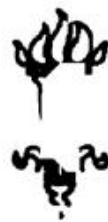




CURTIS JETT.

From Prison to Pulpit.

LIFE OF CURTIS JETT.



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DEDICATION.

This book is lovingly dedicated to my
niece, June Eloise Jett.

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FROM PRISON TO PULPIT.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND ANCESTRY.

I was born in Jackson, Breathitt county, Kentucky, December 19, 1875. My ancestors were Virginians. My grandmother, on father's side was Bryant decent, and a relative of Daniel Boone's wife. My father and mother were born near Jackson, Ky., in Breathitt county. They were members of the Methodist Church, uniting with the church rather late in life. As I now understand what it means to be a Christian in reality, I could not say that their experience of salvation was what it should have been. Like many other people in the world, they were weak along spiritual lines.

My father was a typical mountaineer, quite disposed and well able to take care of himself when he thought any one crossed his path. Father died when I was quite young, a mere lad. Late in life my mother became a most consecrated Christian, and died about three years ago, leaving a good testimony, which is a pleasant memory.

I am not disposed, nor do I charge my parents with my downfall. When I was a

mere child a feud broke out in our community, and one of my uncles was killed, and my father was seriously wounded. His enemies were constantly waylaying him, and when he was away from home they would rock our house at night, no one being there except mother and the little children.

Acting on the advice of relatives my father and mother moved to Doylesville, Madison county, Ky. In those days there were no railroads in Breathitt county. On a cold day in January, about the year '77, my mother and little ones behind her on horseback, and one in her lap,—that being the writer—rode out of Jackson over the lofty mountains and crossing the streams to Beattyville, thence to Richmond, and twelve miles to our home. They had left their home to keep from being murdered from ambush.

Very early in my childhood I began to take note from the conversations that my parents would have around the fireside. I would hear them talk about how they had been mistreated and driven from home, and how our home had been rocked. A spirit of revenge took hold of my young heart, and I naturally sympathized with my parents.

Early in life I became addicted to the habit of pistol toting, with no other thought than if necessary, I would use it to the limit, re-

ardless of what the consequences might be. The reader will understand that growing up with these surroundings my young life was naturally filled with strong resentment, without any of those gracious influences of the religion of Jesus, but all my surroundings had a tendency to draw me away from the right. I was taught nothing of the Gospel of forgiveness, but grew up entirely on the basis of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, with the understanding that it would be for the best, and also to my credit, if I got the other fellow's eye and tooth and saved my own.

I well remember when a small boy my father brought home a letter to my mother, informing her that one of her brothers, Willie Sewell, had been murdered while making cane molasses. He was shot from ambush one night by some unknown person. I can see the troubled look on mother's face as she heard the news. He was a quiet, peaceable citizen and his murderers went free. He fell into one of the boiling vats of syrup, was pulled out, and died soon afterward. You may be sure, that news coming into our family aroused our indignation and kindled in my young heart wrath and revenge against the enemies of my people.

CHAPTER II.

MY BOYHOOD.

One of the most unfortunate incidents of my boyhood days is the fact that we had a neighbor who was a kind sort of man, with a heart as tender as that of a child. He loved children and children loved him, but he was a drunkard. He took a great fancy to me and would give me strong drink, not realizing what great wrong he was doing to God and myself. I was fond of him and that made me easily influenced by him. Owing to these environments I became addicted to strong drink early in life, and found that booze is a dangerous thing to tamper with. What the Old Book says about it is true: "It biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

I also fell into the miserable habit of cigarette smoking which affected my nerves and mentality, causing me to become very excitable and high tempered. Not having the power to resist strong drink and cigarette smoking I was led into many things that I would not have done if these habits

had not fastened themselves upon me so early in life.

I have already mentioned the fact that I fell into the habit of carrying arms while quite young, and this habit grew upon me as I grew older. I loved the woods and was fond of hunting, consequently from my early youth until my unfortunate career, I hardly knew what it was to be separated from shooting irons. I was quite a crack shot at quail on the wing, and could bring a squirrel out of the tops of the tallest trees.

When very young I attended a revival meeting at Union City, became impressed by the Spirit of God, and united with the church, but as I did not have that wholesome influence to encourage me in the right life the thorns sprang up and choked me to death, spiritually. O, the thorns in this ungodly world! The tares of evil destroy the good wheat. God says "His Spirit shall not always strive with man." I could feel the Holy Spirit in my life away back there in my youth, but the enemy came and stole the good seed away.

When I was a lad my mother would take frequent trips to Breathitt county from our Madison county home, and I would often attend her on these occasions. In this way I became acquainted with my relatives in

those parts, and the mountain people as well. It seemed that every one in that section of the country had an axe to grind.

I have attended many turkey matches and always got my share of the birds. At one match I killed eight with a Winchester rifle. I would run my horse at full speed along a post fence and put a bullet in each post. Once when I was a lad, something had been disturbing my mother's chickens at night, and she asked me to take the old gun that was about six feet long and go out to the henhouse and see if I could find out what was bothering her chickens. It was a bright moonlight night. With gun on my shoulder I went in pursuit of the enemy. The moon was almost bright as day. I opened the door, took a peep at the roost, and stepped back into the moonlight shade of a tree. I could see through the door and on through the cracks on the other side of the henhouse, and the moonlight on the other side of the henhouse. Presently I saw something about the size of a rat bobbing up and down through the crack of the house, and I said to myself, "That must be a rat." I took deliberate aim, pulled the trigger, the report rang out on the night air, the gun went one way and I went the other, and my mother's big turkey gobbler fell dead with his head

shot off. Of all the flopping you ever heard it was then. My mother came to the door and asked, "Did you kill it?" I said, "Yes," Then she asked, "What was it?" I said, "Your big gobbler." And reader, you can guess the rest.

In those days in mountain regions there was hardly a cabin which did not have a rifle, and most of the men went armed. Those were the days of feuds between the Eversoles and Franks, the Strongs and Ameys, Strongs and Callahans, Callahans and Deatons. During these feuds, which amounted sometimes to almost a civil war many men were killed. The usual method was to waylay and shoot one's enemies from buildings or woods. Not that they were afraid to fight in the open, but as General Washington suggested to General Braddock of the British Army, "To fight the Indians in their own way." It was the plan of the mountaineer to get their man and take no chances.

Many of the leaders of the feuds were men of good circumstances and of fine intelligence. They were kind and courteous to their friends, but they came from a race of people beyond the sea who, for centuries, had not looked to the courts for protection, but had taken their affairs into their own

hands. With them it was perfectly honorable to defend themselves and take the life of any they suspected of having ill will toward them.

The leaders of the mountain feuds were something like the old Scottish Chieftains who gathered their class about them and fought their misunderstandings to a finish. Many of us boys who grew up in this atmosphere admired the leaders of the feuds, as they were men of good circumstances, and were well liked by their friends. They were stalwart mountain men, crack shots, with intense love for their friends and bitter hatred for their enemies. We boys were ambitious when we became men to become leaders of such a click, to take our chance in the mountain battles and some day to carry revolvers and Winchesters with notches cut to indicate the number of enemies we had outwitted and gotten the drop on.

CHAPTER III.

MY ROAMINGS.

During my teens my father moved to Winchester, Ky. While living at this place my father died and was buried in Richmond Cemetery by a Masonic lodge in Richmond. While living in Winchester I had a round with a colored gentleman whom they called "John the Baptist." It was on this wise: Baptist and a white boy by the name of Frazier got into difficulty and I butted in and took the white boy's part. The Baptist hit me in the head with a stone and ran. I pulled my gun and just as I fired Baptist fell into barbed-wire fence and hung by his hide. Many thought he was killed, but he was not hit, which was all for my good.

When father died mother moved back to Madison county and bought a farm of one hundred acres on the banks of the Kentucky River. While living there I drifted away from my mother's care and became quite a rover. I made several trips to Illinois, and traveled as far west as Texas. In all of these states I drank extensively, carried weapons, and had frequent brawls, and some fist fights. By and by, I got so homesick that I would have walked all the way from

Texas if I could not have caught a train for my "Old Kentucky Home."

