

## Chapter One

### Introduction: A Knowledge of God

*“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”* John 17:3.

The Amplified Bible renders this verse thus:

*“And this is eternal life: (it means) to know (to perceive, recognise, become acquainted with and understand) You, the only true and real God, and (likewise) to know Him Jesus (as the) Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, Whom You have sent.”* John 17:3.

“The knowledge of God as **revealed in Christ** is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that works transformation of character. This knowledge, received, will re-create the soul in the image of God. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine.” 8T. 289.

We can safely conclude that the **possession** and the **experience** of the true knowledge of God is eternal life. But where is this knowledge of God to be found? In the word of God. God has revealed Himself to us in and through His Son in the plan of redemption, and this revelation, this knowledge is in His word. A true knowledge of His word is a true knowledge of God.

Many Christians drift along in a superficial or lukewarm experience without appreciating or appropriating the power of God’s word. They may not even understand that the victory of Christ is given to them in His word and they receive this victory by receiving His word.

In this series of studies we want to discover the victorious power in God’s word and we want to learn how to **receive** the word and to **employ** its power in the work of overcoming sin.

Remember:

**“When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience.”** D.A. 668.

**“The work of overcoming is to be the study of every soul who enters the kingdom of God.”** R.H. Vol. 3, 70.

**“The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame,—the power of the word.”** D.A. 258.

#### A Knowledge of God

“Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all.

Our Saviour bound up His precious lessons with the things of nature. The trees, the birds, the flowers of the valleys, the hills, the lakes, and the beautiful heavens, as well as the incidents and surroundings of daily life, were all linked with the words of truth, that His lessons might thus be often recalled to mind, even amid the busy cares of man's life of toil.

God would have His children appreciate His works and delight in the simple, quiet beauty with which He has adorned our earthly home. He is a lover of the beautiful, and above all that is outwardly attractive He loves beauty of character; He would have us cultivate purity and simplicity, the quiet graces of the flowers.

If we will but listen, God's created works will teach us precious lessons of obedience and trust. From the stars that in their trackless courses through space follow from age to age their appointed path, down to the minutest atom, the things of nature obey the Creator's will. And God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created. He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without fear. When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark.

If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God, who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of cares, or overwhelmed by their weight. We should then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers.

As your senses delight in the attractive loveliness of the earth, think of the world that is to come, that shall never know the blight of sin and death; where the face of nature will no more wear the shadow of the curse. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray. In the varied gifts of God in nature we see but the faintest gleaming of His glory. It is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

The poet and the naturalist have many things to say about nature, but it is the Christian who enjoys the beauty of the earth with the highest appreciation, because he recognizes his Father's handiwork and perceives His love in flower and shrub and tree. No one can fully appreciate the significance of hill and vale, river and sea, who does not look upon them as an expression of God's love to man.

God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them. The psalmist, tracing the work of God's providence, says, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psalm 33:5; 107:43.

God speaks to us in His word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption. Here is open before us the history of patriarchs and prophets and other holy men of old. They were men "subject to like passions as we are." James 5:17. We see how they struggled through discouragements like our own, how they fell under temptation as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God; and, beholding, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness. As we read of the precious experiences granted them, of the light and love and blessing it was theirs to enjoy, and of the work they wrought through the grace given them, the spirit that inspired them kindles a flame of holy emulation in our hearts and a desire to be like them in character--like them to walk with God.

Jesus said of the Old Testament Scriptures,—and how much more is it true of the New,—“They are they which testify of Me,” the Redeemer, Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. John 5:39. Yes, the whole Bible tells of Christ. From the first record of creation—for “without Him was not anything made that was made”—to the closing promise, “Behold, I come quickly,” we are reading of His works and listening to His voice. John 1:3; Revelation 22:12. If you would become acquainted with the Saviour, study the Holy Scriptures.

Fill the whole heart with the words of God. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven. Jesus declares,

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." And He explains Himself by saying, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:53, 63. Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink; and as in the natural economy, so in the spiritual economy: it is what we meditate upon that will give tone and strength to our spiritual nature.

The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for the most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. As we thus contemplate heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger, and our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and a daily, living experience in His power to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

As we meditate upon the perfections of the Saviour, we shall desire to be wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like Him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of Him to others and represent Him to the world.

The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for salvation are made as clear as noonday; and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God.

We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the words of God for ourselves. If we allow others to do our thinking, we shall have crippled energies and contracted abilities. The noble powers of the mind may be so dwarfed by lack of exercise on themes worthy of their concentration as to lose their ability to grasp the deep meaning of the word of God. The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture and spiritual things with spiritual.

There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times.

But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind.

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood, but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life.

Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." John 1:47, 48. And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer if we will seek Him for light that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance.

The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is His office to present Christ, the purity of His righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through Him. Jesus says, "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16:14. The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God esteem the human race, since He gave His Son to die for them and appoints His Spirit to be man's teacher and continual guide!" S.C. Chapter 10.

## Chapter Two

### Introducing The Power Of God's Word For Victory Over Sin

*“Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee.”* Psa. 119:11.

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”* 1 Peter 1:23-25.

*“As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”* 1 Peter 2:2, 3.

*“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”* 1 John 3:9.

*“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”* 1 Thess. 2:13.

These wonderful passages of scripture, taken all together, establish an amazing line of truth.

1. We are born again by the *seed* of God.
2. The *seed* of God is the word of God.
3. We grow spiritually by feeding on the *word* of God.
4. The *word* of God works in the minds of those who believe.
5. This *word* of God hidden in the heart gives victory over sin to the point where God will have a remnant who cannot be made to sin by any device or power of Satan!

*“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”* Rev. 12:17.

*“And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the lamb, and by the word their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”* Rev. 12:11.

When we have the *testimony* of Jesus we also have the *word* of that testimony. And the word of the testimony of Jesus must become the word of *our* testimony in order for us to overcome as He overcame.

*“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.”* Rev. 3:21.

And to the Philadelphian remnant, Jesus gives this wonderful promise:

*“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience. I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”* Rev. 3:10.

When we keep the word of God, the word of God keeps us.

*“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”* Rev. 22:7.

***“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”*** John 6:63.

***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying (word), he shall never see death.”*** John 8:51.

Brethren we have come to the time for the fulfillment of 1 John 3:9.

***“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”***

We must learn how to let the **word** keep us from sinning. Remember there is not much time left. It is now or never. The final crisis is about to burst upon us. We must appropriate the righteousness of Christ by appropriating His word. We must understand how He overcame and overcome as He overcame. We must be kept from sinning now and always by the word of God.

***“Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth.”*** John 17:17.

***“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.”*** Rom. 8:32.

All the things that God has given to us in Christ are in His word, we possess them by possessing the **word**.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

“Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God’s immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?” G.C. 593.

“The Saviour took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ and His life declares that humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin.

“The Saviour overcame to show man how he may overcome. All the temptations of Satan, Christ met with the **word** of God. By trusting in God’s promises, He received power to obey God’s commandments, and the tempter could gain no advantage. To every temptation His answer was, ‘It is written.’ ***So God has given us His word wherewith to resist evil.*** Exceeding great and precious promises are ours, that by these we ‘might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.’ 2 Peter 1:4.

“Bid the tempted one look not to circumstances, to the weakness of self, or to the power of temptation, but to the power of God’s word. All its strength is ours. “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” Psalms 119:11; 17:4.

“Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go.

“These precious words every soul that abides in Christ may make his own. He may say:

*“I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: When I fall, I shall arise; When I sit in darkness, The Lord shall be a light unto me.”* **Micah 7:8.**

“He will again have compassion on us, He will blot out our iniquities; Yea, Thou will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea!” **Micah 7:19, Noyes.**

God has promised:

“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; Even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.”  
Isaiah 13:12. **M.H. 180-182.**

This is the word of God. Believe it. Receive it. It will make you more precious than fine gold.

## Chapter Three

### Promises Of Victory

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* 2 Cor. 7: 1.

*“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”* 2 Peter 1: 4.

*“For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”* 2 Cor. 1: 20.

*“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things.”* Rom. 8:31, 32.

*“According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”* 2 Peter 1: 3.

*“Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.”* 2 Cor. 2: 14.

*“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* 1 Cor. 10:13.

*“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished.”* 2 Peter 2: 9.

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. How does He deliver His people out of temptation? By His word!

“The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame, - the power of the word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 8: 32; 7: 17, R.V. **Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin.**” D.A. 258.

“Satan cannot hold the dead in his grasp when the Son of God bids them live. He cannot hold in spiritual death one soul who in faith receives Christ’s word of power. God is saying to all who are dead in sin. “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” Eph. 5: 14. **That word is eternal life.** As the word of God which bade the first man live, still gives us life; as Christ’s **word**, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise,” gave life to the youth of Nain, so that word, “Arise from the dead,” is life to the soul that receives it. God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Col. 1: 13. **It is all offered us in His word. If we receive the word, we have the deliverance.**” D.A. 320.

*“In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every evil trait and resisting every temptation, however strong.* But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast our demons when He walked among men is still the same mighty Redeemer. **Then grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life:** “Him that cometh

to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6: 37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this - never.” M.H. 65, 66.

“The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14: 30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character. And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means He did overcome in the conflict with Satan? **By the word of God.** Only by the word could He resist temptation. “It is written,” He said. And unto us are given “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1: 4. **Every promise in God’s word is ours.** “By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, **but to the power of the word.** All its strength is yours. “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” Ps. 119: 11; 17:4. D.A. 123.

Are you studying God’s word and receiving it into your soul daily? Are you acquainting yourself with the promises of God? Are you standing on God’s promises? Are you feeding your soul as well as you are feeding your body?

Remember, only those whose minds are fortified with the truths of God’s word will be able to stand through the great final crisis. And only those who practise exercising faith by claiming God’s promises will be able to stand alone in God when all earthly support will be cut off.

*“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” James 1: 21.*

## Chapter Four

### The Weapons Of Our Warfare

*“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5.*

*“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with **truth**, and having on the breastplate of **righteousness**; And your feet shod with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**: Above all, taking the shield of **faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

*And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.” Eph. 6:11 - 17.*

Pay careful attention to the essential components of **“the whole armour of God,”** these components are *truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.*

You should see right away that each of these components comes to the believer in the word of God. To put it simply, to put on the whole armour of God means to fortify the mind with the word of God. The principles of truth in the word of God are the principles of Divine selfless love (Agape). These eternal principles define and describe the ways of righteousness and the rewards of righteousness. Each principle of truth, righteousness and love is a formula by which a particular problem of temptation, trial, adversity or difficulty can be solved. Not only must we know the principles of truth, righteousness and love in God’s word but we must know **how, when** and **where** to apply a particular principle to obtain the victory in a particular temptation or adversity.

In other words the many principles, of commands and promises, in God’s word are the **weapons** to be employed in the warfare against the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can **rely** is **the word of God**. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6: 33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. **When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives.** Our only questions will be, what is God’s command? And what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other.” D.A. 121.

#### The Word — Our Weapon of Warfare

“Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God’s promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons.” G.C. 600.

“We must be better acquainted with our Bibles. *We might close the door to many temptations, if we would commit to memory passages of Scripture.* Let us hedge up the way to Satan’s temptations with “It is written.” We shall meet with conflicts to test our faith and courage, but they will make us strong if we conquer through the grace Jesus is willing to give. But we must believe; we must grasp the promises without a doubt.” R.H. Vol 1. 425. (2).

“When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit, and Jesus will be our helper and will lift up for us a standard against him. The father of lies quakes and trembles when the truth of **God, in burning power, is thrown in his face.**” T. Vol 5. 426.

“Wherewithal (how) shall a young man **cleanse** his way *by taking heed* thereto according to *Thy word.* With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy commandments. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart,* that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119: 9 - 11.

“If we would not be misled by error and falsehood, the heart must be preoccupied with the **truth.** The word of God will furnish the mind with **weapons** of divine power, to vanquish the enemy. Happy is the man, who, when tempted, finds his soul rich in the knowledge of the Scriptures, who finds shelter beneath the promises of God. “Thy word.” said the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” The Faith I Live By. 8.

The words of God repeated in songs of thanksgiving and praise reinforce the thoughts of God in the mind of the believer and therefore acts as a fortification to the mind against the temptations of the enemy.

### **The Word in Song**

“Be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Eph. 5: 18,19.

“With a song, Jesus in His earthly life met temptation. Often when sharp, stinging words were spoken, often when the atmosphere about Him was heavy with gloom, with dissatisfaction, distrust, or oppressive fear, was heard His song of faith and holy cheer.” Ed. 166.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Col. 3:16.

Let praise and thanksgiving be expressed in song. When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God.” M.H. 254.

This is not a system of works, but rather, a God-ordained aid to overcoming. For with songs of praise upon our lips and thoughts of heavenly themes upon our minds, it is impossible to give heed to the deceiver’s voice. And the light of God’s word upon the mind and in song dispels the darkness of doubt, discouragement, and weakness.

*“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”* Acts 20:32.

Like good soldiers let us become acquainted with the weapons of our warfare and let us learn how to use these weapons to vanquish the enemy.

## Chapter Five

### Renewing The Inward Man

*“For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish the inward man is renewed day by day.”* 2 Cor. 4: 16.

Jesus answered and said:

*“It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”* Matt. 4:4.

The **outward man** is the **human body** of flesh and blood, including the brain as an organ. The **outward man** is sustained by food and air and water, but since it is mortal and corrupt it is gradually approaching the end-point of physical death.

On the other hand the **inward man** is the **mind** (spirit and soul). The mind is the **function** of the brain and is to be distinguished from the brain but has no separate or independent existence apart from the brain. When the brain dies the mind (spirit and soul) ceases to function, in other words, the soul, as a conscious, living, functioning entity, **cannot** survive the death of the body. The entire human being is devoid of any inherent immortality.

*“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”* Psa 146:3, 4.

The **inward man** then is the **mind** (soul). By **mind** we mean the sum total of the **thoughts** or **thinking** or **thought-patterns** of the individual. This includes motives, attitudes, desires, mind-set, content of thoughts, direction of the thought-pattern, and, most importantly, that mysterious set of thoughts, unique to each individual, called the personality-identity — life experience thought — complex by which each person knows him or her self in relation to the universe around.

Whereas the **body** is **nourished** by bread (physical food) the **mind** must be fed by **words**. Words are **thoughts** expressed. The **word** of God is the **expression** of the **thought** of God and therefore is the expression of the **mind** of God which is Infinite Mind.

When the mind is fed with the word of God, it is renewed.

Now remember, however well we may feed the body, it still remains corrupt and mortal while declining towards physical death because *“the flesh profiteth nothing.”*

But we can renew the mind unto eternal life by taking into the mind the word of God.

Jesus said:

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”* John 6:63.

*“This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.”* John 6:58.

The brain is flesh but the mind is not flesh. Thoughts are non-material i.e. spirit. If the mind is set on the flesh and controlled by the law of sin and death (selfishness, ego centrality), then the only life the mind has is the life of the flesh. Such a mind is spiritually dead. When the mind is genuinely converted, it is set free from enslavement to the flesh and possesses, in addition to physical life, spiritual life i.e. the life of the Holy Spirit which is the life of God. This is accomplished by the word of God.

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” 1 Peter 1:23.*

The human physical life is the life of the biochemical infrastructure of the thought-process. In other words, under grace, in this present system, we need the physical life in order to produce or receive thoughts or words.

When the believer receives the word of God into his mind that word brings the life of God into his mind in order to make him victorious over sin. The life of God in the soul will not become the life of the new body until at the resurrection/translation event. Before that event, the life of God is the spiritual life of the believer’s soul, while the human physical life is the life of the flesh including the brain, which is the organ that produces the mind.

We come now to some very important conclusions. Firstly, in the human being there is that which is flesh (body and brain) called by Paul the **outward man** in 2 Cor. 4:16 and our earthly house in 2 Cor. 5:1.

*“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” 2 Cor 5:1.*

Secondly in the human being there is that which is **not** flesh (even though its biochemical infrastructure is in the flesh). This is the human **mind**, called by Paul the **inward man** in 2 Cor. 4:16.

*“For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish the inward man is renewed day by day.” 2 Cor. 4:16.*

It is your **mind** which constitutes the **real** you. Your flesh is simply the “house and vehicle” for your mind. You feed your flesh with physical bread but your mind must be fed with thoughts. The words of man contain the thoughts of man. The words of Satan contain thoughts of Satan. The words of God, even though given to us in human language, contain the thoughts of God. Moreover, the life and power of God are inseparable from His word. Therefore when you feed your mind with the word of God you are feeding your mind unto eternal life by virtue of the fact that you are receiving into your mind divine principles which are eternal!

At this point someone may ask; does this mean that I should read or study **only** the Bible? The answer is no. Take, for example, Jesus. He studied and received the words of Joseph concerning carpentry and He became a perfect workman at that trade. But when it came to character development He received the word of God and allowed only that word to enter into the production of character.

And so for us there is much worthwhile instruction we have to receive in many areas of human endeavor, but when it comes to salvation, we must rely on the word of God alone.

“The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.” Ed. 126.

This is an overwhelming thought! It means that we, fallen human beings, have, at our finger tips, within the Bible, the CREATIVE ENERGY of God in His WORD which we can receive into our minds for victory over sin now, and for eternal life in the eternity to come.

*“For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6.*

How did God create light on the first day of creation week?

By His **word**!

*“And God said, “Let there be light: and there was light.” Gen. 1:3.*

So now, He speaks light into our souls by His word. And this light is the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*“The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” Psa. 119: 130.*

*“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.” Psa. 119: 133.*

“Every promise in God’s word is ours. “By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the WORD. ALL ITS STRENGTH IS YOURS.” D.A. 123.

“The word of God received into the soul, molds the thoughts and enters into the development of character.” D.A. 391.

“The word of God, studied carefully and obeyed, is the only thing that will make man pure and keep him pure. This alone can save him from meddling with all the iniquities that prevail.” T.M. 335.

But of course, this will only be a reality when we make God’s **thought** in His word our **own thought**. In order to understand better how this is done, we shall begin in our very next chapter to study the human mind and the mechanism of thinking.

We close this chapter with this gem.

“The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matt. 4:4.

“As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in the verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know “what saith the Lord.” D.A. 390.

By making God’s thoughts our own, we are thereby renewing the inward man unto eternal life.

## Chapter Six

### The Word and The Mind

The human **mind** or **soul** is comprised of three functional entities: the **will**, the **intellect** and the **emotions**.

The **intellect** must be **filled** with the **word** of God. The **will-power** must **submit** to the **will** of God as revealed in His **word**. And therefore the **word** of God **hid** in the **intellect** and **acting** through a **surrendered** will-power must **control** the **emotions** so that we behave **not** in accordance with our natural sinful feelings or desires but in accordance with the **word** of God! Such a mind is called a **spiritual** mind by Paul in Romans 8. The inspired apostle compares and contrasts the natural or carnal or sinful mind with the spiritual mind in verses 5 through 9. Let us read these verses from the N.I.V.

*“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

Remember that the Spirit of God and the word of God are functionally inseparable. The Holy Spirit controls the believer’s mind by and through the word of God and the word of God controls the believer’s mind by and through the power of the Holy Spirit which is the power of God’s love.

Let us read John 6:63 from the N.I.V.

*“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”* John 6:63 N.I.V.

“Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.” C.O.L. 408.

“The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false theories and traditions, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.

“In describing to His disciples the office of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified

energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." D.A. 671.

We should study the word of God in order to progressively appreciate and receive more and still more of His love, His truth and His righteousness. The more of His love we see and receive the more does the capacity of the mind expand to receive still more of His love until we are filled with all the fullness of His love, this is latter rain experience.

"If the eye is *kept fixed* on Christ, the work of the Spirit *ceases not* until the soul is *conformed* to His image. The pure element of love will *expand* the soul, giving it a *capacity* for *higher* attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the *fullness*." D.A. 302.

"God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of the Scriptures." C.O.L. 60.

"By a study of the Word, we are to see Him as He is, and, charmed with the view of His divine perfection, we are to grow unto the same image. We need to understand that the gospel fully reveals the glory of the Lord. It is the mirror that reveals the character of God to the converted soul. The likeness of God is revealed in the perfect character of His Son, that we may understand what it means to be made in the likeness of the image of God, and *what we may become* if by constantly beholding we allow ourselves to be changed from "glory to glory." 4 S.T. 478.

"If we would enter the city of God, and look upon Jesus in His glory, we must become accustomed to beholding Him with the eye of faith here. The WORDS and the character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and of our conversation; and each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes." M.Y. P. 114.

"BEHOLDING CHRIST MEANS STUDYING HIS LIFE AS GIVEN IN HIS WORD. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being." SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 1098.

In order for the mind to produce thoughts it must receive thoughts. Thoughts, ideas and principles of knowledge are received through words. Words are thoughts expressed in language and each language has a different word for the same thought. For example; the request or command **to sit down** is one set of words in English, another set of words in French, another in Spanish, yet another in German. But when the command is given in each language the result is the same, i.e. the people sit down. This proves that the **thought** expressed in the different words of the different languages is the **same thought**.

**Words**, then, are vehicles for conveying **thoughts** to the **mind**. In some languages there may be only one word to convey several thoughts whereas in other languages, there may be several words to convey one thought. For example, in the English language there is the one word **love** used to convey the **thoughts** of several **modalities** of **affection**, whereas in the Greek language there are three words for the English word love: **agape**, **eros** and **filia**. **Agape** is the Divine love; **eros** is man-woman love; **filia** is brother-sister-family love.

It is of the utmost importance, then, that we understand the particular thought intended in a particular word or set of words. Since human language is the imperfect medium through which God has revealed His thoughts to us we must have trustworthy rules of interpretation in order to ascertain the **thought** of God in the **words** of human language.

In studying the scriptures we must be careful and thorough. We must compare scripture with scripture and receive the **thought** of God in the words of human language. Because, strictly speaking, the **word of God** is the **thought of God** in a **human word** and **not** merely the human word itself.

Having ascertained the **thought** of God in the **words** of scripture, we are to make that **thought of God** our own thought by thinking and acting in harmony with the particular **thought of God** as revealed in the words of the scripture passage.

By thinking the **thought** and acting on the **thought** it becomes fixed in the **mind** thereby re-producing the **character** of the **Source** of the thought in us.

In our next chapter, we shall begin to examine more closely the mechanism of thinking and the power of thoughts.

In closing let us meditate on this gem:

“The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God’s word. Christ says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.” John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God.”

“Every seed bring forth fruit after its kind. Sow the seed under right conditions, and it will develop its own life in the plant. Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God.” C.O.L. 38.

## Chapter Seven

### Fixing The Word In The Mind – Part One

“As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know “What saith the Lord.” D.A. 390.

“Fill the whole heart with the words of God. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven. Jesus declares, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” And He explains Himself by saying, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:53, 63. Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink; and as in the natural economy, so in the spiritual economy; it is what we meditate upon that will give tone and strength to our spiritual nature.” S.C. 88.

“There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times.” S.C. 90.

Pay careful attention to the last sentence in the above quotation:” If God’s word were studied as it should be...” There is a correct way to study God’s word. In studying the scriptures we need to obey the following guidelines:-

1. Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. “Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.” S.C. 91.
2. Study the scriptures **carefully** and **thoroughly**. It is best to study Bible texts under specific subject headings, e.g. studying and learning all the texts which deal with the Second Coming of Christ. It is also equally important to read and study passages of exhortation and praise.

“But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. **One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained.** Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind.” S.C. 90.

3. Approach the study of the scriptures with a spirit of **humility** and **meekness**, not with self-sufficiency and intellectual pride. Lay preconceived ideas at the door of honest scriptural investigation.
4. Compare scripture with scripture and let the Bible be its own interpreter. Never jump to a conclusion based on one text or on a vague passage. Search for all the texts which deal with a particular theme and by comparing text with text you will be guided by the Holy Spirit into the truth. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God: that we

might know the things that are freely given to us. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Cor. 2: 12, 13.

"We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood, but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. **There must be careful research and prayerful reflection.** And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, **so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker.** The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life." S.C. 90, 91.

5. We should fortify our minds with the word of God through daily study and much prayer. And so long as we do this, we have the assurance that the Holy Spirit will bring to our remembrance the truths that will be needed when we are brought to trial in the Final Crisis.

"The servants of Christ were to prepare no set speech to present when brought to trial. Their preparation was to be made day by day in treasuring up the precious truth of God's word, and through prayer strengthening their faith. When they were brought into trial, the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the very truths that would be needed.

"A daily, earnest striving to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, would bring power and efficiency to the soul. The knowledge obtained by diligent searching of the Scriptures would be flashed into the memory at the right time. But if any had neglected to acquaint themselves with the words of Christ, if they had never tested the power of His grace in trial, they could not expect that the Holy Spirit would bring His words to their remembrance. They were to serve God daily with undivided affection, and then trust Him." D.A. 355.

### Fixing The Word In The Memory

In the word of God much emphasis is placed on the critical importance of MEMORY i.e. remembering the truths of scripture.

*"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."* Heb. 2:1.

And Paul goes on to stress that **forgetfulness** of the word is usually the result of **neglect** to study and **learn** the word with **persevering earnestness**.

*"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation..."* Heb. 2:3.

The apostle Peter also stressed the importance of memory when he wrote his epistle to the churches.

*"Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."* 2 Peter 1:15.

In fact the purpose of Peter's second epistle was to stir up their minds by way of memory.

*"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour."* 2 Peter 3:1,2.

As a preacher and teacher Peter understood the importance of **continuous revision** in order to **fix** the truth in the mind's **memory**.

*“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.” 2 Peter 1:12.*

It is clear from this text that merely **knowing** a truth does not necessarily mean that you are **established** in that truth. You have to reach the point where that truth, in all of its bearings and applications, is **“always in remembrance”**, that is, it is **fixed** in the **memory** intellectually and experientially as a sanctifying principle which controls your motives, attitudes, thoughts, words, behaviour.

Fixing God’s truth in the mind requires, as we have already seen, the co-operation of the human and the Divine. Our part is to obtain the knowledge of truth by diligent, daily, prayerful, careful, thorough study and revision of the word of God. God’s part is to impart His Spirit, in whom His love is functionally constituted. The love of God, His Spirit, fixes the truth in our experience and brings it back to remembrance in times of crisis.

“Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself,” D.A . 671.

Psychologists and neurobiologists today make three critical distinctions about memory. **Firstly** there are three stages involved in committing any truth to memory:

- (i) **encoding** the information in the mind.
- (ii) **storage** of the information in the mind.
- (iii) **retrieval** of the information when one requires to use it.

**Secondly** there are two basic functional types of memory:

- (i) Short term memory for storing information for a few seconds.
- (ii) Long term memory for storing information for any period of time  
ranging from several minutes to a whole life time.

**Thirdly** there is one memory system for storing the facts of one’s life experience and another for storing learned skills.

We need to understand more about how the mind works so that we can co-operate more effectively with the Holy Ghost in learning and teaching the truth. Jesus Himself studied the minds of men so as to teach them more effectively. Later on we shall see that His methods were the best and are being vindicated by modern psychological research.

We look forward to our next several chapters when we shall understand more about **learning** and **memory**. By such understanding we shall be better able to eat and digest the bread of life.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. **As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus.** The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” **This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.**” D.A. 391.

## Chapter Eight

### Fixing The Word In The Mind – Part Two

We are told in Hebrews 1:3 that the Son of God upholds all things by the **word** of His power. Therefore the word of God must hold up the believer's mind and keep that mind from falling under the "gravitational" pull of the world, the flesh and the devil. But in order for the word of God to "hold up" the mind, that word must be indelibly engraved or hidden in mind.

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..."* Col. 3:16.

*"Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee."* Psa. 119:11.

*"Holding fast the faithful word as you hath been taught, that you may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."* Titus 1:9.

#### Hiding The Word In The Heart

##### (A) THE THREE STAGES OF MEMORY:

These three stages are:

- (i) Encoding
- (ii) Storage
- (iii) Retrieval

**Encoding** means **putting the information into** memory.

**Storage** means **maintaining** the information **in** the memory.

**Retrieval** means **recovering** the information **from** the memory.

Experimental evidence indicates that **encoding** involves mainly regions of the brain in the **left** cerebral hemisphere whereas **retrieval** involves mainly regions of the brain in the **right** cerebral hemisphere, but there is some definite overlapping.

##### (B) SHORT-TERM MEMORY

First let us consider these **three** stages with reference to **short-term memory**. **Short-term** memory is memory from which information is retrieved a **few seconds** after encoding.

###### (i) Encoding for Short-term Memory

When information is encoded into memory it is entered in a certain code or representation. You may remember something by having a **mental picture** of it, this is called **visual encoding**. Or you may remember something by **repeating the sounds** of the information, this is called **Acoustic encoding**. **Acoustic** or verbal (words) encoding involves mainly the left cerebral cortex whereas **visual** or pictorial (picture) encoding involves mainly the right cerebral cortex.

## (C) STORAGE

One of the most amazing facts about **short-term memory** is that it has a very limited **storage** capacity. The average human being can store **only** seven (yes 7) items in short-term memory. In actuality, it is  $7 \pm 2$ . A few can store 9 items, a few can only store 5 items, the overall average is 7 items for short-term storage!

This number was first determined by Herman Ebbinghaus in 1885. In 1956 George Miller confirmed it and was so struck by the constancy of the number 7 as the number of items stored in short-term memory that he called it the magical number 7.

Short-term memory means a quick look and immediate retrieval and our storage capacity is 7 items (plus or minus 2). Since short-term memory is limited to 7 items, on average, if a large number of items can be divided or chunked into a smaller number of items, short-term memory for the original large number will be better.

For example, if you were shown these 14 letters,

**S R U O Y Y L E R E C N I S**

This would be beyond our short-term memory. But if you realise that these letters spell **sincerely yours** backward, you are able to remember the 14 letters quite easily.

Similarly, if you were shown these 12 numbers and asked to recall them in a few seconds, **184 4188 81798** it would be beyond you.

But if you could chunk it down into **three** items: **1844 1888 1798** you would easily remember because each of these numbers is significant theologically and prophetically to you. We may be able to hold on to 7 items very briefly but we soon forget.

For short-term memory we forget for two reasons:-

- (i) the storage decays with time, and
- (ii) the items stored are displaced by new items.

### Functions Of Short-term Memory

- (i) Short-term memory stores information that is needed immediately.
- (ii) Short-term memory is working memory, i.e. it serves as working space for solving **present** problems.
- (iii) Short-term memory is the stand-by or way station to long-term memory.

If a person can relate short-term information to some information stored in long-term memory, then that person can perform better in short-term retrieval.

Jesus, the Master Teacher studied the minds of men in order to reach them with eternal truths. He often linked the new truths He taught with familiar everyday settings or experiences. The people remembered

the new truths easily because the new truth was stored in the memory in association with a never-to-be-forgotten experience or setting. Take for example His teaching about the danger of drifting along contented with a superficial experience. He put this teaching in the setting of real actuality which His disciples would never forget. It is the story of the ten virgins, 5 wise and 5 foolish of Matt. 25.

Similarly, He employed the varied scenes of nature as pictures through which to convey precious truths into the memory.

“Again, Christ had truths to present which the people were unprepared to accept or even to understand. For this reason also He taught them in parables. By connecting His teaching with the scenes of life, experience, or nature, He secured their attention and impressed their hearts. Afterward, as they looked upon the objects that illustrated His lessons, they recalled the words of the divine Teacher. To minds that were open to the Holy Spirit, the significance of the Saviour’s teaching unfolded more and more. Mysteries grew clear, and that which had been hard to grasp became evident.” C.O.L. 21.

### **Long-term Memory**

In our discussion of long-term memory we will again distinguish the three stages of memory: (i) encoding, (ii) storage and (iii) retrieval.

#### ***Encoding For Long-term Memory***

You will remember that for short-term memory the two ways in which information is encoded are (i) acoustic or (ii) visual. But for long-term memory, although acoustic and visual encoding do occur, **the dominant way for encoding verbal material (i.e words) is to encode the written materials according to their meanings.**

To illustrate this, if a passage is read to you, or if you read a passage, and you are asked about it, let’s say, an hour after, most of what you would remember would be the **meaning** of the passage rather than the individual words.

Research in psychology (1975) has shown that the more the **meaning** of an item of information is **elaborated** upon, the better the memory will be. This means that if you have to remember a particular text or scriptural point or doctrine in the Bible, or a point made in a text book, you will recall it better if you concentrate on its **meaning** rather than on the exact words. And the more deeply and thoroughly you **expand** on its meaning, the better you will remember and recall it.

This modern scientific research in psychology shows us that the instruction given in the book **Steps To Christ** by E.G. White is absolutely correct. Let us read again the specific instruction.

“But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. **One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained.** Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind.” S.C. 90.

And also this from **Desire of Ages!**

“We should take one verse, **and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us.** We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know “What saith the Lord.” D.A. 390.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, employed many illustrations in His teaching models. The various illustrations aided in expanding and deepening the meanings of the particular truths and therefore it was easy for His hearers to encode the truth in their long-term memories.

The importance of **understanding** the **meaning** of the Word is stated clearly in the parable of the Sower.

*“Behold, a sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up. When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside.”* Matt. 14:3, 4, 19.

The better we understand the more we remember. The reason for this is complex yet simple. The better we understand a particular doctrine the more connections we see between its parts. Because these intra-doctrinal connections serve as retrieval links in the mechanism of the memory, the better we understand, the more we remember.

But there is a lot more to learn about long-term memory and in our next chapter, we shall begin to go deeper into this subject. In closing remember Paul’s advice to Timothy.

*“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* 2 Tim. 2:15.

## Chapter Nine

### Fixing The Word In The Mind — Part Three

“The reception of the word, the bread from heaven, is declared to be the reception of Christ Himself. As the word of God is received into the soul, we partake of the flesh and blood of the Son of God. As it enlightens the mind, the heart is opened still more to receive the engrafted word, that we may grow thereby. Man is called upon to eat and masticate the word; but unless his heart is open to the entrance of that word, unless he drinks in the word, unless he is taught of God, there will be a misconception, misapplication, and misinterpretation of that word.” R.H. 1897-11-23.

#### Long-term Memory: Encoding

In our last chapter we saw that, for long-term memory, information is usually encoded (that is committed to memory) according to its *meaning*.

The Holy Spirit *explains* and *elaborates* the meaning of the scripture and thereby *fixes* the *truth* in the long-term memory. But the Holy Spirit does *not* do this work without our co-operation. We must study diligently, comparing scripture with scripture, and trust God to give His Spirit to enlighten us, and He will.

*“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”* 1 Cor. 2:9-13.

If the items to be remembered are meaningful but the connections between the items are not meaningful, or seem not to be meaningful, memory can be improved by adding meaningful connections. For example, students in music usually remember the musical scale EGBDF by remembering “Every Good Boy Deserves Food”. Similarly, doctrines are better remembered by searching out their relation to the plan of redemption. When the Bible student searches diligently until he sees the love of God in a particular doctrine and the connection between that doctrine and the overall plan of redemption, long-term memory will be improved.

#### The Problem Of Forgetting

##### (a) Retrieval Failure

**Encoding, storage** and **retrieval** are the three fundamental steps in the overall process of memory. Many cases of **forgetting** in long-term memory are caused by **failure to retrieve** the stored information. If we have stored a large number of items under the same heading there may be interference between the items when we try to retrieve any one item under that heading. This is so because the particular heading is the signal for **all** the items. Therefore **retrieval failure** in long-term memory is **less** likely to happen when information is **organized** into smaller subdivisions with fewer items under each subheading. For example, in studying the subject of the millennium, of Rev. 20, the information is more easily remembered by sub-dividing it under three sub-headings as shown below.

(i) Events occurring at the **start** of the millennium.

- (ii) Events occurring **during** the millennium.
- (iii) Events occurring at the **end** of the millennium.

