

# FEW SAVED

CONSISTENT WITH SCIENCE. SCRIPTURE.  
RECOGNITION AND THE LOSS OF FRIENDS

A SERMON BY

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**TEXT:** ENTER YE IN AT THE STRAIT GATE: FOR WIDE IS THE GATE, AND BROAD IS THE WAY, THAT LEADETH TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY THERE BE WHICH GO IN THEREAT: BECAUSE STRAIT IS THE GATE, AND NARROW IS THE WAY, WHICH LEADETH UNTO LIFE, AND FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT.—MATT. 7:13,14.

## BRIEF OF THE SERMON

### I. Salvation of the Few a Dictate of Science

- (a) Greater mass of the inanimate creation as compared to that of the animate world.
- (b) Myriads of living creatures that perish for the survival of one.
- (c) Great proportion of the human race which perish in immaturity.
- (d) Difficulties of entering any kingdom compared with the ease of missing it. Examples: the kingdoms of wealth, wisdom, music, love, etc.
- (e) General truth that as the quality of life advances the quantity diminishes.
- (f) Same law must hold in reference to the highest life—eternal life.

## II: Salvation of the Few a Decree of Fact

The paucity of numbers in avocations, pursuits, professions, etc., is so general that it creates no comment. Why should the truth be an exception to the rule?

## III. Salvation of the Few a Dictum of Bible Teaching

(a) Plain declarations that, numerically, few are saved.

(b) Apostolic prophecy requires that the world at the present time should be in a state of almost complete and universal apostasy.

(a) Deut. 7:6,7; Matt. 7:13,14; 22:14; Luke 12:32; 13:23, 24; 1 Pet. 3:20,21; Gen. 19:15,30,31; Rev. 3:4; Jas. 2:5; 1 Cor. 1:26,27.

(b) 2 Pet. 3:3,4; 2 Tim. 4:3,4; Luke 18:8; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 20:29,30; 2 Thess. 2:7,8; Rev. 17:5; Matt. 24:37-39.

## IV. Recognition in the Kingdom of God

The resurrection of the righteous dead and the transformation of the living saints at the coming of Christ restores an individuality that can be recognized in the case of the first and perpetuates the individuality of the second (1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2; Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4; Phil. 3:20,21; Rev. 20:4; Luke 16:25; Matt. 17:3; Luke 12:28,29; Heb. 2:17,18; 4:14,15; 5:2).

## V. Future Happiness, However, does not Depend upon the Salvation of our Relatives

(a) The destruction of the wicked will not mar the happiness of the redeemed.

(b) Fleshly relationships are only temporary, while spiritual relationships abide forever.

(a) Rom. 11:22; Jos. 23:15; Psa. 136:17-21; Rev. 14:10; Psa. 37:34; 52:5,6; 58:8,10; 149:7-9; Mal. 4:2,3.

(b) Gen. 1:28; John 7:5; Mark 3:21, margin; Luke 9:59-62; Matt. 10:37; 19:29; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Gal. 3:28-29; Luke 20:33-36; Heb. 12:23.

### Exegetical Peroration

**C**HRIST never, by roseate description, glossed over the hardships, the difficulties, the drabs, and the drawbacks of the Christian life. His sincere sincerity is evinced in his frank portrayal of the Christian "cutting off right hands," "plucking out eyes," "selling all," "counting the cost," "striving to enter strait gates," and "walking in narrow ways" (Mark 9:43,47; Matt. 19:21; Luke 14:28; 13:24; Matt. 7:14). Our text today follows the trend of general Bible teaching when it affirms that "few" find life in comparison with the many "whose end is destruction" (Phil. 3:19). Many sentimental people are struck dumb with amazement when their attention is called to this declaration of our Lord. The minority saved and the majority lost horrifies them like a nightmare; they call the thought an anti-climax, a sorry consummation; and ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" (Matt. 26:8).

## 1. SALVATION OF THE FEW A DICTATE OF SCIENCE

In fleeing from Christ unbelievers generally take refuge in science. But in this case science vindicates Christ. He affirms that but few are saved, and science in some of its most conspicuous features corroborates the Lord's asseveration. The novice in scientific knowledge knows that the mass of inanimate matter in this world is greater than the animate. Dead matter is more abundant than living matter. There are more dead people than living. Reflect upon the myriads of living creatures that have perished so you might live. Many lives sacrificed for one! Think again of the great proportion of the human race which perish in immaturity, and then you will realize how "few find" even this mortal life. N. S. Davis, M. D., L. L. D. says in "Fifty Years and Beyond," page 8: "Reliable records of mortality show, that of all persons

born in civilized countries, nearly one-half die in infancy, or before they have completed the third year of life; and at least one-third of the remainder die before they reach twenty-one; and only an average of six or seven per cent. of the whole live to sixty years or over."

