

CLEAN CHURCHES

by W. Carl Ketcherside

CLEAN CHURCHES

A series of short sermons delivered over
RADIO STATION WTMV (1490)
on Sunday afternoons, Nov. 5, 1944, to Jan. 28, 1945,
by W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

Sponsored by

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

7121 Manchester Avenue.
St. Louis, Mo.

5344 Lillian Avenue,
St. Louis, Mo.

412 Queen Street,
Webster Groves. Mo.

137 East Maple Street,
Hartford, Ill.

29th and Washington Streets,
Granite City, Ill.



TO ALL

who believe in keeping the church clean and pure, and whose lives are dedicated to that task, this book is affectionately dedicated.

OUR PERFECT EXAMPLE

The greatest gift ever conferred upon earth was that of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. He attested to that Himself with the memorable words, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The Apostle Paul further testifies on this score, as follows, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7, 8). The greatest fact in history is the death of God's beloved Son. On that fact depends all of our hope of future happiness. For, as we read, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19). Certainly, in view of these Scriptures, it behooves us all to consider some of the reasons why Christ came to earth, and died on the Cross.

In pursuance of this, I ask you to listen to a statement from the Apostle Peter, which will form the basis for our brief discussion today. He says in 1 Peter 2:21, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps." When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, his relationship with God was broken up. In order for him to get back once more to the image in which he was originally made, it was requisite that he should have a pattern to follow, in the re-making and remoulding of his life. But that pattern was not to be found upon earth, for it had to be a perfect character, and no man possessed such, for "all had sinned and come short of the glory of God," as we learn by reading Romans 3:23.

Now, there may be those who listen today who are old enough to recall the old copy-books which were used in teaching penmanship or writing. They consisted of strips of paper upon which a sentence was written. The student would write the sentence, then shove his paper up under the strip, and write it again. Thus, he always had the original copy before him, and used it as his guide.

He did not use the one which he had just written, for if imperfections were found therein, they would be multiplied and become more exaggerated as he proceeded. Always he kept the perfect copy as the one which provided his pattern. In this manner, he could correct the mistakes which he made on his previously written sentences.

I learned the necessity of this once when I was helping an elderly carpenter cut siding boards for a house. He sawed the first one, and said, "Now use this for your pattern." I cut a board, and reasoned that it was identical with the first, so, instead of laying it down and picking up the original, I would cut the next one according to it. I did this with three or four boards, and the third or fourth were too long. Then the carpenter set me right on the matter, by telling me that none of the boards we sawed were exact with the pattern, since each time there was the width of the saw blade difference. This was insignificant on the first board, but each time it grew greater, unless we reverted to the original pattern. We can all get a good lesson from this law of life.

Jesus Christ is God's standard. He came as the perfect revealer of God's will and purpose. By comparing my life and conduct to that of Jesus, I know exactly what the Father expects me to be. But occasionally, we find a man who is sincere, contrite and humble. We conclude that he would be a good example for us to follow. Yet, if we worship that man, we will be deflected from the perfect example of the Savior. We are not to worship any man, not even a preacher of the Gospel. But someone may ask if we were not told by Paul to follow him. Yes, indeed, but do not forget to finish his admonition, "Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ.*" We are to heed anyone so long as he is revealing what Christ has taught, but we are to do it, not because the man teaches it, but because Christ does.

Jesus asks us to do only one thing which He could not do. With that one exception, He has done everything He requires of us. He asks us to *believe* in His Father, and testified of His own faith in Him. I quote, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (John 8:28). He

asks us to *confess* Him before men as the Son of God and this He did when He stood before the Roman procurator, for it is written, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession" (1 Timothy 6:13). He commands us to be buried in water *baptism*, as a part of God's system of righteousness, and of Him it was said, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him" (Matthew 3:13-15).

But Jesus also demands of us repentance. We read His words in Luke 13:3, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But this He could not do, for He had nothing of which to repent. He came in the likeness of sinful man, except for the sin. He possessed all of our characteristics except that of our transgression. The judge who pronounced upon Him the sentence of death admitted that he found no guilt in this man. The chief of the executioners, who nailed Him to the tree, smote upon his breast and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Jesus could not repent, but we can and must if we wish to achieve a semblance of that perfect pattern which He set for us.

He was the world's greatest exemplar of pity, mercy and compassion; of love, devotion and integrity; of consecration, sanctification and justification. He was all that we want to be in our dreams of perfection. Living in a sordid world of sin, He rose above the sucking mire of temptation, and taught us to place our feet upon higher ground. The vocabulary of all that is good, pure and holy in the English language would be exhausted, and yet He cannot be described in the fullness of His glory. We plead with you this day to let this great Shepherd of the Sheep lead you in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Too many of us look not to the head of the church, but to those in it who are hypocritical and unworthy of our confidence. We compare our lives with such and revel in the thought that we are as good or better than they. What a standard to select, by which

to measure our careers! Do you stay away from God's House because you say you are as good as a lot of people in it? Do you continue in the world, doomed to Hell, because you say you are better than a lot of hypocrites in the church? Frankly, I want you to know that I doubt whether you are any better off than they. It is evident they have looked to the lower things of life as an example by which to measure, and you in turn are measuring yourself by their lives! Why not use good judgment? Why not exercise good sense? Put yourself up beside of Jesus and ask if you are as good as He! If you are not, then you have something to work for, even yet. Remember the words of the old song,

*"Sweet are the promises, kind is the word,
Dearer far than any message man ever heard;
Pure was the mind of Christ, sinless I see;
He the great example is, and pattern for me."*

If you do not live for God, then the death of Jesus was in vain, insofar as you are concerned. The greatest gift of heaven goes unaccepted; the greatest sacrifice on earth is unappreciated; and the greatest love the world has ever known is unreciprocated! Do not be so careless, indifferent and unconcerned. Before the day is over, make a resolution to obey the Gospel and accept Christ as your example. The Churches of Christ are ready to help you fulfill that resolution. May God grant that all who hear this day may open up the door of their hearts, that Jesus may come in and there abide.

GETTING BACK TO GOD

There is an age-old question which you have asked yourself many times! It has been the source of wonderment and even sometimes of doubt. That query is, "Why Did Christ Have to Die?" Was there no other way by which man could be saved? Was there no other alternative? Now, the careful student of the Bible will find a number of reasons assigned for the death of the Son of God, but in all of these there runs a constant thread of

teaching which, followed to its conclusion, will produce the same thought. It is best expressed by the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3:18, wherein we read, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that He might bring us to God.*"

Man became separated from God by sin. In this condition, he was doomed to die, for the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). It was not, however, the wish or will of the Father that we should remain in this lost state, for we read again that we are to pray for all men, and, I quote, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who will have all men saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3, 4). Once more we find, "God is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance."

In order for man to return to God upon the proper terms, he had to be made to realize the Father's love for him; and his heart motivated to repentance by the tender regard which he would cherish in his heart for one who sacrificed all in his behalf. Jesus came to win our hearts back to God. He came as a Shepherd looking for a sheep that had strayed. He came as a redeemer to ransom one who had been sold under the bondage of evil. Perhaps this is made clearer unto us by one of the parables which Jesus uttered than it is in any other Scripture. He declares, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance" (Luke 15:4-7).

We should note some of the things which this beautiful lesson of love sets forth. Let us remember that it portrays the following: anxiety over that which is lost, the search persistently, the rejoicing at finding the lost, and last of all the homecoming. The remainder of our little talk today will center around each of these points in order.

First, God was anxious about man's lost condition. He was concerned about his state and interested in him. This was not because of man's righteousness, however, for the record says, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There was just one thing that prompted this heavenly interest and that was love—love so deep as to be almost unfathomable, so great as to be almost incomprehensible, so mighty as to almost stagger our feeble powers of reasoning. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Not just that God loved the world; not just that He loved them and so gave His Son; but rather, "God so loved us as to give His Son." We must put the emphasis upon the "so" in this verse, for it sets forth for us the degree or quality of the love of God.

Second, we note the search for the lost. Jesus asserted His mission in these words, "The Son of Man hath come to seek and save that which is lost." There are three acts mentioned as necessary—coming, seeking, saving. He could not have sought us had He remained in heaven, nor could He have saved us without first seeking us! O, the sacrifice that He made in this coming! O, the suffering He endured, as He walked through the wilderness of this cruel world, in His search. But I like one thing about this parable we are studying, and that is its completeness. It says, "He goes after that which is lost until he finds it." And that is what Jesus did. His footprints lead o'er the cold, dark mountains; through the valley of disappointment, and over the hills of sorrow until finally they end at Gethsemane. And just when the world thought that He had failed to find His loved and own; when He said, "It is finished," and humanity thought His mission was a failure; He found us. The Cross of anguish was the gateway to our salvation, so that we still sing

*Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown
And love beyond degree!
At the Cross, at the Cross,
Where I first saw the light*

*And the burden of my sins rolled away,
It was there by faith
I received my sight, and now
I am happy all the day!*

Third, we notice the rejoicing that this occasioned! The Shepherd rejoices, and all about him, his neighbors and friends join in! So it was at the time when Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, returned to heaven. Not only did he rejoice, but all of the angels and archangels join in the glad song of praise. The scene is described by one who saw it in a vision, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:11, 12). Heaven is interested in your soul this day. That soul is precious unto your God. Its worth is known to the myriads of angels who throng the courts of the glory-world! How can you then sell it to Satan for the few trifling pleasures of this world? How can you afford to lose it for the transitory thrill of lust, passion or unbridled desire, for which you may forfeit it this day? Will you turn the smiles of heaven into tears? Sin brings sadness, righteousness brings rejoicing! Return with joy to the fold of Him who has sought us and bought us, and who loves us all with a love that passeth understanding.

