

OLD-TIME RELIGION
12 Fervent, Soul-Winning Sermons

By

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CHAPTER ONE

OLD-TIME RELIGION

(Sermon preached at Wheaton College, September, 1943. Stenographically reported for The Sword of the Lord).

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:6-12).

When I speak of "old-time religion" I do not mean religion in the common acceptance of the term, but I refer to salvation - genuine, old-fashioned, Holy Ghost regeneration. In the thinking of the average person religion and salvation are synonymous terms. But nothing was ever farther from the truth. There is a vast gulf between the two. A person may be ever so religious and know nothing of salvation. The fact is that more people are going to Hell the religious route than any other.

Multitudes of people think that because they have adopted the Christian philosophy of life, accepted the Bible as being or "containing" the Word of God, accepted as being true the fact that JESUS CHRIST is the Son of GOD, and believe in the principles and tenets of the Christian faith, - that they are saved.

You can cultivate religion, teach its precepts and fundamental truths, train a person in its ceremonials, rituals and tenets, but you cannot cultivate one into salvation.

Someone has said, "Man is incurably religious." This is a fact of human nature. Therefore, it is quite easy to take a child and teach him any religion, pagan or Christian. It is also very easy to incite religious emotions by certain types of music, rituals and religious ceremonies.

Many people imagine that they are saved because they "feel religious" under the influence of this kind of environment, forgetting that feelings of reverence, worship, or ecstasy can easily be stirred in an unsaved heart. There is no doubt that the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, the Confucianist, or any other pagan has the same feelings when going through his religious ceremonies of worship and prayers. But who, knowing anything about the Bible teaching of salvation, would even intimate that these are saved? They are religious but lost, and many of them even more devoutly religious than many who call themselves Christians.

Oh, how we need to distinguish in our thinking between religion and salvation! There is no doubt that there are multiplied million of people in the churches of the world who have never known or experienced real salvation.

Religious But Lost

JESUS said, "**Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.**"

In other words, not everyone who professes to be a Christian is really saved. He even goes so far in this statement as to say: "**Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you**" (Matthew 7:22,23).

Can you imagine anything more tragic than a person going through life living a religious life and doing religious works, thinking all the time that because of these he is saved and finally hearing the Lord say, "**I never knew you.**" Religious but lost!

As an example of what I mean by religious but lost, I cite the Jews.

Paul said of them: "**My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God**" (Romans 10:1-3). You see from this that a "**zeal of God**" and an earnest effort to live right ("**establish their own righteousness**") are not salvation.

Another example in the Bible is Cornelius.

GOD says of him that he was "**a devout [deeply religious] man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway**" (Acts 10:2). It was further stated of him by his servants that he was "**a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews**" (Acts 10:22).

Let us analyze these statements from the Word of GOD about this man.

GOD says he was "**a devout man,**" or deeply, sincerely, consistently religious; a man who

"**feared God with all his house**" (not only feared GOD himself but by his example and precept taught his whole household (children and servants) to fear GOD; a man who "**prayed to God alway**," and who was liberal with his means toward helping the less fortunate; a man who had compassion upon human suffering and "**gave much alms to the people**." His servants said he was "**a just man**" or a man who was fair in all his dealings with his fellow man and treated everybody right.

I know multitudes of people who are depending on these very things for salvation. Not only that, but they imagine they are wonderful Christians because of them.

But was Cornelius a saved man? Let the Word of GOD settle it. While Cornelius was praying one day an angel appeared unto him and said, "**Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved**" (Acts 11:13, 14).

I once asked a woman about her soul's salvation and her reply was, "I'm not a member of the same church as you, but I think if you are a member of any church and live up to it you will get to Heaven."

I said, "Lady, I may shock you when I say it, but you can be a member of any church and live up to the required standards of all of them and die and go to Hell. You could easily be the best, most faithful and most consistent member any church has and still be unsaved."

What Is This Old-Time Religion?

1. It is a revealed plan of salvation.

Paul says, "**I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ**" (Galatians 1:11, 12).