If you still hesitate to accept the thought of few being saved, allow us to point you to a few more scientific facts which indorse Christ's affirmation. Look at the difficulties attending the entrance of any kingdom compared with the ease of missing it. The kingdom of wealth, for instance, is closed to the majority; the same may be said of the kingdoms of love, wisdom, music, etc. There is nothing easy in this world but evil. The immunities and comforts of an ungodly life are its greatest condemnation. Sin has a right of way in this world which is patent to every observer. Gravitation is all on the side of downwardness. To live the Christian life one must make a bee line across many a flowery field. As the carrier pigeon makes a straight course for its nest in the shortest line possible, so must the believer run the race and "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Cor. 9:24; 1 Tim. 6:19). Only butterflies flutter and dance around a garden all day and go only where there is brightness and honey. The restrictions, limitations, and abstinences imposed upon the believer are vital to his religious life. They are not arbitrary impositions. Many things in this world which seem to be fetters, are supports; instead of being inconveniences, they are blessings. We call them checks, whereas they are braces. The commandments of God which hem us in are like picket fences which bristle along the walk, on either side of which is a deep ditch, and are meant for our good. You can walk through a hall which is only wide enough for yourself in Egyptian darkness when you would stumble and fall in a spacious room. Narrowness is often a safety. "The narrow

way" is the safest and best way. There is less room for vacillation and vagrancy. Be suspicious of easy roads, broad ways, paths of dalliance, liberal theology, larger hope, and universal salvation. The salvation of all, redemption without conditions, "free salvation" and other cant of this kind cheapens redemption until it is worth nothing, and is an appeal to a very feeble and shabby motive. Noble minded men are repelled by a sense of the cheapness of that which comes to them without a correspondingly commensurate toil and outlay. They perceive the general fact that as the quality of life advances the quantity diminishes. They know from observation that while life in its lower forms is abundant, as you ascend the scale of being, there is less of it. And they see that since diminution of life is in the ratio of quality, even in this present life, according to science, reason, and Scripture, they are forced to believe that the same law applies to the future life, the highest life, the eternal life.

## 2 SALVATION OF THE FEW

### A DECREE OF FACT

Fact agrees with science in saying that only the fit survive. Doctors, lawyers, ministers and those in any profession are notoriously limited to the minority. Paucity of numbers, so far as the truth is concerned, is a wonder to the thoughtless and an objection to the critic; but is strictly in keeping with the callings of professional and commercial life. When people ask, "How can so many good people be wrong?" they unconsciously advertise their ignorance of facts and transgress the scriptural interdiction which says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). Men plow wickedness, reap iniquity, and eat lies "because they trust . . . in the multitude of their mighty men" (Hos. 10:13). They sing, "The re-

ligion of my father is good enough for me." They should say, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (Jer. 16:19). They want no redemption "from the vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18). They trust in man and are cursed (Jer. 17:5). "Everybody is more clever than anybody" may be fine worldly wisdom; but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25). The desire to be with the majority in religious sentiment is ridiculously absurd; for it shows weakness of character in pursuing the path of least resistance, the desire of an indolent soul to repose in dormancy. Any dead fish can float with the current. Swept away by the stream of public opinion they are rapidly carried into the whirlpool of heathenism. In the beginning of the twentieth century we have authentic record that the religious status of the world stood as indicated below:

#### World Statistics of Religion

Catholics .....	394, 100, 000
Protestants .....	177, 300, 000
Jews .....	13, 168, 924
Mohammedans .....	246, 700, 000
Non-Christians .....	774, 100, 000

Such are the totals of the world's religions as given in "The World Almanac and Encyclopedia," 1917, page 600. Let those who are anxious to be with the crowd note who the crowd is. Counting the Catholics and Protestants as both Christians, we have only five hundred seventy-one million, four hundred thousand Christians in the world against one billion, thirty-three million, nine hundred sixty-eight thousand, nine hundred twenty-four non-Christians! There are four hundred sixty-two million, five hundred sixty-eight thousand, nine hundred twenty-four more Jews, Mohammedans, and non-Christians than those professing the name

of Christ! If the Catholics are taken from the Christian total and added to the non-Christian's list the total jumps to the staggering sum of one billion, four hundred twenty-eight million, sixty-eight thousand, nine hundred twenty-four! Count both the nominal and genuine Christians and still the heathen outnumber them one billion, two hundred fifty million, seven hundred sixty-eight thousand, nine hundred twenty-four! Let those who want to be with the majority identify themselves with the heathen! Let them stand with the crowd if they must! They "despise the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10), and are going to destruction with the majority (Matt. 7:14).

