***The Doctrine of Reversionism, No. 1  
  
RV33-02***

This is segment number 10 in our study of the letter to Sardis in Revelation 3:1-6. Believers who fail to practice the doctrine which they know are open to divine discipline. Indifference toward the Word of God results in violating its precepts. So the Bible is very careful to remind those who think they stand (that is, those who think they have a handle on the divine viewpoint of the Word of God – who understand doctrine) that they are to be very careful because they face the position of becoming indifferent toward the Word of God. Grace, which always comes before the chastening hand of the Lord, is often viewed by people as getting away with something, rather than that God is simply going slowly and giving opportunity to repent. We do not get away with any violation of the Word of God. When we do not practice the truth we know, then God moves in on us. When we mistake His grace for laxity, He moves in on us, as is described here in Revelation, as a thief. A thief is someone who appears suddenly and unexpectedly, and without a moment's notice, the damage is done, and the suffering is experienced.

So, the discipline of God comes upon indifferent believers in just that way. Somebody who is rolling along in life; violating the principles of the Word of God; and, being indifferent to doctrine suddenly finds life tearing apart and coming apart. Then he realizes too late that God was giving signals all along that were indicating problems that needed to be brought to Him and corrected.

So, the church at Sardis is in this position. It was warned to make its works match its doctrine, or to suffer the consequences. Life, apart from Bible doctrine and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, causes one to descend to an animal level of operating on various degrees of moral defilement.

So, now we're going to begin with Revelation 3:4, where this church has been analyzed, and now a statement is to be made concerning its condition. Verse 4 says, "You have a few names, even in Sardis, that have not defiled their garments." The Greek Bible actually begins with a word that is not translated here in the King James Version. That is the Greek word "alla." This is a conjunction. It is normally translated as "but." It is introducing here a contrast to a previous negative. And it happens to be that very strong negative that we had in verse 3 where it says, "You shall not know what hour I will come upon you." That double negative means that in no way would they be prepared to face the judgment of Jesus Christ. In contrast to that, this word introduces that there is another category of believers in the church at Sardis.

So, you might translate this with the words, "On the other hand:" "On the other hand," there is a different group here in this church in contrast to the one that He so severely criticized. "On the other hand, you have." The word "have" is the well-known Greek word "echo." The word "echo" means "to possess," and it refers to the church at Sardis. The Greek has this in the present tense which means that they continually possess this particular thing that He's going to refer to. Present tense means that it happens all the time – regularly. It is active which means that they personally were in possession of this particular factor that He's going to mention. They possessed it as a church. And the mood is the indicative which means that it's a statement of fact.

What they possessed is described first by the word "few." The word "few" is the Greek word "holigos." "Holigos" simply refers to numbers. It is a few (a limited number) of what? Of "names:" "onoma." The word "onoma" is a noun that means "names." It is actually used here for the idea of person. An example of that is Acts 1:15: "And in those days, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said, 'The number of names together was about 120.'" It uses the word "onoma" there. You can see how what they mean there is, "The number of persons was 120." So, there are a few persons (a few special kinds of persons) in the church at Sardis.

**Defilement**

The word "even" is not in the Greek. The word "in" is the Greek word "en" which indicates the location. The location is "Sardeis" – the city of Sardis in Asia Minor. "You have a few that." The word "that" is "hos." It is a relative pronoun, and it is referring back to the word "names." So, we would translate this word really as "who:" "You have a few names (or a few persons) who have not." The negative here is "ou." So, right away you recognize this as a strong negative. So, we know that they definitely have not done this. What they have not done is described by the word "defiled" ("moluno"). "Moluno" means "to besmear." For example, it could mean to besmear with the filth of sewage, or to besmear with the contamination of mud.

In the ancient world, the word "moluno" was used to describe an actual condition that people experienced. As you know, there were very crude sanitary conditions. And the way of handling sewage, which was collected in the chamber pots at night, was simply to open the window and to dump it out in the street. This was particularly distracting if it was tossed from an upper second-story window, and you happen to be passing by on your way to a birthday party with your present in hand, or to visit your girlfriend with flowers in hand, wearing your nice, clean white linen suit that you just got back from the cleaners. And somebody opens a window and swooshes it down, and it splatters in the street, and all over everywhere. So then you are very noticeable at the party when you arrive. That is what is behind the word "moluno."