Now, last of all, let us notice the destination of the shepherd and the sheep. The story says, "and when he cometh home." Home is one of the sweetest words in our language. Ask the lad who wallows in the muck and mire of a foxhole in Holland or Belgium! Ask the homesick soldier who cuts his way through the green wall of verdure in the jungles of the South Pacific! Ask the sailor who scans the tossing bosom of the ocean with a faraway look in his eyes, as he dreams of his loved ones! And those of you who have not found God today are away from home. You may be sitting now in a cozy living room, with your family gathered around you—but you are not at home if you are not with God. You are a prodigal wandering through the world, feeding upon

the husks cast in your direction! Don't be lost any longer! Don't stay away from the One who gave all for you and your dear ones. Live for Him who died for you! Say as did that other prodigal, "I will arise and go to my father's house."

This world is not our permanent dwelling place! Here we are but straying pilgrims! We must look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Here we have no continuing city. Let us then seek one which is to come! Fortunately, God has placed upon earth a portion of His House in which we may prepare, so that some day we may enter that home of the soul beyond the dim curtain of death. That house on earth is the church. I quote the words of Paul, "The house of God is the church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Are you a member of that church which is spoken of in the New Testament? Are you in the Church of Christ? If not, we extend to you a Gospel invitation, and urge you to accept it. Do not delay! Do not say, "Sometime I am coming to God," but rather say in the words of the song, "I've wandered far away from God, but NOW I'm coming home." NOW! That is all you have! Go to the nearest faithful congregation of the Church of Christ, make your confession of faith and be immersed into Christ. He left heaven, came to earth and died on the Cross, to "bring us to God."

A CLEAN CHURCH

From time to time we are asked why religion has lost prestige in the world, and why there are so many who no longer respect Christianity. It is worth our time to sit down and calmly think through this problem and see what solution we may find for it! We must admit that the majority of those who live in this so-called Christian nation are no longer concerned about the church or the Bible. Millions never read God's Word, nor do they even think about frequenting a place of worship. What is responsible for all of this irreverence and disregard? I do not feel that it will be

possible for me to answer these questions in one brief talk, but I should like to call your attention to certain salient features which I consider as contributory factors to the indifference manifest in our modern day.

I shall unhesitatingly affirm that the churches themselves are partially responsible for the condition. They have emphasized human creeds and confessions, fought and bickered over denominational tenets and theories, until the average person has become thoroughly disgusted. Christianity has been killed and buried beneath a pile of outworn arguments for this faith or that, and thus is no longer the vital, animated belief which Christ died to establish. Through all of this, however, the Churches of Christ have held unswervingly to their position that we must return to the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and the New Testament as our sole rule of faith and practice! We have sought, and still seek, to restore apostolic simplicity of work and worship to the world. The Church of Christ is not a denomination; it is not a sectarian body. It is not a *reformation* of anything, but rather a *restoration* of the New Testament church as established nineteen centuries ago!

Then why does this institution not grow until it surpasses in numbers the mighty denominations of this twentieth-century world? I reply that it is simply because its power is neutralized by the lives of many of its membership! There are altogether too many people who profess to love the Lord and at the same time serve the devil. They attend the church on Lord's Day morning, but hurry away so they can get to the theater for the Sunday matinee. Thousands do not even feel obligated to close the Lord's Day with another period of worship at the sanctuary of righteousness; and prayer meeting is not even considered essential insofar as their attendance is concerned. Of such, the apostle wrote, "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

Churches tolerate within their fellowship drunkards, adulterers, fornicators, gamblers, liars, thieves, backbiters, covetous persons, and just about every other kind of sinner. The man in the world

looking at this motley array declares that he is as well off out of the church as if he were in it. And while this does not excuse him, yet it certainly appears that in many instances he would not change his type of companionship a lot by the transfer. But what are we to do about the situation? Does the Bible offer a solution to the difficulty? It certainly does!

First, the church needs to set a standard for conduct and insist that the standard be recognized. Where can such a standard be found? I answer, it can be found in the New Testament. Paul says, "These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). The New Testament epistles were written to tell people how they must behave if they remain in God's church. Many are absolutely ignorant of what is required of Christians. They go happily and merrily on the road to hell, thinking that merely by being a member of the Church of Christ they shall be saved! That brings us to the next point.

In order to purify the church, preachers must proclaim against worldliness! We must cry out against anything and everything that will keep men and women from reaching the ideal of living which Jesus has set as a pattern. Yes, we must cry aloud and spare not! Sickly, sentimental, sob-sister sermonettes will not save humanity. Once more we must recognize our solemn responsibility as stated by the apostle, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the word, be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1, 2). It is important to exhort men and women to live for God, but it is no less important to rebuke them in their sins and reprove them for their transgressions. A fear of man has kept many preachers from exercising a fear of God. Every man who steps into the pulpit is faced with two alternatives in the proclamation of his lesson: he can either preach what the world wants to hear, or he can preach what God wants him to set forth! But he cannot preach both, for "the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

In spite of all this, it remains that there will still be many who will not live up to the Gospel standard. Weak, vacillating, wavering, unsteady, they will compromise with the world, and attempt to use the church as a cloak of maliciousness. What shall be done with them? Can they remain in the fellowship of the church? Let us note what kind of church the Savior will accept and recognize. He says, "That He might present to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it may be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). Can the church be glorious if its membership is made up of a group of drinking, gambling, carousing, lust-gratifying individuals who come to services occasionally and get out and work for the devil the rest of the time? Is it unspotted from the world when it mixes, dabbles and messes with the sordid living all about it? Is it possible for the church to be holy and without blemish, when it endorses or at least retains those who are dragging the name of Christ in the mire?

To ask these questions is to answer them! But what are we to do about it? I answer that we must do what the Bible says! When a man is overtaken in a fault, we should attempt to restore him. We should teach him, pray for him and do all we can to get him to see the necessity of living a righteous life. But if he persists in his course of action, we must then exclude him from the fellowship of the church. Here's what the Bible says! Listen! "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the instruction which he received of us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Here is a plain statement! We are commanded to withdraw fellowship from everyone who walks disorderly. That command is just as much a part of God's Word as any other command. Why obey the command to be baptized, to partake of the communion, to lay by in store as we have been prospered, and then disobey, disregard and scoff at this command? Will it do us any good to preach that men must be baptized to have their past sins remitted, then tolerate them in all of the future sins which they commit? Let the church clean itself up, until it deserves the respect of the world, then it will receive that respect.

The congregation at Corinth was troubled with the fact that

one of the members was guilty of fornication. The apostle Paul wrote to them and told them what to do! He declares, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:4). What does it mean to deliver such an one unto Satan? Let us find out by reading the remainder of this chapter. It certainly means to have no further fellowship with such an one, for the writer says, "Now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not to eat" (verse 11).

But it also means more than that, for again we find, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (verse 13). In the days of the apostles when a man was guilty of sin and would not repent, they excluded him, by public action, from the fellowship. Now, if he has lots of money or power, they make a Sunday-school teacher out of him. No wonder religion is at a low ebb today. Churches of Christ believe and teach that God has a standard of conduct for Christian living! They propose to maintain that standard and to keep the church clean. Are you with us in that? Then, God bless you!

SPIRITUAL HYGIENE

Our boys and girls who go to school are constantly taught the necessity of keeping their physical bodies clean. Courses in hygiene are included as a part of the curriculum of every institution of learning. We know that germs breed where insanitariness prevails, and under such conditions infection results. And infection renders the body ineffective, and makes it incapable of carrying on its routine work. Perhaps the patient is hospitalized, and in some instances death occurs. It is important therefore that we keep physically clean.

I want to talk today about spiritual hygiene and sanitation. I want to talk about keeping the church clean. In many instances congregations have no effect upon the community. The church is lifeless, the membership listless and indifferent, and in not a few cases the church has ceased to exist altogether. What is the trouble? In most cases the answer lies in the fact that the church has become a compromising, sin-filled, tolerant organization which does not stand for anything vital, and therefore earns the disrespect of all thinking people and of God, and passes from this sphere of action.

When a church will permit its membership to indulge in every kind of worldliness, to frequent every hell-hole of iniquity, and still go unrebuked, Satan will capture that church. What regard will the world have for a church whose members frequent the taverns and gulp down all the liquor they can consume? What effect will the church have if its constituency is interested only in card-playing, dancing and theater-going? Those who are non-members will point at the church members who indulge in every conceivable form of ungodliness and say, "We are just as good as they, and there is nothing to the church except a group of pious pretenders and glorified hypocrites." You cannot convert the world until you convert the church! Clean up the church first, and then start on the world. How can you expect the sinner on the outside to get rid of his sins, when you are tolerating worse sinners on the inside?

But you may ask what can be done about such conditions when they prevail? Just do what the Bible says! Restore those who will really accept the truth, and those whom you cannot restore, exclude from the fellowship of the church, and thus clean out the filth and worldliness that has accumulated and give the church a chance to function as it should. Jesus tells us to let our lights shine that others may see our good works and glorify God. Do you recall the old kerosene lights we formerly used in our homes? Do you remember that it was necessary to clean the globes and trim the wicks in order to keep the light from growing dim? Well, a lot of churches today need a good trimming, and a good cleaning to go along with it. Their lights are growing dim. I'm telling you

frankly that I'd rather belong to a church that had only twenty-five people, all of whom loved the Lord, than to belong to one with five hundred members who were living a life of damnable hypocrisy, coming to church on Sunday morning, and serving the devil the rest of the week!

