A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense forest. The path is flanked by tall, thin evergreen trees, their dark trunks and green needles creating a vertical pattern. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and some low-lying green plants. The lighting suggests it might be early morning or late afternoon, with dappled sunlight filtering through the canopy.

Living Righteously

F.T. Wright

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by

F.T. WRIGHT



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This book was originally published in June 1970, and to my knowledge has not been republished since. It was my pleasure to learn of the ministry of Fred Wright (1926-1997) in the early 1980's. At that time I had been a Seventh-day Adventist for about 2 years, having been baptized by Brad Thorp (currently president of the Hope Channel satellite TV station) during an evangelistic series in Surrey, BC.

Although I was a good member of the church outwardly, and loved the truths of Adventism, I was very much struggling with inward sin, and failing constantly. I had just started to learn about the gospel message of A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner, "the 1888 message," as it is called today, which God gave to the Adventist people in those early days, when I learned of the ministry of Fred Wright.

His experience, and the ministry that grew out of it, were based upon that "most precious message" of 1888. In that message, as Fred taught it, I found deliverance from the enslaving power of sin.

This book is the clearest modern presentation of the 1888 message. I have prepared this reprint for the blessing of God's children in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-21), so that they may understand, know, and receive the gold, white raiment, and eyesalve that Christ freely offers them.

Frank Zimmerman
Victoria, BC Canada

This limited edition was produced using open source software and free fonts. Layout was done in OpenOffice 3 on computers running Ubuntu Linux. The fonts used were Linux Libertine, Free Sans, Free Serif, Bitstream Vera Sans and Gentium. Bible quotes are from the English Standard Version (ESV). All other quotes without author credit are from the writings of Ellen G. White.

Some editing was done to the original text to remove wordiness and rephrase awkward expressions, but in no sense was the intent or meaning of the author changed or altered. Many of the diagrams were updated, and the original black and white pictures were replaced with more recent color ones.

Introduction

Deep down in the heart of every man, unless his soul has been so seared by sin as to be beyond any true and noble impulse, is the desire to be a better man than he now is.

For some, especially the young who have not lived long enough to know the frustration of repeated defeat, the hope of reaching the ideal is strong and living. But most, even in the churches making the very highest of professions, have accepted the lower plane of a defeated experience as the norm of Christian living. And can they be blamed for this attitude? Have they not studied the word most diligently, “prayed without ceasing,” “fought the good fight with all their might” and trusted in God to help them, only to be defeated again and again? Surely if anyone has been sincere about searching for a victorious experience they have, and yet the very object of their search eludes them.

Some have concluded from this that the experience of repeatedly sinning and repenting, is a normal Christian experience this side of heaven. They feel that it is the best that we can expect, and so long as we are “hid in Christ,” are doing our best and being sure at the end of each day that we are forgiven for every sin committed that day, then we have the assurance of salvation. Living righteously is not for now. That is reserved for the Paradise above when there is no more devil to tempt us and when we will have perfect minds and bodies.

That was my own experience and thinking through ten long bitter years of unsuccessful battling against sin. But there was another conclusion I could and should have drawn: that I had not discovered the correct way to attain the victory.

There came a time when I discovered that way and found it to be practical, reasonable, simple, and best of all, effective. It really worked and produced the results for which I had so long sought. When at last my eyes were opened, I marveled that I had not seen it before.

The Christian life is not a life of frustration and defeat but of victory and fulfillment. Christ *is* more powerful than Satan. Righteousness *is* stronger than sin. Today you may live righteously. You do not have to wait till the “sweet by and by.”

The saddest thing in all of this world’s history is that here is the gospel, the very power of God brought into the world of man to save us from the strength and presence of sin,—and yet men are still in their

sins, Satan is still their king, and defeat is their portion. How different things would be if only mankind understood the how to grasp the power of God for salvation from their sin.

And why is this not so? It is not because the desire is not there. Men have spent a lifetime in the quest of it. It is not because they do not try hard enough, or pray enough or pay enough. It is because all of this effort and time and money is spent in trying to do the *right thing* in the *wrong way*. The objective and the intention is right, but the method is wrong.

Living righteously is a science. Nothing worthwhile in life is achieved by haphazard methods. You must do the right thing in the right way in order to achieve the desired objective. The more worthwhile the goal, the more precisely and exactly must correct procedures be followed in their correct order.

So in the quest for righteous living, there is a right way and a wrong way. Sincerity and good intentions are not enough. The principles underlying the whole problem, and the step-by-step procedures necessary to solve the problem, must be understood. We must understand what God will do for us so that we make no attempt to do the Lord's part. And we must understand our part and faithfully carry it out.

This series of studies is designed to spell out in practical terms these facts and principles. If you will set aside preconceived prejudices and opinions and strive to understand just what the book is saying, and then obey the principles and procedures outlined herein you will discover the power and the peace of a life freed from the bondage of sin.

Let a whole lifetime of defeat, despite your devotion, your efforts, your prayers, and your tears, convince you that something is wrong. Working harder with the wrong methods which brought you defeat in the past is not going to bring you success. Let it convince you that you have been trying to do the right thing in the wrong way, that it is time to stop and analyze your methods to see wherein they have failed to bring success. Then revise them in harmony with right principles and the result will be a new life experience altogether.

This message works. It has to, for it is the power of God unto salvation from sin. Apply it for yourself and God will bless you as you do.

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The devil is a liar and the father of it. Jesus made that forever plain in a straight-to-the-point declaration recorded in the book of John. To those who sought to deceive the people that were seeking the light and life of heaven he said:

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. *John 8:44*

There it is in plain language, Jesus the Master has exposed the devil forever in his double role of liar and murderer. Elsewhere he is called the deceiver of the whole world:

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. *Revelation 12:9*

Let us give serious and careful consideration to Satan in the light of the above declaration by Jesus, the implications of which are very important to us because we are the very ones whom he is seeking to make the subjects of his deceptions.

Make no mistake about it. This is deception with a purpose; a purpose so terrible that we can contemplate it only with horror and dread, for Satan intends nothing short of the destruction of the people of God and of the whole world. This is the object of his deceptions,—murder, and you and I are the intended victims.

Each and all of us desire to escape that fate. The devil, by no means unaware of the strength of this resistance, knows that he will never succeed in his purpose if he comes to us honestly and openly announcing to us his evil intentions. He must make it *appear* that he is actually leading us into life and joy, while at the same time he is really leading us into the very jaws of death. In order for Satan to have any hope of accomplishing his evil and dreadful purpose, he has to be a liar. But never forget that he is such so that he can be the *murderer* of the people of God and of the whole world.

No one is going to be deceived by a lie no matter how cunning and clever it might be, if he knows perfectly well that it is not the truth. How quickly and positively we reject an offer or a suggestion when we know it to be a deceptive falsehood, while on the other hand, how readily and innocently we accept even the most dangerous deceptions when, completely unaware of their true nature, we believe them to be the truth.

Therefore, we must conclude that our only safety is in becoming acquainted with the lies which he is seeking to urge upon us. Such a knowledge is not to be found within ourselves. We are neither wise enough nor experienced enough to penetrate the sophistries of the mastermind of evil, nor do we have the intellectual power to stand as a match for him, but there is One who has all this and much more. From Him we can obtain all the information needed to become fully equipped to recognize and escape the snares of Satan. Herein lies our safety.

There is nothing the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices. *The Great Controversy*, 516

And you can become acquainted with his devices! Every provision has been made for this in the revelations of truth in the word of God. No one needs to be deceived here and none will be, if they will go to that word and let it tell them just what the lies of Satan are in very fact.

The devil's lies are many. But there is an extremely important one which we shall both list and examine. In fact, this is one of the most important if not the most important one itself, and the wicked one has used a thousand ways of putting it across. And what is *this* lie?

It is Satan's claim that the law of God cannot be kept by human beings in this life. It is the declaration that perfection is impossible this side of heaven; that you must expect to sin every day till Jesus comes; that no one can be truly just before God. This is *his* teaching, and sad to say, the vast majority of believers in the so-called Christian world fully believe it and have their lives shaped by this deception. But in the inspired writings, this lie is called for what it is, *a lie*.

Satan represents God's law as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. *The Desire of Ages*, 24

That is a very plain statement. It distinctly says that Satan claims that for us, for you and for me, the keeping of the law is an

impossibility. This is one of Satan's insidious lies, and one that he is very busy about spreading.

From the beginning it has been the *special* doctrine of the adversary of God and man that the law of God was faulty and objectionable. He has ever represented the law of God as oppressive and unendurable. He has denoted it "a yoke of bondage." *He has declared that it was impossible for man to keep the precepts of Jehovah.* This has been, and still is the work of Satan. This is the seductive doctrine that devils are seeking to spread throughout the world. *The Review and Herald*, July 31, 1888

Note how this teaching is described as a *seductive* doctrine, that is, *one that leads astray*. But even more strongly still, this teaching is called a *fatal sophistry*:

Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his *fatal sophistry* that it is impossible for them to overcome. *The Great Controversy*, 489

What is a sophistry? It is a lie! Not an open, easily discerned one, but one clothed in such skillful, appealing reasoning that it is very readily acceptable to the one to whom it is presented, unless he is able to penetrate the deception. It looks like the truth, and it sounds like the truth, and all too often it is accepted by the majority as the truth. But that does not make it the truth. It remains a lie forever. But it is not just a sophistry, it is a *fatal* sophistry. The word, *fatal* has only one meaning, and that is *ending in death*, and in this case, that means *eternal* death.

And what is this fatal sophistry? It is the teaching that it is impossible for us to overcome, which is but another way of claiming that we cannot live a life of victory over every sin, that the law cannot be kept, and that therefore perfection is not possible in this life.

But look at that statement again and see that Satan is *constantly* seeking to deceive with this fatal sophistry. He is at it all the time with relentless untiring energy. He never lets up. He never gives in. And who is it that is the target of this constant effort? It says, the *followers of Christ*.