There is another Greek word "miaino." This one is the external meaning, and you can almost see the olfactory nerves of the nose working and suggesting the odor that is created here as this person arrives. Or you may simply have the experience of somebody, as you walked down those muddy streets, going by with a horse or a vehicle, splattering mud on a person. So, the word "besmear" connotes both these things in this particular verb. Here He is describing that there are few people in this congregation at Sardis of whom it could be said that they have not been besmeared. They're referring here to a moral defilement – an actual real moral defilement.

An example of how this word is used elsewhere in the Scriptures is indicated in 1 Corinthians 8:7, where it is used of besmearing your conscience with sin: "However, there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is besmeared." So, here are people whose consciences are besmeared with a moral evil in the way they have related themselves to an idol god.

This word is used in Revelation 14:4 to describe a moral besmearing in terms of sexual besmearing: "These are they who were not be smeared with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb." What he is describing there is those who have not been soiled by the sins of adultery or fornication.

**Garments**

The thing that is particularly besmeared, He describes as "their garments" (their "himation"). This is a noun that refers to the outer garments that people wore. We would call it a "mantle" or a "cloak." All of you have seen the ancient Greek and Roman togas. It was just something that you threw around yourself. It is something that a person wears over his inner garments. This is the part that would (in normal wear) become the part that would get besmeared and would get soiled. The idea of a garment is one that is very significantly used in the Bible. It is used to describe really a person's character or his profession of Christianity – the Christianity that he supposedly puts on.

In Colossians 3:7-10, we have this concept of a garment as something that reflects a person's character (what a person is): "In them you also once walked when you lived in them. But now you also put off all these." The words "put off" refer to the concept of taking off an item of clothing: "Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds." Here again you have the concept of taking off a dirty outer garment.

So, if you're a Christian, you should not walk with those same old, dirty, morally-defiling clothes that you walked with when you were not a Christian. Put off these things. Anger – that's a piece of filth. It shouldn't be on your character as a Christian. Wrath is a piece of filth. Malice is a piece of filth. Blasphemy is a piece of filth. Filthy communications and lying come out of your mouth. All of these things you have put off the old man, so don't make this part of your lifestyle.

Verse 10 then shows the contrast of what you have put on. Here again, you have a "himation" concept: "You have put on the new man that is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." There again you have the image of putting on Jesus Christ as a garment. Human good is what the Bible views as a man-made garment which is seeking to clothe moral guilt. This is what has sent most people into hell. It is their attempt with human good to put on a garment to cover their evil that they believe will make it with God. People know that they need something to cover themselves. They know immediately that they need something to cover their evil when they face God. So, the natural thing they come up with is human good.

Go back in history to the Garden of Eden. Here was a man and a woman perfectly innocent of all moral guilt; absolutely in tune with God; absolutely in tune with one another; and, absolutely in tune with the world that they lived in. Everything was perfect. However, Satan, in Eden, stripped man of his garment. What was that that man had? He was not naked without any covering. The covering that he had was the covering of a glory light. It was a covering that was very evident. When Adam came home that day and he looked at Eve, he had no doubt in his mind that something had happened, because the first thing that left her was that outer garment of glory that surrounded her – the glory of righteousness. That was gone. He still had it. She did not have it, and it was evident that something had happened to her. He knew right away, as a matter of fact, what happened to her. He knew exactly that she had violated the rule of God. And very shortly, he found out exactly what it was that she had violated – in the eating of the fruit of that tree.

So, now she was unfit for fellowship with God. He still was fit for fellowship with God. He had to make a decision: he goes with her; or, he goes with God. He made the decision to go with her and eat the fruit. Immediately, his glory clothing (his glory garment) left him.

So, the Bible says that the first thing they discovered when they looked at each other was that they were naked. That was very significant to them because that meant they were in a condition where they were no longer qualified to fellowship with God. Their nakedness reflected their sinful condition now. So, the result was that they tried (with human effort) to remedy the situation. This is one of the all-time humorous segments of the Bible – the attempt to cover the fact that they had lost their freedom from moral guilt.