This is very evident from the very content of the Gospel and is especially clear when compared with any or all of the ethnic religions of the world. These are the highest product of the mind of the natural man. When you have read all their sacred writings you feel like saying with Paul, "**Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?**" (I Corinthians 1:20). No human mind has ever yet conceived of anything that even begins to compare with GOD's plan of salvation through the atonement of CHRIST on the cross. Truly, "**the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God**" (I Corinthians 1:18).

We hear and read a great deal of nonsense today about the need of a new gospel for a new age, about the world having outgrown the old-fashioned ideas of religion. The Holy Spirit knew that the time would come when men would '**turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables**,' so He had Paul to write, "**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that**

ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9).

No, my friends, we don't need a new message for a new age. We need a new generation of preachers who will stand up and preach the old-time Gospel; who will tell men-in spite of the philosophies of men, modern psychology and the babblings of modernistic preachers - that the Word of GOD says they are sinners, doomed and damned for Hell, without GOD and without hope in the world; and call them to repentance and faith in the shed blood of JESUS CHRIST as GOD's only and all-sufficient remedy for sin. As long as there is sin in the world men need to hear the old, old story.

2. This old-time religion is salvation by grace.

"I marvel," said Paul, **"that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ"** (Galatians 1:6).

Paul here clearly indicates that any deviation whatever from a plan of salvation by pure grace is a perversion of the Gospel of CHRIST. And his calling for a curse upon even an angel from Heaven who would dare to pervert this Gospel most certainly means that a perverted gospel has no power in it to save. The natural pride of the human heart has always caused man to want to be his own saviour, or at least to do something to help save himself.

The natural man has always hated a Gospel of salvation by pure grace. This was first evidenced in **"the way of Cain,"** and is continued to this day in man's additions to the way of grace in the form of works and human merit, ordinances, rituals, church membership, et cetera. Even multitudes who claim to preach salvation by grace add good works as a condition of "keeping saved."

Yet the Scriptures say, **"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Ephesians 2:8,9). But man is so loath to confess himself a helpless, lost sinner, ruined and undone, and to come as a beggar to a throne of grace that he will go to any extent to add something to GOD's way of grace that will cater to and pacify the flesh.

BUT WHAT IS GRACE?

Someone has said, "Grace is *unmerited favor.*"

It is that and more. It is the favor of GOD extended where there is no merit - in the complete absence of merit. Grace is the only possible way salvation could be made available to all mankind. It means that there is no condition attached to salvation that cannot be met by any man, anywhere.

In the fourth chapter Paul is arguing salvation by grace. He uses Abraham's salvation as an example and states that **"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."** He climaxes his argument by saying, **"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be**

by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed" (Romans 4:16). That most assuredly means that no man will ever find himself in a position or possible circumstance in which he could not be saved if he wanted to.

Imagine a man on a submarine ten thousand miles from land. The submarine is torpedoed and goes to the bottom, never to rise again. This man finds that he is the only one left alive of the crew. He is lost and knows it. He wants to be saved. There is a Bible on the table. He picks it up and turns to the third chapter of John. Can that man be saved? If not, then the promise is not **"sure to all the seed."** But, thank GOD, he can be saved just as the thief on the cross was saved. That is grace. There is but one thing in all the universe that can keep you from being saved, my lost friend, and that is your own will. JESUS said, **"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."**

My life, my character, my morality and my works have absolutely nothing to do with salvation.

But I want to tell you, if I really have salvation it is going to have everything to do with the kind of life I live. It is the other way around. My character, my morality, my works do not produce salvation. But genuine, Holy Spirit-wrought regeneration in the human heart produces a new creature in CHRIST JESUS, gives us a new nature, gives us new longings, new hopes, new aspirations, new loves.

"If any man be in Christ," says the Scripture, **"he is a new creature [or a new creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (II Corinthians 5:17).

Sam Jones used to say, "You can raise a pig in the parlor, and something will change, but it won't be the pig."

