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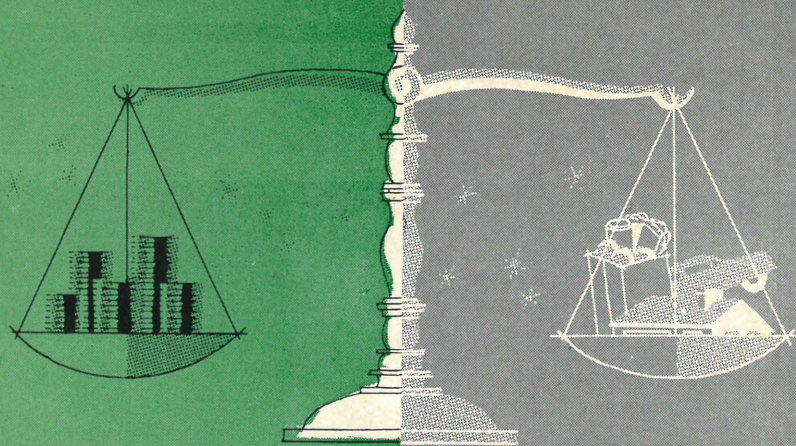
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# HOW MUCH DO YOU WEIGH?

*and other messages by*  
**WILLIAM WARD AYER, D.D.**

*As given over* **The Bible Institute Hour - Los Angeles 17, California**

## HOW MUCH DO YOU WEIGH?

TODAY, people all over America are weight conscious. We study diets, for we want to take off a little or put on a little, so that we will tip the scales just right. But a better question is "How much do you weigh on God's scales?" Judgment is a term which has almost disappeared from the American vocabulary, sometimes even from the speech delivered from the pulpit. How many sermons have you heard lately on the judgment of God? It is a definite part of the New Testament as well as of the Old. We are reminded that knowing the terror of the Lord we should persuade men. Psychiatrists tell men in their frustrations that no human is without fault; we should not bother ourselves with thoughts of sin. They say that nature forgets and time heals all wounds, so these things need not be worried about. I think the difference between our generation and that of our forebears is that while our forebears sinned, they knew they were sinning. When the Spirit of God spoke to them, they knew that they were sinners. When the Gospel of Christ was presented to them, fairly and squarely, they fled to Christ for refuge.

Today we not only sin, but also deny the nature of sin. That is not to say that there is not a truth in these things psychiatrists and psychologists tell us; yet in God's revelation judgment against sin is written prominently. National calamity, the result of forsaking God, is everywhere in history.

There is a fascinating story in Scripture concerning one of God's choicest servants, Daniel, who was the instrument of God to pronounce judgment upon a king and a kingdom. This dedicated Israelite, with his brethren, had been taken from battle into captivity when Nebuchadnezzar had come down and destroyed Jerusalem. In the amazing city of Babylon, with its hanging gardens and tremendous fortresses, Belshazzar (probably a great grandson of Nebuchadnezzar) wanted to show his power as a king. He decided to stage a wild party. In making a great feast for a thousand of his lords and ladies, he provided wine for the mob to drink before the gods. He called for a holy vessel from the temple and endeavored to defile it in the orgy. In the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand and wrote on the wall. The king's countenance was changed. Everyone was frightened at the strange apparition. Belshazzar called for the soothsayers, the magicians, and the wise men of Babylon. None of them could read or interpret the mysterious handwriting. All were helpless to aid the king. It was something that only a godly man could understand. Somebody remembered that Daniel was still alive and that he was a mighty man of God. Daniel prayed to God that he might be able to bear witness when he came to read the writing. First of all, however, he condemned Belshazzar for his wickedness. He said, "And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the

Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; Gold hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:22-28). That night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain and Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about three score and two years old.

Those wild parties used to go on for days in Oriental ancient times. They had been eating and drinking and had been involved in all manner of immorality. Finally, Belshazzar wondered what he could do to liven up the party. He remembered that he had seen in the museum of the palace, the beautiful vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the temple in Jerusalem, vessels of gold and silver. "I'll get those vessels to liven up the party." He had his servants bring them. On one of those vessels was written, "Holiness Unto the Lord." I can see a woman lift her glass, and, in a drunken stupor, "Long live Belshazzar." As she looked at the wall, she gave a scream, "Look, look there on the wall, a hand!" There, slowly, methodically, a hand wrote a message of judgment.

As in the long ago, the hand of judgment writes again, but not against Belshazzar. This time it is against us in America. Judgment is surely coming.

## GOD'S STANDARD OF MEASUREMENT

A SERIOUS question which needs to be asked today is "How much do you weigh in God's scales?" Even as Belshazzar was "weighed in the balances and found wanting," so are we, individually, and as a nation here in America. We are on one side of God's scale, His perfect commandments on the other. The Bible clearly reveals that all men have been found wanting, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Some might ask, "Why did God give the law if He knew we couldn't live up to it?" In the Epistle of the Romans we read, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Paul wrote the church at Galatia, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). Also,

we read, "The law was our schoolmaster [teacher] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). The law, you see, is to show us our need of Christ. And thank God, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. A teacher cannot make you clean, he can only show you and instruct you where you are wrong. You cannot become a Christian by keeping the law even if you try to the utmost. If you go to a mirror and notice that your face is dirty, you do not cleanse yourself with the mirror. You go to water. The law shows that your moral face is dirty. The law cannot cleanse you, but "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains." "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32). God's perfect law reveals us all as sinners so that He might have mercy upon all men. This He has marvelously done through His matchless grace. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile. We are saved by the same Christ and saved in the same way.

You cannot work, earn, or merit your way to heaven. Today, you are on the scales. How much do you weigh? If you are honest, you will have to say, "I do not weigh anything." You are 'way up. You are light weight; the law is heavy and condemns you. The law kills. When it was given on Mount Sinai, the mountain smoked and people could not stand it. But if you will flee to Jesus Christ you will find abundant mercy and pardon with the Saviour.

"Depths of mercy can there be,  
Mercy still reserved for me?  
Can my God His wrath forbear,  
Me the chief of sinners spare?"

While I am on the scales; I have discovered that the weight is perfectly balanced. Do you know who is on the scales on my side with me? Jesus Christ. His righteousness has availed for me. He alone is heavy enough to balance the law. He alone is heavy enough to balance you in the Father's sight, for He alone could keep the whole law. There is no sin in Him. He is our substitute in death, and our representative before the throne of grace.

"Before the throne my surety stands,  
My name is written in His hands."

As you read these words, you can make this same decision for all eternity, too. Say to the Lord Jesus, "I take Thee now as my personal Saviour."

"Come, ev'ry soul by sin oppressed.  
There's mercy with the Lord,  
And He will surely give you rest  
By trusting in His word."

## MAN'S SHORT WEIGHT

WE HAVE been weighing ourselves in the balances and have been found wanting. As we put ourselves on one side of the scales and take God's holy law on the other side, we can get a small idea of just how little we weigh in God's sight.