So, they came up with a man-made substitute. Genesis 3:7 tells us that they took these glossy fig leaves, and they sowed them together into an apron, and they covered themselves. So, you always see these pictures of Adam and Eve going around with their apron cloths and their fig leaf garments, and here everything was all solved again. However, the fig leaf aprons had in them the kiss of death to begin with. Within a few days, they were going to shrivel; they were going to die; they were going to dry; and, they were going to get all dried out. Then the first time you sat down, there goes your whole suit of clothes as the whole thing disintegrates into a bunch of shredded pieces. That's about the picture. It is really funny. It is so ludicrous to think that this is how they were going to solve their problem. They had a man-made solution for a garment that indeed they needed – a garment to cover a sin that was so evident because of the glory light that they had lost. There was no way to cover up their moral guilt. Yet they knew they had to have some kind of a garment to escape the divine punishment that was due them.

Well, then God came in and said, "Let me fix it. Just stand aside, and let me take care of the problem. You've got a big problem. You're in real trouble. You're in big trouble." The first thing God did, as you know, was to take an animal; take the life of that animal; and, shed the blood as symbolically conveying the fact that the covering for their sins now required the payment of the price of death – the payment of the shedding of blood, in symbolizing what Jesus Christ in time would do as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world.

So, God's provision was to symbolically put on them the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In Romans 13:14, we read, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust." Christ, who is our righteousness, is what they symbolically put on when they put on the skins of those animals. It was entirely a divine good provision which was compatible with divine holiness, and it was apart from all human doing on the part of Adam and Eve.

**God Clothes Us**

This is what God does for you and me as believers. He clothes us to cover the nakedness of our evil. If you stop and think about this, the Bible is full of examples of this sort of action on the part of God. In the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30, we read of the condition in which this man was left by the side of the road after he was jumped by the thieves: "And Jesus answered and said, 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who stripped him of his raiment; wounded him; and, departed, leaving him half-dead.'" The first thing they did was to take all his clothes off, and they left him wounded and naked by the side of the road. It's kind of interesting that this man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. His back was toward Jerusalem, the place of God's blessing. He was going down to Jericho, which was so often a place of cursing in human experience. The consequences of his moving that direction was certainly demonstrated by his helplessness as he lay there by the side of the road, stripped of his clothes. The Bible says that he was half-dead and wounded. This is what Satan has done. He has stripped man. He has stripped us. He has wounded us. We're in a mortally, seriously dead position in terms of spending eternity in the lake of fire.

We are also told of the demoniac of Gadara in Luke 8:27. The evil (the possession) by this demonic spirit expressed itself in this man's nakedness: "And when he went forth to the land, there met him out of the city a certain man who had demons for a long time and wore no clothes; neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." It is characteristic of satanic activity to engage in public nudity. Anytime you come into contact with public nudity, you may be well-assured that you have come into contact with demonism. Demonism expresses itself, in part, in public nudity. Whether it is photographic public nudity or actual public nudity, it's a demonic activity, and one that you should tread very carefully in the presence of. However, in Luke 8:35, we see that this man who lived among the tombs in the place of death met Jesus; he was cleansed; and, he was saved. Then notice what happened: "Then they went out to see what was done. They came to Jesus and found the man out of whom the demons were departed sitting at the feet of Jesus." He was no longer in the tombs (the place of death). He was sitting now at the place of life. It says that, "He was clothed (in his right mind), and they were afraid." They found this man now free from Satan's control, with his clothes on, and they found him mentally rational, and they found him in the place of blessing at the feet of Jesus.

These are little biblical types that reflect to us the fact that garments in Scripture describe our relationship to the living God. When we are minus the garment, we are in the position of being under the condemnation of God (under His chastening hand). When we have the garments that He has provided, we are under the place of His blessing and His care. Sinful man, however, is always trying to patch up his old filthy rags (his clothing of unrighteousness) which God, however, rejects entirely.

In Luke 5:36, you have this principle enunciated: "And He spoke also a parable unto them: 'No man puts a piece of new garment upon an old. If so, then both the new makes a tear, and the piece that was taken out of the new does not agree with the old." This is what man is always trying to do (his human good): to patch up his filthy garments, and God says, "You cannot stand before Me with this on you."

**The Prodigal Son**

Think of the prodigal son. When the prodigal son came into a position of fellowship with his father, what did the father do? Luke 15:22 tells us that he commanded them to bring a new garment for His Son. Do you think for one moment that he left his old filthy, stinking pig clothes on, in which he had been wallowing around with the hogs – that he left those rags on and just put this nice new garment over it? You may be sure that he took the old off, and he put the new on. Yet, that is what people are always trying to do – somehow to keep the filthy rags and add something to it.