What will be the result if the congregations withdraw from all who walk disorderly among them? The answer to that is that such churches will grow and increase both in spiritual strength and in numbers! Thinking people do not want to affiliate themselves with an institution which is made up of base pretenders. They want to unite with a church that has a standard of righteousness and maintains that standard. It pays to do what God says always! And God demands that the church be kept in a pure state. The reason why it is not done is because there are too many preachers and pastors who put the soft-pedal on sin, and are such moral, spiritual cowards that they will not condemn wrong, for fear they will lose their soft place and their nicely feathered nests. Further than that, a lot of them have neutralized the effect of any teaching they might put forth, by frequenting places of ungodly association themselves!

A member of a certain church in our city told me recently that the congregation where she attended was so full of worldliness that it was not even like a church any longer—but more like a club. I asked her why the minister did not lift up his voice against such conditions, and she said she had also wondered about that. Recently, though, she had learned why, for at a party at the home of one of the members, she had seen the preacher take a cocktail, and had heard him tell a suggestive story.

And one who belongs to a so-called Church of Christ informed me that he had attended a theater, and was sort of squirming in his seat because his conscience hurt him at the type of picture that was being shown, with its immoral tendencies. Later, though, his conscience was eased somewhat when he met one of the elders and the preacher coming from that same theater. No wonder Satan has such an easy job. He has captured the religious leaders and is using them as bait to trap the unwary, unsuspecting, gullible souls of the membership in general. How long are you going to tolerate

that kind of thing? How long do you think the Lord will accept you? He says, "Wherefore come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing." My Bible says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

The church is the body of Christ. There is just one body that has the divine sanction of heaven (Ephesians 4:4). Of that body, Christ is the head, for we read, "And He is the head of that body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). Every person who has obeyed the Gospel has been added to that church, for the record says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Thus all baptized believers are members of the body of Christ, just as my hands, feet, eyes and ears are members of my body. Let us prove that. I quote, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same work, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:4, 5).

What do you do when you scratch your hand on a piece of rusty barbed wire, and that hand becomes infected? Certainly you try to save it by giving it all of the treatment and attention that you can. You use every means that is available to reduce the inflammation, eliminate the trouble, and restore the hand to usefulness. Suppose, though, that all these measures are to no avail, and the doctor informs you that you must either amputate that member or else suffer death. What will be your choice? Will you argue that it is best to let it alone, that it might get well sometime? Will you say, "I am not going to have this member removed, for fear that it will make the other members feel bad?" No, for you know that if you leave it go, it will affect all of the other members and everyone of them will be lost. Much as you hate to lose the member, you recognize that the welfare of the body as a whole must come first.

That holds true with the church, or body of Christ. When a member becomes infected with the virus of wrong, we must do all within our power to restore him. Let us read, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one

in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). But if that person will not cease his wickedness, he must be amputated to keep him from seriously affecting all other members. Sin is catching, like any other disease. If left alone it will assume epidemic proportions. The Bible says, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The church must come first. It is worth more than any individual. One who does not live up to the requirements of Christianity is not a help, but a hindrance. He will not be saved in the church in that state. He may cause others to be lost as well. That's why the apostle writing by inspiration of God commands, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:13). True Churches of Christ believe in, preach and exercise public discipline against all who are unworthy of fellowship.

SIN IN THE CAMP

The armies of Israel marched forth confidently against the city of Ai. Only a few days before, the mighty walls of Jericho had fallen and that great city had been put on the edge of the sword. This second attack would be a pushover. As a matter-of-fact only three thousand specially chosen soldiers were to engage in an assault. The reason was that the city was small, and it was considered folly to send the whole host upon such a minor job. Everything would soon be over and the victorious men would return to camp laden with spoil and leading many captives.

The battle was joined! The clash of arms was terrific! Suddenly there was an indefinable fear clutching at the hearts of the men of Israel. Things were not going according to plan. They were being pushed back. The Lord was not with them. Jehovah had deserted them. Their retreat became wild panic. Casting off the impediment of their armor, they fled ingloriously before the shouting enemy. The people of the Lord had been defeated.

When Joshua the captain, who had remained in camp, looked out and saw thirty-six of his soldiers lying dead, their bodies strewn

with the wreckage of battle upon the hillside, he lost control of himself. Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord from morning until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. The leader cried in agony of despair, "O Lord, what shall I say when the Israelites turn their backs before their enemies?"

God spoke unto him and told him to get up off his face! He declared, "Israel hath sinned and they have transgressed My covenant . . . therefore they could not stand before their enemies." Let us go back beyond this story and get the background! When Israel took Jericho they were distinctly commanded not to appropriate any of the spoil for their own individual use. Insofar as the leadership knew, this command was carried out. But a certain man, Achan by name, had taken some of the spoil and had hidden the gold, silver and garments beneath the floor of his tent. The sin of this one man had caused the whole congregation to be defeated and had resulted in the death of thirty-six others, who were ignorant of his wrongdoing!

Joshua was instructed to get rid of that sin in order that Israel might go forward. I like the way he went about it. The Bible says, "Joshua *rose early* in the morning and brought all Israel by their tribes." He did not hesitate! He did not delay but went right after the job of cleaning out the sin. When the guilty one was determined, that culprit was convicted before all of the people. He and his family were then taken to the valley of Achor and were stoned to death. Why did they do away with his family? Simply because it is as bad to defend a wrongdoer as to commit the crime he is guilty of.

Now, friends, ancient Israel was a type of the church of today! The great Apostle Paul affirms, "The things which were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). What can we learn from the defeat of Israel at Ai? We know that in many places today the church is virtually at a standstill! No advance is being made, no progress attained! Why is this true? Some will say that the opposition of the outside world is too great. Others will declare that sectarian prejudice is too strong! But I'm

telling you frankly that I believe in most cases it is the internal corruption which holds the church back and not the external opposition.

Congregations today tolerate, shelter and even endorse drunkards, liars, adulterers and others of like ilk. Because such men may have money and prestige in the community, they are doted over, bragged about and set forth as an example. No wonder we cannot advance against the hosts of Satan when he has planted many of his best workers and blackest sinners within the church itself. Preachers no longer cry out against ungodliness; the membership is as worldly as they can possibly be, and the church has lost respect. There's sin in the camp. What shall we do when the armies of the Lord are threatened with defeat?

Does someone say we should pray over it? That is not God's recommendation. It is not a time to fall on your face and call upon God. It is rather a time for action! Prayer is fine in its place. We need to call upon God for help always. But prayer is not a substitute for God's commands and obedience to the same! Get up off your face and get busy and clean the church up. Preach against sin, warn against ungodliness, and purge the church of the ungodliness and hypocrisy that is found in it! Then the church can go forward and not until then. God says, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not according to the traditions received of us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

When shall we start in this great work? Joshua rose up early. He did not put it off. If it is God's will, the time to start is now! The longer you delay in having a cancer removed, the more it will affect the other members of the body! The more a gangrenous condition is left alone, the more it will develop in other portions of the blood stream. The time to take a decayed apple out of the barrel is when you first find it! If you permit it to continue therein it will only affect the others near it. You cannot expect to overcome sin in the church by tolerance. Drastic action is required!

I am pleading for a clean church, a church that stands for something! I care not how radical it may sound, so long as I am sure that I preach God's Word. And I know that all who hear this

day must admit that God wants a church that is walking in the Spirit. Listen to the teaching of the Bible. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1, 2). Look at the church you are a member of! Does the membership follow the admonition to set their affection on things above, or are they interested only in pleasures of this life?

Are you made up of a group of card-playing, gambling, theater-chasing, dancing, cocktail-sipping, lust-gratifying individuals? What is the leadership doing about it? Are they fearful they will hurt someone's feelings if they come out against the damnable immorality and corruption of this modern hell-bound age? Then, I ask you, how long you think you can give your time, money and effort in such a place and be blessed of God? But you may argue that you do not personally believe in those things, although you attend where they are countenanced! You are as guilty as they are. You are equally responsible with them. Here's what the Lord says, "If any man come and bring not this doctrine (that is, the teaching of Christ) receive him not into your house and neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker with him of his evil deeds" (2 John 10:11).

You cannot overthrow the devil by fraternizing with him. You cannot be on the fence about your religion. You cannot blow hot and cold in the same breath and please God. In the name of all that is holy, if you feel that the sin which is spreading over this land and engulfing the churches is wrong, then take a stand against it. Let the truth be known. Clean up the church and if you cannot do that, then come out on the Lord's side. There are Churches of Christ left, thank God, that believe it is wrong to fellowship the devil and his agents of wrong. Take your stand with us and let's go down the line all the way for God!

There might have been individuals in Sodom and Gomorrah, even the sons-in-law of Lot, who did not fully endorse all that was going on, but they were destroyed the same as the rest of the wicked sinners. The family of Achan was subjected to death the same as was he. They were guilty of tolerating his sin. What

good is it going to do you to tell God that you are against worldliness, then turn right around and contribute to pay a preacher's salary when you know that he endorses sinful living? What good is it going to do to say that you do not endorse what is being done, then lend your presence to the place where it is being done?

Let's clean up the church, clean out the church, and keep it clean! Let us have the courage to preach that old Gospel regardless of what men may say or think about it! Have you the courage of your convictions? Have you the spiritual backbone to stand against the evils of this present age? Then let us work together for the glory of God and the saving of our souls!