### 3. SALVATION OF THE FEW A DICTUM OF BIBLE TEACHING

If, however, science is ignored by the unbeliever, and if facts be disputed, we appeal finally to the law and the testimony of God (Isa. 8:20). In directness and positiveness the Bible teaches the smallness of the number of those who will receive the truth. "Who hath believed our report?" (Isa. 53:1) is a question which it propounds, and which it answers in the following unmistakable manner:

#### (a) Plain Declarations that, Numerically, Few are Saved

"The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deut. 7:7).

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23,24).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13).

"Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

"Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14).

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (Jas. 2:5).

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26,27).

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:25,26).

"Few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pet. 3:20).

Theological attempts to vitiate the force of the testimonies just quoted by saying that they apply only to particular times in the past, are futile; for while it is true that God's truth and people have been more in disfavor sometimes than others (Rev. 12), they have always been unpopular (Dan. 7: 21, 22). Break concrete history into epoch bits and you will see this statement is true. Eight in antediluvian days (1 Pet. 3: 20,21), two contemporary with Lot (Gen. 19: 15,30,31), two in six hundred thousand Israelites (Ex. 12: 37; Deut. 1: 35,36,38) show the appalling paucity of God's faithful in the different ages of the past. In the days of Noah, Abraham, Elijah, and the prophets the people of God were "like the gleanings of the olive tree, two or three upon the topmost branch" (Isa. 27: 6). Believers were so few as to be "for signs and wonders" in the age in which they lived (Isa. 8: 18; Psa. 71: 7; Zech. 3: 8, margin). "One of a city, and two of a family" (Jer. 3: 14) continued to be the fortune of the truth even in the New Testament day when the world was blessed by the personal ministry of Christ. After preaching three or four years, assisted by the twelve apostles and the seventy, his disciples only numbered one hundred and twenty (Luke 8: 1; 9: 1; 10: 1; Acts 1: 15). This

"little flock" (Luke 12:32) were a "spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men" (1 Cor. 4: 9), a gazing-stock (Heb. 10:33), "the filth of the world"; and they are "the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. 4: 13). Few saved in any age, at any time, is the oracle of science and the verdict of reason and Scripture. We now supplement this thought by the added evidence of prophecy which requires that the present time in the world's history should be a time of "gross darkness" (Isa. 60: 2) so far as the faith is concerned. Consider the testimony impartially.

**(b) Apostolic Prophecy Requires that the World at the Present Time should be in Apostasy**

"There shall come, in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lust, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:3,4).

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3,4).

"When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith (ten pistin, the faith\*) on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter days some shall depart from the faith (tes pistios), giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;

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\* The literal translation of the Greek words ten pistin is "the faith." When Christ comes he will find faith in the abstract in great abundance (for there are many false faiths, religions, and creeds in the world), but he thinks, by his question, that he will scarcely find "the faith," viz., that to which the Apostle alludes as the "one faith" (Eph. 4:5); "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3); "the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5); "one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:14); "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20); "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24:14); in other words, "the faith" comprehended in "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12).—The Declaration.

speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

"For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29,30).

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:11).

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work (in Paul's day); only he who now letteth (hindereth), will let (or hinder), until he (paganism) be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked (the Papacy) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:7,8).

"And upon her forehead (the forehead of the woman representing Papal Rome, Rev. 17:18) was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great (Papacy), The Mother of Harlots (that is, of state religions), and Abominations (the numerous sects) of the Earth" (Rev. 17:5).

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:37-39).