**(b) Storage Failure**

Some forgetting from long-term memory is caused by **loss from storage**. (This is **not** as common as **retrieval failure**). In order to understand this problem of forgetting due to **storage loss** we must understand that new information takes a **few weeks** to be **consolidated** in our memories. **Consolidation** involves the **hippocampus** (a part of the brain below the cerebral cortex) and the cortex surrounding it. In order to minimize storage failure, **you should read over the subject and question yourself on it and express its meaning in your own words. As you do this in the period of consolidation you will eliminate storage failure as a cause of forgetting. In other words, one of the best techniques for improving memory is to practice retrieving information while learning it, that is, you read a portion and quizz yourself on it and repeat this process until you know it thoroughly.** This is what is meant by dwelling on a text until we ascertain the thought of God in that text and make that thought our own.

**(c) Emotional Factors and Retrieval**

Emotional factors can interfere with retrieval. If a person is anxious and nervous he may be rendered temporarily unable to retrieve a particular point. Similarly, an unpleasant experience may be actively repressed. In other cases emotion can enhance memory.

**(d) The Role Of The Holy Spirit**

In studying the word of God we should pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and to fix the truth in our long-term memory. But we must co-operate with the Holy Spirit by careful, thorough study and revision.

**Intellectual And Experiential Memories**

Long-term memory for the facts of our **past** life-experience is called **explicit memory** and is manifested in **recall** of such facts or the **recognition** of certain persons or objects surrounding such experiences.

Long-term memory for knowledge and skills is called **implicit memory**.

**Explicit memory** (the memory for the facts of past life-experiences) breaks down in **amnesia** while **implicit memory** is usually spared.

For example, a person may suffer a head injury and therefore forget the past experience of learning to drive (i.e. who taught him or when or where etc) but would not forget the skill of how to drive.

Research also indicates that different areas of the brain may be responsible for **explicit** and **implicit** memories.

In the sealing work we must be settled **intellectually** and **experientially** into the truth. This means that not only must we learn and understand truth intellectually but we must put it into our experience by practicing it. It is the obedience of faith which sanctifies us by making the truth part of our life-experience.

It is a fatal mistake to believe that a mere intellectual assent to doctrines constitutes saving faith. Genuine faith produces obedience to God's word and thereby sanctifies the believer who abides in Christ.

**Advice On How To Improve Memory**

**(i) Organization**

The more we **organize** the information we encode the **easier** it is to **retrieve**. So if you are studying a doctrine which contains a large mass of information you should organize it into sub-divisions and use the most important scripture passages for each sub-division. Later on you can add the other less forceful passages.

(ii) **Practice Retrieval**

As you study ask yourself questions about the doctrine which you are trying to learn. Study a portion, then quizz yourself on it. It has been shown that this method is more effective in fixing the information in the memory than simply reading and re-reading it.

(iii) **Elaborate On The Meaning**

**Understanding the meaning** of a doctrine is absolutely necessary for it to be stored in long-term memory. We must tax the intellect to the utmost by comparing scripture with scripture and by studying all the various connections between other doctrines. The better we understand, and the more the meaning is elaborated on, the better will be the memory.

For example, the sanctuary truth is more easily remembered when we study it in relation to the doctrines of righteousness by faith, the character of God and the issues at stake in the great controversy.

(iv) **The PQRST Method**

**P** stands for **preview**. Preview the material. Look over the headings, glance through to get an idea of how it should be organized for encoding.

**Q** stands for question.

**R** stands for read.

**S** stands for self-recitation

**T** stands for test.

After **previewing** the material, go through each portion of it thoroughly while **questioning** yourself as you **read**. Then **recite** the meaning and the key concepts, facts and conclusions until you are satisfied that you know it. Then test yourself or ask someone to test you. Go over these steps until your knowledge is perfect.

Yes, we must thoroughly study so that the truth is indelibly stored in our intellects and in our life-experiences.

### **Conclusion**

“As the blood is formed in the body by the food eaten, so Christ is formed within by the eating of the Word of God, which is his flesh and blood. He who feeds upon that Word has Christ formed within, the hope of glory. The written Word introduces to the searcher the flesh and blood of the Son of God; and through obedience to that Word, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. As the necessity for temporal food cannot be supplied by once partaking of it, so the Word of God must be daily eaten to supply the spiritual necessities.

As the life of the body is found in the blood, so spiritual life is manifested through faith in the blood of Christ. He is our life, just as in the body our life is in the blood. He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, just as the bone, sinew, and muscle are nourished, and the whole man built up, by the circulation of the blood through the system. In vital connection with Christ, in personal contact with him, is found health for the soul. It is the efficacy of the blood of Christ that supplies its every need and keeps it in a healthy condition.

By reason of the waste and loss, the body must be renewed with blood, by being supplied with daily food. So there is need of constantly feeding on the Word, the knowledge of which is eternal life. That Word must be our meat and drink. It is in this alone that the soul will find its nourishment and vitality. We must feast upon its precious instruction, that we may be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and grow up into Christ, our living Head. When his Word is abiding in the living soul, there is oneness with Christ; there is a living communion with him; there is in the soul an abiding love that is the sure evidence of our unlimited privilege.

A soul without Christ is like a body without blood; it is dead. It may have the appearance of spiritual life; it may perform certain ceremonies in religious matters like a machine; but it has no spiritual life. So the hearing of the word of God is not enough. Unless we are taught of God, we shall not accept the truth to the saving of our souls. It must be brought into the life practice.

When a soul receives Christ, he receives his righteousness. He lives the life of Christ. As he trains himself to behold Christ, to study his life and practice his virtues, he eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God. When this experience is his, he can declare, with the apostle Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." R.H. 1897-11-23.

## Chapter Ten

### Kept By The Word

*“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” Gal. 4:19.*

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” John 1:1,14.*

*“And He answered and said, IT IS WRITTEN, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matt 4:4.*

*“To wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” 2 Cor. 5:19.*

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.*

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12.*

*“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17.*

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” John 6:63.*

*“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns, and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations ...” Rev. 19:11-13, 15.*

Let us put all these passages of scripture together and rightly divide the word of truth.

These passages are telling us that:

1. Christ must be formed in us individually as believers.
2. In the incarnation the Son of God, the Word, was formed in *our* corporate human flesh.
3. And as a man He overcame by living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He obeyed, even unto death, the word of God, through faith in His Father, and thereby reconciled the world to God.
4. God has therefore given to us the word of reconciliation so that whosoever hears, believes and receives this word has eternal life and shall not be condemned.
5. Therefore as in the incarnation, the Living Word, the Son of God, became flesh, so now again the word must become flesh in each of us.
6. As we receive the word of God it will perform the radical spiritual surgery of a two edged sword; cleansing us by cutting away all sin and transforming us by bringing the thoughts and intents of the heart into at-one-ment with God.

7. We are thereby and therefore sanctified by the truth.
8. And with the word of God fully incarnate in our minds, we have the life of God whereas those without the word of God have not the life of God and will be “smitten” by that word of God which declares that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). For since the word of God gives us life, the absence of that word leaves us dead and therefore at the Second coming of Christ there will be but two classes: (I) the children of life who will have Christ the Word of God fully formed in them and (ii) the children of death who will *not* possess the Word of God but rather the word of Satan fully formed in them.

### **How The Word Becomes Flesh In Us**

When we study the word of God the truth enters our minds in the form of electrical impulses. These electrical impulses alter the shape of proteins in the neurones and also induce the neurones to make new connections (synapses) with each other. Through persistent and thorough learning of the truth and obedience to the truth, the new inter neuronal connections are irreversibly laid down. In addition the neurones adjust their DNA and RNA to make new proteins for the new storage and new circuits in the brain. These new circuits and protein storage capacitors become increasingly changed into the energy (or spirit) pattern which reflects the energy (or Spirit) pattern of God’s thoughts i.e. of God’s mind. In other words, the mind of God becomes our mind.

Since the electrical storage and circuit pattern of selfishness and sin are completely different from the storage and circuit pattern of love and righteousness, the one or the other will eventually take full control and seal us or mark us for our destiny.

Recent research is even showing us clearly that thoughts of forgiveness and peace establish brain circuits which improve the function of the immune system whereas thoughts of anger and an unforgiving spirit depress immunity. Indeed Solomon was scientifically correct when he wrote under inspiration that:

*“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”* Prov. 17:22.

And remember the bone marrow, an important part of the immune system, is situated inside the bones!

Receiving any new information produces new synaptic connections and new protein-storage-capacitors in the brain thereby producing new thought patterns. Each new circuit will be driven by the power of the new idea.

The same is true when it comes to receiving the word of God into our minds, except that the power in the word of God is the power of God Himself!

It is clear then that the plan of redemption is built upon the incarnation of the Word of God. In the man Christ Jesus the Word of God became flesh. When we are in Christ, His word again becomes flesh in our brain thereby reproducing the mind of Christ in us His followers.

In 1 John 5:20 the Greek word translated *understanding* means *mind*. Let us read it.

*“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding (a mind), that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”* 1 John 5:20.

Since the truth of God’s word makes new connections, new capacitors and therefore new thought patterns in our brains, we can clearly see that the Word of God makes our minds new. And since the word of God contains the life and power of God, our minds are renewed unto eternal life by His word and our minds are kept from falling by His Word.

A.T. Jones, one of the 1888 messengers on Righteousness By Faith puts it beautifully in the following quotation from Review and Herald October 13, 1896.

“In the Christian life everything depends upon the word of God. It is true that God is able, and desires, to keep us from sinning; but this must be done through his word. So it is written, “By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” “Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.” This is the way that God has appointed, and there is no other way to have this thing accomplished. (Ps. 119:11).

Nor is this way appointed merely because he arbitrarily chose that this *should* be the way, and then laid it upon men that this *must* be the way that they should go. His word is the way of salvation and the way of sanctification (Christian living), because this is the way that the Lord does things; because this is the way that he manifests himself. It was by his word that he created all things in the beginning; it is by his word that he creates men anew; and it will be by his word that he will re-create this world and all things pertaining to it. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” “Being born again,... by the word of God.” “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new... And he said unto me, It is done.” (Ps. 33:6,9; 1 Peter 1:23; Rev. 21:5).

It is not only that the worlds were created by the word of God; but they are also sustained by the same word. “By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby [by the word of God] the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, *by the same word* are kept in store.” (2 Peter 3:5-7) So also it is not only that the Christian is created by the word of God, but by that same word he is sustained, and caused to grow. God holds up “all things” by his powerful word. And the Christian is among this “all things” no less than any or all the worlds.

There can be no question whatever that all the worlds are held up, and held in their places, by the Lord. But it is not only all the worlds, it is “*all things*” that are held up and held in place by the Lord. And it is as true of the Christian as it is of any star in the firmament or any world on high. Nor can there be any question that the stars and the worlds are held up and held in their courses by the word of the Lord. And no less than this can there be any question that the Christian is held up and held in his right course by the word of the Lord.

This is to be believed and depended upon by every one who professes the name of Christ. You and I can no more hold ourselves up and in the right way than can the sun or the earth. And as certainly as the worlds are dependent upon his word, so certainly is the Christian to depend upon his word. And when this is so, the Christian is kept in the way of the Lord as certainly and as easily as is any planet in the universe. It is written that he “is able to keep you from falling.” And he says, “I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” “Yea, he *shall be* holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” (Jude 24; Isa. 41:10)

O struggling, failing Christian, is not that word which holds up great worlds able also to hold up you? Trust that word. Depend implicitly upon it. Rest wholly *upon* it; and then you will find rest in it. Trust the Lord to hold you up, just as you trust him to hold up the sun. His word holds up the sun, and his word is over and over to you, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee.” “I will uphold thee.” I will keep thee, thou art mine. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” I will never leave thee till I have done that thing which I have spoken to thee of.

“The word of God is quick [‘Living,’ R.V.] and powerful.” “Powerful” means “full of power.” The word of God is living and full of power, to do for you, with you, and in you, all that that word says. Believe that word, trust it; for it is the word of the living God. It is the word of the pitying Saviour. “Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” “I commend you to God, and to *the word* of his grace, which is able to build you up.” “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” You “are kept by the power of God through faith.” The power of God is manifested through his word, and therefore it is his powerful word. Faith comes by hearing the word of God; therefore it is the *faithful* word, the

word full of faith. Therefore when he says, you “are kept by the power of God through faith,” it is only saying in another way, You are kept by the word of God, “unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Believe that word, trust it, and find its keeping power.” R.H. Oct. 13, 1896.

## Chapter Eleven

### The Mysterious Working Of The Word

#### The Mystery Of The Word Of God

There is an absolute mystery about the Word of God. This mystery is revealed in many passages in the Bible, here are two such passages.

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”* John 6:63.

*“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”* Isa. 55:10,11.

#### The Reception Of The Word Is The Reception Of Christ

“The reception of the word, the bread from heaven, is declared to be the reception of Christ Himself. As the word of God is received into the soul, we partake of the flesh and blood of the Son of God. As it enlightens the mind, the heart is opened still more to receive the engrafted word, that we may grow thereby. Man is called upon to eat and masticate the word; but unless his heart is opened to the entrance of that word, unless he drinks in the word, unless he is taught of God, there will be a misconception, misapplication, and misinterpretation of that word.”

“As the blood is formed in the body by the food eaten, so Christ is formed within by the eating of the Word of God, which is his flesh and blood. He who feeds upon that Word has Christ formed within, the hope of glory. The written Word introduces to the searcher the flesh and blood of the Son of God; and through obedience to that Word, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. As the necessity for temporal food cannot be supplied by once partaking of it, so the Word of God must be daily eaten to supply the spiritual necessities.” R.H. 1897-11-23.

#### We Must Be Taught Of God

“All, from the oldest to the youngest, need to be taught of God. We may be taught by man to see the truth clearly, but God alone can teach the heart to receive the truth savingly, which means to receive the words of eternal life into good and honest hearts. The Lord is waiting patiently to instruct every willing soul who will be taught. The fault is not with the willing Instructor, the greatest Teacher the world ever knew, but it is with the learner who holds to his own impressions and ideas, and will not give up his human theories and come in humility to be taught. He will not allow his conscience and his heart to be educated, disciplined, and trained-worked as the husbandman works the earth, and as the architect constructs the building. “Ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9).

Everyone needs to be worked, molded, and fashioned after the divine similitude. Christ tells you, my dear friends, young and old, the everlasting truth, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. [If you do not take Christ’s word as the man of your counsel, you will not reveal His wisdom or His spiritual life.] Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. ... For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (John 6:53-56). Said Christ, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, then, are spirit, and they are life” (verse 63).

Those who search the Scriptures, and most earnestly seek to understand them, will reveal the sanctification of the Spirit through the belief of the truth, for they take into their very heart the truth, and have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. All their spiritual sinew and muscle are nourished by the Bread of Life which they eat *Manuscript Release*, vol. 8, pp. 162, 163.

A.T. Jones gave this beautiful analysis of Isaiah 55: 10-11.

### **The Word Of God Is Self-fulfilling**

“As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

The earth can bring forth vegetation only because of the moisture that comes upon it by the rain or the snow from heaven. Without this, everything would fade and perish. So also is it with the life of man and the word of God. Without the word of God the life of man is as barren of power and of good as is the earth without rain. But only let the word of God fall upon the heart as the showers upon the earth; then the life will be fresh and beautiful in the joy and peace of the Lord, and fruitful with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ.

Notice, too, it is not *you* who are to do that which he pleases; but, “It shall accomplish that which I *please*.” *You* are not to read or hear the word of God, and say, I must do that, I will do that. You are to open the heart to that word, that it may accomplish the will of God in you. It is not *you* who are to do it, but *it*. “It,” the word of God itself, is to do it, and you are to let it. “*Let* the word of Christ dwell in you.” Col. 3:16.

This is stated in another place thus: “When ye receive the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, *which effectually, worketh* also in you that believe.” 1Thess. 2:13. Thus it is the word of God that must work in you. You are not to work to do the word of God: the word of God is to work in you to cause you to do. “Whereunto I also labor, striving according to *his working*, which worketh in me *mightily*.”

The word of God being living and full of power, when it is allowed to work in the life, there will be powerful work wrought in that individual. As this word is the word of God, the power, of which it is full, is only the power of God; and when that word is allowed to work in the life, there will be the work of God manifested in the life, it is his power working mightily. And thus it is *God that worketh* in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13 “It shall accomplish that which I please.” Let it.

From these scriptures it is plain that we are expected to look upon the word of God only as *self-fulfilling*. The word of God is self-fulfilling. This is the great truth presented everywhere in the Bible. This is the difference between the word of God and the word of men. And this is just the difference emphasized in the passage that says, “When ye received the word of God... ye received it *not as the word of men*, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” 1 Thess. 2:13.

### **The Word Of Man Contrasted With The Word Of God**

There is no power in the word of a man to do what it says. Whatever may be the man’s ability to accomplish what he says, there is no power in the man’s word itself to accomplish what he says. A man’s word may express the easiest possible thing for him to accomplish, and you may thoroughly believe it, yet it is altogether dependent upon the man himself to accomplish it *apart from his word*. It is not his word that does it. It is he himself that must do it; and this just as really as though he had spoken no word at all. Such is the word of men.

It is not so with the word of God. When the word is spoken by the Lord, there is at that moment *in that word* the living power to accomplish what the word expresses. It is not needed that the Lord employ any shadow of any other means than that word itself to accomplish what the word says. The Bible is full of illustrations of this, and they are written to teach us this very thing, that we shall look upon the word as the word of God, and not as the word of men; and that we may receive it thus as it is in truth, the word of God, that it may work effectually in us the will and good pleasure of God.

### **The Creative Power Of The Word Of God**

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth... For he spake, and it was.” “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Heb. 11:3 At first there were no worlds at all. More than this, there was none of the materials of which the worlds are made. There was nothing. Then God spoke, and all the worlds were in their places. From whence came the worlds, then? Before he spoke, there were none; after he spoke, there they were. Whence, then, did they come? What produced them? What produced the material of which they are composed? What caused them to exist? It was *the word* which was spoken that did it all. And this word did it all, because it was the word of God. There was in that word the divinity of life and spirit, the creative power, to do all that the word expressed. Such is the word of God.

“And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” The word of God in the Bible is the same,-the same in life, in spirit, in creative power,-precisely the same, as that word that made the heavens and all the host of them. It was Jesus Christ who spoke the word at creation; it is he who speaks the word in the Bible. At creation the word which he spoke made the worlds; in the Bible the word which he speaks saves and sanctifies the soul. In the beginning the word which he spoke created the heavens and the earth; in the Bible the word which he speaks creates in Christ Jesus the man who receives that word. In both places, and everywhere in the work of God, *it is the word* that does it.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Receive it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you. Then, “as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: *so shall my word be* that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing *whereto I sent it.*” “To you is the word of this salvation sent.” “And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to *the word of his grace*, which is able [literally, ‘full of power’] to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” Acts 20:32 R.H. Oct. 20, 1896.

## Chapter Twelve

### The Power Of The Word For Victorious Living

#### The Gospel Presents The Word Of God As The Means Of Salvation

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” 1 Peter 1:23.*

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may be able to grow thereby.” 1 Peter 2:2.*

*“Sanctify them through thy truth Thy word is truth.” John 17:17.*

*“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 2:24,25.*

#### Born Again By The Word And Yet Born Again By The Spirit

*“Jesus answered, verily, verily I say unto thee, except man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is BORN OF THE SPIRIT.” John 3:5-8.*

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth forever.” 1 Peter 1:23.*

#### **THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT**

#### Therefore the Word of God and The Spirit Of God are Functionally Inseparable.

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” John 6:63*

Not only are they inseparable, in fact, the Spirit is in the Word. This is the **essence** of the mystery of the word of God; the Spirit of God flows with the WORD of God; the Spirit of God functions in, with and through the Word of God. In other words, the WORD OF GOD carries in it and with it the SPIRIT OF GOD.

If a man speaks and says he wants a glass of water, his word has no power in itself to bring him that glass of water. He himself or someone else must bring him the glass of water or else he will not get it.

But when God speaks His word, that word is self-fulfilling, that is, the word of God itself accomplishes the thing which it says without any external help. (Read Isa. 55:11).

*“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish what which I please...”*

And yet in Zachariah 4:6, God says:

***“...not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”***

So, if God tells us that HE ACCOMPLISHES what he pleases by His word in Isaiah 55:11 and also tells us that He accomplishes His will by His Spirit in Zachariah 4:6, we must conclude that His word contains His spirit, His life, His power!

“The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God’s word. Christ says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.” John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God.

Every seed brings forth fruit after its kind. Sow the seed under right conditions, and it will develop its own life in the plant. Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God.” C.O.L. 38.

### **The Word Of God Minus The Spirit Of God Equals The Old Covenant “Letter”**

Since the word of God and the Spirit of God are not only inseparable but are a functional unit, we can perform a little divine mathematics. Let us read 2 Cor. 3:6.

***“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”***

Those who read the word while rejecting the Spirit of that word are in Old Covenant error and have not the truth of God which means in effect, that they have not the word of God because God’s Word is the truth (John 17:17). The Spirit of the **law**, the Spirit of the **word** is **love**. Any attempt to obey the law or the word without love is old covenant legalism. When we receive the truth and the love of the truth we have received the Spirit of God in the word of God which produces new covenant obedience.

***“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”*** Rom. 7:6.

“Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God.” C.O.L. 38.

In other words, the WORD minus the SPIRIT equals THE LETTER. The **word** with the **Spirit** in that word is the truth, the life, the character of God. Jesus the LIVING WORD IS THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE and so it is with HIS WRITTEN WORD.

“In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized.” C.O.L. 38.

We now close with this quotation from A.T. Jones.

“We have seen that the power abiding in the word of God is sufficient, only upon the speaking of that word, to create worlds. It is likewise sufficient, now that it is spoken to men, to create anew, in Christ Jesus, every one who receives it.

In the eighth chapter of Matthew it is related that a centurion came to Jesus, “beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but *speak the word only*, and my servant shall be healed... And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”

Now what was it that the centurion expected would heal his servant? -It was "the word only," which Jesus would speak. And after the word was spoken, what did the centurion depend upon, to what did he look, for the healing power?-It was "the word only." He did not look for the Lord to do it in some ways apart from the word. No. He heard the word, "So be it done unto thee." He accepted that word as it is in truth the word of God, and expected it, depended upon *it*, to accomplish that which it said. And it was so. And that word is the word of God to-day as certainly as in the day that it was originally spoken. It has lost none of its power, for that word "liveth and abideth forever."

Again, in John 4:46-52 it is related how a certain noble man, whose son was sick at Capernaum, came to Jesus at Cana of Galilee, and "besought him that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth."

This is the power of the word of God to the man who receives it as it is in truth the word of God. This is the power that "effectually worketh also in you that believe." This is the way that the word of God accomplishes that which he pleases, in those who will receive it, and let it dwell in them. Notice that in both instances the thing was accomplished at the very time when the word was spoken. Notice also that the sick ones were not in the immediate presence of Jesus, but some distance away-the latter was at least a day's journey away from where Jesus was spoken to by the nobleman. Yet he was healed at once, when the word was spoken. And that word is living and full of power to-day, as certainly as it was that day, to every one who receives it as was done that day. It is faith to accept that word as the word of God, and to depend upon it to accomplish the thing that it says. For of the centurion when he said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed," Jesus said to them that stood around, "I have not found so *great faith*, no, not in Israel." Let him find it now everywhere in Israel.

Jesus says to every one of us, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is *through the word* that this cleansing is wrought. The Lord does not propose to cleanse you in any way apart from his word, but through the word which he has spoken. There, and there alone, are you to look for the cleansing power, receiving it as it is in truth the word of God which effectually worketh in you, and accomplishes that which he pleases. He does not propose to make you pure except by the power and indwelling of his pure words.

A leper said to Jesus, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus answered him, "I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Are you mourning under the leprosy of sin? Have you said, or will you now say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"? The answer is now to you, "I will; be thou clean." And "immediately" *you are cleansed* as certainly as was that other leper. Believe the word, and praise the Lord for its cleansing power. Do not believe for that leper away back there; believe it for yourself here, now, immediately. For the word is to you now, "Be thou clean." Accept it as did those of old, and immediately it worketh effectually in you the good pleasure of the Father.

Let all who have named the name of Christ receive his word to-day as it is in truth the word of God, depending upon that word to do what the word says. Then as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," (Eph. 5:27) even so it will be now to the glory of God." R.H. Oct. 27, 1896.

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Eternal Living Word

#### Introduction

So far we have learned that God accomplishes all things by His WORD. The universe was created by His word and the universe is upheld by His word.

*“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”* Psa. 33:6.

*“...upholding all things by the word of His power...”* Heb. 1:3.

Salvation is also the accomplishment of the word of God.

*“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Rom. 10:17.

*“The word of the LORD endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”* 1 Peter 1:25.

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.”* 1 Peter 2:23.

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.”* 1 Peter 2:2.

*“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* John 17:17.

*“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”* Rev. 3:10.

#### The Word of God Is Self-fulfilling

*“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”* Isa. 55:10,11.

#### The Word Of God Cannot Be Defeated

*“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.”* 2 Cor. 13:8.

*“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.”* Isa. 40:8.

*“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”* John 8:32.

*“...Thy word is the truth.”* John 17:17.

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* Heb. 4:12.

## The Son Of God Is The *Logos* Of God, The Eternal Living and Divine Word

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* John 1:1,2,3,14.

The Greek word translated **WORD** in John 1:1 is **LOGOS** from which we get our English word **logic**. **Logos** denotes **WISDOM** and in Proverbs 8, **WISDOM**, the **Logos** of God, the Son of God, speaks thus:

*“The LORD (YAHWEH) possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.”*  
Prov. 8:22.

The question may now be asked: When was THE BEGINNING OF YAHWEH’S WAY? DID HE, YAHWEH, HAVE A BEGINNING?

To answer this question you may want to quote Psalm 90:1,2.

*“Lord (YAHWEH) thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or even Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.”*

But the Hebrew word translated **everlasting** is **OLAM**. It’s linguistic usage is similar to the **Greek** word **AIONIOS** also translated **everlasting**. These words, **olam** in the Hebrew and **aionios** in the Greek, mean a DURATION OF TIME WHICH MUST BE DETERMINED BY THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT BEING DESCRIBED.

Let us, for example, read Jude verse 7.

*“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal (aionios) fire.”*

How long did the **eternal** fire which burnt up Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes (2 Peter 2:6) last? The answer is given in Lamentations 4:6.

*“For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown **as in a moment**, and no hands stayed on her.”*

So we see that the “eternal” (Hebrew: **Olam**; Greek: **aionios**) fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah lasted such a short time that Jeremiah informs us that those cities were burnt up **as in a moment**.

It is clear therefore that we cannot use the words **olam** or **aionios** (which are often translated **eternal** or **everlasting**) to prove that anyone or anything is **beginningless** or **endless**.

So where is the biblical proof that our God, YAHWEH, is without beginning and without ending, that is, eternal in the absolute sense of that word in our modern linguistic usage?

The answer is found in Exodus 3:14.

*“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel I AM hast sent me unto you.”*

The Hebrew words translated I AM THAT I AM are **EHYEH ASHER EHYEH**. This mysterious term indicates **the continuous present tense**, it indicates **self-existence**, it signifies **beginninglessness** and **endlessness**. This is the only term in the original languages of the Bible which is equivalent to our English word **eternal** in the absolute sense of that word as we use it in our modern languages.

When the **WORD** became flesh and dwelt among us 2000 years ago, He applied the mysterious term **I AM** to Himself. Let us read John 8: 56-59.

*“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”* John 8:56-59.

Notice that Jesus did not say: “Before Abraham was **I was**, but rather He said, “Before Abraham was **I AM**.” He thereby declared Himself **to have always existed**. He therefore declared His DEITY. The Jews clearly understood what He intended to say and they took up stones to stone Him. Why? They understood that He was declaring Himself to be the Infinite “**I AM THAT I AM**”! Consider these gems from *Desire of Ages*.

“With solemn dignity Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

“Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the **eternal presence**, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the **self-existent One**, He who had been promised to Israel, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin. D.A. 469-470.

“It was Christ who from the bush on mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, “I AM THAT I AM... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” Ex 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came “in the likeness of men,” He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Tim 3:16. And to us He says: “I AM the Good Shepherd.” “I AM the living Bread.” “I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matt 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. “God with us” is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.” D.A. 24,25

The Son of God is called the Word of God and the Wisdom of God. He is the only begotten Son of God the Father. There are some students of the word who interpret these terms “Son of God” and ‘only begotten Son’ in an earthly, biological way, and they conclude therefore that the Son of God cannot be without beginning as God the Father is. They claim that a son must always be younger than His Father. Yet these same students say that they believe in the Deity of the Son of God. This brings us to some deep principles.

i) **The Definition Of God**

By definition Deity is Creator and is uncreated and without beginning. No one can be said to have Deity if that one had a **literal** beginning either by creation or by birth.

ii) **No True Deity Was Formed After Another True Deity**

*“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord (YAHWEH), and my servants whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed neither shall there be after Me.”* Isa. 43:10.

In other words you cannot say that you believe that the Son of God is Deity and still believe that He was formed after the Father because the word of God clearly states that such cannot be. If the Father is Deity and the Son is Deity neither One was formed before nor after the Other. This is the unmistakable truth revealed in Isaiah 43:10.

This is further confirmed by comparing Isa. 44:6 and Rev. 1:17, where YAHWEH in Isa. 44:6 and the Son of God in Rev. 1:17 each declares that He is the first and the last. This would not be true if One is younger or older than the Other.

### iii) We Cannot Interpret The Ways Of God According To The Ways Of Man

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord (YAHWEH). For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* Isa. 55:8,9.

This means that the way in which the Son of God was begotten is as high above the way a son of man is begotten as God is higher than man.

Let us bring these principles together and apply them to the problem of the Son of God being the only begotten Son of the Father.

### The Word Of God Is The Son Of God

We must not deny that the Son of God is truly the Son of God, begotten of the Father. But we must let Him tell us when He was begotten, and He tells us in Proverbs 8:22.

*“The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way before the works of old.”*

When was the beginning of YAHWEH’S way? We have already proven that YAHWEH is beginningless.

Therefore in Proverbs 8:22 the Son is saying that He is as eternal as His Father. In other words He is eternally begotten. This is a deep mystery but some of the mysteriousness is clarified by the very fact that the *Son* of God is the **WORD** of God, the **WISDOM** of God.

### ETERNAL WISDOM

YAHWEH must be the **source** of His wisdom, the **Father** of His wisdom. Therefore His Wisdom is begotten of Him. Yet there was never a time when God’s wisdom was not in existence because God’s wisdom must have been in existence for as long as God has been in existence. Therefore although God, the Father, is the Source, and Father of his Wisdom and His Wisdom is begotten of Him, both the Father and Son are Co-eternal, because God and His Wisdom are co-eternal.

Paul informs us that *eternal power* is the *first* absolute eternal reality in Deity.

*“For the invisible things of Him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”* Rom. 1:20.

We understand from Proverbs 8 that power without wisdom is self-destructive. Therefore eternal power eternally gives birth to eternal wisdom so that power and wisdom are co-eternal. And the force that unites them is love. Infinite Power, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love.

The Father, His Son and their Spirit, this is the Deity, and each must have all the characteristics of the Father, therefore each must have personality and each must be without beginning and without ending. What a mystery!

We can only skim the surface now. The deep ocean of truth is still beneath. In the eternity to come we shall be able to plumb the depths of this mystery, but the more we learn the more there will be to learn because the Father, Son and Spirit are infinite and eternal.

Having established the absolute eternity of the Son of God from the Bible, we can now add the Spirit of Prophecy “icing” from the writings of the Lord’s servant to the “cake” which has already been “baked” in the “oven” of correct Biblical interpretation.

Consider these quotations carefully (emphases supplied).

1. Commenting on John 1:1-3

“If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are do decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the **highest** sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God [Pro. 8:22-27 quoted].

There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was One with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise un-explainable truths, while it is enshrined in light unapproachable and incomprehensible.” (R.H. April 5, 1906).

2. “In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through **dateless** ages. *He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God.* He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him. - *S.T. Aug. 29, 1900.*
3. “Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before his incarnation is not measured by figures. - *S.T. May 3, 1899.*
4. “*From all eternity* Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. - *S.T. Aug 2, 1905, p. 10.*
5. “When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, *even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity.* - A.A. 38, 39.

But while God’s word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding his pre-existence. *The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God,* in union and oneness with his Father. From everlasting he was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted him, were to be blessed. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God. - R.H. April 5, 1906.

“A human being lives, but his life is a given life, a life that will be quenched. “What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” But Christ’s life is not a vapor; it is never-ending, a life existing before the worlds were made. - S.T. June 17, 1897, p. 5.

“*From the days of eternity* the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was “the image of His greatness and majesty, “the outshining of His glory.” - *D.A. 19.*

“He was one with the Father before the angels were created.” *Spirit of Prophecy, vol 1, 17.*

“Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. *He was with God from all eternity,* God over all, blessed forevermore. - R.H. April 5, 1906, 8.

Any doctrine which denies the absolute, eternal beginninglessness of the eternal Word, the Son of God *“not only lowers man’s conceptions of the work of redemption, but undermines faith in the Bible as a revelation from God.”* G.C. 524.

“If men reject the testimony of the inspired scriptures concerning the deity of Christ, it is in vain to argue the point with them; for no argument, however conclusive, could convince them.” G.C. 524.

The eternal Word, the eternal Wisdom, the Son of God had to become human in order to save humanity by the *engrafted word*, for only He who is without beginning could impart eternal life to humanity.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath eternal life.” Through the beloved John, who listened to these words, the Holy Spirit declared to the churches, “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:11,12. And Jesus said, “I will raise him up at the last day.” Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave, - not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ but because through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of life eternal.” D.A. 388.

## **Conclusion**

Oh what wondrous love! Our redemption could not have been accomplished by anyone who was one iota less than God in every respect.

The term the Son of God now embraces redeemed humanity for the eternal Word of God, the eternal Son of God is now also the Son of man. How can anyone reject such love!

“And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Eph. 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells us of the power of prayer,--how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. By sin, earth was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2. Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the most sinful, the most needy, the most oppressed and despised, may find access to the Father. All may have a home in the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare. “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;... behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” Rev. 3:7, 8. D.A. 113.

## Chapter Fourteen

### The Engrafted Word - Part One

#### Introduction

Since God created all things and sustains all things by His Word, the universe of created intelligences could be secure only by having the Word of God filling and controlling their minds. The alternative to this would be for creatures to be controlled by another word. But the Word of God is the Wisdom, Righteousness and Truth of God, therefore another word would be the folly, unrighteousness and error of creatures.

God's eternal purpose was, is and ever will be, to have a universe of intelligent creatures fully and freely surrendered to the absolute control of **His** word and to no other word whatsoever!

And moreover God desired such a submission to His Word to be entirely motivated by love for, and trust in the graciousness and righteousness of His character rather than being motivated by fear or compelled by force.

*“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.”* 1 John 4:18,19.

#### The Mystery Of The Eternal Purpose

This brings us to the mystery of the eternal purpose. The principles revealed in the unfolding of this mystery must be clearly understood and logically followed in order to avoid the pitfalls of error which surround the narrow road of pure truth.

#### God Was In No Wise Responsible For Sin

“To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's word and essential to salvation. There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties; and such as are actuated by a disposition to doubt and cavil seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.”

“It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;” it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.” G.C. 492-493.

*“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”* Hab. 1:13.

*“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”* James 1:13-15.