I don't care what you do with him - perfume him, curl his hair, marcel it, tie a pink ribbon around his neck, and feed him from your table - you will never do that hog any good unless you change his nature. And that is what GOD proposes to do in salvation - change man's heart.

If a person is in the church unsaved, that person will always love the world because those that are of the world love their own. JESUS said, **"Because ye are not of the world . . . therefore the world hateth you."**

You can do all you please to the unregenerated human heart: you can educate it, cultivate it, refine it, teach it religion, bring it into the church; but until it is regenerated nothing will do it any good. The fact forever remains, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh."**

The mistake that people make is in the conception that in salvation GOD is dealing primarily with man's sins, with what man has done, whereas GOD goes deeper than that and gets to the taproot of the thing. GOD, in salvation, is dealing primarily with what man is and proposes to change what he does by first changing what he is. Hence the words of JESUS to the Pharisees: **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean"**

also" (Matthew 23:25,26).

No man can ever merit salvation.

Everyone of us has sinned, willfully sinned, turned our backs on GOD, gone away from GOD, rebelled against GOD, hardened our hearts against GOD knowingly and willfully, and everyone deserves to go to Hell. We have nothing to commend us to GOD. We talk about human character and human morals. Suppose we had the character and morals of the best and finest there is on earth; would that commend us to GOD? The Scriptures say, "**We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**" (Isaiah 64:6).

Just take a look into your life. There is plenty of sin and slime and filth in the very best of us - sin in thought, sin in motive, sin in word, sin in deed, sin in impulses. Oh, what a foul brood there is in every human heart! Then look at the perfect holiness of GOD and see what you look like in GOD's presence, and you will realize that you need something you cannot do for yourself.

GOD is so holy that "**even . . . the stars are not pure in his sight.**" The Scriptures tell us that He is too holy to look on sin. GOD is so holy that when a man like Moses asked if he might see GOD's face, GOD said, "**There shall no man see me, and live.**"

The best that GOD could do to answer Moses' request was to hide him in the cleft of the rock, cover him with his hand and pass by and let him see the afterglow of His glory. Moses was one of the holiest men who ever walked this earth, one of the holiest servants of GOD who ever lived. Yet GOD had to say to Moses, "If you looked on my face, you would perish." Why? Because sinful flesh still is the tabernacle of the redeemed soul, and sin and holiness cannot come face to face lest sin be destroyed.

That is the reason JESUS said, "**Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" Note the language. He did not say, "He will not"; He said, "**He cannot.**"

If there were some way you could put an unregenerated person into Heaven, the minute he came into the presence of GOD's holiness he would perish.

Old-Time Religion Is Heartfelt Religion

Millions of people go through life hoping to be saved, trying to be saved, hanging onto something, not knowing whether they are saved or not.

You can be saved and know it; for this Bible salvation, this old-time religion is heartfelt religion. Listen to the Word of GOD:

I John 5:10: "**He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.**"

Galatians 4:6: "**And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.**"

Romans 8:15, 16: "**For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.**"

When you are saved you not only have the witness of the Spirit, but salvation itself is a definite experience. Being Born Again is a very definite experience.

Job could say in the midst of the wreck of everything he had, "**I know that my redeemer liveth.**" How did he know? By a personal experience.

Paul could say, "**I know whom I have believed.**" How do you know, Paul? "I have had a personal experience."

Do you know you are saved?

This Old-Time Religion Centers in a Person

Salvation is in a Person - not in works, not in character or morality, not in a church or church membership, not in the externals of religion; but in a Person; and that Person is JESUS CHRIST. Paul said, "**I know *whom* . . .**" Get it; the word is not "*what*." Salvation is not in a "*what*." "**I know *whom* I have believed [trusted], and am persuaded [fully convinced] that he is able to keep that which I have committed [entrusted] unto him against that day.**"

Notice he did not say, "I know what I have done," or "what kind of life I have lived," but simply, "***whom* I have trusted.**"

I sat by the bedside of a man in a hospital one day, trying to lead him to CHRIST. I explained that Paul told his experience of salvation in one brief sentence, in these few words:

"**I know *whom* I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.**" I said, "Listen to the word '*whom*' first - a Person. Paul said, '**I know *whom* I have trusted.**' He had trusted JESUS CHRIST, a Person, the Son of GOD, as his personal Saviour, his sin-bearer. Then he committed or entrusted something to Him. He had entrusted his soul and its destiny for time and eternity to Him." And I said, "That is his experience. That is his testimony." And I said to the unsaved man, "Do you see it?"

