

The book cover features a dark brown wood grain texture. A horizontal band of greenish-blue color runs across the middle. The title and author's name are printed in a gold, serif font.

NINE SCRIPTURAL  
REASONS

JOHN R. CHURCH

## **Nine Scriptural Reasons for Holiness**

Rev. John R. Church, DD



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**REV. JOHN R. CHURCH DD**  
**Winston-Salem, North Carolina**  
**1899 -1984**

Dr. Church, an approved evangelist of the United Methodist church, and a member of the Western North Carolina Conference since 1920, was one of the truly outstanding itinerant evangelists of 20th century Methodism.

In 40 years of evangelism, Dr. Church traveled over one million miles; preached in 31 colleges and universities; conducted over 1,000 series of meetings with some 40,000 seekers at the altar; and witnessed over 800 men and women answering the call to full-time Christian service under his ministry.

He has ministered in many of the largest camp meetings in America, including: Hollow Rock, Sychar, and Circleville in Ohio; Lakeland, Avon Park, and Brooksville in Florida; Wilmore in Kentucky; Bentleyville in Pennsylvania; and Indian Springs in Georgia. In his early ministry he shared the camp meeting platform with such noted evangelists as: Henry Clay Morrison, Joseph H. Smith, "Uncle Bud" Robinson, John L. Brasher, Samuel Logan Brengle, and C.W. Butler.

He received the Doctor of Divinity degree from Asbury College in 1942 and was on its Board of Trustees for many years: He was co-founder of John Wesley College, Greensboro, North Carolina, and served as Chairman of its Board for 28 years.

The dynamic power and success of his ministry, spanning more than half a century, is expressed by Dr. Church's own words: "It is still true that this is the will of God, even your sanctification...Men may quibble and question, but I choose to take my stand with the Word of God. I cannot do otherwise and still be a faithful minister of the gospel. Other men may feel that this is an elective course that can either be taken or left alone, but with the light and convictions I have on the subject, I could not be true to my own soul and fail to preach it...Every man must answer to God for his own ministry, but I would tremble for my own soul, if I should go into His presence without having preached this glorious truth."

## ***DEDICATION***

This Book is Lovingly Dedicated to the Memory of four consecrated faithful Methodist Ministers whose lives were a great blessing to my own life. They have now gone on to their eternal reward, but their memory lingers on as a sweet incense. Their names are:

Rev. Daniel Oakley Rev. Robert E. Ward Rev. Herbert E. Stimson Rev. T. G. Williams

Their radiant lives proved the reality of this glorious truth of full salvation. They not only lived the life but best of all they were definite and faithful in their witness to this great doctrine of entire sanctification. If it had not been for their clear-cut testimony and teaching on this great truth, I might have gone through life without coming into this glorious experience of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost in His sanctifying power. May God help me to be as faithful as they were. If we do not preach and witness to this great truth, then many people will never come into the experience.

Sincerely His and Yours, John R. Church

## NINE SCRIPTURAL REASONS FOR HOLINESS

By John R. Church, D.D.

I. God Has Sworn That We Can Be Holy, And Live It. Luke 1:73-75.

II. God Commands Us To Be Holy. I Peter 1:15,16

III. It Is God's Will That We Be Sanctified. I Thess. 4:3.

Also Read and Study I Thess. 5:23-24

IV. God Calls Us To Holiness. To despise this call is to despise God. I Thess. 4:7-8

V. Christ Died That We Might Be Sanctified. Heb. 13:12. Also Eph. 5:25-27.

VI. Christ Is Not Ashamed Of Those Who Are Sanctified. Heb. 2:11.

VII. No One Can Get To Heaven Without Holiness. Heb. 12:14-17.

VIII. God Chastens Us In Order to Make Us Partakers Of His Holiness. Heb. 12:6-10.

IX. It Is God's Choice For Us. Eph. 1:4.

For seventy-nine years there have been camp meetings held on these sacred grounds, and this camp became legally, officially, and (to many of us) affectionately known as the Central Holiness Camp Meeting. And that name was selected deliberately to emphasize the fact that this camp stood for the doctrine of holiness. Now, there are other camp meetings in Kentucky, were then and have been since, that did not believe in and preach second-blessing holiness. There are many churches scattered up and down this land that do not believe in and do not preach second blessing holiness. John Wesley said the Methodist church was raised up to spread scriptural holiness over the land and to reform the continent. But there are millions of Methodists who never hear a sermon on second blessing holiness, they'll have to hear it in some place like this. And if they ever get the experience of entire sanctification, they'll have to get it in a place like this.