Dear fellow Christian, be aware of this, that you and I are the very

SATAN DECLARES

**THAT GOD'S LAW CANNOT BE OBeyed
BY HUMAN BEINGS.**



*But then Satan is a liar
and the father of all lies.*

ones whom the devil is ever and always seeking to deceive with this fatal lie. But know from hereon out and forever, that any suggestion that the law cannot be kept is from the evil one himself, and must be rejected at once as a fatal sophistry.

The above statements say that from the very beginning the devil has made this claim. Therefore we must expect to find in the Bible itself the same fact revealed,—and we do. There is one place in the Old Testament where it is stated by his own lips so plainly that it cannot be misunderstood. Let us turn to the book of Job.

In chapter one, verse one, the God of heaven describes Job as being a perfect and an upright man. In other words, Job kept the law of God to the satisfaction of the Lord Himself, for, if He should describe Job as being perfect and an upright man, then he must have been just that.

The life of Job was a clear-cut proof that the argument of the devil that the law could not be kept by human beings, was a false argument. If Job was keeping that law, then any other man who would walk with

God as Job did, could also keep that law. The very life of Job as a human being, proved that the claims of the devil were false. The law of God was not too difficult for man to keep and to obey.

Knowing full well the stand of the devil, and the arguments that he used to maintain his position, the Lord laid out a very definite challenge before the devil on the occasion when the Sons of God met together for council:

And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” *Job 1:8*

Now do not make the mistake of thinking that the Lord was taunting Satan, because it is not in the heart of the Lord to do such a thing. Instead, He was making a great and loving appeal to him. He was saying in effect, “Satan, why go on longer adding sin to sin, and building for yourself a greater retribution when the case is closed? Job has demonstrated that the law can be kept and so your whole position is proved invalid.” But would the devil admit that his whole position was so evidently wrong? Never!

When the Lord said that Job was living a perfect life, then that was exactly what Job was doing. If he was not living that kind of life, the devil would have been sure to point it out. But in his reply to God, Satan did not attempt to find any fault with what Job was doing. Rather he admitted that the Lord’s claim was quite true and right. Knowing better than to attack from this angle, he turned instead to impugn the motives of the Lord’s servant and even of the Lord Himself. He charged Job with self-seeking and self-serving, and the Lord he charged with underhandedness:

Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face. *Job 1:9-11*

This is a very heavy charge to lay to the Lord. It was the charge that God and Job were working hand in hand to prove the devil wrong by putting up an artificial case. The Lord was paying Job very handsomely to serve him faultlessly, and Job, as a hired servant, was responding very well by slavishly giving to the Lord what the Lord wanted of him. All that was needed to reveal the true nature of the case was for God to

cease the payments, and in no time the servant would curse God and obey the devil. Then it would be seen that the law of God could not be obeyed after all, and that the case of Job proved nothing at all. Such in effect was the argument that the devil put to the Lord on that occasion.

It was entirely a false argument, and the Lord knew this, and He was well prepared to let the battle between good and evil be carried one step further, so that righteousness could be vindicated and the enemy of His people fully exposed. So He told the devil that he could go ahead and test his argument by taking away the possessions of Job.

The case could now be settled only by delivering Job into the hands of Satan to test and to prove him. And how swiftly the devil went to work to break Job at all costs! He swept away all his possessions, and killed all his children with devastating suddenness. As shock after shock fell upon him, Job endured the storm and did not fail in the least. Calmly and patiently he said:

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. *Job 1:21*

But still the devil would not admit defeat, and so the Lord allowed him to take away Job's health, until in utter misery he sat on a heap of ashes to absorb the suppurations, and wished that he had never been born. But still his loyalty to God remained steadfast.

Now that the devil had reduced him to this desperate situation, he brought to him three of the notable theologians of the time, and these sat down to counsel with him in this dark hour. Although these men were theologians and professedly the ministers of the gospel, the devil used them in an attempt to deceive Job with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible to overcome.

Read the whole book of *Job* through and you will find that those men constantly argued that it is impossible for anyone to be righteous. With weighty and solemn words they pressed upon Job the discouraging idea that if anyone was wicked he certainly was, for the Lord never punished anyone who did not deserve it.

But how is it that we know so positively that those men were speaking the devil's arguments? The evidence is right in the book itself:

The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." *Job 42:7*

This is the Word of the Lord, and therefore it is the truth. So we must conclude that if Eliphaz had spoken that which was not right, then he had been speaking a lie. And if he had spoken a lie, then he certainly had not spoken by inspiration of God but by instigation of the devil, who is the father of all lies. They were Satan's mouthpiece and as such expressed his thoughts and his ideas.

Let us turn now to the fourth chapter, and there we find the devil, through Eliphaz, stating in plain terms the charge that the law cannot be kept by God's people. Verse one of the chapter identifies Eliphaz as the speaker. What gives the argument greater weight is that he states that he received this "by inspiration." In verses 12-14 he describes his going into a night vision, and then he says:

A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice. *Job 4:15,16*

Thus Eliphaz describes his inspiration which he claimed to be from God. Then in the next verses Eliphaz states the charge of Satan that the law cannot be kept:

Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? *Job 4:17*

This is a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is really a statement framed in question form to give the statement more impact. This is what Eliphaz is really saying: "Surely you are not suggesting that you believe it is possible for a mortal man to be righteous before God?" That this is his meaning and understanding, is evident from the words that follow:

Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; how much more those who dwell in houses of clay.
Job 4:18,19

And all this is uttered in such a scornful, incredulous tone as to dismiss all further argument on the matter. "Why," he says, "if even the angels are charged by God as being sinners, what hope does a mortal man have of ever measuring up to the requirements of God?"

In view of the depth and extent to which this lie has been for so long accepted by the human family, it is not an easy question for any human being to answer in the affirmative. Eliphaz fully expected Job to quail before that question, and to respond by saying it was not possible for a

man to be just before God. But here he was disappointed, for Job was a man who had experienced the power of God to save from sin, and knew by that experience that it was possible to obey every one of God's requirements. He had a knowledge of God's saving power of which Eliphaz knew nothing. In the light of the conviction and the assurance of that knowledge, he could answer as he did by denying completely the argument of the devil through Eliphaz.

Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days. *Job 27:5,6*

This sums up the persistent stand that Job took to his persecutors throughout the whole of the long battle with them. Only a man with a living experience in righteousness such as Job had, could answer as Job did.

Can a man be righteous before God? What is the answer that you would give to that if it were put to you? Would you hesitate, unsure, unsteady, uncertain?

Can a man be righteous before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? He most certainly can! He most positively, definitely, assuredly and decidedly can! If it is not possible for a man to be that, then where is the power of Christ in the gospel?

Are you prepared to believe that the power of sin is greater than the power of the gospel? Would you teach that Satan is stronger than Christ? Never! The gospel is the living power of God to save from sin, and this it really does wherever a believing heart will let its power work in the life.

Thus plainly and clearly the devil's lie is exposed for what it is. We are to know that this is *his* lie so that no matter from what source this lie may be presented to us, we will know that we must instantly, positively, and decisively reject it for what it is. It is a fatal sophistry.

We will hear it argued with authority and vehemence from the pulpits; we will read it in religious publications; the almost total majority of this world's inhabitants will endorse it in any kind of issue over the matter; we will stand largely alone if we reject this lie of Satan; our nearest and dearest friends and relatives will urge it upon us, and closest of all, our own hearts will even suggest it many times.

But every such voice is from the devil, the father of lies. We are to learn to be quick to recognize his voice in those assertions no matter by whom they may be spoken upon this earth. Our very safety for this life and the life to come depends upon it.

In the Word of God, that lie is exposed for what it is, and thus there is no excuse for any failure on our part to escape the deception and the consequences of it.

In the first chapter of this series, we discussed together the evidence in the Word of God that so clearly exposes Satan as being both a liar and a murderer. We saw that Satan's constant and unrelenting effort to deceive the followers of Christ unto their destruction. The very purpose of his being a liar is so that he might murder those whom he deceives. We saw too, that our safety lies in an awareness of these lies, so that we can reject them when they are presented to us, and thus escape the eternal death to which they lead.

We concentrated on one of his lies: that the law could not be kept by human beings in this life. This is the lie that literally millions of this earth's inhabitants simply believe without question or concern. But *it is a lie* nonetheless, and a fatal sophistry.

Now that we understand Satan's declaration to be a devilish, deceitful lie, let us turn to the Word of God and see what the Lord has to say about this same matter of living a life of obedience to the law of God. Can it be done? Does God expect us to keep that law, or is it something that is much too hard for any human being to do? Has God made a law that is only going to be a yoke of bondage?

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 begins with the words, “For this commandment that I command you today...” If this verse is to have its full impact, we must understand just which commandment Moses is referring to. This is very easily determined. Read over the book of *Deuteronomy* and you will see that the whole of it is Moses' last sermon to his people before his death, and that the subject of that sermon is the law of God.

The first three chapters are a reiteration of the leading of the Lord in bringing them out of the land of Egypt, which was intended to show them their need of spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin. Having recounted their deliverance from Egypt, he says:

And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. *Deuteronomy* 4:1

After giving this kind of admonition all through this chapter, in the next he actually spells out the law of God in the very words of *Exodus*

20. Read it for yourself in *Deuteronomy* 5:6-21.

The rest of the book right up to chapter 30 is devoted to the enlargement and explanation of that law, with various exhortations on the necessity of perfect obedience to it. Therefore there can be no mistaking that Moses meant *the law of God* when in chapter 30:11 he said, “*This commandment that I command you today...*”

This is the very commandment that the devil claims cannot be kept. But what does the Lord say about it? If the devil is right, then we will find that the Lord also will say through Moses that it is too hard to be kept. But does He? Let us see!

For this commandment that I command you today is *not too hard for you*, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that *you can do it.* *Deuteronomy* 30:11-14

Thus the Lord of heaven and earth who made that sacred and holy law has spoken out in plain language concerning it. He says, “*It is not too hard for you to keep it. You can do it.*” If you believe in God, and believe that He is the truth and that there is no lie in Him, then that should settle the matter forever. It certainly does for me.