### The Basic Principles Of The Eternal Purpose

1. In a universe full of intelligences with absolute freedom to think and to choose there would be the possibility of sin evolving. In mathematics we say that if an event is ***certain*** to happen it has a probability of 1, and if an event ***cannot*** happen it has a probability of ***zero***. If an event is ***possible*** but not yet ***actual*** it has a probability greater than ***zero*** but less than ***one***. There was the definite probability (0 > probability of sin evolving < 1) that sin could evolve.
2. God really desired a universe free from even the possibility of sin. But He also desired a free universe, with all created intelligences free to think and to choose. These two desires were ***mutually exclusive***, that is, so long as God made His created intelligences free to think and to choose He could not, ***as the same time***, render the probability of sin zero, that is, He could not prevent the possibility of the evolution of sin.
3. But what is a God worth who cannot accomplish His will?
4. Would the probability of sin evolving become actuality, given time, given an eternity?
5. Well it didn't take an eternity of time. In Lucifer's mind the ***possibility*** became ***actuality*** and that ***not withstanding all the efforts of God to the contrary!***
6. Sin developed in Lucifer's mind and it spread to angels and to the first two humans on planet earth.
7. Lucifer expelled the Word of God from His mind. And what happened ***internally*** in His mind manifested itself ***externally*** in His rejection of the Living Word, the Son of God.
8. We now come to the crux of the mystery. The actual development of the sin problem would furnish the ***modus operandi*** (the operational mechanics) by which God would render the universe so absolutely secure against sin that it would be impossible for sin to ever develop again after its eradication from the universe.
9. God foresaw all this from the beginningless eternity-past. And God therefore centered His eternal purpose in the One who is the Wisdom or ***LOGOS*** OF GOD, HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON! The Father through His eternal love, would give His eternal wisdom to the sin-infected human race and thereby produce a result which would guarantee eternal immunity from a second infection in the endless eternity-future.
10. It would always have taken an infinite demonstration of both the justice and mercy of eternal love and the infinite humility of eternal wisdom to secure the universe against sin. This infinite revelation could not have been given at creation of angel or man otherwise the universe would have been secured against sin from the outset. But no, in the absence of sin, it would have taken an infinite time to give an infinite demonstration of love. In other words there would have always been the possibility of sin developing.

11. What the development of sin did was to give God the opportunity to do in a very short time what would otherwise have taken an eternity to accomplish, that is, would never have been accomplished. This is the revelation of the mystery.

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.” Rom. 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

Lucifer had said, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;... I will be like the Most High.” Isa. 14:13, 14. But Christ, “being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.” Phil. 2:6, 7, R. V., margin.

This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father’s side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.

Nearly two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, “Lo, I come.” “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me... Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.” Heb. 10:5-7. In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, “A body hast Thou prepared Me.” Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,—the invisible glory in the visible human form.” D.A. 22-23.

When Adam yielded to the tempter’s trap and sinned, he expelled the spirit of God in the word of God from the mind of man. The only way by which the Spirit with the Word could have been restored to its rightful place in the human mind was through the Word becoming flesh. And the glorious eternal results produced by the earthly life and death of the incarnate Word will not only redeem mankind but elevate him to the throne of God and thereby render the universe absolutely secure in the future endless eternity.

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. “With His stripes we are healed.”

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan’s purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.” God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the “Son of man” who shares the

throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6. The I Am is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Heb. 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.

Of His people God says, "They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" Zech. 9:16, 17. The exaltation of the redeemed will be an eternal testimony to God's mercy. "In the ages to come," He will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "To the intent that . . . unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known . . . the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. 2:7; 3:10, 11, R. V.

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union.

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift — *Immanuel*, "God with us." D.A. 25-26.

***"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."*** Rom. 11:33-36.

"Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty.

He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning—the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing. Though "clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." Psalm 97:2, R.V. And this the inhabitants of the universe, both loyal and disloyal, will one day understand. "His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Deu. 32:4." P.P. 42-43.

## Chapter Fifteen

### The Engrafted Word - Part Two

#### A. Introduction

*“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” James 1:21.*

In order to redeem fallen humanity, the Word of God, the Wisdom of God, became flesh.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:1,14.*

God engrafted His Word into humanity in order that humanity might be engrafted into His Word.

#### B. The Purpose Of The Engrafting

Because fallen humanity needed redemption, the Word became *flesh* (Greek: SARX).

*“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” Rom. 1:3.*

*“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” Heb. 2:10-18.*

*“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 4:15-16.*

The above scriptures clearly reveal the truth that the Son of God took on our corporate fallen human nature. He had to do so in order to reconcile corporate fallen humanity to God and also in order to be our example in the warfare against the sinful flesh. It is of the utmost importance to understand that He enables the reconciled believer to follow His example by imparting His victory into the believer within the abiding relationship.

*“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,*

***condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***” Rom. 8:1-4.

“Satan had pointed to Adam’s sin as proof that God’s law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam’s failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.

Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam’s position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured.” D.A. 117.

***“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”*** 1 Peter 4:1-2.

### **C. The Problem Of Communication Not Only Solved But Elevated To Its Highest Possible Level**

- (i) Before the Fall, God communicated with Adam ***through*** Christ ***directly***. i.e. the Son of God spoke to Adam face to face in full glory.
- (ii) After the Fall, God communicated with fallen man ***through*** Christ, but ***indirectly***. i.e. ***not*** face to face but by the spoken or written word inspired by the Holy Spirit through angels. (On a few occasions the Son of God appeared to a chosen few but with His glory not fully revealed).
- (iii) Since the incarnation, God communicated with fallen humanity ***in*** Christ but still ***indirectly*** since the glory of the majesty of the Son of God was shrouded.
- (iv) In the kingdom of glory God will communicate with glorified humanity ***in*** Christ ***directly***. Glorified humanity by virtue of their union with Christ will see the Father face to face and will share in the communion between Father and Son, a communion which Lucifer desired to share but could not.

“At the Saviour’s baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father’s glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam’s sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity ***through*** Christ; now He communicated with humanity ***in*** Christ. Satan had hoped that God’s abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored.” D.A. 116.

And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Eph. 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells us of the power of prayer, how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. By sin, earth

was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2. Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the most sinful, the most needy, the most oppressed and despised, may find access to the Father. All may have a home in the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare. “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;... behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” Rev. 3:7, 8. D.A. 113.

*“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and has loved them, as thou hast loved me.”* John 17:21-23.

*“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”* Rev. 22:1-4.

#### **D. The Sacrifice Of Eternal Wisdom, The Person, Maintained And Demonstrated The Immutability Of Eternal Wisdom, The Principle**

Since the Son of God incarnate was the Word or the Wisdom of God incarnate, Jesus had to demonstrate that humanity, having been given the Word of God, must live by that Word.

The incarnate Son of God was the living Word given to humanity and as a man He lived by every word of God. He overcame by that word and died in loyalty to that word.

“The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.

And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. “It is written,” He said. And unto us are given “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God’s word is ours. “By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours. “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” Ps. 119:11; 17:4. D.A. 123.

**E. The Word Of God, With All The Spirit, Life And Power Of God, Has Been Given To Us In Christ.**

In Christ the word of God is not “*yes* and *no*” but in Him it is *yes*! God’s word has been fulfilled in humanity in Christ. All things that God has given us in Christ, the Living Word, are in the written word to be claimed by faith.

*“But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”* 2 Cor. 1:18-20.

“The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matt. 4:4.

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know “what saith the Lord.”

In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that *I* by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. The experiences related in God’s word are to be *my* experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.” Gal. 2:20. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.” D.A. 390-391.

**Conclusion**

In Christ the creative power of the **Word** has been manifested.

In Christ the redemptive power of the **Word** has been manifested.

This Word is ours in Christ because in Him the Word became human, overcame the fallen human nature and has elevated the human spirit and nature to the place occupied by the Word of God, which is the Throne of God.

As individual believers we must therefore understand the power of the word and learn to live, as Jesus did, by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God’s command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other.” D.A. 121.

## **Chapter Sixteen**

### **The Word Of God And The Rest Of God**

#### **Introduction**

Faith in God produces rest.

*“For we which have believed do enter into rest,...”* Heb. 4:3. first part.

There is no rest apart from God’s word, and no day can be the Lord’s day apart from the word of God.

#### **Jesus Is Lord**

Jesus is Lord, Hallelujah Jesus is Lord! Philippians 2:11.

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14: 10).

He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Hebrews 12:2.

True Christian experience means to be found in Him (Christ), not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Phil 3:9).

In fact Jesus Christ is, for us, the very wisdom and righteousness of God. (1 Cor. 1:30).

#### **Salvation By Grace Through Faith**

We are saved by grace through faith. Salvation is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8,9) Yet Paul quickly adds in verse 10:

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Eph. 2:10).

So although the Christian is saved by grace through faith, not of works, yet so long as he is saved he will walk in the good works which God ordained that Christians in Christ should walk in. This is clearly understood from Eph 2: 10.

Paul emphasises that “we are His (God’s workmanship), created in Christ Jesus unto good works”. What does the Apostle mean by this?

When the Son of God became man by taking on our human nature and form, He lived His life on earth by faith in, and absolute surrender to, His Father. And the Father by the Spirit performed the works of righteousness in and through His Son. John 5:30; 6:38.

“The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.” (John 14: 10).

That is why Paul calls it the righteousness of God in Christ.

As man, Jesus, obeyed for us and died for us, thereby fully satisfying His Father’s justice. Every requirement of righteousness that God has ever required or will ever require had to be perfectly performed by Christ in order to satisfy Divine Justice for us.

#### **The Two Adams**

Paul makes this very clear in Romans 5 where he compares and contrasts the two Adams. The first Adam by his disobedience sold out humanity to sin. Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, by His obedience, even unto death, redeemed humanity from sin.

For as by one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus Christ) shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:18,19).

Therefore, it is clear that the good works which (according to Eph. 2:10) God ordained that we should walk in are to be found in Christ.

The Christian must have the righteousness of Christ in order to be saved and the same righteousness of Christ, which saves the believer, will be manifested in the believer's life.

### **Christ Our Righteousness**

The gospel is the wonderfully good news that **Christ is our righteousness**. It was Paul who wrote these immortal words in Galatians 2:20.

*"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

And it was Jesus who said (John 15:4) "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." All of this means that the fruit of good works to be manifested in the Christian's life must be the good works of Jesus, the obedience of Jesus, the righteousness of Christ.

You see friend, in order to cover me with His righteousness He had to obey every requirement of God without fail and without the slightest omission.

When Jesus went to be baptised by John the Baptist, and John was reluctant to baptize Him because he knew Him to be the Sinless Saviour, Jesus said allow me to be baptized, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. 3:15) Remember, Jesus is our Perfect Example. (I Peter 2:21).

Since the true believer is saved by the righteousness of Christ and since that same righteousness is lived out in the believer's life, we come to an absolutely true and inescapable conclusion. And it is this, **God can never and will never require any duty of us that was not required of the man Christ Jesus and that was not obeyed by the man Christ Jesus.**

Concerning His righteousness Jesus said in John 15:10, that He kept His Father's commandments. Therefore, when we have His righteousness as a free gift we will also likewise keep His Father's commandments, by that same obedience which is of Christ. This is the fruit of salvation by faith.

*"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."* John 15:10.

When we examine the obedience of Jesus (which is the obedience that saves us and makes us righteous) we cannot find any Sunday keeping at all. In fact He never even took the first day of the week on his lips in all His teaching.

He kept the seventh-day Sabbath and instructed His disciples how to keep it properly. Since Sunday keeping was not any part of the obedience of Christ it cannot be part of the obedience which God requires of Christians, who are but followers of Christ. Rom 5:19; Luke 4:16; Matt 12:12.

Christ is our righteousness. Christ is the truth, the way, the life. Christ is our example. He made no mistakes, He committed no sin. It is His righteousness alone that the Father accepts. We cannot add to or subtract from the righteousness of Christ. And the sanctification of the first day of the week was no part of His teaching or practice.

### **The New Covenant**

Paul tells us that the New Covenant was completed, confirmed, and enforced by the death of Jesus. Hebrews 9:15,16, 17. Moreover, Paul tells us that nothing can be added to or subtracted from a testament or covenant after it has been confirmed by the death of the testator. (Galatians 3:15; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 12:24).

It follows with absolute certainty therefore that if Sunday keeping were to be a part of the new covenant Jesus would have had to add it into the covenant before His death. But He did NOT. Rather He told His disciples to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath day at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. (Matt. 24:40) That event took place in A.D. 70, some 40 years after His death.

We want to follow the example of Jesus. We cannot be wrong when we follow His example and do what He did because He was the sinless saviour.

He kept the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. (John 15: 10; Luke 4:16) He **never** observed the first day of the week as the Sabbath.

He is our Saviour, our Lord, and our righteousness. We are safe when we copy Him. But in fact, it is not “copying” in the ordinary sense of the word; rather, He dwells in *us through His Word by* His Spirit and reproduces His obedience, His good works through us. Therefore, the only day, which can be a holy day in our experience, is the one that was a holy day in His experience, the Seventh day. In fact, the new covenant establishes the righteousness of the law in the believer’s mind. (Heb. 8:6-10; Rom. 3:31; 8:4).

### **The Creation Sabbath Not Abolished**

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus stated explicitly that He did not come to abolish the moral law but to fulfil it and He warned against breaking and teaching others to break the least of the commandments. (Matt. 5:17-20).

Further, Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man. (Mark 2:27) Is not Jesus the authority on the things that were made? Exactly so, for He is the One who made all things that were made. (John 1:1-3). Since the Sabbath was made, He made it. And, He made it for man before the fall of man. Since He made it for man before the fall of man it cannot therefore be a “shadow” of things to come. The ceremonial feast days also called sabbaths were done away with by His death on the cross. They were shadows which were instituted after sin and which helped to point to Him, the One who would come to take away the sins of the world. But the Sabbath of creation is the unchanging memorial of God’s finished work of creating. (Col. 2:16,17; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gen. 2:1-3).

The difference between these **yearly** sabbaths or feast days and the **weekly** sabbath is explained in Lev. 23:26-44, note especially verses 37,38.

Jesus invites us to come to Him to receive rest. (Matt. 11:28) Paul tells us that there remains a rest for God’s people and when we enter into that rest we cease from our work as God did from His. (Heb. 4:9,10, 4).

### **The True Lord’s Day**

In Christ the believer has sweet spiritual rest which is celebrated every seventh day following the perfect example of Father and Son.

In Revelation 1:10, Jesus informs us that there is a Lord’s day for Christians. (Rev. 1:1-3,10).

In Isaiah 58:13,14 God calls the Sabbath, His holy day. And in Mark 2:28 Jesus says that He is Lord of the Sabbath. This brings us to another inescapable conclusion of absolute truth and it is this - the Sabbath is the Lord’s day. The reasons for this are clear.

In creation week, the Son of God, our Creator, created our world in six days, and rested on the seventh day. (Gen. 2:1-3) The seventh day therefore became His holy day of rest.

When the Son of God came to our world in the incarnation, He kept the seventh day Sabbath (Luke 4:16). When He finished the work of redemption on the cross He cried out "It is finished", that was the sixth day of the week. He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath and on the first day He rose to start a new work. Therefore, both in creation and redemption the Son of God our Creator and Redeemer rested on the seventh day and started work on the first day of the week.

The Sabbath is therefore not only the memorial of a finished creation but of a finished redemption. It is therefore the sign between God and His people that He is the sanctifier. (Ezekiel 20:12) And since we are sanctified by the Sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10;10,14) it means that the Sabbath is also a memorial of Salvation.

### **The Origin Of Sunday Worship**

Jesus never changes; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8) If He is Lord of your life, His Sabbath day, of which He is Lord, will be your Sabbath day too.

Sunday keeping came from Rome. The pagan day of the sun infiltrated Christianity in the days of Constantine. Those were days of compromise between paganism and early Christianity resulting in the development of the Papacy. The Pope is the lord of Sunday, but Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath Day. The Christian faith must be established upon the word of God not the traditions of man. (Matt. 15:7,8,9).

### **The Words Of Jesus Are Spirit And Life**

The Christian must **hear** and **do** the **sayings** (the word) of Christ. Matt. 7:24,25.

There is nothing about the first day of the week in any of the teachings of Christ. Therefore the first day of the week as a holy day or as the Lord's day is unscriptural, it is not in Christ, it is not in the New Covenant.

In order for any **practice** or **duty** to be **anointed** by the Spirit as a doctrine of Christ it must be in the words spoken by Jesus. John 6:63.

Therefore holding the first day of the week as the Lord's day is not only false but is devoid of the life and Spirit of God because it is **not** in the word of God.

*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* John 8:32,36.

*"And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."* Mark 2:27,28.

## **Section Two**

### **The Science Of The Gospel Understanding How To Exercise Faith**

#### **“Basic Principles”**

## Chapter Seventeen

### The Study Of How Faith Is Cultivated And Exercised A Preview

#### Introduction

We start this morning by opening our Bible to four passages of scripture.

Firstly:	Romans 1:16,17
Secondly:	John 16:33
Thirdly:	1 John 5:4
Fourthly:	Rom 10:17

God has redeemed corporate humanity in and through Christ. Christ has already overcome the flesh, the world and the devil in humanity for humanity.

In the salvation of the individual person, God simply makes real in the believer's experience what has already been accomplished by Christ in our humanity in His earthly life, death and resurrection.

In other words, for a person to experience the wonderful salvation so freely given to humanity in Christ, that person must exercise faith. We are talking about **saving faith**.

#### Faith Is A Gift

In and through Jesus Christ God has given the gift of faith to corporate humanity. The gift of faith is received by the individual sinner through the Word of God. The Spirit of God in and through the Word of God imparts the gifts of faith and repentance while drawing the sinner to Christ. (Acts 5:31). No man has this faith naturally, it is a gift imparted with the salvation "gift-package" as the Spirit, through the Word, presents God's love with His goodness which leads to **TRUST AND REPENTANCE**.

Romans 12:3 is usually misunderstood because of a less than ideal translation of the Greek word **HEKASTOS** which means literally **Each of you**. Therefore when the KJV reads in Romans 12:3 (last sentence).

*"... according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."*

the words "**every man**" are to be understood in the same way that they are to be understood in 1 Cor. 12:7. The term "**every man**" really means to **Each One Of You**.

Let us read Romans 12:3 from the N.I.V.

*"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."*

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. And as the Spirit of God in and through the Word of God imparts faith into the individual, that gift of faith can either be rejected or accepted. This brings us to a key point.

The proof that we have accepted the gift of faith is for us to exercise that faith. When faith is exercised it grows (2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:3). When it is not exercised, it diminishes and eventually becomes extinct.

We must **cultivate** faith and we must **exercise** faith, and faith is **cultivated** by **exercising** it.

Let us make sure that we are moving in a straight line of truth so far.

1. Faith is received as a gift in and through the Word of God. Rom. 10:17; John 20:30, 31; Rom. 12:3.
2. Therefore the more of the Word we receive, the more our faith will grow in direct proportion as that faith is **exercised**.

### **Definition Of Faith**

But what is faith?

You will remember, no doubt, the account of the centurion who went to Jesus requesting healing for his servant. It is recorded in Matthew 8:5-12. The centurion told Jesus:

*“I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”* Matt. 8:8.

Jesus’ reply was:

*“Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”* Verse 10.

Faith then, is expecting the word of God to accomplish what it says and to depend on the word of God to do what it says because it is the word of God.

We can now read Hebrews 11:1,3,6.

### **The Cultivation Of Faith**

Faith is cultivated by studying the Word of God and by understanding from the Bible that the Word of God is absolutely dependable. It is self-fulfilling. The Bible is full of the records of the very many occasions when the Word of God accomplished the will of God in the lives of those who depended on that Word with naked faith. And by studying these accounts, faith is cultivated because God’s love and trustworthiness are seen and appreciated in and through His Word.

“The knowledge of what the scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.” R.H. 1898-10-18.

But there is another dimension to the cultivation of faith. Not only must we study the word, we must also exercise faith in order for faith to grow.

### **The Exercise Of Faith**

Faith is expecting the word of God to do what it says and depending on it to do what it says.

Therefore **to exercise** faith is **to expect** the word of God to do what it says and **to depend** on the Word of God to do what it says.

This is beautifully illustrated in Luke 17:11-19. Let us read the account. Note carefully the sequence.

- (1) The lepers asked for mercy (verse 13)
- (2) Jesus said to them: **“Go**, show yourselves unto the priests.” (Verse 14)
- (3) They believed His Word and acted on it. They went.
- (4) And as they went, they were healed. (verse 14)
- (5) Only one of the ten lepers really appreciated Jesus’ love in His healing word.
- (6) That leper gave thanks.

(7) Jesus told him that his faith had made him whole. (Physically and spiritually)

The point to understand here is that when Jesus said, Go, THEY WENT! And in so doing, they were healed.

To **exercise** faith, then, is **to act upon the Word of God**, expecting it, and depending upon it, to accomplish God's will.

"Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy." P.P. 431.

### **Appropriating Christ's Victory By Faith**

Remember that all the things which God has given to us in His Son come to us in His word. 2 Peter 1:3,4. We are to make all the things which God has given to us **our own** by claiming the promises recorded in His word. This is called **appropriating** the victory of Christ i.e. making Christ's righteousness and victory our own.

To exercise faith is to appropriate the victory of Christ. How? By claiming the promises of His word and acting upon them in the full assurance that they are absolutely dependable for the accomplishment of God's will in our lives. 1 Thess. 2:13.

### **The Science Of The Gospel Should Be A Compulsory Subject Of Study**

"Understanding how to exercise faith, this is the science of the gospel."

"We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot obey the gospel unto salvation until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised." R.H. 1899-03-07.

"We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief and of our ignorance of how to exercise faith." R.H. 1899-03-14.

Time is running out. We need to understand better the science of faith and we need to exercise more faith.

"The faith of individual members of the church will be tested as though there were not another person in the world." B.C. 7: 983.

### **Our Salvation From Start To Finish Is By Grace Through Faith**

Let us read Ephesians 2:8-10.

Grace is defined as all the favours and blessings and victories God has given to us in Christ and which we do not of ourselves deserve.

Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace.

This is done by claiming as our own the promises of God as written in His word. **When we truly claim a promise of God we will act upon that promise.**

Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), the Word of God is the only means of faith. (Hebrews 11:3).

Therefore where there is **no** word of God there **cannot** be any faith. And where the word of God is, faith is entire dependence upon that word for the accomplishment of what that word says.

In our next several chapters we shall continue to study the science of how to exercise faith. Remember that this is the science of the Gospel.

### **Conclusion And Appeal**

“As Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness,” even so was the Son of man “lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:14,15. All who have ever lived upon the earth have felt the deadly sting of “that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan.” Revelation 12:9. The fatal effects of sin can be removed only by the provision that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God’s word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice. Unlike the inert and lifeless symbol, Christ has power and virtue in Himself to heal the repenting sinner.

“While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. “Him that cometh to Me,” says Christ, “I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.

“Nothing but the righteousness of Christ can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. There are many who have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings, but have not received them, because they have cherished the idea that they could do something to make themselves worthy of them. They have not looked away from self, believing that Jesus is an all-sufficient Saviour. We must not think that our own merits will save us; Christ is our only hope of salvation. “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12 P.P. 431.

# Chapter Eighteen

## Introducing The Elementary Principles

### Introduction

We want to start today with seven (7) victory texts of scripture, so open your Bibles with me and let us read.

1. John 16:33
2. 1 Cor 15:57
3. 2 Cor 2:14
4. 2 Peter 1:3,4
5. 1 John 5:4
6. 1 Cor 10:13
7. James 4:7

**“The work of overcoming is to be the study of every soul who enters the kingdom of God.”** R.H. Vol 3, 70.

But since Jesus has already won the victory for us, then our work of overcoming is simply to appropriate His victory, that is, to make His victory our own!

*“And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* 1 John 5:4.

The victory which Christ has won for us is *received* by faith and *deployed* against the enemy also by faith. Therefore John informs us in 1 John 5:4 that *faith is the victory!*

Now please remember that God holds back nothing. *He has given us all things* (2 Peter 1:3) that are necessary for victory, *and even more*. Oh praise the Lord! Let us open our Bibles and read Romans 8: 31,32,37.

### Faith Is The Victory

#### Definitions And Meanings

#### Faith

Faith is trust in God and belief in His Word to the point where we expect His Word to do what it says and we therefore depend on His Word to do what it says. Faith is not *merely* intellectual agreement with the *Word* of God, it is an *overpowering conviction* that God’s *Word* is absolutely *right* and *true*. This overpowering conviction drives the mind to *think, speak* and *act* in obedience to that *Word*. Faith, therefore, is such a strong belief in God’s *Word* that it produces a surrender of the will-power to that *Word* of God and that *Word fills* the thoughts and *drives* the thinking-process to *produce* actions which are *in harmony with that Word*.

Therefore, in the Bible, faith is *never* presented as a *passive phenomenon* but *always* as a *dynamic* phenomenon. FAITH, GENUINE FAITH IN GOD, PRODUCES ACTION. Faith works! Just read Hebrews chapter 11 and you will see, in every case mentioned, that faith is invariably coupled with action. The action is called the obedience of faith.

*“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”* Heb. 11:7.

*“By **faith** Abraham when he was called to go out ....., obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he was going.”* Heb. 11:8.

*By **faith** Moses .... **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; **choosing** rather to **suffer** affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”* Heb. 11:24,25.

In each case faith is coupled with a verb of obedience. So although, *linguistically* speaking, **faith** is a **noun**, *functionally* speaking Biblical faith is a **verb**! Hence James emphatically declares that faith without works is dead. James 2:17-26.

### **The Birth And Growth Of Faith In The Human Soul**

**Trust** is always a **learned** response. You see a wild cat or dog, you pay attention to it, you offer it food, it is hostile at first, then it becomes less hostile though still suspicious, eventually it becomes friendly and submissive, it is now a tamed animal. Such a process takes time.

In order to trust God we must first come to know that He loves us. This love of God for us is revealed in His word. Thus it is written:

*“So then **faith** comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”* Rom. 10:17.

Faith comes by hearing. By hearing what? By hearing of God’s **love** and hearing it through the **word** of God. Only by love is love awakened. By revealing love to the lost soul, the Spirit of God **in the Word** of God (i.e. the love of God in the word of God) imparts love into the soul. As this love is cherished it produces trust or faith. Faith will then lead to surrender and surrender produces obedience.

In other words, the **basis** of **our faith** is **God’s love** as **revealed** in His **word**. Let us read 1 John 4:16-19.

It takes time for the Holy Spirit to produce faith in the human soul. It takes longer for some than for others but it takes time for all. This period of time is called the long-protracted wooing period during which the Spirit of God in and through the Word of God, is gradually producing faith in the soul by revealing God’s love to the soul.

And just as faith is born in the soul through an appreciation of God’s love in the word of God, so faith is **cultivated** by bringing it into contact with God’s love in His word and through prayer.

How is faith cultivated? By a consistent devotional life of earnest, fervent prayer and diligent, thorough study of the word of God. Moreover, faith is like a muscle. The more you exercise a muscle the bigger it gets. Faith grows by exercise.

Furthermore as faith grows it produces an ever-deepening understanding of God’s word and this ever-deepening understanding increases faith. Therefore a spiritual cycle of growth is established between faith and studying God’s word.

One of the hallmarks of **mature** faith is its appreciation of the **power** of **God’s word**. When we reach the experience of understanding and appreciating the **power** of God’s word, our only questions will be “what are God’s **commands** and what are His **promises**, knowing these we will **obey** the commands and **trust** the promises.

Fully mature faith is called the faith of Jesus and it must be tested to demonstrate its quality, quantity and maturity. This is written in 1 Peter 1:7 and James 1: 2,3,4.

Such a faith is cultivated within the framework of a **quality devotional life**. The **basis** of the believer’s **devotional life** is taking **time** out , **alone**, in the early morning of each day to **seek** Jesus through **His** Word and through **prayer**. Here is where **commitment** comes in. **The Christian who is serious about**

***cultivating faith must be committed to spending quality and quantity time in diligent study of the word and earnest fervent prayer each and every day.***

The union of the soul with Christ is based on communion with Christ and we commune with Christ through prayer and study of His word. It is called ***union through communion***. If there is ***no*** communion there is ***no*** union. We must take time to pray, to study God's word and to learn the promises of God.

### **The Exercise Of Faith**

This is the science of the Gospel.

“We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and of our ***ignorance*** of how to exercise faith.” R.H. (1899-03-14).

“We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot obey the gospel unto salvation, until the science of faith is better understood; and until ***more faith is exercised.***” R.H. (1899-03-07).

“Those who exercise but little faith ***now***, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of Satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience.” G.C. 622.

It is clear therefore that we must learn the science of how to exercise faith.

Faith is exercised by ***claiming*** God's promises and by ***thinking, speaking*** and ***acting*** in harmony with the promises of God.

Faith is exercised by ***believing*** the Word of God in the ***full assurance*** that that word ***will accomplish*** what it ***says*** in our life because it is the word of God.

### **A Spiritual Science**

Since the ***science*** of the gospel is ***understanding*** how to exercise faith, as with all sciences, we must ***discover, learn*** and ***apply*** the principles of this spiritual science if we are to master it in our Christian experience. And again, as with all sciences, we must begin at the elementary level and advance, principle by principle, to the very highest levels of achievement and experience.

### **The Two Elementary Principles**

#### **Elementary Principle (1)**

##### **Faith Is Exercised Through Prayer (Phil. 4:6,7)**

You will no doubt remember that it is also cultivated through prayer. Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, where there is ***no*** word of God there ***cannot*** be any faith. And where there is the word of God, faith is expecting that word and depending upon that word to do what it says because it is the word of God. Therefore to pray a prayer of faith means to bring to God a request that is based upon His word. A.T. Jones expressed this principle thus:-

“Anyone who seeks ***in the word of God*** the things (promises) which God has there provided for all, and upon that specific word (or promise) prays for that thing, thus asking according to the plainly expressed will of God, knows that his prayer is heard and that he has the thing for which he prayed.” Jones, R.H. Feb 28, 1899.

There is a whole depth of light in this principle which we will study in our next chapter in this series.

#### **Elementary Principle (2)**

##### **Faith Is Exercised By Thinking And Acting In Harmony With The Word Of God. (Eph. 1:18).**

By *daily, earnest* prayer and study of the word of God the believer builds up such a spiritually intimate relationship with the Father and the Son that the *word* of God produces an *overpowering, "can't-keep-quiet," irresistible* driving force in the thinking-process of the mind. This leads the believer to *claim* all that is in the word as his *own* and therefore to say: "I have it in the word and therefore I can do it because the word will accomplish God's will in and through me." In other words, "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" Phil. 4:13.

This brings us to a very important fact. When the *word* of God is diligently studied and learnt and when the *mind is set to think* and *act* in *harmony* with the *word* of God, the *Divine Spirit* and *life* in the *word energizes* the *will-power* to *expel* sin and to *perform* righteousness. This is how faith works by love to purify the soul. (Gal. 5:6).

**By Filling The Mind With God's Love, Truth And Righteousness Through Intense Study Of The Word, The Energy Circuits And Storage Mechanisms Of The Mind Become Fixed In Righteousness To The Point Where Sin Is Hated And The Tempting Thought Is Instantly Expelled.**

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." D.A. 668.

"As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character." D.A. 390.

## **Conclusion**

We now have to fully explore these two elementary principles before we go on to the advanced principles of this science of the gospel, the science of understanding how to exercise faith.

We must understand the meaning of faith, how to cultivate it and how to exercise it. The final crisis is very near. It is now or never.

"While God has given ample evidence for faith, He will never remove all excuse for unbelief. All who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon will find them. And those who refuse to accept and obey God's word until every objection has been removed, and there is no longer an opportunity for doubt, will never come to the light.

"Distrust of God is the natural outgrowth of the unrenewed heart, which is at enmity with Him. But faith is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it will flourish only as it is cherished. No man can become strong in faith without a determined effort. Unbelief strengthens as it is encouraged; and if men, instead of dwelling upon the evidences which God has given to sustain their faith, permit themselves to question and cavil, they will find their doubts constantly becoming more confirmed." G.C. 527-528.

## **Appeal**

"No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His word. Here are revealed the wiles of the tempter and the means by which he may be successfully resisted. Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages, by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually: "Lead us not into temptation." G.C. 530.

# Chapter Nineteen

## Mastering The Basic Principles Of The Science Of Understanding How To Exercise Faith

### Section One Introduction

*“Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”* Luke 18:8.

We cannot wait until the final crisis arrives to be trained in the science of faith and the understanding of how to exercise faith. *Now* is the time for us to *master* this *science* of the gospel.

First we must have a *thorough* knowledge of the two basic principles and *understand* how to apply these principles in exercising faith.

“The knowledge of what the scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.” E.G.W. R.H. 1898-10-18.

“Understanding how to exercise faith this is the science of the Gospel. We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot obey the gospel unto salvation; until the *science of faith* is better understood, and until *more* faith is *exercised*.” E.G.W R.H 1899.

*“And Jesus answering saith unto them, HAVE FAITH IN GOD.”* Mark 11:22.

### Section Two Exercising Faith Through Prayer

(This is the **first** elementary principle mentioned in our last chapter).

The *mechanics* of this principle are as simple as A,B,C: *Ask, Believe, Claim* and never forget to *act* on the *claim* and *give thanks*.

*A,B,C,D: Ask, Believe, Claim, Do* give thanks please and *do* act on the *claim*.

*A,B,C,D: Ask, Believe, Claim, Do*; This is the ABCD of exercising faith through prayer. Let us now study each of these in more detail.

#### A=ASK

Let us read Matthew 7:7

**Ask**, and it shall be **given** you;

**Seek**, and you shall **find**;

**Knock**, and it will be **opened** unto you.

For everyone that **asketh receiveth**;

And he that **seeketh findeth**; to him that **knocketh** it **shall** be **opened**. Matt. 7:7,8.

Here are three (3) commands (verse 7) and three (3) promises (verse 8). And what is the FORMULA? (You know every science has principles and formulae) The FORMULA is: **OBEY THE COMMANDS AND TRUST THE PROMISES!**

Now to some other texts worth reading on this matter of *Asking*:

Psa. 2:8; Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:13. And remember James 4:2 (last part) .....yet ye have *not*, because ye ask *not*.

#### Conditions For Asking

### Condition 1.

You Must Abide In Christ And Fill Your Mind With His Words. John 15:7.

*“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.”* John 15:7.

Our wills must be surrendered to God. His words must be in our minds. This means that we *must* have the *word* of God for the particular *request* for which we are *asking*. This brings us to our next condition.

### Condition 2.

Ask According To God’s Will. 1 John 5:14.

*“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.”* 1 John 5:14.

When it comes to matters of salvation, there is no question. It is the *will* of God that we have all things that pertain to godliness and victory over sin. Read 1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Peter 3:9.

But in matters not *directly* related to salvation, e.g. travelling, choosing a career, choosing a life mate, deliverance from a particular illness, etc, we must say *“IF THE LORD WILL.”* Read James 4:13-15; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

### Condition 3.

The Motive For Asking Must Not Be A Self-centered Motive (James 4:3).

*“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”* James 4:3

So if our motivation is selfish we may ask but we may *not* receive.

### Condition 4.

Willful, Deliberate Transgression Will Prevent The Request From Being Heard

*“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”* Psa. 66:18.

*“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”* Prov. 28:9.

### Condition 5.

We Must Ask In Faith. James 1:5,6,7.

*“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth (reproacheth) not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”* James 1:5,6,7.

This brings us now to the **B** of the ABCD of exercising faith through prayer.

### B= BELIEVE:

*“He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”* Heb. 11:6.

Further more let us read Mark 11:24

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24.

### Some Characteristics Of Prayer-Effective Belief

1. Such *Belief* Must Be *Confident*. 1 John 5:14.

“And this is the *confidence* that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.” 1 John 5:14.

2. Such *Belief* Must Not *Waver*. James 1:6,7.

“For he that *wavereth* is like a *wave* of the sea *driven* with the *wind* and *tossed*. For let *not* that man think that he shall receive *anything* of the Lord.” James 1:6,7.