A friend of mine down in the western North Carolina Conference said to me some years ago, "John, the trouble with you is you just don't preach anything but holiness." "Well," I said, "the trouble with you is you don't ever preach it. And we have about five or six-hundred other Methodist preachers just like you, and it keeps me busy making up for your short-comings." I said, "If you fellows would preach it more, then I wouldn't have to preach it so much." And I'm not being facetious when I say that; I'm in dead earnest. Because it will surprise you at how many so-called holiness camp meetings today at how little definite holiness preaching is done. In fact many people look upon it as fanaticism and out of date, not relevant to this modern day and age in which we live.

Some time ago I had the privilege of preaching in an evangelistic conference down in North Carolina, where they claimed there were three-hundred and fifty Methodist preachers registered. It was my privilege to preach to them five times. Naturally, I preached several times on the baptism with the Holy Spirit. One fine young man in that conference got carried away. And, after he got home he called me over long distance and asked me if I would agree to give him a date for a meeting in his church. I had a week that I had been saving for rest, but I usually give my rest periods for meetings, and so I told him I'd give him eight days in his church. But, undoubtedly, he either cooled off, or somebody talked to him and advised him not to have that fellow Church. He might get his church split open. And so he called me again and asked me if I would agree to come to his church, and preach on his television program as well as his church, but agree not to preach on second blessing holiness. He said he didn't think it was relevant to this modern day and age in which we live. He said, "Now I go to places where people of various denominations and various theologies are." And he said, "I adapt my message so that it will not give offense to any particular group." I told him, "I couldn't agree to do that, because I do not know how God may lead me to preach. And certainly I couldn't agree to not preach on the baptism of the Holy Spirit because I promised God that I'd never hold a revival meeting without preaching on it at least once and invite people to the altar to seek it." And I told him, "Now, I gave you this date. I was saving it for rest, and I need the rest." And I said, "If you want to cancel the date that will be perfectly all right; there won't be any hard feelings on my part." So I didn't go.

But there are many people who have the feeling that this is kind of a sideline, or an elective course, and just a few hair-brained fanatics are advocating this thing. So I felt

very definitely led, in fact I had originally planned, to speak on religion in the home. But I feel just as definitely led to speak to you this afternoon on nine scriptural reasons why I believe in holiness, as I am that I am standing on this platform. These are scriptural reasons why I believe in holiness. And that is a good solid foundation.

This first reason why I believe in scriptural holiness is the fact that the Bible tells us that God swore that we could live holy and righteous before him all the days of our lives. That's found in the first chapter of Luke, the seventy-third, seventy-fourth, and seventy-fifth verses, when Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, reminds us of the covenant that God made with our father Abraham and swore to him: "That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, before him all the days of our life." Not when we get to heaven, but right down here. And God doesn't swear to a lie. And Paul, in writing to the Church in Thessalonica, prays, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And then he says, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." And John, in his Epistle, tells us, that "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This thing of sanctification and holiness doesn't rest upon sentiment or vain speculation. It rests upon the eternal faithfulness of the holy God of this universe.