But this is not the only place in the Word of God where this plain truth is spoken. It is the same message from cover to cover. It is the same in the New Testament as in the Old. Not always is it expressed in the same language as the above. More usually it is expressed in the form of a call or an appeal in words like these:

Keep my statutes and do them. *Leviticus* 20:8

Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left. *Joshua* 23:6

You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. *Psalm* 119:4

Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and *be holy*, for I am the Lord your God. *Leviticus* 20:7

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is

perfect. *Matthew 5:48*

Go, and from now on *sin no more.* *John 8:11*

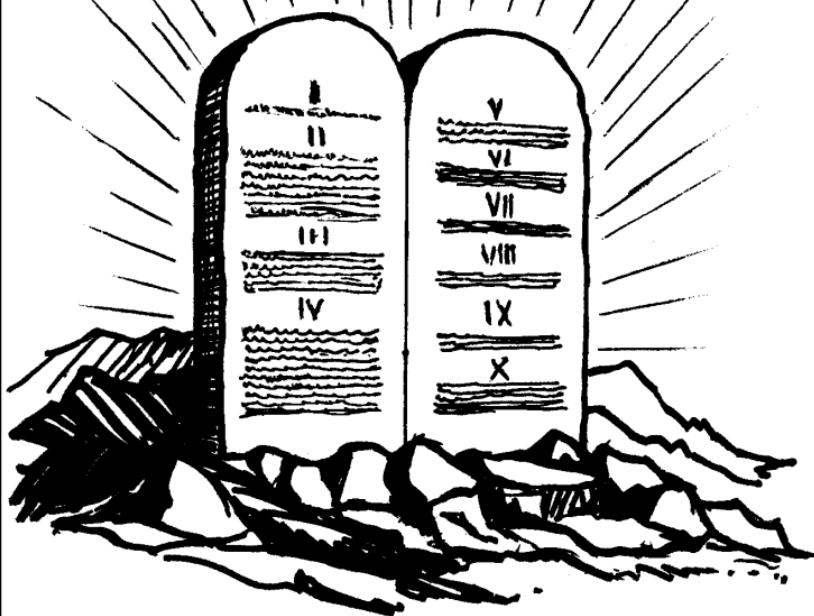
Cease to do evil. *Isaiah 1:16*

Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and *do not go on sinning.* *1 Corinthians 15:34*

Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?...For *sin will have no dominion over you*, since you are not under law but under grace. *Romans 6:1,2,14*

GOD DECLARES

**THAT HIS LAW IS NOT TOO HARD
FOR US TO KEEP.**



*And God is the Truth
and the Father of all truth.*

These are but a few examples of the many, many such statements that are to be found right throughout the whole Bible. And right along with them may be quoted blessing after blessing that is given on the conditions of strict obedience, and threatenings of coming judgments on those that disobey.

Consider the seven wonderful promises to be found in *Revelation* 2 and 3, which are for those who are conquerors, not for those who are being conquered. A conqueror is one who has the victory over sin, and therefore has become a law keeper indeed. To this class alone are promised the blessings of God. This is most emphatically and plainly stated in the Bible. Carefully note the clear message of these verses:

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works. *Romans* 2:5-6

God will judge and deal with every man in that day in the light of what that man has been doing in his lifetime. If he has been patiently continuing in well doing he will receive eternal life, but if he has been contentious and disobedient, then will come on him the indignation and wrath of God which is spelled out in eternal destruction.

To those who by patience in *well-doing* seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who *does evil*, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. *Romans* 2:7-13

Therefore, in the judgment, I myself, and not someone else on my behalf, am going to have to be found *doing good* according to the standard that the law considers good, or I shall have no hope of eternal life at all.

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first

SATAN'S

LIE

GOD'S LAW,
IT IS TOO
HARD FOR YOU.

PERFECTION
IS
IMPOSSIBLE.

GOD'S
TRUTH

GOD'S LAW,
IT IS NOT TOO
HARD FOR YOU.

"YOU THEREFORE

MUST BE
PERFECT."

Which do YOU believe?



parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery to be immortalized. *Steps to Christ*, 62

If the devil is right, and if it is true that the law cannot be kept by human beings, then what conclusions must we draw from the plain fact of the above statements of Scripture? The terrible conclusion that must be drawn is that there is not a single human being on the earth who has the slightest hope of redemption. Every single one of us must perish. There is no other possible conclusion that could be drawn.

Therefore if we hold that view, and intend to go on holding that view, then consistency demands that we abandon all profession of Christianity and go out and join the ranks of the atheists and make the best of what is left of this life, for we will know no other. But praise the Lord, that law can be kept, through His grace and by His power. It is not too hard for us, and there is not one of us that needs to perish.

The only way to escape the above conclusion, and to believe that men will be saved while at the same time believing that it is impossible to keep the law, is to invent some other way into heaven besides the way that is so plainly laid down in the Word of God. And that is exactly what the religions of the churches of this day and age are doing.

Only recently I heard one such teacher speaking about the giving of the law from Sinai, and saying these very words, "Even when God gave them that law and called upon them to keep it, He knew perfectly well that it was impossible for them." Yet this man speaks of the hope of salvation and expects to see millions saved into the kingdom. How?

Anyone who teaches that we cannot keep that law, could not and would not teach that we come to the judgment keeping it, for that would be a very crude and obvious inconsistency and contradiction. Nor would they dare deny the plain teaching of the Word of God that the law will demand perfect obedience in the judgment. Therefore they are left with the alternative of saying that since the individual cannot keep the law, then the good deeds must be offered on his behalf by someone who can keep the law. Thus in the judgment he will not be judged according to his own deeds, but according to the deeds of Christ.

Such is *their* teaching. Such is the teaching of their father the devil, but it is not the teaching of the Word of the Living God of everlasting

and unchanging truth.

Jesus never came to deny the teachings of His Father. Neither did He ever come to release us from the obligation to keep the law.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.
Matthew 5:17

But He did come to take away from us the sinfulness that prevents us from keeping the law, and to give us the power to obey it fully.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death...in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. *Romans 8:2,4*

And in His own life, He has provided the proof that it can be done, and the example of how it is to be done.

The Scriptures plainly teach that in the judgment it is my life that is to be examined, and it is my works that will be under review. No one in heaven or in earth will stand there in my place to take the examination in my stead. Just no one. And in that day I must be found to have been, and to still be very much a successful keeper of that law. And therefore we must also believe and have it forever settled in our minds, that the God of heaven is exactly and completely right when *He* says that the law is not too hard for *us* to keep, that *we* can do it.

And yet the curious thing is that the very ones who spread abroad the devil's lie dwell much upon the love and the justice of God. These are their favorite themes. But such teaching completely robs God of both of these attributes. It must be recognized by any honest mind that there is not the least trace of justice in demanding men keep a law that cannot be kept, of passing them through a judgment that will condemn them for not keeping it, and for committing them to eternal destruction because they have not kept it at all. Is that justice? Could a loving being do such a thing? Never!

While such teaching with the lips represents God as a God of justice and of love, in actual fact it presents Him as a being of the basest injustice, and of the cruellest hatred toward the family of men. Thus in a subtle and devious way the devil clothes the God of heaven with his own very devilish characteristics.

Thus dear Reader, you have before you the Word of the Lord as

against the word of Satan. God plainly and simply says of that Holy Law:

"It is not too hard for you. You can do it."

And He says this in the gentle, loving tones of a parent who seeks to encourage his child to do something that the child fears will be too much for him. Against this word is the bold assertion of the devil:

"It is just simply impossible for you to keep that law."

So there it is before you. You must believe one or the other. You cannot believe both. You cannot even be neutral on the matter. You must believe either the Word of God or the word of the devil.

Satan, it is true, can point to unnumbered hosts of this earth's inhabitants who implicitly believe and teach his lie, and he claims that the argument of the majority is naturally right. But the majority is not always right, and certainly not in this case because this is a deceived majority which is on his side. After all, there have been exceedingly few times in history when the truth of God had the majority voice in this earth.

So, as in all ages, those who would be true to God will find themselves among a little company standing in the light. That is where the truth is to be found today as ever. But "by patience in well-doing" we can be preparing for eternal life knowing that the devil is a liar and a murderer and that the law is not too hard for us. By God's grace and through His power, it can be kept.

So far, we have only dealt with the fact that the law can be kept, and that it can be kept to perfection. In the following chapters, we will move along in this study on *Living Righteously* to the HOW of keeping it.

In the last two chapters of this series we have compared the words of the Living God with the claims of the devil and, as plainly as can be, we have seen that it is the devil's lie to say that the law of God cannot be kept by human beings in this life, while just as plainly we heard the voice of God saying to us that it is not too hard for us to keep; we *can* do it.

The choice is left with us as to which one of these claims we are going to believe. Will it be the Word of God that the law can be kept, or will it be the word of the devil that it cannot be kept? On our choice and decision rests the prospects of eternal life or of eternal death. Let us never lose sight of that. But there is a good deal yet to learn about the question before we know the truth that will make us free.

Let us see then a little more specifically what the claims of these two powers are. Satan's claim is bold and sweeping. He declares that it is impossible for any human being, even if he be a follower of Christ, to keep that law. On the other hand, while the Lord plainly declares that the law can be kept by humanity, He *does not claim* that it can be kept by a human being *who is under the control of Satan*. In fact the Bible plainly declares that for such an individual *while ever he remains under the devil's control*, it is utterly impossible for him to obey the law.

Over and over again this is reiterated in the Scriptures:

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. *Romans 8:7*

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. *Romans 6:20*

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?
Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.
Jeremiah 13:23

Thus the Word of God speaks out plainly and clearly. In definite, unmistakable language it declares that he who is the servant of sin, he whose mind is set on the flesh, and therefore the slave of Satan, *cannot possibly keep the law*. This is true.

But we have seen that the same Word of God emphatically declares that human beings can keep the law. Then it must be that, if it is utterly

impossible for one who is a slave of sin to keep it, then it will be one who has been delivered from such bondage who can keep it, for it can be kept by human beings.