For this message, let us take three commandments together. The fourth commandment is "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." Sabbath means the day of rest. Let us first make it clear that I am not a legalist, I am not a ceremonialist; but there are two eternal laws of conduct which God has laid down for men. One is that one day in seven is dedicated to Him. The Sabbath in Old Testament prophecy was given to the Jews and never given to anyone else. Every other commandment, except the one concerning the Sabbath, is repeated in the New Testament as a responsibility for us to assume. Once the Lord Jesus is raised from the dead we worship on the Lord's day. The Sabbath is a commemoration of the old creation; we are members of the new creation. When Jesus rose from the dead he brought life and immortality to light. We are not under law, but we need to be in the Spirit dedicating our lives to Him especially on that day. Certainly we ought to serve Him every day, but one day in seven is especially dedicated to Him. Another thing is that one-tenth of our substance and increase should be set aside for His service. We may go far beyond the tithe in offerings, but certainly we would want to give at least a tenth. The first three commandments have to do with man's relationship to God. The last six deal with man's relationship to his fellow man. The fourth commandment in between is a commandment of transition. By Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, our Lord changed the old Jewish sabbath for the Christian to the Lord's Day, commemorating His resurrection. The Lord's Day is Christ's day, and no nation ever trampled on God's day and lived. In the French Revolution one day in ten for rest was tried, but slowly they went back to one in seven. God knows how we are made physically. The mills of God may grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine. The sin and curse of our day is that men, pleasure mad and spiritually crafty, have changed every holy day into a cheap holiday. Sunday has become a slaughter day upon our highways.

The fifth commandment is the key to the next four: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal." These commandments have to do with our fellowmen. They go to the very heart of the social system as we know it today. We need to meditate upon these truths from God.

Children are to obey their parents. This is the first command-

ment with promise. It seems so common today to hear little children "sass" their parents. I was in a church service in California recently where I noticed a woman and her children in the second row from the front. One of the children started doing something she should not, and her mother, of course, tried to stop her. The child began an argument right there in the front of the church. She was only about six or seven years of age; but her mother was foolish enough to argue back. I had to stop preaching until the sin had ceased. I thought of my own home for a moment. Why, if I argued with my father he would have taken me by the nape of the neck and given some applied psychology. Although my mother died before I knew her very well, I remember when she did spank me. She corrected me when I was disobedient. If we wonder why there is so much juvenile delinquency, we can just put it down to delinquent parents. If you do not teach your children to obey you, they will not obey the laws when they are older. God has put your children into your hands to train them in His nurture and admonition. Killing, adultery, and stealing only naturally follow in the life of a child who is improperly reared and who does not honor his parents.

The ninth commandment reads, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Most of us are guilty of this at times, probably many times. The unmindful gossip, the vicious slander, the cutting critic—how prevalent these things are in our churches. I have been in churches where one cannot move forward with evangelism. The reason is that there is too much criticism, too much backbiting, too many of one group who hate the other. The Spirit of God is grieved and disrepute is brought to the name of Christ.

The tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." It takes a big man or woman to be able to see his neighbor prosper spiritually or materially without being envious or covetous. This should be a real caution sign for all of us, for it can lead to terrible sin. The law, we have seen, reveals to us our guilt. Someone should say, "How can we be delivered from the law? Why did God give us the law if a man could not live up to it?" We cannot attain it ourselves, but when we fail in all our imperfection, there is perfection, imputed righteousness in God's sight, that is given to us.

As we come to the throne of grace we are covered by faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and we stand faultless before Almighty God.

"On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

## A CHRISTIAN ON THE SCALES

AS WE discussed in our last message, the law of God is an important and vital thing. While we do not live under law, but under grace, we must not forget that God has given us the law to be a schoolmaster, a child leader, to bring us to Christ. It will do just that, too. So many people say to me, "I guess if you do your best and live up to the Ten Commandments you'll be all right." These people want to turn their backs upon Jesus, turning to the Ten Commandments. I can only say to them, "You never lived up to the Ten Commandments and you never can or will." The only one who lived up to the Ten Commandments was Jesus Christ.

Another one says, "I like the Sermon on the Mount. It is good enough for me." The Beatitudes are nice, but have you read all of the Sermon on the Mount? It is just possible that the Ten Commandments are easier than the Sermon on the Mount or the teachings of Jesus in general. The Ten Commandments say, "Thou shalt not kill." In our society, one has to kill, commit the act, to be a murderer. But in the Sermon on the Mount, in the teachings of Jesus, all he has to do is hate. Jesus said, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." If you are trying to be accepted on the basis of being good, you do not get any help or any comfort from the Sermon on the Mount. The law says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Jesus declared, "He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart." What mere man can stand up before that and not cry out with the leper of old, "Unclean, unclean"? Do not flee to the Sermon on the Mount, rather flee to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave the Sermon on the Mount.

I remember that when I was pastor in Valpariso, Indiana, we had a revival at the very beginning of my ministry. God gave us a number of precious souls. There was a fine business woman, head of a large department store in the city, who came down the aisle in public confession. I said to her, "Are you a member of this church?" She said, "No, I'm not." "Are you a Christian?" I replied. She said, "No, I'm not." I said, "Well, I have seen you in every service since I have been here." She smiled, "Yes, that is right, I always attend. I've been coming here for years. I believe in Christ but I have been kept back from professing Him." I said gently, "Would you care to tell me about it?" She hung her head in shame for a moment, and little tears came to her eyes as she said, "Well, pastor, I know you will hardly believe me but I have not come into the church because I like to play cards. I've always thought a Christian ought not to play cards, but I love to. I would rather play cards than eat." I responded, "Well, playing cards will not send you to hell. I do not believe in cards, but you do not go to hell because you play cards. Even if you quit cards, you would not go to heaven." She replied,

"I know that, but I have had an ideal. I did not think one ought to be a Christian and mingle with these things." She was probably 55 then when she gave her heart to Christ. She did not live very long after that; perhaps five or six years, and then she went home to be with the Lord. I have often thought about that woman. Those cards were an idol as far as she was concerned; they came between her and God.

You know the idol in your life. Take business, for example. How many business men are idolators? Men are after money and more money. They are like the greedy farmer. He steadfastly declared, "I am not greedy. I do not want much land. I only want all the land that adjoins mine. That is a perfect picture of the human heart. Jesus spoke of the man whom God had prospered. He became so materialistically minded that he could only think of building bigger barns. He did not realize that the soul does not feed on the goods that go into barns. The soul has to feed on knowledge, the grace of God, and the bread of Heaven. That night God said, "Thy soul is required of thee." This man is rightly called a FOOL! Beloved, America is foolish. The world is laughing at us today. We pile up our millions trying to buy the rest of the nations with our money. I have traveled all over Europe, and I know that while the people of Europe flee Russia, yet they do not hate her. On the other hand, they take American dollars, but they hate us. It may be that God will bring America to stand alone so that she will realize that in spite of her spending of millions she has no friends. Her only answer is to turn to the God of her founding fathers. We cannot buy global popularity.

Another sin of America is self-righteousness. So many people are trying to work their way to heaven. They are like the Pharisee who said, "I thank Thee, God, that I am not as other men." He had a high opinion of himself. "I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess," and so on. Self-righteousness is extolled in many churches today. The gospel of salvation and repentance is not being preached. People come into the church with the invitation, "Come, just as you are. Do what you are doing now, only do it a little better; join the throng." That is a lie of the devil. That is not what the Bible teaches. It resolutely declares, "You must be born again." You must grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. You must have the witness of the Spirit. If you are a child of God you must be cleansed by the blood. You must go on and start toward holiness and perfection in the power of God. You must confess your sins, knowing that God is faithful and just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. America is a land of many idols, of which the pride of possessions and self-righteousness are but two. God help us to be delivered from such idol worship!

