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A New GRIP On GOD

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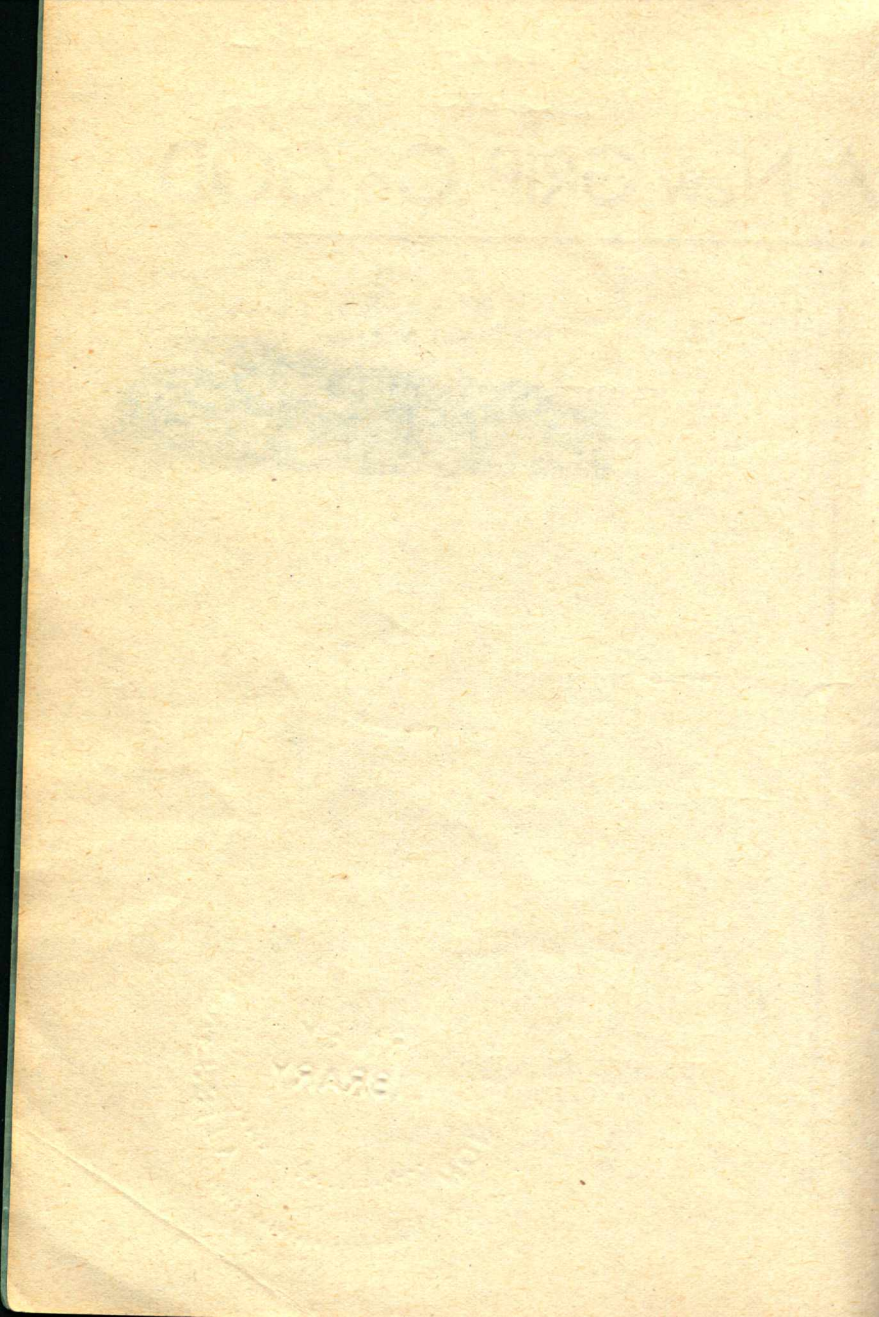
U. E. HARDIN

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DEDICATION

To the memory of John C. and Elizabeth Maves, whose Godly lives and Christian counsel meant so much to me in my early ministry, and who gave to me their beautiful Christian daughter, Rosa Esther, to be my companion through life, this little volume is tenderly and affectionately dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

This is not the mechanically planned product of an "armchair" philosopher. Rather this booklet was achieved in the searching fires of suffering. For these many years the author of this work has struggled against handicaps, and with every one conquered he has been the stronger. Indeed he has used the very real difficulties of his life as stones upon which to step higher in the ranks of the noble men of God. Where some would cry and cringe, our brother, Reverend U. E. Harding, praying that better manhood and Christ-likeness would result, faced the experience that might throw new light in upon his life or sentence him to permanent physical darkness. As he says, he purposed to make the clinic not only one for his eyes but for his spirit too. And out of this crucible of the Spirit he came to utter his heart-cry for a "new grip on God."

To hear this message is to be convinced that God gave him both the message and the answer to his prayer. Fortunate are the thousands who have been gripped by his personal, impassioned plea for a "new grip on God." But you too are to be congratulated, for it is yours to read this message at your leisure, to expose yourself to its truth in the privacy of your own home, to linger over its impelling logic in your place of prayer, to follow in its light until you too

have experienced a "new grip on God." And because this is one of the needs of our trying times I am glad to commend this work to you, praying that God will make you permanently different for having read and pondered and realized "A New Grip on God."

—Lloyd B. Byron

FOREWORD

The author of these humble chapters was reared in the hills of southern Indiana about fifty miles from the Ohio River. Here a happy, free and peace-loving people have lived since their forefathers, who purchased it from the government at twelve and one-half cents an acre, entered this land. Among these earlier settlers was my grandfather, William Henry Harding, for whom my father was named.

The land was cheap and there was free range for stock, which consisted principally of hogs and cattle. Here these happy people mingled and married with each other. They cleared up their ground and fenced their farms with rails like those split by Abraham Lincoln, whose boyhood days were spent in these same hills and whose mother's grave is found here. They met together and rolled logs, raised their houses and barns, and enjoyed the feasts of friendship.

Woods covered the hillsides; and soon saw-mills, stave factories, and other industries that used wood dotted the rivers and valleys.

Just as roses have their thorns, so this country had its sorrows. There were the dreaded diseases of different seasons. Winter fever, as it has sometimes been called, was often followed by consumption. Then

in the spring and summer came the chills and fever. I can still remember some of the home remedies of teas from leaves, weeds, dock and bark, recommended by those of mature years and long experience. The shelves of the old whatnot were loaded with pills and plasters, ointments and oils, Japanese King of Pain, arnica, liniment and all, as well as the ever present quinine bottle. No doubt many of my readers remember the old whatnot shelf, made of strings of spools, swinging in the corner of the old log house.

Typhoid fever would take its annual toll. While we welcomed the spring with its profusion of wild flowers and ferns on our hillsides and the summer with its fruits and berries, grapes and haws, and the yielding fields of grain, yet we knew all too well that someone was marked for that dreaded disease. I lost my mother with that ailment, when I was but ten years old. Later I saw three of my brothers and a sister go down until their feet touched the brink of the river of death with the same plague.

Among the scourges that came our way every few years was a contagious eye disease, sometimes called pink eye, which caused weak and inflamed eyes. I was one of its victims and while many responded to the remedies of kinsmen and neighbors, my eyes gradually grew worse until the family physician was called upon. He said the case was becoming chronic, and advised consultation with an eye specialist.

All this meant money, and my parents were poor. Seven children were housed in our log cabin in the valley. I was the fifth son. A trip to the city would be required to reach the specialist, and no one wanted to make that trip, for none of us had ever ridden on

a train. The expense involved equalled the price of a good horse or a yoke of oxen or two good milch cows. This was serious business for a poor family and not one to be undertaken lightly.