Thus it follows that there is a clear-cut distinction to be made between the two types of human beings,—those who are *slaves to sin*, and those who are *free from sin*. It is of the greatest importance that we clearly understand this distinction, and we shall spend quite some time searching this matter through in the Word of God. There we shall find that this distinction is most clearly made, and no truth to be more plainly taught, than that one must be set free from the power of sin *before* he can keep the law at all:

And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. *Ezekiel 11:19,20*

Here the Lord promises to do something for each individual. He will take right *out of* and *away from* him the stony heart. What is this stony heart? It is the fleshly mind that cannot submit to the law of God:

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. *Romans 8:7*

It is the character of Satan written into the heart of man. It is the condition that is the result of the marriage to the old man of sin:

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. *Romans 7:1-5*

While we are thus married to Satan, the children, or the fruit of that union can only be the wicked characteristics of hatred, malice and pride.

It will be impossible to bring forth the good fruits of obedience to the law and truth of God. And we will find that we are bound as slaves in that condition, that by human power and means there is just no escape from that slavery.

But the Lord says that He will remove this from us, and that which is removed *away* is no longer *there*, and, *into the place* where it was, He will put the new heart, which is the character of God, the mind of Christ. Now He does this for a certain and very specific purpose. We read it in the next verse:

That they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 11:20

This verse declares that the Lord takes out the stony heart *so that* we can keep the law and obey it and thus be His people. Which simply means that until this is done, it is impossible for them to obey and to keep that law:

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. *Romans 6:6*

Here is the same message. That old self must be crucified *first*. Once we have had this change, the slavery comes to an end, as it reads in the next verse:

For one who has died has been *set free from sin*. *Romans 6:7*

Again the same message is repeated in *Hebrews 9*:

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, *purify* our conscience from dead works to *serve* the living God.
Hebrews 9:14

Here the same truth is expressed in the terms of a cleansing or purifying of the conscience so that we might serve the Living God. Turn now to *Ephesians 2*:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. *Ephesians 2:8-10*

The work of taking out of man that stony heart is nothing less than a

work of creation, or as it is more accurately stated of *re*-creation or *re*-generation. This can only be done by the Creator Himself. No one else has the power to do that. But it is explicitly stated that this work of creation is a work that is done *so that* we should produce good works, the works of righteousness. We are recreated *for that purpose*, which again teaches the lesson that without that recreation there never could be any good works on our part. This same lesson is taught in the book of nature:

As in nature so in grace. He who gave the parable of the tiny seed is the Sovereign of heaven, and the same laws that govern earthly seed sowing govern the sowing of the seeds of truth.

Christ's Object Lessons, 65,33

Jesus used the thorn bush and the brier to represent the man with the stony heart. And in His teaching of this lesson by this means, He showed that just as it was impossible for the thorn bush to bring forth any good fruit whatsoever, so it was impossible for the man who does not have a renewed heart to do anything else but evil deeds.

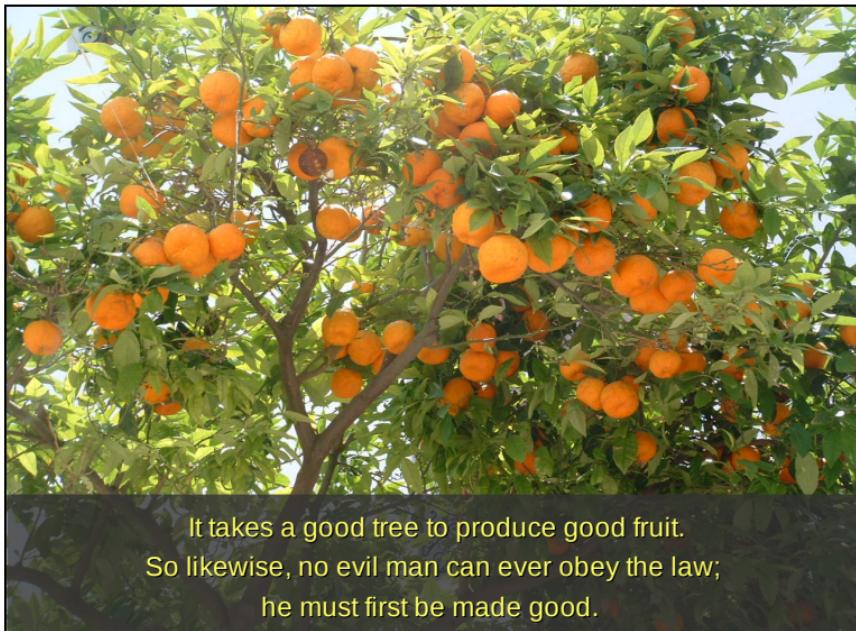
For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. *Luke 6:43-45*

Here Christ has reiterated a simple law of nature with which we are all familiar. We know that not once in the whole history of this world has there been so much as a single instance where a violation of this law has been found. There never yet has appeared a grape on a bramble bush or figs on a thorn bush and there never will, because of the utter impossibility of it. All the efforts of science and the wisdom of men could never do it. It just cannot be done.

Jesus reveals that this same law operates in the spiritual world with equal force and inviolability. As it is in nature, so it is in grace. The *same laws* that govern earthly seed sowing govern the sowing of the seeds of truth:

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. *Luke*

This is a law that cannot be altered or broken. In the light of the words of Christ, we can say with the utmost certainty that there has not been since the creation of man, one who was evil that brought forth any good fruit while he remained in that state. Not a single one. Nor will there ever be one either. It is an impossibility.



It takes a good tree to produce good fruit.
So likewise, no evil man can ever obey the law;
he must first be made good.

By natural inheritance and birth, every one of us is an evil tree. There is not one of us that is born good. We can only inherit from our earthly parents their evil natures.

Therefore, in the light of these plain facts we are shut up to this one conclusion:

A man must *become* good *before* he can *do* good.

There is just no other conclusion that these facts will admit. And yet, simple and straightforward as this truth is, it is missed by so many who are seeking the Pearl of great price. And yet no truth is more plainly taught in all the Scriptures:

By nature the heart is evil, and “who can bring a clean thing out, of an unclean? Not one.” *Job 14:4*. No human invention can

find a remedy for the sinning soul. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be...” “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” *Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19*. The fountain of the heart must be purified *before* the streams can become pure. *The Desire of Ages*, 172

The tree must be made good *before* the fruit can be good. *That I May Know Him*, 226

God does *not* claim that the unregenerate can keep that law. There is no issue over that. But the claim that the Lord makes is that the man who has experienced the change in his very nature that the Bible calls the New Birth, can keep that law to the entire satisfaction of the God of heaven. *This distinction, this difference must ever be kept in mind.*

Go back now to *Deuteronomy 30:11-14*, where we previously read the Word of the Lord which said, “It is not too hard for you, you can do it.” The people to whom those words were spoken were a people described as those in whose hearts the law had been written. This is but another way of expressing the taking out of the stony heart, and the putting in of a new heart. The new heart is one in which the law has been written. So the Lord says:

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. *Deuteronomy 30:14*

Today and in every age the whole world is divided into exactly two classes. There is the vast majority who have been born evil and have remained that way. Many of these make a very high profession of Christianity and belong to churches and work very diligently to evangelize the world, but they are *unregenerate* nonetheless.

On the other hand there are the few who have been born exactly as the other group has been born, but who have come to the Lord to receive the cleansing away of the old nature and into its place receive the new nature. This has been to them an actual experience and is an actual change, or better still, exchange of natures.

A man can have church membership, a knowledge of the facts of the truth, temporal blessings, deliverances by the hand of God from suffering, sickness, death, or financial loss; he can have a very real and deep love for God and gratitude to Him for His goodness, and yet still not have the new nature, still not have the law written in his heart, and

thus still being an evil tree, be a slave to sin and produce only evil fruit. It was Jesus who said:

Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:3

Thus there are two classes and two only. The first has not a hope of keeping the law of God. Do not let us ever try to argue with anyone that he can. Only the man who is born again can, and to him it is a pleasure and a joy.

The fact that he is born again, that he is a new creation, that the old man of sin has been destroyed, and that he has the mind of Christ, does not alter the fact that he is a human being still. He has not become an angel or a god. He is very much a different man but he is a man still.

The issue stands out in ever sharper clearness. God's Word stands true that human beings can keep all the law provided they have been renewed in His character image. Satan's claim that the law cannot be kept by created beings is proved to be a lie. Jesus said:

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. *John 8:32*

This book is concerned with the HOW of keeping that law in righteousness, and we would emphasize that a very important part of that HOW is to have the living faith that, even if so far we have found that we have not kept that law, it *can* be done, and as we find the right way to do it we know that we *will* come to keep it.

While we have faith in this Word of God there is hope for us in the judgment, but just so soon as we submit to believing the lie of the devil, then just so soon we will find ourselves lacking the faith to know we can be delivered from sin. Lacking that faith there will be no deliverance and no eternal life.

Thus at this stage, if we have gained no other, may it be that we have gained the sure conviction that the law can be kept, and that it will be to our joy and delight to do so.

In the whole controversy as to whether the law can or cannot be kept by created beings, Satan can point to the unnumbered men and women of every age and generation who support his claim by living lives of rebellion and disobedience, as proof of its validity. Certainly, he has the majority on his side in the argument. But, in this case at least, the majority is wrong. Satan's majority is a *deceived* majority, and as such, constitutes no proof at all.

There are certain situations where the unbelieving multitude can be very wrong and the despised minority, very right. For century after century the majority of men did not believe that it would ever be possible for anyone to fly like the birds, and regarded with indifference, amusement and even ridicule, the attempts of a few to master the air. It took only two young men, Orville and Wilbur Wright to *prove* them all very wrong. And they *proved* them all wrong forever, not by involved and lengthy argument, but by simply *doing* what so many said could not be done. And, because they were men like any other man upon the earth, their doing of that proved that any other man could do it too.