Mark 10:49 tells us about a man named Bartimaeus who was blind. Again, this is an interesting illustration of what he did when he came into contact with Jesus Christ. When he met the Lord, he was dressed in beggars' clothes – ragged, shoddy beggars' clothes: "And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, 'Be of good comfort. Rise. He is calling you.'" Verse 50: "And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus." The first thing he does in coming to the Lord is to cast aside that outer garment of his beggars' rags. And that's what you have to learn to do. Nobody comes to Jesus Christ until you get rid of your outer garments of your filthy self-righteousness.

In the Old Testament, in Zechariah 3:3-4, you have the high priest, being described in the condition of being dressed in filthy garments. This is another illustration: "Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel, and he answered and spoke unto those who stood before him, saying, 'Take away the filthy garments from him.' And unto him, he said, 'Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with a change of raiment.'" This is a perfect example of what we're talking about. Here, Joshua, the high priest, was standing before God, trying to minister clothed with filthy garments. He can't do anything about it. God says, "I'm going to take it away from you. You can't deal with Me in terms of your human good. That is filthy in My sight. I am going to give you a garment where you can stand before Me.

In Matthew's 22:11-13, you have the description of the man who came into the marriage feast. The king's son is getting married, and this man comes in without the proper wedding garment: "When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who did not have a wedding garment on. (He did not have divine righteousness.) He said unto him, 'Friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?' He was speechless. Then, the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot. Take him away and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" You would think that the king would have been a little kinder to this man, and sort of excused him. But no, the king says, "You're responsible. If you come into my presence as the king, and if you come here to the marriage celebration of my son, and you come here with your filthy garments on (you have not come with a proper wedding garment), then it is your responsibility." He tells his servants, "Throw him out." The description that you have here in verse 13 of gnashing of teeth in outer darkness, of course, is the description of the condemnation in eternity and the suffering in eternity in the lake of fire.

Believers are clothed in the garments of God's absolute righteousness, and that garment that God provides is like the garment of the children of Israel, of the Exodus generation whose garments did not wear out in the 40 years of their wandering. So these garments are eternal. The believers are clothed with the garment of temporal fellowship, and they're clothed with a garment of divine good production. They are to be prepared to welcome the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns in those garments. This is where we are getting back now to what we're talking about in the church at Sardis. They were failing to maintain a garment symbolizing their temporal fellowship. They're being led by God the Holy Spirit. Consequently, they are failing to be producing works of divine good quality, both of which are expected of them when Jesus Christ returns from heaven.

Therefore, Romans 13:12-14 says, "The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works." There's that expression for taking off an item of clothing: "Cast off the works of darkness. Let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in reveling in drunkenness, not in immorality and wantonness, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust." Then if you'll move on along with that to Revelation 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him for the Marriage of the Lamb is come and His bride (that is, His wife, the church – you and me) has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints."

So, when Jesus Christ appears, you will be expected to be clothed first with temporal fellowship. You will be expected to be a believer who stands under the control of the guidance of the Spirit of God with known sins confessed. You will be expected to be a believer who is functioning in his life, producing divine good works, so that you may be rewarded accordingly. The garments of human good (the garments of human righteousness) are seriously condemned in the Word of God. Isaiah 64:6 calls those (in our King James translation) "filthy rags." In the Hebrew translation, they are menstruous cloths. So the Almighty God, in trying to convey a loathsome concept (a contaminating concept), refers to this image to say, "This is the way I, as God, in My integrity, look upon what you come up with as a garment of self-righteousness." It began with those stupid fig leaf aprons of Adam and Eve, and it has gone down through the centuries to our day in a variety of expressions.

So, here in Revelation 3:4, there are few people in this church of Sardis who have not defiled their position of temporal fellowship, and defiled their production of divine good works with their reversionism. That is the contamination (that is the besmearing) that He's speaking of here. How do you, as a Christian, besmirch your garments in the Lord? You besmirch it with reversionism.

**The Doctrine of Reversionism**

So, now let's tie this up with a summary of the doctrine of reversionism. What do we mean when we talk about reversionism? That is what the problem was here in Sardis. Most of the people in this congregation had contaminated and had fouled up their clothing of practical righteousness with reversionism.

1. **Backsliding**

Reversionism is the end result of a super case of backsliding from a mature spiritual maturity structure. It is the consequence of persistent carnality. If you are a functioning believer who is moving on in the things of the Lord, you will be building through doctrine in your soul what the Bible calls edification.