## CHRIST'S IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS EVENS THE SCALES

AS WE look at ourselves, being weighed in the balances, we find that apart from the righteousness of Christ we are nothing but guilty, hell-bound sinners. The perfect Ten Commandments of God reveal this for us. Look at the words of forceful power, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain." That is the third commandment. The universal prevalence of profanity is awful. The bus driver swears at the truckman; the conductor swears at the passengers; the passengers swear at the company. The farmer curses the hired man; the hired man curses the mules; but at least the mules have the decency and common sense to keep quiet.

Even little children have blasphemous words on their baby lips. I remember when I was a student pastor in a little community in central Illinois. Since it was a small town, the people knew me. Walking down the street one day, I noticed two little fellows about six years of age who were fighting about something. One little fellow stuck his fist pretty hard into the other one's eye. Out of that small mouth came a string of oaths which made my blood run cold. Then the mother of the injured came rushing down from her porch. Shaking her boy she said, "I told you not to use these words: I am going to wash out your mouth with soap." When she saw me, knowing that I was the Baptist minister, she declared, "I am sorry that you had to hear this, Reverend." I responded, "Well, he did not take my name in vain. You know, however, that that kind of words does not come out of a child's mind unless somebody teaches him to say them." She shamefacedly replied, "Yes, I told his father that he should not use bad language in his son's presence." I told her solemnly, "You had better remind him of what the Bible says about those who teach little children to use God's name in vain. The Lord Jesus said that it would be better that a millstone were tied around his neck and that he was cast in the depths of the sea, than that one should cause a little one to stumble."

God warns, "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shall thou profane the name of God." Yet, in America today the name of God is profaned all the time. Blasphemers were put to death in Old Testament times. I am sorry for those who take God's name in vain. They do not realize what they are saying; it is possibly a habit of their vocabulary.

Mel Trotter, that great rescue mission man from Grand Rapids, now home with the Lord, was a drunkard and a low-down fellow before he found Christ. He was mightily converted and the Lord changed his life. Thereafter he went everywhere preaching the Gospel. He always preached a good straightforward sermon but in a

rough sort of way. He did not have a great command of English. One day, when he was preaching in London a rather stilted Englishman came up to him and said, "Mr. Trotter, you gave a good message today, but my, you have a very limited vocabulary." Trotter replied, "I guess that's true, but when I got saved God took two-thirds of my vocabulary away from me." It may be a good idea to have it taken away from you.

Before Christ came into my heart I swore all the time. I never thought anything of it. I worked as a printer for a company in Massachusetts which printed school books. If any printer is reading this, he will understand what I mean when I say I used to tighten up or lock up the form. Frequently the key would slip and my knuckles would go down on the face of the type, knocking the skin off, hurting them. In those days I would let out a string of oaths. The fellows working with me were in the habit of hearing that. But when I was saved, the Lord came into my heart. Working in the same place, I never said a word when my hand would slip. One day one of the fellows said to me, "Ah, go on Bill, you say it. You might as well say it as think it." But I said to him, "Do you know, the strange thing is, I don't even think it now." It was true, for God had wrought the change. With the Lord Jesus in his heart one will not want to say such things.

I am suspicious of those who are always swearing. One doing this might say he is a Christian while taking God's name in vain. You might slip as did Peter, but I do not believe you have Christ in your heart if you constantly take the holy name as a vehicle for the expression of every evil that comes out of the cesspool of an unregenerate soul. Search your heart to find out if you are right with the Lord. Suppose, in eternity, God would pull all your blasphemies and filthy words out of the atmosphere and pour them back into your ears? I do not believe you could take it, my friend. I know I couldn't. It is a terrible thing to take God's name in vain. Yet, concerning this matter of blasphemy, there is cleansing and forgiveness. What has Jesus ever done that you should blaspheme His name? He left heaven's glory, where angels veiled their faces in His presence, and came down to earth to work among men. He knew the scoffing, the scourging, the scorn, and the shame; and He took your cross and my cross that we might go free.

## AN EXAMPLE OF FOLLY

BELSHAZZAR had a specific purpose in his wild debauchery and sacrilege. In desecrating God's name and the things dedicated unto God, he led his nation into a path of degradation and sin. How wicked to desecrate God's gifts to us here in America (and *it is* being done). The mighty things which God has permitted us to have, have

written upon them, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD." They should not be used for any other purpose.

In their wild raucous celebration Belshazzar and his people were proud of their own accomplishments (as men usually are). Belshazzar boasted that his city had walls so thick and so high that one could race chariots around about them. History clearly reveals that Babylon was a tremendous city. They had enough supplied in granaries for twenty years. They could have stood seige for two decades. The tributaries of the Euphrates river ran under the walls so that there was plenty of water. Belshazzar boasted, "No one can conquer us; we are able to protect ourselves." Men today, full of sin, make claims like that. In the Bible, however, we read, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalms 127:1). Undoubtedly, the majority of the city joined in the drunken debauchery to show their disrespect and disdain for the Medes and the Persians; they thought they were safe and invincible. But while they were drunk, their enemies planned their strategy. They turned the small tributary of the Euphrates River that ran under the walls of Babylon, into another channel. While the city was drunk a few enemy soldiers came into the "wonder city" on the dry riverbed under the wall. They opened the main gates and other soldiers swarmed in to bring defeat. The blood of the people was as red as wine as it flowed in the streets. King Belshazzar was slain and Darius the Mede reigned in his place. There is a practical side of this, too. We, as individuals, often are weighed in the balances and are found wanting. Many people read these great stories in the Old Testament and say, "They don't apply to us." But, my friend, they do. Sin did not stop with Belshazzar, nor national judgment with Babylon. Judgments by the Almighty are to be seen on the earth today. Let us emphasize that word Daniel spoke to Belshazzar, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." God has weighing scales. The Lord has moral standards, and we as a nation in every area of life cannot turn a deaf ear to them. When the rich young ruler asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?", Jesus said, "Keep the law." He meant just that. But you say, "He couldn't keep the law." Of course, he couldn't. But you see, Jesus wanted him to find it out, for they were under law in that day. The young man was proud. He said, "Well, I've done all those things from my youth up." The Lord said, "You lack one thing; Go sell all that you have and give to the poor. Then you shall have treasure in heaven." The last we see of this fellow is his back as he goes away from Jesus. I do not believe he ever came back. He had been breaking the law of covetousness. He loved his possessions more than he loved God.