Some one recommended an eye medicine that was highly advertised by the woman who made the remedy. My father secured the medicine, and the strong drops were used three times daily in my tender eyes. Later my mother noticed that the handkerchief kept with the medicine was stained as with rust, and the cloth eaten up. It was then she realized this was caused by that strong medicine which was being used in my eyes.

This scarred the cornea, resulting in a condition now known a scar tissue of the cornea. Thus I was to battle through life in blindness, seeking an education in a school for the blind. But all this is another story which may be found in a book entitled **Seeing through the Eyes of the Dead**. It seemed necessary in this foreword to tell some of these things that the reader may understand the reason for the suffering, the hospital and all that followed.

There were years of searching for some one who would give me hope for sight or improvement, but again and again I was told that I would have to be satisfied with what I had.

In 1920 I learned that some day surgeons would know how to transplant corneas of the eyes and when that day dawned, it would be a fortunate day for me.

In 1938 I went to the hospital for this very delicate operation. I was the second person in America to have such an operation where the eye of the dead was used.

This meant that I would have to undergo several minor operations. It meant three weeks in total darkness, both eyes plastered shut with adhesive tape. The eye with the transplant was sewed shut, the upper and lower lids stitched. Thus I must sit and wait and think. This little volume is the result of those hours.

CHAPTER ONE

A SPIRITUAL CLINIC

The three weeks I spent in the hospital for the operation on my eye, I was in total darkness with both eyes plastered shut. I would not wish that anyone should have to spend time in the hospital; but if you should have to go there, pray that it may be spent for your good and for the glory of God. Why lose time when it is so precious? Why let your machinery of thought run in channels that will not enrich you spiritually?

I knew that if the eye that had been transplanted to me did not "take" I would be absolutely blind. The lady who bequeathed me the eye was a saint of God. In death she had seen into the very gates of heaven, and had seen Jesus waiting to receive her into everlasting bliss. I told myself that the eye I was getting had seen the city of God; I could use it only to the glory of God and to bless a lost world. Thus I began a spiritual inventory, examining my own heart.

My life passed before me in review. I could see the low places, the times I had contended for my own way—selfish times, when I had walked in the flesh when I should have walked in the Spirit. I was so human, so much of the flesh. There had been selfish ambitions, aspirations unholy, too much desire for self-gratification. I cried out, "Oh, for a new grip on God, and a new grip on my ministry." Those words stayed with me. I said, "That's just what I want, a

new grip on God." I asked myself, "Why not go in for a new lease on life, why not go through a spiritual clinic?"

A real hunger of soul seized me and I began to re-dedicate to God my life, and also this new member which I had received from that saint of God, Mrs. Margaret Carr.

Like many others I had at times compared myself with my fellow ministers. I was as spiritual as they. I fear I was looking upon God's grace as we boys used to look upon taking medicine. Mother would diagnose and then dose. We would always ask, "How much do I have to take?" Many times we take a similar attitude toward religion, asking "How much do I have to have?" rather than, "How much may I enjoy?"

Far too many of us carry our religion as a fire insurance. We simply do not want to be lost; we do not want to burn. How much better to achieve something definite in the Christian life, to expand and explore and grow in the things of God.

My brother once kept an old-time general store. In those days people did not go to the trouble to take inventories; they did not know how much stock they had on hand or how much it was worth. They did not know just what they were doing in business. They simply took in produce, timber and grain and exchanged it for dry goods, groceries and machinery. Today that system will not work. Competition is too keen. Many stores take inventory each week, and some of them know each evening just how much has been sold and how much received.

If inventories are good for business, if examina-

tions are good in school, why not try them in the spiritual realm? If a child fears examination day, it is because he has not worked at the job. If we fear it, it is because we are guilty of sins of omission or commission.

In this hospital there were patients who followed prescribed diets; and in order to do this they had to give up habits of years. This took will power. In the bed next to mine with an Italian. When he entered the hospital he was so blind he could not see his own bed; now he could read the newspaper to me. He had lost his sight from nicotine, chiefly through smoking cigarettes. His case was a revelation to me. No knife was used; he simply took sweats, baths and treatments to get the poison out of his system. He told me how his system cried out for days and weeks for this poison. It took will power to resist the craving, but he ever held before him his sight. Oh, to see again as other men! He said, "Sight is worth the struggle." He had been a great coffee drinker, and now he was told that since his system was clearing he must not pour any more poison back into it. So he quit his coffee.

Then I thought of the men whose occupations require great physical endurance. They eat, sleep and do the things that will develop them physically to win in a prize fight, a foot race, a wrestling match, and so forth. They do it to win an earthly prize, but I was running for a crown, for the reward of the final faithful in Christ. Would I have the will power? Could I pay the price? I have heard it said that God has His best for those who will not be satisfied with anything less.

In other parts of that hospital, some were having

an eye removed to save the other one. I remembered what Jesus said, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off." Whatever is an offense unto me, a drain in my spiritual life, I must put away. Thus I was on the table; I was in a spiritual clinic. The Holy Ghost was diagnosing my case. God's great X-ray was on my soul. It revealed old wounds made by critics and jealous brethren. Some wounds were caused by foes; but those that left the deepest hurt were by friends of years. Adhesions, growths, scars of years must be cut away. Would I be patient? At times the knife went deep, the old sore spots hurt, but I wanted a new grip on God and a new lease on life.

Those great doctors had been so patient with me for so many years. Seventeen years ago they took interest in my case, when other doctors had passed me up. Now Jesus was patient in my case. He wanted to help me.

My doctor would visit me every day for a few moments, ask some questions and cheer me. He would say "Look up," and one day he said, "We must pray and trust." When he left my bedside, Jesus would speak to me about my spiritual condition and would always encourage me, and say, "You're getting on well."

Oh, the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost! He showed me the times I had gone into the pulpit in my own strength, when there was so much of the human, and so little of the divine.

A story is told of a farmer who, after finishing his Saturday chores, put on his Sunday clothes and started off to see and to hear John Fletcher preach.

(John Wesley said of Fletcher, "He was the holiest man I ever knew.") When the farmer passed a neighbor who was working, the neighbor stopped him and asked where he was going all dressed up. The farmer replied, "I am going to see Fletcher and hear him preach." On Monday morning as he was returning home, the same neighbor stopped him again, and asked him if he had seen Mr. Fletcher. The farmer replied, "No, I saw no man save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

On another occasion the church where Mr. Fletcher preached was filled on Sunday morning with people who were anxious to hear him. The hour for preaching arrived, but Mr. Fletcher had not yet appeared in his pulpit. A man, getting impatient to hear him, pulled the coat of the colored janitor as he passed by, and asked, "Where is Mr. Fletcher? The congregation is getting restless." The old sexton told him that Mr. Fletcher was in his study, and added, "Some one is in there with him, for I heard him say as I passed the door, 'I won't go into the pulpit today unless you go with me.'" Later the pale figure of Fletcher appeared behind the sacred desk, and no one needed to ask whom he had been talking to in his study. His face shone, and his message was so full of unction that all knew he had been talking to the Master.

One of the finest compliments I ever had, I believe, was from a little lady who shook my hand at the door after the service one Sunday morning and said, "You made me feel I had been to church today."

CHAPTER TWO

FACING FACTS

Some time ago a good brother said to me, "It won't be long before the Christians of this country will have to face the firing squad for their testimony." That may be true, for no doubt there have been men and women of late in Russia and Germany that have died for their faith. But that does not seem to be in the devil's program, at least for the present in America.

Let us turn our minds back through the centuries to the early church, and walk the streets of that historical city, Jerusalem. We will find a group of disciples gathered in a certain home. If we will listen in on them, we will hear them praying, something like this, "And now . . . behold their threatenings." Outside are the soldiers and mobs with search warrants, swords and sticks, seeking the little band of earnest Christians to bind and place in prison for their testimony.

It was about this time that Paul was still breathing out threatenings against the church of God. These were threatenings of martyrdom. It was the devil's mistake as he found out later. Such persecution puts iron in men's souls. Out of it emerged some of our greatest Christian characters. From this source come our best books and sweetest songs.