And I might define what we mean when we speak of sanctification. It's not my definition; it's found in the Standard Dictionary. The Standard Dictionary says that: "Sanctification, in theology, is the gracious work of the Spirit whereby the heart of the believer is cleansed from sin, and he is exalted to holiness of heart and life." Now that's not fanaticism. That's not wildfire. And by the way the holiness cranks don't have any corner on fanaticism. They had plenty of it in Resurrection City in Washington. And listen in on your television, if the Beatles are still living (They got so popular they were more popular than Jesus Christ, but it seems to have sort of faded into the background.), but there was a time when girls would swoon and scream and fall prostrate on the floor when the Beatles sang, and down in North Carolina the Monkeys do a great deal of carrying on. And I haven't heard of any protestors getting unduly excited about that.

Now, I don't think God would swear to a lie. And when God swears that we can be delivered out of the hands of our enemies, and live without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives, I believe it can be done, by his grace and power. We can't do it; but He can.

The second reason why I believe in holiness is that the Bible tells us that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. In Hebrews the twelfth chapter and the fourteenth verse, it says, "Follow peace with all men and holiness (or, as it is translated in other translations, the sanctification) without which no man shall see the Lord." So, according to the teaching of the Bible, you're going to have to have holiness in order to get to Heaven. Regardless of where you get it or how you get it, you're going to have to have it to get in. And Jesus said, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," and, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Unless you have holiness, you won't want to go to heaven.

A little lady down in Greensboro, one night after I'd preached on holiness, came up all excited and stamped her foot. She said, "I hate holiness." I smiled, and said, "Well, I

hope you don't go to heaven feeling that way." And she got still madder. She said, "Do you mean to insinuate that I'm not fit to go to heaven?" "Well," I said, "I'm not making any insinuation, I'm not going to be the door-keeper. But," I said, "to be honest with you, I don't think you would enjoy it in your present state of mind." Now I said, "If you can become so agitated and so excited over one little sermon I preach on holiness, what will you do if you have to spend eternity in the presence of the holy God of this universe? and listen to the angelic hosts shout, 'Holy! Holy! Holy! is the Lord God of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.'" And I said, "If you hate holiness, what will you do if you have to spend eternity in the presence of the holy prophets and apostles and the Christ who suffered without the gates that he out might sanctify the people with his own blood?" I said, "If you hate holiness, what will you do if you have to spend eternity in the presence of the holy martyrs that have suffered and bled and died because they loved righteousness while you love worldliness and sin?" I said, "Sister, that wouldn't be heaven to you." I said, "That would be hell of the very worst sort." I said, "Why, you'd climb over the fence to get out." And that's true. The colored folk down in North Carolina sing, "Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't a'goin there." And they're not. There are a lot of people in Wilmore, Kentucky. Some of them may be professing holiness, but a radical change is going to have to take place before they'll be ready for heaven.

I was preaching in the old Red Rock Camp Meeting in Minnesota one Sunday. It was that sermon I have on A Bird's Eye View of God's Plan, and I was talking about the imminent coming of Christ. There was a rather distinguished looking gentleman over here on this side of the tabernacle who suddenly leaped to his feet, ran out of the building, and ran around there to another very distinguished looking gentleman. And the other man rose to his feet, they got to hugging each other, and the Holy Spirit fell, people got to running in the aisles and shouting. And a quartet there from Marion College, Indiana, rose to their feet and started singing "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name", and we had quite a stir. I never did get to finish the message, but after the service was over, this rather distinguished looking man that had got up over here, came down, and said, "Brother Church, I want to apologize to you for interrupting your message like I did." He said, "I'm a Methodist minister over here in Wisconsin." And, by the way, he's Fern Abbott's father, the missionary, and the Abbott that was connected with the World Gospel Mission. He said, "That gentleman I went to over there was the chairman of my board." He said, "Some months ago in one of our board meetings he and I got into an argument and we both got mad." He said, "He got mad enough to curse, and did curse." He said, "I got mad enough to curse, but I didn't curse." And he said, "We haven't been speaking since that time." And he said, "The Holy Spirit came to me while you were speaking and said to me, 'If Jesus would come right now, you wouldn't be caught up to meet him because you won't even speak to the chairman of your board.'" And he said, "It Tightened me so I ran over there before I even realized what I was doing because I didn't want to be left out."