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

In our campaign to clean up the church and exclude from the fellowship those who will not walk according to the New Testament standard, and who cannot be restored, it is only natural that we should be called upon to meet opposition. Yet it is strange that such opposition should attempt to base its plea upon the New Testament, and thus make God's Word contradictory. No one can deny that the inspired apostle has said, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." No one can deny that he has said, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." But still there are men who are unworthy but want to remain in the church as a cloak to their hypocrisy, and who oppose the exercise of such scriptural injunctions. Sometimes they do it through partiality and because members of their own families are living a life of ungodliness, and they seek to protect them. Today we begin an examination of their supposed justification.

One of the most common objections is based upon the parable of the tares, and the fact that Jesus said to let the wheat and tares grow together until the time of the harvest, at which time He would make the separation. Is this, then, in opposition to what the inspired apostle said? Do we understand that the apostle taught, "I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw

yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" and that the same Jesus steps up and affirms, "No, no! Let them grow together until the end of time." Did Jesus call Paul a liar? Did He deny the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Did He wilfully and deliberately create a contradiction in His own New Covenant Scriptures? You know that He did not! Then, what is the explanation to this apparent difficulty! I assert that the parable of the tares has nothing whatever to do with membership in the church. Christ was not talking about permitting sinners to remain in the church, and He says so himself!

Let us get the picture as He gave it in Matthew 23:24-30. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the time of the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

There you have it! Now, what is the meaning of all this? Rather than speculate on it and make God a liar, let's just permit Christ to explain it. He does in verses 36 to 43, in this fashion:

"The disciples came unto Him saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth good seed is the Son of Man. **THE FIELD IS THE WORLD**; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into

a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Can anything be plainer? Christ says the field is *the world*. This parable was not spoken to tell us to tolerate sinners in the church, but to show we had no right to kill them, and remove them from the world. Were we to do that we might remove someone who, given an opportunity, would develop into a Christian. This parable was spoken because of the attitude of some of Christ's personal followers. Some even of the apostles wanted permission to kill the wicked of their day and rid the world of them.

Listen to this incident! "When the time came that He was to be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face: so they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him. And they did not receive him, so when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned and rebuked them and said, Ye know not what spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:51-56).

Members of the body of Christ have no right to exterminate from the earth those who disagree with them. We are not to convert men with a sword as the Mohammedans do, nor are we to subject them to Christ at the muzzle of a double-barrel shotgun! But we are to judge those in the church, and to exclude them from our fellowship! If we refuse to do that the church will soon become full of wickedness and ungodliness of every description and the wrath of God will be brought upon it.

The Apostle Paul makes this clear in his admonition to clean up the church at Corinth. Let's see what he says in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13! "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with (that is, fellowship) fornicators. Yet not altogether with fornicators of this world, or with covetous, or extortioners, or with idolators; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother

be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one not to eat."

Now, get this distinction! "For what have I to do to judge them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

We cannot help associating with some who are ungodly in the world. You have no right to go up to your grocer and say, "Mr. Grocer, are you a fornicator? If so, I cannot trade with you!" You have no right to go to your druggist and say, "Mr. Druggist, are you a drunkard? If so, I will not purchase my prescription here." The man at the next desk, the one at the next bench, the fellow at the lathe across the way where you work, may be wicked, ungodly and profligate. You cannot judge him! That is God's business! The thing you should do is to go calmly on your way, setting the right example. You cannot remove them from the earth in order to purify it. The Lord will take care of that separation of the chaff from the grain in the last great day.

But in the church it is an altogether different proposition. If any man that is called a brother be guilty of such sins as have been enumerated, you are plainly told to not fellowship him! You cannot remove him from the earth but you can certainly exclude him from the fellowship of the church, and thus no longer be responsible for his conduct, or suffer him to bring reproach on the body of the Savior!

What kind of influence will the church have if it puts a worldly, lying, cheating, stealing individual in for a Sunday-school superintendent? What kind of influence will it have if it permits a man who is an adulterer to direct its class of adults in the study of God's Word? How long will it be an influence for good if it supports a preacher who chases around to every filthy show, plays cards with the membership, drinks a little on the side, and uses profanity for emphasis when with a crowd of like type? Get rid of that kind of thing. If you cannot clean up and stand for something in the church, then get out of it, and cease to be a hypocrite!

The Churches of Christ sponsoring these talks believe in a clean

church to which the world may come and find a higher standard of living! We preach discipline and practice it! If you are tired of the shame and pretense, the hypocrisy and worldliness which have crept into religion in these days, we invite you to come and take your stand with us on the basis of the New Testament teaching, and join in this crusade for scriptural churches — not just churches with the name “Church of Christ” stuck up over the door, but churches where preachers, elders, deacons and the congregation seek to live for the Lord. Are you with us for clean churches, honoring the Savior’s name?

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE?

Regular listeners to this broadcast know that we have been speaking recently upon a very important but much neglected subject, that of discipline in the church. A home cannot properly function without the exercise of authority and respect for law. Neither can a school, state or nation. Then, why should we expect the church to continue without the exercise of that function which will purge it of unbelievers and those whose lives are a disgrace to their profession? The New Testament clearly and positively teaches that when a man will not live up to the standard set forth in God’s law, that he should be excluded from the fellowship. For a church to permit such an one to continue in its work and worship is to make them equally guilty with him, for the word “fellowship” means partnership.

Why is this not preached from the pulpits? Why is it that preachers who profess to be members of the Church of Christ will talk about baptism all of the time, or spend their time fighting sectarianism, when the very congregations they are preaching for tolerate drunkards, fornicators, gossipers, backbiters, liars, rabble-rousers, trouble-makers, factionists and heretics of every shade and grade? I answer that it is because those mercenary-minded pastors are afraid to teach the whole truth on this subject, for fear they would lose their jobs. Let the truth be known! The church cannot convert the world to Christ as long as we tolerate worldliness in

the church. Come out against sin! If we cannot line up the membership for Christ, then let's do what the Book says, withdraw ourselves from those who want to go arm in arm with Christ and the devil at the same time!

But it is argued that when such individuals cease to attend after having placed membership with us, that they have "withdrawn themselves." I deny that! There is no scriptural authority for any member withdrawing from the church. The church is a spiritual army. Can a man withdraw from the United States Army just because he doesn't like the discipline and routine? Suppose one does run off and leave? Does that end the responsibility of the army? Do the superior officers say there isn't anything to be done because he has withdrawn from the army? You know that such an idiotic position would destroy the morale and discipline of the army. It is ridiculous even to contemplate! When a man deserts the army, he is brought back and tried, and properly punished; sometimes given a dishonorable discharge!

An individual cannot withdraw from the army of the Lord either. He is not authorized so to do, and no Scripture tells him how to do it. But he may become delinquent. When he does, the officials are told to restore him if possible, but if impossible to do that, he is to be withdrawn from by the congregation. The idea that our responsibility ends when a man becomes delinquent is just a salve to our own guilty consciences, and an easy way out of doing what God has commanded!

My arm cannot decide to withdraw from my physical body! But if my hand becomes gangrenous and threatens to destroy the whole body, I can with my head, decide to amputate that member to save the body. Just so, Christ as the head of the church has given instructions, that under certain circumstances we are to amputate a member if necessary to save the church from becoming defiled. Remember that the New Testament teaches, "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ and everyone members one of another" (Romans 12:4, 5).

Again it is urged that the command to withdraw yourselves

from every brother that walketh disorderly is a personal affair! We should not make it public, we are told, but let each member privately and in his heart just resolve not longer to endorse the guilty! No wonder some so-called Churches of Christ are always in trouble! No wonder they are full of envy, jealousy and contention. No wonder the only mission work they ever do is when a group becomes angry and sloughs off and starts a faction! Withdrawal of fellowship must be as publicly done as the acceptance of such membership. Some congregations want to receive members through the front door and brag and bluster about the number of additions received, but they want to usher them out the back door quietly, so no one will know anything about it!

I want to refer again to the case of the church at Corinth, which unfortunately had one of its members become guilty of fornication. They were going merrily on their way, tolerating the man, and seemingly proud of the fact that he was in their number. Then the Apostle Paul heard about it and wrote them the first letter addressed to Corinth. Listen to the action he commanded in the name of Jesus Christ, "*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan*" (1 Corinthians 5:4, 5). He said to do it when ye are gathered together. This was an act of the church and not an individual matter! It was public exclusion! It was the last act in the case of the guilty to bring him to his senses. There was no maudlin sentimentality about it. It was an act of the body of Christ! And in the case of this man, it did save him. He quit his fornication, repented of his sin, and was restored to the fellowship, as the second Corinthian letter tells us!

What is the use of having a standard if no one is required to observe it? The government bureau of standards has determined that sixteen ounces make a pound! But suppose that leniency were permitted, and we were told that while such was the standard, yet everyone was to be guided by his individual wishes in the matter. Would not chaos and confusion result? The whole structure of society dependent upon weights and measures would be overthrown. That's why some congregations are always in confu-

sion. They claim to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent; but they are careful to be *silent* where the Bible *speaks* on the subject of discipline in the church! Everyone is permitted to do what is right in his own sight. The standard of morality becomes as low as that in the world and the church does not stand for anything! Oh, of course the preacher still bangs away on baptism, against instrumental music in worship, against societies, etc., but at the same time the congregation he works with is so immoral and rotten that the world laughs at the efforts he puts forth in the pulpit. Clean up the church or else cease calling it the Church of Christ! For it is not a Church of Christ, regardless of doctrine, unless it preaches and practices everything the Word of the Lord commands.