Just so, God has done more than merely state His case. He *has proved it*. He has *proved* it by giving a *conclusive* demonstration that it can be kept by human beings even under the *greatest handicaps* and the most *forbidding circumstances*.

That demonstration was carried out to the fullest success in the earthly life of Jesus the Son of God and man. It is generally believed that Jesus came to the earth only for the purpose of dying the death of Calvary and thereby paying the redemption price for the lost race. But Jesus came to accomplish far more than that. He came to prove that man, even when handicapped with the limitations of a degenerate humanity and surrounded with an environment that had every appeal and pressure to sin, could obey every one of the commandments of God, and do it to his benefit and advantage.

To do this He must have come to us *where* we are and *as* we are so that He could know in His own experience what it meant for man to do battle with evil. And so it was in very fact that He came with the same flesh and blood as every one of the children of men, and at the same time with the same divine power in that flesh and blood as is available

to every man, and then with that power, in spite of the limitations and handicaps of the weak and degenerate humanity, He lived a life of perfect obedience to every one of the commandments of the Lord.

Thus, voluntarily placing Himself where every man is in all the weakness and helplessness of humanity, in the very environment of temptation and sin, He, by triumphing over it all, has proved forever for everyone of us that we may do the same, if we will lay hold on the divine life and power which He offers to freely impart to us. His life sweeps away from every son of man every excuse that we might ever think to bring forward for failure and defeat in this life.

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*

Study this next statement very carefully for there is wonderful, saving truth in it for each one of us personally:

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 Ministry of Healing*, 180

For us to understand the value and the force of that demonstration to ourselves personally, and to experience the saving power of it, we must know and believe for ourselves that Jesus was “made like his brothers *in every respect*.” Therefore He “*in every respect* has been tempted as we are” (*Hebrews 2:17; 4:15*) and yet He exercised no divine power in His own behalf that is not freely available to us.

As He says of us:

Apart from Me you can do nothing. *John 15:5*

So of Himself as He was upon this earth He said:

I can do nothing on my own. *John 5:30*

He depended upon the Father moment by moment for the power to overcome every single temptation, just as we must depend on the Father moment by moment for the power to conquer:

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. *Revelation 3:21*

As He conquered, so we are to conquer.

Christ's overcoming and obedience is that of a *true human being*...He came *not* to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but, *as a man* to obey God's Holy Law, and *in this way* He is our example. The Lord Jesus came to our world, *not* to reveal *what a God* could do, but *what a man could do*, through faith in God's power to help in every emergency. *Our High Calling*, 48

How else could it be? If this proof is to be valid, Jesus must actually become man. He must have as His very own all the weaknesses, frailties, liabilities and infirmities common to humanity, and as such, would know by His own experience, the full force and power of every temptation that is common to man.

It could be no other way. Jesus could not be removed from the humanity that He came to save by so much as a hair's-breadth; for, if He was, then His life would prove nothing for God and the truth. Instead, it would be a mighty argument for Satan, because he could and would claim that wherein Christ did not meet temptation, there the grace of God was insufficient, and the law could not be kept after all, and to us it would mean that there would be every excuse for sin.

The fact is that those who deny the completeness of the humanity of Christ also deny the possibility of having right now, and every day, the complete victory over every known sin in the life. For them, their supposed Christianity is an ever-repeating pattern of sin and confess, sin and confess, sin and confess.

But the Bible distinctly says that He was made in *every respect* like unto His brothers:

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. *Hebrews 2:17*

Now "*every respect*" means just exactly what it says. It means *every* thing, not *some* things or *many* things or even *most* things. Let us take the Bible as it reads and believe just what it says, and all that it says, so that when it plainly says "*every respect*," we accept that as being nothing less than *every* thing.

But, in our reading of this Scripture, let us note that this complete

likeness in all things is “like His *brothers*.” Herein lies a very important distinction. In the last chapter we showed how it was impossible for a carnal man to obey even the first of the commandments of the Lord. We saw how plainly the Bible teaches the principle that a man must *become* good *before* he can *do* good.

From this, two conclusions are immediately apparent. The one is that Jesus never came to prove that a carnal man, while he remained such, could keep the law of God. There are two very good reasons for this. In the first case, it was impossible anyway and in the second, to have done so would have been but to prove the Bible wrong, a thing which He as the Truth could never do.

The second conclusion is that Jesus never was made in all things like unto a carnal man, for if He had, it would have been impossible for Him to keep the law either. He would have been an evil tree and therefore by nature could only have produced evil fruit. Neither does the Scripture anywhere say that He was made in every respect like the carnal man, but that He was made in every respect like *His brothers*. There is a very decided difference between those who are His brothers and those who are not, for not all men are the brothers of Christ.

Those who are brothers are of the one family and have a common father. To the believing Gentiles of his day, the apostle Paul wrote regarding their previous unbelieving lives:

Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. *Ephesians 2:12*

No one can at the same time be described as a brother and an alien or stranger. Neither can one be a brother who has different parents. Paul makes it very plain in this verse:

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call *them* brothers. *Hebrews 2:11*

Let us study this verse for a moment. It says that He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified, have a common origin. He who is the Sanctifier or the One who makes others holy, is Christ. He is the subject of the whole context of this verse.

And who are they who are sanctified? There can be no doubt as to

who they are. They are those who have been born again; those from whom the old spiritual nature has been removed, and who, having become good trees, are able to bear good fruit and thus to obey the law of God. These are they of whom we studied in the previous chapter as being very different from the carnal, unregenerate man who did not and could not obey the law of God.

And they are the ones whom Christ is not ashamed to call His brothers. And it is like them that He was in *every respect* made, and as they are tempted, so He was tempted also.

Because this distinction is so important, let us study a little further the common origin of these two, the Sanctifier and the sanctified ones. Every single one of us can trace our origin back to an earthly parent, and we have a human nature acquired from that parentage by normal human birth. Every one of us knows just what flesh and blood is,—its liabilities, its handicaps, its frailties and its infirmities. We know some thing of the power of that human nature to preserve its own life and comfort and well being. We know too, how firmly that flesh will resist the call of God when that call, as it always does, demands sacrifice and trial. We can only describe that flesh as being sinful in its tendencies and direction. It is mortal, corruptible and as such, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. *1 Corinthians 15:50*

Those of us who have been truly born again also know that the new birth experience makes no change in the flesh except that as we practice temperance and self-denial, there is definite improvement in the life and habits. There is a mighty change in the person who is born again, but this is change is not in the flesh but in the spiritual nature. When we are born again we do not cease to be human beings. We do not lose the sinful flesh. We still remain in actual fact the sons of men, so far as the flesh is concerned; but are also the sons of God, so far as the spirit is concerned.

So the regenerate man has two origins: human and divine. But the unregenerate man also has two origins: human and Satanic. Jesus declared to the unregenerate Jews of His day:

You are of your father the devil. *John 8:44*

In *Romans* chapter 7 Paul referred to the two natures:

But I see in my members *another law* waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. *Romans 7:23*

“My members” refers to his human nature, and “*another law*” refers to the corrupt spiritual nature, the stony heart, the old man of sin, which is the master of the man and uses the flesh to its own evil purpose.

But in the case of the sanctified ones of whom we are studying, the evil spiritual nature has been removed, and they have been born again of a *divine* parentage that is neither carnal nor human. It is of God. How plainly the Bible speaks of this:

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. *John 1:12,13*

Beloved, we are God's children now. *1 John 3:2*

So it can be said of each truly born again christian, that he is a son of man, *and* a son of God. He has the mind of Christ. True christians are “*partakers of the divine nature*,” (*2 Peter 1:4*), and are in actual fact divine-human beings.

Many are unable to understand the distinction between the human and the spiritual nature, and consider them to be one and the same. But the distinction is there and it is a very important one. In fact it is almost impossible to properly understand the incarnation of Christ and the new birth if we fail to grasp this distinction.

Now that we have studied the nature of man, let us turn to the study of the nature of Christ, and see if the Scriptures do teach that He was in fact made in every respect like His brothers. We turn first to the human side of His nature. In this connection the Bible plainly says the following:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things. *Hebrews 2:14*

Note just what the verse says. It says He partook of the same flesh and blood that the children have. These children are the ones who are sanctified, for they are the ones that “*God has given*” Him (*Hebrews 2:13*).

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the

offspring of Abraham. *Hebrews 2:16*

He did not come in an angelic nature, but in the nature of those whom He came to help.

God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. *Galatians 4:4,5*

Concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh. *Romans 1:3*

We are just such children, and we partake of flesh and blood, and we know that He partook of the same flesh and blood that we do, not a *different* flesh and blood, but the *same*. And what is more, He partook of it in the self same way that we do. How did we receive ours? By the process of normal human birth of a human parentage. The Bible says that He took part of the same:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things. *Hebrews 2:14*

The word “likewise” means “in exactly the same way.”