When the Spanish-American war broke out I joined the Sixth Cavalry of the regular army and our regiment started to Cuba. To my great disappointment the war closed after our regiment got to Tampa, Florida. I was discharged and returned to the mountains of Eastern Kentucky to visit relatives in that section. All the years of this period of my life I was gambling, drinking, and dissipating, generally. There was a time I lived without thought or fear of God or man, not having a serious thought. The fact that there was either heaven or hell awaiting me in the future, for the time escaped my mind. As I look back to the years of my life it seems a strange bad dream. I remember it with profound regret and I hardly see how those years could have been spent more wickedly and aimless. I make these statements with the hope that this booklet may fall into the hands of someone who, having drifted as far into the region of sin as I did, may receive hope and encouragement to come back to the Christ who has been so gracious and merciful to me.

From the time I was discharged from the army until my arrest, I had no fixed home, but roamed about from one place to another.

These were dark days in my history. There are a few bright spots that I recall with a degree of pride and consolation. One of my associates once threatened to shoot a preacher for whom I had taken a liking, and I succeeded in convincing my companion that if he dared do such a thing there would be two funerals, so the man, after the preacher with his gun, changed his mind. I also recall that on two occasions that I helped rescue drowning men from the Kentucky River, one in Madison county and one in Breathitt county, who would have perished without assistance.

About this time the feud with which I became connected had reached its climax. I loved my people and would have cheerfully died for them any day; and I hated their enemies. There was much animosity and ill feeling which culminated in several deaths on both sides of the feud. So far as any part I may have had in these unfortunate affairs is concerned that has been thoroughly threshed out in the civil and criminal courts of the State, and I could not add anything which would involve anyone who has not already been involved in the courts. I did not participate in these for any price or cause except for the love of my people and the unfortunate spirit of revenge in my own heart. A merciful God has granted my forgiveness

which I feel toward all men and believe it would be unwise for me to enter into any further discussion of the matters. I have now entered upon a new life with peace with my fellowbeings and desire to do all in my power to amend the past, and try to prevent any young man from following in the pathway, and falling into the habits which brought such wickedness and sorrow to my life. God knows that in my heart I fully forgive anyone who may have been my enemies, and have nothing but the kindest feelings toward everyone. It might be interesting to enter upon the details of the long, hard battle which was waged in the courts which cost my friends and the State many thousands of dollars, but I think it best to leave this matter, only to say that a strong array of legal talent represented both prosecution and defense.

I will say, however, that I first entered the penitentiary with life and death sentence, received a new trial and was returned to the penitentiary with two life sentences; was in five different jails—Winchester, Jackson, Beattyville, Lexington, and Louisville. I spent over one year in jail, was tried by three circuit judges, and all three died while I was in prison, as they were much older than I.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT LED TO MY CONVERSION.

"To a woman now dead, who was an invalid for most of her life and whom I never saw, is due the credit of converting me," is the manner in which the Rev. Curtis Jett, one time feudist, explained how he became a Christian in a sermon preached at the People's Mission Tabernacle at the corner of Third and Ohio streets last night.

"When the crowds and newspapers cried 'hang him,' it was letters from this woman written in a motherly fashion pleading with me to reform that finally converted me," continued Rev. Jett.

"Nearly five hundred people gathered to hear the Rev. Jett last night packing the building to its capacity. Many were refused entrance owing to the size of the crowd. This is the first sermon preached in this city by the Rev. Jett, since his release from State penitentiary in Frankfort, where he had served eleven years of a life sentence for the alleged murder of J. B. Marcum in a noted Eastern Kentucky feud.

"Rev. Jett, during his sermon, told of his

fight for religious principles while in the penitentiary following his conversion. He told of conditions when he first arrived and how they have been improved during the years that he spent there.

“Continuing about his conversion, Rev. Jett said, ‘It was the letters from this invalid woman which I read as I sat in my cell on felon’s row that finally convinced me that my ways were wrong and that I should become a Christian. The woman of whom I tell you died before I was released and I have never seen her, but some day I am going to the cemetery where she is buried and there pay her tribute for what I owe.’

“The audience was an unusually large one, arriving early and practically filling the tabernacle long before time to start the services. A special musical program was provided during the evening.

“The Rev. Jett throughout his sermon urged the audience to take advantage of the example he formed and be converted before they permitted their present ways to get them into trouble. He talked for a little over an hour.

“Rev. Jett, during his sermon last night, paid a high tribute to Asbury College, in Jesamine county, where he is now going to school studying for the ministry.

“This morning at 11 o’clock, Rev. Jett will preach the morning sermon at the Nazarene Chapel on Shropshire Avenue. Rev. Jett will preach at the People’s Mission Sunday afternoon at 2:45 o’clock, and Sunday night at 7:30 o’clock. Everyone is invited.”

I am now in school at Wilmore, Ky., Asbury College, studying for the ministry. This is a great school, with Dr. H. C. Morrison as its president. He and his good wife are doing a great work here. It is a wonderful place for young people to be trained in the service of the Lord.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE PENITENTIARY.

This old penitentiary was completed in the year 1800. The first inmate was John Turner, of Madison county, for two years under conviction for horse stealing.

On entering the prison as a prisoner, you are taken to the bath-house, given a hair cut, shave and bath. Then you put on new, clean clothes, and are assigned to your cell. The next day you are assigned to work in some department of the prison. There are many rules and regulations that govern this prison as well as all other prisons. All kinds of people are to be found in prison; some as low-down men as breathe, and some good men, but the latter are very scarce.

There are three classes of prisoners, according to the grading system and uniform: First, second, and third. There is the church of all denominations, the Christian Endeavor Society, of which Miss Georgia Dunn is superintendent, and who has done a great work in the prison for the unfortunate men and women confined therein. She is dearly beloved by all the prisoners. There are two

large Bible classes conducted for the white and colored respectively.

On May 4, 1904, when I entered the prison I found it a living, grinding hell on earth, full of gambling and pool tables. Most of the prisoners spent their time away from church on Sunday playing pool and gambling, and I was one of the number. I cared nothing for the church or God or man. I was as vile a sinner as ever came down the pike.

CHAPTER VI.

EXPERIENCES AFTER MY CONVERSION.

The prison, all these years of my confinement, has been getting better; that is the treatment of prisoners and respect for religion. Many dark hours of persecution have I suffered because I was a Christian, and had been born again. At the time of my conversion a Christian had but little protection in prison. On the right hand and on the left it was said the fellow who joined the church was playing the hypocrite and trying to get out of prison on his religion.

After my conversion I never let up on pool tables until they were all removed, which was several years ago. I preached against them, prayed against them, and God removed them, I hope and trust, forever. I helped to win multiplied prisoners to Christ, numbers being converted under my preaching. I have persuaded hundreds to join the Christian Endeavor and Bible Class.

After my conversion I became a student of the Bible and secured a diploma from the Ohio Sunday School Association upon the completion of the First Standard Teacher

Training Course for service. I received this diploma February 12, 1910, being examined by Rev. Joseph Severance, then Chaplain of the prison. He gave me 100 on the examination. I also had to send off a written examination.

During all these years of confinement my dear mother never went back on her wandering boy, but visited him frequently, until the day of her death. Mother's death cast a gloom over my life, but Jesus doeth all things well. At night all the prisoners are locked in their cells, except those who are trusties. As I was a trusty I had the privilege and pleasure of going from cell to cell and talk to the prisoners, and have been the means of comforting many aching hearts who poured out their troubles to me. Many times the prisoners would send for me in the night and I would find them in tears. Perhaps one had just received a letter that his wife, mother, child, or brother had died. He can never see them again on earth, cannot go to the funeral, and his heart is breaking; and maybe his conscience is hurting, and he feels the Spirit of God striving with him, and wants advice. It was my duty as one of the heads of the large Bible classes, to get their names, ask the warden to have them turned out of their cells at night, for the class was

conducted on Sunday nights in the corridor of the cell-house. On my recommendation the warden would let these men out to the class. When they would not behave I would not let them out any more for awhile, as it was dangerous. Here is a short note one wrote me after I had him locked up for bad conduct:

“July 7, 1918, 159-5 B. Curt, if you will let me come out again I will sit on the front seat so you can watch me. I am sorry for what I did, and ask your pardon.—H.”

All during this period my relatives, brothers and sisters were trying to get me released from prison on pardon or parole. Thousands of names were written on the petition, and scores of letters asking for my release. Prayers were offered all over the State asking God to liberate me from bondage. During all these years a girl was visiting me and bringing me good things to eat. “A friend in need is a friend indeed.”