What will happen to a congregation that does not teach the Word of the Lord on such matters as we have under discussion? I answer that if we will not as a church withdraw from those who are ungodly, then Jesus Christ will withdraw from us. He says so Himself. Listen to His words in Revelation 2:5, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of his place." That's but another way of saying that if the congregation did not repent and get busy and serve Him, He would simply no longer recognize it. And that was not a sectarian body. That was the Church of Christ at Ephesus.

Faithful congregations will recognize the discipline of other faithful churches. Sometimes when a man is excluded in one place because of his ungodly life, or his heresy, he immediately runs to another, and they gather him in with open arms! Suppose that a man could steal a car in one State and then, merely by driving to another State, secure protection of the law? Soon there would be no respect of property rights in this nation. When a man has been excluded somewhere, and he presents himself to you for membership, let him go back and right the wrongs he has committed, then he can bring a letter of commendation, and you have the right to receive him. To harbor a criminal or fugitive from justice is equal before the law with committing the crime. Only recently certain ones were sentenced to death because they took in and shielded escaped

Nazis, or enemies of our government! The church has no right to give succor, aid, encouragement, endorsement or assistance to those who have attempted to destroy the Lord's Body elsewhere!

Friends, we are pleading for clean churches—churches where the membership strive to live right in life as well as in doctrine. Both are essential, but having the right doctrine will not save you if your life is not in harmony with it. Let's live our religion every day!

PERSONAL OFFENSES

Since we are in a discussion of matters pertaining to the government and discipline of the church, it is very timely for a notice of the teaching of the New Testament, concerning the responsibility of the church in dealing with offenses that arise over matters of a personal nature. Not all of the difficulties in the church come about by reason of the public transgressions against the body as a whole. Often, the most complex problems arise because of the fact that one member, wittingly or unwittingly, says or does something which offends another. Does the Bible tell us what to do under such circumstances? It certainly must inform us somewhere, for we read that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16).

And surely enough, as we turn to Matthew 18:15-17, we hear the Savior say, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

It is just as true as anything can be that as long as the church

is made up of men and women, it is going to have offenses arise! Yet, the Word of the Lord gives us a perfect solution to every spiritual difficulty. Let's examine carefully what Jesus taught on these things. I emphasize first, that if your brother offends you, you are instructed to go to him first, and alone, in order to tell him of his fault. Is that what you do? Isn't it rather true that you harbor that up in your heart, let it develop the seeds of wrath and grow into malice, and then you tell it to everyone else except your brother? Are you one of those persons who like to "get it in for someone" and then chase all over town telling what was said or done, and doing it in such a derogatory fashion as to destroy his influence in the service of God? Do you like to get with a group, and tell them in a half-whisper what you've heard about So-and-So, and then caution them all not to tell anyone else, for the person who told it to you made you promise that you wouldn't tell anyone else? I want to say that I think more churches have been ruined by damnable, uncontrolled gossip and backbiting than any other one thing!

You become jealous of your brother because of his ability, and immediately you begin to seek some offense. You can always find what you are looking for! If you don't, you'll invent something! Then, instead of going to him alone, you blab, ballyhoo and emblazon it all over town, until a character is besmirched and the church is crippled in influence, so that it can never recover! It takes planning ability and executive talent to erect a building, but give anyone a crowbar and he can tear it down. An undisciplined child can take a claw hammer and wreck a clock that required the work of skilled craftsmen. It doesn't take either sense or ability to wreck a mansion, but it takes some skill to build even a chicken house! Don't pride yourself on the wreckage you have strewn around. What have you built?

When my brother offends me, the first principle that should motivate me is the saving of that brother, and the gaining of his good will! Life is too short for me to spend it in making enemies, because of a lack of tact or good common sense. I am here to save men's souls, not to destroy them! I want to see every person I can reach go to heaven. I do not want to see anyone lost, not even

the man who offends me! Of course, I know that we cannot reach the glory world and leave our sins uncorrected; therefore, I want to help my brother, who in a moment of weakness has trespassed against me, to restore himself to God. When I go to him, there are two things I should bear in mind. They are, first, that I must put myself in his position and try to understand the motive that prompted his action; and second, that I must consider myself and how I would have acted under the same set of circumstances. If I do that, I will be able to talk to him upon a reasonable basis.

I think stubbornness is one thing that keeps a lot of us from doing what we should. If someone offends us, we immediately bristle up, and quit coming to church. We say, "If I ever come back, it will be when he comes and apologizes to me. I'll never have anything to do with a place that has such a hypocrite in it." Now, I'd like to point out that of the two you are the biggest hypocrite! You pretend to be so sanctimonious, sincere and self-righteous that you cannot stand to go where a hypocrite attends. You love the Lord too much to associate with a person like that! Then, if you love Christ, why do you not do what he has told you? He told you not to tell anyone else at all, but first go to your brother and tell him his fault and try to gain a reconciliation. Instead you say he's going to hell, and you take a position that will send you right along with him. You must like him better than you thought you did, since you are making arrangements to live with him throughout eternity.

Sometimes men develop characteristics of lower animals. They leave the God-given plane of intelligence which lifts them above the brutes, and get back down on the same level with the beast. Thus I've heard the disposition we refer to called "pig-headed, mule-headed, and even bull-headed." Now, you who live on a farm and have tried to drive either pigs, mules or bulls know exactly what those descriptive terms mean. Isn't it a shame that those who profess to love Christ will let such passions govern them?

I want to say that if you are listening in this day, and someone has offended you, and you've been treasuring up hatred in your heart, sit right down and take the telephone and call that person up, and tell him what you've done in your attitude toward him,

and see if you cannot iron it out. If you are away from home, and there's someone you've been hating, get out the necessary materials and write that person a letter, and get this thing straightened up immediately. Do you want to die tonight with hate in your heart? Do you want to go down to your grave with malice against one whom you loved in the past? Do you want to face those black stains in the last great Judgment Day! If you've quit serving Christ because someone offended you, remember that you will not have to answer for his sin—but you will have to answer for yours!

Go back to church and acknowledge your wrong, then get in touch with the one who has offended you and get the matter adjusted. You're not a Christian at all if you will not do this, for it is what Christ has told you to do, and you know you cannot be a Christian without following His instruction!

The greatest principle ever enunciated insofar as our personal relations go is the statement of Jesus, "Therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." Can we determine by what you do, what you want men to do to you? Is it possible that you want others to hate you, despise you and gossip about you? If you do not, then why do you do those things with regard to others? Have you no sense of fairness? Have you no love for consistency? Do you set up one standard for your own conduct and an altogether different one for the remainder of humanity? Friends and brethren, let us heed the words and spirit of the Master who went about *doing good!*

If someone comes to you with a tale of offense, that a brother has committed, do not stretch your elastic ear to take in the hateful things that may be put out! Don't have one of those eager, grasping covetous hearts that just palpitate to hear dirty gossip, and pick up like a scavenger the morsels of contaminated rottenness that some are so ready to spill from their carnal tongues. Instead just tell the informer that you consider it his duty to go first and tell the one who is alleged to have done the wrong, and you do not care to listen to it until that has been done. It is sometimes a whole lot easier to talk *about* a person than to talk *to* him—but one is a moral coward who will dabble in dirt, and smear another,

yet hasn't the nerve to face the accused and tell him the same things.

Personal troubles would generally end as personal and never become public if we would all heed the advice of the Savior. Yet it seems to be a part of the constitution of some to want to mess and mix in everyone else's affairs and keep trouble continually brewing, boiling and bubbling! The world has too much misery in it, anyway. Let's not add to it. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." There is no blessing for scandal-mongers, dirt-dealers or gossip-gulpers!

WHO SHOULD VISIT THE ERRING?

This is a day when men like to shun their obligations! In politics, they "pass the buck"; in religion, they shift their responsibility. It all amounts to the same thing. America has become so money-crazed that there are some who feel they can purchase anything including the right to enter heaven, if they just have enough filthy lucre to use as bait.

The modern pastor system has to a great extent grown out of this tendency! Christians have an individual duty to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction; to look after the needy and destitute; to develop ability to teach the Word of the Lord; to improve upon talent for public work in the service of the Master. How many are doing that? Instead, in many places, a man has been hired to go to the hospitals and see about the sick; orphan homes are established with a superintendent and matron to care for neglected children, while at the same time there are thousands of childless homes, inhabited only by a man and wife, and from one to three Boston terriers or Pekingese pups! If father and mother get old, they are packed off to a church home for old folks, because their Christian character is not in keeping with the cigarette-smoking, cocktail-sipping, hell-raising ideas of their sons and daughters! We'd rather pay someone to live the Christian life for us, so that we can be free to get out and go to the devil, without any restraint.

Even those who really think they love the Lord permit this influence to enter their lives to a greater extent than you might think. For instance, when a brother goes astray, or makes a mistake that might hamper his hope of entering heaven, it is the duty of all of us to try and restore that one. Let me read you the instruction of the Apostle Paul, as given in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering theyself, lest thou also be tempted." That is plain! It is understandable! It makes it binding upon every child of God—everyone who claims to be spiritual—to take a personal interest in an erring brother, to the extent of exerting an effort to restore such an one to the fellowship.