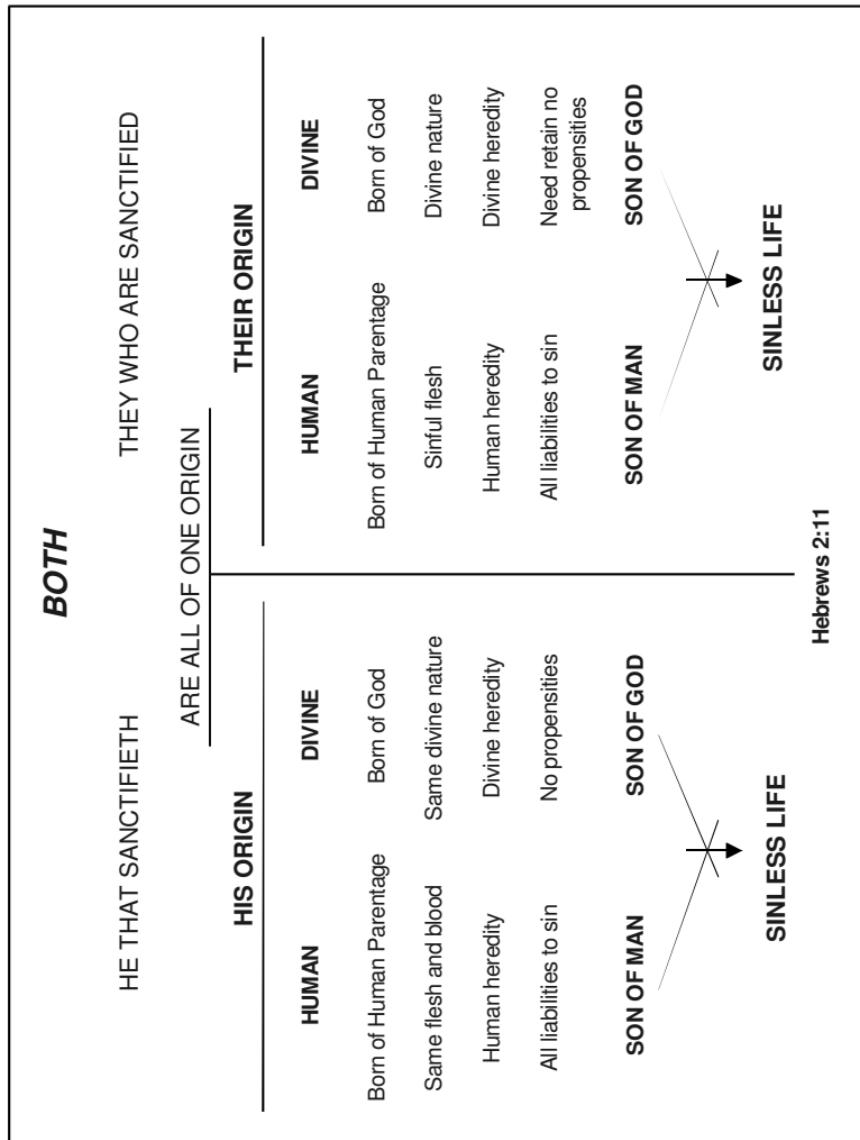
“It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 49

He took the very same flesh and blood that we have, and He took it in the very same way that we do. Thus, between our origin on the human side, and His origin on the human side, there is not so much as a hair’s breadth of difference. He comes to us exactly where we are and exactly as we are, and stands there with us, completely one of us, and one with us.

God has plainly stated that the law can be kept to perfection by created beings, including a fallen humanity. But He did not let the matter rest there with the claim. He has proved it, and that proof is made in the earthly life of Jesus, the Son of God. And the marvelous victory of that Son in the self-same flesh and blood as the children

partake of, is the end forever of Satan's argument and case. He just simply has no case left.

Thus far in the study of the answer of God to Satan's lie, we have been emphasizing the completeness of the *humanity* of the Saviour, that



He was truly and in all respects, the Son of Man. And we have seen that, if He was to actually gain the victory over the devil and thereby prove that the law can be kept, then it was altogether needful that He should be truly man.

But though suffering all the limitations and liabilities of the sinful flesh of man, nevertheless He was also the Son of God and possessed at all times and in all circumstances, the spotless character of His Father in Heaven. As the Son of God *He was God*: eternal, self-existent, omnipotent.

His birth was an incarnation, which is to say that His existence did not begin with the birth in Bethlehem. The same Person who was there before that birth appeared through that birth. The difference between Christ as He dwelt in heaven before His birth into this world, and Christ as the Son of God and man, is that, whereas in Heaven He was in the garb of the archangel, He now appears in the garb of humanity, and as such is compassed by all the limitations and liabilities of that humanity. This exposed Him to the power of temptation and the same risk of falling as any and every other child of God upon the earth. Thus the apostle John testified of Him:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. *John 1:1-3*

Thus of Him it is testified that at the very inception of the creation of the very first creature, He was there, and by Him that creation was effected. And not only that first creation, but every other calling into existence since then has been His work by the power that is essentially in and of Him as the Creator God.

Jesus testified of Himself to the unbelieving Jews of His day:

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.

Sneeringly they replied, and in their reply gave evidence of the fact that they could not see the divinity clad in the humanity,

“You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” *John 8:56-58*

There is no escaping the implications of the answer of the Saviour.

Here He had taken to Himself the peculiar title that the God of Heaven used to identify Himself as the eternal One, the only One who could say at any point of time that could be indicated or named, and even beyond any point of time which any created being could name, that at that time He could say of Himself, I AM. Thus the God in the burning bush had identified Himself to Moses so long ago:

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” *Exodus 3:14*

The Jews to whom Christ spoke, and to whom He claimed this title, understood perfectly that thereby He was claiming the title of God Himself, and in their righteous indignation they took up stones to stone Him, little realizing that the claim was the truth, and that it was *God* who stood before them *in very fact*.

Now in all this we speak of a Mystery, the full depth of which cannot be fathomed by human minds. The apostle Paul thus speaks of this subject as follows:

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. *1 Timothy 3:16*

That God could be manifest in the flesh is indeed a mystery. Exactly *how* it could be we do not know and cannot know, but that it was so, we can know and are to know for the saving of our own souls. Let it be forever settled in our minds that it was *God* who appeared in *human* form and in *the flesh*, to face every temptation as every one of His brethren must face it, and, in that victory, prove that we too may have the same victory over every temptation that can ever be brought against us.

God *was* in the flesh. No truth does the Bible more solidly stress than this. It is just as solidly stressed as the fact that He became truly man in the most certain and complete sense of the word.

If this seems too much for us to believe and to receive, let us tread with caution, for we are plainly told in the Word by the Son Himself, that only those who are taught of God can receive and understand that truth, the truth that Jesus is the Son of God and man. The unenlightened mind may be prepared and able to believe the one or the other but not the truth of both.

There was no question in the minds of the people of that day that Christ was a man. They could see it with their own eyes. He had every appearance of a man, and was compassed with all the limitations with which they themselves were familiar. Knowing this, Jesus asked the question:

Who do people say that the Son of Man is? *Matthew 16:13*

Notice that Jesus described Himself as the Son of man in this question. He did not say, "Who do people say that *I am*," but "**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**" Note their reply:

Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. *Matthew 16:14*

Thus the record plainly shows that the men of that generation, who did not have the heavenly anointing, could see nothing in the Saviour *but His humanity*. The mystery was hidden from them. They could not and did not see it. But the apostles could see *more* than they could. Jesus asked them:

"But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." *Matthew 16:15,16*

In its fullest expression, Peter's answer was, "You, the Son of man, are also *the* Son of God." These men could *see* the mystery of God. They could discern the Divine One hidden in the garb of humanity. They knew that God was with them, was by them and walked with them day by day.

But they did not see this by mere human sight and understanding. That was impossible. They saw it by the illumination of the Spirit of God in their minds, just as you and I must see the same truth today. There is no other way. This is made plain by the words of Jesus:

Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. *Matthew 16:17*

If we find then today that the Incarnation of the Son of God is a dark and forbidding doctrine; if we find that we cannot accept that fact that He was truly God *and* man, then we can know that we lack the illumination of the Spirit, and, in fear lest we be found a castaway, let us humble our hearts and ask for that divine illumination which will enable us to understand this vital truth.



"No one, looking upon the childlike countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children. *He was God in human flesh.*" *The Youth Instructor*, September 8, 1898

At this point it may well be objected that if Christ was the eternal God clad in human flesh, then surely, as such, He was secure against sin, was something that we can never be, and therefore held and possessed such an advantage over us that His life constitutes no proof at all that we too can overcome sin in this human flesh.

And if it were true that He exercised all of His power as a God in the conflict with sin, or for that matter, *any* of that power, then there would be no fair denying that His life would be no example whatsoever to any of us that sin could be overcome by us in our humanity.

But, a most wonderful and amazing part of that mystery of God in the flesh is that He completely laid aside that eternal creative power and never used it at all. And laying it aside as completely and as absolutely as He did, He placed Himself exactly and fully in the same position of utter helplessness as any and every believer must find himself in the battle with sin. Jesus said of Himself:

I can do *nothing* on my own. *John 5:30*

To be able to do nothing means to be completely helpless which is the fullness of the position of humanity in any attempt of itself to keep the righteousness of God. And this is evident from the words of Jesus Himself, for He who testified of Himself that He could do *nothing* on his own likewise said of His people:

Apart from me you can do nothing. *John 15:5*

We do not have the creative power of the Godhead in ourselves with which to meet and sweep aside the devil's temptations, so He laid it all aside and stepped down and became as helpless in His humanity as we are in ours, and having been made like his brothers in *every respect*, He could be and was in every respect tempted as we are. He was faced with all the risk of failure that we face, and yet overcame, thus proving forever that we too can overcome in every temptation that is, and could possibly be, brought against us.

Paul did not say that Jesus was "in every respect tempted as *I am*" but "*in every respect tempted as we are*." This opens up another depth in the mystery of godliness: how could Christ be tempted in every respect as *we are*? There are certain points of weakness that are peculiar to *me* in the make-up of *my* humanity, and thus certain temptations are very real and powerful to *me* while others just do not reach me at all. But *I am* included in that "*we*", and so *I* can know that those temptations that are peculiar to *my* make-up were very real temptations to *Him*, and that He felt them and suffered them just as *I* have to feel them and suffer them.

But *you* are also involved in that word "*we*". He was also tempted in every respect as *you* are. You have temptations which are no temptation to me at all. While the very things that I am prone to stumble over are the things that are no worry to you. But the Word of God says that it was not just as *I* was tempted that Jesus was tempted, but in every respect as *we*, *you* and *I* are tempted. He felt and He suffered all the temptations which I must suffer and feel, and, as well as that, all the temptations which are peculiar to you as you must suffer and as you must feel them, for only then could it be true that He was tempted in all points as *we* are tempted.

But this is not all, for there are the temptations which reach to that other fellow which reach neither you nor me, and he too is included in that "*we*". Therefore, Christ must also suffer being tempted exactly as that other man is tempted, in areas that affect neither you nor me, for only then could it be fully and truly said that He was tempted in every respect as *we* are tempted.