During my imprisonment I became the prison florist and cared for the flowers and lawn and greenhouses. The following is a clipping from one of the local papers:

“Bringing pleasure to his fellowmen is the life-work of Curt Jett, serving a life sentence in the State Reformatory as the result of feud troubles in Breathitt county. Jett

has charge of the flower gardens at the Reformatory and the only growing flowers that most of the prisoners ever see during their confinement in the Reformatory are the result of Jett's work.

"The half-tone picture of Curt Jett's garden at the State Reformatory is reproduced with the permission, and by the courtesy of the State Journal, Frankfort, Ky., which published the picture and the following article in its issue of Sunday, October 1:

"For five years he has had charge of the work of looking after the lawns and flowers in the Reformatory, and in that time a wonderful transformation has taken place. Before he took charge of the work no flowers were grown in the Reformatory, and the men behind the walls never had the opportunity to see the botanical side while in the institution. Now, however, the walk from the cell-house to the dining-room, over which all the prisoners pass each day, is lined with beautiful hedges and blooming flowers.

"Few are the gardens in Frankfort that compare favorably with those of the Reformatory. They show the result of patient care and untiring efforts. When Jett entered the Reformatory he knew nothing about flowers. All that he now knows he learned by working with them behind the prison

walls. He takes an interest in the work; he loves flowers, and endeavors to acquaint himself with the best methods for their growth and cultivation.

“On entering the front gate of the Reformatory there is a large plat of ground in the center of which is the musicians’ stand. In this space Jett has planted beds of cannas, caladiums and geraniums. On the stand are balloon vines and other creeping plants. In various parts of the yard are scarlet sage, colias, roses, dahlias, castor oil plants, etc. In one corner is a bed of caladiums in which stand plants fully seven feet high. They have been admired, Jett says, by many visitors in the Reformatory greenhouse which is nothing really remarkable about their growth. They require plenty of water and a rich soil and when given these they certainly grow.’

“The Christian Endeavor Society is represented in Jett’s garden by the letters ‘C. E.,’ about twelve feet in height formed by a small hedge. A large cross formed of the same plant is close to the ‘C. E.’ monogram.

“Jack Frost is about ready to nip the flowers planted in the yard, but when the cold weather arrives Jett will continue his efforts in the Reformatory greenhouse which has only recently been remodeled. Here are

kept dozens of ferns which are placed about the yard in warm weather and here also are hundreds of seedlings which are later transplanted in the yard. Jett is now preparing to plant some flowers in the greenhouse so that they will be in bloom by Easter. Next year, he says will be the banner year in the Reformatory flower gardens and he believes in making preparations now."

There was a sparrow roosted in the ventilation window over my head which suggested the following poem which I composed:

As I sit in the greenhouse thinking today,
Of the wrongs I have done and how best to
 repay,
There flies in the window a sparrow so gay,
Whose sweet, happy song seems to drive
 grief away.

It's a drear day in winter, with its cold and
 its gray,
With its mood of depression for the sinner
 today,
And the song of the sparrow perched over
 my head,
Seems to say, "Now be joyful; all hope is not
 fled."

Little sparrow, you're welcome, more than
 you can know;

You have come and have cheered me, dull
care now will go.

You came to be warmed, for you're chilled
through and through,

You are warming and cheering, so we're
both pleased, I know.

Come again, little sparrow, come again and
again,

I'll feed you and warm you, and sure be your
friend.

When spring comes, and sunshine, you can
sing where you will,

So mate and be happy; please visit me still.

For you're the first creature I've seen in
some years,

Who seems to be willing to bring me such
cheer.

To be sure, you've me bested, you can leave
when you will,

But please, little sparrow, please visit me
still.

Before my conversion I did not care for
flowers, but after my sins were forgiven I
loved them with all my heart.

There have been the following wardens
at the head of the prison since my incarceration:
E. T. Lillard, W. S. Hawkins, George
Chism, E. E. Mudd, Sam Lykins, A. J. G.

Wills, T. M. Phythian. Two of the above gentlemen have been special friends of mine. Col. T. M. Phythian is a great prison worker; that is, he has had many years of experience with prisoners and is a judge of human character. He is a man full of compassion and tender mercy; hates to say no when approached for a favor by anyone. His heart is as big as the world.

It was under Col. Phythian's administration as warden that it came into his heart to put me on the outside of the prison as a trusty. He put great confidence in me, and I am glad to state that I never betrayed his confidence. My job on the outside as trusty was to open and shut the two large gates that let the prison traffic in and out.

The following is a poem written by one of the prisoners:

Arriving at this prison, of course no friends
you find,
And if you chance to meet one, his hands are
tied behind.
So while serving out your sentence, which
the judge imposed on you,
With a daily load upon your mind, you know
not what to do.
So, on coming to this prison with loved ones
left behind,

Curt Jett will take you by the hand, and a
Savior for you he'll find.
Then his Bible Class is handy, and God's
Word is spoken true,
And to reap the spiritual harvest, it is simply
up to you.

I know that in a prison, you will very seldom
find
Many of God's own people, especially Curt
Jett's kind.
Each day he faithfully serves the State,
By opening and closing the large, back gate.
And when evening is come, he is not
through;
He is teaching the Word of God to you.
From early morning until close of day,
I earnestly believe Curt Jett does pray.

You can meet him in the chapel, you can
meet him in the yard,
And every place you meet him, he is always
praising the Lord.
He works very early, and he works very late,
And God is always with him at the old prison
gate.

The prisoners need religion, but a Chaplain
with them you find,
While people of the outside world, need just
Curt Jett's kind.

He can tell you from experience, what God
has done for him,
And keeping him a prisoner is a most disgraceful sin.

He is a persecuted prisoner, and beyond a reasonable doubt,
Most of Kentucky's people want to see him out.

Now if you will free poor Curtis Jett, and secure his quick release,
God will reward you later, with a blessing and eternal peace.

The people of Kentucky, for liberty and democracy cry,
God has forgiven Curt Jett's sins, why not you and I?
Consider this for a moment, and take it home with you,
Read the Word of God tonight and know what is required of you.

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Luke 17:3, 4.

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Jno. 15:12.

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW STATISTICS.

The population of the penitentiary at Frankfort on November 30, 1910, was 599 white men, and 687 colored men. White women 6, and colored women 42. The number of inmates who had been married were 449, number of unmarried were 885. The number of inmates having a good education were 36, those having a fair education 834, those having no education, 455. The number who formerly had temperate habits, 872, the number having intemperate habits, 462. Those who had attended Sunday school previous to conviction of crime, 900, those who had not attended Sunday school, 434.

On November 10, 1910, those serving life sentences were 203; from 20 to 40 years, 106; from 15 to 20 years, 51; from 10 to 15, 131; from 5 to 10, 253; from 4 to 5, 53; 3 to 4, 121; 2 to 3, 228; 1 to 2, 134; 1 to 5, 15; 2 to 3, 1; 2 to 10, 14; 2 to 21, 23; 6 to 30, 1.

The following are the ages: Under 20, 281; 20 years and under 25, 371; 25 and under 30, 212; 30 and under 35, 198; 35 and under 40, 124; 40 and under 45, 30; 45 and

under 50, 68; 50 and under 60, 38; 60 and under 70, 6; 70 and under 85, 6.

If there is anyone who doubts the effectiveness of the penitentiary system, the following table should remove such doubts. Number confined in the penitentiary, Nov. 30, 1910, and number of commitments served by each one: First commitment 1,043; second, 166; third, 78; fourth, 39; fifth, 4; sixth, 3; seventh, 1.

The following was written by Rev. W. Q. Vreeland, Chaplain of Kentucky prison, and published in *Lexington Leader*, of August 5, 1918.

THE REV. MR. VREELAND WRITES
ABOUT CURT JETT.

Kentucky State Reformatory,
Frankfort, Kentucky.

Rev. Walter Q. Vreeland, Chaplain.

“Those persons who only know the Curt Jett of ten years ago do not know Curtis Jett of today—he is no more like the same ‘old wild dog of the mountains’ that he used to be than Jacob was like himself after he became the prince in Israel; and to say that God cannot gloriously save a ‘self confessed’ murderer is to deny that Moses and St. Paul, self-confessed malefactors, became the great apostles of the law and gospel.