John Bunyan did not write "Pilgrim's Progress" under a beautiful indirect light, seated in an uphol-

stered chair. He wrote it in a musty jail in Bedford, England, imprisoned for the testimony of Jesus. When his daughter came and told him that the committee would let him out if he would stop preaching Christ on the streets, he replied, "They can keep me in here until the moss grows over my back as thick as my eyebrows; but if they let me out of here today, I will preach Jesus Christ tomorrow." The devil does not want another **Pilgrim's Progress** printed, a book which some rank next to the Bible. He does not want another John Bunyan.

The devil does not want another Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos or Daniel. From such men come our greatest writings. Our most magnificent hymns have been forged in the furnace of affliction and baptized in blood.

The early church said, "Behold their threatenings," which meant martyrdom. But the god of this world, with whom the church and ministry must deal, uses different tactics. Paul wrote saying, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world."

The devil with which we contend today is not like the one my old Grandmother Harding talked about when I was a little boy. She called him the "Old Hairy Man," the "Bugger Man" and the "Old Scratch." She said he had horns and chains. She should have told me that he was going through the country as a roaring lion, and was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

If Bob Ingersoll should come to your town, you would most likely go to hear him. He was the silver

tongued orator of his day, a man with a marvelous vocabulary, whose diction was perfect. Of course, you would know whom you were going to hear. He would make light of the church and the ministry, ridicule the church and the Bible; but you would go armed with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit.

You and your children face infidelity in subtle and disguised forms, infidelity ordained, infidelity baptized, infidelity teaching the Sunday school class and even standing behind the sacred desk, infidelity in psychology and doubt.

Thirty years ago we would not have allowed a nudist colony in our country. The good fathers and mothers to protect their young, would have armed themselves, if the law would not have done it, and would have waited upon those folk with switches of tar and feathers. A good coat of feathers for these folk would not be a misfit. But this situation did not come to us over night.

Why it is that we now permit these conditions? About thirty years ago the styles began to change; first there were short sleeves and then no sleeves. Short skirts and tight fitting dresses, and bare legs for our little daughters began to be the vogue. Who populates these nudist colonies? Those who have grown up in this era of immodest dress. We are but reaping what we have sown. Old-time preaching that thundered against this error was counted fanatical, so we continue to reap.

The god of this age would capture every law of psychology, everything that would appeal to the eye, ear, taste or passions of men. Art has been abused

and misused. For the popular taste, music must be jazzed. Some of our finest songs are played in swing time—anything to attract and appeal to the carnal hearts of men. We are swinging and jazzing our way to the grave and hell.

The moving pictures could be a great agency in the hands of good men; but as it is, they lead the way to crime and the brothels of sin. Radio when captured by the church can amplify the voice of the church and reach multitudes who know nothing of God, and so be a power for good. But how frequently it is the sewer pipe of hell, pouring sin and trash into homes all over the land, even to the fisherman's cottage or the mountain cabin.

The Spirit of the age is to lift the reproach on evil, to lower standards of morals, until nothing seems sinful. As my Grandmother used to say, "Just good God and good Devil."

Such conditions make it easy for people to be lost. They believe nothing is mean or bad. We have lost our family pride. In days gone by our respect for the family would keep us from open wrong doing.

There used to be great reproach about drinking. Anyone who had the beer wagon stop at his house was shunned by his neighbors. If a saloon keeper's son wanted to go right, he found it hard to get into good society. Folk felt sorry for him, but he was still the saloon keeper's son. If the bartender's daughter wanted to join the church, the pastor had a difficult time to get his church folk to accept her. She was still the bartender's daughter, and must suffer because of her father's business. Now it is easy to go wrong; we have lost our respect for appearances.

If a woman carried a bucket of beer and a man insulted her, the magistrate would tell her that if she were a decent woman, she had better take down her sign. We associated liquor with harlotry.

I remember hearing of some men from the hills who went to Cincinnati, and stopped at a saloon to get a drink. A woman, the wife of the saloon keeper, was attending the bar, and these men walked out in disgust, saying that they had too much respect for their mothers and wives to take a drink from a woman bartender.

When the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed we were promised that the old saloon would never return, but I would to God that it had returned rather than that the numberless hamburger stands and cafes, taverns and roadhouses, throughout the country, should set their snares for the feet of our young. The old saloon had a reproach, a stench, and a bad name, but it has been lifted to ensnare our children.

Some of you can remember when the morals of our school teachers must come up to that of the parson. No bad habits were allowed, for to these teachers was entrusted the training of our children. Recently a teacher told me that her superintendent of schools, a woman, gets so drunk at cocktail parties that she has to be carried to her home.

Only ten years ago I served on a committee from the Ministerial Association to call on the Board of Education in a western city, regarding a newly chosen superintendent of schools. He had been seen in a cafe smoking cigarettes. This professor was called upon by the committee and was quite impudent about the matter. He informed us that the preachers

were not going to tell him about his morals. After he left the room, we told the Board that unless they got his resignation we would start a recall on every one of them. It is needless to say the superintendent of schools was dismissed. How far we have gone since then! In only ten years!

A short time ago a teacher told me that every teacher in the high school where she taught, smoked and drank, except two. The principal told her the doctor had said that he was losing his eyesight because of cigarettes and he admitted, "I am so blind now that I can't tell one of you teachers from the other when you enter my room." But he still kept on smoking his cigarettes.

Some of us can remember when the house of ill-fame was segregated to itself. Now it can be found in any part of our modern communities. Many of the hotels rent women as well as rooms. Many of the tourist cottages make more money from immoral purposes than they do from rentals to tourists. Many of the cottages rent six to eight times a night, while some keepers boast that they have brought in thirty to forty dollars for one cottage in a single night. They are located outside the city limits where it is easy to break the laws.

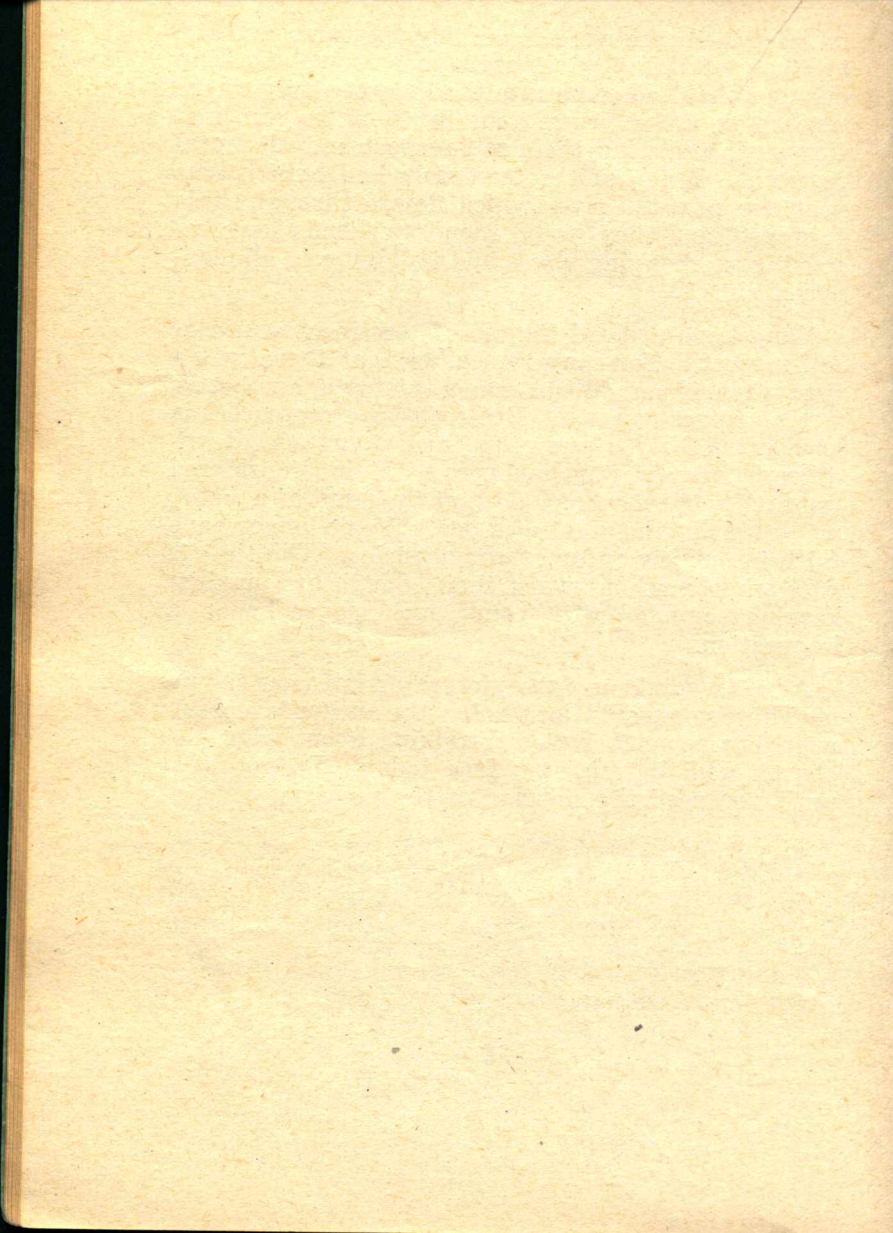
Many tourists, when looking for a place to rest for the night, are told, "There are no vacancies," "We are full up." Yet there was not a car in sight. Those in charge of the cottages were waiting for the darkness of night, and the tragedy is that many of their guests are high school boys and girls.

