

~Other Speakers G-L: Aaron Hills:

Sermon by A. M. Hills, President of Texas Holiness University, delivered at Salvation Park Camp-meeting, Carthage, O., Sunday morning, June 26, 1905.

(Scripture lesson, Acts 7:51, 60.)

The words of my text are found in that 51st verse: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." This was the climax utterance of a sermon which brought to the preacher a martyr's crown. It was a simple discourse. It was simply a resume of the history of the children of Israel, and while the preacher preached it the Holy Ghost sent it home. (Oh, will Christians pray this morning that the Holy Ghost will send the message home!) He began away back with the story of Abraham called out from Ur of the Chaldees, then came down to Jacob and his children, and he showed that the brothers were moved with envy against Joseph. That was sin against the Holy Ghost. These brothers had not knelt for years at Jacob's family altar and been acquainted with Isaac and the story of Abraham in vain. They knew better.

The spirit of brotherhood taught them that they ought not to treat beautiful, innocent Joseph that way. God spoke to their hearts while they were doing it, but they resisted the Holy Ghost. Then he mentioned Moses, to whom the fathers refused to be obedient, but thrust him from them. They knew better. God was leading Moses and they had every evidence of the fact, but their wicked hearts were unwilling to do the will of God, and they thrust Moses from them and refused to be obedient, in the very spirit of the carnal heart always. It was a sin against the Holy Ghost. Then he says they made a golden calf. Ah, they knew better! They had heard just a few days before, the voice of God thundering from the summits of Sinai amidst smoke and fire, saying, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." They knew better, but made a golden calf, and in doing it they sinned against the Holy Ghost.

I suppose we have only a little synopsis of his wonderful sermon, but I dare to say the preacher pointed to Isaiah, who was sawn asunder for being true to God and delivering the messages of the Most High. I dare say he mentioned Jeremiah, thrust into a dark dungeon and nearly starved, because he would be the faithful mouthpiece of God Almighty. I dare say he mentioned Zechariah, slain between the porch and the altar because he would be true to God. Coming on down he mentioned Jesus, whom they had taken, he says, and with wicked hands had crucified and slain, and when he got so far along he turned to them and made a personal application. A sermon does not amount to much that has not in it a personal application. Stephen turned to his audience and said in the words of my text, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Then it was that they shut their ears and hustled him out of the city and stoned him to death, while his face shone like an angel, and he was looking up into Heaven and seeing the face of his God. Ah, what resistance to the Holy Ghost!

I want to call your attention, in the first place, to the fact that the Holy Ghost comes to us and reveals the truth just as He did to Joseph's brethren; just as He did to the people in Moses' day; just as He did in Isaiah's day; just as He did in Jeremiah's day, in Zechariah's day, in Christ's day, in Paul's day. He is revealing the truth today. That is His mission; that is why Jesus called Him the "Spirit of truth." Why? Because truth is the means which God uses to move human hearts. He does not touch us with physical omnipotence to force us into Heaven. No, sir! He just touches our hearts with the illumination of Divine truth, and leaves us to choose whether we will follow God or not.

Secondly, I want you to notice that sometimes people are "stiffnecked, uncircumcised in heart and in ears." What does that mean? O, this is a double figure. Sometimes when cattle are being driven under the yoke, as I have driven cattle by the month myself in my early life, they stiffen their necks and do not want to do what they are told to do. And then that other expression -- "uncircumcised." -- That had a world of meaning to the Jew. To him it meant to be cut off from the covenant privileges of his nation; to be cut off from the privileges of salvation. When this preacher, Deacon Stephen, looked at these people and said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did so do ye," they gnashed their teeth.

When is a person uncircumcised in ears? Why, sir, folks who do not want to hear the truth of Almighty God. A world of people go to church and do not want to hear the truth; they are determined they will not hear the truth, and if the preacher is there to preach the truth, they will not be slow in declaring that they have had enough of that preacher and his messages and will have no more of it. When the ten spies came back and brought their

report, saying. "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it," the people raved and stormed and fumed, and wanted to kill Moses and Joshua and Caleb; they were simply uncircumcised in ears. When the Jews led Jesus to the brow of the hill in Nazareth after He had delivered to them that precious message, and told them that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, and that He was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, and bring deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those that were bruised, and preach the acceptable year of the Lord; O, it is so strange they did not receive the precious message in the spirit in which it was given! But they stopped their ears and hustled Him out on the brow of the hill to cast Him down headlong. They resisted the Holy Ghost. They were uncircumcised in ears.