#### 4. RECOGNITION IN THE KINGDOM

It is sometimes suggested as an objection to the salvation of only "the little flock" (Luke 12:32) that we shall know each other in the future life; and if our friends are not there we shall miss them. Our reply is, that the doctrine of "immortal souls" and going to heaven at death is the menace to the comforting and scriptural doctrine of future recognition. The word "recognize" comes from the Latin "cognosco," to know, and means "know again; recollect; acknowledge acquaintance with." Recognition, when there has been no previous "acquaintance," is impossible. You cannot "recollect" a per-

son or thing you never knew. It follows therefore that recognition in heaven is a stark absurdity from the orthodox standpoint; for nobody goes to heaven whom the modern Christian knew upon earth. Souls go, spirits ascend, and ghosts abscond, but he did not form the "acquaintance" of any of these while on the earth, consequently he would not "recognize" them were he to go to heaven and meet them there. How could he "acknowledge acquaintance with" an immortal soul when he never knew one? Without this acknowledgment there can be no recognition in heaven or anywhere else.

Now the truth brushes away all these cobwebs of ghostology with an unsparing hand and gives us instead sheen bodies of immortality. Resurrection, in the case of the dead, restores an individuality that can be recognized; immortalization, in the case of the living, makes possible the continuity of their being (1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). In both cases the saints have "glorious" bodies like Christ had after his resurrection, which was looked upon, handled, and recognized (Phil. 3: 20,21; 1 John 3:2; 1:1-3). This premise makes recognition feasible, for there is somebody to recognize with whom we were previously "acquainted." Yes; we can "recollect" our friends, know them, and enjoy "the communion of saints." We can separate those who "were beheaded" from the others (Rev. 20: 4); we can differentiate Moses and Elijah from the rest (Matt. 17: 3); we can personally recognize Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Luke 13: 28,29); we shall see Jesus as he is (John 3: 2) and, like him, shall see God and serve him (Matt. 5: 8; Rev. 22: 4). Forgetfulness will make up no part of the kingdom of God. Even the rich man, lost, will "remember" (Luke 16: 25). Recognition is inevitable if our memory is to be continued to us: and of this we may be sure from the fact that Christ now has a vivid memory of his past temptations and in-

firmities, which fits him as a High Priest for dealing mercifully with our aberrations and sins (Heb. 2: 17,18; 4: 14,15; 5: 2).

### 5. FUTURE HAPPINESS DOES NOT DEPEND UPON THE SALVATION OF OUR RELATIVES

Salvation makes the saved happy. Their happiness consists in being saved themselves—it does not depend upon the salvation of some one else. Nor does salvation make them supersensitive. Are we happy now? Yes, if we are Christians (John 13:17). But how can we be happy now with the certain knowledge that many of our friends and kindred are sinning and suffering untold wretchedness every day? All these sequences of sin are appointed by God, though he loves and pities the sinner. The sufferings of this life, permitted and appointed by God, are consistent with his wisdom, goodness, and happiness. The goodness and severity of God are intermingled here and hereafter (Rom. 11:22); in fact, the suffering and death of the sinner in the future are but the extension of the principles of the divine economy of the present; and “the saints in light” (Col. 1:12) will then have “the divine nature” so fully (2 Pet. 1:4), and shall see light with God so completely (Psa. 36:9), they will acquiesce in the appointments of God as infinitely wise and as being best for themselves, the sinner, and the universe. There will be no room for regret or dissent among the redeemed. The triumphant paean of the ransomed will be “the song of Moses the servant of God (which celebrates the destruction of the Egyptian hosts, Ex. 15), and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of ages. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall

come and worship before thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest" (Rev. 15:3,4).

**(a) The Destruction of the Wicked  
will not Mar the Happiness of the Redeemed**

From this Scripture it appears that when God's judgments are made manifest they are the signal for a burst of song instead of a gush of tears. They will enhance the glory of God and augment the happiness of the saints. That man should ever have thought otherwise is due to a misconception of what is the destiny of the wicked. In Psalms 136 we are told twenty-six times in as many verses that "his mercy endureth forever." Among the doings of God which prove this, the following are mentioned: "To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth forever: and slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth forever: . . . and gave their land for an inheritance: for his mercy endureth forever" (vss. 17-21). The doctrine of eternal torment for the lost is what blinds the eyes to God's "mercy" in the punishment of the wicked. "Thou putttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross," says the Psalmist; "therefore I love thy testimonies" (Psa. 119:19). No one who believes in the endless misery of the lost ever sings about it in gladness, or shouts the refrain with enthusiasm, "his mercy endureth forever"; or ventures to say that the doctrine causes him to love God's word. On the contrary, we have heard them express a sort of regret that the Bible taught so horrible a thing. We have even heard them say they wished it were otherwise. They are sorry it is so! But the Psalmist did not desire that the wicked should be differently treated from the manner in which God would dispose of them. He loved God's word because it revealed his purpose to treat "all the wicked of the earth like dross." "Hellish pains to all eternity" would never cause a man to "love" the book which made known such