And friends, I'm here to say to you that if you are planning on spending eternity with Christ you're going to have to get your heart cleaned up and cleaned out and filled with perfect love and pure and clean in the sight of almighty God.

The third reason why I believe in holiness is God commands it. Peter, in his epistle, says, "As he that has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (or living). For it is written, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'" God wants his children to be holy

because he is holy. He wants us to be like himself. He wants us to be different from the world. And this is not a new commandment. It came out of the Old Testament. God had given this commandment, first of all, to Israel because God had called Abraham and his descendants out and set them at the cross-roads of nations so that he could show to the human race what the grace of God could do for men and women. And he wanted them to be different. Now listen, friends, in spite of all the lowered standards today, God still wants his church to be different. Paul says. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying un-Godliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and Godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior, who loved us and gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all impurity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And in writing to the church at Corinth he says, "Having therefore these promises, Dearly Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Dr. McPheeters sent me a letter some months ago from a very agitated lady. She was agitated over an article that I had written in the Question Bureau about mixed bathing. And she told him that she thought it a great tragedy to have such articles as that in the Herald because it might upset some of our young people and cause them to have a guilty complex. I don't think there's much danger. I don't know how long it's been since I saw a girl that could blush. And I see quite a good many mothers that seem to have forgotten how to blush.

I saw a lady the other day at one camp meeting. And I said to Mrs. Church, "It's a burning shame for a mother to dress that way before her children, let alone before anybody else." She didn't have on enough clothes to be in a bathroom alone by herself. But God wants his people to be different; he expects us to be different. And, to be honest with you, the world does too. The sinners expect us to be different. They expect us to dress different, and talk different, and act different. And when we don't they're disappointed.

Byron Crouse's sister Edith told us that she was going down to Puerto Rico, I think it was, on a missionary tour. And some of the girls in the dining room were discussing, they said, "We have a Christian missionary on the boat. Wonder which one she is?" And one of the girls, who had attended a missions school said, "I don't know which one she is now, but I can tell you when she comes in the dining room." And Edith dropped her head and offered a silent blessing and she said, "That's her." They expect something out of us. That's right, they have a right to. It ought to make a difference.

Another reason why I believe in holiness is, it's God's will. Paul says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Your sanctification. I don't care if you're a Baptist; I don't care if you're a Presbyterian; I don't care if you belong to the Church of Christ, or the Episcopal Church, or the Catholic Church, this is the will of God, even your sanctification. Your sanctification. You say, "Well, my preacher don't preach it that way." Well, this is the will of God, even your sanctification. God wants you to be sanctified. That's why he saved you. Moses said to the Children of Israel, "He brought us out from thence that he might bring us in." God didn't just want to get the children of Israel out of Egypt, he wanted to get them into Cannan. And he doesn't just want to get you out of the world, but he wants to get the world out of you and to get His Spirit in your hearts.

Now you can look at that in two ways. You can look at it, "This is the will of God," that is, this is what He wants, that's what God desires of you. Or you can look at it from the standpoint of an inheritance, a bequest, that God has willed you something. And it is an inheritance. Paul, when he received his commission to preach, was commanded to go to the gentiles, "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by the faith which is in me." It is a part of the Christian's estate. If your father would call your name and say, "I will bequeath to that particular child. Jim, or George, I don't know, whatever the name is, ten thousand dollars in AT&T Stock, you'd jump to the conclusion that there was some AT&T Stock somewhere in his name, and you'd be wanting to cash in on that. Well, the father wills you some stock. And you can cash in on it.