We need to put ourselves on God's scales of personal righteousness. On the farm a scale always has weights on one end and meat or chickens or something else on the other end. Let God put His holy law, the Ten Commandments, on one side. Let us climb up on the

other. See how much we weigh on God's scales. I cannot see you, but I dare you to put yourself on the scales against God's law. Just look at the first two commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or 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" (Exodus 20:3-5). Someone may say, "Those two commandments do not bother me. I may not be what I ought to be, but I am certainly not an idolater. I don't have any idols of wood or stone in my house." Did you know that there are a lot of American gods? Do you know what an idolater is? An idol is anything that comes between you and God! The Apostle John says, "Little children keep yourselves from idols." John knew what we ought to know, that sometimes after we are Christians, we have idols that keep us from God. What are the American gods? There are, sad to say, scores of them. This is basically, a nation of pleasure seekers. If any nation ever fulfilled the warning, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," it is America in this 20th century. We want to laugh, we want to dance, we want to sing, we want to be happy. People are not interested in serious talk. We do not want the pulpit to talk "straight" to us. We pay enormous sums of money to have somebody on television or radio to make us laugh and forget our troubles; we want to be amused. I have nothing against laughter, for God Himself laughed. ("He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.") While Jesus was a man of sorrows, especially manifested at the end of His ministry, yet I do not believe he would have been invited to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus if he had not been a happy young man participating in the things of the home. I know little children would not have come to Him if He was like some of the pictures I have seen painted of a sad individual. I do not believe He would have been invited to a wedding, for one is pretty careful whom he invites to a wedding. (You cannot help who comes to your funeral, but when it comes to a wedding, you only want the happy people there.) But God isn't laughing today. Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God and weeping over this world. When a nation like ours, a supposedly Christian country, blessed of God, only wants to laugh when people are going to an eternal hell, judgment is hanging over our heads, it is time for repentance. May the Spirit of God speak to hearts today.

## PATTERNED AFTER THE SAVIOUR

**I**S THE church actually like Christ?  
I have had many people rebuke me when I have asked them about their personal relationship to Christ. While they had nothing to say



against Christ the Lord, yet they did not hesitate to lambaste the church. The discussion is usually ended by the question, "Why aren't you Christians more like Christ?" That may be a fair question but, oh, what a devastating one it is for all of us!

In the main, Christ seems to be popular with all Americans. The church, however, is under much scrutiny. Outwardly, she seems to be prospering. People are crowding the doors and the world itself is honoring her. Over radio and television people are reminded to attend church. It seems to be the best thing one can do for himself and for society. It is not surprising, therefore, that the church should be under criticism from the world.

Here is the truth to remember: "When the world patronizes you, the world demands the right to criticize you." I warn Christians not to get too popular with the world for they could well be crucified by it tomorrow. The crowd surrounding Christ, who on Sunday waved their palm branches shouting "Hosanna," by Friday were shouting, "Away with Him; crucify Him." I am more afraid of the present patronizing attitude toward the church than I would be if she were despised and rejected of men. Perhaps if more of our members went to jail for their faith, we would be better off spiritually. You may laugh at that, but it is true. Jesus said, "Beware, when all men speak well of you." We have forgotten that truth today.

Let us diagnose briefly some of the conclusions we can safely draw regarding the church. First, today there is too much said about the figures of church membership. We are in great danger of worshipping a statistical God rather than the God and Father of the little flock, the God of the remnant who is always a powerful God. Without question, we were better when we were fewer. With God, it is not how much we have, but how much we weigh in spiritually. God doesn't need more men; He needs a better brand of men.

Second, today the church can boast of its wealth. Years ago Peter and John at the temple Gate Beautiful were accosted by a layman who asked alms. Peter answered, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee." The declaration was made in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. They told the man, "Rise up and walk." And he did. Incidentally, they were not healers who took a big collection afterwards!

Today, the church is building her monuments, not in the souls of the men around the world, but in lavish church property, largely for earthly glory. Millions of dollars from the pockets of Christians are being invested in great universities where little or no Christianity, but often a great deal of materialistic paganism, is taught. Christian morals are laughed at and moral looseness prevails. If you are God's born-again child, don't waste your generosity on things that perish. None of my money will be given to these perishing things. It is later than we think. In these crisis days, I am investing my money in that

which is spreading the Gospel to reach the lost. I am supporting churches that preach the saving Gospel, win souls and send out missionaries. Let everything be current, for the time is short. Let us get out the message of God's redeeming grace. Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19-20).

Third, today the church has high culture. Christ's disciples were not to be considered as a band of ignorant fishermen in any sense. Some of them could speak Aramaic and Greek, as well as being able to write both languages. Still they did not belong to the highly educated class. It was the common people who heard Jesus gladly. Paul said, "Not many mighty, not many noble are called . . . God has chosen the foolish things to confound the wise . . . the weak things to confound the mighty." If the church is to be more like Christ, she must do more consecrated living. Instead, today the church is self-centered. We are proud of our denominations, our programs, our cultured ministers and our talented choirs. To be sure, it is marvelous to have these things, but when we are so proud that we fail to see this is not the real source of power of the church, then these very things become an abomination.

A few years ago, visiting Paris, I went to the tomb of Napoleon. The general's top hat, which has been a symbol of his genius, has been enshrined in a glass case. I stood there and meditated upon this man who had shaken the world and disrupted empires. I realized that he died having nothing. Today nobody trembles at the mention of Napoleon. Gladstone declared, "Napoleon was the mightiest intellectual of his time, but except for his astute military tactics, he occupies no prominent place today. He was a self-centered man. He sought his own glory. Even when he was dying he was more interested in what history would say about him, the place that he would occupy, than he was in the after life. But he recognized the power of Christ and said: 'Alexander, Jesus, Charlemagne, and myself have founded empires, but Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him.'"

Oh, that Christ's church might forget its modern pomp and sham and give itself whole-heartedly to the work of the Saviour! We must rescue the perishing before the awful wrath of men is poured out upon this defenseless civilization. The church must learn from Jesus the deep and precious philosophy of His life, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." This is the law that the higher life can only be reached by the decay of the lower. The disciples courted and coveted suffering. They were willing to pay a price to follow Jesus. The New Testament Church did not come into being by a painless birth. Its

apostles were not the patrons of "pink teas." Matthew was slain by the sword in Egypt. Luke was hanged on an olive tree in Greece. John died a natural death at Ephesus only after an unsuccessful attempt to boil him in oil at Rome. James the Greater was beheaded at Jerusalem. James the Less was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple. His bruised body was beaten to death with clubs. Philip was hanged up against a pillar. Bartholomew was slain by the command of a barbarous fiend. Andrew was bound to a cross from which position he preached until he perished. Thomas was run through the body with a lance. Judas was shot to death with arrows. Simon was crucified in Persia. Matthias was beheaded. Paul perished at Rome by the sword of Nero.

This same martyrs' spirit is being forced upon God's people in many parts of the world today. It may well come to our land. Because of this, the American church must prepare itself for martyrdom now. This can come only through yieldedness to Christ. Be ready to walk any pathway that God ordains by stopping all this self-seeking. Some years ago I heard about an artist whose paintings had become famous for their color. He was able to capture on this canvas a glowing red tint that made the subject stand out above all others. This created so much comment that other artists tried to copy him. They mixed their paints with diligence but could not seem to get the shade of red that made the artist famous. The master paid no heed to the imitators, he went on painting his pictures with their mysterious glowing red. It was noted, however, that the more he painted and the redder the pictures became, the paler he grew with the passing days. Then the master died and the secret of his mysterious color became known. A wound under his heart was found. This was the source of the magic red of his pictures. He had literally given his life's blood to his work. My friends, on the blood of the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian church and every Christian must be carried on in these tragic days. Let us spend and be spent. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" the Lord said. "Redeeming the time, for the days are evil."