How many people obey that command? Isn't it generally true that when a brother in Christ is reported to be drifting from the hope of eternal life, the rest of us feel no personal or particular concern? Haven't you said, "It is the duty of the minister or the elders to see such an one? It is no concern of mine." You are not the first person to thus act. When Cain had slain his brother Abel, he disclaimed any interest in him, by asking the age-old query, "Am I my brother's keeper?" You know the reply of God, do you not? Isn't it strange that you will re-echo the attitude of the first brutal murderer in the world? You should be ashamed to live and afraid to die!

Honestly, most of us do not put a very high value on the soul of a man! We might go tonight and help lead one back to the way of righteousness if we showed just a little interest in him, but we must traipse off to the movie, and desecrate the Lord's Day, inflame our lust, and disgrace our hearts by looking with gloating eyes upon some suggestive portrayal by a group of actors from one of the most immoral atmospheres on earth. We haven't time to talk to a brother who is discouraged, but we have time to sit at a card table and while away the precious hours in a smoke-filled room, where dirty stories and profanity fill the atmosphere! We can go to a night-club and support the liquor trust which is doing more to wreck the morals of this nation today than any other group, but we haven't time to read the Bible to some wayward

soul. Is this a Christian nation? Can it be such when we follow the "dog-eat-dog" tactics so characteristic upon every hand?

Jesus Christ came to die for others! He gave His ALL in behalf of dying humanity! If you are a follower of Jesus, you too "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." You are saved to save others! And when you show no concern about the eternity-bound souls of those about you, you are not a Christian. You are a hypocrite if you pretend to be! The world is in a serious condition! Civilization is facing a great crisis! America herself is standing at the crossroads! Is this a time for drinking, carousing, gambling, lusting, when our boys are spilling their crimson blood upon a hundred battlefields? Is it not rather a time when we should be laboring to save all whom we can? Is it not a time for rededication to the service of heaven?

James says, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19, 20). Think of that phrase, "shall save a soul from death." Jesus teaches that the value of one soul cannot be estimated, because there is nothing in the world comparable to it. He even affirms that there is no profit if a man gain the *whole world* and lose his own soul. Now, I'm sure if you could save your neighbor's house from fire you'd do it! I'm certain that if you could save his child from death beneath the wheels of a car you'd gladly do that! I tell you that your neighbor's soul is worth far more than all the houses in the world—worth infinitely more than physical life! Have you ever tried to save his soul from the flames of hell?

A few days ago, a daily paper printed a plea for help. A life was at stake and a certain type of blood was needed for transfusion. Volunteers were lined up at the hospital in an endeavor to save that life. Many eager ones were turned away. How we all like to save the physical life that is in danger! Yet, what effort have you made today to rescue a soul that is going over the brink of the chasm of despair?

There is no one on earth who does not have an influence upon

others! It can be used either for good or bad. I plead with you to employ your influence this day in helping to bring back to Christ those who have been overcome by the temptations of sin. Listen to this admonition, "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and straighten the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed" (Hebrews 12:12, 13). Again I read, "Now we exhort you brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). There is nothing in any of these passages which indicates that they were meant especially for officials of the church, or for preachers alone. As a matter-of-fact, they were written by apostles and preachers to the church in general. The inspired statement, "He that winneth souls is wise," was not limited to officers of the church!

As we seek to assist others who have failed to live up to the requirements of the Savior, let us always remember that we too may sometimes step aside, and will need understanding and aid to get back on the road of life. The record says, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Now, if you refuse to help someone else in his hour of need, what right have you to expect aid when you need it?

*If I could see
A brother languishing in sore distress,
And I should turn and leave him comfortless,
When I might be
A messenger of hope and happiness—
How could I ask to have that I denied
In my own hour of bitterness supplied?*

*If I might share
A brother's load along the dusty way,
And I should turn and walk alone that day,
How could I dare—
When in the evening watch I kneel to pray
To ask for help to bear my pain and loss,
If I had heeded not my brother's cross?*

There may be someone this day who is languishing along the road to spiritual Jericho, with spirit wounded and heart oppressed, whom you could save. Will you, like the priest and the Levite in the parable, pass by on the other side? Will you wrap your garments of self-righteousness closer about your selfish form, and turn away from him who needs only a cheery smile and an encouraging word to start him on the upward trail to glory again? Or will you not rather go to his side, like the good Samaritan, and bind up his wounds, pouring thereon the oil of gladness and joy, and give him new courage to face the future?

The work of soul-saving is the personal responsibility of every Christian. He who shifts this obligation is not a Christian. He is not a follower of Christ. Brethren, if you know someone who has been overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore that one. Do it in the spirit of meekness. Do it in full consideration of your own failing and shortcomings! Do it with the realization that you too may sometime be tempted!

PERSONAL DISCIPLINE

In our discussions on the matter of keeping the church clean, we have emphasized the necessity of excluding from the fellowship those members who persist in living in ungodliness and sin. But it stands to reason that if we could get all who profess to believe in Christ to personally discipline their own lives, public discipline would not be required. The church is made up of individuals. It cannot be clean unless those who compose it are clean. Each one in divine presence today should therefore resolve to cleanse his own heart of all moral impurity, and pattern his life after the instructions set forth in the Holy Scriptures. If all do that, the church cannot help but be a clean institution, attractive to all who are honest.

But the worst trouble with most of us is that we wish to enjoy the rights, privileges and freedoms offered by the church, without giving up our past wicked lives. We want to carry water on both

shoulders. We desire to remain members of the church in case of sudden death, but we also want to do all that the world does, in case we live longer than expected! But compromise and equivocation will not merit or receive God's approval. You cannot walk with one foot in the devil's territory and at the same time climb the mountains of faith. You cannot span with one life the gulf that exists between sin and righteousness. You must take a stand!

Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24). Paul declares, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:16, 17). Again he asserts, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:5-8).

There are some who feel, however, that they can serve the lust of the flesh and still escape the just judgment of God. Can they do it? What sayeth the Word of the Lord? I read, "Be not deceived, God is 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" (Galatians 6:7, 8). Here is the instruction given to every child of the Lord, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:11-13).

I read a few days ago about a lad who was taken to the hospital for examination. The physicians looked into his body, and were

amazed when they found his heart on the right side of the body, exactly opposite of where it should have been—the heart normally being located on the left of the body! He was still alive but his heart was in the wrong place. That's the condition of many of us in a spiritual sense, we have our hearts in the wrong place! We have our affection on things of an earthly or temporal nature, rather than on those higher ideals which Christ specifies.

Let us hear Paul again, as he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, set your affection on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (the substance of Colossians 3:1, 2). But if we obey that command, what will happen to our earthly cravings and desires? Here is the Bible answer! "Mortify (that is, crucify) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked one time when ye lived in them" (Colossians 3:5-7).

The man who comes to Christ and still wants to hold on to a pet vice for a while, saying that eventually he expects to grow out of it as he becomes stronger in the Lord is "riding to a fall." An eagle in search of a dinner, seeing a weasel skulking in the grass, airplaned down and seized it in his claws. The weasel twisted its long body so it could reach up with its head under the eagle's wing and gnaw with his sharp teeth into the flesh. The eagle suffered from the bites and vented his shrill screams, and climbed up fiercely to his nest, but would not release his prey. The weasel's teeth eventually severed an artery and the great bird came thrashing to the ground, suffering its death pangs!

We must not permit sin, regardless of how little and insignificant it might be, to enter our hearts. For sin is insidious! It is powerful. I recall that once when I was a youngster I sat watching my grandfather in his attempt to split a gnarled log. So hard was the wood, so twisted the grain, that the axe made but little impression at all. Finally he asked me to bring him a wedge. Placing that wedge at the proper angle, he hit a few blows with a maul, and said, "If I can just get the thin edge of the wedge to

take hold, I can split the log and separate it easily." He did that very thing! Today if the thin edge of sin is permitted to enter your life, it will grow on you and every day you practice the wrong will be like a hammer blow driving it farther into your soul, until you are severed from God. Watch yourself, then, that you keep your heart from the first impressions of evil!

I'm sure you've all read the fable of the camel that asked his master if he would grant permission for the camel to put his head inside the tent. When such leave was granted, the camel then asked if he might also extend his neck into the warmth of the interior. Next came his shoulders, then his body, until finally the camel occupied the tent and the master was forced outside. So sin takes advantage of your life, by inserting itself slowly into your heart, until eventually it crowds out the Master, and leaves you without hope of the blessings of eternal life.

Discipline your life! First, realize how little value should be placed upon your past existence. The great Apostle Paul tells us, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Too many of us do not count our past lives as a total loss. We do not mark them off the books! We try to hold on to those things and just discount them. If we have been drinking six bottles of beer per week, we discount that fifty per cent when we come into the church, and merely drink three per week. If we, having gone to dances twice a week, decide we ought to give up something for the Lord, we just discount our pleasure fifty per cent, and only go once per week from that time forward. But Paul counted his life as a total loss. He said it was as dung! By that he meant that it was not only refuse, but such refuse as he would not want to go back and take up any more as long as he lived!

I want you to listen as I read again. "Be ye therefore, followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you,"

as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not becoming; but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. *Be not ye therefore, partakers with them . . .* and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:1-11).

I call upon all you who claim to be lovers of the Lord to show it by your action. Cease your hypocritical lives, and go "all out" for the Lord. One person by compromising with sin can lead countless other souls to hell. Make up your mind right now that you will take your stand one hundred per cent for the Lord. It's the only safe way to live! Don't wait! Start today!