Recently we were visiting in a rural community, where once contented and pure minded people lived

in safety. As we were discussing the times and the apostasy of this age, we were told of the shocking changes that had come into the lives of many whom we had known in years gone by, families who had thrown to the wind their self-respect and all moral restraint. Many of the townsfolk had built cabins near the peaceful river which flowed through this farmland, and they would spend weekends here carousing, exchanging wives and indulging in all manner of sin.

Many have avoided the sin of stealing because of self-respect. You may remember that there was a time when, if you called a man a thief, you had better try to protect yourself. But today the reproach has been lifted. With many, to take advantage of another is merely good business; it is considered "smart" to cheat. Some do it at the point of a pistol, and others at the point of a pen. We no longer have faith in our law enforcement agencies. The time is past when mothers warn their daughters against keeping company with young men whose honor is in question.

All this paints a dark picture and if you should stop here you would decide that the author is a pessimist, but remember we are talking about what the church and the ministry face today. Do not stop until you read the solution of the problem.



CHAPTER THREE

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

One day as Jesus walked the roads of Galilee, the multitudes following Him (many of them only to share in the miracles He performed), He began to speak in parables about the suffering that awaited Him and His disciples. The people then deserted Him in such large numbers that He turned to His little group of disciples and said, "Will ye also go away?"

As I passed through this spiritual clinic, I sat alone with my thoughts and prayers. With my eyes darkened, I seemed to realize that perhaps God had allowed this affliction to come to me that, with my physical eyes closed to my surroundings, I might see the more important things of life — things even greater than the running brooks, the green fields and the mountain peaks. As I sat there in darkness, I seemed to see the tender eyes of Jesus turned toward me saying as of old, "Will ye also go away?"

Jesus warned us that in the last days "iniquity shall abound," "the love of many shall wax cold," and "as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Paul tells us, "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," and "in the last days perilous times shall come."

Friends, these are perilous times; we had better get a new grip on God. To be forewarned should

mean to be forearmed. There is no need for the church folk to throw stones at one another; we are all facing the spirit of the age, the falling away period. There seems to be a sleeping sickness in the church, a creeping paralysis, creeping over us and paralyzing the church and the usefulness of the ministry. It seems like a riptide or an undertow, sweeping people out to the sea of doubt. Many are backslidden; many who will read these lines are not completely backslidden, but are backsliding, losing their grip on faith and prayer. They are suffering with heart paralysis, their consciences seared; things that used to seem so wrong and sinful do not seem wrong any more. The light is not so bright. It is when we are spiritual that we are sensitive to evil.

During the scourge of the influenza, every newspaper in the land carried a diagnosis of that dreaded disease. It would read something like this: "If the joints ache, the muscles are sore, if your head aches and you chill and have fever, your throat is sore and you are sneezing, go to bed and send for the doctor." Many heeded this warning and are living today. Many who thought they could walk or work it off are in their graves today. Let us diagnose our case. We have been warned in God's Word.

Do we manifest the spirit of Christ? He was gentle. Are we? He was tender, loving, forgiving and kind. Are we? He was often moved with compassion for the souls of men about Him. Are we? When He saw a multitude He was moved for their needs. Do we see a hungry world before us, or do we see their cars, clothes and homes?

A brother said to me recently, "So many preachers are preaching without any heart." What a truth!

When Jesus saw the woman at the well, He forget His hunger. He had been so hungry that He had sent His disciples to the village to buy bread, so tired that He had sat on the curb of the well to rest. But while He was waiting a sin-sick soul came to draw water. And her condition so stirred Him He lost His desire for food, and said to His disciples upon their return, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." They asked, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?"

There are millions in that same class today. Fallen women are all about us. The loose laws of our land will greatly increase their number. Will the church turn to law, instead of love for these? Will she close the door to them when they seek the "Water of Life?" Will the church today with her rules and regulations close the door to those whom Christ said will go in while the children of the kingdom are left out? Will we forget the vision given to Peter on the housetop, when he was told, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Thousands of people today are getting themselves into a condition from which they will never get out. Too much is involved. They could be saved but they will not pay the price. It means too much. They are too entangled with business deals which are lose and shady. Some are so mixed up in domestic affairs, with morals so loose and with so many issues involved, that it seems they are in a position from which they cannot extricate themselves. The devil won't let them go.

Two couples in my church, in a friendly way, began to get too intimate with each other. They would attend the services and each man would sit with the

other man's wife. I remonstrated with one of the men, warning him that he was playing with fire and coming too near to sin. He resented my admonition, but later he called me to his office and told me with tears in his eyes that he was sorry he had not taken my advice. He asked that their names be withdrawn from the church roll.

While I was writing this chapter, a lady drove up in a nice car and asked to have a conference with me. She told me that she belonged to church, attended cards, drank cocktails and attended picture shows. This was her statement to me "This morning I turned on the gas to end my life, but when I realized that if I died I would go to hell, I got scared and turned it off. I am living in hell now and I must have help." This is the spirit of the age. The church and the ministry must get a new grip on God for this age.

Some have told me their downfall was due to the dance, the show, the cigarettes and the cards. No, my friend, it goes farther back than that. It started when you let down in your devotional life. You failed to read the Bible, to pray, to practice self-denial. You failed in attending the means of grace and the prayermeeting, and to have your family devotion and private prayers. You became weak, and when temptations came you went down. This is an age of weakened wills, flabby muscles. There is no conviction of right and wrong.

A friend of mine who used to be in the silver fox business up in Canada told me he decided he could raise foxes in California as well. But when he tried it out he found that in California the foxes did not

produce the heavy fur that they had in Canada. Even in the snow-covered mountains the winters were too short and not cold enough. Nature did not build up the resistance.

Paul tells us to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. If these are not evil days, may God have mercy upon us when they come. We had better begin to build up a resistance against those things that are coming upon the earth, or we shall not be able to stand.

The germ of tuberculosis stays in the body for years, and when the body is left weak from grippe or influenza, that germ becomes active, and down you go. Sin is in the land and when you are in a weakened condition from lack of prayer and devotion, it is the devil's time to attack.