When the apostle Paul stood on the stairway of a castle in the city of Jerusalem, and went so far as to say God had called him to preach to the Gentiles, the very fact that the Gospel message was to be offered to the Gentiles so enraged them that they stopped their ears and threw dust in the air, and tore their garments, and would have killed him. They were "uncircumcised in ears." We see lots of that kind of people in our churches. I want to tell you that there are people sitting in the pews of all our big, wealthy churches who have declared in their hearts that they will not hear Gospel messages and no preacher of theirs shall preach them, and if they do preach them there is a storm. Dr. Gunsaulus, of Chicago, said one day, and it went all over the nation, that if the clergy of Chicago should preach the truth one single Sunday, every pulpit in Chicago would be vacant of preachers the next morning. I declare to you if I was a pastor in that city and had the genius and power and eloquence and standing that God Almighty has given that man I would have preached the truth one Sunday anyway, if I had to give up the job the next day. Today the churches are dying for the want of the Gospel, just because rich, worldly, selfish, criminal, sensual church members are daring the preacher to preach the truth; and when a man stands up and preaches the real Gospel he does it at the peril of his position, if not his life.

Who are the people who are uncircumcised in heart? I will tell you who they are. They are the people who have heard the truth and then would not put it in practice. Then he gets down from the ears to the heart and shows that your heart is just as bad as your ears. Some of you will hear the truth, but if you do not put it in practice you will go storming out with the very spirit of Hell in your souls. You watch this audience this morning. If any folks go out when it gets hot you will know what is the matter. They have heard just a little more than they want to hear. Their hearts and their ears are uncircumcised and they will go storming out with the very spirit of the pit. God help us to understand that He saves men by the truth, and the man who preaches the truth is not to be muzzled. He comes from the secret chamber where he meets Almighty God, and he has a God-given message. Woe be to the man or woman who muzzles the preacher and refuses to let him preach the truth!

Thirdly, let us now specially consider who are the people who resist the Holy Ghost. Let us make this very definite, so we will know what we are talking about. I do not want this audience to say I preached a very eloquent sermon against the people who lived a couple of thousand years ago. I want this to be a personal message to each one of you.

In the first place, people resist the Holy Ghost when they are out of Christ, and the Spirit convicts them of sin, and they refuse to be converted. That is the message and mission of the Holy Ghost. Jesus said, "And when He is come He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." Why, when the Apostle Paul, or Saul as he was called, got his conviction on the way to Damascus, and Jesus of Nazareth unmistakably spoke to him, if he had put His message off, he would have sealed his destiny. He had either to go forward and bow to Jesus, or simply be a rejected old Jew, doomed and damned. God is going to speak to some of you this morning, just such a message. Woe be unto you if you resist the Holy Ghost!

There was Felix; Paul reasoned with him one morning of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come. There stood Drusilla, the accomplice of his crimes, the woman he had stolen from her lawful husband; he did not want to forsake her; he did not want to turn from his avarice and ungodliness; his knees smote together; he trembled, but said to Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The Apostle Paul went back to his quiet room, but the Holy Ghost went with him, and never gave Felix another call. He settled it that day. He resisted, fatally, the Holy Ghost.