“For five years after coming to prison Curt Jett was the same bad fellow of his former mountain days, but nine years ago a great change came into his life. An old lady residing in Lexington (long since gone to her reward), who had read of his trial and conviction, got him on her heart and conscience and wrote a kind letter to him, citing quotations from the Bible. He never having read a chapter of the Bible in his life called on a fellow prisoner to find the passages. He took it as a jest and tried to laugh it off, but not so!

“The next Sunday while playing a game of pool on the yard the chapel bell rang. He remembered the letter and said to his wicked companions, ‘Boys, let’s go to church.’ They refused, but he went. Listening to a sermon preached by Dr. C. R. Hudson, of the Christian Church, he was deeply convicted of his sins.

“That night in his cell alone with God under a great load of sin, he repented deeply and found forgiveness. There in the glow of the new found life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he accepted unreservedly God’s plans for a new life.

“So transformed by a desire to live a pure and holy life, he at once threw away his tobacco, which he has no desire for since, quit

his swearing and vulgar talk, stopped gambling and forsook his evil associations, and began to do everything that a Christian naturally loves to do—read his Bible, pray, attend church, etc. Soon he began a correspondence course of study of the Bible and received a diploma. He was now being noticed for his quiet and orderly habits and his deep interest in everything good and beautiful. He kept his person scrupulously clean, saying he wanted his body to be a fit temple of the Holy Spirit.

“For nine years he has been growing in grace, and the knowledge of Christ, until now his outward man shows marked signs of the inward work of grace. He does not look like the same old Curt Jett of his former sinful days, and is recognized by the officials and fellow prisoners as a man of strong convictions of right and Christian character.

“Five years ago he felt the refining fires of the Spirit ‘boiling out his body and soul,’ as he expressed it, and became impressed with a call of God to preach the Gospel. Having a clear, incisive view of the truths of the Bible, ever since then he has been preaching a strong Gospel sermon that reaches the hearts of attentive listeners; whereupon many scores of his fellows have been converted and left the prison bearing testimony to

their convictions of sin under his preaching.

“Without seeing and knowing Curtis Jett as he appears now, no one can, nor has the right, to judge him. Hundreds of visitors at the reformatory have been amazed to find him to be such a different man from what they knew him formerly to be. God’s grace is magnified in its power to save to the uttermost just the vile sinners like he used to be.

“He has made no loud pretenses, but has consistently tried to live daily a better life. He is happy in his new found faith and often laments the sad fact that he had not known and served Christ all his life. I know from daily association for eight years, that he would rather spend the remainder of his life in prison with this peace and love of God in his heart than to be turned out of prison in his former wicked state.

“His great ambition now is to enter Wilmore College, and finish his education preparatory to preaching, in order to try to save precious souls and, as far as possible, undo the great wrongs done to society in the past.

“The State of Kentucky is never better pleased to release from prison her former objectionable citizens than when they show work of reformation and go out to become law-abiding citizens.

Sincerely,

“W. Q. VREELAND,

“Chaplain, Kentucky State Reformatory.”

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTERS RECEIVED FROM PRISONERS.

The following are some of the letters received from prisoners who were helped to a better life by me while in prison. We shall give only a few extracts from them, as that will suffice to give the reader an idea of my work in the prison.

My Dear Friend:

I think it my duty to let you know you have done so much for me in prison, and for every prisoner who will hear you. There are some you could never do any good, but for me you have started me to Christ. I thank you for the good you have done this place, and hope God will bless you, and I long to see you out of this place. You have been so faithful God will give you liberty, for which I am praying. That is all we can do, is to look to God for help. I praise Him for waking me up and, for you that you helped me to start in the right way. From your best friend,

J. S.

As a member of the Christian Endeavor Society I want to express my heartfelt

thanks to my fellow-prisoner, Curt Jett, for the many efforts he has put forth for the betterment of myself and others. He has a Bible class and is striving to teach our hardened men the need of help in God. His many pleadings have not been in vain, for he is doing a wonderful work behind prison bars. I pray the Lord will reward Curt Jett for what he has done for us behind the bars, and am sure He will in every way.

G. B.

Dear Sir: I think the Bible class is one of the best things in the prison. It has helped me to be a man since I came here, and I want to congratulate you for the many good talks I have heard you make. The things I have heard you say have caused me to think on my life as never before and I mean to live better than ever. You are doing a noble work. So go on, regardless of knockers, for they are on every hand. May God bless and keep you in the good way.

Your friend,

J. S.

To My Brother Prisoners:

As my time is nearly expired I feel like writing a few lines to my fellow-prisoners in the interest of the Bible class. It is one of the greatest things that is done in this institution for the welfare of the prisoners. Any

man who will attend and hear the good talks and prayers will, upon the expiration of his time, leave the institution benefited. Mr. Jett, the man at the head of the class, has proven himself worthy and ought to be remembered by the men he has so cheerfully helped to better things. He is a great benefit to the institution, as well as individuals.

J. V.

What Christ has Done For Me.

Jesus has awakened me and made known unto me a promise that I made to my dying mother, that I would meet her in heaven. I never thought of this promise and how much it would have helped me if I had heeded it. My eyes have been opened and I see those beautiful letters written in gold, "Yes, mother, I will meet you in heaven." My coming to this prison has revealed this to me. The sadness, sorrow, heart-breaking griefs that I have had to bear in having to leave the dearest little wife on earth and return to this awful place of sadness. But it has awakened me to a new life, and I am determined to live as near right as I possibly can. I have better self-control than I ever had, and I feel as I never felt before. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him

should not perish but have everlasting life." This verse has created a sensation within my heart, and it makes me realize He suffered for me and that through Him I might have eternal life. Christ said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I have come to Him and found rest. A PRISONER.

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to express my candid opinion of Curt Jett. I've always known him to be a good prisoner, since my incarceration here. He is the leader of the Bible class here at the prison, and is doing a good work with the prisoners as their leader. His preaching is very good indeed, and he has led many a man to accept God and see the brighter side of life. He is also liked by all the guards of the institution, and the warden also. He carries himself as a gentleman at all times and should be given a chance to preach the Gospel to the outside world. I've known him for six years and never knew him to violate any of the rules here. He is doing a great work among us prisoners. He is the leader of the Christian Endeavor, and continues to try to get the men to study their Bibles. He visits the cell of nearly every man in here at least once a week. He comes around to see

if he can be of any help to us who are shut off from the outside world. He speaks a word of comfort or cheer wherever he sees you. He is always trying to show us the better side of life. With a little study this man will make a great preacher some day. May God speed the day when he will be given a chance to go out into the outside world to preach the Gospel and to save souls from a life of shame, is my prayer for Curtis Jett. May God give him the opportunity to do so at the earliest possible date. G. S.

AN UNFORTUNATE BROTHER.

A poor wretched sinner I am, but still I have hopes of meeting the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. After attending the Bible class, of which Brother Curtis Jett is leader, no sinner need say that there is no chance for him. Brother Jett preaches such wisdom that any and all that will listen to him are bound to say that there is a chance for me, if I will only try. Brother Jett not only preaches the Gospel, but gives good advice to whoever he has an opportunity to give advice to, and his opportunities are many in this place. Therefore, I have grown to believe that he has been forgiven of his sins by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Why should not man forgive him if the Lord has?

I believe he has forgiven all who sinned against him if there were any. L. M.

HEED THE RESULTS OF OLD SATAN.

Boys, I have been doing his work for about ten years and I have never found any good in him yet; but I will tell you what I have found in him. I have found that he has led me into sin and I am sure that he will do that for anyone that will follow him. But, thanks be to God, I have found him out and turned over a new leaf, and am trying to follow Jesus. I read the Bible night and morning, and kneel down and pray each night. I feel that God is with me. I thank Curt Jett for what he has done for me. He has caused me to read my Bible and to think about the wrongs I have done, and I am sure he is trying to do all within his power to teach his fellow-prisoners the right things. I am charged with manslaughter and given a ten-year sentence, and when I get out I want to live a Christian life and follow Jesus in the best way I know how. A. S.

Dear Mr. Jett: I feel greatly indebted to you for what I have profited by attending your services at Bible class, also in chapel. I further believe that many have profited by attending Bible class while under your instruction. L. S.