There seems to be an ether from hell these days which is overpowering people. We are asleep to the conditions around us. We thought the World War would wake up the church, but it did not. We thought the thousands of new-made graves as the result of the influenza epidemic would waken the church, but we continue to sleep on.

Some said when the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed it would stir the church out of her sleep. But now we are getting used to the night clubs and taverns, and the snares set for the feet of our young people. Hell's hypodermic has done its work.

One Sunday after I had preached, my son, who is now a pastor, walked with me. With his arm around me, he said, "Father, you stirred my soul today. And the church was surely stirred, too." "Yes," I replied, "my son, they told me so as they shook my

hand at the door. Some said they could never be the same any more, but we'll wait and see if they even come to church tonight." That night half of those people stayed at home around their fireside. The ether was at work. We feel sometimes that we must be doped and doomed.

CHAPTER FOUR

SNARES FOR THE YOUNG

King David once cried out in grief, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Where are the young people safe today? If we send them away to the average college, many will come back poisoned in body, soul and mind. Many of our colleges are hotbeds of atheism and communism. They destroy faith in God, church and country. Teachers whom we as taxpayers support say, "Let youth choose their own paths, be free to live their own lives."

A father relates the following story. His beautiful daughter in high school was drifting away from the teaching of her parents and that of her grandparents. In school she was told that her home training was old-fashioned and out of date. She became dissatisfied and insisted that she be allowed to live her life as she pleased. But her godly parents could see the danger of the road she was pursuing.

They decided to send her to their church school before she had drifted so far from them that they would not be able to reach her. Through respect for her parents she agreed, "I'll go, but I am going under protest, and against my better judgment." She said, "You are taking the responsibility of my life in your own hands."

That night those parents did not sleep much for they were in prayer and meditation. "What if we

should make a mistake?" they asked. Then they said, "God gave her to us; the responsibility is ours, and we must face it as our parents faced it for us. We must decide for her." So they did. She was sent to a Christian college, and for a few weeks letters came that were full of tears and criticism of the college, town, food, rules and everything in general.

Then an old-fashioned revival broke out in the college and that young woman was beautifully saved. What a change in the letters! That college was now a wonderful place; it had become one of the sweetest spots on earth to her. Her letters were filled with appreciation for her parents for sending her there. Today she is happily married to a fine Christian young man, and living a consecrated Christian life.

If in years gone by it was necessary to build colleges for religious training, that need has now multiplied many times.

Are the youth safe on our streets? Recently a fine looking young man came to me and said, "A woman down here in the city stopped me on the sidewalk and said she was in trouble and needed a friend; she told me that I had a kind face. But I turned her down and walked on." He continued, "I don't know whether or not I did the right thing. Perhaps she was in need of help." I told him that he had done exactly the right thing. If she needed help she could find it at the Salvation Army, the Y.W.C.A. and other similar organizations.

Had he listened to her, he might easily have become involved in serious difficulty. She might have asked him to go with her, and when he refused,

threatened to scream. If she carried out her threat, the police would come and it would only be his story against hers. In any event he would be in a jam, and his name in the papers, all despite the fact there had been no wrong doing on his part. These things happen in our city all the time.

Are young people safe on our highways? Late in the evening when men are driving from the cities to their homes, women are planted on the highway, with an over-night-bag in hand, soliciting a ride (however, they always pass up the car with a man and his wife). They are waiting their prey. They want the traveling man or the young man whom they can lure into temptation. Generally the man is kind-hearted and stops to give the supplicant a lift. She often entices him into an auto camp (usually only a few miles down the road), and there relieves him of some cash. If he is "green," as they say, he will come again, and eventually she will get him to take her to another state, or across the state line. Then one day he receives a letter stating that he has transported a woman across the state line for immoral purposes, and unless he produces a certain amount of money, his family and friends will be notified of the crime he has committed. Of course, this is blackmail, but often the man is too alarmed to know the wisest thing to do, so he pays until he is wrecked morally, financially and mentally. This is a racket that has been all too successful.

Are young people safe in society? We are told that eighty thousand of our fair young women drop from sight each year into white slavery or into sin so deep that they never return. Poor girls! Each is somebody's cherished daughter.

The night club, the tavern, the roller skating derby (which in many cases is as bad as the dance, for there the younger folk are often led into temptation and enter the dance halls later), the bath house and the beach—all are places that will drag our youth downward.

You may say, where are our policemen? Friend, do not leave the rearing of your family with the juvenile courts and the police. Many times these officers could help more, if they had the co-operation of the parents. Many parents refuse to see anything wrong in their children.

Are young people safe in the theatre? Perhaps eighty percent of the crime committed today can be laid at the door of the theater. There has never been so much crime in all history as we have today. The theater is the school for crime.

Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Lot . . . thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Reader, do you think this is the road to Sodom?

CHAPTER FIVE

FACING THE FUTURE

The spirit of the age is to remove the reproach of evil and make it easy for folk to be lost, and to throw a reproach around sacred and holy things, that mean so much to the spirituality of the church.

Paul tells us that the gifts are for the edifying of the body of Christ and that we may profit withal. Who can reject any gift? Yet there has been so much confusion of late on this line that many good people are greatly perplexed. We have heard more of gifts than of God, more gifts than grace, until some of the more spiritual people have swung to the other extreme and fear these things.

The sainted Doctor Godby told me years ago that he personally knew Alexander Dowie. Dowie came to this country from Australia as a holiness evangelist, and was a power in the hands of God. Doctor Godbey said that he believed that Dowie had the gift of faith. But it proved his downfall. He started a strange cult, built for himself a city, died cursing his enemies, and today his followers are still searching for the hidden treasure, some thousands of dollars that he hid away. We can all call to mind persons we have known who had gifts, but because of misusing them, fell into disgrace. They could not stand these blessings.

Some years ago I was urged by a friend to go to a certain city in southern Illinois to see a noted faith healer. I went, and upon my arrival I not only found one healer, but many, all with their shingles out. You see, one man had made a great success of it and like gasoline filling stations on four corners of an intersection, competition reigned.

I found this noted healer in a hotel. A clerk kept the register, listing names and turns on the board, like outgoing trains. The large room was filled morning, afternoon and evening. There were all kinds of sick and impotent folk there waiting for the touch of the healer. You would see some on the street in wheel chairs, some with canes and crutches, and even some on stretchers.

The restaurants and hotels catered to the sick and afflicted. In fact, healing was the main industry of the town. What a sight to behold the lame and the blind, seeking for deliverance. Many of them had more faith than the healer himself, for it was their faith that brought them here.

The girl who kept the record told me that each one who registered paid twenty-five cents. This was not demanded but it was expected, and the patients were supposed to register each time they came, morning, afternoon and evening.

I picked out one poor fellow, waiting for the magic touch, and asked him how long he had been there. He told me, "Six months." I inquired, "How often do you go through here for treatments?" He answered, "Three times every day." The clerk told me that there were from one hundred to one hundred and fifty that went through daily.

There was no stated charge, but it was understood that one should leave an offering of at least one dollar with the man of faith.

I saw the poor sick folk come and go with the same sad look on their faces. One man was so badly eaten up with cancer that no hotel would take him, so he would go and sit in the depot at night. The agent would get out of his office and walk up and down the platform to escape the awful odor. What a pity! I saw many come and go, but I never saw a single one healed.

An old farmer was sitting in front of a barber shop. I sat there and talked with him. He told me many interesting stories about the healer. He said he used to be a humble farmer, but possessed rare gifts. People went to him and they were healed. He said he saw a man healed of blindness, who later drove a span of horses down the street—something which had been the great ambition of his life.

Then he told me of an invalid girl who came from St. Louis, Missouri, to spend the summer with her grandmother. This grandmother took her to this healer and the girl was healed. The grandmother wired the father of the child, a wealthy man in St. Louis, and he and his wife took the train immediately to see their daughter. A newspaper reporter went with them, and the name of the healer and his story were spread over the front pages of newspapers in this country and in Europe. Telegrams and letters of inquiry began to pour in; people began to arrive to find the pool of the modern Bethesda.