An old colored woman used to go down to Indian Springs Camp. She heard Dr. Morrison and some of those old warriors speak on sanctification and holiness. She went back home. She attended a Presbyterian Church. They had a balcony up in the back of the church where the colored people could sit and attend the service. And one Sunday morning when the Pastor had finished his message and they were singing a closing hymn, this old colored auntie came down the steps and down the aisle and knelt in front of the church. And it excited the pastor, he wasn't accustomed to that. And it would excite a lot of Methodist pastors. They haven't seen anything like that happen in a long time. And he went down and he said, "What'd you come to the altar for?" She said, "I came to be sanctified." "Why," he said, "you can't be sanctified until you die. You have to wait 'till you die to be sanctified." She said, "Parson, that big black book you read out of up there, don't it say, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification'?" He said, "Certainly it says that, but you can't be sanctified 'till ye die." "Well," she said, "I'll have it or bust the will one!" Well you don't have to bust the will, you don't even have to contest the will. It's on deposit.

And that leads me to the next reason why I believe in holiness, and that is the fact that Jesus suffered without the gates that he might sanctify the people with his own blood. It's already been purchased. It's part of the atonement. The provision's been made. In fact, if you study your Bible discriminatingly, you'll find that Jesus died for a two-fold purpose. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now that's one purpose for which Jesus died. But in Ephesians the fifth chapter and the twenty-fifth verse Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it." The Church, not the world, but the church. And he's not talking about the Methodist Church, he's not talking about the Baptist Church, he's not talking about any denomination. He's talking about the true church, the body of Christ, which is made up of all regenerated people. You can't join the true church, you're born into it. "The Lord adds to the church daily such as are being saved." Now that's the crowd that he gave himself for that he might sanctify them.

Now listen, friends, if you don't have discernment enough to see the difference between the world and the true church, you don't need to worry about this matter of sanctification, you'd get in anyway. The Lord's made provision for that simple minded people to get in. He loved the world and gave himself for it that it might be saved. He loved the church and gave himself for it that it might be sanctified.

There are two calls. God calls the sinner to repentance. He calls the believer unto holiness. Paul says in I Thess. 4:7-8, "For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, and he therefore that despiseth or rejecteth, despiseth not man but God who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." You're not despising John Church.

One of the district superintendents in the Western North Carolina Conference was talking to a friend of mine, he didn't know he was my friend, but he said, "Well, you know, we have three groups in the Western North Carolina Conference. One's the Duke crowd, and then the Emory crowd, and that John Church crowd." Well, when he told me about it I didn't feel down in the dumps at all, I felt sort of honored. That John Church crowd. But, it's not that John Church crowd, it's God's crowd. And when you despise it, you're not despising John Church, it's not an issue between you and me, it's an issue between you and God. Down in Georgia we had a great bishop, one of the most outstanding bishops of the Southern church, and he scoffed and ridiculed second blessing holiness. Somebody asked him if he thought the holiness people would get to heaven. He said, "Yes, if they don't run by it." And one time in the Hughes Memorial Auditorium here at Asbury College when he was speaking, (Dr. Morrison was alive) and the Bishop took a fling at second blessing holiness, even at Asbury College. When he asked the congregation to stand for the benediction, old Dr. Morrison called his hand. He said, "Wait a minute, Bishop." He said, "How many people in this auditorium today got saved and knew you were saved? And then later on saw the need of a heart cleansing and sought and received the sanctifying grace of God as a second definite work, stand up." And they stood up, in the balcony and all over. And he said, "Now, Bishop, you can pronounce the benediction." We need some of that today.

But listen friends, when that bishop was on his death bed, a Methodist preacher called on him and asked him if he was ready to go. He said, "I'm lost, I'm going to hell." And the preacher said, "Oh, no, Bishop, you're not lost. A great man like you that's rendered such a great service in the church, can't possibly be lost." And he said, "I am lost." He said, "I have trifled with holy things." Now, his family claimed that he'd lost his mind, that he was irrational, that he didn't know what he was talking about. He seemed to be rational about other things. But that was his dying testimony. And in that passage in Hebrews, where it exhorts us to "follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled, lest there be any fornicator or profane person, who, like Esau, sold his birthright and later sought the blessing with penitential tears but found no place to get the blessing." Listen, friends, this isn't a hobby with John Church, it's God's eternal plan and purpose. And don't you treat it lightly.

