorceress near by?" He was taken to the witch of Endor. He said, "Bring

up Samuel." She went through her hocus pocus and Samuel came up. She didn't bring him up. She was as frightened as anybody there. She had been practicing sorcery across the years, and it was the first time it had worked. Really, God Almighty overruled on that occasion and Samuel came back from the dead. Samuel said, "Why have you disquieted me?" Saul said he couldn't get instruction from the Lord. He wanted to know about the future. Samuel said, "Tomorrow you and yours sons will be with me." Sure enough, the next day Saul and his three sons were killed in battle with the Philistines. Tomorrow brought death to them.

Last fall, a sweet Christian teacher at Harding College, Sister Ruby Stapleton, went out one evening to do a washing at a washateria. It was about 10:00 when she left home. Two renegades came into that washateria, led her out, put her in an automobile, stuffed a piece of cotton in her throat as big as a man's fist, drove down a gravel road to a dry bayou, stepped off about 135 steps, threw her body into the bayou, and, as an afterthought, cut her clothing from her body. We tried to find her, but in vain. She lay under the hot blazing sun of that Indian summer for eleven days before she was located. When found, had it not been for bridge work, it would have been impossible to have identified her. She was a lovely Christian lady. She had been teaching at Harding for more than thirty years. Surely, she had all of her work planned for the next day. She had no idea of dying that night, but she didn't see the light of another day.

So many of us think we are going to live to be a hundred. We picture ourselves in a clean bedroom or a lovely hospital room. There, we will very gently slip into eternity. But, for many of us, death will come with shocking suddenness. We will be driving down the highway and boom; we are dead and gone. Hurled into eternity without warning! Brother G. C. Brewer said, "Death will come to me in my 72nd year." How many people will sit down with pen in hand and write the year that death will come to them? Brewer knew he was dying with cancer. Very few people know when death is coming to them. I know this, one of these days our loved ones and friends will walk past a box and look into our cold ashen

features. They will talk about how natural we look. You may not want to think about death, but it's real. A mortician, speaking in Arkansas two or three years ago, said, "There are plenty of people who refuse to take out a burial policy because they don't want to think about dying." Well, we need to think about it. An old timer in the southern part of our state said to me one day, "Brother Jim, I am living to die." He's living a full and abundant life, but he is living to die. You're going to die regardless of how you live. It may be tomorrow. Nine of the young men with whom I attended Harding College are dead. None of them saw 30 years of age. One of the finest athletes we had in school left this world when he was 26 years old. He was outstanding in basketball, track, and football, but he's gone.

Tomorrow could bring the judgment. The Bible says no man knows the day nor the hour. It could be tomorrow. If judgment were to come tomorrow, what kind of a day would it be for you? Would it be a day of wrath, vengeance, and fear? Would you call for the rocks and hills to fall upon you to shield you from the presence of the Lamb? Would you learn by experience that it's a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God? Would you know God as an all consuming fire? Or, would it be a day of joy and happiness? Would it be a day of reward? Shortly after I became a Christian, I was involved in some devilment. I remember saying, "Oh, God, don't come now. Give me an opportunity to get this thing worked out first." The idea of the second coming, the end of the world, and judgment were real to me! Any time the end could come.

Bible emphasis is not on tomorrow; it's on today. A moment ago, one of our brethren, in his prayer, made reference to this passage. Jesus said, in John 9:4, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh when no man can work." Jesus said, at Matthew 21:28, "Go this day and work in my vineyard." Hebrews 3:15, says, "Today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The Latins had an expression "carpe diem," which means "seize today." At II Corinthians 6:1-2, Paul said, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive

not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." If you will come now, N-O-W, you will have W-O-N. You need to come now.

This is the last night of our meeting. We have a tremendous crowd assembled. Many of you are almost Christians. You are near the kingdom of God. You are going to do it some day. Why not tonight? We ask you to be very quiet. We ask every Christian to pray silently, "Let the lost be saved." If you are lost, come and answer this invitation tonight. Ushers, perhaps you are ready to get in your places so you can assist those who want to come. Please do not be timid about obeying the Lord. We would be delighted to see you come. This is the time of decision. This is the last night of the meeting. You ought to be a Christian. You ought to be saved. If you will believe in the Lord and be baptized, you will leave here tonight a Christian and a member of the Lord's church. If you haven't been living right, you can come to the front and we will pray with you and for you. While we stand and sing, you come.