Some years ago while holding a revival meeting near Mansfield, this state, at the close of the service a man named Tom Taylor came to me and related the following circumstance as an illustration: "During the war when I was a soldier I came to D_____, Ohio, and while there had a tent-mate by the name of Charlie Austin, whom I loved very much. One Friday night we went to a mission chapel in the edge of the city of Cincinnati, and heard the preacher preach a faithful sermon. The Holy Ghost came to Charlie Austin and convicted him of his sins and moved him to give his heart to Jesus. He trembled all over, and was on the verge of yielding. I said, Charlie, this is God's call; this is your time. He thought he would go forward and accept Jesus, then he bethought himself, "Oh, I have bought a ticket for the masquerade ball next Tuesday night, and it is in my pocket. I want to

go to that ball first, then I will bow at the altar and give my heart to Jesus." Mr. Taylor said, "Oh, Charlie, don't say that, it might be fatal to your soul." But he answered, "Yes, I will go to the ball; next Tuesday night I will be in a royal banquet." A few moments after they rose up and left the chapel. As they passed out the door it came to with a sharp report, as it closed with a spring. Charlie said, "What's that?" His friend answered, "Oh, nothing but the door coming to;" but turning around to him, Charlie said, "Tom, the bang of that chapel door was the death knell of my soul." "Oh, don't say that, Charlie." "Yes, that was the death knell of my soul; I knew it when I heard it. I want you to write to my mother and tell her I swam through her tears and prayers, and have gone to Hell." Mr. Taylor said, "Oh, don't say that, Charlie; don't say that." But that night Charlie could not sleep, and the next day he was in a raging fever; he could not sleep all day; there was no rest for him. He said, "Tell mother I have gone to Hell." The next morning the chaplain of the regiment came and visited him, but all to no purpose. He was a raving maniac, and at 12 o'clock Tuesday night his soul passed out into eternity to meet his God. The only "royal banquet" he attended on Tuesday night was the banquet of the damned. Oh, how much it means to resist the Holy Ghost! Hear me! Every soul that is ever damned, some time resists the Holy Ghost for the last time, and it is all over. No one but God Almighty knows but some man or some woman, or many of them, are getting their last call by the Holy Ghost this morning. If we knew who it was, we would go down these aisles on our knees, if need be, and weep over you and beg you to give yourselves to God; but God hides it from our eyes. You will think of this sermon, many of you, a million years from this morning in eternity. Mark it!

Second, when people refuse to give up some evil habit or course of action, or set of opinions when God brings light to the soul, they resist the Holy Ghost. The opinions we cherish, the views we entertain, the theological ideas that influence our political actions -- all these have a world more to do with the Holy Ghost than people dream of. He is abroad in the earth. This is the Holy Ghost day; this is His administration, and He is dealing with human hearts everywhere. You cannot get away from the Third Person of the Trinity if you want to.

President Finney tells us in his autobiography of the marvelous revival of 1857 that swept over the northern part of this country and New England; from Boston to Omaha. It was the most marvelous work of grace that this world, up to that time, had ever seen. Fifty thousand souls were converted each week for ten weeks running. There was no great leader, but it was the work of prayer, and the marvelous and matchless outpouring of the Holy Ghost. He says very gently that another section of the country that was committed to the great national evil was barren. While one section was being swayed and swept by this great movement, another section was utterly left, as though God had said for the time being, "You are joined to your idols; I will leave you alone." We learn from this that we want to be careful what opinions we cherish about national affairs, lest we resist the Holy Ghost. President Finney says in his autobiography, also President Mahan in his, that the great revivals that swept over the land between 1830 and 1840 were pulling along certain lines of theological opinion; and that there was an old school of theology that practically threw on God the responsibility for all the sin, and all the dearth of harvest of souls, and all the wickedness of the world; they limited the atonement to a few of the elect, asserting that all the rest of the human race were created on purpose to be damned. He said the preachers who held to that doctrine did not have any revivals, while the preachers who belonged to the new school that believed in the universal atonement, and the willingness of God to save all who would repent and meet His conditions, had revivals that were sweeping the country like prairie fires, and the Holy Ghost was with them everywhere, and crowned their labors with an abundant harvest and marvelous outpourings of the Spirit of God. We learn from that that God had grown tired of having His name and character defamed by the teaching of such awful theology. He may have blessed such preachers in times past, but it is too late; He will bless them no more. Better be careful what theology you hold. Take the Unitarian or Universalist theology. I challenge any man or woman in this house to tell me of a genuine, soul-saving revival of religion under any of their preachers. They do not have revivals. Their churches are as free from revivals as buried Nineveh. Why? Because they are clinging to error, and the truth of God and the Spirit of God will not indorse it. They are bankrupt. God help you to see you cannot question the divinity of Jesus; you cannot play fast and loose with issues of the eternal world, and have the backing of the Spirit of God. It cannot be done.