Jesus has left on record in Mark 11:22,23 some very powerful instruction. Let us read it at this point.

3. Such *Belief* Must Claim The Answer To The Request Mark 11:24.

“Therefore I say unto you, that what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them*.” Mark 11:24.

This brings us to the C of the A,B,C,D of the exercise of faith through prayer.

### C = CLAIM

“And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, *we know that we have the petitions* that we desired of Him.” 1 John 5:15.

And the proof that “*we know* that we *have* the petitions that we desired of Him” is the *claiming* of the thing that was requested so long as all the aforementioned conditions have been met.

A beautiful example of **CLAIMING THE REQUEST BY AN UNSHAKABLE FAITH** is recorded in Matthew 15:21-28.

*“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us, but he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. The Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”* Matt. 15:21-28.

Notice that the Canaanite woman made a request for the deliverance of her daughter. And when Jesus replied that the children’s bread shouldn’t be thrown to dogs she *claimed* the crumbs! The answer Jesus gave is highly significant:

*“O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.”*

This woman would not be denied, she not only persevered but she *claimed* the blessing for which she asked and therefore received it!

The *proof* that we have *claimed* the thing for which we asked is to **act** on the claim in full *confidence*. This brings us to the D of the A,B,C,D of exercising faith through prayer.

### D=DO

In our last chapter we introduced the two (2) elementary principles in the science of exercising faith. The first was *the exercise of faith through prayer* and that's what we are discussing in this chapter.

The second was exercising faith *by thinking and acting in harmony with the word of God* and this principle is included here in the **D = DO** of the ABCD of prayer.

In the **D = DO** there are two things to *do*.

- (i) **Act upon the word and,**
- (ii) **Give thanks to God.**

Both of these are clearly illustrated in the account of the healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17:12-19.

Notice that they made their request for healing. Consider carefully the answer Jesus gave them:

**“Go, show yourselves unto the priests.”**

Now the only reason a leper would go and show himself to the priest was if he had been healed. Therefore when Jesus said, **“Go,”** and they *went*, the act of *going* was the act of *doing* which confirmed their *claim* of the healing.

They acted on the word. They **DID** what they were commanded to do and in *so doing* they were *healed*.

Only one returned to give thanks to Jesus and to receive in addition, healing from spiritual leprosy (sin).

The doctrine of *giving thanks* in prayer is written down in Philippians 4:6,7.

**“Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, *always asking him with a thankful heart*. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.”** Phil. 4:6,7 Good News Bible (T.E.V).

*Giving thanks* demonstrates our faith in the fact that God *has given* us the request we asked for. It also confirms the attitude of *humble dependence* upon God's word. In fact *giving thanks* is the ultimate expression of faith because faith includes heart-felt appreciation for God's love and the infinite gift of His Son to save us from sin.

**“Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”** 1 Thess. 5:17,18.

## **Conclusion**

“Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his life work a success must understand. Christ says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God’s will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal.

“For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received.

“We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most. Ed. 257-258.

# Christ: The Basis Of Our Faith

## Introduction

Hebrews 11 is a kind of Portrait Gallery of the great men and women of faith in the Bible.

Paul starts with Abel, then Enoch; He continues with Noah, Abraham, Sara. Yes Sara! This means there is hope for the weak in faith that God will strengthen our faith. Paul continues until he runs out of time. He mentions Abraham *again*, then Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the harlot Rahab and then he says:

*“And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: **who through faith** subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”* Heb. 11:32-34.

## Faith Is The Victory

*“For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* 1 John 5:4.

Faith is trusting God- believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing. Truth, uprightness, purity, have been pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in possession of these principles.

Every good impulse or aspiration is the gift of God; faith receives from God the life that alone can produce true growth and efficiency.

***How to exercise faith should be made very plain.*** To every promise of God there are conditions. ***If we are willing to do His will, all His strength is ours. Whatever gift He promises is in the promise itself.*** “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in His promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift.

Faith that enables us to receive God's gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being. ***It grows as exercised in appropriating the Word of God.*** In order to strengthen faith, we must often ***bring*** it in ***contact*** with the ***Word***.

In the study of the Bible the student should be led to see the power of God's word. In the creation, “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” He “calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Ps. 33:9; Rom 4:17); for when He calls them, they are.” Ed. 253,254.

## Faith Is Not Feeling

Many Christians confuse the two. They think that their faith is strong when their feelings are on a high. And they think that their faith is weak when their feelings are down in a low. But faith, is not feeling, nor is it to be based on feelings. Our faith must be based on the love of God revealed in the word of God. ***The sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary remains forever the infinitely supreme revelation of God's love for us.*** And since Christ's sacrifice has won for us an infinite victory, our faith must always be based on the absolute, objective facts of the Gospel and neither on the subjective moods and feelings of our emotions ***nor*** on the sights and circumstances of this world.

“Abraham believed and hoped, even when there was no reason for hoping, and so became the Father of many nations. Just as the scripture says “your descendants will be as many as the stars.” He was then almost one hundred years old; but His faith did not weaken when He thought of His body, which was practically dead, or of the fact that Sarah could not have children. His faith did not leave him, and he did not doubt God’s promise; His faith filled him with power, and he gave praise to God. ***He was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what He had promised.*** That is why Abraham through faith was accepted as righteous by God.” Rom. 4:18-22 Good News Bible (Today’s English Version).

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised). Heb. 10:23.

The religion of Christ is not a religion of mere emotion. You cannot depend upon your feelings for an evidence of acceptance with God, for feelings are variable. You must plant your feet on the promises of God’s Word... ***and learn to live by faith.***” 6T: 175.

As soon as one begins to contemplate his feelings he is on dangerous ground. If he feels happy and joyous, then he is very confident and has very pleasing emotions. The change will come. There are circumstances that occur which bring depression whether the Lord is with him or not.

Now, the feelings must not be made the test of the spiritual state, be they good or be they discouraging. ***The word of God is to be our evidence of our true standing before Him.*** Many are bewildered on this point...

If you confess your sins, believe they are pardoned, because the promise is positive. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). Why, then, dishonor God by doubting His pardoning love? Having confessed your sins, believe that the word of God will not fail, but that He is faithful that hath promised. ***It is just as much your duty to believe that God will fulfill His word and forgive your sins as it is your duty to confess your sins.*** Your faith must be exercised in God as one who will do just as He has said He would do - pardon all your transgressions...

Oh, how very many go mourning, sinning and repenting, but always under a cloud of condemnation! They do not believe the word of the Lord. They do not believe that He will do just as He said He would do.... ***You hurt the heart of Christ by doubting, when He has given us such evidences of His love in giving His own life to save us that we should not perish but have everlasting life.***”

We must trust; we must educate and train our souls to believe the word of God implicitly.” 4T. 107.

### **The Word Of God Reveals The Security Of Our Salvation Through The Blood Of Jesus**

*“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:” Col. 1:12-14.*

*“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts 20: 28.*

*“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Eph. 1:7.*

*“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:” 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

*“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:6-7.*

### **Faith Is A Scarce And Fragile Commodity**

You may have had the opportunity to collect a gift sent to you from overseas and upon receiving the package, you saw the words: **FRAGILE, HANDLE WITH CARE.**

Faith is a gift from God but it must be handled with care. If the gift of faith is properly cultivated and adequately exercised, it will grow exceedingly.

*“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;” 2 Thess. 1:3.*

On the other hand, if faith is *not* cultivated enough or exercised adequately it will fail in time of trial.

*“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Luke 22:31,32.*

Moreover faith can be overthrown by error, hence the importance of learning truth.

*“Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” 2 Tim. 2:18.*

Some people reject the gift of faith immediately or after some time, therefore not all people have faith.

*“And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” Thess. 3:2.*

And in the end time so few people will have any faith at all that Jesus asked this important question.

*“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8.*

But, Hallelujah, there will be an end-time remnant who will cultivate faith and exercise faith until it grows to the maximum quantity and quality. Such faith of maximum quantity and quality, is called the faith of Jesus!

*“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 14:12.*

The things of this world are anti-faith (against faith), therefore we must be very careful that though we live and work in this world, we do not allow this worldly system to fill or dominate our thoughts.

*“For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:” Col. 2:5-10.*

*“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of*

*the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” 1 John 2:15-17.*

Faith grows by daily study of the Word and by prayer.

Faith also grows by exercise.

Every trial and temptation successfully endured and overcome, produces an acceleration in the growth of faith.

And this should be our daily routine.

But in addition God has established other privileges, opportunities and institutions for the prevention of growth failure and of the enhancement of growth acceleration. These special opportunities include the various church services, camp-meetings and, very importantly, the Communion Service, the Lord's Memorial.

The Communion Service reminds us, through our participation, of God's infinite love in the infinite sacrifice of His Son. Furthermore the Communion Service in its own unique way enhances and boosts our union with Christ.

Refusal to participate is not only a denial of faith, but an insult to our Lord.

Remember that God has held back nothing in His work of redemption. When He gave His only begotten Son, He gave His all! The condescension of the eternal Son of God to become a human being, to take on our corporate fallen human nature, to be tempted in all points “like as we are” and then to die the equivalent of the second death for us and thereby to give us the very eternal life of God - such condescension was infinite! This is the foundation of our faith!

Christ is our Righteousness.

When He died for humanity, He gave up the sinful human nature to the second death. When He rose from the dead the new humanity was fully born. In Him we have forgiveness, righteousness, eternal life and complete victory over sin.

*“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Cor. 5:14-21.*

## **Conclusion**

“These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. Christ has instituted this service that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf. There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus. And nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love efficacious for us. It is only

because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the center of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith.”

“...As faith contemplates our Lord’s great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God.” D.A. 660-661.

*“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:31-39.*

## Chapter Twenty-One

### Developing The Mind-Set Of Victorious Faith

#### Introduction

We have so far been studying the two basic or elementary principles in the science of the Gospel. The science of the Gospel is the science of understanding how to exercise faith in order to appropriate (to make our own) all the blessings of redemption given to us by God. These blessings are in Christ the Living Word and are written down in the written word the Bible. We receive Christ by receiving His Word.

*“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU THEY ARE SPIRIT AND THEY ARE LIFE.**”* John 6:63.

*“Sanctify them through thy truth: **THY WORD IS TRUTH.**”* John 17:17.

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **BY THE WORD OF GOD** which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: **BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOREVER AND THIS IS THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED UNTO YOU.**”* 1 Peter 1:23-25.

#### The Two Basic Principles

You should know by now the two basic principles which we have been studying, these are:

**Principle Number (1)**                      Exercising faith through prayer: *Ask, Believe, Claim, Do.* (A,B,C,D).

**Principle Number (2)**                      Thinking and acting in harmony with the Word of God.

#### A Science That Is Compulsory Study For Victory

*“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”* Jer.15:16.

*“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”* Rom. 4:20-21.

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* 2 Cor. 7:1.

*“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Phil. 4:13,19.

“Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his life work a success must understand. Christ says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God’s will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for

wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received.

We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most.

To live thus by the word of God means the surrender to Him of the whole life. There will be felt a continual sense of need and dependence, a drawing out of the heart after God. Prayer is a necessity; for it is the life of the soul. Family prayer, public prayer, have their place; but it is secret communion with God that sustains the soul life." Ed. 257-258.

### **Thinking And Acting In Harmony With The Word Of God**

We will now take a closer look at the *second* basic principle which is the principle of *thinking and acting in harmony with the Word of God*.

To *think* and *act* in *harmony* with the *Word of God* involves a number of important steps:-

- (i) We must thoroughly *study* the Word of God, this includes the *promises* recorded in His Word. 2 Tim. 2:15; Jer. 15:16.
- (ii) We must understand the *THOUGHT, the IDEA, the TRUTH* of God in the particular command or promise or doctrine. 1 Cor. 2:12-13.
- (iii) We must then make that *THOUGHT* of God in His Word our own *THOUGHT* by meditating upon it and thereby fixing it in our thinking. This involves understanding the thought and repeating the promise, repeating it in our own words until it is fixed in the memory, until it fills and dominates our thinking process. 1 Tim. 4:16.
- (iv) We must, by practice, train the mind to adhere to the Word; that is, we must train the mind to let nothing cause us to depart from the particular THOUGHT or IDEA or TRUTH of God in the command or promise. 2 Tim. 1:13-14.
- (v) In prayer, we should present the command and promise to God according to the simple A,B,C,D formula, (Ask, Believe, Claim, Do) which we have already learned.

By study, prayer and practice the mind is to be disciplined to think and to act in harmony with the Word of God until it cannot be made to move by anything or anyone.

During the process of performing the above five steps an amazing phenomenon occurs. The life and power, the Spirit and energy in the Word of God are released into the mind so that the power of the Word becomes the power of the mind for the accomplishment of that Word.

"The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's word. Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God.

Every seed brings forth fruit after its kind. Sow the seed under right conditions, and it will develop its own life in the plant. Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God." C.O.L. 38.

"Several times each day precious, golden moments should be consecrated to prayer and the study of the Scriptures, if it is only to commit a text to memory, that spiritual life may exist in the soul. 4T. 459.

## The Soil Of The Mind

The Word of God is the seed which contains the Spirit and Life of God and this seed, the Word, must be planted in the mind in order to produce victory over sin and over the various enemies of salvation. Therefore the condition of the mind is of critical importance in the exercise of the principle of *thinking and acting in harmony with God's Word*.

The *mind* is the *soil* into which the *seed*, the *Word of God*, must be *planted* in order to grow and *produce* the *divine character*.

In the parable of the sower (Matt 13:1-9; 18-23) Jesus deals mainly with the different kinds of *mind-sets* or *mental soils* and their effect on the growth of the seed planted therein. According to Jesus, there are *four* different types or kinds of *soil* or *mind-set*, these are (i) *the wayside soil*; (ii) *the stony-ground soil*; (iii) *the thorny soil* and (iv) *the good soil*.

### Four Types Of Spiritual Mind-set Or "Soils"

#### (1) THE WAYSIDE SOIL

This is a *mind-set* that has no time, no room, no interest whatsoever in receiving the seed of the Word.

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart this is what was sown along the path or wayside." Matt. 13:19 (RSV).

"The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. 3:13. The spiritual faculties are paralyzed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger. They do not perceive the love of Christ, and they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them." C.O.L. 44.

#### (2) THE STONY-GROUND SOIL

This is a *mind-set* that is content with a quick, superficial study and prayer but is not prepared to go deep or to study hard in order to fix the principles of truth or the promises of God in the mind. Unlike the *WAYSIDE* or *BEATEN PATH* in which the seed does *not* even germinate but is *eaten* up by birds, the *STONY-GROUND SOIL* allows quick germination but stops at that point. Such a mind-set produces early growth failure, and, if not corrected, early death of the new plant.

"He that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Matt. 13: 20-21.

The seed sown upon stony ground finds little depth of soil. The plant springs up quickly, but the root cannot penetrate the rock to find nutriment to sustain its growth, and it soon perishes. Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued. They have not seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the heart has not been humbled under a sense of its guilt. This class may be easily convinced, and appear to be bright converts, but they have only a superficial religion." C.O.L. 46.

#### THORNY SOIL

The thorny-soil is the *mind-set* which allows germination and growth to proceed to a certain extent but as time passes the thorns of worry, love of riches, worldly pleasure, the old habits and practices of the former life choke the word out of the “*spirit*” of the mind and no fruit is ripened. Luke 8:14 R.S.V.

Such a *mind-set* is the *main* cause of *late* growth failure in the growth of the Christian.

*“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”* Matt. 13: 22.

The gospel seed often falls among thorns and noxious weeds; and if there is not a moral transformation in the human heart, if old habits and practices and the former life of sin are not left behind, if the attributes of Satan are not expelled from the soul, the wheat crop will be choked. The thorns will come to be the crop, and will kill out the wheat.

Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life.” C.O.L. 50.

Talking about the “pleasures of this life,” listen to this:

“And pleasures of this life.” There is danger in amusement that is sought merely for self-gratification. All habits of indulgence that weaken the physical powers, that becloud the mind, or that benumb the spiritual perceptions, are “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11.

“And the lusts of other things.” These are not necessarily things sinful in themselves, but something that is made first instead of the kingdom of God. Whatever attracts the mind from God, whatever draws the affections away from Christ, is an enemy to the soul.” C.O.L. 53.

### **Good Soil**

This is the *mind-set* that intends not only to *begin* but also to *finish* in Christ. This is the mind-set that is intent on making advanced progress in growth and producing much fruit to the honor and glory of God. Such a believer considers it a top priority to spend much time in prayer and deep study of the Word in order that he may be cleansed of sin and filled with the divine character and life of the Word.

*“And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the Word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.”* Luke 8:15 R.S.V.

“The good-ground hearer receives the word “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.” 1 Thess. 2:13. Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true learner. He trembles at the word; for to him it is a living reality. He opens his understanding and his heart to receive it. Such hearers were Cornelius and his friends, who said to the apostle Peter, “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” Acts 10:33.

A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth.

The good-ground hearers, having heard the word, keep it. Satan with all his agencies of evil is not able to catch it away.

Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles.

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. **The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures.**” C.O.L. 59-60.

### **All Four Types Of Soil Can Be In Any One Person**

While it is true that particular types of soil represent the dominant mind-sets in particular persons, it is also true that any combination, including all four types, may be found in one person either simultaneously or consecutively. This should be no surprise for the heart is very deceitful unless kept pure by God’s grace.

### **Preparation Of The Soil**

But each and everyone of us can and may develop our minds into *good soil*. Here is where our own diligent effort comes into play. God will not do your praying or your studying for you. He has given you the ability to study, to pray, to think, to concentrate, to prioritize, to choose your interests.

And these you must do.

He through His Spirit in His Word is attracting you, drawing you, inviting you, appealing to you, but you must co-operate with Him.

“Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the soil. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves. But the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such. The Spirit of God is ever seeking to break the spell of infatuation that holds men absorbed in worldly things, and to awaken a desire for the imperishable treasure. It is by resisting the Spirit that men become inattentive to or neglectful of God’s word. They are themselves responsible for the hardness of heart that prevents the good seed from taking root, and for the evil growths that check its development.

The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, Satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus. The Lord bids us by His prophet, “Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.” “Sow to yourselves in righteousness; reap in mercy.” Jer. 4:3; Hosea 10:12. This work He desires to accomplish for us, and He asks us to co-operate with Him.” C.O.L. 56.

“Moses would never have been prepared for his position of trust had he waited for God to do the work for him. Light from heaven will come to those who feel the need of it, and who seek for it as for hidden treasures. But if we sink down into a state of inactivity, willing to be controlled by Satan’s power, God will not send His inspiration to us. Unless we exert to the utmost the powers which He has given us, we shall ever remain weak and inefficient. Much prayer and the most vigorous exercise of the mind are necessary if we would be prepared to do the work which God would entrust to us. Many never attain to the position which they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness in this life must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and then God will assist them by combining divine power with human effort.” 4T. 611.

### **Conclusion**

To think and to act in harmony with the Word of God is to exercise faith. And this principle goes hand in hand with exercising faith through prayer. Jesus says:

*“If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.”* John 15:7. R.S.V.

Have faith, my friend, in God!

## Chapter Twenty-Two

### Union Through Communion

#### Introduction

The science of the Gospel is the science of understanding *how to exercise faith* in order to appropriate the victorious, all-conquering, righteousness of Christ.

#### The Good News

Remember that the Son of God took on our sinful flesh and as our Representative, the Second Adam, He overcame as a man for all mankind. He perfectly obeyed everyone of His Father's righteous principles or laws and He died the equivalent of the second death for us, thereby fully satisfying Divine Justice for all mankind. *This is the grace of God.* Jesus has already died for your sins. God has already forgiven and accepted corporate humanity *in Christ!*

This is the Good News of the Gospel! It reveals the amazingly wonderful love of God in giving His Son to die for humanity in order to save humanity from sin and to give humanity *love, righteousness* and *eternal life*, the life of God!

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”* John 3:16,17.

*“Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* Rom. 5:18.

*“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* Rom. 3:23,24.

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”* Heb. 2:14-18.

#### The Individual Application Of The Gospel

All the righteousness required of us by God, all the principles we are commanded to obey have been done for us by Christ in our common humanity of which He partook.

He came as the Second Adam so that God could deal with us in Him. His name was to be called EMMANUEL which means “God with us,” and since *God with Him* meant *God with us*, “*He*” was “*us!*”

The victory was won by Christ *for* humanity and *in* humanity, but that individual humanity in which Christ won the victory was the humanity that was in Him and He in it!

Therefore we understand that humanity in Christ is victorious over sin.

The work of *winning* the victory over sin was the work of Christ and He accomplished it. It was done.

The work of receiving the victory is **our** work. And God will cause us to triumph by our **receiving** Christ's victory.

*"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* John 16:33.

*"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* 1 Cor. 15:57,58.

*"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."* 2 Cor. 2:14.

And just as it was said **"IT IS DONE"** when Christ **completed** the work of **winning** the **victory**, it will again be said **"IT IS DONE"** when His **Church completes** the work of **receiving** the victory and therefore **winning** the last conflict in the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

The victory was won by Christ **for** humanity **in** humanity. But that individual humanity in which Christ won the victory was the humanity which was **united** to Him. Hence it is a fact that any individual human being who is united to Christ is victorious over sin.

Therefore the formula for **receiving** the already accomplished victory and thereby being victorious over sin is for the individual to have his soul united to Christ. This is called union with Christ or abiding in Christ. Listen to the Word.

*"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him"* 1 John 3:4-6.

*"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."* John 15:4,5.

## **Union With Christ**

But what is union with Christ? It is an ever deepening surrender of the **will-power**, **the intellect** and **the emotions** (i.e. the entire soul) to God through prayer, through study of the Word of God in order to hear His voice speaking to your heart and through claiming and acting on the promises of God. The basis of such surrender is the love of God which causes the believer to love God, to trust Him and therefore to surrender to Him. And the love of God is revealed to us through His Word.

## **Union Through Communion**

The union is formed initially through initial communion with God thereby receiving the love, truth and righteousness of God in and through His WORD. And the union is maintained and deepened through ever deepening communion.

There are three distinct though inter-related aspects of communion.

- (1) We commune with God through PRAYER.
- (2) We commune with God through STUDY OF HIS WORD.
- (3) We commune with God through CLAIMING HIS PROMISES and acting upon them in obedience to His commands while trusting fully in Christ and His victorious righteousness.

## **The Mechanics Of Union With Christ Through Communion**

Let us read again John 15:4,5.

*“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”* John 15:4,5.

Let us also read 1 John 3:6 (first part)

*“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not..”* 1 John 3:6.

How does the abiding relationship work out practically in everyday living?

Jesus gives the answer in John 15:7.

*“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”* John 15:7.

We must examine this text carefully in order to understand it and therefore to experience it. Jesus is giving us a formula for receiving the victory in this science of understanding how to exercise faith. Listen and understand.

By prayer and careful, thorough study of God’s word, we must let his words abide in us, we must think and act in harmony with His words. And when we ask in prayer according to the words of God which now fill our minds, what we ask shall be done unto us i.e. victory is absolutely assured!

### **Divine Physico-chemical Principles**

*“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”* 2 Peter 1:3,4.

We should clearly understand that the Divine Nature could never be defeated by selfishness and sin. The question is whether God’s creatures would submit their minds to the control of the Divine Nature rather than to the control of sin. The fundamental principle of the Divine Nature is infinitely selfless eternal love. The fundamental perversion of sin is selfishness.

Unselfish love is indestructible whereas selfishness is self-destructive.

Jesus demonstrated beyond doubt that even in our sin spoiled human nature, which He took on, victory was assured by submission to the Divine Nature.

The apostle Peter is giving us a wonderful insight into the theo-bio-chemistry of the science of the gospel. Follow carefully.

The **victory** of Christ is **ENCODED** in His **Word**. When we fill our minds with His Word and practise to think and to act in harmony with the Word, the victory ENCODED in the Word becomes ENCODED IN THE CHEMISTRY OF OUR THINKING. Our thoughts therefore become victorious thoughts of Christ’s righteousness and Christ’s victory. Such a victorious thought-pattern does not, in fact, cannot tolerate evil thoughts. Therefore any evil thought seeking entrance into the mind is expelled.

“We are commanded to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No. Put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled.” A.H. 127-128.

The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect large things if they have faith in His promises.

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, **through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.**

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised. Whatever was given to Christ--the "all things" to supply the need of fallen men--was given to Him as the head and representative of humanity. And "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22. D.A. 668.

### **Bringing Every Thought Into Captivity To God**

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:3-5.*

When the soul is in union with Christ through communion the weapons of our warfare are spiritual, "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." And since God accomplishes all things by His Word this means that our weapons are His words filling and controlling our souls at the levels of the **will-power, the intellect and the emotion.**

If there is not union through communion the weapons of our warfare are carnal, flesh versus flesh. This means defeat.

We must fortify our minds with the truths of God's word, we must fill our minds with the love of God revealed in His word, we must control our minds with the righteousness of God's word. Through communion with God, through prayer and consistent, persistent study of His Word, sin will become hateful to us.

## **The Word Of God And The Physiology Of The Brain**

### **The Word Of God And The Physiology Of The Brain**

The desires of the body reach the lower brain in the form of upcoming electrical nerve impulses. These desires are then passed on to the highest centres in the frontal lobes. The frontal lobes are controlled by specific and particular thought patterns. Dominant thought patterns in the frontal lobes exert control over the impulses of desire coming up from the body or coming in through any of the five senses.

By fortifying the mind with the Word of God any and every incoming tempting thought will be expelled before it has time to conceive. Thus through prayer, study of the Word and thinking and acting in harmony with the word, the mind will be trained and disciplined in the obedience of faith. It is thus that the victory is received and deployed against the enemy.

The character of God through the word of God must fill and control our frontal lobes. Rev. 14:1.

### **Prayer And Faith Closely Connected**

We must learn the science of the gospel. We must exercise faith through prayer by bringing God's promises to Him. We must *ask, believe, claim, do*. We must meditate upon the Word until it fills and controls our minds and until we have the electricity of our thinking so sanctified that evil thoughts are immediately expelled and kept out.

“In the conflict with satanic agencies there are decisive moments that determine the victory either on the side of God or on the side of the prince of this world. If those engaged in the warfare are not wide awake, earnest, vigilant, praying for wisdom, watching unto prayer,... Satan comes off victor, when he might have been vanquished by the armies of the Lord.

Spiritual vigilance on our part individually is the price of safety. Swerve not to Satan's side a single inch, lest he gain advantage over you.” 6 B.C. 1094.

“Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.” C.O.L. 250.

“We have before us a warfare,--a lifelong conflict with Satan and his seductive temptations. The enemy will use every argument, every deception, to entangle the soul; and in order to win the crown of life, we must put forth earnest, persevering effort.” M.Y.P. 104.

“We must have on the whole armor of God and be ready at any moment for a conflict with the powers of darkness. When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God and agonize with Him in prayer. He will not turn us away empty, but will give us grace and strength to overcome, and to break the power of the enemy.” E.W. 46.

“Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor.” G.W. 255

“Beware how you neglect secret prayer and a study of God’s word. These are your weapons against him who is striving to hinder your progress heavenward. The first neglect of prayer and Bible study makes easier the second neglect.” M.Y.P. 96.

“The prayer of faith is the great strength of the Christian and will assuredly prevail against Satan. This is why he insinuates that we have no need of prayer. The name of Jesus, our Advocate, he detests; and when we earnestly come to Him for help, Satan’s host is alarmed. It serves his purpose well if we neglect the exercise of prayer, for then his lying wonders are more readily received.” 1T. 296.

“An appeal to heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings” 2 B.C. 1008.

## Conclusion

*“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” 1 Cor. 9:26-27.*

“God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose....

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered,--a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. There are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. Often the training and education of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. **We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation.** We must learn to look upward. The principles of the word of God--principles that are as high as heaven, and that compass eternity--we are to understand in their bearing upon our daily life. **Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles.**

The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in God’s power to save, are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God are to seal their destiny.

We have no time to lose. We know not how soon our probation may close. Eternity stretches before us. The curtain is about to be lifted. Christ is soon to come. The angels of God are seeking to attract us from ourselves and from earthly things. Let them not labor in vain.” 8T. 313-314.

## Chapter Twenty-Three

### The Basic Mechanics Of The Gospel For Victory Over Temptation

#### Introduction

*“But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Heb. 11:6.*

*“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition: but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” Heb. 10:38,39.*

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Cor. 7:1.*

#### Appropriating The Victory Of Christ

If you saw a man living on the streets begging for money, eating out of a garbage container, dressed in rags and then you discover that this man is a millionaire but doesn't know it. What would you say to him? You would say:

*Having therefore so much money dearly beloved cleanse yourself from all this poverty and hunger and begging and nakedness and live like a millionaire.*

But we as Christians live like spiritual paupers when in fact we are more than spiritual millionaires.

God has given to us all things that are necessary for victory, in fact He has given us not only the victory over sin but He has given Himself in Christ to us.

*“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Eph. 3:17-21.*

*“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3,4.*

Pay careful attention to these important facts.

1. God **‘is ABLE to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.’** Eph. 3:20.
2. All things that He is able to do for us are in the promises recorded in His Word.
3. By claiming and having these promises and keeping them in our minds and hearts; by thinking and acting in harmony with the word of God, the power of the promise is released within our minds to **energize the will-power to obey.**

4. Therefore the *power of the Word*, which is the *fullness of God*, works in us to overcome every sin and even the fear of death!
5. When we make God's THOUGHT in God's word our own THOUGHT, the infinite victory harnessed by His Son's infinite sacrifice, and ENCODED in His WORD, becomes our victory.

Hence as we are told in Rev. 12:11.

*"We overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony and we love not our lives unto death."*

What a victory! Hallelujah! Amen!

### **Two Dimensions To This Victory**

There are two dimensions to this victory.

- i.* Eradication of *defects* from the character
- ii.* The building in of the attributes of Divine love, the fruits of the SPIRIT, into the character.

We must be united with Christ in his death and resurrection. Union with Christ in His death frees us from sin. Union with Christ in his resurrection gives us the New life, the life of God in the Holy Spirit.

But all of this is received by receiving His word.

Andrew Murray expressed it this way:

*"The true taking away of sin is this: if the light comes in, the darkness is expelled."*

It is the *presence* of *Jesus* dwelling in us by the *Holy Spirit* through the *word* that makes us holy.

*"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* Gal. 2:20.

### **It Is All In The Word**

"Are you a follower of Christ? Then all that is written concerning the spiritual life is written for you, and may be attained through uniting yourself to Jesus. Is your zeal languishing? has your first love grown cold? Accept again of the proffered love of Christ. Eat of His flesh, drink of His blood, and you will become one with the Father and with the Son.

The unbelieving Jews refused to see any except the most literal meaning in the Saviour's words. By the ritual law they were forbidden to taste blood, and they now construed Christ's language into a sacrilegious speech, and disputed over it among themselves. Many even of the disciples said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"

The Saviour answered them: "Doth *this* offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4.

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another's mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know "what saith the Lord."

In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. The experiences related in God's word are to be *my* experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*. Gal. 2:20. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. **As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus.** The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven." D.A. 389-391.

### **The Mechanics Of The Gospel For Victory**

In order to better appreciate the wonderful victory *encoded* in the word of God for us we need to study the steps in the process by which temptation leads to sin and the mechanics for victory at each step.

Let us start with James 1:14,15.

*"...Every man is tempted, when he is **drawn away** of his own **lust**, and **enticed**. Then when **lust hath conceived**, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

Remember, temptation is not sin.

To be *tempted* then, is to *feel the pull* of the particular *desire* and to be *enticed* by the *object* of the desire.

Both the *pull* of the desire and the *enticement* enter the mind as a tempting **THOUGHT**.

#### ***This is step ONE.***

We should do all within our power to *avoid* temptation.

We should avoid *reading* or *watching* or *listening* to anything that would suggest evil to our minds. We should avoid the *company* of those who *speak* and *practise* evil, unless we are going to instruct them. We should also avoid going to places where the *social atmosphere* is intended to cause *sexual arousal*, and *intimacy* or *thoughts of violence* and *hatred*.

But although we should do all that is within our power to *avoid* temptation, we will still be tempted everyday because we live in sinful flesh in a sinful world. Jesus Himself, who took on *our* flesh and lived in *our* world, was *genuinely* tempted in *all* points just as we are tempted. He overcame for us and His victory is ours!

*“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”* Heb. 2:17,18.

*“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* Heb. 4:15,16.

*“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”* Heb. 5:7-9.

*“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;”* 1 Peter 4:1.

Jesus never allowed the tempting thought or desire to conceive. This brings us to **STEP TWO** in the process by which temptation leads to sin.

### **Step Two: The Conception Of Lust**

James 1:15 says:

*“Then when lust **hath conceived** it bringeth forth sin.”*

How does the **tempting thought**, the evil desire, the lust, conceive? How do we allow the lust to conceive? By making **“provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.”** Romans 13:14.

There are stages involved in **“making provision for the flesh.”**

Let us analyse these stages carefully.

The **lust** or **evil desire** will **conceive** if we **cleave** to it. We should abhor it and cleave to that which is **good**. (Rom. 12:9).

But when we **cherish** the tempting thought (or lust or evil desire) we are thereby allowing it to **gain** a **foothold** in the **mind**, that is, to conceive.

And we **cherish** the evil desire because we think and we believe that we **owe** something to the flesh, that we are **debtors** to the flesh, that we must mind the things of the flesh. (Romans 8:12,5).

The **basis** of the carnal mind-set, the mind-set of thinking and acting in harmony with the sinfulness of the flesh, is **fear** of **death**. (Heb. 2:15). The basic functional principle of sin is that **SELF** must be put **FIRST** or else we **cannot** survive, and since we want to survive we put **SELF FIRST!**

Therefore the reason for our minding the flesh, or turning to our own perverted way in that we are enslaved to fear, **fear of death**. (Heb. 2:15).

Now, I believe we all know how we **mind** the flesh, we **cherish** the **evil desire** by dwelling on the desire, by mediating on it, by building up imaginations of the thing, by even doing the thing in our minds. This leads inevitably to our minds being enslaved to the evil desire, i.e. **THE EVIL DESIRE OR TEMPTING THOUGHT BEGINS TO DOMINATE, TO RULE, TO REIGN, TO CONTROL** the motives, the thoughts, the will-power (Romans 6:12).

The end-result of all these stages is that we **“yield our members** (the various parts of our bodies) **as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.”** Romans 6:13 (first part). In other words, we **think** and **act** in **harmony** with the **cherished evil desire**. Lust has indeed conceived and brought forth sin!

## The Practical Texts In The Formula For Victory Over Temptation

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Heb. 2:14,15.

*“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”* 2 Cor. 5:14,15.

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* Gal. 2:20.

*“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.”* Rom. 6:9-14.

*“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.”* Rom. 12:9.

*“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof.”* Rom. 13:14.

*“Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and **do not think** about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”* Rom. 13:14. N.I.V.

*“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”* Rom. 8:12-13.

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* 2 Cor. 7:1.

*“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”* Rom. 6:17-18.

*“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”* John 15:5.

*“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”* 1 John 3:6.

*“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Rom. 5:21.

## We Must Train Our Minds To Think Holy Thoughts And To Expel Evil Thoughts

*Through communion with God sin will become hateful* to us. By *earnest, agonizing, heartfelt* prayer and *consistent, persistent, thorough* study of the Word and *learning* the promises, our minds will be so trained to love righteousness and to hate and abhor evil, that the corrupt thought will be instantly expelled!

To this end, we should also listen to, and sing, sacred spiritual music, hymns and songs. Sacred music helps to synchronize our thought-patterns in righteous resistance against evil thoughts. We must train and discipline our minds to dwell in the mental atmosphere of pure thinking.

### **Conclusion And Appeal**

“Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement.

We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God. The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands.