Dear Mr. Jett: I would like to tell you how much I have learned by going to your Bible class. It has made a new man of me. It made me think where I was going to spend eternity. I have prayed to God and He has pardoned my sins. You don't know how much better I feel. I was sent here wrongfully, but I can pray for those who sent me here. I can say, if ever I get out I can go back home to my old mother and say, Brother Jett was the first man that ever caused me to go down on my knees and ask the Lord to pardon my sins. I was going on the dark way and didn't read the Bible once a year until I was put in prison. I hope that God will help me to cause others to go down on their knees. I am here, and I can say that my sins are pardoned by the help of God. I want you to pray for me, and I will stay on the right way and there will be nothing to cause me to fall back. D. C.

A BETTER MAN.

I am a better man than I was when I came here, for I did not go to church outside, and now I go to church and Sunday school. The Bible class is a good thing and it has helped me in many ways. When I go to my cell at night I feel good for the Lord has done something for me. I love my Warden; he has

been good to me. I have something to be good for. My wife's father is blind, and no one to help her. My baby is too young for her to leave at home by itself, so before I go to bed at night I say, "God bless my wife and baby." When I was here before I was not married, and I did not care, but now if they will give me a chance I will make good, for I have been a good boy since I have been here. I have done what I was told to do. All that I can ask of them is, to give me a chance once more and I will make good. W. I.

A VOICE FROM THE CELL.

I was raised by a true Christian mother and father. I was a member of the Baptist Church. After my dear mother and father died I forgot my dead ones and the prayers and teaching. I went on the railroad as a fireman, and then I began to send my soul to torment. I was in a wreck where my engineer was killed. There is where I met my wife who was a sister to him. As she and her mother were weeping, and mother praying, there is where my God came back to me. Dear Christian friends, don't stand back to trust God for He is love and truth. After that mother and sister showed their love for that poor brother who was killed, God saved me in that wreck, as I jumped

from that engine bound for the other world. God has showed me in my life His great and wonderful works. I am innocent. Jesus knew I was not guilty of this terrible crime, and He spared my life. I love to tell how my ever true and faithful Jesus stood by me and my darling little boy in our hour of need. God said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither be afraid." I knew God knew I was innocent, and I feared not what came. Jesus cared for me and my dear child. Friends of the C. E. and of the Bible class, I am so happy to see and know I have found Jesus my Savior in these walls just as true and close to me as He was on the outside. As I come into my cell at night I am praying to God for being in here with me. Friends, if God lets me live, and spares my sisters and my darling boy to see me free, I'll let them know Jesus has kept me from hell and torment. I want to speak of my dear Brother Curtis Jett, who is so faithful in his good work for our heavenly Father. I think he is doing great good in this prison. Life is too short to throw away for things on this earth; things above are what I want, and what I am going to have. Friends, I could tell more of what Jesus has done for me and what He will do for you if you will only trust Him.

R. K.

A TESTIMONY.

I want to state that I know from experience that living for God is the best way to live in this world. About three years ago I started out on that straight and narrow path that leads to that blessed home on high that God has promised to give us if we will only trust and believe our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. While I was going to church and living up to God's Word the best I knew how I had plenty of good clothes and money in my pocket, but somehow I let the devil get his great claws upon me and he dragged me in sin till he caused me to break one of God's great commandments and to be put behind prison bars. I thank God that He put forth His willing hand and saved me from a burning hell. I had plenty of good friends, for our preacher took a great liking to me and watched over me like a guardian angel. I was once a leading member in the Christian Endeavor Society. My little church sent me to the Berea Collegiate in 1915 to represent our church and to make its pledge for what little it was giving to help God's cause. While we were at the Collegiate they got me a place to stay at a home right at the foot of the hill at the chapel, and they treated me well. There were only three of them. The son was going to College on Monday,

and as there was no school they all three got up bright and early and left me in bed with my meal on the table. They told me where they were going to put the key and said, "We are going out on the farm this morning to pick apples, and you may get up when you want to; and when you leave lock the doors and put the key back." They trusted everything to me.

When I was a small boy I took up cigarette smoking, and I think that is what started me on the downward path to hell, for next came rushing the can for beer, and then whiskey, the greatest damnation in this world. I believe deep down in my heart if I had not taken to drink I would be at Camp Sherman, Ohio, or in France doing all that I could for my country, and the ones I love dearly here on earth. My mother died when I was only two years old and my father was a drinking man, and he put the example before me all my young life. My dear grandmother was too good to me and let me have my own way. I want to say that Curtis Jett's way of living and his faith in God has put me on the right path; for by faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God can make a soldier of the Cross of a man like Curtis Jett, and the same loving God can do the same for me. I want to thank him for the cheering words he

has spoken to me since I have been behind prison bars. My own blessed Father bestow His lovingkindness upon him. C. T.

HOW I STARTED DOWNWARD.

As to what are the principal causes of my downfall: whiskey, cards and women of the commonest classes on earth. As to what I have resolved to do while confined at this prison for a period of two years, unless released by the mighty hand of God in whom I have placed all confidence, regardless of all else; I have resolved to think of my Savior always as when in my mother's care, and do all I can to help others see the light of salvation, which will lead all who follow it into peace and happiness forever and ever. As to the future, I will endeavor to do all that is expected of an honest and moral citizen, and follow the straight and narrow path, giving up my old and most sinful life and start in anew. It relieves me to a very great extent, to know that we are blessed by having one so kind and good among us as Bro. Curtis Jett, who has assisted many on their road to salvation, and with the help of God, continues to do all that is in his power for his fellowmen. Thank God, that salvation is free, and I am going to have my share of it while the time is good, instead of visiting sa-

loons, gambling dens and the side entrances of hell. I have resolved to make places of religious worship my future headquarters. I have sown and now I am reaping my wild oats, but when this crop is reaped it will not be stored, therefore there will be no seed to sow a new crop. My eyes have been opened in this dark and miserable place, and I see as I never saw before, so many dark lives that could be made bright if only the cloud of sin was removed and the light of God allowed to shine therein. Hoping, by the help of God, to continue as above resolved, I ask the prayers of all Christian people that I may succeed.

L. D.

Dear Brother Jett:

I belong to the Bible class here and I am going to go out in a few days. I hope you will have good success. I also hope you have good luck and get out. I think I will either join Uncle Sam or the Salvation Army. I am going to try to do better from now on. My mother was here to see me just after I was sent here, and very shortly after she went back she took sick and died, and her last words were that her "home was bright and fair," and that she wanted to meet us all in a better land. My two older sisters wrote me they were going to live right. If I had

listened to my mother I wouldn't be here. I would have been on the outside where I could have seen after my sisters. I certainly mean to do better.

W. H.

THE COMMON SINNER'S REWARD.

To make a long story short, practically all my life I have been what ordinarily would be called a common, or rather, petty sinner, and for this disobedience to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I am most positive that now I am serving on a second life sentence in this prison. Truly, "The wages of sin is death." However, I must confess, with delight, that I have been greatly benefited, spiritually, by the Reformatory Bible Class and its leader. I now find it no burden whatever, but a pleasure to call on the Divine Master for His guidance and blessing, and by so doing I find that the monotony of prison life is much easier borne. I am having an up-hill pull to free myself from Satan's fetters. The things which I would not do, are sometimes what I do. From my experience with old Satan I find a fine specimen of his character and traits in Kaiser Bill, who plunged his murderous junkers, cut-throats, and brigands on the little Christian kingdom of Belgium. This horde of the Kaiser's vassals, prompted by the devil and his vice administrator, com-

mitted murder, rapine and unspeakable crimes on this little Christian nation of Belgium. Not only did this horde commit such devilish crimes on little Belgium, but now they have extended their outrages on the whole civilized world. This is exactly what the devil would have us all do. Therefore, I have resolved, in my weakness, to be a servant of the Lord the balance of my days, and I sincerely pray for the day to come when I may have the strength and courage to stand up for Jesus. The Apostle James says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." I truly request the prayers, in my behalf, of all the Christians in and out of this institution. With sincerity, I am truly yours,

S. F.

RED CROSS FUND MADE UP BY CURTIS JETT IN
PRISON, JUNE 25, 1918.