This healer had to give up his farm. People came to him in such numbers that he could not work his

farm, so he moved into town. He finally bought one hotel and then another, and another, and now he told me, he owned half of the town. He said, "These other so-called healers heard it was good fishing here and so they came."

"But does anybody get healed now?" I asked. The old man hung his head and replied, "No, not any more, not any more."

Gifts have been so abused and misused until I wonder whether God will or can give that gift to anyone any more. It has been used to split churches, to start movements, build temples, and accumulate fortunes. With others it has been used to get a crowd, and a meal ticket. Thus the god of this age scores a victory and turns folk away from the true gospel and the church.

Healing is no new doctrine, no cult of today can have a patent right to it. Yet it has been in such bad repute that many who used to have faith for healing, who called in the elders of the church and anointed their families and friends with oil, who saw wonders wrought in the name of the Holy Child Jesus, turn away from this teaching today because of the reproach.

John Wesley tells of his experience on the way to Conference. He said his horse was sick, and after he prayed for it the animal was healed. I wonder what would happen today if in one of our annual gatherings some preacher would tell how he prayed and the family cow was spared, or the hog that would furnish meat for the winter was healed through faith? Watch the people nudge each other and hear them ask, "What crowd has he been with?" We are afraid of it.

At the first campmeeting I attended was the prince of preachers of his day, Rev. George B. Kulp, as the evangelist. A little girl around eleven years of age fell from a horse and broke her arm about three inches above the wrist. They called for Brother Kulp. He came and anointed her with oil. The folk prayed, then wept and shouted for joy, for she was healed. Some time after the service and before the supper bell rang this little girl was playing with the rest of the children, her arm perfectly healed. It never had a splint on it. No doubt it will be hard for many to believe this story, but I was there and witnessed it myself. We can still see such healing if the church will get a new grip on God.

A sainted woman in Illinois was at death's door. The neighbors gathered in to be there for her passing. Men stood outside the house in groups, while inside women talked in soft whispers. They had a wash boiler on the stove, heating water for her last bath, for in those days the country folk did not employ an undertaker, but took care of their neighbors themselves.

Yonder in the sick room the anxious father and husband watched patiently at the deathbed of his wife and lifelong companion. The children looked in and turned away to choke their sobs and dry their tears. Finally the husband noticed his wife's lips moving, and asked what she wanted. She replied, "I am praying." A few minutes later she spoke with a strong voice and said, "I am healed; get my kimono." Her husband thought it was the stroke of death and urged her to lie still, but she began to rise from her bed. A kimono was brought to her and she walked through the house praising God. Some

ran from the house with fear, and as she walked into the kitchen, the women tried to keep her from seeing the boiler of water on the stove, but she had seen it all and knew just what it meant.

She told them that after Lazarus had been raised there had been a feast, so they should kill some chickens and have a feast too. This grand old saint lived on for more than twenty years. God is just the same today, and we must not allow this age to defeat His plan for us.

God is almighty and He can do anything that is needful. He could give to the early church the gift of tongues when it was necessary to reach the masses that were present in Jerusalem at the great feast of Pentecost, and thus start the New Testament church. He can do it today when He will get glory out of it and the church will be benefited by it. But as those who advocate it will admit, this gift in its misuse and abuse has hurt the church. Doctor Godbey said that God gave him the gift of the Greek language, and those who knew him believed it too. Harman Schmelzenbach of South Africa no doubt was blest of God with this gift, and spoke the Zulu language and did great good.

In these days many foreigners come to our shores, and unfortunately are often snubbed by society — many times, I am sorry to say, by church folk—causing them to turn against the church and our flag, and frequently to become rank Communists. What a field for evangelism they afford for the people who have that gift. But it is used rather to proselyte other churches, to build a cult and to get a crowd and money for themselves, until many are

wondering if it is possible for any to have this gift today or ever to have it again before Jesus comes. It seems as if God cannot give these choice gifts today to His people. Oh, for a new grip on God!

We seem to be afraid of spiritual demonstration in these days. If you took emotions out of baseball, you could not pay for the park. If you took emotions out of the dance, you could not meet your light bills. When religion loses its emotional appeal, folk will continue for some time to go to church through respect and loyalty, but not long.

This writer was attracted to the revival meetings by the freedom in singing and the shining faces of those who enjoyed their religion. No doubt there are many others who can say the same. Some have said that if we cannot get a crowd except through curiosity, we do not want them. But Jesus asked the crowd when they came to see and hear Him, "What went ye out for to see?" The great throngs that followed our Lord went at least partly through curiosity.

The burning bush attracted the attention of Moses, and God talked out of the bush. Fire attracts. Yet, religious enthusiasm that has degenerated to fanaticism has turned many good people away from emotionalism until they are fearful of anything that has any demonstration or manifestation of the Spirit.

The night I was saved a little lady whom everybody believed in shouted down one aisle and back up another until this poor fellow passed her in the aisle getting to the old-fashioned mourner's bench. I do not remember the text that night, not one thing that

the preacher said, but I just could not get away from that holy demonstration.

People used to fall under the power of God, and we did not question or discount it. My father-in-law, who came from Germany when he was nineteen years old, was saved soon after he arrived in America and was sanctified a few years later. He fell under the mighty power of God many times. Sinners believed in him and would quake at the sight of this holy demonstration.

I have heard Uncle Bud Robinson tell of an experience he had. He was one of the workers in the camp with Dr. Henry C. Morrison, that great preacher of the south. One Sunday morning during the love feast Uncle Bud got up to testify and got blest. He fell under the mighty power of God. The crowds gathered around him but Doctor Morrison told the folk to stand back and give him air. He said: "The dear fellow has broken off more than he can handle."

They took him to his tent and he lay under this mighty power until Monday morning, when, as he said, "I got strength enough to move my hand and wave it to the Lord and said, 'Dear Lord, you had better hold up or you will kill a good man.'" Uncle Bud said that billows of glory swept over his soul like the waves of the sea. It was my privilege to be Uncle Bud's pastor for more than four years.

Just now I am thinking of a little sainted lady who used to get so blest in the camp meetings while testifying of the power of God. She often began by jumping up and down, bouncing like a ball, and would keep it up for over half an hour. The wise leader would continue the meeting, telling the folks not to