Finney mentions another thing. He says there was a time when ministers could be utterly indifferent to the temperance question and have the blessing of God with them. They did not have the light and knowledge, and God did not hold them very much responsible, and still He would use and bless their ministry; but he says, "I challenge you to name a preacher now whom God wondrously uses in saving souls who is silent on this question of intemperance." Why, you cannot find one in the country. Sam Jones says: "I have never seen a true, genuine, second blessing, holiness Christian who was not a Prohibitionist from his hat to his heels." It means something to get such statements from such men; it means that men who expect to be soul-winners and mightily owned and used of God must be careful about their political opinions; they must find God's side and get over on it. They have to be where the Spirit of God is. Yes, sir; this is what it means.

And then there are our amusements. Oh, how much they mean! Our customs of living. Do you know that our

great fashionable churches are being swept over an awful precipice into an abyss of hopeless worldliness and ruin on this question? That great, Spirit-anointed soul, Katharine Booth, the mother of the Salvation Army, said in her sermon one day, speaking to the women of her congregation, "You may think you must follow the fashions set by the harlots of Paris, and you may think you are the children of God; but you will find that you will never be the bride of Christ. You may think you must have wine on the table because it is fashionable, and you may have it; but I challenge you that you shall never have the wine of the Kingdom." Oh, these fashionable amusements! How they are engulfing our churches! So much so that at the last General Conference of the M. E. Church, in Los Angeles, it was believed that over one-third, about three-eighths, of all the church delegates to the Conference actually voted to remove from the church discipline the clause prohibiting worldly amusements. God have mercy! It did not pass, but came so near passing that it plainly showed where the church is drifting. Church members may run after theatres, and ministers may run after plays where they represent a harlot coming up out of Hell, the flames coming up after her, and announcing that there is no room in Hell, making a joke of the whole thing, until God says it is enough, and Hell fire opens up, as it were, and consumes them. You may indulge in these things if you will, but the Spirit of God is not in these things. You may play progressive euchre, and, as Sam Jones says, "progress hellward a mile a minute." You may dance and dance and dance, but the time is coming when you will circle and swing for the last time, and will waltz into Hell. The dance is lecherous in its very nature. "It is essentially unclean," Gail Hamilton said, "and it cannot be washed." Mrs. General Sherman said: "Virtuous women ought to blush at the very mention of the dance." Prof. A. G. Sullivan, an ex-dancing master, says: "Waltzing is the spur to lust." Mr. T. A. Faulkner, a converted dancing master, tells us that 163 out of 200 fallen women in a single city told the city mission worker that they fell through the dance; over 80 per cent. Some of you people train your children to dance, and then expect them to get to Heaven. God have mercy on you. The whole thing is from the bottomless pit.

Third. People resist the Holy Ghost when they refuse to give up evil associates. Don't you know that is the way the devil is entrapping thousands of our young converts in all our churches? While boys and girls are sinners they are associating with the unclean, with the children of Hell; they get converted and at once the question arises, "Will you give up your evil associates?" and in all probability it will be fatal to a soul that does not do it. A girl came to the Texas Holiness University, who was converted at home before she came. She leaped up from the altar and poured forth a stream of eloquence upon the people, and the evangelist said, "There is a new preacher." It seemed that her very soul was aglow with the love and power of God; but she came to our school and went to corresponding with the unclean young lepers she used to associate with, and her heart began to go out after them, and before she knew it, almost, she had lost her sanctification. God brought her down on the floor one day, where she lay for an hour, just screaming in agony of soul, and crying to God for mercy. I stooped down, and whispered in her ear, "Mary, will you give up your evil associates?" and just left her. Pretty soon she leaped to her feet with the joy of salvation restored, and again poured out a perfect stream of eloquence, saying, "Girls, you have to give up your evil companions if you keep God with you." Would you believe it? that girl went back and married one of them, and just lost everything.