The young would not be seduced into sin if they would refuse to enter any path save that upon which they could ask God’s blessing. If the messengers who bear the last solemn warning to the world would pray for the blessing of God, not in a cold, listless, lazy manner, but fervently and in faith, as did Jacob, they would find many places where they could say: “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Genesis 32:30. They would be accounted of heaven as princes, having power to prevail with God and with men.

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; **some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power.** But Christ declared of Himself: “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.” G.C. 622-623.

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Phil. 4:8.*

We have each of us an individual work to do, to gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober, to watch unto prayer. The mind must be firmly controlled to dwell upon subjects that will strengthen the moral powers. The youth should begin early to cultivate correct habits of thought. We should discipline the mind to think in a healthful channel, and not permit it to dwell upon things that are evil. The psalmist exclaims, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14). R.H. June 12, 1888.

## **Chapter Twenty-Four**

### **Asking To Give by *E.G. White***

Christ was continually receiving from the Father that He might communicate to us. "The word which ye hear," He said, "is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." John 14:24. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Matt. 20:28. Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed. "The Lord God hath given Me," He said, "the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." Isa. 50:4.

Christ's disciples were much impressed by His prayers and by His habit of communion with God. One day after a short absence from their Lord, they found Him absorbed in supplication. Seeming unconscious of their presence, He continued praying aloud. The hearts of the disciples were deeply moved. As He ceased praying, they exclaimed, "Lord, teach us to pray."

In answer, Christ repeated the Lord's prayer, as He had given it in the sermon on the mount. Then in a parable He illustrated the lesson He desired to teach them.

"Which of you," He said, "shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed: I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." Here Christ represents the petitioner as asking that he may give again. He must obtain the bread, else he cannot supply the necessities of a weary, belated wayfarer. Though his neighbor is unwilling to be troubled, he will not desist his pleading; his friend must be relieved; and at last his importunity is rewarded, his wants are supplied.

In like manner the disciples were to seek blessings from God. In the feeding of the multitude and in the sermon on the bread from heaven, Christ had opened to them their work as His representatives. They were to give the bread of life to the people. He who had appointed their work, saw how often their faith would be tried. Often they would be thrown into unexpected positions, and would realize their human insufficiency. Souls that were hungering for the bread of life would come to them, and they would feel themselves to be destitute and helpless. They must receive spiritual food, or they would have nothing to impart. But they were not to turn one soul away unfed. Christ directs them to the source of supply. The man whose friend came to him for entertainment, even at the unseasonable hour of midnight, did not turn him away. He had nothing to set before him, but he went to one who had food and pressed his request until the neighbor supplied his need. And would not God, who had sent His servants to feed the hungry, supply their need for His own work?

But the selfish neighbor in the parable does not represent the character of God. The lesson is drawn, not by comparison, but by contrast. A selfish man will grant an urgent request, in order to rid himself of one who disturbs his rest. But God delights to give. He is full of compassion, and He longs to grant the requests of those who come unto Him in faith. He gives to us that we may minister to others and thus become like Himself.

Christ declares, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The Saviour continues: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

In order to strengthen our confidence in God, Christ teaches us to address Him by a new name, a name entwined with the dearest associations of the human heart. He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite God our Father. This name, spoken to Him and of Him, is a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us. Spoken when asking His favor or blessing, it is as music in His ears. That we might not think it presumption to call Him by this name, He has repeated it again and again. He desires us to become familiar with the appellation.

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Christ's lessons in regard to prayer should be carefully considered. There is a divine science in prayer, and His illustration brings to view principles that all need to understand. He shows what is the true spirit of prayer, He teaches the necessity of perseverance in presenting our requests to God, and assures us of His willingness to hear and answer prayer.

Our prayers are not to be a selfish asking, merely for our own benefit. We are to ask that we may give. The principle of Christ's life must be the principle of our lives. "For their sakes," He said, speaking of His disciples, "I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified." John 17:19. The same devotion, the same self-sacrifice, the same subjection to the claims of the word of God, that were manifest in Christ, must be seen in His servants. Our mission to the world is not to serve or please ourselves; we are to glorify God by co-operating with Him to save sinners. We are to ask blessings from God that we may communicate to others. The capacity for receiving is preserved only by imparting. We cannot continue to receive heavenly treasure without communicating to those around us.

In the parable the petitioner was again and again repulsed, but he did not relinquish his purpose. So our prayers do not always seem to receive an immediate answer; but Christ teaches that we should not cease to pray. Prayer is not to work any change in God; it is to bring us into harmony with God. When we make request of Him, He may see that it is necessary for us to search our hearts and repent of sin. Therefore He takes us through test and trial, He brings us through humiliation, that we may see what hinders the working of His Holy Spirit through us.

There are conditions to the fulfillment of God's promises, and prayer can never take the place of duty. "If ye love Me," Christ says, "Keep My commandments." "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." John 14:15, 21. Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him.

Many are forfeiting the condition of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when

we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us. We present to God His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by so doing He would dishonor His own name.

The promise is "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. And John declares: "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." 1 John 2:3-5.

One of Christ's last commands to His disciples was "Love one another as I have loved you." John 13:34. Do we obey this command, or are we indulging sharp, unchristlike traits of character? If we have in any way grieved or wounded others, it is our duty to confess our fault and seek for reconciliation. This is an essential preparation that we may come before God in faith, to ask His blessing.

There is another matter too often neglected by those who seek the Lord in prayer. Have you been honest with God? By the prophet Malachi the Lord declares, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." Mal. 3:7, 8.

As the Giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. This is His provision to sustain the preaching of the gospel. And by making this return to God, we are to show our appreciation of His gifts. But if we withhold from Him that which is His own, how can we claim His blessing? If we are unfaithful stewards of earthly things, how can we expect Him to entrust us with the things of heaven? It may be that here is the secret of unanswered prayer.

But the Lord in His great mercy is ready to forgive, and He says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith,... if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field... And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 3:10-12.

So it is with every other one of God's requirements. All His gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises.

But we must show a firm, undeviating trust in God. Often He delays to answer us in order to try our faith or test the genuineness of our desire. Having asked according to His word, we should believe His promise and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied.

God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask. Unwearyingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks. Christ said to Martha at the grave of Lazarus, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." John 11:40.

But many have not a living faith. This is why they do not see more of the power of God. Their weakness is the result of their unbelief. They have more faith in their own working than in the working of God for them. They take themselves into their own keeping. They plan and devise, but pray little, and have little real trust in God. They think they have faith, but it is only the impulse of the moment. Failing to realize their own need, or God's willingness to give, they do not persevere in keeping their requests before the Lord.

Our prayers are to be as earnest and persistent as was the petition of the needy friend who asked for the loaves at midnight. The more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with Christ. We shall receive increased blessings because we have increased faith.

Our part is to pray and believe. Watch unto prayer. Watch, and co-operate with the prayer-hearing God. Bear in mind that “we are labourers together with God.” 1 Cor. 3:9. Speak and act in harmony with your prayers. It will make an infinite difference with you whether trial shall prove your faith to be genuine, or show that your prayers are only a form.

When perplexities arise, and difficulties confront you, look not for help to humanity. Trust all with God. The practice of telling our difficulties to others only makes us weak, and brings no strength to them. It lays upon them the burden of our spiritual infirmities, which they cannot relieve. We seek the strength of erring, finite man, when we might have the strength of the unerring, infinite God.

You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you.

Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of a sickly, enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible. The Lord is rich in resources; He owns the world. Look heavenward in faith. Look to Him who has light and power and efficiency.

There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose that neither time nor toil can weaken. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isa. 40:30, 31.

There are many who long to help others, but they feel that they have no spiritual strength or light to impart. Let them present their petitions at the throne of grace. Plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bible in your hands say, I have done as Thou hast said. I present Thy promise, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

We must not only pray in Christ’s name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit “maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Rom. 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Eph. 3:20.

Christ has said, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:13. And the beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks with great plainness and assurance: “If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” I John 5:14, 15. Then press your petition to the Father in the name of Jesus. God will honor that name.

The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We have sinned against Him, and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas, “Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.” Jer. 14:21. When we come

to him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us.

Like Aaron, who symbolized Christ, our Saviour bears the names of all His people on His heart in the holy place. Our great High Priest remembers all the words by which He has encouraged us to trust. He is ever mindful of His covenant.

All who seek of Him shall find. All who knock will have the door opened to them. The excuse will not be made, Trouble Me not; the door is closed; I do not wish to open it. Never will one be told, I cannot help you. Those who beg at midnight for loaves to feed the hungry souls will be successful.

In the parable, he who asks bread for the stranger, receives "as many as he needeth." And in what measure will God impart to us that we may impart to others? "According to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. Angels are watching with intense interest to see how man is dealing with his fellow men. When they see one manifest Christlike sympathy for the erring, they press to his side and bring to his remembrance words to speak that will be as the bread of life to the soul. So "God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19. Your testimony in its genuineness and reality He will make powerful in the power of the life to come. The word of the Lord will be in your mouth as truth and righteousness.

Personal effort for others should be preceded by much secret prayer; for it requires great wisdom to understand the science of saving souls. Before communicating with men, commune with Christ. At the throne of heavenly grace obtain a preparation for ministering to the people.

Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised.

Let the glorious conceptions of God possess your mind. Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is willing to shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

**Section Three**  
**The Science Of The Gospel**  
**Understanding How To Exercise Faith**  
**“Advanced Principles”**

## Chapter Twenty-Five

### Developing The Gold-Standard Faith

#### Section 1: Introduction

*“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:7.*

Faith is a gift from God through His Word.

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith,, and that **not** o y ourselves: it is a **gift** of God...” Eph. 2:8.*

*“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Rom. 10:17.*

Faith is trusting God, believing His Word, depending on His Word to do what is says and expecting it to do what says because it is the word of God and contains the Spirit and life of God.

*“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void. But it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isa. 55:10-11.*

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63.*

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12.*

#### Section 2: Alternatives To Faith

There is *always* what *appears* to be a *reasonable* alternative to *faith*. But in fact any alternative to faith, however reasonable that alternative may seem to be, is sin because the Word says:

*“...For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Rom. 14:23.*

And since **faith** is the **victory** (1 John 5:4) any *alternative* to faith is **defeat**.

Each and every temptation is intended to induce the Christian to depend on alternatives that seem reasonable rather than depending on the Word of God, that is, rather than exercising faith.

Whenever it boils down, all alternatives to faith are really *provisions for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Romans 13:14.

To put it plainly, all alternatives to faith are methods of depending on self rather than on the word of God. But what is meant by depending on self rather than on the Word of God? Well, let us answer by first explaining what is meant by depending on the Word of God. We shall use the story of Abraham.

God promised Abraham a son. Time passed and nothing happened. Sarah made a suggestion. It was a reasonable suggestion, a reasonable alternative to faith. Abraham obeyed the word of his wife and it

*apparently* worked. But the work was *not* of God and the result produced was *not* the fulfillment of God's word. Eventually when Abraham had no other alternative but to depend on the word of God, Isaac was born. Now please understand that Abraham did not say "Well God promised me a son and I am just going to wait, I'll do nothing but wait." No, he acted on the Word of God and went into his wife. His going into Hagar was a self-dependent work, but his going into his wife in dependence upon the word of God was not self-dependence, it was faith. Faith *trusts* God's promise while it *obeys* His commands, faith *works, it works by love!* (Galatians 5:6).

In order to depend on someone's word you must become acquainted with that person, in fact, you must get to know the person very well.

The key to the development of the faith of Jesus is *to follow on to know God* as the Man Christ Jesus, knew Him.

*"Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."* 1 Cor. 15:34.

*"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning: and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."* Hosea 6:3.

*"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* John 17:3.

When we know God as well as it is our privilege to know Him, sin will become hateful to us, then we most definitely will.

*"Abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good."* Rom. 12:9.

### **Section 3: Faith For The Final Crisis**

We obtain a saving, victorious knowledge of God through three avenues:

- (i) Through prayer - a consistent, ever deepening prayer-life.
- (ii) Through consistent thorough study of His word. And
- (iii) Through *proving* His promises by *claiming* them and *depending* on them while *fulfilling the conditions*

Remember, you cannot depend on someone's word in an emergency if you know nothing about the *trustworthiness* of that person or the *dependability* of that person's word.

Similarly you will not depend on the Word of God in a crisis unless you know, intellectually and experientially, that God is trustworthy and His Word is absolutely dependable. Therefore a very important principle in the development of the faith of Jesus is *to prove God's trustworthiness and dependability by learning and claiming His promises* in the ordinary affairs and small crises of our lives!

In the learning process we may make mistakes, as Abraham and Sarah did, but we are to learn from such mistakes and press on until our faith becomes perfected as Abraham's was.

We should now be obtaining an *intimate* acquaintance with God by *proving* His promises through *regular, earnest, heartfelt* prayer and by *thinking* and *acting* in *harmony* with His *Word*. But we should not present our petitions to God to prove *whether* He will fulfill His Word but *because* He *will* fulfill it. This means that the term "*proving His promises*" does *not* mean proving *if* God will fulfill His Word, but rather proving that He *will* fulfill it! In other words "*proving His promises*" means *training* our *minds*

and *hearts* to *depend* on His promises with *absolute certainty* because the promises are *absolutely dependable!*

*“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* Heb. 11:6.

#### **Section 4: Faith Renounces Self-worth And Self-dependence**

It is from the account of the healing of the Centurion’s servant that we learn our definition of faith as *depending on the word of God only to accomplish that which it says*. But there is more to learn.

The account in Luke 7:1-17 contains more details than that of Matthew 8:5-13. In Luke 7:4,5 we are informed that the Jewish Elders told Jesus that the Centurion was *worthy* of having his request granted because he loved their nation and built a synagogue for them. This showed how far they were from possessing the spirit of the gospel. They did not recognize that our great need is our only claim on God’s mercy. In contrast to the Jewish Elders, the centurion said of himself,

*“I am not worthy thou that shouldest enter under my roof”* Luke 7:6.

His heart had been touched by the grace of Christ. He saw his own unworthiness; yet he asked for help. He trusted *not* to his own goodness; his argument was his great need. His faith took hold upon Christ in His true character and work. The Centurion did not believe in Christ merely as a miracle-worker but as the Friend and Saviour of mankind.

When Jesus replied that He had not found such great faith anywhere in Israel He was not only teaching us that *faith is entire dependence on the Word of God for the accomplishment of what that Word says*, He was also teaching us that *faith renounces self-worth and self-dependence*.

It is not because we are worthy that God loves us. It is because He loves us that we have any worth.

In ourselves, outside of Christ, we are nothing. Out of self and in Christ we are sons of God and are worth as much as His Son. This is the *true* self-worth and self-esteem that Christians will have, a self-worth not based on self at all but on Christ, because He is our Righteousness!

We have nothing to recommend us to God; but the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utter helplessness **and** His infinite love in sending His Son to save us. *Faith renounces all self-dependence and clings unshakably to the Word of God* and thereby to the Righteousness of God in Christ.

#### **Section 5: The Trial Of Faith**

Faith must be tried in order (i) to develop it to the highest level and (ii) to demonstrate its endurance under the most severe circumstances. In Genesis 22 there is recorded the account of the trial of Abraham’s faith.

God told Abraham to offer up Isaac for a burnt offering upon a mountain in Moriah. This was the latest Word and Abraham now had to obey this Word which seemed to be a contradiction of the former Word that Isaac would be the one through whom numberless progeny would come.

Abraham dared not even consult his wife. His mind was now fixed upon the Word of God regardless of the consequences. He knew that God would have to solve the problem, but it was his duty to think and act in harmony with God’s word and leave everything else with God.

This was a very severe test for Abraham because he not only loved Isaac as much as a human being can love anyone, but he had already fixed his mind on the Word of God that through Isaac his seed would be reproduced by millions. This trial not only tested whether he would deny self and cling to the word of

God while suffering unbearable emotional agony, but it also tested whether he would think and act in harmony with the *new* Word while still holding to the *former* or *old* Word.

The severity and complexity of this trial were enough to drive a man mad or cause him to run away from it all in despair, confusion and doubt.

But Abraham had by now become *so close* to God and *knew God so well* and *loved God so supremely*, that he simply exercised faith in both Words of God on Isaac. And when he was about to slay His dearly beloved son, God stopped him and provided a lamb for the sacrifice. This proves that advanced faith is a faith which loves God more than anyone or anything and therefore obeys God's commands while trusting His promises under the most forbidding circumstances. Such a faith would die rather than depart from God's Word. This is the faith of Jesus. This faith is *selfless, completely God-centered* and irreversibly fixed in the Word of God. It takes time and diligent cooperation with God to develop such a faith but it must be developed before the crisis breaks.

The Old Testament is full of *faith-building* accounts of God's dealing with His people (for personal study read accounts such as 2 Kings 19; 2 Chron. 20; Judges 4; Ruth; Esther).

### **Conclusion**

*“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various kinds of temptations and trials. You must understand and experience the fact that the trying of your faith produces patient endurance and unshakeable perseverance. When these have been perfected in you, your faith will be complete, mature, perfect, without any deficiency.” James 1:2-4 amplified*

*“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:7.*

## Chapter Twenty-Six

### Developing The Gold-Standard Faith - Part Two

#### Section One: Introduction

God's Son, *Christ Jesus*, is our *Righteousness*. Christ Jesus is our *Victory*. Salvation is by *grace* through *faith*. The grace is free to all because the Son of God *paid* the *infinite price* for our salvation. And the grace imparts faith. So faith is a free gift of God but the power to exercise it is ours.

It is true that God gives grace and faith to all through His Word. But only those who accept the gift of faith and who, by prayer, by study of the Word and by practice, become well trained in the science of understanding how to exercise faith will actually appropriate the victory of Christ.

It should be abundantly clear, therefore, that the science of understanding how to exercise faith must be mastered intellectually and experientially by the final generation of living saints.

#### Section Two: More Than We Can Ask Or Imagine

*“When I think of the greatness of this great plan I fall on my knees before God the Father (from whom all fatherhood, earthly or heavenly, derives its name), and I pray that out of the glorious richness of his resources he will enable you to know the strength of the Spirit’s inner re-inforcement-that Christ may actually live in your hearts by faith. And I pray that you, firmly fixed in love yourselves, may be able to grasp (with all Christians) how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ -and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension. May you be filled through all your being with God himself! Now to him who by his power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine - to him be glory in the Church through Jesus Christ for ever and ever, amen!” Eph. 3:14-21 J.B Phil. Translation*

In this passage the Apostle Paul is, as it were, lost for words to express the love of God and the greatness of the victory accomplished for humanity in His Son our Lord Jesus Christ!

God, our Heavenly Father, has given us, in and through His Son, *all that we need, and more, in* order that we shall be victorious over sin and evil. But Satan has deceived us into thinking spiritually *small* when we should be thinking spiritually *big*. God is patiently waiting for us to understand and appreciate *our* great need on the one hand and *His* infinite gift in Christ, on the other. Then we shall claim, through faith and prayer, the fullness of the victory already given to us in Christ. The *Holy Spirit, in and with the Word of God*, brings the fullness of Christ into our minds, that is, into our *intellects*, into our *wills* and into our *emotions*.

“Christ rejoiced that He could do more for His followers than they *could ask or think*. He spoke with assurance, knowing that an almighty decree had been given before the world was made. He knew that truth, armed with the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, would conquer in the contest with evil; and that the bloodstained banner would wave triumphantly over His followers. *He knew that the life of His trusting disciples would be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter.*

‘These things I have spoken unto you’, He said, ‘that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world’. Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged, and His followers are to manifest a *faith of the same* enduring nature. They are to live as He lived and work as He worked, because they depend on Him as the great *Master Worker*. Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess. *Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace*

***they are to go forward. Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called upon to surmount them.*** They are to *despair of nothing, and hope for everything.* With the golden chain of His matchless love Christ has bound them to the throne of God. It is His purpose that the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the Source of all power, shall be theirs. **They are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame.**” D.A. 679,680.

Paul summarizes it beautifully in Romans 8:31-39 and again we shall read it from the J.B. Phillips Translation, for indeed we hold, in Christ, an impregnable position!

*“In face of all this, what is there left to say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that did not hesitate to spare his own Son but gave him up for us all — can we not trust such a God to give us, with him, everything else that we can need?”*

*Who would dare to accuse us, whom God has chosen? The judge himself has declared us free from sin. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and **Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us!***

*Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain or persecution? Can lack of clothes, food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms? Indeed some of us know the truth of that ancient text:*

*For thy sake we are killed all the day long, We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

*No, in all these things we win an overwhelming victory through him who has proved his love for us.*

*I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power, from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God’s whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord! Rom. 8:31-39 (J.B Phillips).*

### **Section Three: Faith Works By Love**

Genuine faith not only believes the Word of God but claims and uses all that God has given in His Word. Genuine faith therefore works!

But how does faith work? It works by love! (Gal. 5:6) But how does faith work by love? This is a very important question.

The love of God was the Almighty Divine motivation for creation and redemption. This love is seen and appreciated through a knowledge of God and His Son and the plan of redemption. The same love which motivated God to give His Son will motivate us to receive His Son. This love of God produces love and faith in our hearts thereby enabling us to love God and to trust Him to the point at which our intellects are saturated with the knowledge of God, our wills are absolutely surrendered to Him and our emotions and affections are unshakeably fixed upon Him. When such a point is reached, such a faith is the faith of Jesus. This is latter rain faith.

“When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that “the devils also believe, and tremble;” but this is not faith. James 2:19. **Where there is not only a belief in God’s word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith - faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God.**” S.C. 63.

This renewing is progressive until Hosea 6:3 is fulfilled:

*“Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.- His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He, shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”*  
Hosea 6:3.

There is no knowledge sweeter than the knowledge of God! The knowledge of God is experiential knowledge. It means having an ever-deepening knowledge of God’s love, His Righteousness and His Power which produces an absolute surrender to Him because we love Him with all our heart and mind and being!

#### **Section Four: The Importance Of Trials And Difficulties**

No one likes trials or difficulties or adversity. Nor are we to think that God is the source of adversity. No. Adversity is caused by sin and reluctantly permitted by God.

Since Christ has already won the victory over sin and evil, why does God permit Satan and sin to continue and to attack His believing children? The answer is complex but it certainly includes this fact. In order to appropriate the already accomplished victory and to use the victory, the church needs on-the-job training. And therefore “for the sake of man Satan’s existence must be continued.” (D.A. 761) until the remnant church is perfected in the victory of Christ.

It is a mysterious fact, but nevertheless true, that just as Jesus won the victory by learning obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. 5:7-9), so too His body, the church, can only appropriate the victory by also learning obedience by the things we suffer!

*“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”* Phil. 1:29.

*“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* Rom. 5:3-5.

Don’t panic when adversity strikes, Paul says that it is evidence of God’s love!

*“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”* Heb. 12:6.

#### **Section Five: The Trial Of Faith**

Since faith is the means by which we receive the victory of Christ and employ that victory against sin and evil Satan is constantly attacking our faith. He knows that if he can cause our faith to fail we are already defeated, but so long as our faith remains strong, and we exercise faith in Christ we are already victorious.

Every trial, every temptation, every adversity which we overcome strengthens and develops our faith. In the final crisis Satan will be coming with the final pressure in the most severe trials such as delay, hunger, weariness, emotional and physical pain, psychological abuse, and the threat of death.

Now is the time for preparation. We must, by prayer, by study, by practice, come up to every point and pass every test, however difficult, in order to develop the gold-standard faith of 1 Peter 1:7.

In the final crisis, those who have and keep the faith of Jesus will be secure because the faith of Jesus has already conquered sin and evil even in their most extreme forms!

There are some very important advanced principles involved in developing the faith of Jesus and these we shall explore in our next several lessons. Remember we shall need a faith which can endure weariness, delay, hunger, pain, isolation and the death sentence. We must develop the faith of Jesus before the crisis breaks.

## **Conclusion**

“When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don’t resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence. And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God-who gives generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty - and he may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given him. But he must ask in sincere faith without secret doubts as to whether he really wants God’s help or not. The man who trusts God, but with inward reservations, is like a wave of the sea, carried forward by the wind one moment and driven back the next. That sort of man cannot hope to receive anything from God, and the life of a man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn.” James 1:2-8 J.B Phillips.

“The man who patiently endures the temptations and trials that come to him is the truly happy man. For once his testing is complete he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to all who love him.” James 1:12 J.B Phillips.

## Chapter Twenty-Seven

### Exercising Faith Through Prayer - Deeper Issues

#### Introduction

The church is the body of Christ, His Bride. He is now preparing her for her future *queenly* role. Christ *won* the *victory* for His *Church* but the church must *receive* and *implement* that victory in this sinful world. She must *overcome* as He *overcame* in order to *sit* on His *Throne* with Him. God has ordained that the church must receive the victory and must enforce the victory against the forces of evil by *exercising faith through prayer!*

But *why* did God *devise* the plan of *prayer*? Why can He do *nothing* in the realm of human redemption *apart* from human *co-operation* through *prayer* and *faith*? This is what we intend to begin to explore in this lesson.

The *entire* High Priestly Ministry of Christ in the *Most Holy Place* of the Heavenly Sanctuary is *intended* to *prepare* His *wife*, the Church, for the *Throne*. And this will be accomplished through the *perfection* of the *“remnant of the woman’s seed”* (Rev. 12:17), the final generation of the church.

#### Divine -human Co-operation

In the plan of redemption there must be the co-operation of the Divine and the human. For the incarnation of the Son of God, our Heavenly Father was dependent upon the *faith-response* of a godly woman. In reply to Gabriel’s words Mary answered:

*“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”* Luke 1:38.

This was the prayer of her soul, the expression of her faith, by which God accomplished His eternal purpose in the incarnation of His Son.

In His life on earth Jesus performed many mighty miracles but always only in response to the exercise of faith by those in need, and when the level of faith was low, He could *not* perform many miracles. In His own country He was limited by unbelief.

*“And He did **not** many mighty works there **because** of their **unbelief.**”* Matt. 13:58.

When the angel was about to execute judgement upon Sodom and Gomorrah he had to allow Lot to escape, notice the angel’s words:

*“Haste thee, escape thither; **FOR I CANNOT DO ANYTHING TILL THOU BE COME THITHER.**”* (to Zoar) Gen. 19:22.

The Church is the Body of Christ, He is the Head. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul compares the church to the human body. Decisions are made in the head but are implemented or carried out by the parts of the body. For example: a man decides to visit his neighbour, the decision occurs in his head (brain) but that decision is implemented by his feet as he walks to his neighbour’s house. ***So it is with Christ and His church. God in Christ makes the decisions but the responsibility for implementing those decisions upon earth He has placed upon the shoulders of His church.***

The proof of this is found in the following texts :

*“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of*

*heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matt. 16: 18-19.*

*“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matt. 18:18.*

*“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” John 20:21-23.*

These passages all teach that through faith and prayer and the preaching and living of the truth, God works **through, with** and **by** His church to complete the plan of redemption on earth. Through **submissive, faithful prayer the church receives the victory of Christ and uses that victory against the forces of evil.** The forces of evil delight in using physical compulsive destructive force, whereas Christ and His church employ only the principle of self-sacrificing love and that principle though **harmless** is **unconquerable!** The church implements the authority and plan of God on earth not by force or politics or legislation or sociology **BUT BY PRAYING, PREACHING, TEACHING AND LIVING THE TRUTH AND LOVE OF GOD BY THE SPOKEN WORD, PRINTED PAGE AND THE EXAMPLE OF GODLY LIVES, AND LEAVES PEOPLE FREE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE GOSPEL.**

### **Prayer A Divine Mystery**

God is omnipotent and omniscient. Could not He who created the universe by His word accomplish His purposes without involving puny man? Then why did He devise the plan of prayer. Why can He do nothing in the realm of human redemption apart from human cooperation through prayer and faith (*Matthew 13:58*).

*And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; and their own way have I recompensed upon their heads.” Eze. 22:30-31.*

What a mysterious passage! Here we see God, seeking to save the nation during a time of national apostasy. But, strangely, He is “helpless” without a man. If no one will pray, God cannot spare the nation. Why should He be “dependent” upon the prayers of a man in order to save a nation from the recompense of “its *own-way*.” If He yearned to show mercy, why did He not exercise His supreme sovereignty and do so, regardless of the prayers of any man?

That He will do nothing in the realm of human redemption, since its inception, outside of this scheme of prayer and faith is indicated by God’s many pressing invitations to pray in His Word. He not only invites us to exercise this privilege; He entreats us, He importunes, He urges, He even begs us to pray. One translator has paraphrased Matthew 7:7 thus: “Ask, I ask you to ask; seek, I intreat you to seek; knock, I urge you to knock.” *Evidently He will do nothing without our prayers.*

In Matthew 9:38 God commands us:

*“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.”*

He is Himself the Lord of the harvest. The harvest is His. The labourers are His. Why should He stand “helplessly” by while urging men to pray reapers into their fields? Why does He send forth labourers only in answer to the prayers of the redeemed?

Furthermore He has bound Himself unequivocally to answer. God's promises to answer prayer are absolute. Here are some examples:- *John 14:13-14; John 15:7; John 16:23-24; 1 John 5:14-15; Philippians 4:6-7*. These are "unconditional" promises, that is, no conditions are attached which constitute a "dodge" on God's part. In other words, there are no conditions which are not fair or which are not within the reasonable capacity of a truly dedicated child of God. The condition of abiding in Him and His words abiding in us is possible for any ordinary, earnest, and sincere born-again believer. God does not lay down conditions because He is seeking to avoid the risk involved in making such sweeping promises. Oh no! He is not that kind of Person, the conditions He gives us are meant to bring us into harmony with the "circuit of beneficence" so that His blessings may flow to us and, through us, to others! The scheme of prayer, so far as God is concerned is foolproof. ***His part is already done.*** While His promise to answer prayer is always circumscribed by His will, this is in no sense a dodge on God's part since any truly *yielded* child of God ***never*** wills anything but God's will. THEREFORE IF GOD IS NOT DODGING, THEN THE ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRAYERLESSNESS OR INEFFECTIVE PRAYER FALLS ENTIRELY UPON US.

While we rightly reject the Roman idea that the Pope is God's vicegerent on earth, *have we not failed to act upon the sweeping authority God has delegated to His corporate body in the world?* And that authority to implement the will and decision of God concerning earthly affairs operates solely within the framework and system of prayer which God has ordained. By God's own decree, all of this vast delegated authority is wholly inoperative apart from the prayers of man. *Ezekiel 20:30-31*. What is the explanation of this plan? Why did God do it?

### **Prayer Privilege - The Badge of Rank**

God had something infinitely great in mind when He planned the system of prayer. God's eternal purpose in the creation of the universe and the human race was to obtain an Eternal Companion for His Son. This fact is a part of the mystery revealed in the Book of Ephesians, reaching its illuminative climax in chapter five. This chapter expounds the divinely revealed parallel between God's human and divine marriage programs. Verse 32 clarifies the mystery when Paul unequivocally declares that the partners in the marriage program are Christ and His Church. In God's eternal purpose the Church, as Christ's Eternal Companion, is to occupy the highest position in the universe short of the Godhead itself. As the Bride of the Eternal Son she is to share with Him His sovereignty.

"Don't you know that some day we Christians are going to judge and govern the world? ... Don't you realize that we Christians will judge and reward angels?" *1 Cor. 6:2a, 3a LB*).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" *2 Tim. 2:12*).

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power authority over the nations" (*Rev. 2:26*).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" *Rev. 3:21*).

"And they sang a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God a kingdom of priests, and we shall reign on the earth *Rev. 5:9-10 New Scofield*).

*Redeemed members of the human race will constitute this Eternal Companion. Since this companion is to share the throne with her Lover and Lord she must be trained, educated, and prepared for her queenly role.*

### **Prayer Is "On-the-job" Training For Sovereignty**

By delegating His authority to her for administering His decisions and enforcing His will upon earth, God placed the Church in apprenticeship for eternal sovereignty with Christ. By practicing in her prayer closet the enforcement of Heaven's decisions in earthly affairs, the Church is on "on-the-job" training for co-sovereignty with Christ. She must learn the art of spiritual warfare, of overcoming evil forces in preparation for her assumption of the throne following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. *To enable her to learn the technique of overcoming, God devised the scheme of prayer. To give her "on-the-job" training, God delegated to her the authority to enforce His will right here on earth. In order to enable her to acquire the character and the "know how" she will need as co-sovereign, He has placed upon her the responsibility and authority of His Word to implement His will and administer His decisions in the affairs of earth through prayer and witnessing!*

Notice how often *earth*, as her sphere of action, is emphasized: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on *earth*" "*Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth;*" "If any two of you shall agree on *earth*." (*Matt. 16:19, Matt. 18:18-19*). This delegation of authority and administrative responsibility for earthly affairs constitutes the highest honour and elevates her to the highest rank of all created beings. No angel nor archangel will ever achieve this rank, because not angels but redeemed humanity alone is qualified to constitute the Bride and share the Bridegroom's throne.

### **If The Church Will Not Pray, God Will Not Act**

This is why God never goes "over the head" of His Church to enforce His decisions. He will not take things out of her hands. To do so would sabotage His training program. Only by bearing this overwhelming weight of responsibility can she be brought to her full stature as co-sovereign with Jesus. This is why when she fails He will wait. This is why He will do nothing in the realm of human redemption until she accepts her responsibility and uses her privilege and prerogative of intercession. If she will not pray God will not act because this would abort His purpose to bring His Church to her full potential as His co-sovereign.

This was God's plan from the beginning. He will not spoil it now by taking things out of her hands. He *will let the whole world go to destruction first*. His part of the work of redemption is full and complete. But He will not override His Church. *His eternal purpose is the qualifying of His Eternal Companion for entering into full partnership with her Lord in the governing process of the universe*. She can be qualified only through the apprenticeship of prayer and intercession. Only thus does she learn to enter into and participate in the eternal purpose of her Lord. Therefore, *God will do nothing apart from His Church*.

### **Prayer - The Main Business Of The Church**

This is why John Wesley said, "God will do nothing but in answer to prayer." This is why S.D. Gordon said that "The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is to pray." This is why he also said, "You can do more than pray *after you* have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed." This also explains his statement, "Prayer is striking the winning blow ... service is gathering up the results." It likewise explains the statement of E. M. Bounds about prayer: "God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil ... The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock of heaven by which God carries on His great work upon earth. God conditions the very life and prosperity of His cause on prayer." If these things are true, then "prayer should be the main business of our day."

### **The Church Holds The Key**

Checks used by some business firms require the signatures of two individuals to make them valid. One signature is not enough. Both parties must sign. This illustrates God's method of operating through the prayers and faith of His people. His promises are His checks signed in His own blood. His part was fully completed at Calvary. But no promise is made good until a redeemed man enters the throne room of the universe and, by prayer and faith, writes his name beside God's. Then, and not until then, are the check's

resources released. It is like a safety deposit box in the bank vault. The keeper has a key and you have a key. Neither key alone will open the box. But, when you give the keeper your key, he or she inserts *both* keys and the door flies open, making available all the treasures stored in the box. *Heaven holds the key by which decisions governing earthly affairs are made but we hold the key by which those decisions are implemented.* This being so, then prayer takes on a very different dimension from the conventional notion or understanding. *Prayer is not overcoming* reluctance in God. It is not persuading Him to do something He is unwilling to do. It is 'binding upon earth' that which already has been bound in heaven *Matt. 16:19 Amplified).* *It is implementing His decision. It is enforcing His will upon earth.* Prayer makes possible God's accomplishing what He wants and what He cannot do without it. The content of all true prayer originates in the heart of God. So it is He who inspires the prayer in the heart of man, and the answer to every God-inspired petition is already prepared before the prayer is uttered. When we are convinced of this, then faith for the answer is easy - far easier than it would be otherwise.

### **Too Busy to Pray**

No angel was ever invited to share this high privilege. No archangel was ever invited into the throne room of the universe. Only redeemed humanity. And many of us are too busy - watching television, following sports. We are so busy with the cares and pleasures of this life, trying to keep up with the trend that we do not have time to pray.