Another reason why I believe in holiness is, Christ is not ashamed of those who are sanctified. In Hebrews the second chapter, the tenth verse I believe it is, it says, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all at one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Now, there are some people that he will be ashamed to call brethren. He said, "If ye are ashamed of me and my word, then I'll be ashamed of you." And he ought to be. He has a right to be. If I knew this was the truth, the teaching of God's word, that it was God's will, plan and purpose for me to be sanctified and live a holy life, and for the people I preach to, and I hesitated to preach that just because it wasn't popular with the bishop, or because it might hinder my

appointment, and I toned down and didn't preach it, my own mother ought to be ashamed of me. I'd be a contemptible coward. I wouldn't be worthy to stand behind the sacred desk. God didn't call me to be a coward, he called me to be a soldier. He didn't call me to be a compromiser, he called me to be a preacher. He didn't call me to be popular, he called me to be faithful. And he's promised that, if we're faithful unto death, he'll give us the crown of life. I'm not seeking anything down here. I don't want anything. I've had offers, opportunities. I was telling brother Bill Henderson about the bishop wanting to send me to the First Methodist Church in Independence, Missouri. I told him I wasn't interested. I'm not. I'm not interested in anything, only being faithful to God: because I don't want him to be ashamed of me.

You know, you can get honors from man, and they seem mighty empty and meaningless at times. But God's going to have some honorary degrees to hand out. In Hebrews we're told that there are some people that he's not ashamed to be called their God, for he's prepared for them a city. Now, your kinfolk may be ashamed of you. And the brethern in the ministry may be ashamed of you. In fact, I've been amused through the years at the annual conference, how preachers that I've known for years, and many of them I've held meetings for, and that used to be very warm-hearted, and friendly, and cordial, and wanted me for a meeting, and then I'd go to Conference one year and they'd be in the awfulest hurry to go when they saw me, just hurrying to a board meeting. And they seemed to be sort of ashamed to be seen with me or stand around in front of the church talking to me. And you didn't have to tell me they'd cooled off, I knew it.

When I came up to join the conference at Monroe, North Carolina, I got quite a raking out when I went before the committee. A brother had gone before the committee and misrepresented me and told some things that were not true. And they really nailed my hide to the side of the barn. And I went out of there brokenhearted and bewildered. I didn't hardly know what to do. And I walked down the street and came to the First Baptist Church, and the door was open and an old colored man was sweeping out the vestibule. And I said, "Uncle, is there any place around here convenient where a fellow could find a place to pray?" He said, "Boss, they's a little room right up here under the dome, right up the head of dese windin' stairs." He said, "They's a lot of broken down furniture up there. But," he said, "right in the center of that room they's a clean place. I goes up dere right often and kneels down for a bit." And he said, "I'll tell you the honest truth, the connection is usually pretty good up dere." And I climbed the stairs, and found the little clean place. It was slick, and clean. He hadn't just used it now and then, he'd used it a lot. And I dropped down on my knees and I said, "Oh, God!" And that was a far as I got. The Holy Spirit said, "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all at one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethern." And I said, "Glory to God." And down the steps I came, into the vestibule, I said, "Thank you, Uncle, thank you." And he said, "Boss, the connection must have been awful good this morning." And since that time I've been fed a good deal of cold shoulder and hot tongue, but I've gone home and gone to bed and the Lord's opened up a stand of sower-wood honey, and served the best of the pomegranates and grapes, and said, "Son, don't you worry. They might not understand, but I understand. And I'm not ashamed of you." And that's enough.

And then, the last reason that I give is this: It's God's choice for his children. And it's

not a second choice. Paul, in Ephesians, tells us that "God, before the foundation of the world chose us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." That's our Father's choice for us. And, knowing him as I do, and having had as much business relation with him as I've had, I'm not surprised that he'd make that kind of choice for his children. I'll be honest with you, I can't conceive of a Holy God, with infinite power and wisdom, and having made the sacrifice that he did in order to redeem a lost race, I can't conceive of him devising a plan of salvation whereby you could come and get your sins forgiven, and get a white robe, and then go out and live like the devil, and repent every night and get cleaned up, and then start out the next day and live like the devil.