**Spiritual Maturity (Edification)**

That is spiritual maturity. This spiritual maturity structure is basically broken down into five points. The apostle Paul describes these five points in the book of 2 Corinthians, and he says, "I'd rather have these than anything else because they move me forward in my walk with the Lord and in my Christian life."

* 1. **Grace**

First of all, we are to be oriented to the principle of grace. Few Christians know how to function and live with God on the principle of grace. The person who is grace-oriented knows that it is God who is sowing the blessings that you are reaping. It is the non-grace-oriented person who thinks that the blessings that he's reaping are the blessings that he's hustling for. That is not true. Grace orientation is God sowing, and thus we reap the blessings.

* 1. **Mastery of the Details of Life**

Another factor in this spiritual maturity structure is a mastery of the details of life – the capacity to control material things. You need material things; you use material things; but, they do not dominate your life, and they do not control your life.

* 1. **A Relaxed Mental Attitude**

Another factor is a relaxed mental attitude. A relaxed mental attitude is the capacity to express "agape" love. "Agape" love is a mental attitude love. It's a love that's free of bitterness toward anybody. It's a love that enables you not to become part of the problems of other people. It enables you to rise above circumstances; above things; and, above people. It enables you to function in faith rest, and to permit the Lord to fight the battles. It's that wonderful quality that little David understood when he walked across that plane to meet the giant Goliath, when he sounded forth and said, "The battle is the Lord's." That is a relaxed mental attitude.

* 1. **Love**

Another quality is the capacity for love. This is the ability to have love in the categories: toward God; toward your mate; and, toward your friends. This category of rapport with people is an emotional quality of attachment which is not controlled by your sin nature, but which is controlled by the mentality of the soul. Emotional love is controlled by the mentality of the soul, which is directed by doctrine. That is the greatest emotion in the world. Some people finally develop that kind of a capacity.

* 1. **Inner Happiness**

Then the other side of this spiritual defense and pentagon from which to attack is the inner happiness. That is happiness that is a millennium in your soul when all hell is breaking loose outside. It is a happiness that is the product of God the Holy Spirit within you.

You do not come into the Christian life with this kind of a structure. You begin down at the zero level, and you start moving upward until finally you reach a level of super grace where this condition of the pentagon is achieved. It is what James talks about – super abounding grace. This is not just regular grace, but grace which is just overflowing. That's what James means when he talks about super abounding grace – super grace living. The super grace believer is the believer who has now developed capacity for his soul. He has just developed a huge pot – a pot of capacity. That's what this is. That then becomes the cup into which God is able to pour super abundant blessings, so that it constantly overflows. That is the prime of your spiritual life. That is where success and prosperity in every direction begins to come into your experience. All of this takes time to build up. It can also be suddenly torn down by carnality in the soul. It is torn down by the believer who has experienced eternal fellowship by being born again (receiving Christ as Savior), which also thrusts him into the realm of temporal fellowship.

**Temporal Fellowship**

The realm of temporal fellowship is the place of spirituality. When we sin, we step out of that inner circle into the realm of carnality. The more time we spend in carnality, the more time we are tearing down the structure of spiritual maturity that we have erected in our souls. Sometimes the carnality becomes so intense that, almost overnight, a person destroys the progress that he has made in developing a spiritual relationship to God so that God can really bless.

As the Bible says, "Many are called, but few are chosen." So, there are going to be few Christians in heaven who will go up there with maximum spiritual development, and who will go up there in the prime of their spiritual lives with maximum rewards waiting for them, because there are few people who are able to function in the realm of spirituality. And, by the way, you get back into the inner circle by confessing those known sins. You call upon the technique of confession of 1 John 1:9. There are few people who are so persistently consistent in taking doctrine into their souls that when they have reached the super grace structure; they are able to maintain it; and, they are able to continue functioning on it, then God is free to bless them. Most Christians are going to get into heaven never having received most of what God has for them in blessing. Then it's gone forever. You only take with you when you die what you have sent ahead into the storehouse of the treasury that God has provided for you.

So, this business of reversion is a very serious matter. Here, in Sardis, these people knew their doctrine, and they had sound doctrine, but they were functioning in the flesh. They were not functioning in the power of the Spirit of God. Therefore, Jesus Christ said, "Your works are not perfect, and I reject them. And I hold you accountable for the fact that, when I reject your work, you're standing before Me without temporal fellowship; you're standing before Me without divine production' and, you're standing before Me with filthy garments. And a Christian should not stand before God with contaminated garments.