Inmates of the State Reformatory have subscribed \$53.32 to the American Red Cross war fund, bringing the total in cash to over \$21,000. In a letter to the Red Cross, containing his check for the total amount subscribed by the prisoners, Curt Jett said: "This is to help win the war, put down Kaiserism, and help those who need help. Prisoners are very poor. This was made up in small donations. Many of the prisoners gave

all they had, and that was five cents. It ranged from five cents to one dollar. I think this equals a thousand dollars given by citizens on the outside. A patriotic spirit prompted the making up of this fund. I think the Red Cross is doing a grand and beautiful work. May God bless you all in your work."

Mr. Curt Jett: I will write you a few words about the Bible class and the Christian Endeavor. I like them both fine, and I feel that you have helped me in your talk and your Christian work. I have enjoyed your talk very much, and when I leave here I can speak a good word for you about your good work in this place. I know that you would be a great help to all the people in this place if they would listen to you, for you are trying to lead them right. I don't care what anyone says about you, I am for you, for I think you are right with the Lord. I love to be with His people because they are trying to follow the ways of the Lord. While I was in the London jail I had a dream of a great fowl that had great wings, and I thought it was an eagle. I saw it flying and it lit on a tree very close to my house. I thought of my children and thought it would catch them. I tried to get home to my gun that I might kill it, and I looked and saw my four little

children coming to meet me, and the eagle flew over them and began to come down toward them. I called to them and told them to come to me. I ran to meet them and they got to me before it got to the ground. When it got on the ground I saw it had a body like a horse, only it had but two feet and could not walk fast. I saw that it could not fly any more so I put my children up in a large, green apple tree and they were safe. I stood by them and shot at the fowl and wounded it very badly. My children were safe and my dream was ended. I have thought that the tree that I had found was the Tree of Life, that I may bring my children to it, but the great fowl was between me and my wife, and she never did come to me. I can't tell what was the meaning of my dream. I have studied about it for some time but it was a warning to me. I haven't been able to tell what, but the Lord knows. I will soon be at home with my children, for I haven't but forty-three days longer to stay here. I hope I will never be here again to make any more time. I am going to live a better life than I ever did before, for I have found that the Lord loves them that love Him, and He will give to them that ask Him. I am more than glad that I have left the path of sin that I had followed so long, and I am going

to keep my steps right from this day on. I had a dream of this place two years before I came here. I dreamed the United States had gone to war with the Germans. I dreamed of joining the army and of seeing these walls just as plain as I have seen them, and seeing the brass band, and hearing them play. I dreamed of their making peace while I was standing by the walls. The United States has gone to war while I am here. I dreamed that the United States won the war for the sake of the prayers of the Christian women and men of the United States. I had this dream three years or more before the United States went to war. W. A. A.

My Dear Curtis: May God richly bless you for the good work that you are doing among these poor unfortunate brothers in this prison. Curt, I am sorry to say that I am not as true and as good a Christian as I should be, but I can say this much for you; through your good work and influence I am going out a better man than I was when I came in here. Tell the boys that I said if they will listen to Curt Jett, that when they get out they will never have to come back to prison. I am leaving tomorrow morning for Stithton, Ky., to help in the new army camp. I will write you in a few days and

let you know how I am getting along. Curt, I hope to see you a free man in the near future, as I believe you are sincere and deserve another chance. Good-bye and God bless you. Your friend, H. B.

Dear Sir and Brother: I am writing you this letter hoping it will cheer you and make you feel good. I want to show you that I appreciate the good you have done me, and the good work you are doing in the prison. I am glad that I can say, since I have been coming to the Bible class and heard you talk on the Word of God I have been reading my Bible more, and I want you to have the praise for it. I say this, and believe it with all my heart, that if there is a man in all the world that is trying to serve a living God that you are one of them. If I didn't believe it I would not be interested in writing this letter. I think all the good men inside of these walls are bound to say the same of you. R. N.

Mr. Curtis Jett: You asked me sometime ago to join your Bible class. I refused because I was not worthy to be a member, but nevertheless I sincerely believe beyond all reasonable doubt that you are a gentleman in every respect. For at least seven years I have been very closely associated with you, and I truly know of your pleading to men

who are not right to be better men. Now I can say from my heart that you do all a prisoner can do for the betterment of all who are confined here in this prison, and you have been called everything but a human for taking the time and interest in which you have to make better men out of all who are within your reach. You are having your trials and tribulations, and I would like to see you have a chance to preach and help men on the outside to get right with God as you do in here. Any time I can be of service to you, although I am a sinner, but the little spark in my heart feels for you, and I am willing to aid you in any way I can.

J. S.

Mr. Curt Jett:

Dear Friend: I take the time and pleasure to write you a few lines, as I am thanking you for your good work and what you have done for me. You have set me on the right side. I hope you will be blest in your good work as you have been trying to help someone these many years. I know you ought to be out, and God will give you rest in a better world. Don't get out of heart for you will walk out free and I hope it won't be long. Curt, I will do everything that I can for you for you have done so much for me in prison. I thank you for it.

A. E.

Dear Brother Jett: I want to compliment you on the talk you made at the Bible class last night. It was sure a good one. All of your lessons are good, but I got a little more encouragement from your talk last night than any of the others. I want to say that I have learned a whole lot at the Bible class, and I am trying to obey your instructions. I am sure there are other men in here who feel the same as I do. Perhaps some of them are ashamed to say much about it. You know how that goes with some people in a place like this. I wanted to become a Christian several years before I did, but I was ashamed to go up and give the preacher my hand because somebody is ready to make fun of a man if they see he wants to do right, but I believe if I had heard you make a couple of talks and warned me of this place as well as the one that is still worse, before I got in trouble I don't believe I would have been where I am now. If you could get out of here and go back to the mountains and preach and warn the young men of what you have experienced, I believe you could save many a man from coming to this place. A man who has had the experience is the best man to send for a witness. What you could tell a man about this place would make him behave even if he didn't believe there is a hell. I believe an ex-

convict that becomes a Christian and will try, is the best preacher of the day, for he can describe the bitter part of this life to a man when another can't. Hoping that God will bless your soul and help you to preach.

W. D.

Dear Brother Jett: I feel it my duty to tell the whole world, and I would like for the world to know the way my heart has been changed since I have been in this institution. I have always thought myself a very unlucky man to get caught up with, but since I have come to think what a wicked, sinful life will some day lead to I can clearly see where I have had a trusty friend, one who sticks closer than a brother. Many a night I have been locked in my lonely cell and studied over my awful, sinful life while Satan was my guide. But now I can say, with a clear conscience, that I am a changed man. I have asked God to forgive me of all my sins and guide and direct me that I may do His will each day. Brother Jett has told me of Christ. He has told it in a way that any man could understand it. I will never forget the good advice he has given me. He has taught me how to trust in Christ. I never took any hand in church or anything good before, but I thank God for everthing He has done for me. I want to say that whiskey has been the

greater part of my downfall, and I truly hope to see the day come when I can lend a helping hand to put it out of this whole nation for the sake of other young men. J. B.

Mr. Curtis Jett: I will drop you a line in regard to the good work you are doing in the prison. I have been here six months, and you were the first one to come around to cheer me, and ask me if I didn't want to go to the Bible class. I told you yes, and you went and got me out. I have noticed ever since, when a new man came in you are the first one to him, and advising him to do what is right, and always ready to do anything you can to cheer him. You always have a kind word for everybody. I wish the people all over the State knew what good work you are doing in here. Your Bible class is improving fast. I hope to see the day come when you can be free again so you can deliver the good message to the people on the outside as you often do to us in here. We would be lonesome without you, though you would cheer many a heart wherever you would go. Whenever you get out I want you to visit our part of the country and preach, and I hope to be with you. I feel that the people ought to do everything in their power for you. M. M.

FROM A MEMBER OF THE BIBLE CLASS.

I have been helped by going to the Bible class. I believe if any prisoner will obey Brother Jett he will come out in the right way. I know I have learned how to do better and will try to learn more about God. I believe he will teach the right things for us. Men, I will try much harder to obey and to learn. If I had done as Brother Jett asked me when I was here before I would not be in prison today, but I lost out by not obeying this good man. I will try much the harder to do the things that are right, and stick to it. Let us poor devils try to obey his teaching, and if we do I believe God will bless each and everyone. Listening to him, they will be helped. I know it is time to do better, if I don't my soul will be lost, for God says we all must be born again. C. L.

CHANGE COMES IN CURT JETT.

Frankfort, Ky., March 14.—(Special.)—Although he is serving two life sentences for murder, Curt Jett has not yet abandoned hope of getting a pardon and being given another chance to show that his reformation has been sincere and final. He says that God has pardoned him for his crimes and he thinks the Governor ought to.