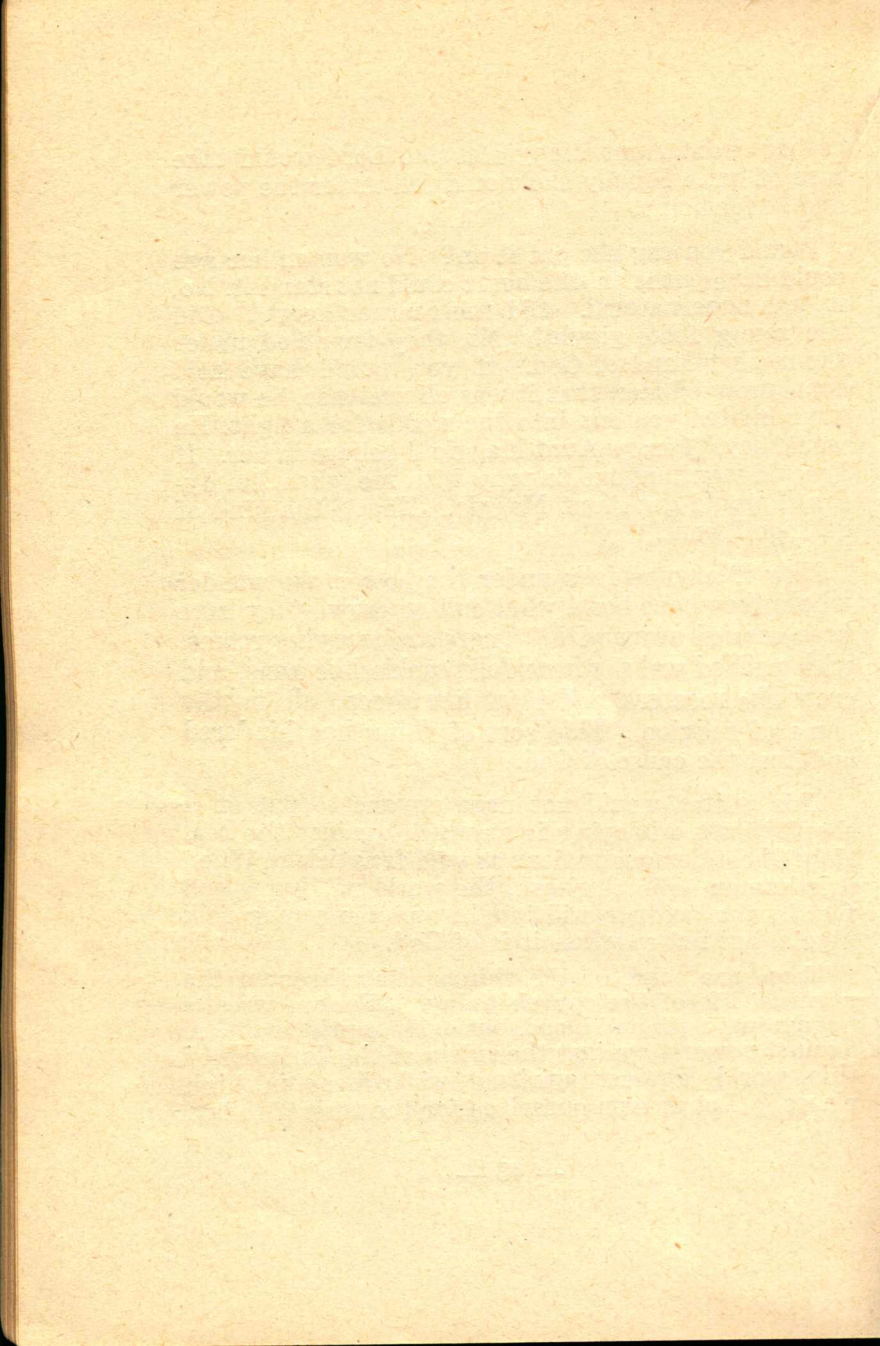
bother about Aunt Maggie as the Lord would take care of her. Finally she would fall under the power and lie for hours.

Would you say she put it on? No woman her age could have put it on, the heart could not stand it. No, it was supernatural. Did the scorner laugh? Did the young folks giggle? No, they trembled under the mighty hand of God. If you would have told some unsaved man that it was all pretense, he would have invited you out into the woods for a fight. He would say, "I know Aunt Maggie, I believe in her. If I would want anyone to pray with me when I'm dying, I would get Aunt Maggie. That's the kind of religion I want."

Now if anyone falls under the power, we wonder where they have been, what cult or crowd they have been carried away with. There are tarrying rooms, with padded walls, where folk cackle like hens, and crow like roosters, and bleat like sheep, all in the name of religion. This sort of thing has hindered and hurt the cause of God.

This writer would not urge anyone to put on a shout. Such whooping is as much against the real Holy Ghost demonstrations as wild fanaticism. When it is human or in the flesh, the world will know and feel it, the scorner will laugh, and the young folk giggle, but not so when it is of God.

These are some of the things that threaten the spiritual life of the church today. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Let us arm ourselves for the task of today.



CHAPTER SIX

THE CHURCH AND THE AGE

Jesus said in Matthew 24:12: "And because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." Reader, if iniquity does not abound today, God pity us when it does. We have been warned of its effect upon the church. "The love of many shall wax cold."

Love is the central truth of religion. It is more than that; it is the soul, the heart of religion. When the church loses it she turns to law. The church may run for a time on loyalty and sentiment, but that will soon prove inadequate.

When Christ appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos He addressed a message to the Church of Ephesus. He commended them for their doctrine, their loyalty, their orthodoxy, but told them they had lost the mainspring of religion, and that was love.

Tradition says that this church was organized by Saint Paul who pastored it for some time. Among other notables that served this church were John and Timothy; Mary, the mother of Jesus, held her membership in this church, and was buried in its sacred cemetery.

If you could have asked the Damascus road convert, Saint Paul, what induced him to leave the old Jewish faith, the great law body of that day, the

Sanhedrin (for he was a Jew of the strictest sect, he was of the Tribe of Benjamin), you would have gotten this answer: "It is the love of Christ that constraineth me."

He would perhaps follow his trade of tent making during the day, but at sunset he would gather the folk about him, down near the river, and preach to them. What is the reason for his zeal? It was "the love of Christ" that constraineth. When the church has lost this love she can no longer serve the purpose for which she was ordained.

Let us examine ourselves. Is this age of apostasy affecting you? Have you lost your missionary zeal? Do you have to pull yourself to prayermeeting? Do you love to pray in secret? When you attend your annual convention, assembly or conference, do you like the discussion better than the devotion? God knows that many souls come to these gatherings with a heart hunger. Would you get more pleasure out of the bookstand or at the information desk, than weeping and praying with those who are kneeling broken-hearted at the altar of prayer? Many would rather be in a committee room taking minutes and readopting resolutions of former years to be reprinted in the annual minutes, which but few will ever read again, than to be at an altar of prayer. Remember, reader, you do not have to be there but where is your heart? "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Is this age of apostasy telling on you?

What a challenge to the church of today! What a time for service! Yet so many are asleep to their possibilities and their opportunities.

The great American church began years ago to crowd her church ledgers with names of members, whether saved or not, by means of great drives on Easter, on decision days and with the sawdust trails, until today she finds herself helpless in the control of unregenerated men and women.

In these drives the church was glad to enroll professional men, business men, men of high standing, many of whom admitted they had had no change of heart, yet the church wanted them because of their influence and financial standing.

Thus, when it comes to annual gatherings of the denomination, these personalities stand out and are elected to fill prominent offices. Many of them did not want these prominent places, but the church drafted them because of their intellect and influence. So they were made trustees, stewards, deacons and delegates to the district and general gatherings. Here they were elected to college boards, on committees for textbooks, and for revision of Manuals and doctrines of the church.

The Bible tells us that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Many of these men are not to be criticized, for they "know not what they do." They revise the hymnal and the theology of the church. They have no appreciation of spiritual things for they have never "been born again." So the church of today finds herself in the control of unregenerated men.

This writer has two sons in the ministry. I would rather my boys would take their seminary work at the feet of Black Amanda Smith of Arkansas, and get their instructions in theology from one like her,

than to be under the instructions from the greatest doctor of divinity in the land, if he has never been born of the Spirit and baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Some few years ago one of the largest prisons of America in its religious census showed that ninety-seven percent of the inmates held to some religious faith. When the world reads such reports, do they not ask, "What has the church done for them?"

What did religion do for Russia, Mexico and for many other nations? What a challenge to the spiritual people of today. These are but a few of the things that face us in this age. Do you not agree that we need a new grip on God?

CHAPTER SEVEN

POWER FOR THE EMERGENCY

In the preceding chapters we have painted a rather dark picture. Nevertheless, every fair-minded person will agree that it is true. Conditions of the world today are so plain that he who runs may read. You may be inclined to class the writer as a pessimist, but I am not blind to the good that is in the world. I am profoundly thankful for all the agencies that work for good, but while I was confined for three weeks with eyes sewed shut, I saw conditions as I had never seen them before. So I earnestly prayed for a new grip on faith, a new grip on life, and a new grip on God.