an intolerable existence. It would never do to read Psa. 119:19, "Thou consignest all the wicked of the earth to an interminable agony which beggars all description—therefore I love thy testimonies"! The reason which the Psalmist gives for his love of God's word is one which appeals to the judgment of all noble-minded servants of God. Who that loves God and the good among men does not desire that the wicked may be "put away like dross" so the righteous may inherit the earth? "His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies" (Psa. 112:8). When the wicked are cut off from the earth, he shall see it (Psa. 37:34). Babylon's punishment will take place "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:10); but this does not disturb their serenity or destroy their felicity. The saints are then "equal to the angels" (Luke 20:36), and are like the Lamb himself (1 John 3:2); and when Babylon falls they are commanded to "rejoice over her, . . . for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. 18:20). When the wicked are destroyed forever, "the righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him" (Psa. 52:5,6). When they pass away forever like the untimely birth of a woman, and are melted as a snail, "the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" (Psa. 58:8,10). Consider that if your father and mother are not saved they may not have known the truth and, forgotten by God, their dreamless sleep in the tomb will never be disturbed (Job 14:13; Psa. 88:5). If they understood the gospel and disobeyed it they are raised from the dead only to be put away "like dross" and to pass away like a whirlwind (Prov. 10:25). There are no perpetual agonies to endure in either case. The judge of all the earth will do right (Gen. 18:25), which makes it possible for us to contemplate the destruction of the wicked with both complacency and felicity.

**(a) Fleshly Relationships are Only Temporary,  
while Spiritual Relationships Abide Forever**

We may be able to admire the goodness of God in ridding the earth of transgressors (Prov. 2:22) as an abstract proposition and still question how we can be happy and enjoy salvation ourselves in case our relatives are lost. The husbands of Lot's two daughters were burned up in Sodom, and he lost his wife through her procrastination (Gen. 19:14, 15, 16, 26, 31). Family ties are rent asunder at the coming of Christ and, as in Lot's family, some are saved and others are lost in the same home (Luke 17:32-36). However, this will not cause the saints to feel one pang of sorrow or shed one tear of regret (Rev. 21:4). Even in this life there is more joy than sorrow. Sorrow is only a transient visitor who lodges with us for a night, and then joy takes its place in the morning (Psa. 30:5). Belauding our kinsfolk looks like affectation, for their loss now is only an evanescent sadness, not conflicting with permanent enjoyment. You know many happy men and women whose wives and husbands are dead; many happy fathers and mothers whose children are dead; and many happy children whose parents are dead. If these sad things are bearable here in mortality, and are compatible with predominating happiness, may they not be borne in immortality without seriously interfering with our personal enjoyment? Surely immortality is at least equal in power of endurance to mortality!

To make future happiness contingent upon family ties and bonds of solidarity is to postulate the celestial marriage delusion of Mohammedanism and Mormonism. Fleshly relations, useful, moralizing, and spiritualizing as they are here (1 Cor. 7:2, 16; Heb. 13:4), become cesspools of degradation and pollution when projected into eternity. Mohammedanism inculcates sensual

gratification and sexual indulgence; Mormonism, polygamy; Confucianism, hero worship; and Americanized theology, "inordinate affection" for kindred, especially if they be dead (Col. 3:5). Such people are blinded by the egotistical hallucination that they have the best wives, husbands, children, and relations in the world, although no one else in the world thinks so but themselves. They are abject servants of the flesh and, loyal to the flesh, they tell Jehovah they do not want to be saved unless all their kinsmen are saved too! Yes, all the children of the flesh must be saved or they cannot be happy! Abraham was "called alone" so far as the faith is concerned (Isa. 51:2). His immediate family were idolaters (Jos. 24:2), yet he is going to be quite happy without them in the day of Christ (John 8:56). Like Abraham, Christ had to leave his kindred to serve his Father (Gen. 12:1). His own brethren did not believe on him (John 7:5); his own kinsmen said he was beside himself (Mark 3:21, margin). Having sacrificed his relatives according to the flesh for the gospel's sake Christ specifically commanded those who would be his disciples to do likewise whenever the need might arise (Luke 9:59-62). To love father, mother, son, or daughter "more" than God was, to him, idolatry (Matt. 10:37). "Forsaking all for the gospel's sake" to Christ meant sacrificing "houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands," if necessary (Matt. 19:29). The children of the flesh hold all these things supremely dear—so dear that they do not want to be saved unless they retain intact the flesh with all its impulses, appetites, lusts, and relationships! Deluded by the serpent into thinking there is no death (Gen. 3:4), they believe their deceased wives and husbands are still alive, and in heaven are hoping, expecting, and beckoning to them from the battlements of glory to come on! Neither husbands nor wives can conceive how