John Hatfield, the Hoosier evangelist, tells of two young women in his meetings. One of them came to the altar for sanctification. She wept and cried, and for six days and nights she kept coming, but did not get the blessing. Finally she said, "Brother Hatfield, I am engaged to marry a wicked young man; I love him as I love my life." Brother Hatfield said, "Give him up! give him up! give him up! or God will withdraw His Spirit from you." She did give him up, and the Holy Ghost came upon her and made her a flaming evangelist, and she has won hundreds and hundreds of souls to God.

The other girl, a Christian, who had great power in exhortation, and who led the service of song in his meetings and sang the Gospel into hearts with her beautiful solos, came to him one day and said, "Brother Hatfield, I am going to marry an unsaved young man. Mr. Hatfield threw up his hands and said, "Oh, Anna! Anna! Don't you do it; if you do, you will disobey God and grieve His Spirit, and it may be at the risk of your soul's salvation." "O," she said, "I think I can win him over." She went on and married him, and Brother Hatfield says that husband is today a low down, drunken sot, and that girl is living in a domestic Hell, without hope and without God in the world. She said to Mr. Hatfield, "I would like to invite you home to take a meal with me, but I do not dare to ask you; my husband might do violence to you." Think of a sanctified girl going down to such a Hell as that, because she resisted the Holy Ghost! I warn you as a father, as a teacher and instructor, who has the care of young people by the hundred in his hands: I tell you before God, when you want Jesus, you cannot take some miserable, Christless leper along with you.

A girl went to the altar and got sanctified, and went out in the audience filled with Holy Ghost power, the radiance of it shining in her face. She led some others to the altar, and then went out and backslid in an hour. How do you suppose she did it? After the meeting was over she locked arms with a son of Belial, and when they got outside of the church he began to sneer, and said, "You made a pretty gump of yourself, didn't you."

She wilted, and the Spirit of God left her. I ask of you, what right had a girl who had become the bride of Christ to go out of the room arm in arm with an emissary of Hell? I tell you young people, if you do not give up your evil, worldly companions you will lose your religion and lose your souls as sure as God lives.

This has a bearing on lodges. I want you lodge men to hear, now. I want to tell you that some lodges have oaths that are a disgrace to cannibal heathen, for the immorality that is in them. Some of the lodges Christians cannot remain in and have any sort of relation to the Holy Ghost. You lodge men would better read over on your knees the oaths that you took, and think of the men with whom you associate. My God, what oaths! Blasphemous oaths that commit you to shield criminals and be partakers in crime. Just now the whole labor world is trying to combine in these labor unions. They just had a labor strike in Chicago which only represented one union, and sixteen men were killed in that strike, and hundreds have received injuries from which they will never recover. Oh, the sin, and the crime, and the hate, and the revenge, and the lust, and the wickedness that was represented by that strike and that union! You rage at these great trusts that are trying to take the people by the throat and make every man in his poverty pay tribute to their avarice, but I want to tell you that the underlying spirit of these labor unions is precisely the same, and is born of avarice and has the spirit and passions of Hell. No man can be a full, fair representative of Christ and His salvation and yoke himself in these awful institutions. (Now is the time to go out if anybody is hurt. God help you.)

Well, fourthly, when people refuse to walk in the light and follow the calling God asks of them, they resist the Holy Ghost. What do you suppose God calls you into His kingdom for? Do you think He calls you into His Kingdom to sit down in a palace car with a through ticket in your pocket, to be petted and fanned and coddled by Pullman car service while you ride home to glory? Is that your idea? I want to tell you that God calls men and women into His Kingdom to make them soldiers. He wants them to take their weapons and fight; to go out and make conquests for God that will astonish Heaven and Earth and Hell. There is a mighty conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, between Heaven and Hell; and when God anoints a soul with the Holy Ghost He does it for a purpose. When a great lieutenant general like General Grant is in command of an army he knows just where to place his men. He says, "Sheridan is for such a place; Sherman, you are just the fellow for that place; Thomas, that is your place, you are just the man for the place, I can trust you there; Hancock, yonder is your field," and so on and on, all over the nation. I want to tell you that the great Commander-in-Chief of the forces of light, Jesus Christ, knows where to place His servants, and He says to the Holy Ghost, "Speak to that girl and tell her I want her in India; speak to that other girl over there and tell her I want her in Africa; speak to that young man over yonder and tell him I want him in Japan; tell that person I want him in God's Bible School, Cincinnati." Oh, God is on the fields! He knows just what He wants and just where He wants His workmen. Woe be unto us if we say we won't go where God wants us. We sing, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, Over mountain or plain or sea; I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord, I'll be what you want me to be."