## GOD'S WORD AND SANCTIFICATION

THERE is a great need today to study Christ's example in practical sanctification. People constantly ask about the doctrine of sanctification and the sin question. There are three views about the relation of sin to the believer which have a very special bearing on our life. Two of them are wrong and, manifestly, only one of them is right.

The first is often called "eradication." This means the elimination of the sinful principle within the human being. This goes beyond

Scripture and is contrary to experience. The Bible declares, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves." Anyone who teaches eradication should be asked these questions: "Do you believe in the perpetual need of the atonement to cover any defects from the moment of supposed eradication?" "Is the atonement necessary for the rest of your life?" "Certainly," they will say. "Then you are a sinner for as long as you need the atonement there is sin whether in defect or otherwise." Sinlessness is not merely the absence of sinning; it is also the presence of the complete will of God fulfilled in our lives. To mention this is to see at once the need of the atoning sacrifice of Christ to the very end of our days. Paul taught Christian holiness but he always stopped short of eradication. The Greek word for the relationship of sin to the believer means not "to eradicate," but "to render inoperative."

The second view is called "suppression." If eradication goes too far, and it does, suppression does not go far enough. Suppression emphasizes that fighting and struggling which are almost inevitable land us in defeat again and again. You cannot lift yourself by your own "boot straps." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." There are two laws to consider. Just as gravitation can be counteracted by volition, the higher law of the will, so the lower law of sin and death is forever counteracted by the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. That is why Romans 7 contains 30 references to the personal pronoun "I." This is the law of counteraction. There is a sinful principle to deal with. Do not dream that it is eradicated, and do not trouble about suppressing it; let the Holy Spirit come into your life and reign supreme in the throne room of the will. Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, we must realize anew that He was wholly without sin. He alone could dare to ask His accusers, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Yet Christ was the example of the practical doctrine of sanctification. In Christ's intercessory prayer of John 17, we hear Him say, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). That statement is startling. It gives new light on sanctification. Our Lord did not set Himself apart from sin for He was sinless. Sanctification for our Lord meant the setting aside of legitimate privileges that the one purpose of His earthly ministry—to die for sinners—might be accomplished.

This brings us to a consideration of what is "legitimate" for the Christian. Church members seem to make their minister their conscience. In an age of worldliness we need to be especially careful of our conduct, while at the same time, in the judgment of others, we need to be merciful and gracious. Yet we become grieved because some other child of God does things we think we ought not to do. One is reminded of the little Southern girl reproved by her mother for playing the piano on the Lord's Day. She replied, "But Mama, I'm just playing sad tunes. Besides, I was only playing on the black keys."

Now this is what is called superficial sanctification. Our Lord's sanctification was not negative but positive. We need a higher conception of our high calling. We are sanctified *unto* Christ.

About 20 years ago, during the extreme flapper age, I used to worry about the young girls whose marriage ceremonies I performed. I wondered what kind of mothers they would make. They were the short-skirted, painted-faced, bob-haired, flippant youngsters of that age. As a young enthusiastic preacher, I scolded them periodically for their apparent sinfulness. I prophesied that none of them would amount to anything. Now a score or more years later, I meet them occasionally and discover that the tasks of life and the grace of God have worked some marvelous miracles in them. They married and assumed responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood. Children came to their homes and these young mothers began the task of bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I was ashamed of the thoughts I had about them. But what had worked the change? The sanctifying influence of the tasks of life under the grace of God! One of the things that ministers and others must learn is that God doesn't always do His best work with good people. He makes us strong with His righteousness. In any process of dyeing the most difficult shade with which to work is crimson. Black can be dyed comparatively easily. It is the red color that is so difficult to get out. The material will take the new color for a time, but sooner or later the underlying red reveals itself. Scarlet and crimson are Hebrew terms for the same red color. The prophet says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

Life is a school. God can cause all of our experiences to drive us closer to Him and away from the things which destroy, if we will let Him. Life, for the child of God, is a long course in spiritual education. There are no short-cuts. God's purpose for us, recorded in Ephesians 3:18 and 19, is to give us breadth and length and height and depth so that we might know the love of God which passeth knowledge. God never pampers His pupils; He lets them get the scars of life and never covers them up.

Once a painter was engaged to capture on canvas a likeness of Alexander the Great. The emperor had gained many scars in battle. He had a bad one on his face. The artist was desirous of giving a correct likeness of the monarch, but at the same time he felt he must cover up the scar. It was a difficult task to accomplish. At length he hit upon a happy expedient. He painted him in a reflective mood, his hands placed against his head, with one finger covering the scar. You know many of God's children wish to be painted that way. They profess a perfection which covers up the failing of their lives. God sees those failings, however, and they are clearly marked. Those who make frequent claims to superiority need to beware lest they become clanking cymbals. People see the lives of others more clearly than

they do their own. Pretense without profession makes the ungodly feel that Christ's program is counterfeit. God grant that we shall be sanctified wholly in spirit, soul and body. May we revel in our positional sanctification, realizing that we are indeed accepted in the Beloved. Let us not be discouraged with the temporary defeat of our experimental sanctification, realizing that ultimately we shall be like Jesus. Let us be found looking to Him who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith and our true Example in this "setting apart" experience.

## DEFINITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

**Y**OU may be saved, but are you a disciple? A lot of our Christianity today has become a very cheap affair. We have endeavored to popularize our Christian testimony but Christ told His disciples that they would be hated even as He was hated. We seem to want a "picnic" when God says it is a "pilgrimage." We seem to want a small god we can understand, one we can serve without too much effort and please without too much sacrifice. A new cult is sweeping the country which is merely religious, not Christian. God is a glorified "bell-boy" who waits to carry all the packages of life so that we do not have to groan and sweat under our burdens. It is simply like the crest of today's philosophy with its insistent demand for the guaranteed annual wage, sick benefits, hospital care, insurance against wind, weather, fire and theft, and final absolution. With nuclear bombs hanging over our heads and unthinkable hell in the offing, this cult says we need a "pick-up" on the highway of life.

What has happened to Christ's words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," and "He that loveth his life shall lose it"? Jesus taught that the cross must come before the crown. The crowds once sought to crown Jesus before He had gone to the cross, and He forbade them. To be sure, religion is quite stylish today. It is front page news. Publishers are getting out books based on the early church and the Roman persecution. Movies with pseudo-biblical themes are box office attractions. Toy manufacturers are making dolls that kneel in prayer. Auditoriums are packed with crowds eating pop-corn and drinking soda pop while they listen to Gospel "boogy." Millions of records feature religious ragtime. Today "Nothing succeeds like success." Where anything is popular, everybody exploits it—tycoons, politicians, song writers, movie stars—all ride the religious band wagon. Most people have a good word for God these days. As Dr. Vance Havner says, "Some of us still are unable to harmonize holiness and head tax, religion and rock and roll, sanctification and swing. The basic trouble is that while millions are marvelously converted, they have never become disciples of Christ." True conversion is a glorious experience but it is not the

end of our salvation. It is only the beginning. We immediately begin a life which is not earthly but endless. We must walk along the narrow way of faith, walking worthy of our calling, walking respectfully, not as other Gentiles walk, "in the vanity of their minds."