Perhaps some may be thinking: Are we to have nothing at all for ourselves? The answer is, NO. Christ is to be ALL and in all. You are bought with a price (*1 Cor. 6: 19-20*). "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (*1 Cor. 10:31*).

Daniel was a very busy man but he allowed nothing, not even the threat of death, to prevent him from spending quality and quantity time in prayer.

By our failure to pray we are frustrating God's high purpose in the ages. We are robbing the world of God's best plan for it and we are limiting our rank in eternity.

"AND I SOUGHT FOR A MAN AMONG THEM AND FOUND NONE." (*Taken from Destined for the Throne by Paul Billheimer*)

### **Conclusion**

Let this not be said of us. May we seek the Lord earnestly in prayer in order to claim all that He has given us in Christ and deploy it against the forces of evil - now!

## Chapter Twenty-Eight

### The Church And The Mystery Of Prayer - Part One Making Up The Hedge By Standing In The Gap

#### Introduction

*“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.” Eze. 22:30,31.*

This passage of scripture informs us that God sought for a man to:

- (i) make up the *hedge*, and
- (ii) stand in the *gap*.

We need to understand what is meant by *each* of these terms. When we really understand what these terms mean and why born-again believers must “*make up the hedge*” and “*stand in the gap*” through *intercessory prayer*, we shall better appreciate the *privilege, necessity* and *urgency* of prayer.

#### Introducing The Hedge

We learn about the *hedge* in the book of Job.

*“Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an **hedge** about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” Job 1:9-10.*

Further light is thrown on the matter in Psalm 34:7.

*“The **angel** of the **Lord** encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Psa. 34:7.*

But before verse 7 there is verse 6.

*“This poor man cried, and the **Lord** heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” Psa. 34:6.*

#### A Mystery Rooted In The Plan Of Redemption

The **SPIRIT** of God in the **WORD** of God flows from the Father and the Son through the *angels* to our planet, earth!

In fact, it is the *power* of the *Word* which *moves* the angelic host to *minister* to humanity. God accomplishes all things by His Word. In creation His Word *alone* accomplished His purposes. But in redemption He has chosen to let His Word work *in, through* and *with* angels and men for the accomplishment of His redemptive purposes.

There is a very profound reason for this. God must prove by demonstration that in the same way the stars and planets are kept moving in perfect order by His omnipotent Word, so too His intelligent creatures must willingly submit to be *kept* and *worked* by His Word. And in His omniscience He intends that intelligent creatures moved by His *Word* shall through the Word work for the salvation and well-being of other creatures.

In the plan of redemption, God in particular, concentrates these efforts on humanity through the angels because these are the two sets of intelligences primarily affected by the sin problem. Sin evolved among the angels in heaven in Lucifer's mind and had an impact on all the angels. One third of the angelic population became irreversible sinners while the remaining two-thirds were troubled in their minds by the philosophy of Satan and the charges he leveled against God's government.

God had decided from all eternity past to meet Satan head-on in fallen humanity. The same species of intelligent creature (mankind) that Satan deceived into sin, God would, by His Word, enlighten unto salvation and elevate to the throne.

Sin had separated man from God and His Word. The Son of God, the Living Word, became a man, took on our fallen nature, and as a man submitted Himself absolutely to the *word* of God. Remember, too, that the highest angels in heaven, the ones who would have been bombarded most by Satan's sophistries, kept very close to Jesus while He was on earth and submitted themselves fully to the Word of the Father and Son even as the Son of *man* submitted Himself fully to His Father's word.

By His life of submission, trust and obedience to His Father's word, even unto the death of the cross, Christ reconciled fallen humanity to God and answered all of Satan's charges against God's government. He did it as the Head of His body the church.

The apostle Paul explains in 1 Cor. 12:12 that there is the individual person called Christ, the incarnate Son of God, and there is the *extended* Christ made up of the *individual Christ*, as the *Head*, and *redeemed humans*, as the body.

Furthermore the *victory* which was *won* by the *Head* must now be *used* by the *Body* in order to *inflict* the *final defeat* on *Satan* in the *final* battle in the *final* crisis. For unless the Body defeats Satan, in the same way and by the same victory, as the Head defeated Him, the plan of redemption would have failed.

### **Back To The Hedge**

By His life and death, Christ gave back to humanity the Word of God with the Spirit and life of God. And this Spirit and Word flows through angels to our planet.

An essential part of the hedge, then, is the angelic host, empowered by god's spirit and word, and who are sent forth as "*Ministering Spirits to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.*" Heb. 1:14.

"Nathanael's first expression of his faith, so full and earnest and sincere, fell like music on the ears of Jesus. And He "answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these." The Saviour looked forward with joy to His work in preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the brokenhearted, and proclaiming liberty to the captives of Satan. At thought of the precious blessings He had brought to men, Jesus added, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Here Christ virtually says, On the bank of the Jordan the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Me. That scene was but a token that I am the Son of God. If you believe on Me as such, your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that the heavens are opened, and are never to be closed. I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men.

The angels of God are ever passing from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels. And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing

comes from God to us. In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. And thus Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men.” D.A. 142-143.

We come now to a crucially important fact. Follow carefully. The plan of redemption required the *union* of and *co-operation* between Divinity and fallen humanity. In other words, the connecting chain between Heaven and earth is a *divine-human* chain in which God is the *Source* and man the dependent *receiver*. The angels of God are involved in both the divine - human and the human - divine flow of the circuit of beneficence.

But as important as is the angelic hedge, it is not the *entire* hedge.

“As His representatives among men, Christ does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity. **Divinity needed humanity**; for it required both the divine and the human to bring salvation to the world. **Divinity needed humanity**, that humanity might afford a **channel** of communication between God and man. So with the servants and messengers of Christ. Man needs a power outside of and beyond himself, to restore him to the likeness of God, and enable him to do the work of God; but this does not make the human agency unessential. Humanity lays hold upon divine power, Christ dwells in the heart by faith; and through co-operation with the divine, the power of man becomes efficient for good.

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God.

“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves.” 2 Cor. 4:7, R. V. **This is why the preaching of the gospel was committed to erring men rather than to the angels.** It is manifest that the power which works through the weakness of humanity is the power of God; and thus we are encouraged to believe that the power which can help others as weak as ourselves can help us. And those who are themselves “compassed with infirmity” should be able to “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” Heb. 5:2. Having been in peril themselves, they are acquainted with the dangers and difficulties of the way, and for this reason are called to reach out for others in like peril. There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ’s stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ.

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. **And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God’s love.**” D.A. 296-297.

Redeemed humanity makes up the other part of the hedge by *standing* in the *gap* between the angelic chain and unsaved humans. Since man must be the channel to communicate with man the angels wait with almost impatient eagerness for our co-operation. **And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion**, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God’s love. In other words, **when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion** we are *making* up the *hedge* by *standing* in the gap.

### **Our Part Of The Hedge Is The Decisive Part**

As we said earlier, the Apostle Paul wrote about the *extended* Christ made up of the individual, Lord Jesus Christ as Head, and redeemed humans as His Body. The Man Christ Jesus is in Heaven, His Body, the Church, His wife, is on the earth. Christ the Head directs His church by His Spirit in His Word.

Redeemed humans must receive Christ's victory through prayer and study of His Word and must enforce that victory also through prayer. The prayers of God's people are necessary for the accomplishment of God's purposes.

Not only must the redeemed complete the hedge by working along with the angels for the salvation of the lost, but, as the Body of Christ, God is dependent on their prayers for binding on earth what is bound in heaven. ***Therefore when God's people pray angels move.*** Indeed the angels cannot perform their work without our prayers and our co-operation. This is clearly illustrated in the Biblical account of Daniel's three week intercessory prayer recorded in Daniel chapter 10.

The vision concerning the future of the nation came to Daniel at the close of a three week period of fasting. During all of that time Daniel was in mourning for his people; that is, he was engaged in prayer and intercession concerning the future of Israel. When at last the angel appeared with the message from heaven, he revealed to Daniel the astounding reason for the long delay. Daniel's prayer was heard in heaven the very day that he began his intercession and immediately this heavenly messenger was dispatched with the answer. But he was intercepted. The Living Bible paraphrases it this way: "That very day I was sent here to meet you. But for twenty-one days the mighty Evil Spirit who overrules the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, (one of) the top officer(s) of the heavenly army, came to help me, so that I was able to break through these spirit rulers of Persia" (Dan. 10:12-13).

### **Battle In The Spirit World**

Notice that Michael intervened to help Gabriel because a redeemed man, Daniel, ***persevered*** in prayer.

Here is a historical account of a literal conflict in the unseen realms. It is doubtless the pattern of many similar conflicts that rage constantly in the spirit world. It is the story of an action on two levels. Down by the river is a man in fasting and prayer. He **labours**, he **pleads**, he **insists**, he **persists**, he **importunes**, **wrestles**, and **agonizes**. He is in mourning day after day. He has read Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years of captivity and knows that the time has almost expired. The time for the fulfillment is almost here. Although God is sovereign and could, if He chose, fulfil His prophecies unaided, Daniel evidently realized that intercession had a part to play in bringing the prophecy to pass. God had made the prophecy. *When it was time for its fulfillment He did not fulfil it arbitrarily outside of His program of prayer. He sought for a man upon whose heart He could lay a burden of intercession.* Intercession is the most unselfish thing anyone can do.

*As always, God made the decision in heaven. A man was called upon to enforce that decision on earth through intercession and faith.* This part of the conflict - the prayer sessions by the river - is on a level which we can observe. But another part of the battle was invisible from earth. While Daniel was on his face interceding, a concomitant conflict, a related pitched battle, was raging in the heavens. Two angels, and possibly the spirit forces under their command, were engaged in a fierce combat which continued for three weeks. Since God does nothing but in answer to prayer, if Daniel had grown weary and become discouraged, God would have been compelled to find someone else to intercede or permit His messenger to suffer defeat. Although the answer to his prayer was granted and already on the way, if Daniel had given up it presumably would never have arrived. Therefore the real battle was fought and the victory won in the place of prayer down on the river bank. The decisive action was there.

Another example of the importance of making up the hedge by standing in the gap is seen in the account of Zacharias who ***prayed for*** the first advent of the Messiah.

*"To the question of Zacharias, the angel said, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings." Five hundred years before, Gabriel had made known to Daniel the prophetic period which was to extend to the coming of Christ. **The knowledge that the end of this period was near had moved Zacharias to pray for***

*the Messiah's advent. Now the very messenger through whom the prophecy was given had come to announce its fulfillment."*

Similarly the Apostle Peter informs us that we must look for and hasten the Second Advent of the Messiah.

*"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" 2 Peter 3:11-12.*

The fulfillment of prophecy is dependent on God's people **making up the hedge** and **standing in the gap** by **persevering persistence** in prayer. Satan knows that the prayers of the redeemed are **decisive** and **incisive** and therefore he invents unnumbered schemes to prevent us from praying altogether or to reduce the amount of praying that we do.

One of Satan's most effective modes of operation is to induce people to idolize the various inventions of modern technology, such as the television, the video cassette, computer games. Christians who should be praying are spending most of their time in front of these modern inventions while the redemptive hedge is short because there is no one to stand in the gap. In fact, when the professed remnant people of God count everything else more important than intercessory prayer, Satan relaxes. He knows that a church that is too busy to pray is a church that is doing **no** harm to his kingdom.

**Prayerlessness** is one of the alarming symptoms of the spiritual cancer of lukewarmness, and Jesus invites us to repent. Yes! We must repent of our prayerlessness, we must pull down the idols which destroy our desire for prayer and for God. People, whether youth or adult, may find church boring because of the excitement of T.V., electronic games and romance novels. We must be delivered from this idolatrous bondage or else we shall be overwhelmed by the final crisis.

We need thorough conversion or re-conversion, a true radical repentance by which we lose the carnal desire to watch and read that which is of no benefit to spirit, soul or body. We must set our minds to seek the Lord with all our heart, now.

## **Conclusion**

Each and every redeemed person in God's church has a specific **gap** to **stand in** and a particular part of the redemptive **hedge** to **make up**. To the extent that any redeemed person is not engaging in earnest, heartfelt, persevering prayer, that person's **gap** is **dysfunctional** and **empty** most of the time causing a **break** in the **hedge** and thereby delaying a completion of God's work on the earth.

Before probation closes the **hedge** must be fully made up by each true believer standing in his/her **gap**. If you persist in lukewarm unconcern about standing in your gap, it will become vacant and someone else will take your place, you will be spewed out. Rev. 3: 14-22.

We are living now in the time when God is calling for all His people to stand in their gaps by consistent praying in order to complete the hedge so that Satan can be defeated in the last battle of the great controversy.

## **Appeal**

We must not let God down. He loves us too much. He has accomplished our redemption at too high a cost for us to fail Him now when He needs us most. Let each resolve to stand in his/her gap and speedily complete the victorious hedge.

## Chapter Twenty-Nine

### The Church And The Mystery Of Prayer - Part Two

#### Knowing The Time Of Our Visitation

#### Introduction

In our last lesson we examined the biblical doctrine of the **HEDGE** and the **GAP** of Ezekiel 22:30. We understood very clearly that God's people must make up the hedge by standing in the gap. Each born again believer, *and especially each of those in the front line of the Third Angel's Message of present truth for this the last generation*, must stand in his **gap** and must make up his part of the **hedge** through **unceasing prayer** within the context of abiding in Christ and being filled with God's word.

*"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

*"Pray without ceasing."* 1 Thess. 5:17.

*"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;"* Luke 18:1.

*"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."* John 15:7.

#### Special Gaps And Special Hedges

But in addition to the **"gaps to stand in"** and the **"hedges to make up"** in the on-going work of the everyday ministry of reconciliation there are **special** gaps and **special** hedges. In the **time-table** of **prophetic events** to be fulfilled in the plan of redemption, there are **critical times** which require **special understanding, special intercessory prayer** and **special action** or else the work of God is delayed and Satan obtains more time.

It is at such critical times that God especially seeks for His people, or at least a man among them, to **make up the hedge** by **standing in the gap**.

*"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD."* Ezek. 22:30-31.

*“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.” Jer. 5:1.*

The prophetic time-table of redemptive events is found in the 2300 day-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 and Daniel 9:25-27. Throughout those 2300 years from 457 BC to 1844 AD and the *four* generations after 1844, there have been, and continue to be, critical occasions when God needed and still needs men to stand in the gaps and make up the hedges in order to fulfill the prophecy and advance His work.

### **The Significance Of The 2300 Year Prophecy**

Of all the great time prophecies in the Bible none is so intimately involved with the people of God; their failure, their delay and their ultimate success; as is the 2300 year prophecy of Daniel 8:13,14.

This great prophecy foretold the Messiah’s victorious conflict with the forces of evil and the ultimate victory of His church. In other words, the 2300 prophecy is a prophecy concerning the Head and the Body of the church; Christ the Head, and His people the Body.

The 2300 year prophecy shows the long delays which the work of God would suffer first by the Jews who squandered their 490 year probational period. Then by the Christians in the post apostolic period who by apostasy allowed the reign of the Papacy for 1260 years. And lastly by the last-day people of God who, by their lukewarmness, have delayed the final victory in the great controversy.

But the 2300 year prophecy also shows God’s love and longsuffering toward His people. The prophecy is as long as it is because God foresaw how long it would have taken His people to reach the stage required for Christ to enter the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844.

The first 490 years of the prophecy dealt with the perfecting of the Messiah through suffering (Hebrews 5:7-9). The last 1810 years dealt with preparation of the body to produce the remnant.

And the remnant must be prepared for, and carried through, the final conflict of the great controversy. They too must be perfected in obedience through the things they must suffer. (Revelation 12:17).

### **Angelic And Human Involvement In The 2300 Year Prophecy**

In Daniel 8:13, we are introduced to two holy messengers speaking to each other. One is called “that *certain* (saint) which spake.” The Hebrew word translated *certain* is the word *palmoni* which literally means *Wonderful Numberer or Numberer of Secrets*. Such a term can only be in reference to the Son of God (see Colossians 2:3).

In Daniel 8:13, therefore, we have two heavenly messengers (angels) speaking. One is the Son of God. The other is Gabriel.

In verse 16, the Son of God commands Gabriel to interpret the vision, but before Gabriel could finish Daniel faints. Then we have that wonderful and exemplary prayer of Daniel 9, before Gabriel returns to continue the interpretation (Daniel 9:21-27). So it was Gabriel who gave to Daniel the details of the first 490 years of the 2300 years. **But he did it only in answer to Daniel’s prayer.**

But not only did Gabriel give the details of the 70 weeks of years, he worked very hard to get the fulfillment of the prophecy started, **and again God needed a man to stand in the gap and make up the hedge. That man was Daniel.**

The fulfillment of the prophecy depended on the “going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” and the actual building of the wall. But Satan was determined to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and for that reason it had to be built “even in troublous times.” Dan. 9:25. **This was a special gap which needed a man to engage in intercessory prayer.**

Satan influenced the enemies of God's people to keep sending unfavorable reports to the highest powers in the Persian Empire.

“Untiring in their opposition, the Samaritans ‘weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius.’ Ezra 4:4,5. By false reports they aroused suspicion in minds easily led to suspect. But for many years the powers of evil were held in check, and the people of Judah had liberty to continue their work.

While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested. Through the prophet Daniel we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel's aid. “The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days,” Gabriel declares, “but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.” Daniel 10:13. All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years.” P.K. 571, 572.

During the three weeks when Gabriel was wrestling with the powers of darkness. God needed a man to stand in the gap and make up the hedge. That man was Daniel. Because of Daniel's persistence in prayer, Michael moved in to give Gabriel the victory! Daniel fulfilled the conditions mentioned in Jeremiah's prophecy. (Jer. 29:10-14).

Not only did Gabriel have to contend with the Satanic opposition to God's work through the enemies of God's people but through God's people themselves! (Sounds familiar?)

“This was a time of wonderful opportunity for the Jews. The highest agencies of heaven were working on the hearts of kings, and it was for the people of God to labor with the utmost activity to carry out the decree of Cyrus. They should have spared no effort to restore the temple and its services, and to re-establish themselves in their Judean homes. ***But in the day of God's power many proved unwilling.***” P.K. 572.

May we in this last generation ***not*** prove unwilling in this the final day of God's power!

Then came the time for the messiah's birth, ministry and atoning sacrifice. Again there was a special gap and God found men to pray for the Messiah's first advent. One such man was Zacharias.

“To the question of Zacharias, the angel said, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.” Five hundred years before, Gabriel had made known to Daniel the prophetic period which was to extend to the coming of Christ. ***The knowledge that the end of this period was near had moved Zacharias to pray for the Messiah's advent.*** Now the very messenger through whom the prophecy was given had come to announce its fulfillment.” D.A. 98.

Throughout the long period of the Middle Ages, during the 1260 year period of Papal Supremacy, God needed and found men of faith and prayer to stand in the ***gaps*** and ***make*** up the ***hedges of revival*** and ***reformation***. When the Protestant denominal churches became spiritually dead (Rev 3:1), there was a big gap and God found a man to stand in the gap and to make up the hedge. That man was William Miller.

In the first generation (1844-1884) of the Third Angel's movement lukewarmness developed. In 1888, early in the second generation (1884-1924), **God found two men, Jones and Waggoner, to stand in the gap and make up the hedge.**

### **It Is Our Time Now**

We have come now to the *fourth* generation after 1844 (1964-2004). This is the generation of judgement (Exo. 20:5). God wants to finish the work and cut it short in righteousness (Rom. 9:28). We have come now to the *last critical* gap and the *final* hedge. God needs men of *faith* and *prayer* to fill the gap and make up the hedge, and to call His other children out of Babylon. Firstly, we must agonize in prayer for the victory over lukewarmness and then by continuous prayer receive the latter rain service power of the Holy Spirit. Only by praying hard and long, by periods of fasting and praying, by the importunate intercession of persisting, insisting, agonizing, crying out, labouring in prayer, shall the victory come.

This is the generation of Third Angel Message believers that *must* claim *all* of God's promises and the *full* victory of Christ. It is now or never, **We must not and we cannot delay God's work any longer.** We must set our minds with fixed determination to make this generation the last by hastening the second coming of Christ through Spirit-inspired, earnest, importunate, agonizing prayer, repentance and complete devotion to Christ! (2 Peter 3; 11-12).

*"Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD:..."* Jer. 29:12-13 & 14.

*"I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."* Hosea 5:15.

*"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."* Hosea 6:1-3.

*"Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."* Zech. 10:1.

*"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."* Lev. 20:26.

### **Conclusion**

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger--a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God--how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God." G.C. 621.

### **Appeal**

“We must today seek God and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without His presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us. How intensely earnest, then, would be our life. How closely would we follow Jesus in all our words and deeds.” 5T. 200.

## Chapter Thirty

### Intercessory Prayer - Part One

### Daniel's Prayer In Daniel Chapter Nine

#### Introduction

Read Matthew 6:5-15.

In His model prayer, which Jesus used for the purpose of teaching His disciples how to pray, He began with a very important principle.

*“OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME. THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.”* Matt. 6:9,10.

#### Accomplishing God's Will On Earth

The whole life of Christ upon earth was lived for the purpose of manifesting the will of God on earth as it is in heaven. This wonderful accomplishment must be repeated by His Body, the Church, in order to bring the great controversy between Christ and Satan to its end.

The church, *as a unit*, is the bride of Christ and, at the same time, the *individual members* of the church are the spiritual offspring of the marriage union between Divinity and humanity in Christ.

In contrast, those individual humans who reject God's free gift of salvation are the children of the Devil. Satan accomplishes his will on earth through his children. God must accomplish His will on earth through His children.

*“They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”* John 8:39-47.

*“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”* Rom. 8:9-10 & 14-17.

*“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the*

*house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 5:14-16.*

Satan works through his (fallen) angels (demons) and through unrepentant humans to establish his government of sin on the earth. God must demonstrate to the universe that His will *can* and *will* be done on earth, *in the lives of His people*, as it is in Heaven. *If God cannot or does not give this demonstration, Satan will claim the right to govern the earth.* God must wait until He has a remnant through whom He can give such a glorious demonstration. But the scriptures declare that God will have such a remnant! Revelation 12:17.

God’s remnant must learn the art and science of intercessory prayer. One example of such a prayer is recorded in Daniel 9.

### **Learning From Daniel’s Prayer In Daniel 9**

In reading Daniel 9 carefully, one realises that there is much to learn from this wonderful prayer of Daniel. Let us go through the principles revealed.

#### **1. Daniel Used The Bible**

The first thing Daniel did in that critical situation was to search the scriptures for a clear understanding of God’s will and plan. We too must diligently search the word, learn the truth and understand the times to which we have come.

*“In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” Dan. 9:2.*

#### **2. He Engaged In Earnest Intercessory Prayer**

As soon as Daniel understood what God’s plan was he set his mind to pray earnestly. He understood that God would only fulfil the prophecy if His people prayed. Many others were praying too. Daniel prayed with *deep humility, deep repentance, deep contrition.*

In every difficulty we must see a call to pray.

*“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jer. 29:13.*

*“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:” Dan. 9:3.*

#### **3. Daniel Confessed His Own Sins And The Sins Of His People**

*“We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespasses that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.” Dan. 9:5-8.*

We too must confess our individual sins and the sins of our congregation and the sins of Adventism past and present. The sin of lukewarmness and the sin of the rejection of the 1888 message must be confessed and repented of, and the message of Christ’s righteousness and the straight testimony of the True and Faithful Witness must be *accepted, learnt* and *experienced!* Only those Seventh Day Adventists who

make such an all-embracing confession and who pray consistently, with deep contrition and repentance, for victory over lukewarmness will obtain the preparation needed to endure the final crisis. All who pray earnestly for victory over lukewarmness will be brought into contact with the glorious light of the messages of righteousness by faith and the character of God in the straight testimony of the true and faithful witness of Rev. 3:14-22. Those who experience these truths intellectually and spiritually will attain to the Philadelphian experience.

*“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev. 3:14-22.*

*“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;.... Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Rev. 3:7 (first sentence), 10.*

“I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God’s approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.

Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels of God had charge over His people, and as the poisonous atmosphere of evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the heavenly angels were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness.

As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts and light up their countenances. Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these and went to the aid of the earnest, praying ones. I saw angels of God hasten to the assistance of all who were struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But His angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them.

I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.

I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” E.W. 269-270.

#### **4. Daniel Depended On God’s Righteousness, Not His Own**

*“O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.”* Dan. 9:18.

There is no record of any sin in Daniel’s life as a man of God during the long period of his exile in Babylon. The reason for this is now clear. Daniel never looked to himself or at his good works to recommend himself to God. He rested entirely upon God’s mercy and depended fully on his righteousness.

In James 5:16, we are told that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;” but Paul informs us that “there is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom 3:10) so how do we solve the problem? Do what Daniel did! Come to God just as you are. Come to God in our sinfulness. It is the only way we *can* come. And as we confess our sinfulness and repent and claim His forgiveness and His righteousness, we have the assurance of His mercy. His wonderful promise is written in words of absolute security:

*“Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out!”* John 6:37.

#### **5. Daniel Sought The Glory Of God And His Sanctuary**

*“O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.”* Dan. 9:16,17.

The prophet was concerned for God’s reputation and name. The heathen scornfully laugh at God’s name when His people, by their iniquity, lose their way and end up in trouble. When we are *more* concerned about God’s glory, His sanctuary and about clearing His Name from reproach *than* about ourselves or even our salvation, our salvation becomes most secure! Why? The reason is found in our fixing our focus on Christ and not on self!

Our salvation does not become secure by our worrying about it, it becomes secure by constantly beholding Christ through prayer, study of His Word, and keeping our affections and thoughts riveted upon His love as revealed at the cross!

#### **6. Daniel Claimed God’s Promises**

*“Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.”* Dan. 9:17.

The promise written in Jeremiah was claimed by Daniel. Listen to the promise.

*“Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”* Jer. 29:12-14.

Daniel claimed this promise!

## 7. Daniel Understood The Mechanism Of Punishment As Written In Moses. He Understood God's Character

*"As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth."* Dan. 9:13.

Moses had written down the mechanism of punishment in Deu. 31:16-18.

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods."*

Daniel understood this. He also understood that for a people to really turn from iniquity they must understand the truth! The truth about God's character, the truth about sin and the truth about God's plan of redemption and how God saves men from sin!

## 8. Daniel Was Persistent In Prayer

In this prayer, as in his prayer in Daniel 10, the prophet persisted until the answer came.

*"O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding."* Dan. 9:19-22.

We too must learn to persist and insist, and agonize, and intercede, and to cling with unyielding faith until the answer comes for indeed the answer is in the promise and we shall experience it when we need it most!

Remember: Luke 18:1,7-8.

*"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* Luke 18:1, 7-8.

## Conclusion

We have learned eight (8) important victorious principles from Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9. We should make them our own by **study** and **practice**. We close with this gem from *Testimonies*, Vol 8, page 251.

"The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will activate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God's servants will speak the same

things. The Lord will co-operate with his servants. All will pray understandingly the prayer that Christ taught his servants: “thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Matt. 6:10; 8:251.

### **Appeal**

*“Pray without ceasing.*

*In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” 1 Thess. 5:17,18.*

## Chapter Thirty-One

### Intercessory Prayer - Part Two - Jacob's Prayer Of Reception

#### Introduction

In our elementary studies in the exercise of faith through prayer, we learnt the ABCD of the science of the gospel.

**A = Ask.** Matt. 7:7. “*Ask* and it *shall* be *given* unto you.”

**B = Believe.** Mark 11:24. “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer *believe* that you have *received* it, and it *will* be *yours*.” (RSV).

**C = Claim.** 1 John 5:15. “And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that *we have obtained the requests made of Him*.” (RSV).

**D= Do.** *Act* upon the word and *give thanks* to God!

“When He saw them He said to them, *Go*, and show yourselves to the priests. And as they *went* they were cleansed.” Luke 17:14 (RSV).

We *must* be *fully convinced* that *God* is *able* to do what He has *promised* (Rom 4:21). Furthermore, we *must* be *equally fully convinced* that God's *word* is *self-fulfilling*. The Word of God, *itself, is able to accomplish* what it says because it is the Word of God and contains His Spirit and Life and Power!

*“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”* Isa. 55: 10-11.

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”* John 6:63.

#### Application Of These Principles To The Final Crisis

Jesus is coming again, soon.

*“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”* Rev. 22:12.

He is coming for those who, having been *called* and *chosen* will have proved to be *faithful*.

*“These (The 10 Horns) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful.”* Rev. 17:14.

They will have become chosen in a furnace of affliction.

*“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”* Isa. 48:10.

This furnace of affliction is called the “time of Jacob's trouble.” It will be part of the great time of trouble which will occur after the general closure of probation.

*“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Dan. 12:1.*

*“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” Jer. 30:7.*

Jacob was delivered out of his time of trouble because he learned the prayer of reception.

*“And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.*

*And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” Gen. 32:9-12, 24-28.*

But long before he could have prayed this prayer of reception he had to have already prayed the prayers of **repentance, confession, commitment** and **surrender!**

Jacob’s time of trouble and deliverance is a **type** or **figure** of the time of trouble and deliverance of the people of God in the end time. The promise is already written in letters of gold.

*“...It is the time of Jacob’s trouble; **BUT HE SHALL BE DELIVERED OUT OF IT.**” Jer. 30:7.*

Jacob here is represented as a type of a group of people, God’s end-time true remnant of Rev 12:17, living just prior to the second coming of Christ who would have gone through the tremendous refining process in the final furnace of affliction. But notice they will be saved out of it because they will have learned to pray the prayer of reception which Jacob learned and which guided him through his time of trouble.

The result will be perfect Christlikeness!

*“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:1-3.*

Jacob represents God’s end-time remnant who through the great time of trouble will come forth as gold.

*“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:7-9.*

The promise is that this group of people will be saved out of this time of trouble because they have learned what Jacob learned. They have learned to pray the prayer of reception they have learned to claim the promises with a faith that cannot be shaken!

And Christ, coming down through the blazing skies, will look upon his remnant people and say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Matt. 25:34.

### **Now Is The Time To Prepare**

"Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.

Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless.

Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict unprepared will, in their despair, confess their sins in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. These confessions are of the same character as was that of Esau or of Judas. Those who make them, lament the *result* of transgression, but not its guilt. They feel no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They acknowledge their sin, through fear of punishment; but, like Pharaoh of old, they would return to their defiance of Heaven should the judgments be removed.

Jacob's history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. While Satan seeks to destroy this class, God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril. The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.

The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger--a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God--how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God.

Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement.

We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God. The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands.

The young would not be seduced into sin if they would refuse to enter any path save that upon which they could ask God's blessing. If the messengers who bear the last solemn warning to the world would pray for the blessing of God, not in a cold, listless, lazy manner, but fervently and in faith, as did Jacob, they would find many places where they could say: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Genesis 32:30. They would be accounted of heaven as princes, having power to prevail with God and with men.

The "time of trouble, such as never was," is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job" were in the land, "as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Ezekiel 14:20.

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. The Lord is ever setting before us, not the way we would choose, which seems easier and pleasanter to us, but the true aims of life. It rests with us to co-operate with the agencies which Heaven employs in the work of conforming our characters to the divine model. None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls." G.C. 620-623

## **Conclusion**

In order to develop such a faith, the faith of Jesus, and in order to pray such a prayer of reception, we must as fully understand God's character, His eternal love and His eternal purpose as is possible for us to understand this side of eternity! In our next several studies, we shall analyse the connection between these great truths and the preparation for the time of Jacob's trouble.

Today we have studied another great intercessory prayer, the prayer of Jacob, a prayer of reception.

## **Appeal**

## **Keep Your Eyes Looking Heavenward**

*“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Phil. 3:20.*

“Shall we not break off our sins by righteousness, and have our conversation in heaven, whence we look for our Saviour? Shall we not talk of our Saviour until it becomes natural for us to do so? If we do not order our conversation aright, we shall not see the salvation of God. Satan will take possession of the heart, and we shall become low and sensual. Let us elevate the thoughts, and take hold upon things that are of real value, gaining an education here that will be of value in the world to come. Shall we not seek the Lord with earnestness, repent of our back-slidings, mourn that we have neglected His Word, that we do not know the truth better, and turn to Him with all the heart, that He may heal us, and love us freely? Today let us take a step toward heaven....

The latter rain is to fall upon the people of God. A mighty angel is to come down from heaven, and the whole earth is to be lighted with His glory. Are we ready to take part in the glorious work of the third angel? Are our vessels ready to receive the heavenly dew? Have we defilement and sin in the heart? If so, let us cleanse the soul temple, and prepare for the showers of the latter rain. The refreshing from the presence of the Lord will never come to hearts filled with impurity. May God help us to die to self, that Christ, the hope of glory, may be formed within!

I must have the Spirit of God in my heart. I can never go forward to do the great work of God, unless the Holy Spirit rests upon my soul. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God’ (Ps. 42: 1). The day of judgment is upon us. Oh, that we may wash our robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb!” R.H. Apr. 21, 1891.

## Chapter Thirty-Two

### The True Gospel And The Faith Response

#### A. Jesus Is Coming Back For Those Who Overcome Sin

Jesus is coming again soon!

*“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus.” Rev. 22:20.*

He is coming for the righteous and the holy.

*“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Rev. 22:11,12.*

He is coming for the righteous and holy ones because they won't sin anymore. In fact, they would die rather than commit sin!

*“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Rev. 3:5,21.*

*“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.” 1 Cor. 15:34.*

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Cor. 7:1.*

*“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.” 1 Peter 4:1,2.*

#### B. Their Formula For Victory

This special end-time remnant will stop sinning because they have learned and experienced the principle of 1 John 3:6 to 9.

*“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:6-9.*

They have learned that if they will take God's **seed** and **place** it in their hearts and **keep** it, and **hide** it and **hold** it in their hearts, **they will not sin**. The **seed** of God is the **word** of God.

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.*

*The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Peter 1:23-25.*

The victory of Christ is **encoded** in His Word, we receive His victorious righteousness by receiving His word.

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” John 6:63.*

*“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” James 1:18,21.*

*“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” John 15:3.*

*“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4.*

*“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Rev. 12:11.*

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12.*

### **C. Christ Himself Won The Victory For Us In Our Fallen Flesh, He Is Our Saviour And Example.**

Jesus Himself won the victory for us by submitting His human will to the **will** of God **contained** in the **Word** of God.

*“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” John 6:38.*

In Matthew 4:4 the Bible states that Jesus, when He was tempted by Satan, hurled a promise at him.

*“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matt. 4:4.*

The end-time remnant of Rev. 12:17 will have learned that Jesus came as our Second Adam, took on our sinful human flesh and that while here on earth, He had no means at His disposal that we do not have. The formula for victory that Jesus used was the **power of the word of God** (which is the power of right as opposed to might).

Brethren, when we hide God’s word in our hearts, as Jesus hid it in His heart, and submit our minds to the word of God as Jesus submitted His mind to that word, the Holy Spirit will **reproduce** in us the victory that was **produced** in Christ for us!

Adam’s sin had expelled the Spirit of God in the word of God from the human mind. The Son of God came as the Second Adam. In the incarnation He took on our sinful human flesh (body and brain).

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high*

*priest pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Heb. 2:14-18.*

He was God and man in one Person. As God He received the infinite fullness of the Holy Spirit; as man He submitted the human mind (the will, the intellect, the emotions) fully to the Spirit of God in the word of God. And therefore in Christ the Spirit of God in the word of God is given back to humanity. ***Therefore we receive Christ and His righteousness by receiving His word!*** Salvation by faith is therefore a straightforward matter!