When that little group of members of the early church found their backs against the wall, while blood-thirsty men threatened them, they did not ask for carnal weapons with which to defend themselves. They did not ask that their persecutors be put to death, or that their burdens be lightened, or even that God should take them out of this sinful world. They did not appoint committees to wait upon them. They did not trust the arm of flesh. They had no finance committee, or Fight-the-Devil fund. They trusted not in the wisdom of men.

They went to prayer. Yes, **prayer**, an art which so few know anything about these days. They felt like David of old, that others may trust in the hills, but their "help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." They knew that their church

was born on her knees and that they could travel faster on their knees than by any device made of man.

They prayed for more miracles of healing; and like many today, they prayed for one thing and got another. We do not always get the exact thing we pray for. God knows best what we need. It was healing that got them in this trouble. God knew what they needed and answered them.

“The place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Then they went out and shook the world. How this old world needs a mighty shaking up morally and spiritually.

Do not confuse this mighty outpouring of the Spirit with that on the day of Pentecost. These people were in that revival too; they had been cleansed and filled on that occasion. Now they knew the source of their power. They knew their Fountain-head. They were facing real issues and they returned for power to meet their opposers and persecutors.

Reader, cannot you remember some great anointing in your life? Some high points and mountain peaks in your experience? Our hearts, like the earth, get dry and hard with the sunshine and wind of adversity; we must have showers along the way.

Some years ago, in a preachers' meeting, was born what is now known as “The Preachers' Retreat.” There was no thought of retracing our steps but of retreating to a place where we could talk out our hearts and pray together.

It was on a rainy day, Monday morning, and not many were present. Someone got up and spoke right from his heart. The brethren wept with him; and we all poured out our hearts to each other, confessing that so many times when we were feeding our flocks, we ourselves got hungry and needed help. This experience was one of the high spots in my life.

Someone asked, "Why not appoint a day for such a gathering with no one but preachers present?" This was done, and a committee was appointed to arrange for the place, and other matters. We met again, but the committee had prepared papers and discussions, and the real object of our gathering was lost sight of and most of us went away disappointed. However, in many of these retreats today, such conferences as we had in the first one have been held, and many a hungry soul has been enriched.

Many of us have used the altar to reach our objectives—conversion and sanctification. There are hundreds of hungry hearts today that need spiritual help—people who are lean in soul, tempted and discouraged, and need someone to pray with them. Yet, if they come to a public altar, they may be classed as backslidden. What are we going to do with this great crowd of folk that need a place of prayer and spiritual help?

In a conference this writer once announced he would speak the following morning to preachers on the subject, "The Preacher with the Blues." Immediately one arose from back in the audience and said. "Bless God, I haven't had the blues for forty years, not since God sanctified me."

"That all depends on what you mean by blues, my

brother," said I. "If you mean you have never been discouraged, tempted and tried, then you are not sanctified, for you are lying right now, and you know it."

It is some of the false and extremely high standards that men have attached to the teaching of holiness that have hurt its cause. Some have made more of the crisis in their experience than they have of Christ. Some have made more of the crossing of the Jordan than of the country in which they live, the land of Canaan.

Many a preacher who has drifted away from God, lost out in his soul and longed for spiritual help, could have been saved from bringing disgrace on the church had he been prayed for and talked with. We may save a lot of people, but what about the ones we lose? They are weak, lame, discouraged and about to drift back into the world. They need a kind friend to help them back on their feet again.

Many times pastors and their wives go to the annual gatherings of the church with an enthusiastic report, but in their hearts they are suffering from what they have gone through back at home. They are hiding behind a mask. Why pretend when the heart cries out differently? There is no use to act like the ostrich, hiding our faces in the sand. Let us simply go down before God, and get a new grip on our ministry. Many people under a burden of discouragement, when hearing and reading messages on gifts and power, messages teaching third and fourth blessings, have given up their faith. They would have triumphed had they gotten a new grip on God.

We used to hear a great deal in the past about

"praying through," but we do not hear much about it any more. When a pastor and his wife were sent to a run-down circuit or charge—a place which was hard for them and which perhaps was a set-back from what they had had—they would pray through about it, and later on in the annual campmeeting or love feast one of them would tell of the battle they had fought and how God had given them the victory.

We will either overcome or be overcome. If we do not get on top of our trials, they will get on top of us. Some folk have been under a cloud for days, weeks and months, but finally they pray through and get on top. They get a new grip on life and on God.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Many church people today are hungering for everything else but spiritual power. They hunger for place, position, prestige, glamor and gold.

We run races in everything but religion. When we are with worldly people, our actions often would indicate that we do not want them to know that we have religion. We pretend not to take it too seriously—and how tragically true it is that we do not! We act as though our religion is something to be ashamed of.

We have contests for everything but spirituality. We boast of our wealth, our learning, our homes and our cars. We try to equal our superiors on other lines but when it comes to spirituality we measure ourselves with dwarfs.

Hunger is the sign of good health. I want to keep a good appetite spiritually. I must keep blest. I am afraid of this age. One day I called one of my good,

humble laymen to meet me at the church. When he arrived, I took him through the Sunday school rooms, until he wondered what I wanted. At last we arrived in the Young People's auditorium and I told him my story.

My heart was so hungry. I had been feeding others and helping them in their trials, yet I felt spiritually exhausted myself. I knelt at the altar and asked him to get on the inside and pray for me. He protested, but I insisted. I pleaded my poverty of soul that day, and what a prayermeeting we had. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." How God came and blessed us there.

The fields are so white, the harvest so great. There is no time for enemies in the church today. The world and the modern church are united to do away with the Garden of Eden and Bethlehem's manger, to tear down the Cross and to destroy the Tomb of our Lord, to take God out of Christ, and Christ out of God, and the inspiration out of the Scriptures.

The spirit of this age is to keep the spiritual people split and splintered and divided over little things belief in which will not save one and disbelief in which will not damn one. Paul said, "When I become a man, I put away childish things." Oh, brethren, it is too late in the age to fiddle about these things. Nero fiddled while Rome was burning. Sometimes we fiddle while the poor old world goes to hell.

This world needs a great religious awakening, and we can have it if we will get a new grip on God. Let us forget our petty differences. There is something

more important than our opinions and that is that a lost world be brought to Christ.

A few years ago I preached a series of sermons on the subject of the "Last Days." While studying the subject, and looking up references on this line, I was referred to this passage, "In the last days. . . I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." All my other research had been from the opposite point of view, such as we have been treating in other chapters of this book. The outlook seems rather dark, but why not preach on this hopeful line? There is our confidence.

It seems only fair and right that the present generation should have an opportunity to get to God before Jesus comes. Outside of the revivals of some of the smaller denominations, this generation has not seen a great religious awakening. I believe we can have "latter rain." The task is great, it is beyond human ability, but with God all things are possible.

We must not look at the picture relying on our own strength, but depending upon God. He can do all things, and He is no respecter of persons. The God of Wesley, Luther and Knox is our God. Make a place for prayer and for God in your life today.

Back in the hills where I was brought up, we had log-rollings and house-raising. We called our neighbors in to help us. When they got ready for a great lift, they called out to the men, "Get a new grip and everybody lift." Let us get together as spiritual people today and all lift with our prayers for a mighty revival.

A revival of real Christianity is the need of this

age. There is no reason for one denomination to throw mud at another. We all face the problems of this age. We cannot meet our problems and face our tasks in our own strength. The world has talents and wisdom, but we must have these talents and wisdom plus God. For it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

Let us all go in for a new hold on the throne, for a fresh touch on our souls, even from time to time as emergency arises. Let us get our theories baptized in love with the Holy Spirit, our services baptized in blood of sacrifice, for we must spill blood these days if we have revivals.

Luke says of the evangelist at Pentecost, Peter, "With many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Brethren, we must save ourselves from some of the things mentioned herein.

Barnabas exhorted his converts "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." We must pause these days, when many are losing their hold on God, and get a fresh start. Many who are not backslidden are slipping, and will soon be gone. Oh, the need today of preachers and laymen alike is a new grip on God.