"Yes, I see it," said he. "Paul meant that he had put his trust in JESUS CHRIST as his personal Saviour, and had handed his soul over to CHRIST."

I said, "You are an unsaved man, but I have never heard a theologian give a better exposition of that text of Scripture than you have given."

He replied, "You mean I was an unsaved man. But I am not now. For the minute that light flashed into my soul, I trusted Him, I accepted Him, and I turned myself over to Him, and I am not an unsaved man any long. I am saved!"

This Old-Time Religion Rests Upon Three Great Facts

1. The first is the atonement of JESUS CHRIST.

"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

He took my place; He bore my sin; He paid the penalty for my sin, the wages of which was death. My sin fell upon Him; the judgment of GOD was upon Him. **"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"** (Isaiah 53:5, 6).

The modernist would tell us that we are to be saved by imitating the beautiful life of CHRIST. But if you tell me that that is my only hope of salvation, I will tell you that you have not offered me any hope of salvation; for when I look at that marvelous life, I tell you frankly I can't live like that.

- the man who sentenced Him to death and turned Him over to be crucified testified: **"I find no fault in him."**

- Pilate's wife came and said, **"Have thou nothing to do with that just man."**

- Judas, who sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, said, **"I have betrayed innocent blood."**

He was such a man that He could stand in the presence of His bitterest enemies and say, **"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"**

Not a sin, not a stain, not a fault, not a shortcoming! He never made a mistake. He never said nor did the wrong thing, nor had the wrong attitude.

And you tell me that I must imitate that life in order to be saved? I will tell you, as I look into my poor sinful heart, that you have not held out to me any hope of salvation. Instead, you have thrust me into the very depths of eternal despair; for try as much as I will to live like that (how I would love to!) I cannot, and there is no hope, if that is the way of salvation.

But if you tell me:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains,

then my poor heart cries out, Lead me to that fountain.

That is what I need. Oh, I need something that will make me clean, that will rid my conscience of the burden of sin; something that will bring me again into reconciliation and peace with GOD.

Thank GOD, He has promised that when I am washed in the blood of CHRIST He will put my sins behind His back and will remember them against me no more forever! He has said, "**The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**" Oh, that is what I need!

2. The second fact upon which the old-time religion rests is the resurrection of CHRIST.

Oh, that grave could not hold Him! He is not a dead CHRIST. We do not worship a CHRIST on a crucifix. We worship a CHRIST who is living today; One who burst asunder the bonds of death and brought out with Him the keys of death and Hell. He is living now at the right hand of GOD. GOD the Father said, "**Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.**"

This is why Paul said, "**He must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet.**"

Oh, praise GOD, He is a living, conquering CHRIST. And the risen CHRIST is my hope of victory along the journey of life after I am saved. So many preach only half the Gospel. The first half is that CHRIST died for our sins, that He bore our sins on the cross and in that atonement made satisfaction for our sins, satisfying GOD's justice and holiness. GOD can now be just, and the "**justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**" But that is only half of the Gospel. The other half is this: "**He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.**" He lives! He lives! He lives in me! That is salvation! Not in works, not in character, not in religion, but "**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"

I have heard many a person say, "I would like to be a Christian, but if I were to be a Christian I would want to know that I could hold out."

I want to tell you, my friends, you cannot do it, and nobody in the world could do it if it were not for the fact that CHRIST lives and when you are saved He comes into your heart to live there. Then we can say with Paul, '**It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.**' And, praise the Lord, "**Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.**"

The victory is in trusting in His power, trusting in His divine leadership, trusting in His work in us to break the power of sin.