*“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:12-14.*

*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” Matt. 7:21-27.*

*“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Rom. 8:1-4.*

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.*

#### **D. The Victorious Remnant**

*“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Rev. 12:17.*

*“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Rev. 12:11.*

These remnant saints will learn and experience the principle of 1 John 3:9. God’s life is in His word, and when they let the Holy Spirit **plant** that Word in their souls and **hold** and **retain** that word in their souls by surrender of faith, i.e. the submission of the human will to the will of God in Christ, **THEY WILL STOP SINNING!**

#### **E. The Secret Of Jacob’s Victory**

The secret of Jacob’s victory in his time of trouble is clearly seen to be the fact that Jacob took God’s immutable, eternal promise and in humility and utter selflessness, presented to God the promise He had

made. Jacob claimed the promise. He *prayed the prayer of reception*. He agonized, he persisted, he insisted, he would not let go. In fact, his intercessory prayer of claiming the promise was so full of faith that, like Daniel's prayer, it brought him a Divine Revelation, a Theophany. The Son of God came to Jacob. After a whole night of wrestling and with his hip dislocated, Jacob cried out:-

*"I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."* Gen. 32:26.

#### **F. Jacob Was A Prolepsis Of God's Final Remnant**

All who do what Jacob did will go through the last great time of trouble *safely*.

*"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."* Dan. 12:1.

*"Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."* Jer. 30:7.

This is the promise of God! Deliverance is promised those who have learned, *intellectually* and *experientially*, the principle and the formula of accepting the life of Jesus Christ in His Word, and receiving Him and His victory in His Word. They will pass through the time of trouble victoriously!

#### **G. The Remnant Will Have Followed On To Know The Lord**

*"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning: and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."* Hosea 6:3.

*"And I looked and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."* Rev. 14:1.

The remnant will know the Lord so well that, like Jacob, they will say, "we will not let Thee go until Thou deliver us." We must know His character, His eternal love and His eternal purpose *so* well, and be *so* filled with His Word and *so* surrendered to His will that we shall not be made to move by any power of earth or hell!

The Son of God, the eternal living Word (John 1:1), became flesh (John 1:14) and as a Man with our fallen nature (Rom. 1:3) He submitted the human thinking process, the human mind structure and function to the Word of God even to the point of death. He obeyed for us, as us; He died the second death for us, as us; thus He reconciled fallen humanity to God and to God's word. In Jesus Christ the human mind has been reconciled to God's word. But God's word is the expression of God's mind. Therefore in Christ the mind of man and the mind of God have been made *at one* with each other. This is the essence of the atonement, at-one-ment between the Mind of God and the mind of man, and it is so only in Christ Jesus!

At-one-ment, reconciliation means peace. Christ abolished the *enmity* of human selfishness and established the *peace* of God's love in the mind of our humanity which He took on.

Christ was severely tempted in all points like as we are tempted. He was tempted to give in to the selfishness and sinfulness of our flesh which He took on. But He kept His human mind-structure fully surrendered to the love of God in the Word of God and thereby overcame the flesh, the world and the devil for us. He is Our Righteousness. The fact that God the Father gave up His only Son to endure our temptations and trials and to suffer and die for us in order to reconcile us to himself and to His word is the demonstration of His infinite love. God has not only given His Son *for* us, He has given His Son *to* us.

God has not only given His Word *for* us He has given His Word *to* us in Jesus Christ. When we receive the Word by faith, we enter into God's rest.

*"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."* Heb. 4: 1-3.

When we mix the word of God with faith we enter into God's rest because we are at peace with God.

In creation God created all things by His Word and that Word accomplished a completely perfect *work* and a completely perfect *rest*. In redemption God redeemed all things by His word and that Word has accomplished a new creation by redemption and therefore complete and perfect rest is restored. The rest of the gospel and the rest of creation are both celebrated on the seventh day Sabbath.

*"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

*For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works."* Heb. 4: 9,10 & 4.

## **Appeal**

We close now with the text with which we shall begin our next message.

*"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"* Eph. 1:4.

God chose this for you from all eternity past!

Will you not right now choose it for yourself? You can come right now to Christ and by faith surrender your life fully to Him. He loves you. He died for you, He will save you and keep you to the end!

## Chapter Thirty-Three

### The Flesh: The Enemy Of Faith

#### *Section One: Introduction*

**In Hebrews 11:6 the Bible states this fact:-**

*”But without faith it is **impossible** to please God.....”*

**In Romans 8:8 the Bible states another fact:-**

*”So then they that are in the flesh **cannot** please God.....”*

**By putting these two texts together we should immediately be able to see this particular equation of identity:**

To be **“in the flesh”** is equivalent to being **“without faith”**.

Section Two:

The “Flesh” Is Satan’s Alternative To “Faith”

**From start to finish we can enter the kingdom of God and do the works of God *only by faith, genuine faith that works by love to obey God’s word.***

**In contrast, we remain in Satan’s kingdom and do the works of the devil by what the Bible calls, being *“in the flesh”*.**

Section Three:

What Is Meant By Being In The Flesh In Romans 8?

**To be “in the flesh” means to have one’s mind *controlled* by the law of sin and death, the Satanic perverted principle of selfishness, which is in fallen human nature.**

**Note carefully that in Romans 8 the term *“in the flesh”* does *not* mean having a blood and flesh body of fallen human nature, rather it means having one’s mind *controlled* by the fallen flesh or fallen human nature.**

**The truly born again believer who is abiding in Christ still has a fallen human nature or flesh but so long as he abides in Christ he is *“not in the flesh but in the Spirit.”***

**Paul makes this clear in Romans 8:9.**

*”But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Rom. 8: 9.*

Section Four: Two Kinds Of Mind In The Universe

## **In Romans 8 Paul speaks of two minds: the spiritual mind (or to be spiritually minded) and the carnal mind (or to be carnally minded).**

To be spiritually minded is to have one's mind filled with and controlled by the Spirit of God which is Eternal Unselfish Agape Love.

To be carnally minded is to have one's mind filled with and controlled by the self-centered, self-seeking, "own-way", self-exalting satanic spirit of perverted self-love and selfishness called the "**law of sin and death**" in Romans 8: 2 and the "**law of sin which is in my members (flesh)**" in Romans 7:23.

In Romans 8:5 Paul defines carnal mindedness as minding the things of the flesh and by this he means having one's thoughts **dominated** by selfishness and sin and the evil desires of the fallen human nature.

In Romans 8:5 Paul defines spiritual mindedness as minding the things of the Spirit and by this he means having one's thoughts dominated by the principle or law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

In Romans 8:7 Paul further declares that the carnal mind, the mind controlled by sin, is enmity or war against God and is not subject to God's law. Carnal mindedness is spiritual death.

*"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8: 5-9.*

### **Section Five: The Faith Connection**

If "they that are **in the flesh**" cannot please God" and if "**not having faith**" cannot please God, it means that when one does **not** exercise faith he is "**in the flesh**" or the corollary, when one is "**in the flesh**" he is **not** exercising faith!

One may profess to be a Christian but if one refuses to exercise faith in any given situation then such a one is "in the flesh" in that situation.

In other words the failure to exercise faith is carnal mindedness! Whereas the exercise of faith is spiritual mindedness!

But we are told that:-

*"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17.*

And it was Jesus who said:

*"It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." John 6:63.*

Since the spiritual mind is the mind filled with and controlled by the Spirit and life of God, we can correctly conclude that the spiritual mind is the mind filled with and controlled by the **Word** of God.

On the other hand, the carnal mind is the mind which is empty of, and therefore **not** controlled by the Spirit of God. It is therefore a mind that does **not** have the word of God. Since faith comes by the word of God where there is no word of God there cannot be any faith. Therefore the carnal mind is a faithless mind and cannot please God.

### **Section Six: The Origin Of The Carnal Mind – The Bad News**

Carnal mindedness is the mind or thought-pattern of exaltation of creature-self above the Creator-God. The carnal mind is a way of thinking which exalts the word of the creature above the word of the Creator.

Carnal-mindedness was first developed in the Universe by Lucifer (now called Satan). The Bible outlines the origin of carnal-mindedness in Isaiah 14:12-14

*“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”* Isa. 14: 12-14.

Carnal mindedness was introduced to our world by Satan. Corporate humanity, all men, were infected with carnal mindedness in Adam when he received Satan’s lie and rejected God’s truth.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:18 (first part) that the offence of *one* man, Adam, condemned *all* men.

As individuals we experience carnal mindedness simply by being born physically because that which is born of flesh is flesh. John 3: 6 (first part). Therefore all have sinned as corporate humanity, in Adam and all have sinned as individuals, (since being physically born), of their own choice.

In Adam all men are carnal, sold under sin. (Romans 7:14).

In Adam the mind of all men is in bondage to the law of sin in the flesh. (Romans 7:23).

Section Seven: The Gift Of The Spiritual Mind – The Good News

You may say it was unfair that all men were infected with carnal mindedness before they were born by Satan through Adam. But remember God is absolutely fair and so He sent His Son to become the second or *last* Adam. And God has given to all men, as corporate humanity, the new spiritual mind in Jesus Christ. Paul declares with enthusiasm in Romans 5:18 that whereas Adam’s offence caused the condemnation of *all* men, even so the righteousness or obedience of Christ, the last Adam has justified *all* men!

*“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”* 1 Cor. 15: 45-49.

*“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* Rom. 5: 18.

*“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”* Rom. 3: 23-24.

Section Eight: The Condemnation Of Sin In The Flesh

In order to give humanity victory over carnal-mindedness the Son of God had to take on our very fallen flesh which contains the law of sin and death. This law of sin and death had enslaved the mind of all men in the first Adam, but the Man Christ Jesus never for a moment allowed it to control His human mind. He surrendered to His Father to keep His mind filled with and controlled by the Spirit of God. He accomplished this by submitting His mind to be filled with and controlled by the word of God. Therefore

God the Father by His Word *dwelt in, controlled* and *kept* the mind of Jesus. Thus in Jesus Christ God has given to fallen humanity the spiritual mind and has abolished carnal-mindedness.

*“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”* 2 Cor. 5: 14-15.

*“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* Rom. 8: 1-4.

*“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”* John 14: 10.

#### Section Nine: The Good News Exceeds The Bad

God has given us *not* merely enough redemption to just barely remedy the sin problem, He has in fact lavished His salvation upon us. In Christ, God has amazingly given His own divine eternal life to humanity; and has glorified and exalted humanity to His Throne.

*“But where sin abounded, grace did **much more** abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord!”* Rom. 5:20,21.

#### **The human race has already been redeemed or bought back by the perfect obedience and infinite sacrifice of the Son of God.**

Before the foundation of the world God had eternally chosen to save corporate humanity, all men, in Christ. The Good News is not that an individual has to do something in order to be saved but rather he simply has to respond to the fact that God has already redeemed him in Christ! Such a response means believing the Good News and surrendering fully to Jesus motivated by a heartfelt love-response to God's overwhelming love!

Adam sold out the whole human race; Christ has bought back the whole human race. The first Adam was overcome by sin while he still possessed *sinless* flesh. The last Adam overcame sin in *sinful* flesh for all fallen mankind!

Since Christ has redeemed to God all that Adam sold out to Satan, every individual has a genuine choice in salvation. And just as how each individual experiences carnal mindedness by being born physically, so each believer experiences spiritual mindedness by being born spiritually by the word, by the Spirit, by faith in Christ.

Moreover God has actually given to every man the free gift of salvation. In order for a man to be lost he must reject or neglect the gift. But the Gift Himself, draws all men to receive Him. In order for a man to be lost he must resist the drawing love of God. God has already sought and found us in Christ, our “seeking” the Lord means acknowledging that He has found us and giving ourselves fully to Him because He already bought us back by His infinite sacrifice.

The true gospel reveals such amazing divine love that it is impossible to remain neutral, that is why lukewarmness is so nauseating to our Saviour!

#### Section Ten: Fighting The Good Fight Of Faith

God has already established a marriage relationship with humanity in Christ. Our salvation does not depend on our initiating or maintaining a relationship with God; it depends on our believing that He stands at the door and knocks seeking to establish that relationship with us. Our part is simply to exercise the faith response.

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3: 20.*

*“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jer: 31: 3.*

*“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” John 15: 1-4.*

Abiding in Christ means exercising faith, believing the Good News, believing the Word of God and giving ourselves fully to Jesus so that His love establishes union through communion with our souls. We receive Christ by receiving His word. Our part in the union through communion is to pray and to study His truth and cherish His promises exercising full faith by depending entirely upon the word of God.

Prayer is the breath of the soul. God’s love inspires us to pray, to study His word and to cherish His promises. And the more we pray and study, the more of His love we see and the deeper and sweeter our devotional life will become and the more our faith will grow.

### **Section Eleven: Helps In The Warfare Against Carnal-mindedness**

Any thing that helps the mind to ignore the flesh helps the believer to grow in spiritual-mindedness by helping in the training of the mind to depend entirely on the word of God.

Practicing self-denial is one such help.

*“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” Luke 9: 23-25.*

Thus a life of self-denial is the practical outworking of the principle of 2 Cor. 5:14,15.

*“We are ruled by the love of Christ now that we recognize that one man died for everyone, which means that they all share in His death. He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but only for Him who died and was raised to life for their sake.” 2 Cor. 5:14,15 TEV.*

Fasting is another such help.

Remember these helps are neither methods of earning merit nor rituals to show off that we are more religious than anyone else but rather they are to be Spirit-inspired methods of discipline to help in training the soul to resist the flesh and depend entirely on the word of God in true humility.

*“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Matt. 6: 16-18.*

In order to succeed in the more severe conflicts against self and against demonic forces our faith **“must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart.”** D.A. 431.

We shall begin to explore how fasting helps to strengthen our faith in our next lesson.

### **Section Twelve:**

#### Conclusion

In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith--faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work--can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," said Jesus, "ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." Though the grain of mustard seed is so small, it contains that same mysterious life principle which produces growth in the loftiest tree. When the mustard seed is cast into the ground, the tiny germ lays hold of every element that God has provided for its nutriment, and it speedily develops a sturdy growth. If you have faith like this, you will lay hold upon God's word, and upon all the helpful agencies He has appointed. Thus your faith will strengthen, and will bring to your aid the power of heaven. The obstacles that are piled by Satan across your path, though apparently as insurmountable as the eternal hills, shall disappear before the demand of faith. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you." D.A. 431.

## Chapter Thirty-Four

### The Role Of Prayer And Fasting In The Believer's Reception Of Christ's Victory

#### Introduction

In our last lesson in this series we understood from Romans 8:5-8 that the carnal mind *is the minding of the things of the flesh*. To be carnally minded is to be “*in the flesh*”, and they that are “*in the flesh*” cannot (it is impossible to) please God.

We also saw from Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is impossible to please God.

We therefore correctly concluded that the carnal mind is a mind of unbelief. This means that in any given trial or temptation or situation, if we fail to exercise faith we are exhibiting carnal mindedness in that situation.

The carnal mind is a way of thinking, a mind-set, dominated by the law of sin and death i.e. the perverted principle of selfishness, self centredness, which is resident in fallen human nature. The carnal mind is a selfish, self-centered mind-set. It is the minding of self, the exaltation of self above God, and it is manifested by a belief in the word of creature and *unbelief*, a doubting, of the Word of God. A carnal minded way of thinking is a way of thinking which is centered on one's opinions and feelings and the way one sees things while all the time rejecting the plain Word of God on the matter.

In contrast, to be spiritually minded is to mind the things of the Spirit. But since the Word of God is Spirit and life we must understand that spiritual mindedness is a mind-set, a way of thinking which is dominated by, controlled by the word of God and the word of God alone. It is a mind of faith in the Word of God!

#### The Human Mind

The mind is the function of the brain. The biochemical and electrochemical infrastructure of the mechanism of thinking resides in the brain. Now please remember that our brain is flesh, *fallen flesh*, sin-damaged flesh.

Now whereas the biochemical and electrochemical infrastructure of the thinking process is resident in the brain, (in the fallen flesh), the mind can receive ideas or thoughts by receiving words through hearing or seeing, through listening or reading, i.e. obtaining *information* from outside of the body.

Biologically speaking, therefore, the human mind requires the structure of the brain and also requires information from outside in order to develop to its maximum and optimum functional capacity.

#### Adam's Mind Before The Fall

Prefall Adam had a perfect, holy sinless flesh and brain. Therefore the biochemical and electrochemical infrastructure of his thinking mechanism was perfect and had no damage from sin. The Spirit of God in the Word of God dwelt in and controlled his undamaged perfect, sinless, holy brain structure and function.

#### Our Human Mind After The Fall

Satan exulted that he could have induced Adam to receive the *wrong* thoughts into a *sinless* mind and *sinless* brain. By receiving Satan's sinful thoughts Adam's mind became sinful and his brain became sin-damaged and fallen. This damage has been progressing over the passing generations of mankind and the

deterioration accelerated after the Flood reaching an all time low in the days of Christ about 4000 years after the Fall.

The natural mind of post-fall mankind has its electrochemical and biochemical infrastructure in a sin-damaged, sinful, fallen brain tissue. Such a mind-structure will produce a weakened mind-function physically, mentally and morally. (By “morally,” here, we mean *will power to do right*).

### **The Mind Of Jesus**

In the incarnation the Son of God took on our fallen human nature after 4000 years of sin. He took on a sin-damaged, fallen, sinful body and brain with a sin-weakened biochemical and electrochemical mind infrastructure. His human *thinking-mechanism* was physically, mentally and morally *weakened* by the damage done by 4000 years of sin. Roman 1:3; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15; 5:7-10.

In contrast to Adam, the man Christ Jesus had a sin-damaged human mind structure. He took on our fallen human nature (brain and body) yet He remained Divine. His human mind-function was always filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit. As God He received the fullness of the Holy Spirit and as man He submitted our fallen mind-structure, which He took on, to the absolute control of the Holy Spirit in order to produce sinless character.

The mind of Christ was the post-fall, (in fact post-flood) sin-weakened human mind *filled* with, *empowered* by and *controlled* by the Spirit of God by faith in and surrender to God the Father through His Word and though prayer.

There is a concept now gaining ground in some publications which states that Christ took on post-fall human flesh but that he had Adam's pre-fall mind. This is incorrect. There is a vast difference between pre-fall and post-fall human mind-structure and functional ability.

The Son of God took on a fallen human body with a fallen human *mind-structure*. His human mind-structure (will-power, intellect and emotions) was our fallen mind-structure weakened by 4000 years of sin. And with that fallen, sin-weakened mind-structure He produced sinless *mind-function*, sinless thoughts, and sinless character by absolute surrender to God's word.

Before the Fall, Adam's mind-structure was perfect, holy and undamaged by sin and it was natural and easy for him to obey God. But the fallen human mind-structure finds it difficult, in fact, impossible **on its own**, to obey God. This explains why Jesus said:

*“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”* John 5:30.

*“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”* John 6:38.

*“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”* John 14:10.

“Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss.

The heart of the human father yearns over his son. He looks into the face of his little child, and trembles at the thought of life's peril. He longs to shield his dear one from Satan's power, to hold him back from temptation and conflict. To meet a bitterer conflict and a more fearful risk, God gave His only-begotten

Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. "Herein is love." Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth!" D.A. 49.

"Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.

Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam's position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured." D.A. 117.

### ***Victory Of Mind Over Flesh Only In Christ***

Since our sinful flesh is the *physical* basis of our mind-structure and function, the mind finds it easy to surrender in to the pull of the law of sin and death in the flesh.

In Jesus Christ the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the word of God enabled the fallen human mind to overcome the terrible and constant pull of the law of sin and death in the flesh. Therefore what the law was unable to do, on account of the weakness of sinful human nature, God did! In Christ God has reconciled fallen humanity to Himself and has given the human mind victory over the sinful flesh.

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* Rom. 8:1-4.

### **The Victory Comes To The Believer In The Word Of God**

"The Saviour overcame to show man how he may overcome. All the temptations of Satan, Christ met with the word of God. By trusting in God's promises, He received power to obey God's commandments, and the tempter could gain no advantage. To every temptation His answer was, "It is written." So God has given us His word wherewith to resist evil. Exceeding great and precious promises are ours, that by these we "might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4.

Bid the tempted one look not to circumstances, to the weakness of self, or to the power of temptation, but to the power of God's word. All its strength is ours. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Psalms 119:11; 17:4. M.H. 181.

### **The Role Of Prayer And Fasting In The Believer's Reception Of Christ's Victory**

Victory is not **achieved by self effort**; it is **received** by faith in Christ through His word. Praying and fasting is one method by which the believer's fallen human mind is trained to deny the flesh and to depend on the Holy Spirit in God's Word. The more the mind-function is yielded to the word of God and the less it is influenced by the flesh, the more powerful will be the Spirit's flow through such a mind. It is

for this reason that Jesus told His disciples that certain evils could only be overcome by intense prayer and fasting. Matt. 18:14-21.

### **Conclusion**

“Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God.

The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming. Christ declares that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour's fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God.

In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. "Be of good cheer," He says; "I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, "I thirst." He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours.

Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, "The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded:... and I know that I shall not be ashamed... Behold, the Lord God will help Me." Pointing to His own example, He says to us, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord,... that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Isa. 50:7-10.

"The prince of this world cometh," said Jesus, "and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.

And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. "It is written," He said. And unto us are given "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God's word is ours. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin

against Thee." "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Ps. 119:11;  
17:4." D.A. 122.

## Chapter Thirty-Five

### Prayer, Fasting And The Growth Of Faith

#### Introduction

*“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”* 1 Peter 1:7.

*“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”* James 1:2-4.

“The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay and hunger – a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time.” G.C. 621.

**“The time of trouble such as never was” (Dan. 12:1) is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain”** G.C. 622.

#### Victory Is A Gift

Victory over sin is the *gift* of God in Christ and is *received* by faith through the Word of God.

The man Christ Jesus *received* the victory for us by *faith* in His *Father* through the *word of God*. Through the *Godhead* of Christ, the Father gave the fullness of the Holy Spirit to the *humanity* of Christ and Christ lived a sinless character in our sinful human nature which He had taken on.

In Christ God has given the human mind victory over the flesh, the world and the devil, thereby producing sinless mind-function.

*“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* John 16:33.

*“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* 1 Cor. 15:57.

#### Christ Is Our Righteousness

The best definition of righteousness is this:

**RIGHTEOUSNESS IS JESUS CHRIST  
JESUS CHRIST IS RIGHTEOUSNESS**

*“In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”* Jer. 23:6.

*“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”* 1 Cor. 1:30, 31.

There are two wonderful dimensions to this divine reality:

“By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His Divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He *gave* us an *example* of *obedience*; as the Son of God, He *gives* us *power to obey*.” D.A. 24.

“The Righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.” M.B. 18.

And remember, we receive Christ by receiving His word!

### **Only By Abiding In Christ Does The Believer Experience Righteousness And Victory**

*“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”* 1 John 3: 6-9.

*“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”* John 15:4,5.

“No human being is righteous any longer than he has faith in God and maintains a vital connection with him.” 7T. 194.

“Ministers and people, if saved at all, must be saved *day by day, hour by hour.*” F.E. 240.

“The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” D.A. 324.

### **How Christ Received The Victory**

**Christ received the victory through prayer, fasting and much suffering.**

*“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”* Heb. 5:7-9.

“It was through suffering that Jesus obtained the ministry of consolation. In all the affliction of humanity He is afflicted; and "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 2:18. In this ministry every soul that has entered into the fellowship of His sufferings is privileged to share. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Corinthians 1:5. The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balsam to those who sorrow. "The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort . . . comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Corinthians 1:3,4.” M.B. 13.

### **How The Believer Receives The Victory**

*“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not:...”* 1 John 3:6.

*“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.” 1 Peter 4:1, 2.*

*“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” James 4:7-10.*

The **effort** in the Christian’s life is to be in the realm of **exercising faith** and thereby **remaining** in the abiding relationship. The union is through communion, and God clearly spells out the believer’s part. Our part in the communion is to pray, to study the truth and to surrender our minds (will-power, intellect and emotions) to be controlled by and empowered by that truth in order that we live out that truth in righteous character.

### **God’s Part Is To Keep Us From Falling - Jude 24**

By “working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13.

“By **faith** you become Christ’s, and by **faith** you are to grow up in Him – by **giving** and **taking**. You are to **give** all – your heart, your will, your service, - give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must **take** all, - Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey.” S.C. 70.

### **A Faith That Can Endure Hunger, Weariness And Delay**

Fasting disciplines the mind to resist that most powerful of fleshly urges, the urge of appetite. At the same time it also trains the mind to experience the reality of the principle that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God.

The mind must be disciplined to rely on the word of God and to stand on that word regardless of the severity of the pressure applied by the flesh. Fasting affords us the opportunity for such discipline.

Fasting and praying work together. Persisting in prayer brings the soul into the very atmosphere of heaven, develops spiritual mindedness and cultivates an unshakeable faith in God.

“There are conditions to the fulfillment of God’s promises, and prayer can never take the place of duty. “If ye love Me,” Christ says, “Keep My commandments.” “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” John 14:15, 21. Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him.” C.O.L. 143.

“But many have not a living faith. This is why they do not see more of the power of God. Their weakness is the result of their unbelief. They have more faith in their own working than in the working of God for them. They take themselves into their own keeping. They plan and devise, but pray little, and have little real trust in God. They think they have faith, but it is only the impulse of the moment. Failing to realize their own need, or God’s willingness to give, they do not persevere in keeping their requests before the Lord.

Our prayers are to be as earnest and persistent as was the petition of the needy friend who asked for the loaves at midnight. The more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with Christ. We shall receive increased blessings because we have increased faith.

“Our part is to pray and believe. Watch unto prayer. Watch, and co-operate with the prayer-hearing God. Bear in mind that “we are labourers together with God.” 1 Cor. 3:9. Speak and act in harmony with your prayers. It will make an infinite difference with you whether trial shall prove your faith to be genuine, or show that your prayers are only a form.” C.O.L. 145-146.

“The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger--a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God--how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God.” G.C. 621.

Seasons of fasting and praying with the mind filled with God's promises and agonizing with a persistence that will not be denied will be one of the means by which we experience Colossians 3:1-3.

*“IF ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Col. 3:1-3.*

## **Conclusion**

"When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites." Matthew 6:16 The fasting which the word of God enjoins is something more than a form. It does not consist merely in refusing food, in wearing sackcloth, in sprinkling ashes upon the head. He who fasts in real sorrow for sin will never court display.

The object of the fast which God calls upon us to keep is not to afflict the body for the sin of the soul, but to aid us in perceiving the grievous character of sin, in humbling the heart before God and receiving His pardoning grace. His command to Israel was, "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." Joel 2:13.

It will avail nothing for us to do penance or to flatter ourselves that by our own works we shall merit or purchase an inheritance among the saints. When the question was asked Christ, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6:28, 29. Repentance is turning from self to Christ; and when we receive Christ so that through faith He can live His life in us, good works will be manifest." M.B. 87.

## Chapter Thirty-Six

### Claiming The Latter Rain - Part One

#### Introduction

The true remnant church of God must be filled with the latter rain in order to give to the world and to the universe the full and final display of God's righteousness and thereby to win the last battle in the great controversy before the Second Coming of Christ.

*"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" Rev. 12:17.*

Empowered with the latter rain, the church will look:

*"... forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Song of Solomon 6:10.*

#### But What Is The Latter Rain?

When we speak of the latter rain, we tend to think only in terms of spectacular and miraculous exhibitions of the Holy Spirit's power with a greatly increased ability to warn and to win souls. Such a concept is not wrong but it is not complete.

We have already shown that the Holy Spirit is *in* the Word of God and works *with, by* and *through* the word of God.

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:1-2.*

*"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.*

In the book of Isaiah the **Word** of God is compared with the **rain**.

*"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. 55:10-11.*

The prophet Hosea also speaks of God **raising righteousness** upon His people.

*"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12.*

If we put together these two passages (Isa 55:10,11 and Hosea 10:12), we begin to understand that the spiritual meaning of **rain** is the **revealing** of God's **righteousness** through God's **word**. Further confirmation of this interpretation is found in Hosea 6 where the prophet compares the **knowledge** of the Lord with falling of the **rain**.

*"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3.*

And of course, there is that sweet promise in Isaiah 11:9.

*“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” Isa. 11:9.*

### A Hebrew Word Study

The Hebrew language had more than one word for rain. For example the Hebrew word **geshem** means a **heavy shower** and this is used in Zechariah 10:10.

*“Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.” Zech. 10:1.*

In this passage the Hebrew word translated **showers (of rain)** is the word **geshem**. But in this passage there is also the word **rain** by itself.

*“Ask ye the Lord **rain**...”*

This brings us to **another** Hebrew word for rain, the word **matar**.

In addition there are other very interesting Hebrew words, all of the same root, which though translated as **rain** also mean **to teach**, or **teacher**. These Hebrew words are:

1. **MOWREH** or **MOREH**; meaning: **teacher** or teaching or **archer, shooting an arrow, instructing, flowing as water.**
2. **YARAH**; meaning: to flow as **water, to point out to teach, to instruct, to shoot, to teach through.** E.g. Prov. 27:11: **Teach** me thy way **O Lord.**
3. **YOWREH** or **YOREH** (active participle of YARAH) meaning **to sprinkle or teach.** Consider Hosea 6:3.

*“Then shall we know if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the **latter and former rain** unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3.*

The Hebrew word translated latter and former **rain** is **YARAH** which means **teaching, pointing out, teach through.**

### A Teacher Of Righteousness According To Righteousness

Let us go back now to Joel 2:23,

*“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.”*

This text contains the mysterious words: *“the former rain moderately.”*

The Hebrew word translated **“former rain”** in this text is the word “mowreh” which means **“teacher”**. The Hebrew word translated **moderately** in this text is the word **“LITSEDAQAH”** which is derived from the root word **TSEDEQ** meaning “righteous.” Therefore the exact literal translation is **A TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ACCORDING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.** (If you have a Bible with complete marginal references and explanations you will see a marginal note showing this translation).

Similarly, in Hosea 6:3 the Hebrew word translated **former rain** is the word **arah** which means **teacher**. And the Hebrew word translated **latter rain** is **malgosh** which literally means **gathered rain**.

### The Primary Meaning Of Early And Latter Rain

When the Bible speaks of the early and latter rains it is speaking *primarily* of the *intellectual* and *experiential* knowledge of the *righteousness* of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and written down in the word of God. The original Hebrew words indicate that the early and latter rains mean a **thorough instruction and explanation of the plan of redemption** revealing the **victorious righteousness of Christ** and the **character of God**.

Those professed Christians who are looking or waiting for exhibitions of wonder working miraculous power while neglecting or rejecting the messages of the righteousness of Christ and the character of God as revealed in Christ through the plan of redemption, are in fact rejecting the latter rain of the Holy Spirit!

There must be continuous growth in truth and righteousness. It is only by following on to know the Lord that He comes to us as the latter rain. Those who drift along in a careless attitude or who keep their minds preoccupied with trivia while hoping for some future miraculous outpouring to change them are in a fatal delusion.

“We need a thorough reformation in all our churches. The converting power of God must come into the church. Seek the Lord most earnestly, put away your sins, and tarry in Jerusalem till ye be endowed with power from on high. Let God set you apart to the work. Purify your souls by *obeying* the truth. Faith without works is dead. Put not off the day of preparation. Slumber not in a state of unpreparedness, having no oil in your vessels with your lamps. Let none leave their safety for eternity to hang upon a peradventure. Let not the question remain in perilous uncertainty. Ask yourselves earnestly, Am I among the saved, or the unsaved? Shall I stand, or shall I not stand? He only that hath clean hands and a pure heart shall stand in that day.” T.M. 443.

### **The Latter Rain In Seventh-day Adventist History**

The termination of the 2300 day-year prophecy of Daniel 8:13,14 marked the date October 22, 1844 as the time of the commencement of the last phase of Christ’s High Priestly ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. Since that date, the church has been in the dispensation of the latter rain.

The development of Laodicean lukewarmness delayed the advancing light until in 1888 God sent the wonderful message of the righteousness of Christ. It was and is a unique message!

The messengers who gave that message were indeed *teachers of righteousness* and they *shot the arrow straight, they pointed out, they taught, they explained* with a continuous flow of scriptural logic and *truth* like the sweet *flow* of water. It was indeed the latter rain according to the prophet Joel—a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness.

Let us go back in history and get a **taste of it and we** will better appreciate the meaning of the Hebrew words for *rain*. **We shall feel the arrow being shot, we shall have the matter pointed out** very clearly, we shall see the teaching *flow like water*. We go now to AT. Jones in 1893 (message number 11).

“Now, calling attention again to a thought that we have studied before, with which to begin this study tonight directly, that is, what this righteousness is to us now, let us turn back to that passage in Joel, the second chapter, and 23rd verse, and notice also the marginal reading. “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.”

Our study on that was in BULLETIN No.7, p.183. What is the margin? “He hath given you the former rain? “What is that?”—“A teacher of righteousness” “Given you the former rain moderately.” What is that, moderately? What was the former rain at Pentecost?—“A teacher of righteousness.” “He hath given you a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness.” Was that the former rain? And he will give you “the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain,” as at the first. What will the latter rain be?—“A teacher of righteousness” again. According to **what? [Congregation; “Righteousness.”] But what** is another expression for the latter rain? **[Congregation; “The outpouring of the Spirit.”] What is another one?**

**[Congregation: “The times of refreshing.”] What is the latter rain to the third angel’s message?**  
[Congregation: “The loud cry.”] What is the latter rain in connection with the fall of Babylon? - It is the bestowal of that power, and that glory, with which the angel of Rev. 18 comes down and lightens the earth.

Now let us read a few passages of those that we have had already to get the connection here definitely. On page 58 of the BULLETIN in Brother Haskell’s lesson, we had, as it was read from the REVIEW of Nov. 22nd, these words:

**“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ.... This is the beginning of the light of that angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth.”**

Another passage on page 16 of the BULLETIN, in that Testimony that was read:-

**“Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness.”**

What “work will be cut short in righteousness?” [Congregation: - God’s work.”]

**“The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the world to the other. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.”**

What is this message of Christ’s righteousness as we read here before in these other places? This is the beginning, of the light of the third angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” Now, This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.” Then, when we have come to that time what time have we reached? [Congregation:- “The loud cry of the message.”] We have reached the time when God is going to close it up. That is the glory that closes the work of the message.

Now, another thing: What is that first expression which we have just read? - “He will cut it short in righteousness.” Then when that message of God’s righteousness-the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, God’s right doing -when that is received and is allowed to be carried out, and is held by his people, what does that mean about the work of God on earth? -It will be but a short time until the whole thing is done.

Then, when we reach the time of the latter rain, the loud cry, the angel coming down from heaven having that great power, all these things coming together, as thus stated by the words of the Lord, we are simply brought to the same point where we were brought by the study of the things which are before us, and which led us to view what is coming upon us. That line of study that we had - studying the things that are before us to see what is soon to come upon us -led us face to face with six or seven different events that shut us up to this very thing, that now is the time that the work will be closed up shortly, and we are in the midst of the scenes that close up this world’s history. Here are these different expressions in the Testimony of the Spirit of God, when put together, that show that it is the same thing from that side.

Well, the latter rain is the loud cry of the third angel’s message; it is the beginning of that message of glory that lightens the earth. But the latter rain is the teaching of righteousness. When did that message of the righteousness of God, as such, come to us as a people? [Congregation:-” Four years ago.”] Where? [Congregation: “At Minneapolis”] Yes. This Point was brought up the other night, and can be read again in BULLETIN No. 7, P 183. I do not know that we can state it any more clearly than we did that night.

