

MAN AND GOD GETTING TOGETHER.

James 4:1.

I am not taking this text to make it appear that I think my congregation is made up of those whose hands are unclean. Neither do I take it to leave the impression that I feel my audience to be composed of people who are double minded. I take it because it is a good text and because it might find some one or ones here to whom applies. Furthermore, because you who are now Christians were once likely sinful and knew the sorrow, sadness, and hardness which went along with that life and now you experience the blessedness of the other kind and you want to tell others about it.

Man and God getting together was not brought about first by man asking God to come down and abide. On the other hand God has been seeking to get with man. We might be interested to consider some of God's approaches to man.

1. The clouds, and skies. Elijah was glad to see the manifestation of God in a cloud no larger than a man's hand. David observed that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmaments showeth His handiwork. Abraham turned his eye to the stars and heard the whisper of the Divine promise that his seed should be like that for multitude. While it is blessed to see the footprints of God on the fleecy folds of the clouds above and far beyond us but that distance is too far away to satisfy our hearts.
2. The mountain top. Mountains have played a great part in God's dealings with man. Mount Ararat where the Ark rested when the waters went down after the Flood. Mt. Nebo a spot on Mt. Pisgah's lofty flint where Moses viewed the promised land. Mt. Sinai where the moral law was given to Moses. Then the Golgothic, Cross crowned, Ever blessed Calvary. God came to Mt. Sinai. But many are too feeble to hunt the mountain and too weak to climb it when found.
3. The Tabernacle. There is a vast difference between the Divine manifestation in the cloud or on the mountain and the manifestation of the Shekinah presence between the cherubim over the Ark of the covenant in the sanctum sanctorum. It is indeed the same Divinity but the locality is different. Man now felt that God was much nearer and rejoiced in their sacred worship.
4. In the flesh. The cloud, Mt., Tabernacle, are all too much separated from man. So God still desiring to come in closer touch with straying humanity made His fourth dispensational approach to man in the mystery of the Incarnation. So we see God ever trying to get closer while on the other hand there are those among us who try to shove Him off to where He is just a God of machinery interpenetrating it but not transcending it. Think how far on the road of reconciliation God had come when He was manifested in the Person of Christ, the parable speaker, the miracle worker, the breaker of chains, the abolisher of death, and the glorious giver of life and immortality.
5. But suppose God had stopped here and not been willing to go any further? We would still be in sin. But He desired further closeness so it was arranged that in every heart desiring Him and opening the door to Him He would enter and abide. This is closer than the physical visible Christ could get to us. God in the consecrated heart is the nearest possible approach of God to man. God came then to the heavens, the mountains, the Tabernacles, into the flesh, and best of all by the Holy Spirit into the human heart. Should we not sing with our colored brethren?

Lord I want more religion in my heart, in my heart, in my heart Lord I want more religion in my heart.

In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have the record of the second member of the Trinity, Jesus, ascending to heaven. In the second chapter we also have the record of the third member, The Holy Spirit, descending from heaven. Christ sprinkled the throne over yonder for all Adam's race. The Holy Spirit sprinkles our hearts here from an evil conscience. Christ makes intercession for us over yonder and the Spirit makes intercession in us over here. To have this consummation of God's approach to us we must draw near to God. How must this be done? .

1. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners. The man who thinks that he can just go on with his hands all filthy with the handling of the sinful things of this world and at the same time have God in his heart is fooling himself and himself alone. No sinful hand should be put to a sacred task.
2. Purify your hearts ye double minded. Get the single vision, which sees Jesus and his cause above any of our pet schemes.

Ezekiel saw this same approach to salvation. He was led out into the water a thousand cubits and it was to the ankle, two M. and it was to the knees, three M. and it was to the loins, four M and it was a river.

In 23rd Psalm David had a cup religion. "My cup runneth over." In Jesus time He spoke to the woman at the well about the Christian as having in him a well of water springing up.

But in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost the cup and the well stage is passed and God measures salvation by the rivers.

"In the first day that great day when Jesus stood and cried, saying 'if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said, out of his innermost soul shall flow rivers of living water.'"