KEEPING THE BODY IN SUBJECTION

As we consider the personal discipline which each of us should exercise over his life, we should recall one great example, that of the Apostle Paul. He recognized that there was a constant conflict in everyone of us, that our better self was trying to gain supremacy when we became Christians, but at the same time the old life of lust was pulling backwards and downwards. So he affirms, "But I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

I want to analyze that statement with you today and I ask you to think of it carefully and seriously. Who was speaking? The great apostle to the Gentiles! And herein is something worthy of note by all of us, that if this one who was a chosen vessel of God, to bear His name before kings, could become a castaway, then certainly none of us are at the place where we cannot fall. The doctrine that one "cannot fall from grace" is a sectarian idea not mentioned in God's blessed book. Instead we are warned, "Let him

that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). Paul knew that he could become a castaway and he took means to prevent it. What did he do?

He declared that he buffeted his body and brought it under subjection. I am certain then that if my body gets "the upper hand" I will be cast off by the Lord. I must discipline that body and keep it under control. Now, the body is essential to life, but it was never meant to control the man. It is a servant of the mind, and not the master of it. Too many have no will-power to resist evil in any form simply because they are dictated to by the wishes and desires of the flesh. They do not deny themselves of anything, and the result is they are mere pawns in the hands of lust.

Many things are all right as *servants*, but when they become *masters* they are extremely dangerous. They must be kept under control. That is true, both in the realm of natural force and in the human body. For instance, fire is a wonderful servant of mankind. With it, we preserve heat in our dwellings and maintain comfort even when the chilly blasts of winter roar around our dwellings. But when fire gets out from under control, it is a destructive agent of the worst type, and takes from man much of what is dear to him, including life itself. Water is a blessing from God. It enables nature to reproduce, gives food for our tables, drink to quench our thirst, and keeps life within our bodies. But who has not read of the damage that water can do, when it is unleashed in all of its fury? The mighty floods of the Mississippi and her tributaries have taken a terrific toll of life, both animal and human, besides all of the property damage that has been done. Water is a good servant, but indeed a cruel master. It must be kept under control.

That holds true with the organs and instincts that God has given us. Take, for instance, the tongue! It is a wonderful aid to man. We can communicate our wants, wishes and pleasures to others, as well as talk to God, with the tongue. Yet, that organ, uncontrolled, has wrecked homes, broken countless hearts, dethroned kings, set nations against each other in merciless slaughter, and kindled the flames of hell on this earth. No wonder the Bible says, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among

our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6).

A young girl said to me that the place where she worked, a defense plant, was a veritable cesspool of immorality. Even the women working there spent their time in damnable profanity, in telling filthy and lewd stories, in expressions of the most vulgar sort. She said that, though reared in a Christian home in the country, she had to fight against herself constantly to keep from lapsing into such conversation in an unguarded moment. Like Lot, in the city of Sodom which spewed out its brazen wickedness on every side, she vexed her righteous soul from day to day. We must keep our tongues under proper discipline, else we shall become castaways!

There is a terrible tree which grows in Australia. It is known by the natives as "the stinging tree." It is like one huge fiery nettle grown into full tree size. Thorns are all over its surface. Very fortunately, it has an unpleasant odor which tends to repulse those who would approach it. At first, the sting or prick of the tree's thorns does not trouble one at all; he has no pain whatever. But in a few minutes he is in agony. Weeks and months afterward he suffers if water touches the wound. When a dog is pricked by it, it is pitiful to hear him whine, and to see him bite pieces of flesh from the place that has been stung. Isn't that much like the sting of a gossip tongue? Perhaps at first, it does not create any great sensation, but later it cuts to the heart, and the wound rankles and burns and sears for a whole lifetime! Even after the stinging tongue has been buried in a grave, the misery it has produced lives on and continues to affect the person or cause of Christ!

The force of the church in the world against sin is being nullified and neutralized by the speech of some of its membership. There are those who go to the house of God on Sunday, make a pretense at least of worshipping God, and no later than that same afternoon they indulge in the practice of telling abominable, vile, disreputable stories. Their minds are in the gutter! They deal and dabble with filth from the moral hog-pens of the world. Every statement that is uttered they give a double meaning, and by sly

insinuation and dirty suggestion they turn the most sacred things into jests of the lowest nature. No wonder the church has lost its influence in many communities, when it will tolerate men who think it smart to hold the Bible in class, and then get out and stoop to the lowest depths for their language with others.

Profanity is apparent on every hand. No respect is shown for age, sex or belief. You hear it drooling from the mouths of men—and women too—on the bus, the train, or the street. It is open defiance of Almighty God, who said we would be condemned for taking His name in vain. Such language is not a sign of smartness. It is not a mark of sophistication. Rather is it the symbol of a depraved heart and a weak mind. It is only a cloak of maliciousness and a sham to hide the ignorance of the one who uses it! No one who thinks anything of his character can be persuaded to indulge in this impious disregard of that which is high or holy. Let us learn to make our tongues as servants for good; and not let them master our emotions.

Of course, the tongue is not the only thing that God has provided for our good which may be abused. Among other things may be mentioned appetite, ambition, a desire for gain! Appetite is a blessing, as you'll soon learn if you have lost yours. Life takes on a very dark picture if you no longer relish any food that is prepared for you. But at that, it must be remembered again, that appetite is a good servant but a poor master. Have you ever seen one who has succumbed to every craving of his body, and who had made a glutton of himself? Such an one "lives only to eat." Now, we are informed by the Bible that we should let our moderation be known in all things. In other words, we should deny ourselves some things that we crave, and which are not good for us, just simply to demonstrate that we are still able to govern ourselves and keep the body in subjection.

When the body rules over the mind, we are governed by *passion*; but when the mind rules over the body, we are governed by *reason*. Perhaps that should be one of the greatest points of difference between the man who is a Christian and the one who is not. The man who is a child of God knows that he is not his own. He recalls that Paul has said, "Ye are not your own, for ye

have been bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are His" (1 Corinthians 6:20). He thus no longer asks, *do I want* to do this or that, but rather, *does God want* me to do this? On the other hand, the man who lives only for time, who cares nothing for his soul, who will be damned in eternity, cares nothing for God's will. He is interested only in getting out of life all that he can. He might as well, for he will certainly not get anything in the next world. Of such, it is said, "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

Can you whip your own body? Can you control your desires? Can you master yourself? Or, are you a spiritual craven and a moral coward. Many, like Samson, can overcome their outward enemies, but lose the battle against their own natures. He could kill hundreds of the enemies that besought him from every side to do battle with them, but he could not conquer Samson! Let us learn to keep our bodies under and bring them into subjection!

DEAD OR ALIVE?

According to the Word of the Lord, all who listen to me today are dead persons! Yes, you are a corpse! But some are dead one way, while the remainder are dead another. I mean that some of you are dead *in sin*, while others are dead *to sin*. Christ came to earth to die *for sin*, that those who were dead *in sin* might become dead *to sin*. Let us read in Romans, chapter 6: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:10, 11).

What should be the attitude of those who are dead to sin? I read once more, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." This is very plain. We must either continue to conquer sin, or else it will captivate us and reign over us. We must either bring ourselves into subjec-

tion, or else we will be enslaved by the hideous power of evil. Yet, the conquest of self is the hardest battle most of us have to fight.

When Abraham Lincoln was a candidate for the Presidency, someone asked him what he thought of his prospects. He replied, with his characteristic humor, "I do not fear Breckenridge, for he is of the South; and thus the North will not support him; I do not fear Douglas, for the South is against him. But there is a man named Lincoln I see in the papers of whom I am very much afraid. If I am defeated, it will be by that man." And all of us can say that same thing this day. It will do us little good to come up in the last day and plead that others have been responsible for our course of conduct. God's word declares, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his *own* lust and enticed. Then lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15).

Moreover, we will not be judged by what others have said or done, but by our own deeds. In the great judgment scene as described by John the Revelator, we find, "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*" (Revelation 20:12). We must stand or fall by our own lives! Let us then war against self and sin, that we be not overcome.

In our battle, we shall need the help of God. Many do not come to the Lord because they feel they are too great sinners. But that is when you need Him most! What would you think of a man who was seriously ill and refused to go to the doctor, saying that he would rather wait until he was feeling good? You go to a physician when you are sick! Jesus Christ is the Great Physician for our spiritual ills. Arise and come to Him now. Recognize the burden of sin that is upon your soul and throw off that burden by obeying the voice of the Lord.

Perhaps you say as you chase around the worldly places, curse and swear, drink and gamble, that you are not conscious of being a sinner. You may declare that you are not worried about your

condition. You may even laugh off this sermon today. In that case, the story of the Indian preacher needs to be related. He was preaching on the burden of man's transgressions, when a skeptic called out, "You keep harping on the burden of sin. How heavy is it? Forty pounds? Ten pounds?" The preacher answered, "Tell me, if you laid a hundred pound load on the chest of a corpse, would it feel the load?" "No, because it is dead," the scoffer replied. The preacher then said, "That's the condition you're in too, if you feel now no weight of sin." Are you dead in sin today? Have you arrived at the place where your conscience no longer condemns you? Then you are in a serious state indeed!

The Churches of Christ are pleading for pure living! We stand for clean churches! But the church can only be clean when the members are clean. The Bible teaches us that we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. As Christians we are to be examples to the world. We have no right to carry on a habit that will injure us and cast a stumbling-block in the pathway of others. We must rise superior to our own cravings, lusts and desires. Too many of us have pampered and petted ourselves into believing that we can do anything we wish and still please God. We have made out of ourselves such spiritual weaklings, and spineless jellyfish, that we will go on in our course of life regardless of what God's Word or our hearts have to say on the subject.