3. The third great fact is the intercession of CHRIST.

"**Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them**" (Hebrews 7:25). "**Uttermost**" means in every battle; it means every step of the way, in every trial and every temptation; it means until I am safe in Glory.

That is why Paul said, "**He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.**" What day, Paul? That day of all days; that day when the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll and elements shall melt with fervent heat. He, the living CHRIST, is able to keep against that day; that day when the angel shall stand with one foot on the land and one on the sea and declare there should be time no longer. The living CHRIST is able to keep against that day.

Isn't it great to be a Christian! Isn't that a glorious salvation! I did not do the saving; I just did the letting. I just received. Faith is an empty hand that is held out to receive. That is all.

Eternal life is a gift that is offered; and it is held in a nail-scarred hand. **"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."**

When a gift is offered, the receiver

- does not have to beg for it;
- does not have to merit it;
- does not have to purchase it;
- does not have to work for it

he just holds out the empty hand of faith and receives it.

That is all that stands between any soul and salvation - just to receive it.

- GOD is able.
- CHRIST has died.
- CHRIST has paid the full penalty of sin.
- He has done everything necessary to save every soul on earth.
- He does not need your help.
- He is able to do it.
- GOD is satisfied with His finished work.
- GOD is reconciled with a lost world; and
- GOD is now saying, **"Receive"; "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"** (John 1:12).

People stumble over the simplicity of it. In the pride of the human heart we want to help do it and so we pervert the Gospel of His grace and mix in our works.

This Old-Time Religion Satisfies

It satisfies every longing of the human heart.

A dear girl came to me recently who had been taken into the church without having had an experience of grace. She had been disturbed for years. Her soul had been torn asunder; she had been wondering and groping in darkness. When she saw the simplicity of the plan of salvation in CHRIST, she said, "I reckon I have been trying to make it too hard for myself."

"No," I said, "the Devil has been trying to deceive you and make you think it is hard."

Then that dear girl said these words, "With all my heart I am opening the door for JESUS." She left that room all but shouting happy, saying, "Oh, such peace! Such peace! Such peace!"

He satisfies: nothing else does. **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God**

through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"It Will Do When I Am Dying"

It will not only give you that peace and satisfaction in life; make you happy every step of the way; put a new song in your soul; send you down the road of life rejoicing, but when you come to the end and lay your head on the dying pillow, there will be victory and glory even then.

I was called to the home of a little mother who was dying of tuberculosis. She had been on the bed more than three years, simply wasting away. One Sunday morning they called for me, saying, "Can you come? Delta is dying, and she wants you here."

When I walked into her room she was so weak she could hardly speak. When she saw me she smiled and said, "Brother Hankins, I am so glad you came. I wanted you to see how a Christian can die, so that you can tell others."

She had two little girls, one seven and one ten. She called them to her bedside.

The little seven-year-old girl sat down on the bed beside her mother. The mother put an arm around each of them, drew them close to her, kissed them and bade them good-by. Tears were gleaming in her eyes, and the dying woman's mother, who was beside the bed, took a handkerchief and wiped them away.

As she did there broke a smile on that dying face and the glory of another world lighted it. I got a little peep right into Heaven when she looked into her mother's face and said, "Mother, in just a few minutes GOD will wipe away the last tear that will ever be in these eyes." And then she said, "Babies, don't cry: Mother has had a hard time. It has been a hard struggle. But it is over and I am going to be with JESUS. Good-by. JESUS has come and I am going with Him." And again, the glory of another world lighted her face.

I saw what they saw when Stephen died. And she fell asleep like a baby in a mother's arms.

Genuine salvation is something that will take you through every trial of life and make you happy every step of the way. You cannot drive the sunshine away, for the Sunshine in the soul will make a rainbow in the cloud and shed glory on every step of the way. And when you come to the end it will be a triumphant end, with glory and victory as you go out to meet your Lord and be forever with Him.

That is OLD-TIME RELIGION.

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