Conversion experience is also the beginning of our warfare. The Christian is a soldier; his life is a battle to the end. But softness is the prevailing condition of God's people. Our soldiering seems to be to walk into the parlor, to rest and to fold one's hands. It was not so in Jesus' day. Don't be fooled by the crowds in churches on Sunday. You certainly can be thankful that the preacher is giving them the Gospel, but remember, for many, God is only a polite convenience. How long would these churches be full of godly people if the minister told them what Christ told His disciples "Take up your cross and follow me"?

In Luke 9:57 to 62 we read of a man who came to Christ and said, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever thou goest." The answer of our Lord was immediate. He said: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." In other words, "Can you pay the price"? Jesus Christ turned on one who had been called to follow Him, who had requested that he might first go and bury his father, and He gave him the stern command, "Let the dead bury their dead. Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." One wonders how the meek and lowly Jesus could ever have said such a thing as that. The answer is found in the fact that there can be no first in the discipleship except the first for the kingdom of God. If this man had put discipleship first, I believe Jesus would not only have permitted him to go and bury his father, but perhaps would have gone with him and broken up the funeral by a resurrection.

You see, it is one thing to be saved, but quite another to be a disciple. Salvation is imperative but discipleship is optional. Yet, if any man will follow after Jesus, he must take up His cross. Many of Christ's followers have reached the stage where in summer Bible conferences, church prayer meetings, and Sunday School classes they meet to study and to discuss the pilgrim way, yet, by outward services, they have no intention of following Christ. They start on the way, but as soon as they discover it is not macadamized, but rather rocky and stony, they turn back. Discipleship is no dreamy lotus land but a stern bending of life to inescapable obligations. Christianity has never been easy; it has never been a painless life. Jesus never hides His scars to win a follower.

Salvation by grace, through faith, is not of works. To believe costs nothing; to follow Jesus is costly. Millions of our youth are led by "glamour boys" who are daily talking about how much fun it is to be a Christian. Christ never said that. That is deceptive. Those merely believe; produce no fruit. Disciples are the fruit-bearers. Belief saves

the soul; discipleship glorifies the Saviour. Belief gets one to heaven; discipleship gets the reward.

Jesus presents discipleship under the figure of the plow. He said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). The plow is a fit symbol of discipleship. It is a symbol of unromantic service. Artists used to portray plowing as a very colorful and romantic occupation. There were two spotless white horses in the yard with an attractive cabin in the foreground and a flowering apple tree in the background. That is not plowing. The farmer rides his plow up and down the field with a monotony which seems purposeless. Yet it is purposeful. We discover that following Christ is not a temporary joust with the devil while trumpets blare and crowds jeer. Often it is a dreary and unromantic gripping of the plow handles of the task of righteousness. "All things work together for good," and blessed is the man who visualizes the glory of the harvest while he attends to the drab and unromantic task of plowing. The plow is also a symbol of the glory of a common man. The hands that grip the plow are those of the common man. Common people heard Jesus gladly. Abraham Lincoln said, "God must have loved the common folks because he made so many of them."

One of the most dangerous procedures in Christian programs today is getting by fair means or foul all the big names we can muster behind the cross of Christ. A well-known motion picture star, as soon as he shows an interest in religion, is seized and put on the platform. The dreamy-eyed glamour boys grab him and exhibit him from coast to coast. The crowds gather and gossip, thinking how wonderful it is to have so notorious a person publicly patronizing God. Or there is someone who has been a popular politician and suddenly he gets "religion." Before he has a chance to know what it is all about, he is shoved into prominence to help get a crowd and to swell the collection. Jesus dodged the "big shots" in His day. When you get these "big shots" on the bandwagon, look out! God is not so bad off that He needs "plugs" from politicians, movie stars and world-famous characters. The church has never had such an affect on the world as she did in the days when she would have nothing to do with the world! So many Christian leaders want to be stars in the firmament, but God's aristocracy is the godly common folk. No matter how obscure our place is God knows us and is mindful of us.

Then again the plow is the symbol of consistent constancy in the faith. To look back means a crooked furrow and a wobbly life. Once the hand is put to the plow, we must go on. Discipleship is not a summer picnic. We had better count well the cost and remember that discipleship is optional. But if we desire to be disciples of the Master, there is no turning back without disaster. The watchword then is "constancy and consistency." Let us go on and on courageously to the end, but with the glorious knowledge that there is One Who

walks beside us all the way. "Oh, Master let me walk with Thee, in lowly paths of service free. Tell me Thy secret, help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care."

## THE WAR FOR THE MIND

THERE is a tremendous war going on today which can be best described as, "Satan's battle for man's mind." Many in our troubled, complex day feel that they do not even know the reason for their being here in this life. Never in history has the race been more befuddled. Satan has so deceived mankind that the majority of human beings are all at sea, having rejected God's divine revelation of truth. Most men today have no sense of divine purpose, or any other purpose for that matter. Questions come such as, "Who are we? What are we doing here? To what purpose is our intellectual power? What will we do with it?" Satan endeavors to cloud and blind the minds of men "which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4).

Why are men so possessed with crazy, sometimes criminal, thoughts? Why are older people devoid of eternal hope? A learned professor at Princeton declares, "Twentieth century man is unable to believe anything except facts and figures." He states that two things are the cause: man's desire to be self-sufficient, apart from any other outside help, and his natural lust for more of what his neighbor has. Anyone who knows Satan's program revealed in the Bible knows that these two things are what Satan is doing to the race. First, he is feeding men on the old myth by which he deceived our first parents. "Ye shall be as gods." Second, he is catering to men's natural greed and selfishness. The forbidden fruit was desired because it was able to make men wise. The appetites of men today, not only of science, are still feverishly following this lie of the devil's. Their atom and hydrogen bombs, their intercontinental missiles and space satellites are bankrupting the nation.

The mind of man is fallen, degenerate, at enmity with God. Men feel that all the mind needs is education. Learning is important, to be sure, but God's Word warns us that education alone cannot make man what he ought to be. Before man sinned, he was a perfect mind. You can put this down as a certainty. Adam was not a grinning, half-ape man. He was a majestic creature fresh from the hand of God. He may not have had the knowledge of the universe which men hold today, but, at the same time, he had a better mind than any man living today. The difference was that Adam was in complete fellowship with God before he sinned. His intellect was unmarred, his imagination unsullied, his thought processes perfect. However, the Bible

tells us in Genesis, that after sin entered the world, just before the judgment of the flood, every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continually. Today man's imagination still runs riot. He has been imagining for years the relationship of basic universal forces. He has been imagining atomic-powered weapons for world conflict. He has been imagining tremendous speeds with rockets and interplanetary travel. Now the things he imagined have become, at least in part, a reality. But with the reality comes the certainty of terrible suffering and death.