Not long ago a man told me that he was convinced that the tobacco habit was a filthy one. He said he knew that his smoking not only gave him an offensive breath, but likewise his puffing second-hand smoke into the faces of others was not even polite. He said that he very much doubted that he could justify his conscience and still continue to suck nicotine out of his daily ration of cigarettes, knowing what their use was doing to his lungs and body in general. But he added that he was afraid if he quit that it would kill him. I said to him, as I say to you, that I would rather die doing what I know is right than to live a hundred years, doing what I think is wrong all of the time. For I know that I am bound to die sometime anyway, and in the act of death for quitting a bad habit, I would at least die with a clear conscience.

Have you ever seen a river that was straight as an arrow? I am sure you have not. Rivers do not flow that way, but rather they wind in and out, and curve and twist through the countryside. Why is this the case? Let a wise master of epigram answer and at the same time drive home a great truth. He said, "A river becomes crooked by following the line of least resistance! So does man!" Let us meet the obstacles that confront us, and overcome them, rather than be overcome by them! Let us keep ourselves on the straight and narrow way!

But you may ask what you are to do about those things in your life which you do not know to be wrong, but which you are in doubt about. Do you recall the story of the man who arose one morning and picked up the shirt he had worn the evening before? He looked at it, and debated whether he should wear it another day. He wanted to be economical and besides it was hard to get clothes back from the laundry. As he stood there surveying the collar, his wife settled the matter for him by calling out, "If it's doubtful, it's dirty." That goes for a lot of other things in life also.

If you are tempted to tell a story that is off-color, but still you hesitate whether you should or not, forget it—it's dirty! If you are provoked to use an expression but hesitate just before it escapes your lips, swallow it. If it's doubtful, it's dirty! If someone calls you up and asks you to go some place, and your better self whispers for you not to go, then stay home. Leave the doubtful things alone and you'll always be on the safe side. A man gathering snakes for our museum does not rush forward and pick up a serpent if he is in doubt about whether it is venomous. He first determines its harmlessness before he takes a chance!

So many of us become our own worst tempters. Instead of conquering self, we are led to hurt ourselves by our own folly. If you were driving over a mountain road that you'd never traversed before, what would you do, see how close to the edge of the precipice you could get without tumbling over into the chasm below? Of course not! Instead you'd hug the inner wall until you scraped the paint off your fenders, trying to stay as far from danger as possible. That's sensible, but why not do that in every walk of life?

If you have a tendency to drink intoxicating liquors and you have been freed from their bondage by obedience to Christ, don't hang around with a gang that drinks, and lolls and lounges around a tavern. Choose companions whose lives are free from the taint of drunkenness. If you have a constant temptation to use profanity, stay away from vile-mouthed, filthy-talking, slang-hurling, corrupt conversationalists. Choose as your companions those whose speech will elevate you morally and spiritually! You can conquer sin, but you can't do it by flirting with it. Let us all resolve today that we shall attempt to raise the standard of living to a higher level. Let us make our lives count for God! Take your stand on the Bible, and be faithful to its teachings!

TROJAN HORSES

The present world conflict has introduced a number of new words and names into our vocabulary. It has also given new meanings to many old ones. Recently, we have heard once again of the "Trojan Horse." History reveals unto us the significance of the expression. We expect to show today that we have "Trojan Horses" of a spiritual nature to contend with also.

You will recall having heard of Helen of Troy. She was the beautiful wife of King Menelaus of Sparta. She was abducted by Paris, son of the Trojan king. All of Greece gathered to avenge this insult. Under the leadership of Agamemnon, the Grecian armies landed on the Trojan coast and began a siege of the city. For nine long years that siege continued with no visible weakening of the beleaguered garrison. Then the Greeks finally captured the city by a stratagem.

In full sight of the inhabitants of the city, they constructed a huge wooden horse. Leaving it hollow, they concealed within a number of picked soldiers. Then the rest of the army retired to ships as though they were relinquishing their hopes of conquest. In full elation and exultation, the excited Trojans came out and dragged the horse within their walls. That night when the city

was exhausted from celebration, the soldiers crept out of the horse, opened the city gates to their comrades who had returned and the city was given over to fire, plunder and massacre.

I should like to remind you that this same thing has happened to the church many times. The devil is a master of strategic warfare. He has carried on a relentless battle for six thousand years. He is tricky, wily and cunning. Well does he know that if he were to come unto us and attempt to force certain things upon us, that he would lose the battle. Therefore he conceals his weapons in that which appears to be innocent and safe. When because of curiosity or a desire to be modern we drag those things into the church we find too late that we have opened the gates for a flood of evils which will eventually overwhelm and destroy us.

The Churches of Christ have consistently opposed the adding of anything to our work or worship which is not provided for in the New Testament. It has been, and still is, our aim to "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where it is silent." It is our contention that God, who is perfect, has given unto us a perfect law. He demands perfect obedience of that law. Many religious bodies have drawn into their citadels those things which appeared to be innocent, only to awaken later to a realization that spirituality had decayed, and truth was swallowed up of error.

The addition of humanly organized societies to do the work of the church appeared very innocent at first. But eventually, it was determined that the society became more powerful than the church. Falling into the hands of unscrupulous individuals, drunk with sight of power, it became a dictator of church policies, and soon the church could not even secure a preacher without first obtaining permission from the lordly and arrogant organization for which no scriptural sanction existed.

Others established ecclesiastical schools and colleges to teach the Bible; thinking in their ignorance that such would act as a guarantee against trouble in the future. Instead they have been Trojan horses, bringing in more difficulties all of the time. Only recently in Nashville, Tennessee, the daily papers were filled with accounts of squabbling and fighting in one such institution, which had been

established purportedly to teach the Bible. By their fruits ye shall know them!

Faithful churches have opposed the addition of any such humanly-devised schemes and systems. We believe in mission work! We believe in education! We believe in all securing a knowledge of the Word of the Lord. But we believe it is the duty of the church to preach the Gospel. We also believe it is the duty of the church to teach the Word of the Lord. It would be sheer ignorance to oppose a missionary society established to preach the Gospel, and then set up an educational society to teach it! Our contention, with the New Testament as our guide, is simply that Christ established the church to make known the manifold wisdom of God and any other institution established to do the work of the church is a usurper of the prerogatives of the church and of the glory of God. There is nothing that you can accomplish in the way of good in any other institution that could not with equal facility be done by the church, if you would give as much time and effort to it! Any other organization saps the church of its glory, money, talent and time!

Here is what Paul says in Ephesians 3:10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by *the church* the manifold wisdom of God." When God tells us to do a thing, and then tells us how to do it, that excludes every other method of doing it, else we are not obedient to His will. Now, these other organizations are either the church at work, or they are not. If they are, they should be supported wholly by the treasury of the church, for the treasury is to be used to support the church at work. If they are not, then they constitute other bodies set up to do the work which God authorizes the church to do. But Paul says, "There is ONE BODY" (Ephesians 4:4). If therefore I create another body, which is not the church, but which is set up to do the work of the church, then I arrogate to myself spiritual authority which belongs only to God, and I come under the condemnation of heaven.

The introduction of theological institutes has saddled upon the church today a group of "professional" ministers. Those who

attend such a school do so exactly as one goes to a medical school to become a doctor. Naturally when one graduates from such a medical school, he realizes how much time and money he has invested in attaining his degree, and he is interested in finding a place where he can build up a good practice and settle down and get his money back and accumulate additional. So, a "kingdom of the clergy," as it was designated by Alexander Campbell, has fastened itself upon the churches today, and is taking over the full scriptural authority which belongs to the eldership; in many instances doing all of the preaching, teaching, visiting, etc. And because such individuals must hold their jobs, little teaching is done on the subject of discipline. Churches therefore become tolerant of sin. In Kansas City recently a so-called "Church of Christ" installed an elder who had been seen under the influence of intoxicating liquor only three weeks before that time. But he was wealthy and helped to support the minister. Now, a church cannot rise above its leadership anymore than a stream can rise above its fountain head. Thus, with a corrupt leadership, with preachers and elders running around to night clubs, theaters and other places of worldly amusement, you cannot be too expectant that the congregation will keep itself pure!

The truth of the matter is that the word "Christian" has become empty and void in many places, because it is applied to those who are neither Christ-like or holy! Every man does that which is right in his own right. But just as long as he has been baptized, pays his assessment, and comes to church when he feels like it, he is designated a "Christian." I resent this abuse of so sacred a title. I denounce the idea of calling churches after the name of Christ which will tolerate fornicators, drunkards, gamblers, liars and every other type of evildoer in their midst. I call upon those of you who really love the Lord to come out from among them, and help us to establish in this area churches that are Churches of Christ in practice and life, as well as in name. Have you the courage of your convictions?

We have been making a plea for clean living, for pure conduct! Some of you have said "Amen" to it; others have continued in the way of your own heart. But we are firm in our belief that there

are still hundreds in this land who have not bowed their knee to the Baal of modernism, who are not willing to sell our birthright of religious truth for a mess of pottage! Too many places have taken in the Trojan horses which Satan has constructed in the plains of compromise. Even now destruction and ravaging of that which is spiritual is taking place. Escape from that devastation as Lot escaped from Sodom, and reconstruct with us the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Our plea is to all believers in God, who accept the Gospel as their only rule of faith and practice! May God grant that we shall unite upon the principles of the New Testament and go forward in the work of the Master. Will you join us in that battle for truth today?