“The best thing ever happened to me was

when I was sent to the penitentiary," said Jett last night in his cell in the prison here as he was talking to some newspaper men, who were inside the cellhouse for another purpose than talking to Jett. "I realize that I never would have been reformed but for being put in here," continued Jett. "I only wish that they would give me another chance to show that I really have changed my ways."

LICENSE TO TEACH SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Jett showed the newspaper men who had stopped to talk to him, when they saw him lying on his cot reading, a certificate from the International Sunday School League entitling him to teach in a Sunday school. He was prouder of that than he ever was of his ability to shoot and he showed it with great pride. Jett recently wrote out his religious experiences for the Rev. Geo. L. Herr, the prison evangelist, and last night Jett said he would give the story to the newspapers if Col. E. E. Mudd, the prison warden, had no objections. Col. Mudd was with the newspaper men and readily consented to Jett giving out the story. He had written it with a pencil and gave it to the newspaper men, desiring that it be published.

Jett's cell is covered with pictures, most of them selected with care as to their beauty, and he has shown taste in arranging them.

One of the newspaper men remarked on the decorations in the cell last night and Jett said:

"Yes, it cheers this cell up a little and makes it brighter."

EXPRESSION ON FACE CHANGED.

Even the expression of Jett's face has changed and he has none of that hard look that he used to wear. He is bright and cheerful and Col. Mudd says there is not a better prisoner in the penitentiary than Jett. Col. Mudd said that he could not say that Jett's conversion was genuine from a religious standpoint, but he says Jett has certainly changed inside the prison. The Rev. Joseph Severance, the prison chaplain, says that Jett is one of the best Bible scholars he ever saw and knows more about the Bible than many earnest church workers.

In his story which he gave out last night Jett freely admits his guilt of the crimes that are charged against him. He added, when he said that it was a good thing that he had been put in the penitentiary:

"I do not mean that it was good to kill men."

He said that whiskey was largely responsible for his misdeeds and he wanted to do good now that he had done so much harm. The

following is Jett's story as he wrote it in his cell:

JETT'S STORY.

"State Prison, Frankfort, Ky., March 13, 1909.—To the Whole World: I want to let the whole world know what God in His great mercy has done for me, and prove to you by words which are true that Jesus is willing, able and does save to the uttermost. After a life of sin and shame, God sent His Holy Spirit into my soul and made a new man of me. It was in this wise: A dear, good woman who is dead now, but who then lived in Lexington; her name was Mrs. Fanny A. Pew—I shall never forget that name—she wrote me a good Christian letter, full of good advice, and begged me to become a Christian. I had never seen her, or she me, as I know of; she had only read in the press regarding what a desperado and outlaw I was. I read her letter and it sounded like a fairy tale to me, with no sense in it; but after reflection, I answered it, and we began to be good friends, and she kept begging me to turn from my sinful ways and be a Christian man.

READ NEW TESTAMENT.

"I want to state here that because a man is in prison, he doesn't have to be a Christian or behave himself; and Mrs. Pew sent me a small revised Testament and begged me

to read it. At first I laid it up and would not read it. I don't remember of ever reading a whole chapter in a Bible up until that time in my whole life; and at last, by her begging me in every letter to read my Testament, I began to read it, and started out with a resolution to read it through, and after I began to read, I became interested in it, and the more I read it the deeper I became interested in it, and God's Holy Spirit began to work in me, and I began to pray. At first it seemed that I was afraid that God would not answer my prayers, but still something made me pray anyway, and it wasn't long until I was praying to God every night from one to three times, from the depths of my heart. I had taken His name in vain ever since I was a child, and I asked Him to make me quit taking His name in vain, and after a day at my work, and when I would curse God, I would think of my prayers, and then at night when I would go to my cell I would let my thoughts wander over a day that had just passed, and I could tell after reflecting that I hadn't cursed so much that day. And little by little God removed that evil spirit, cursing, from me, until one night when I went to my cell and my thoughts wandered over the day that had just passed, and not an oath had I uttered, and I was happier than ever before,

I fell on my knees on the hard stone floor, and thanked God for His goodness and for removing that swearing away from me.

QUITS SMOKING CIGARETTES.

“I had smoked cigarettes for at least fifteen years, and I quit them. I was full of revenge and hatred, and I cried aloud to God in my lonely cell to redeem my soul, which He did, and it wasn't long before I was a friend to everyone and praising God for full and free salvation. He has made a new man of me. The Holy Spirit is like a fever, and it is all and all, before a man gets right with God. Condemning and deceitful spirits will rise up in a man, but all we have to do is to ask God and He will remove them all; to live a true Christian life is the straightest life that anyone ever tried to walk. It is a great warfare. I read and study my Bible and have learned a great deal about God's word since I joined the church, a few short months ago, under a great, good and noble man of Frankfort by the name of C. R. Hudson, and I love him as a very dear brother. There is not a man in all this world that I hold the least bit of malice against, and before I got right with God I had revenge in me against many.

WARNS YOUNG MEN.

“Young men, as you read this, from one who has done many and great wrongs, take

warning; shun evil companions and don't do as I have done in days gone by. Don't be led astray by older heads, for the man that will advise you to do a wrong is not your friend; but I could not see it that way. God has given me a new mind and I know as well as I know that I am living that religion is true, real and no fake, as I once thought.

HAS BEEN BORN AGAIN.

"I was raised on a Bluegrass farm in Madison county, Ky., and my parents were as good a father and mother as ever lived; but my father died while I was young and I went from bad to worse, committing crime after crime, and I am guilty of the charges against me, but God has forgiven me of every wrong I ever did. Why won't the Governor? All the punishment that I will ever have to go through with will be on this earth, for God has forgiven me of every wrong and I have a clear conscience now, for I have been born again. There are so many men in prison that trample the lowly God under foot to try and gain their freedom in that way, and I hope that no one single person that reads this will think that I am making mockery of God's love, for I am sincere with God, as I used to be with Satan. I wish that every paper in the whole world would publish this so that it could have a chance to touch the hearts of

many sinful men; I long to tell the story to young men, from East to West, from North to South, how God redeemed my soul.

REFERS TO SCRIPTURES.

"We have organized a Bible reading circle here in the prison which is a grand and good work. Now I refer you to some Scriptures which I hope everyone will read carefully, and it will show you how God will forgive a man for the crime of murder and for all crimes except one.

"Read Exodus 2:11, 12, 13, 14, 5; 2 Sam. 10 and 12; Ezekiel 18, from 20th verse to end of chapter; Jeremiah 33:8, 9; Matthew 12:31; Luke 15; Acts 7:54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60; Acts 8:1 to 7; 16, 17, 22; Galatians 3:24.

"I ask for the sincere prayers of every good Christian in this whole world; pray for me, that I may be true to God the rest of my life. When I was repenting my whole face would draw and I could feel the hot, burning love of God in my whole being. I am in prison, maybe never to hear the birds sing or the rippling of the water again, a free man, but I say unto you that I am a free man in Jesus; I have found a friend that sticks closer than a brother. People, let your light shine, for I believe that there are many diamonds in the rough. I am yours in Jesus,

"CURTIS JETT."

CHAPTER IX.

COMMENDATION FROM PRISON EVANGELIST.

To the Editor of the Evening Post:

My Dear Mr. Knott:

I read in your paper a few days ago an article, where Mrs. Tucker (former wife of Judge Marcum) begs the Prison Board to deny the plea of Curtis Jett, now confined in the State Reformatory, Frankfort, Ky., a parole. To support her plea, she cites Tom White and Beach Hargis. Having known the three men during their time of incarceration, I deem her comparison a very unjust one indeed, in fact, the cases are not parallel at all. Beach Hargis and Tom White never made any pretense whatever towards accepting the Gospel and God's mercy for forgiveness of the dark past. Consequently, they did not live differently upon their release from prison.