1. **Emotional Domination**

Reversionism is accompanied by emotional domination of the soul, and with callouses on the facets of the soul. Reversionism is always accompanied by emotional domination of the soul. The mentality of the soul should be controlling a person. The mind, with its perceptive mind (its perceptive functions) and its directive mind (the directive function) takes in information, and makes decisions. Instead of that controlling the emotions and the will, the will suddenly takes over and it dominates the mentality. What you think is determined by what you feel, and your emotions cannot think. So, a person goes spiritually insane. The people that you once knew who walked with God and were divinely productive people, but who are now zilch (zero), and who are many times, in fact, off into cults; off into the charismatic movement; and, off into all kinds of contamination with the world, have gone spiritually insane. They have gone off their spiritual rocker because emotions are now controlling their soul. They have forgotten that the battle is the Lord's. They have forgotten that they can stand by, and the Lord is not going to be outmaneuvered by anybody. He is not going to be whipped. He's not going to be conned. He is going to execute His sovereignty as per His personal integrity.

So, for the mind to dominate the soul is the normal relationship that God has. It is illustrated in the relationship of a husband and a wife. The husband is the head who is the decision-maker. The wife is the follower who is the responder to those decisions. Sometimes the decisions aren't very good, but the wife still responds. She also talks to God about straightening her husband out, and that works real good too. But if the wife tries to take over, and begins to be pushy and feisty and to take over to be the head, then you get a monstrosity. That is a nightmare that you can observe in a lot of people. You've got females who are not women – they have lost their womanhood. Females are dominated emotionally, but women are dominated by the mentality of their souls.

So, reversionism is accompanied by emotional domination and the facets of one's soul (the mind, the emotions, and the will) all become gradually insensitive toward God. So, the Bible describes this in Ephesians 4 as a hardening upon the soul. The Greek word means "callouses." Callouses are developing so that we become insensitive in our thinking and our emotions and in our wills toward what God thinks; toward what God feels; and, toward what God wants to do.

**Falling from Grace**

So this principle of reversionism is described in Galatians 5:4 as falling from grace. What it means is that grace brought you, because of the Word of God, up to the super grace life level of a completed pentagon of defense, and a pentagon from which you do your battle in the angelic warfare. When you begin to break that down with failure to take in doctrine (setting in the backsliding effects of reversionism), you gradually destroy your capacity for God's blessing. The blessings stop flowing; the success stops flowing in life; the happiness leaves; and, the facets break down so that you are dominated by all kinds of animal desires, and you become insensitive toward God.

Sometimes you are shocked by what people say and by what people think. Sometimes people are Christians whom you knew in better days. The shock comes because you can't believe how much callous is built upon the facets of their soul. They are so out of it spiritually in their relationship to God. They've gone insane in their thinking; they're hardened in their emotions; and, they're hardened in their will.

You cannot remove callouses very quickly. Callouses take time to remove. You have to confess your condition. You have to turn back to the Word of God. You have to start taking doctrine into the soul. You have to start going positive toward the Word of God. Then gradually, the callouses peel off, and gradually the illumination of the thinking of God comes in. But in the meantime, you have busted up the pentagon of your super maturity structure, and you're right back down to building it all up again from scratch. Then what happens? You catch the flu; you die; you go to heaven; and, you walk in with the pentagon partially rebuilt, with losses entailed as a consequence of that.

1. **Going Negative Toward Doctrine**

All the problem begins with a serious attitude of going negative to the doctrines of the Word of God. That's the next point, which we will begin next time. It's a more extensive point. We don't want to get into it right now. We'll pick that up in our summary of the doctrine of reversionism next time in order that you understand what it was that the Lord Jesus Christ was seeing when he looked at these Christians and said, "You have besmirched your garments with sewage and the filth of mud, and you stand before Me in your reversionism." But here and there, a few wonderful people were standing there with garments glistening white. As we shall see later, that word "white" is a fascinating word, because it's precisely the word which was used to describe the appearance of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration – on Mount Tabor when He stood there and was transfigured before the disciples. As He looked, so do we appear to the Lord unless we have besmirched our garments with reversionism. This is a subject you should understand. It is a doctrine you must thoroughly get hold of, because it's one that Satan is constantly seeking to bring you down into – the breakdown of reversionism.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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