Satan, through men's minds, has been blighting the world ever since sin entered. Man has been imagining that he is something which he is not. He thinks that he is the master of his fate and the captain of his soul. He creates God in his own image and endeavors to bring God into all his final plans and programs. Instigated by Satan, man's evil imagination has created all of the idolatry found in the world today. In the first chapter of Romans we read, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21). Here's a startling picture. Yet, I challenge anyone to say that it is not true of world conditions today. If you want a brief analysis of what God's Word has to say about this carnal mind, read these passages: Romans 1:28: "God gave men up to a reprobate mind." Romans 8:7, Ephesians 4:17, which tells of men walking in "the vanity of their minds." Titus 1:15, which states that man's mind and conscience "is defiled"; I Timothy 6:5 speaks of "men of corrupt minds"; Colossians 1:21 declares that many are made enemies "in your mind by wicked works"; II Corinthians 4:4 warns "the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." Romans 8:7 sums it up, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." "To be carnally minded is death."

I have no doubt that much of man's inventive genius is Satan-inspired. Man endeavors to fulfill the promise, "Ye shall be as gods." We have reached the place in human achievement where men are able to build almost anything their minds conceive. But most of it is accomplished in Satanic pride. Satan has deceived the race into thinking that all men's problems will be settled by science. But science, in the main, is unwilling to admit that this world is under the blight of sin; that the carnal mind is at enmity against God. Until men know God in a saving way, science cannot fully know the meaning of basic truth. One does not receive full knowledge, no matter the education, until by faith he has come to know the One who framed the universe. Until men, with regenerated hearts and minds, see the purposes of God in everything they do, will they come unto the fullness of truth and knowledge. To reject God's revealed truth is to pervert knowledge to false interpretations and sinful ends.

This Satanic attack is intensifying every day. The Communists

are brain-washing a third of the earth's people; Satan is busy with the rest. Today, as he did with Adam and Eve, Satan says, "Individual happiness is what man wants and deserves," and today, as always, Satan is saying that happiness is found alone in the natural and in the carnal. If that finally fails to make you happy, science endeavors to tranquilize your conscience, giving you happy feelings. Satan deceived, disillusioned and brought disaster in Eve's day. Today we have a repeat scene of Satan's deception on an infinitely larger scale. Man, with his devilish pride, has built a civilization on false security, greed, selfishness, personal ambition and sinful pleasure. Satan's battle for the destruction of man's mind is modern literature, no matter whether written or in visual form. Never in history has so much popular literature descended into such a cesspool of iniquity. It is not only widely read and glowingly reviewed but also it is put out in very cheap editions with lurid covers to attract the minds of the multitudes. Often it is produced in motion pictures and television. The minds of millions more are led into the depths of hell.

Sin always creates strange paradoxes. Here's a modern one. Many of the liberal preachers laugh at the Bible doctrine of total depravity, that is, that men are hopelessly lost without Christ. They say, "It doesn't mean that all men are bad. There are many good people. Even the worst have some good in them." These are nothing but clever deceptions, Satanic lies. Total depravity means that the purpose for which God originally made man cannot be achieved unless he becomes a new creature through divine redemption. Men's minds laugh at the doctrine of original sin. Yet our "literary greats" create characters that do nothing *but* sin. They make evil good and good evil.

The great need of the human race today is to find and know the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," Paul declared. The Lord Jesus Christ made Himself of no reputation. Our Saviour, though very God, as the Second Person of the Trinity, lived in submission to God. He humbled Himself that God might be exalted. This is the type of mind the world needs today. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." This is what many Christians need too. Christians should be sensible people; they should be positive, well-balanced. Above all, in these troublesome days, we need a peaceful mind. Everyone seems to be seeking escape from the worries of our complex world. Books dealing with personal peace, peace of mind, peace of soul, peace of God, power of positive thinking, are extremely popular. But there can be no real peace without divine pardon. Hear these great words, "Be anxious for nothing." This is a glorious possibility for God's child. "In nothing be anxious" (In nothing be alarmed). Learn to put your trust in God. Don't let Satan brain-wash you. Keep close to Jesus Christ. Know His mind; know His will and do it. Know the peace of God which passeth all understanding and you will find the benediction of the Lord upon you for all eternity.

## THE GREATEST NEED OF THE HOUR

**T**ODAY, America needs a real revival. As a Scriptural foundation and background, let us recall the story of Elijah. In First Kings we read, "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according to the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan" (1 Kings 17:1-5).

Almighty God is speaking to America in this crucial hour of the world's history. I believe He is primarily speaking through the imminent peril of an atomic era that would be so disastrous as to destroy, as some of the scientists say, 60,000,000 people in the first onslaught. After that many more would perish. Civilization would become a shell, especially in our great cities. It is not that people are so much concerned as it is that they are alarmed. If they were truly concerned, there would be a great wave of repentance over our land. We don't find that, however, even in our churches. People have become calloused; some are indifferent. The Lord is speaking today through continued revelation of national viciousness and corruption. There is an obvious lack of integrity in our national life. We have been suffering from Communistic infiltration in high places, even in our churches. There is a rise of juvenile crime; there is flaunting of all moral ideals by millions of people; sex promiscuity and divorce are rampant. We are cursed by "trashy" books, movies and stage plays. There is a religious coolness and doctrinal apostasy.

Today, more than a billion of the world's population are under the threat of atheistic brutality. America, in the eyes of the multitudes, is the main representative of Christian civilization. Yet what kind of representative impression are we giving?

There is no real use trying to fool ourselves, for communism is trying to destroy the United States of America which, they say, is the enemy of progress and all other things that communism teaches. The West is in the greatest danger it has been in since the beginning of the Christian era. Still Christ pleads with His Church for repentance. I believe He is saying what the prophet declared in the long ago, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Why are not preachers sounding forth the clarion call, stating things as they really are? Why should there be the "sugar and spice and everything nice" in the pulpits? Why don't we see a great movement of spiritual power? Why aren't our people down on their knees, asking God to make bare

His mighty arm and spare us from this awful thing that could fall upon us at any time? "Awake thou that sleepest and rise from the dead," said the apostle, "and Christ shall give thee light."

We can no longer refer to the God of our parents. It may be true that our grandparents, or great grandparents, had real faith, but today the majority of the churches are merely dead orthodoxy. We have a religious generation, to be sure, but the religion is far from true Christianity. With our forefathers, their Christianity was vital; it was in control of their lives. I don't want to be pessimistic, yet I must face the truth. Every prophet is a pessimist sometimes. I try to be a prophet. This generation is giving mental assent to our forebears' beliefs, without knowing the inner power of these beliefs. This is a very deadly thing. America needs preacher-prophets, uncompromising, fearless men of God, who will face our time and deliver truth without fear or favor. We need Elijahs today. We need men like Elisha who, as you remember, succeeded Elijah, the man of God. The second and third chapters of Second Kings tell of the time when Elijah was translated. Elisha received the mantle of the great prophet. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they departed hither and thither: and Elisha went over" (II Kings 2:11-14).