It sounds good in poetry and song, but the people who practice it are too few.

I was preaching in Finney's old church at Oberlin, Ohio, one morning, and after I preached about the Holy Ghost, Father Wright came to me and said, "I want to give you an illustration." He was then a feeble old man between 70 and 80 years of age. He said, "When I was a young man in Medina, O., there was a certain young man there by the name of McClure, a Christian, very active, as bright and talented as any of the early lights of Oberlin. He taught school and was always successful; was a member of the church and taught in the Sabbath school, and was always loved by the people. His friends urged him to go to Oberlin College and prepare himself for the ministry. Then the thought came to his mind, 'If I go to Oberlin I will never be anything but Rev. Sam McClure; but if I study law, I may become "Judge," a great politician and a wealthy man.' He would study on it for a while, and then go back to his law books. Finally one night he went into his office, picked up his law books before him, sat down in a chair, leaning his face in his hands, and meditated and meditated until the city clock struck twelve. He then rose up, and lifted a law book over his head, slammed it down and said, 'I will have my law, come Heaven or Hell.' He had not more than spoken the words until he felt a cold chill run down his back and go all over him, and he felt what he had done. He went to the church officers and said, 'Take my name off the church record. My soul is utterly hardened and steeled against God. If I should see as many people as could kneel between here and Cleveland (a distance of forty-two miles) kneeling and begging me to pray for them, my heart would be utterly unmoved.' Oh, the man had settled it! He had settled it! He had settled it! He lived to become a judge, 'Honorable Judge McClure'; he lived to amass two hundred thousand dollars; he also became profane and drunken, and one day as he was sitting in his soft-cushioned carriage, which was drawn up to his residence to take him to an afternoon entertainment, an arrow from God Almighty struck his heart, and he died in an instant. He lost his soul for \$200,000." Who knows but what God wanted him to be some mighty President Finney, and like a flaming angel to herald the Gospel until hundreds and thousands should turn to righteousness, and receive a crown of fadeless glory, and shine as the stars forever and ever?

There are multitudes of people today who are resisting the Holy Ghost in not obeying God's call. God Almighty help you! Why, sir, when God said to Paul, "I want you to be a missionary to the Gentiles," if Paul had drawn back at that moment, we would never have heard of him, or just heard of him as the wicked wretch that held the garments while Deacon Stephen was stoned. That is all we would ever have heard of that man who stands away up above every other character in the roll of the centuries; but he let God have, His way with Him. Will you? God Almighty help you! God has His place for every one of us. Woe unto us if we miss the place!

Fifth. People resist the Holy Ghost by refusing sanctification when they are called to it. Jesus baptizes people with the Holy Ghost that they may have purity of heart and power to do the will of God. The greatest work God does for souls this side of Heaven is to take carnality out of them and fill them with the Holy Ghost, and let them loose on this wicked world to move things for God. God is knocking at hearts. Multitudes of people are coming to the place where they will have to accept the priceless blessing that will fit them for service, or resist the Holy Ghost. Oh, how hard He works to get us; to give us something worth a million worlds! How we hang back and refuse to accept this blessed, blood-bought gift of God! You are called to it. God urges you to it. There are sixteen commands in the New Testament, and eighteen prayers that you may have it. Fourteen passages in the New Testament tell you how you may get it. There are a hundred passages in the New Testament that point out unmistakably the second work of grace. God urges and prays and promises and commands and entreats, and does everything to get us to seek and obtain the blessing. God in this day is flooding all the churches in this whole country with light. Don't say you do not know what we are talking about. You do know that we are talking about the second work of grace, the baptism with the Holy Ghost that takes the carnal nature out of the heart and sets you free and untrammelled. Ah, this is the greatest blessing that was ever offered to this world. God calls you to it and wants you to have it. I declare to you the Christian who hears that call and then refuses grieves the Holy Ghost; he resists Him, and if he keeps on, he will do it fatally.