Wondrous saving truth! Think of what it means to you and to me. Jesus was the "*one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin*." *Hebrews 4:15*. Jesus came to this earth in a humanity that

came right to where, not just one of us is, or two of us are, nor even to where a certain class of us might be, but He came to every man right where any one of us, anywhere, might be. And He comes to each one everywhere with a humanity just such as that man has in the peculiar need of that man's desperately lost situation. And to do that, He must have come to humanity with a humanity so completely identified with humanity that He possessed in His humanity, all the weaknesses and liabilities that it is possible for humanity to have.

He must have possessed as His very own, by the heredity of a human birth, all the weaknesses and liabilities that are my peculiar weaknesses, and together with that, all the peculiar weaknesses and liabilities of which I may know nothing, but which are very real and formidable to you, and together with that all the weaknesses and liabilities that neither you nor I may know nor have, but which are so real and so terrible to that other poor soul.

He had them all, and knew them all, for the Bible expressly says that He was made like His brother in *every* respect,—No! Oh, no!—like His *brothers*. He was not made in every respect like *one* of us, but in every respect like *all* of us. He did not come to save *one* of us, He came to save *all* of us.

Jesus is the great bridge which spans the gulf
made by sin between God and man.



This bridge is the uniting of His divinity with humanity.
With His human arm He reaches us where we are;
With His divine arm He reaches to the throne of the Infinite.
He is truly God in the flesh of man.

But that is not all, for Jesus stood there with *your* weaknesses too, and the weaknesses of that *other fellow*, and Satan came against Him with every temptation that could conceivably be brought against *you* and the *other fellow* too. When he and all the legions of hell that were with him had completely exhausted every weapon of evil against Him, they still found that He did not in the least yield to all that pressure and all that subtlety. It is the living truth of God that He “*in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*”

Thus we have seen that the Saviour in His life on earth met and overcame every temptation that is possible for the enemy of souls to bring against any man. We have seen that therefore any man, possessed, as He was, of the divine nature, can overcome even as He overcame and will find in that Life the fullest answer to the lie of Satan that the Law cannot be kept.

But this is not all that is proved by the incarnation of the Son of God. There is a deeper truth that is yet to be seen and understood in regard to this. For us to pass over this aspect of the case would be to leave the subject but partially presented, and this we cannot do. We need to see the Saviour as a *complete* Saviour.

Truth has deeper and deeper levels which need to be understood, but the deeper truth will never contradict the fundamental truth. Likewise, this deeper study of the incarnation will not contradict the truth already laid down.

He never was a carnal man. He ever was God in the flesh. Jesus came at the same level as the *converted* man, and in that position proved that the *converted* man could obey every one of the commandments of the Lord. To those of us who already have received the very life of God into the soul, it is a great comfort and assurance to know that every temptation that can come to us has already come to Jesus and been overcome by Him. Jesus then is the perfect and complete example for those who have been placed on vantage ground. To *them* His life gives the perfect assurance that *they* need not be overcome and need not be lost.

But this is no help to the unconverted man. He is not up there on that vantage ground. He is down in the pit of sin bearing the terrible burden of discouragement and hopeless despair as the devil presses the full weight of the curse of sin upon him.

One of the most fearful weapons which the devil uses to secure his

victims is the awful sense of discouragement felt by the sinner as he is down in the pit of sin under the full weight of the sense of condemnation and with the awful sense of separation from God. As the devil sees the sinner seeking to escape from his grasp, he presses the hopelessness of his situation upon him in the most discouraging light so that he will give up in despair, and fail to gain the precious victory over this thing.

But because even a lost sinner can have victory, Jesus must also pass over this road and *experience* that same discouragement and awful sense of separation from God. He must demonstrate that by putting entire faith in God, it is possible to come up from the most desperate depths of sin and stand upon vantage ground and live a life of victory over every sin. And He did that too.

The picture of Christ passing through this experience is recorded prophetically in the fortieth *Psalm*. This psalm is a prophecy of Christ (compare *Psalm 40:6-8* to *Hebrews 10:5-9*). Note the wonderful description given here of the plight of every sinner down in that pit and the coming out of that darkness into the marvelous light of His presence:

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord. *Psalm 40:1-3*

We have seen that there was no sin in Jesus, and never once did He stumble and fall under the power of temptation, yet He could say in reality in the twelfth verse of this psalm, right after the very verses applied to Him in the book of *Hebrews*:

For evils have encompassed me beyond number; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me. *Psalm 40:12*

Jesus said, “*My iniquities have overtaken me.*” How could He say that when He never had any iniquities of His own? Here is a great truth that we must see and understand. When we take His righteousness, which is never *of us* in the least degree, it becomes ours and we can *experience* the fullness of the joy and the peace and the power of the possession of it.

So, likewise, when there was laid on Him the iniquity of us all, my sin, your sin and every other man's sin; when He took that which was never of Him in the least degree, He so truly took it that He *felt* the full weight of the bitterness and the discouragement of it, as if it were *really* of Him just as every desperate and lost sinner feels the weight of the curse on himself.

And like every sinner He had to wait patiently on the Lord until He heard His cry and inclined unto Him. He had to put His faith in God to lift Him up, for He could never lift Himself up out of that miry pit, because He was as helpless there as any of us ever could be. He experienced the full weight of the discouragement of it, and the awful temptation to give it all up. But whereas He could have walked away from the situation, we can't; therefore for our sake, He endured it.

Study the story through also in the twenty-second *Psalm* and in the agony in Gethsemane and on the cross. It is impossible in the space of this chapter to compass all the wonder and the truth of this subject. We can only introduce you to the theme and leave you to go on exploring it under the guidance of the teaching of the Spirit.

But have you seen something in all this that seals up the argument of God completely? Have you seen that Jesus did not stop short of the fullest measure of identification with, and experience in *all* that humanity must overcome *as* humanity must overcome it?

When I faced the tempter as a lost soul needing basic salvation, I faced him only with the discouragement of my own sins upon me. That was a fearful load of discouragement and I was tempted to think that it was too much. But when I see that Jesus had all the weight that I had of all my sins, and the discouragement of that, and all the weight and the discouragement that you have, and in addition to that all the weight and all the discouragement of all the sins of the whole world, then I know that He is able to deliver, no matter how deep is the discouragement we bear.

And if that were not enough, He bore that weight not just with the weaknesses of my humanity, but with the weaknesses of yours as well, and in addition, the weaknesses that any other man might possibly have. And thus in this position of disadvantage and burden far greater than I can possibly have, and bearing a burden of guilt of fantastic weight far beyond what I will ever possibly be called upon to bear, He overcame and lived a whole lifetime without ever sinning at all.

What a complete and conclusive and final death knell that is to Satan's argument. How our mouths are stopped in shame at the least temptation to excuse the very smallest or most common sin in ourselves. And what a Saviour! What a mighty conquering One! The victory is won! The gates of hell and the grave are burst asunder! The bands of sin are broken, and Jesus bids the captives stand free! Satan is exposed and seen forever as he is, a liar and a murderer. Christ is ever and always revealed for what He is: the Way, the Truth and the Life.

It could well be that in the minds of some of our readers there is the thought that we have overstressed the importance of Christ's living demonstration that the law could be kept by sanctified human nature, thereby exposing Satan as a murderous liar. But we can boldly say on the authority of the Word of God that this is not so. On the contrary, the fact is that this truth cannot be over-emphasized for it is of the utmost importance that each of us has the clearest possible understanding of this subject.

It is by no means too much to say that if our beliefs are astray in this subject, then they will be just as much astray on every other vital and fundamental truth of salvation. The Bible views this matter so strongly, that it identifies every single one who holds this doctrine in error as antichrist, while only those who hold it in truth are considered to be from God.

This is not an arbitrary test imposed upon us by God's choice, but one that is inevitable and at the same time perfectly consistent in view of the issues of the great controversy itself. Let us turn right now to the Bible itself and read the test as the Lord gives it to us:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. *1 John 4:1-3*

Before we examine the test itself, let us make one aspect of the case very clear: the Lord imposes upon His people the requirement of applying the test. There are some who believe that we have no right to test others and that to do so would be to disobey the command of Christ:

Judge not, and you will not be judged. *Luke 6:37*

But He who said, "Judge not," also said:

Test the spirits. *1 John 4:1*

To test means to examine with the intention of coming to a decision

about what is being tested.

There seems to be a contradiction here, but it is not really so. In *Luke* the instruction of the Lord is in the matter of judging the motive as to why a person does a certain thing. No man can do this because he is not able to read the heart of another.

So when those who profess to be teachers of the gospel come to us, it is not for us to judge as to *why* they teach what they do, but it is very much our duty before God to carefully test and examine the *teachings* of those who come to us and to decide just what side those teachers are on. In this matter the Lord does not come and tell us where each teacher is as they come one by one, but He supplies us with the test and we are required to apply it for ourselves. When this is done, we have the approval of the Lord. Note the warm words of approval to the Ephesus church:

I know...how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have *tested* those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be *false*. *Revelation 2:1-3*

So then, having the Divine command to test the teachers, let us apply the test which the Lord Himself has provided for us. He says to us, “*By this you know...*” That is to say, by this means or by this test you will know. Now let us examine the test itself:

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist...

What kind of flesh did Jesus come in? It is the *same* flesh and blood as the children’s flesh and blood. He was made like His brothers in *every* respect so that He might be tempted in every respect as they are tempted. Therefore in its fullness the test would read: “Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come *in the same flesh and blood as the children*, is from God.”

Satan knows this test, and he seeks to make it difficult for us to apply by making it appear that his agents actually do teach that Christ did come in the flesh. A classic example of this is to be found in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. From the very opening of the revival of Protestantism in the fourteenth Century, it has been clearly understood, on the basis of Bible prophecy, that the Roman Catholic Church is the great antichrist of history.

But the Roman Church argues that there must be a misapplication of the prophecy for antichrist teaches that Jesus Christ does not come in flesh, but the Roman Church does. Therefore, she is not the antichrist. It is a sad fact that many Protestants find themselves without an answer to this, and as a result, the voice of Protestantism is well nigh dead in the world today.