Dr. John Rice, bless his heart, I love him, and he's published some of my sermons in *The Sword of the Lord*, but he wrote an article on the peril of preaching sinless perfection (No one preaches that. No reputable preacher preaches sinless perfection. We preach Christian perfection) but in the course of this article, he quoted that statement from the third chapter of Romans, the tenth verse, where it says, "There is none righteous, no not one." And I wrote a reply to it. It was published in *The Herald*. And I said, "I'm surprised that a man of Dr. Rice's intelligence and supposed to be an authority on the word of God as he is, that he should ever quote that passage of scripture and apply it to Christian people." I said, "Anybody that will study that passage of scripture, is bound to know that Paul is not talking about how Christians live" (if they do live that way then they ought to be in the penitentiary). You read it. Turn to the third chapter of Romans and begin reading at the tenth verse, and read down about five or six verses, and see if you think that's a description of a Christian. If Christ can't do any more than that for us, we have a sorry Gospel. I wouldn't drive across the state of North Carolina to preach such a Gospel. I can't conceive of a holy God who would devise any such plan as that.

Now I was reared poor. My grandfather was killed in the Civil War. He was the first sheriff of Forsyth County and one of the selectmen that helped organize the state of North Carolina but he was blown up in that fort down there in North Carolina. Because of carelessness, he failed to have his deeds recorded, and everything that he had was lost. And my father was bound out as a boy to work for his board and clothes until he was eighteen years of age and never got to go to school a day in his life. He couldn't read nor write his name. And because of that he had to work as a day laborer. I can remember when he worked for a dollar a day. And there were eight of us children to feed and clothe and educate. How he ever did it, I don't know. But, we just didn't have a lot of things that kids take for granted today. And we lived pretty tight. I had a brother that's nearly two years older than I am, and when he'd outgrow a garment, they'd hand it down to me. And, if he didn't outgrow it quick enough and I was about to bust out the seams, then Mother would get an old coat from somebody, and she'd rip it up, and she'd make me a pair of little, short, straight-legged trousers. They struck me here above my knees, about like the girls wear their mini-skirts now. And she'd button to it a little blue body, white buttons, and that's what I'd wear. In fact, I can well remember the first store-bought suit of clothes I ever had. I was a good-sized boy. And my father said to me one Friday night, he worked for a furniture store, and he said, "Son, if you will come up town in the morning, I'll buy you a brand new suit, a suit that nobody else has ever worn." And he said, "It's going to be yours and nobody else's. And I went up, and