There is a city in Texas that has, or did have some years ago, an illustration of this truth. There was a preacher there who was once a mighty power in the hands of the Holy Ghost. He had a revival at one time in which more than five hundred souls were converted. God was wonderfully using him. But there came a day, as there comes to all of God's real, true children. when this blessing was brought to his attention; but he had church honors in view; he had ambitions and position and salary in his mind, and he weighed the Blessing against these pebbles of the earth, and finally he concluded he could not pay the price, went back on it, and God left him. I heard a man say he did not believe that man had had a convert in five years. I heard a man say, "I believe his influence in this city is worse than that of any saloon. He is steeped in tobacco and worldliness, still running after riches, going to the devil, and yet filling one of the leading pulpits of the city. One day his cousin was talking with him, and in the course of the conversation in order to fix a date he said. "Yes, I remember the occasion. It was just so many years ago; it was the year I was sanctified." The preacher turned pale with rage and said, 'I wish you would never speak that word again in my presence. I hate the very word.' " What chance has a man of getting into Heaven who hates the word "sanctify," that Jesus used in His intercessory prayer? What do you think about it? Oh, sir, the man is bankrupt for time and eternity. It is an awful thing to turn your back on this great blessing.

I was holding revival services down in Texas six years ago this summer, and God wonderfully poured out His Spirit, until men were actually knocked from their seats and fell to the floor as if some giant hand had struck them. It was the power of the Holy Ghost; a marvelous meeting. A Baptist minister's brother who was present said no man living could look on that scene and not see God in it. But that Baptist minister, whose church was only fifteen rods from where our tent was pitched, stayed away from the meeting just as soon as there were seekers and inquirers from among his church members, and talked and sneered at that work of the Holy Ghost. That Baptist minister died, raving in his sickness and cursing God to His face. So you tell me he did not resist the Holy Ghost? The minister who does these things does it at his eternal peril, and if he does not stop it, he will land in Hell. It is the most precious work God does, the work of sanctifying the soul; and whether you are a preacher or layman, if you lift your voice or your pen against such a work of grace, God help you; you resist the Holy Ghost.

Sixth, and lastly. We resist the Holy Ghost by making fun of holiness, and insulting the Holy Ghost. A boy went to a holiness meeting in Indiana some years ago and was deeply impressed by the Spirit of God, so that he went home and said to his mother, "I tell you, mother, there is no use talking, the Spirit of God is there. Some wicked young men I know so well went to the altar and turned from their sins and were converted. I tell you, mother, God is there." That mother had enough carnality in her heart to hate holiness. She turned on that boy and began making fun of him and guying him because he went to the meeting, and kept it up so persistently that he yielded and let the meeting pass by without seeking the Lord. In two weeks that precious boy was taken sick. The doctor was hastily summoned, and when he came the mother happened to be out. He examined the

boy, threw up his hands and said, "My boy, you are awfully sick; you have only a short time to live." He said, "Is that so? Then call mother." The mother came into the room and met the eyes of her boy blazing with the hate of Hell, as he said, "Mother, I have sent for you to curse you to your face, and I will curse you in Hell forever, for when I wanted to go to the meeting and give my heart to God, you laughed me out of it, and now I have got to die, and I have got to go to Hell." Oh, it is an awful thing to resist the Holy Ghost.