Now, that message of the righteousness of Christ is the loud cry. It is the latter rain. We have been praying for the latter rain here at this Conference already, haven’t we? Have you? [Congregation: Yes sir.”] What were you looking for when your prayer was answered? Are you ready now to receive the latter rain? We have been praying here for the latter rain. Now there is the connection. The testimonies tell us what it is and Joel tells us what it is. I simply ask now, Are you ready to receive the latter rain? That is, are you ready to receive God’s message of righteousness, according to righteousness. Let us look

at that a little further. Joel says, according to the margin, that it is a teacher of righteousness, that which brings the teaching of righteousness according to righteousness. Whose idea of righteousness? [Congregation: "God's."] No, mine. [Congregation: "No."] Yes, mine will do! [Congregation: "No."] Why? If I receive the righteousness of Christ according, to my idea, is not that enough? Is not that receiving, the latter rain? Is not that receiving the righteousness of Christ? [Congregation: "No Sir it is your own righteousness."] But that is what is the matter with a good many people who have heard this message of the righteousness of Christ. They have received the message of the righteousness of Christ according to their own idea of what his righteousness is, and they have not the righteousness of Christ at all.

Now, let us ask again, how are we to receive that? How is that to be given? According to righteousness." How, then, is it to be received? According to righteousness." It is given according to righteousness," and we must receive it according to righteousness." We must receive it as it is given.

But let us dwell further upon that thought; and I am in no hurry to get away from it, either. When we receive the teaching, that teaching of righteousness" according to righteousness," we must receive it according to God's idea of righteousness, and not according to our own measure of it. And he who thinks of receiving that message of Christ's righteousness according to his own idea of it, will miss it entirely. We are to receive it according to God's idea of it, and nothing else than God's idea of righteousness, nothing else than that, is righteousness.

There is a thought again that we had the other night, that when it was presented four years ago and all along since, some accepted it just as it was given, and were glad of the news that God had righteousness that would pass the judgment, and would stand accepted in his sight. A righteousness that is a good deal better than anything that people could manufacture by years and years of hard work. People had worn out their souls almost, trying to manufacture a sufficient degree of righteousness to stand through the time of trouble, and meet the Saviour in peace when he comes; but they had not accomplished it. These were so glad to find out that God had already manufactured a robe of righteousness and offered it as a free gift to every one that would take it, that would answer now, and in the time of the plagues, and in the time of judgment, and to all eternity, that they received it gladly just as God gave it, and heartily thanked the Lord for it. Others would not have anything to do with it at all; but rejected the whole thing. Others seemed to take a middle position. They did not fully accept it, neither did they openly reject it. They thought to take a middle position, and go along with the crowd, if the crowd went that way. And that is the way they hoped to receive the righteousness of Christ and the message of the righteousness of God. Others deliberately discounted the message about fifty per cent, and counted that the righteousness of God. And so, all the way between open and free deliberate surrender and acceptance of it, to open, deliberate, and positive rejection of it-all the way between-the compromisers have been scattered ever since; and those who have taken that compromising position are no better prepared to-night to discern what is the message of the righteousness of Christ than they were four years ago." A.T. Jones Speaking in 1893

## **Conclusion**

"The Word of God is the living seed, and as this seed is sown in the mind, the human agent must give diligent care to the successive stages of its growth. How is this to be done? After the Word has been prayerfully received, it is to be cherished, and practiced in the daily life. It is to spring up and bear fruit, putting forth first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

It is not enough to study the Bible as other books are studied. In order it to be understood savingly, the Holy Spirit must move on the heart of the searcher. The same Spirit that inspired the Word must inspire the reader of the Word. Then will be heard the voice of heaven. "Thy Word, O God, is truth" will be the language of the soul.

The mere reading of the Word will not accomplish the result designed of Heaven; it must be studied, and cherished in the heart. The knowledge of God is not gained without mental effort. We should diligently

study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His Word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell on the thought till it becomes our own, and we know “what saith the Lord....”

The Word of God is the bread of life. Those who eat and digest this Word, making it a part of every action and of every attribute of character, grow strong in the strength of God. It gives immortal vigor to the soul, perfecting the experience and bringing joys that will abide forever.” (Signs of the Times, June 25,1902)

### **Appeal**

“The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.

There is to be “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.” T.M. 506.

## Chapter Thirty-Seven

### Claiming The Latter Rain - Part Two

#### Introduction

In our last lesson we learnt from the original Hebrew words in Joel 2:23 that the term “*early and latter rain*” of the Holy Spirit means “*the teacher of righteousness according to righteousness.*”

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you *the former rain moderately (THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ACCORDING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS)* and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the *former rain* (the teacher of righteousness) and the latter rain (*heavy showers* of righteousness) in the first month. Joel 2:23.

That the Holy Spirit is *described* as **THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ACCORDING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS** should not surprise us, because that was how Jesus *described* him.

*“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”* John 16:12-15.

And that the Holy Spirit is *symbolized* as rain or flowing water should not surprise us either, because that was how Jesus *symbolized* Him too.

*“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”* John 7:37-39.

*“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”* John 4:10-14.

The Holy Spirit Is The Power Of The Gospel

*“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* John 3: 5-6.

*“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)”* Rom. 1: 1-2.

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”* John 6: 63.

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”* Rom. 1:16-17.

“In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.” D.A. 671.

### **The Holy Spirit Is The Only Effective Teacher Of Divine Truth**

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”* John 16: 7-11.

“The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. ***This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth.***

The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.” D.A. 671.

### **The Holy Spirit Is Received By Faith In Christ**

*“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* Gal. 3: 14.

*“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* Rom. 5: 1-5.

“Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord’s promise; they talk *about* Christ and *about* the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use

the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people “to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.” D.A. 672.

### **The Holy Spirit Carries Forward From Start To Finish The Work Of Character Perfection**

*“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”* Mark 4: 26-29.

“There is to be “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience.” T.M. 506.

This *growth* from *birth to harvest-ripe maturity* applies to the *church* as a *whole* as well as to *each member* as an individual.

The *germinating early rain* as *the teacher of righteousness according to righteousness* along with the *heavy early rain pentecostal showers* started the true Christian church on its path of growth.

The *ripening latter rain* as *the teacher of righteousness according to righteousness* along with the *heavy latter rain explosive showers* will ripen the church and make her harvest-ripe for the Second Coming of Christ.

Notice that each rain, the early or the latter rain of the Holy Spirit, is made up of two components:

- (i) The teaching of righteousness according to righteousness and
- (ii) The exhibition of spectacular divine Holy Spirit power.

These two components are inseparably connected to each other. The church cannot receive the *latter rain Holy Spirit explosive divine power* without first receiving and experiencing the fullness of the latter rain message of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, i.e. the Holy Spirit as the teacher of righteousness according to righteousness.

Unless we understand these two inseparable components of the latter rain and unless we appreciate in fact, that *latter rain truth* is the *fundamental essence* of the *latter rain*, we may find ourselves *rejecting* the latter rain while *praying* for the latter rain! In Adventist history the message of Christ Our Righteousness started in wonderful glory in 1888 but was rejected by many including the ecclesiastical leaders.

Meanwhile Seventh Day Adventists are still praying for the latter rain. We must receive and experience the wonderful light God sent back then and walk in the advancing light of Christ’s righteousness.

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message,

which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” T.M. 91-92.

### The Purpose Of The Latter Rain

In Mark 4:28,29 Jesus outlined the stages of growth:

“... *First the **blade**, then the **ear**, after that the **full corn** in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the **harvest is come.***”

It is clear from this text that the stage between *ear* and the *full corn* in the ear is the *latter stage* of the growth, the process of *ripening*. Listen now to this quotation from T.M. 507,508.

“At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, **to fill out the ears and ripen the grain**, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain.” TM. 507-508.

There we have it then, the latter rain *fills out the ears* and *ripens* the grain.

But what does this mean?

“The *ripening* of the grain represents the *completion of the work of God’s grace* in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be *perfected in the character*. We are to be *wholly transformed* into the likeness of Christ.” T.M. 506.

“Of the Spirit Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me.” The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.” D.A. 671.

The latter rain therefore *perfects the character* of the church thereby *ripening* her for the Second Coming of Christ.

How Is This Ripening Accomplished?

“It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. *Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature*. Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress his own character upon his Church.” D.A. 671.

“*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by them ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world through lust.*” 2 Peter 1:4.

By the Spirit we become partakers of the divine nature and by the promises of God’s word we become partakers of the divine nature. Therefore the Spirit in the word and through the word, reveals the righteousness of God in Christ and teaches us righteousness according to God’s idea of righteousness.

“*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*” John 17:17.

The knowledge of God as contained in the details of the plan of salvation and revealed by the incarnation, earthly life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the knowledge which ripens Christian character for the harvest.

We must pray earnestly. We must study thoroughly the wonderful all-embracing truth of Christ Our Righteousness in order to be ripened quickly for the end. We must make sure that we know and

experience the true message of righteousness by faith and not be deceived by the false gospels which are becoming increasingly popular.

*“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” 2 Cor. 3-10.*

### **Christ Our Righteousness**

In Christ, God has *given* to humanity the *free* gift of righteousness, eternal life, victory over sin.

All that the first Adam sold out by his disobedience, Christ, the Second Adam, bought back by His perfect obedience and infinite sacrifice on the cross. The Son of God in the incarnation took on our fallen human nature, was really tempted in all points like as we are tempted and was, in fact, tempted beyond the level that we can be tempted. He overcame every temptation by entire dependence upon His Father’s word through faith and absolute surrender. He did not use His own Divinity, He did not depend upon His humanity, He had to overcome by faith in and absolute dependence on His Father. He had to live by every word, which proceeded out of the Father’s mouth. He, by His death, paid the price of our redemption. He died our death, the death which is the wages of sin, for all men, for all time. He suffered our death penalty and set us free. In Christ, God has produced more than enough righteousness for all men. His Holy Spirit, through His word, gives us the faith by which to trust, to believe. His Holy Spirit, through His word, reveals His infinite love and makes us sorry for our sins and makes us able to confess sin and to surrender fully to Christ.

The righteousness of Christ brings us not only free forgiveness for all our past sins, but righteousness to cover us and to fill us, moment by moment, day by day.

In Christ we have forgiveness, justification, sanctification and perfection. So long as we abide in Him to the end we have His righteousness which enables us to pass the judgement. His righteousness in us enables us to keep His commandments, to overcome temptation, to grow in grace through prayer and study of His word and to reach maturity and perfection of character.

We must by faith claim, receive and appropriate the righteousness of Christ, i.e. make His righteousness our own through faith by earnest prayer and consistent study of His word and submission of our will-power to obey His word by His power.

The love of God in giving His Son *for* us and *to* us is the infinite motivational power in the Christian’s life. The love of God in the Spirit of God drives us on to put away all sin and to love, trust and obey God while depending entirely *not* on anything we do but *only* on the righteousness of Christ, what He *has done* for us and what He *is doing* for us by His intercession and investigative judgement *for us* in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary.

### **Conclusion**

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented: for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. If

he can control minds so that doubt and unbelief and darkness shall compose the experience of those who claim to be the children of God, he can overcome them with temptation.

That simple faith which takes God at His word should be encouraged. God's people must have that faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (Eph. 2:8). Those who believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven their sins, should not, through temptation, fail to press on to fight the good fight of faith. Their faith should grow stronger until their Christian life, as well as their words, shall declare, "The blood of Jesus Christ... cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

If we would have the spirit and power of the third angel's message, we must present the law and the gospel together, for they go hand in hand. As a power from beneath is stirring up the children of disobedience to make void the law of God, and to trample upon the truth that Christ is our righteousness, a power from above is moving upon the hearts of those who are loyal to exalt the law and to lift up Jesus as a complete Saviour. Unless divine power is brought into the experience of the people of God, false theories and ideas will take minds captive. Christ and His righteousness will be dropped out of the experience of many, and their faith will be without power or life...

The people must be instructed that Christ is unto them salvation and righteousness. It is Satan's studied purpose to keep souls from believing in Christ as their only hope: for the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin is efficacious in behalf of those only who believe in its merit, and who present it before the Father as did Abel in his offering...

The burden of our message is not only the commandments of God, but the faith of Jesus. A bright light shines upon our pathway today and it leads to increased faith in Jesus. We must receive every ray of light and walk in it... As increased light is given, men must be reformed, elevated, and refined by it." G.W. 161,162.

## Chapter Thirty-Eight

### Claiming The Latter Rain - Part Three

#### Introduction

The **Holy Spirit** carries **forward** the process of Christian **growth** from **start** to **finish**. The **early rain** of the Holy Spirit produces **germination** i.e. the new birth. **Continuous** showers are needed for steady **continuous** spiritual growth. And the latter rain **perfects, matures** and **ripens** the character, thereby producing **harvest-ready fruit** i.e. translation-ready character perfection.

#### The Stages Of Spiritual Growth

*“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”* Mark 4:26-29.

Here Jesus gives us the eight (8) important stages in spiritual growth from **initial conversion** to harvest-ripe **maturity**. (See diagram at end of this chapter)

It should be clearly seen that the **fifth stage**, the ear, is the critical transition stage between **early** growth under the **early** rain of the Holy Spirit, and **later** growth under the **latter** rain of the Holy Spirit.

#### The Holy Spirit Is In The Word Of God

The Bible is also emphatically clear in teaching us that the **word of God** carries forward the process of Christian growth from start to finish. Therefore the Holy Spirit is in the word and works **in, through** and **by** the word of God to accomplish each and every stage of growth.

Let us now prove from the scriptures that the word of God accomplishes each and every stage of spiritual growth from start to finish.

#### The New Birth Is Accomplished By The Word Of God.

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”* 1 Peter 1:23-25.

#### Spiritual Growth Is Accomplished By The Word Of God

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”* 1 Peter 2:2-3.

#### Sanctification From The World Is Accomplished By The Word Of God.

*“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* John 17:17.

#### Separation From The World Is Accomplished By The Word Of God.

*“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” John 17:14.*

Our **Prayers** Will Be **Answered** If The **Word** Of God **Abides** In Us.

*“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7.*

The **Knowledge** Of God **Comes To Us** In And Through His **Word**

*“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.... For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” John 17:3, 8.*

**Perfection** Comes To Us Through The **Knowledge** Of God As Revealed In His **Word**.

*“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matt. 5:48.*

*“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:1-6.*

*“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:” Matt. 7:24.*

The Word Is The Seed

In the **word** of God is the very **life** and **Spirit** of God. It is the **life** of God in His word which makes His word the **seed**.

*“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63.*

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” 1 Peter 1:23.*

The Word Of God Is The Rain

And yet the word of God is the rain, **the nourishment**, by which the seed **germinates** and then **grows**. How is this?

The word not only contains the **life** of God but it also contains the detailed description of the **principles** by which that divine spiritual life operates. By **feeding** on the **principles** we **nourish** the **life** thereby producing **growth**.

*“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” 1 Peter 2:2-3.*

*“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but*

*it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isa. 55:10-11.*

Whenever the born-again believer receives the word of God he or she is receiving the spiritual rain of the Holy Spirit in the word of God.

Remember, fellow believers, we receive the **rain** by receiving the principles of truth and righteousness in the word of God. Every occasion when the **truth** of God in His **word** is being presented is an occasion of spiritual rainfall and an occasion for receiving the **rain** of the Holy Spirit in the **word** of God.

The Teacher Of Righteousness According To Righteousness

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately (THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ACCORDING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS) AND He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain (the teacher of righteousness) and the latter rain (heavy showers) in the first month.” Joel 2:23.

The early rain of the Holy Spirit is the instruction of the word of God for **conversion** and **early growth**. The early rain imparts **faith, repentance, confession**, the **recognition** of our sinfulness and lostness and the **appreciation** of our **need** of Christ. It brings us to the point of **initial** surrender of self to the cross to be **crucified** with Christ and to **receive** His **life** in that very **word**.

The early rain as a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness **in, through** and **by** the **word** of God produces early growth by **cultivating** faith, **deepening** repentance and **concretizing** our surrender. All this is achieved by keeping us abiding in Christ through prayer and study of His word and assembling together for worship and study.

The latter rain of the Holy Spirit in the word of God is the advancing revelations of God’s love, truth and righteousness in advanced studies of the plan of redemption and the messages of the character of God and Christ our righteousness. These wonderful messages of advancing light “fill out the ears and ripen the grain” i.e. they produce Christian character perfection and maturity.

Conclusion

"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain." "He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain." In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.

The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.

There is to be "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.

Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When

the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.

At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, "Watch unto prayer," "Watch, . . . and pray always." A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door." T.M. 506-508.

## Chapter Thirty-Nine

### Claiming The Latter Rain - Part Four

#### Introduction

In our last lesson we established that the Holy Spirit's earliest work of grace in the soul is necessary in every advancing stage of growth straight through to maturity and perfection of character.

The Spirit's *pre-conversion* work of revealing God's love through His Word; of imparting faith, repentance, confession; of convicting us of sin and convincing us of truth and of showing us our absolute need of Jesus, *continues* and *deepens* as Christian growth *progresses*.

The Spirit's work of *converting* also continues and deepens as Christian growth progresses.

All this means that:

“At **no** point in our experience can we dispense with the **assistance** of **that** which enables us to make the **first** start. **The blessings** received under the **former** rain are **needful to us to the end**.” T.M. 507.

#### Early Growth

*“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”* Mark 4:26-29.

Growth starts at conversion (germination) and proceeds on through a particular point called the “*ear*.” This period, between *conversion* (germination) and the mysterious point called the “*ear*” is *early* spiritual growth under the *early* rain of the Holy Spirit.

“The **germination** of the seed represents the **beginning** of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth.” C.O.L. 65.

“The wheat develops “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” (Mark 4:26-29) C.O.L. 67.

#### Early Growth Failure

This is the most common type of spiritual malady affecting Christians – a failure to grow spiritually at a rate of growth which corresponds to the light available. In other words the believer's growth lags behind where it should be at any given level of *light* and *time*.

The Apostle Paul encountered this spiritual malady in the Apostolic Church.

*“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”* 1 Cor. 3:1-3.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul told them that they were behaving not as mature spiritual Christians but as babes in Christ who still had to be fed with “milk” rather than with “solid food.”

He further elucidates this malady of early spiritual growth failure in Hebrews 5.

*“For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* Heb. 5:12-14.

The last verse above (Heb 5:14) gives the formula for healthy spiritual growth.

“...even those who by reason of habitual use (continuous practice) have their mental faculties trained by exercise (Greek: *gum naze*) to be able to fully analyse, examine, judge thoroughly (Greek: *diakrino*), discern the good (Greek: *kalon*) and the evil (Greek: *kakos*) See Romans 7:21.

The four fundamental functions indicative of healthy spiritual growth are:

- (i). A consistent, ever improving, *prayer* life.  
Prayer is the *breath* of the soul.
- (ii). Consistent, ever-deepening, *study* of the Word of God.  
A healthy *appetite* for eating the word.
- (iii). Witnessing to or teaching others the truths we have learnt. If we take in, we must *put out*, the more we impart to others, the more we receive from God.
- (iv). Facing life with a positive Christ-like attitude and claiming the promises of God even under adversity, thereby allowing the adversity not to crush us, but to refine and strengthen us. This is the *exercise* of faith day by day.

These are, in fact, the practical realities of the abiding relationship – abiding in Christ.

*“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.... If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”* John 15:4, 7.

**In the abiding relationship, as we pray, study, witness to or teach others and react positively to adversity, the Holy Spirit broadens and deepens our spiritual foundation so that our conversion deepens progressively even as we grow spiritually!**

“Genuine conversion is needed, not once in years, but **daily**. This conversion brings man into a new relation with God. Old things, his natural passions and hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong, pass away, and he is renewed and sanctified. But this work must be **continual**; for as long as Satan exists, he will make an effort to carry on his work. He who strives to serve God will encounter a strong undercurrent of wrong. His heart needs to be barricaded by constant watchfulness and prayer, or else the embankment will give way; and like a millstream, the undercurrent of wrong will sweep away the safeguards. No renewed heart can be kept in a condition of sweetness without the **daily** application of the salt of the word. Divine grace must be received **daily**, or no man will **stay** converted.” O.H.C. 215.

### **Jesus’ Analysis Of Spiritual Growth Problems**

In the Parable of The Sower in Matthew 13, Jesus mentions four types of soil. The second type is the *stony* soil.

“He that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”

“The seed sown upon stony ground finds little depth of soil. *The plant springs up quickly, but the root cannot penetrate the rock to find nutriment to sustain its growth, and it soon perishes.* Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued. They have not seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the heart has not been humbled under a sense of guilt. This class may be easily convinced, and appear to be bright converts, but they have only a superficial religion.” C.O.L. 46.

This is the condition of the class represented by the foolish virgins. The foolish virgins are content with a superficial work and do not allow the Holy Spirit to deepen their conversion experience. The result is growth failure and spiritual death.

By analyzing the parable of the sower, we learn that there are four types in the church.

- 1). **Wayside Soil** – those who were never converted. No growth
- 2). **Stony Soil** – quick initial conversion, early growth failure. This degenerates into spiritual death. The individual becomes a foolish virgin entrenched in Laodicean lukewarmness.
- 3). **Thorny Soil** – initial conversion, early growth proceeds well for a while. The plant is almost ready to produce blossoms (the stage of the ear), but it is choked and produces no fruit. This is late growth failure and represents another class of those who have the Laodicean lukewarm syndrome.
- 4). **Good Soil** – Initial conversion, daily conversions, steady growth (or healing and deliverance from types (i), (ii) or (iii)). The soil of the soul is progressively improved, conversion experience deepens, growth proceeds to the “ear” and on to the “full grain in the ear.”

In the Laodicean-shaking, categories (i), (ii) and (iii) are left unprepared for the Final Crisis. Only category (iv) will be ready to give the final warning and to go through the Final Crisis victoriously.

## **Conclusion**

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Eze. 33:31. The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

This is the class that in time of peril are found crying, Peace and safety. They lull their hearts into security, and dream not of danger. When startled from their lethargy, they discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency. The grace of God has been freely offered to every soul. The message of the gospel has been heralded, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Eze. 14:20.

It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied.

The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth's history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God's service. All apparently wait for Christ's appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.

At the final day, many will claim admission to Christ's kingdom, saying, "We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets." "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" But the answer is, "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me." Luke 13:26, 27; Matt. 7:22. In this life they have not entered into fellowship with Christ; therefore they know not the language of heaven, they are strangers to its joy. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. 2:11. C.O.L. 411-413.

### **Appeal**

"Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, "I know you not." The fellowship of the Spirit, which you have slighted, could alone make you one with the joyous throng at the marriage feast. In that scene you cannot participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its melody upon deaf ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of gladness in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.

We cannot be ready to meet the Lord by waking when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven." C.O.L. 413-414.

## Chapter Forty

### Claiming The Latter Rain - Part Five

#### Introduction

“At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end.” T.M. 507.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Col. 2:6.

“Looking unto Jesus the **author** and **finisher** of our faith...” Heb. 12:2 (first part).

In matters of spiritual construction God broadens and deepens the foundation as the building proceeds. In spiritual growth the foundation of the new birth must be broadened and deepened as growth advances. In fact, the spiritual foundation **must** and **will** be **broadest** and **deepest** as Christian growth **reaches** harvest-ripe **perfection**.

The Foundation Of Spiritual Growth

*(See Diagram at the end of this chapter)*

These **foundational** building blocks must be well laid down **initially** and then progressively **strengthened** and **expanded** continuously as spiritual growth advances.

The most critical building block is REPENTANCE, because genuine repentance is the proof that all the other aspects of the Holy Spirit’s early work have been submitted to and thoroughly applied to the soul.

Repentance

Repentance is an act of the will by which the repenting soul **hates** sin and **turns from** sin and self-centredness **to** God. Repentance, of necessity, includes **sorrow for sin** but repentance is **not** to be seen as a **mere** emotion.

Repentance means **turning away from sin** because the soul **hates** and **abhors** sin and selfishness and is completely **broken down** before God with a **heart-breaking** longing for God and righteousness.

Repentance therefore is a **gift** of God and **can only** be **accomplished** by the **power** of **God’s love** in the Holy Spirit. In order to **genuinely** repent, the soul must **see** something of God’s **infinite love** and **goodness** as revealed in the **sacrifice** of His **Son** on Calvary’s **Cross**. The love of God **melts** the sinner’s heart producing **sorrow** for and **hatred** of sin, a **determination** of the will-power to **turn away** from sin and an **enabling** of the will-power to **actually** turn away **from** sin **to** God’s love as revealed in Christ.

Moreover as Christian growth advances the believer’s repentance **deepens** and **broadens**. Repentance is the **absolute pre-requisite** for the **new-birth**, it is the **absolute pre-requisite** for progressive spiritual growth and it is the **absolute pre-requisite** for latter rain perfection of character!

*“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand... Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore*

*fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matt. 3:1,2, 5-12.*

*“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:31.*

*“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:37-38.*

*“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Acts 11:18.*

*“Repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner... 1 S.M. 365.*

*“Repentance must precede forgiveness, for it is only the broken and contrite heart that is acceptable to God, yet the sinner cannot bring himself to repentance, or prepare himself to come to Christ... The very first step to Christ is taken through the drawing of the Spirit of God; as man responds to this drawing, he advances toward Christ in order that he may repent.*

*The sinner is represented as a lost sheep, and a lost sheep never returns to the fold unless he is sought after and brought back to the fold by the shepherd... The Lord Jesus is constantly seeking to impress the sinner’s mind and attract him to behold Himself, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world... 1S.M. 390.*

*“God has made the first advance. While you were in rebellion against Him, He went forth to seek you. With the tender heart of the shepherd He left the ninety and nine and went out into the wilderness to find that which was lost.*

*In the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God’ seeking after us... C.O.L. 189.*

*Since repentance prepares the heart to accept the righteousness of Christ, our repentance must deepen as we grow in grace.*

*“When through repentance and faith we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Lord pardons our sins, and remits the penalty prescribed for the transgression of the law. The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and*

*the Son. Then there is yet another work to be accomplished, and this is of a progressive nature. The soul is to be sanctified through the truth. And this also is accomplished through faith. For it is only by the grace of Christ, which we receive through faith, that the character can be transformed.” ST, Nov. 3, 1890.*

*“Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.” S.C. 63.*

*“The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.” M.Y.P. 35.*

*“Both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ.” D.A. 300.*

### ***The Infinite Sacrifice Of Christ Is The Source Of Genuine Repentance***

*The love of God as revealed in the life and death of Jesus Christ is the only agency by which the stubborn, rebellious, carnal heart can be broken and transformed.*

*The love of God as revealed at the cross of Calvary is also the only agency by which Christian growth and perfection can be experienced by the believer. It is therefore of the most critical importance that each believer keeps the mind filled with the details of Christ’s sacrifice and His glorious achievements for us.*

*“Every soul may say: “By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness. He presents me to God in the spotless garment of which no thread was woven by any human agent. All is of Christ, and all the glory, honor, and majesty are to be given to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” IS.M. 396.*

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” *Gal. 6:14.*

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” *2 Cor. 3:18.*

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” *Rom. 8:31-32.*

*“It is only through Jesus, whom the Father gave for the life of the world, that the sinner may find access to God. Jesus alone is our Redeemer, our Advocate and Mediator; in Him is our only hope for pardon, peace, and righteousness. It is by virtue of the blood of Christ that the sin-stricken soul can be restored to soundness.” IS.M. 332,333.*

*“Exceeding great is our salvation, for ample provision has been made through the righteousness of Christ, that we may be pure, entire, wanting nothing.” S.D. 45.*

*“Christ, only Christ and His righteousness, will obtain for us a passport into heaven.” Letter 6b, 1890.*

*“Through Christ, restoration as well as reconciliation is provided for man. The gulf that was made by sin has been spanned by the cross of Calvary. A full, complete ransom has been paid by Jesus, by virtue of which the sinner is pardoned, and the justice of the law is maintained. All who believe that Christ is the atoning sacrifice may come and receive pardon for their sins; for through the merit of Christ, communication has been opened between God and man. God can accept me as His child, and I can claim Him and rejoice in Him as my loving Father. We must center our hopes of heaven upon Christ alone, because He is our substitute and surety.” IS.M. 363.*

***The Laodicean Message Calls For Deep Repentance***

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” *Rev. 3:18-19.*

*Laodicean lukewarmness must be repented of. Those who will be used by God to give the final warning will have been delivered from all lukewarmness and sin through the most deep and thorough repentance.*

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” *Rev. 3:19-21.*

*Right now the Laodicean shaking is well advanced and each professed Seventh Day Adventist will be most definitely affected.*

*“I was asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.*

*I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” E.W. 270.*

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are

shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.” *Heb. 12:25-29.*

### ***Conclusion***

*“I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.*

*Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels of God had charge over His people, and as the poisonous atmosphere of evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the heavenly angels were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness.*

*As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts and light up their countenances. Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these and went to the aid of the earnest, praying ones. I saw angels of God hasten to the assistance of all who were struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But His angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them.*

*I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon*

*the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.*

*I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.*

*Said the angel, "List ye!" Soon I heard a voice like many musical instruments all sounding in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard, seeming to be full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel, "Look ye!" My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy.*

*The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Evil angels still pressed around them, but could have no power over them.*

*I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and*

*the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, "It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel." E.W. 269-271.*

### ***Appeal***

*"May the God of all grace so enlighten your understanding that you may discern eternal things, that by the light of truth your own errors, which are many, may be discovered to you just as they are, that you may make the necessary effort to put them away, and in the place of this evil, bitter fruit may bring forth fruit which is precious unto eternal life.*

*Humble your poor, proud, self-righteous heart before God; get low, very low, all broken in your sinfulness at His feet. Devote yourself to the work of preparation. Rest not until you can truly say: My Redeemer liveth, and, because He lives, I shall live also.*

*If you lose heaven, you lose everything; if you gain heaven, you gain everything. Do not make a mistake in this matter, I implore you. Eternal interests are here involved." 2T. 88.*

## Chapter Forty-One

### Claiming The Latter Rain - Part Six

#### Introduction

*“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Mark 4:26-29.*

(See diagram at end of this chapter)

Growth from **conversion** to the stage called the ‘**ear**’ is **early rain** experience. The ‘**ear**’ (stage 5) is the transition point between **early** growth (early rain experience) and the **later maturational development** of grain or fruit production for the harvest (latter-rain experience).

The ‘**ear**’ is the **critical** stage. It represents that **permanence** of surrender which is necessary for **constant** and **progressive** fruit bearing and the **ripening** process.

When Christian growth reaches the stage called the ‘**ear**’ the believer is **locked into** the abiding relationship with Christ. Latter rain **experience**, for the **individual** Christian, begins at this point called the ‘**ear**’ and continues on to Christian character perfection, **“the full grain in the ear.”** But the work of the **early** rain of the Holy Spirit does not stop at the stage of the ‘**ear**’, early rain experience **continues** and **deepens** during the latter rain experience. In other words **both** early and latter rain work **together** in the **ripening** process between the ‘**ear**’ and the **“full corn in the ear.”**

#### Ripening

“The **ripening** of the grain represents the **completion** of the **work** of **God’s grace** in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.” T.M. 506.

*“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7-8.*

“The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.” T.M. 506.

“It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. **Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues**, we shall **not** recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” T.M. 507.

*“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.*

## **Filling Out The “Ears”**

“While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain to **fill out the ‘ears’** and **ripen** the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain.” T.M. 508.

*“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Eph. 3:17-19.*

*“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Cor. 3:18.*

*“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3.*

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.” D.A. 668.

“God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.

The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Cor. 6:16.

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect." D.A. 311-312.

## **Blotting Out Of Sin**

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith

placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation--a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works.

Revelation 22:12. G.C. 421-422.

“We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” G.C. 489.

The Holy Spirit, in **early** and **latter** rain **combination**, blots sin out of our characters by enabling us to conquer and to expel every sinful defect and to fill the vacuum with the active Christian graces, the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit must expand, fill and control every detail of the human personality in motive, thought, word and deed.

The continuing **early** rain work of the Holy Spirit deepens repentance to the point where the mind (spirit and soul) is **fixed** in **hatred** of sin and **abhorrence** of self. The continuing **latter** rain work of the Holy Spirit **fills** and **concretizes** the spirit and soul, **intellectually** and **experientially** with the light of the knowledge of the character of God as seen in the face of Jesus especially when He was nailed up to Calvary's Cross.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” Gal. 5:22-26.*

“In Christ the battle has been fought on every point and the victory has been made complete. He was made flesh itself— the **same flesh and blood** as those whom He came to redeem. He was made in all points like these; he was “in all points tempted like as we are.” If in any “point” He had not **been** “like as we are,” then, on **that** point He could not possibly have been tempted “**like as we are.**”

He was “**touched**” with the **feeling** of our infirmities,” because he “was in **all** points **tempted** like as **we are.**” When He was tempted, he felt the desires and the inclinations of the flesh, precisely as we feel them when we are tempted. For “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts (his own desires and inclinations of the flesh) and enticed.” James 1:14. All this Jesus could experience without sin; because to be tempted **is not sin**. It is only “when lust hath conceived,” when the desire is cherished, when the inclination is sanctioned, — only then it is that “it bringeth forth sin.” And Jesus never even in a thought cherished a desire or sanctioned an inclination, of the flesh. Thus, in such flesh as ours, He was tempted in all points as we are, and yet without a taint of sin.

And thus, by the divine power that he received through faith in God, He, **in our flesh**, utterly quenched every inclination of that flesh, and effectually killed at its root every desire of the flesh; and so “condemned” sin **in the flesh.**” And in so doing, He brought **complete victory**, and **divine power to maintain it**, to every soul in the world. All this he did “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

This victory, in its fullness, is free to every soul in Christ Jesus. It is received by faith **in Jesus**. It is accomplished and maintained by “the faith **of Jesus**,” which he has wrought out in perfection, and has given to every believer in Him. For “this is the victory which overcometh **the world**, even our faith.” A.T. Jones, R.H. Oct. 2, 1900.

### **We Must Pray Continually For The Latter Rain**

"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." **Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it.** The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man's co-operation is required. God's work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. **We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing.** Christ has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.

But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favorable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. **If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.**" T.M. 508-509.

### **Conclusion**

“We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end. If we have walked with God in fellowship of the Spirit, it is because we have sought Him daily by faith. From the two olive trees the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us. **But those who do not cultivate the spirit and habit of prayer cannot expect to receive the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love.**

Everyone is to keep himself separate from the world, which is full of iniquity. We are not to walk with God for a time, and then part from His company and walk in the sparks of our own kindling. There must be a firm continuance, a perseverance in acts of faith. We are to praise God; to show forth His glory in a righteous character. No one of us will gain the victory without persevering, untiring effort, proportionate to the value of the object which we seek, even eternal life.

The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to

proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.

What can I say to my brethren in the name of the Lord? What proportion of our efforts has been made in accordance with the light the Lord has been pleased to give? We cannot depend upon form or external machinery. What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of His Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit." T.M. 511-512.

### **Appeal**

By beholding Christ on the cross we shall be transformed wholly into His image.

*"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."* Gal. 6:14.

Be-hold, be-hold the Lamb of God, On the cross, on the cross;  
For you He shed His precious blood, on the cross, on the cross;  
O hear His agonizing cry, "E-loi, la-ma, sa-bach-tha-ni,"  
Draw near, and see your Saviour die, on the cross, on the cross.

Be-hold His arms ex-tended wide, On the cross, on the cross'  
Be-hold His bleeding hands and side, on the cross, on the cross;  
The sun withholds his rays of light,  
the heav'ns are clothed in shades of night,  
While Jesus doth for sinners fight, on the cross, on the cross.

And now the mighty deed is done. On the cross, on the cross;  
The battle fought, the victory won, on the cross, on the cross;  
"Tis finished," now the Saviour cries; to heaven He turns His languid eyes;  
Then bows His sacred head, and dies, On the cross, on the cross.

Where ever I go, I'll tell the story of the cross, of the cross;  
In nothing else my soul shall glory, save the cross, save the cross;  
And this my constant theme shall be, Thro' time and in eternity,  
That Jesus shed His blood for me, on the cross, on the cross.