we shopped around for suits. We looked at goods, and felt of goods, and priced goods, and finally we settled on a suit. I'll never forget it. It was a blue, corduroy, velvet suit. It had a vest to it, double-breasted, white pearl buttons, and cost eight dollars. And brother, that was a big price to pay for a boy's suit back in those days. You could buy a man's suit for that. But when I got that thing under my arm and started to walk home, I don't suppose John D. Rockefeller, or Henry Ford, or anybody else ever felt any richer than I did. Well, I just hit the high places. And when I got home and showed it to mother, her eyes just bugged out. I wanted to be ready to put on my new suit. We had an old-fashioned bureau, and I'd put an old Methodist hymn book down back of the mirror and turned it out so I could see myself full length. I put on that suit. And I strutted like a peacock. And then it suddenly dawned on me how much my father had had to sacrifice to buy that suit. He had to work one whole week, and he didn't work eight hours, he worked ten or twelve hours. I've seen him come in at night in the winter time with the lines frozen to his hands. And we boys were glad to unharness the horses, saying, "Go on into the fire. Dad." He'd had to work one whole week and would have to work two more days the next week to pay for the suit. And then I remembered that he had an old blue serge suit that we called his Sunday suit. I don't know how long he'd worn the thing. He'd worn it until it had turned green here on the pads, on the shoulders. And he'd worn it until it had become threadbare in some places and mother had darned it. He called it his Sunday suit. He wouldn't put it on except for Sunday or for a funeral, or something like that. And just as quick as he'd get home from church he'd take it off so it would last. When I thought of that, it took the strut out of me. And I went downstairs very humbly and into the bedroom where he was putting on his Sunday suit. And I said, "Papa, why did you buy me such an expensive suit?" I said, "Why didn't you buy me a cheap suit and buy you one, too," I said, "you need one so badly." I'll never forget the look that came in his eye. He walked across the room and laid that old hard, horny hand on my head, and pushed my head back and looked me in the eyes, and there were tears in his eyes and a choke in his voice. He said, "Son, I'm a poor man. And I don't have much of this world's goods. And I can't provide for my children like other men can. And it's been a source of embarrassment to me that you've had to go so long without a new suit. But," he said, "I made up my mind when I did buy you one, I was going to buy you a good one, so that you can put it on, wear it to church for the day, stand out in front of the church with the rest of the boys and not be ashamed." And then he said, "When it comes time for preaching and you walk down the aisle to come sit with Mother and me, and you sit down by my side, and the preacher starts preaching," he said: "I'll turn and look at you and say, 'That's my boy. I bought that suit for him with the labors of my own hands.'"<sup>M</sup> Now when my heavenly Father got ready to buy me a garment, he didn't go to a rummage sale, or a second-hand hand-me-down-outfit. It cost him a lot. But he bought me a robe that I can put on, and wear, and stand on the platform at Wilmore Camp Meeting and say, "I'm a child of the king. A child of the king. My father is rich in houses and lands. He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands. I once was an outcast, a sinner by choice, and an alien by birth. But I've been adopted. My name's written down. I'm an heir of a mansion, a robe and a crown." And when Gabriel blows his trumpet; and the gates swing open; and the saints come marching in; and David begins to play on his harp and sing "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be lifted up ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory come in. Who is this King of

Glory? The Lord of Hosts, the Lord mighty in Battle;" and the saints come marching down the streets and boulevards of the New Jerusalem, old Abel carrying the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ; and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; and the twelve patriarchs; and John the Baptist; the great Apostle Paul; and all the holy martyrs; and John Wesley; and they all stand before the throne; and Gabriel and Michael, and all the angelic hosts fold their wings; then Christ will say "They're my brothers and they're my sisters, redeemed by my blood. They're my glory and they're my praise, and will be throughout eternity." [Here Dr. Church begins singing] "And I will make the darkness light before thee, what is wrong I will make it right before thee, all thy battles I will fight before thee, and the high place I'll bring down. When thou walkest by the way I'll lead thee, on the fatness of the land I'll feed thee, and a mansion in the sky I'll deed thee, and the high place I'll bring down."

[Here he recited a poem] "Upon our journey here below, we meet with pain and loss. Sometimes there is a crown of thorns, and sometimes a heavy cross. The dreary road to Calvary, the bitter goad and sting, but once inside those gates of pearl, will be worth everything. And when we're inside those of pearl, we'll learn a lot of things. We'll have a harp that's made of gold, perhaps a thousand strings. And we'll sing and shout without a doubt. The Lamb will dry our tears. We'll have a grand homecoming week the first ten thousand years."

"The precious blood of God's own Son has saved and sanctified a wondrous people for his own, and they are called the bride. Though here neglected and despised one day the Lord will call his chosen people within the gates. And that's going to be worth everything." If I can just make it through, 'till the estate's divided, and you come up there after about ten thousand years, and say, 'John, what were you whimperin' and whinin' about down there in Nineteen and Sixty-eight?' "Well, I'll declare, I forgot. It seemed awful important then but-I can't remember now."

God wants you to be holy, he wants me to be holy. Not just profess it but possess it. While we stand and sing, "Lord Jesus I long to be perfectly whole, I want thee forever to dwell in my soul. Break down every idol, cast out every foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." If you have a hungry heart, a needy soul, if there's anything that you need to talk to God about, you come while we sing it.