How different is the case of Curtis Jett. I have every reason to believe that Jett is a thoroughly converted, sincere, Christian man; his life behind the high walls at Frankfort in dealing with his fellow-prisoners to live for God and the right is a positive proof

of his sincerity. There isn't an official nor a prisoner that has not the utmost confidence in Curtis Jett. He often conducts the services in the prison, and upon one occasion, in the Chaplain's absence from the city, he was sent by our warden, T. M. Phythian, to the prison farm to conduct the funeral of a dead prisoner. Such is the esteem of the warden in Curtis Jett. Eighteen ex-convicts that I have guided to a better way have become ministers of the Gospel. Some of the most notable redemptions of so-called "hardened criminals," known to evangelistic work have been accomplished, but none, have I ever met or dealt with have I had more confidence in than Curtis Jett. I have every reason to believe the liberation of this man would be a blessing to the community at large and that his life's story with the wonderful Gospel message would be the means of turning thousands to a better life. My prayer and hope is, that I may soon see Curt Jett in school, studying for the ministry. I am, very truly yours,

GEORGE L. HERR,
Prison Evangelist.

THE VIOLIN PLAYER.

She came to encourage the prisoners,
And to ease their hearts once more,
To let them see their follies,
And commit bad deeds no more.

She sang to them of mother,
And touched the hearts of all,
As tears dropped from the eyes of guards
Who were sitting near the wall.

She melted hearts as hard as steel,
And caused many of them to say,
"She is one of God's holy messengers,
He has sent to us today."

We know that God has sent her,
To let us have a glance
At what is known as a holy child
In all of her elegance.

Her violin we know is proud
To boast of a mistress true,
And renders great assistance
To the good she has to do.

The bow she draws across the strings
With graceful pride and care,
As angels will in heaven,
When they play for her up there.

This work has brought her much fame,
But earthly honors she does not claim.
Her mother is proud to stand and see
Her daughter reforming you and me.

Her music is lovely, but were it our choice,
We would all prefer her beautiful voice.
If all people were as graceful and great
We would need no prison in Kentucky
State.

And why they are not I cannot say,
For she is exceeding good in every way;
She is traveling straight and working hard,
And heaven shall be her great reward.

She was a little Miss Rice, that visited the
prison in the summer of 1918, with her
mother.

CHAPTER X.

POEM WRITTEN BY A PRISONER.

I have been confined and hid away,
In a lonesome prison for many a day;
But I am glad to know that God can see,
How I am deprived of my liberty.
The bitter tears that now I shed,
With thoughts of loved ones that are dead,
Can never be recalled again,
Although I have suffered from the pain
Of deeds committed long ago,
But now I am washed as white as snow,
My sins forgiven, I now feel free,
And think most everyone can see.
This world is cold with clouds above,
And has no earthly charms I love.
I think of those that have gone to rest,
And those who gave to life their best;
Their bodies lie beneath the sod,
Their souls above at peace with God.
But I am sure that they are free,
And are waiting there on high for me.
There is nothing now that I can do
But teach the word of God to you.
Still, I can talk, and will not fail
To tell a most convincing tale

Of by-gone days when I was free
And never knew that God could see,
The good I held within my heart,
Until He gave me strength to start,
To seek the souls so dark with sin,
And speak the love of God within.
I am traveling a road that is narrow and
 straight,
And I am sure to enter the Pearly Gate.
My light so shines that I can see
Those loved ones waiting there for me.
With outstretched arms and a crown of gold,
God now receives my humble soul.
Those dear departed ones I loved could mem-
 ory's hand restore,
Their loving kindness and advice to their
 dear boy once more.

PRISONER'S SOLILOQUY.

Left alone on earth a prisoner, and no one
 seems to see,
The good a Christian could do on earth, if he
 were only free;
To see the things of nature, that God made
 for me to see,
And love my freedom here on earth as justice
 owes to me.
I could summon from the shadowy past, the
 times as they used to be,

When I roamed over hills and hollows, and
fought the bumble-bee.
As the lilies of the valley, I know that they
are free,
And rose bush on the hillside, beneath the
chestnut tree.
The violets in the garden make me think of
happy hours
That I spent there with my mother gathering
favorite flowers.
This was near old Mud Creek, my favorite
running stream,
That I spent the happiest of my days, and of
a prison, I would never dream.
But some earthly things that once I loved, I
wish never again to see,
And I am continually praying for God to set
me free.
Each day we are growing older and I fear
that nature will change
The song birds and the flowers of my old fa-
miliar range.
The friends on earth that once I knew, who
would help a friend along,
Have given up their earthly tasks, and to
their eternal homes have gone.
My father and my mother have reached their
home on high,
And some day I shall meet them in that home
beyond the sky.

But I am left in a hell on earth, and no one
seems to care
What becomes of poor Curt Jett, or how he
has to fare.
But if fathers and mothers, and brothers, and
sisters would pray for me,
It would not take long to convince you that I
could be set free.

COPY OF LETTER WITH CLIPPING.

Mr. Curt Jett: I got your telegram and also your letter. We are surely delighted that you are coming. Am enclosing a clipping from the *Register* that appeared the following day after receiving your telegram. Your many friends in the country and town will be delighted to hear you.

Yours truly,

G. D. SMITH.

CURT JETT TO BE HEARD ON PLATFORM HERE
FEBRUARY 14.

“Much intrest has been aroused by the announcement that Curt Jett, formerly of Breathitt county feud fame, will have a date on the lecture course at the Richmond Methodist Church. He will be heard here Feb. 14, coming over from Asbury College at Wilmore, where he is taking a ministerial course. When it was ascertained that Jett could be

obtained for a lecture, Rev. M. T. Chandler, who had been programmed, willingly consented to give him his date.

“Jett’s subject will be ‘Saved by Grace.’ Those who have heard him say that he makes an especially fervent and strong appeal, especially to the young men, and there is no doubt but that his friends in town and the county will be glad of this opportunity to hear him.”—*Richmond Register*, Jan. 22, 1919.

CHAPTER XI.

MY PAROLE.

On December 11, 1918, I was paroled from the State Prison at Frankfort. I cannot describe my feelings after over fifteen years of servitude and bondage, to be released from this terrible slavery.

I came to Lexington and spent the night at the Phoenix Hotel, and on December 12, went to my old home at Doylesville, in Madison county, visited Mr. R. R. Wells, who owns our old home. Everything looked strange—the creeks, trees, and old hills. The old church is still standing. I walked on its sills as a barefoot boy over thirty years ago.

I preached three sermons in this old church; one on the first Sunday after my release. I preached to some of those who had prayed for my release, and we had a fine time. I also received a call to Union City, and preached in the Baptist Church; also preached several sermons at Ravenna. The following is a newspaper clipping:

“CURT JETT PREACHES TO PACKED CHURCH.”

“Ravenna, Ky., Dec. 20.—Rev. Curt Jett is holding services at the Mission Church here. He is attracting large audiences, the church

being packed to the limit. His enthusiasm and earnestness are wonderful."

"He said that he had for several years devoted much of his time to the study of the Bible, had been converted to a religious life sometime ago, and that he would begin a course at Asbury College, Wilmore, on the first day of the New Year, and continue until the summer vacation, at which time he will begin his preaching either in the mountains of Kentucky or elsewhere, where he believes he can give spiritual aid to those who have not been fortunate enough to see the light as it has been brought to him.

"Jett said he was converted sometime after his term in the penitentiary began, from letters received from women, one in particular who sent him words of cheer and told him of the blessings of religious thought and the happiness that comes from Christianity and its teachings.

"Now, he would not be recognized as the same man, so greatly has he changed in the years in which he has been in prison, and during which time he has studied deeply and taken counsel of men and women who have, by their intellect and character, induced him to study the lessons of religion, to reflect on the sins of his past life and to look forward to the work of a teacher and an evangelist.

“Curt Jett, the criminal, entered prison a hardened, brutal man; he left it with his whole nature changed, his mind awakened, his heart and soul touched by the teachings of religion. He says he gave little thought to religion as a boy and only when his mother talked to him on the subject did he go to church.

“There can be no doubt of the sincerity of Curt Jett, for his manner and appearance are so changed that nothing but a strong influence for the better could have destroyed his old look and apparent swaggering pride in his achievements that characterized his whole conduct while on trial. He says that but for the action on the part of a few women in Lexington and elsewhere he would never have been converted, and this conversion opened his eyes and made him a better man. He speaks of his prison life without the slightest hesitation, and feels that his term in the penitentiary was all that could have brought about his reformation through conversion to religion.

“Jett will never attempt to hide the fact that he has been in prison, that he was convicted of a terrible crime, for he now says he believes in truth, having been converted to religion.”

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