Dr. Powers, a noble evangelist of Lincoln, Nebraska, told this in my presence. He said, "My father was an infidel. He wrote a great book on infidelity which never was published. My mother's brother's son imbibed the infidelity of my father, and he became, at the age of twenty-seven, a perfect demon, an infidel of the rankest kind. He used to laugh at me and my brother because we served the Lord. One day in the harvest field, to show his great atheistic daring, he dropped his cradle and rolled up his sleeves and challenged God. He said, 'I dare God the Father to come down and fight with me; I dare God the Son to come down and fight with me.' God the Father and God the Son took the insult; but the next day, with that awful daring, he laid down his cradle again, struck up his sleeves and said, 'I dare the Holy Ghost to come down and fight with me.' Quicker than a flash the fellow dropped, paralyzed from his arms down. They carried him to the house and sent hastily for two doctors, who came and examined him and declared they did not know what was the matter with him; they had never seen anything like it. In the early part of his sickness he began to groan, 'O eternity, eternity; how shall I spend eternity!' He had beautiful, long, curly hair, and for four days he pulled at it until he had pulled it all out. On the ninth day, just as the sun was going down, he groaned out, 'O eternity, eternity; how can I endure eternity?' and he was gone." I want to tell you, my dear friends, you would better play with forked lightning bolts than to insult or resist the Holy Ghost. Oh, the Spirit of God is speaking to some of you people this morning and telling you something. You would better sport with God's thunderbolts than with the Holy Ghost. What are you going to do about this message? Are you going to resist the Holy Ghost, or not?

Bishop Pierce, one of our most eloquent Southern Bishops, tells us that he was asked to preach one Sunday morning at a camp-meeting like this. There was in attendance a courtly Southern gentleman of the old style, who always went to camp-meeting out of respect for his wife's piety, and as the Bishop stood up to preach, this gentleman sat down in a seat before him. God spoke to Bishop Pierce and said, "This is the last message that old sinner is ever going to get; do your best." God's Spirit came upon him and limbered his tongue, and gave him the fullest possible use of every faculty of his being, and he preached the Gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost, and from start to finish God sent it like barbed arrows to that man's heart. He writhed as if he was sitting on a burning chair, his face turning as pale as if he was in a coffin; then the blood would rush to his face again. He went through the sermon, and when it was over, took that chair and went to his tent, and pulling down the curtains, threw himself on the floor. The good, Christian wife watched it all, went to the tent and knocked. He did not open it, and she heard a groan. She peeked through a little crack by the side of the curtain and saw him on his face in the straw. She said, "Thank God, he is convicted at last." Dinner time came and she knocked again; no answer but a groan. She watched the door until supper time, then tapped again, but received no answer but a groan. She watched the tent until eleven o'clock at night, and went again and tapped on the door; no answer but a groan. She spent that night in another tent. In the morning she received the same response as before. She wept praying and watching until one o'clock on Monday, when the door opened, and she rushed forward on the wings of love, hoping to meet a Christian husband; but when she got to him there was an awful look of horror upon his face. He had had a terrible siege. He had fought the Holy Ghost and driven Him away at last; but it took him just twenty-five hours to do it. But it may be that some of you in the next twenty-five minutes will fight the Holy Ghost and resist Him for ever and be a damned soul.

During the war there was a soldier who had one of his lower limbs shot off by a cannon ball close up to his body. He was taken into the hospital and cared for and dressed tenderly. One day the limb began to bleed profusely. The nurse stepped right up and put his thumb over the spot and sent for the surgeon, who came and examined him very carefully and said, "My dear fellow, it is a vein, and the artery is close by; if it should bleed from the artery instead of the vein, you could not be saved. You would die in three minutes." They partially succeeded in stopping it, but it broke out again. The nurse again put his thumb over the place and sent for the surgeon, who when he came said, "My dear fellow, I am sorry to tell you it is the artery this time; now get ready to die, for if he should take his thumb off you would die in three minutes; send your messages to your friends." The man wrote to his far-away wife and attended to some business matters. Finally the dear fellow said, "Now, kind nurse, I am ready to die; take your thumb off." How could he do it? It would mean instant death; but he could not always stand there with his thumb on the artery; so he turned away, and took his thumb off, and the hero was gone.

O sinner, I have been pleading today for an hour and a quarter for your soul. Your destiny is at stake; your eternal destiny is at stake. How can I cease pleading? I want to know how many in this audience are going to decide to be led by the Holy Ghost. Oh, Recording angel, stay thy hand while these people decide! I want every

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one of you who decides to be led by the Holy Ghost, to do what He bids you to do, to make your way to Heaven, to conquer in the name of Jesus, to stand up; everybody who is a Christian, and every one who will decide to be led by the Holy Ghost. Now, those who want to be saved or sanctified, come to the altar.