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" This was the cry of Elisha, and today we need to take it up again. The work that ended in Elijah's translation was a remarkable one. It is a type of the church. There came a time when Elijah knew he was going to be translated. He called Elisha, a devout man from the plow, and ordained him to be his successor. You remember how they walked along until they came to the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and smote the waters of Jordan and they parted. Elijah and Elisha went over on dry ground to the other side. Then later on Elijah was translated and taken up to heaven. Elisha took his place and used Elijah's power. Today we need to realize that our Elijah, the Lord Jesus Christ, has gone through the waters of death. He lived among us, He died bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, and then He rose again. He went through the waters and we, as His followers, have gone through with Him. God says we are not only crucified with Christ but also we are risen with Him. The church becomes a type of Elisha on this earth. Jesus said to His followers before He left the earth, "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to my Father." Then he said that the

Holy Spirit, represented here by Elijah's mantle, would be given unto us. If only the church and each individual Christian would take hold upon that power, God would work the same miracle today!

I was in the Billy Graham campaigns in New York City. We had hoped there would be a great revival; Billy hoped so, too. Thank God, there were many, many saved. The Gospel was faithfully preached. But, in actuality, scarcely a dent was made on New York City. Do not misunderstand, I am not blaming anybody. Evangelism, the preaching of the saving gospel, will always save souls and build people up in the faith. But there have been times in American life when God has moved and whole communities have been brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. But it is not so today.

We talk about revival. We would like to have one if it can come cheaply enough. We don't want to pay the price; we want a bargain. Let me tell you, there is no bargain in spirituality. There is a price which has to be paid. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." The reason for the weakness in the church today, and that it has very little power to move the multitudes, is because people do not pray and they are not willing to pay the price. God says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14). Over America there must come a weeping repentance. Americans must turn aside, pray, and turn from their wicked ways. Then, and only then, will we receive in this land of ours, the things which we truly need. There are many ills that the nation, our national leaders, can't deal with. They are throwing up their hands in despair. You know that. All of the political corruption, the crookedness, has left us bereft and failing as a nation. If we do not do something, and do it quickly, I earnestly believe God is going to punish us. Judgment is coming and it may well be from the hand of another nation. If we are going to have a heaven-sent revival, we must first of all exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone talks about God today. It is popular, but it is knowing Jesus Christ personally that counts. I pay no attention to politicians who use the name of God in almost the last sentence of their speeches just to give them a religious tone so that church people will think they are religious men. Because a man mentions the name of God, some people think he has religion. The devil has religion and yet he trembles at the very thought of religion more than some of the politicians.

Then, in addition, we need to condemn sin. We need to get out and bring the multitudes to salvation. We need to bring deep love and compassion to those who are lost in sin. May God help us to do this, not just today, but every day until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back for us!

## PATTERN FOR REVIVAL

**A** GRAPHIC illustration for the revival America needs can be found in the story of Elijah and Elisha. You remember that when Elijah was translated, his successor, Elisha, watched as he went up on high. He did not see death, and a chariot of fire came down. I personally believe he is going to appear again upon the earth as one of the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation. The fire created a whirlwind which swept Elijah into heaven. His mantle was left behind him, since Elisha was to succeed him. When Elijah was gone, Elisha took the mantle and went back to smite the waters of the Jordan. He asked, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" In this study we have an illustration of Christ and His church. Elijah represents Christ, since our Lord went through the Jordan of death and came up on the other side in the resurrection to ascend into heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit, typified by the mantle, to dwell in us as Christians. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves that we have such little holy power when so much of it is put at our disposal. If we would only lay hold of that power to use it for the glory of God!

No one would argue that America needs a heaven-sent revival. God says the way to get it is to humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways. The church must condemn sin. There is a weakness in our preaching today. Why are we afraid to condemn sin? In all the churches I have had the privilege of working in and with, I have discovered that there is very little condemnation of sin. For some reason, as sin is being soft pedaled, sin is called everything else but sin. Some preachers believe in evolution and say, "Well, man cannot help it; it is the remnant of his animal nature." The Bible tells us plainly that sin is in the human race and that the wages of sin is death. Sin is not a remnant of man's animal nature; it is a result of our lost condition, the fact that we are partakers of the first Adam's nature. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He says, "If any man sin, he has an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We must deal with the sin question today. The pulpits had better get busy and stop preaching "sugar and spice and everything nice," calling sin by other names and pleading with people just to do a little better. We need plain preaching backed up by prayer with a great conviction by the Spirit of God which would cause men to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" In every true revival, God is the one source of power. When God moves mightily, things happen. In Elijah's day the righteousness of God was in tune. A number of folk have an idea that when there is an abundance of sin in the world God will send a revival. That is not necessarily true. God may well send judgment instead. He has been long-suffering to usward, however, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Ahab, a weak king, had married a pagan princess, and the people worshipped Baal. Jezebel had most of the priests of Israel killed. A man named Obadiah, though he was a weakling, hid a few of the prophets of Israel in a cave. Baal was a very beautiful religion, you know. They had great choirs, the soprano could sing high C, and the basso could hit low F. The places of worship had soft lights and soft music (and if they had any preaching it must have been very soft, too). The morals of the people were not changed. Elijah became angry about it. He was not a great man; he did not even have a D.D., except the kind of D.D. that we need—"Down in the Dust" in obedience to God. Elijah became angry.

The scene now takes us to a special religious "shin-dig" in the palace. Queen Jezebel and King Ahab were on their thrones. The lords and ladies, and the high and the mighty, were all there. All of a sudden there was a commotion; a wild-looking man from the hills comes in, pushing the guards aside. "Get out of my way," he says, "I'm here for God." He comes right up to Ahab, pointing a long bony finger under Ahab's nose saying, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word." Notice he did not say, "I stand before you, King Ahab." He did not bow and curtsy and scrape. He said, "I stand before God. I am not bound to you, you apostate king," and he pronounced this judgment of no rain nor dew. And a great drought did come to the land and to all its people. I can imagine that when Elijah had left, there was a brief silence. People in the court did not know what to make of it. I can imagine the flippant Queen Jezebel saying, "Well, let's go on with the affairs, there's never a dull day in the court of Ahab."

They went on, but I have an idea that just as soon as he could do it, Ahab walked out of that place into the gardens. He did not make fun of Elijah's words, for he was a Jew. He knew that God had brought prophets and that God could punish His people for sin.

The church could do today with a few angry men like Elijah: angry at sin, but desirous of seeing sinners saved. A multitude of people are stirred up about social matters and need for social improvements; the Christian needs to stand forth against sin and for social righteousness.

While people had at first laughed at Elijah, they began to see that the things he had prophesied were beginning to come true. When it did not rain, people began to explain it by saying it was a natural dry spell. But when rain did not come for such a long time, when the ground was hard and baked, and when the cattle could find no fodder, there was an alarming cry and wail that went up. The people began looking for Elijah. They felt that he had put a curse on them. When Elijah met Ahab again, he said to the wicked mon-



arch, "You have forsaken God. Now let us have a contest to see whether Baal is god or whether Jehovah is God." You know the story, I am sure, of how they met on Mt. Carmel near the spring. But even as men looked for physical salvation, so today men want to be saved from the atom bomb. A revival never comes through fear of disaster. "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," not the fear of the atom bomb. There are more people in churches now than ever in our history; yet we have less of the true Spirit of God than ever before.

The sinfulness of man's heart cannot be cured with education, science, psychiatry, or tranquilizer pills. But, thank God, "There's power in the blood of the Lamb of Calvary." Today, as in the long ago of Elijah, God can save us if we will turn to Him and let Him work His transforming power in our lives.



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