their departed ones can be fully happy until they get there! For the husband to die and go to his wife, and for the wife to die and go to her husband, becomes the only hope and the one ambition of the surviving. It does not seem to occur to these American Mohammedans that they have no wives or husbands in heaven, on the earth, or anywhere else in the universe, after they are dead. In matrimonial parlance, they only covenanted at the marriage altar to be husband and wife "so long as you both shall live." To the temporary nature of the marriage bond the following Scriptures accede:

"The woman that hath a husband is bound by the law of her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:2,3).

"This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:29-31).

"Ye are all the children of God . . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26,27).

"Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:33-36).

### Exegetical Peroration

Succinct exegetical remarks on these four Scriptures form a fitting peroration to this sermon.

**I. Marriage is a Provisional Institution.** Paul's words in Rom. 7:2,3 show that marriage is a provisional institution. Death dissolves the matrimonial compact, as shown by such expressions as, "Loosed from the law of her husband"; "free from that law." For the wife to marry, however, "while her husband liveth," without a legitimate divorce, which annuls the marriage contract (Matt. 19:9), makes her an adulteress. "If the husband be dead," an expression of emphasized reiteration, shows that while marriage is a binding contract for life, its obligations end at death. The prevailing belief that the husband is alive after his decease, coupled with the binding nature of marriage "so long as he liveth," gives the wife a living husband in heaven after he is dead. Her right to "marry another man" depends upon him being dead. "If her husband be dead." If he be not dead but alive in heaven, and she marries again, what would she be but an adulteress? She would be guilty of marrying "another man" while she had a living husband!

**II. Wives are Catalogued with Ephemeral Things.** In 1 Cor. 7:29-31 Paul classes wives with weeping, rejoicing, buying, possessions, and other ephemeral things of the present. He then declares that all these things are only of transitory moment, to be used, not abused; "for the fashion of this world passeth away." All of these things are to perish with the world and its lusts (1 John 2:16,17). Wives are as temporal as the other things that are here catalogued. When the wifely relationship is abolished those of husband and children become obsolete inevitably.

**III. The Children of God Without Sexual Distinctions.** "The children of the flesh are not the children of God" (Rom. 9:8). Here are two families: "The children of the

flesh," and "the children of God." Now of those who compose "the children of God" the following facts are affirmed in Gal. 3:26, 28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek (no national distinctions), there is neither bond nor free (no social lines), there is neither male nor female" (no sex). National, social, and sexual distinctions find no place in the perfected family of God.

**IV. There will be no Marriages in the Next World.** Lastly, in Luke 20:33-36 our Lord teaches that marriage and dying are limited to "this world." The moment a husband dies he is no longer a husband. When a wife dies she is no longer a wife. When the saints are raised from the dead not one of them is married, nor can they get married again; for they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Marriage, husbands, wives, death—all of these are impossible things in "that world." There will be no lost wives to mourn, no missing husbands to sorrow, no absent children to grieve, no death to blast—all will be "equal to the angels; and are the children of God." The children of the flesh with their weddings and funerals, husbands, wives, and children, are extinct. But this loss is an infinite gain. The few and despised children of God who have been scattered abroad, in all ages a "miserable minority," are then gathered together (John 11:52), and they make in the aggregate "a multitude which no man can number" (Rev. 7:9). All of them will enjoy the perfections of immortality forever. They are called "the whole family" (Eph. 3:15) and "the whole assembly" in the Greek of Heb. 12:23. The members of this family are God, the judge of all, the whole assembly and church of the firstborn, the spirits of just men made perfect, an innumerable company of angels, and Jesus. May the aspiration to be a member of this family be our heart's desire, and may its attainment be our final and glorious portion, is our prayer.

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