The Roman Church has been very clever in setting up a false front to what she really believes, and anyone who is prepared to be only superficial will certainly be deceived. I turn now to a recent Catholic publication to see the deceptive front that this church is raising for her protection from this charge:

Q. "Is Christ a human being the same as you are?"

A. "Christ is really a human being the same as you are. Christ was born of a woman, ate, slept, and suffered, and even was tempted by the devil. You will see Christ the man in heaven."

Page 14, *A Catechism for Non-Catholics* by Rev. Martin Farrell, published by the United Book Service, Box 127, Orland Park, Illinois, USA, on Nov. 5, 1961

This evidence would seem to show that the Roman Catholic Church does teach that Jesus came in the flesh and therefore could not be the antichrist. If this were so then *1 John 4:1-3* would be a false test because we know from *Daniel 7, 8, 9* and *11*, as well as the great prophecies of *Revelation*, that the Papacy is the antichrist of history, has never changed from that, and will figure as that in the closing scenes of the great controversy.

It further means that if this is so, then the whole of the Protestant revival and reformation was one big mistake, and that we should all return quickly to the fold of the Roman Church. *This we can never do.* What then is the answer? The answer is to look again and to look a little deeper.

And in looking again we find that the above statement from the Catholic publication is *not* the *real* teaching of that church but only a front to hide the real teaching. And the real teaching is that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh, and therefore she is the antichrist together with all others who teach the same.

The Roman Church is the mother of the Babylonian churches. She, above all else, is Babylon. The word "Babylon," means confusion and it is to be seen that she has a double tongue. With the one she speaks the

very words of truth to a certain extent, but with the other she formulates a doctrine that is the utter denial of that truth. It is not the isolated statement, but the formulated structure of her doctrines that are the *actual* teaching of that church. This is that by which she must be tested. *Here* the question must be asked: "Does the Roman Church teach that Jesus Christ came in *the flesh*?"

To find the answer to that question we must go to that part of her teachings where the whole matter of the incarnation of the Son of God as taught by that church, is explained. In doing this we find that the Papal Church is most clear and explicit in her teaching here, and leaves no doubt as to what her teaching is. It is all found under the heading of *The Immaculate Conception*:

"It is to be noted that the Immaculate Conception does not refer to, the miraculous conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mother without the intervention of a human father, as many non-Catholics imagine, but to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother without the stain of original sin." Page 509, *The Faith of Millions*, by John A. O'Brien, (R.C.) published in 1962 by W. H. Allen, London.

A very important principle involved here is the law that a child will receive from the parent only that which the parent has. Thus we believe that inasmuch as Mary the mother of Jesus, like every other mother of her time, had a human nature which suffered the effects of over four thousand years of sinful degeneracy, she could only impart to Jesus the same nature that she had. The Roman Church also recognizes this principle, and states it thus:

"In other words we affirm," as Cardinal Gibbons points out, "that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of God, who in His Divine nature is from all eternity begotten of the Father, consubstantial with Him, was, in the fullness of time, again begotten by being begotten of the Virgin, *thus* taking to Himself, from her maternal womb, *a human nature of the same substance with hers.*" *ibid.*, 507. Italics ours.

Therefore the Roman Church correctly teaches that whatever Mary was in her human nature, then Christ must have been in His, for it was from her that He received His human nature.

Having laid down this important principle, then the Roman Church, in order to make really clear the doctrine of the humanity of Christ as

they would have us to see it, describe in some detail the humanity of Mary:

"Not only was she free from the slightest stain of actual sin, but by a singular miracle of Divine Grace she was free also from original sin, with which all the other children of Adam are born into this world. It was eminently fitting that she who was destined to be the mother of Christ, who was to give Him *flesh of her flesh and blood of her blood*, should be *undefiled* by that slight shadow of Adam's fall. *To her alone*, among all the members of the race, was granted this singular immunity." *ibid.*, 509. Italics ours.

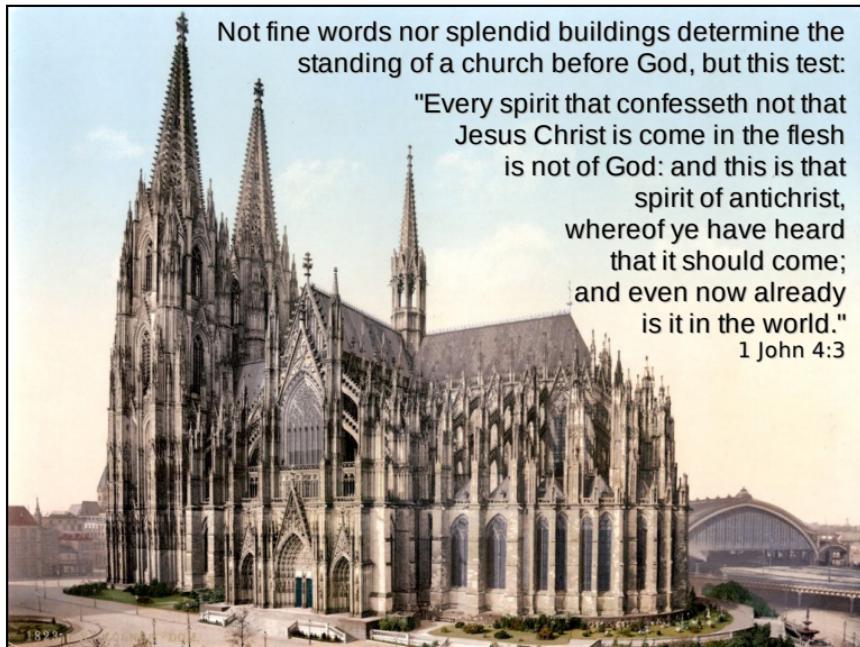
Notice how distinctly and clearly that this teaches that Mary was different from every other human being who ever lived so far as her flesh and blood was concerned. This teaches that she did *not* partake of the same flesh and blood as the others of the human family but had a flesh and blood which was completely and fully exempt from all liability toward sin. In other words this clearly teaches that unlike any other human being she had *holy* flesh and not sinful flesh. Bear in mind as set out in previous chapters, that we are here concerned with the human side of the nature of the Son of God and man. He was possessed of sinful flesh, but not a sinful heart. These two are separate and distinct.

It must follow that if Mary was different from every other human being on the earth, then Jesus must have also been different from any other being that He came to save, because Mary could only, and did only impart to Him that which she herself had. And the Roman Church teaches her immaculate conception and *different* flesh so that they can set Him forth as also not having the same flesh and blood as the children. Therefore there can be no question that the Roman Church is the antichrist of history, and that *1 John 4:1-3* is perfectly consistent with the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* in identifying her as such.

We do not have the space here to examine the creed of every denomination to apply this test, though such would bring to light a surprising company of daughters who hold the same teaching. This is never stated in just the same words as those quoted above, but add up to the same teaching nonetheless.

Let us now consider how it is that this teaching is the teaching of

antichrist. Any teaching that takes away from Christ's oneness with humanity gives strength to Satan's side of the argument. It aids and abets him in his warfare against Christ and God. Such a position is simply "against Christ" or "anti-christ."



Not fine words nor splendid buildings determine the standing of a church before God, but this test:

"Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

1 John 4:3

All true faith is based upon the Word of God. Therefore it is of vital importance that we believe the truth of God and not error. It is the truth that makes us free, and it is the error, or the lie of Satan that leads to eternal destruction.

If we teach that Christ came in a different and very superior flesh to that which the children of men have, as we have proved that the Roman Catholic Church does, then we remove completely the proof that the human family can have a living experience in righteousness. That is fatal enough. But worse yet, we also prove that human beings cannot keep the law. How is this so?

The Lord has declared that the law could be kept by *human beings* even in the environment of this sinful world. Satan has staked his whole case on the argument that it could not be done. Now if Jesus came to this earth to prove Satan wrong, but was not prepared to accept the fearful risk involved in making that proof in the selfsame flesh and

blood as the children, with all the handicaps and liabilities to sin involved therein, then He would have been making a direct admission that it could not be done in that fallen flesh and blood. And for God in Christ to make an admission like that, would be but for God Himself to admit that He had made a false claim, that He and not Satan is the liar.

How we can praise God that He did not make a claim which He could not sustain! But having made His claim, He has proved the truth of it so convincingly that there need never again be the least doubt. He has forever proved that you and I can keep every one of God's commandments.

It follows then, that anyone who sets forth Jesus as having a different flesh and blood than that of the children, is thereby charging God with making a false claim. They are charging *Him* with being the murderer by making a standard in the judgment for eternal life which no one could reach anyway.

This is exactly as Satan would have it. This is just the end toward which he is working, and therefore everyone who puts forth these arguments cannot be on the side of God, but only on the side of Satan. In the very nature of the case they can be no other than antichrist.

To make matters worse, we see that it is not those who openly oppose God, such as the atheists, who are the most effective servants of Satan in all of this controversy, but those who profess to be the church of Christ. While they profess to be His servants they are actively sending souls to damnation by teaching the very lie of Satan. And the more closely connected they have been with God in the past, the more effectively they serve the devil when they take up this lie.

Fearful indeed are the consequences and the issues involved in the matter of the teaching and the understanding of the nature of Christ in His humanity. Those who teach that He did not come in *the flesh* are antichrist, no matter what their profession or past calling might be. That is the one question alone which needs to be asked, and if a body of people or an individual teacher holds that doctrine, then while ever they hold it, they are on the side of antichrist, no matter who they may be. Let no consideration of pleasing appearance or subtle argument or winsome manners weaken in the least the clear cut nature of this test.

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you

may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. *2 John 7-11*

Dear Reader, this whole matter demands that you and I come to a very definite understanding and decision on this question. The position that you take will either be on the side of God, or in league with the antichrist. Which side will you take in the matter? The decision rests with you!

Thus far we have been dealing with the issues of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. We have seen just how plainly the Bible exposes the claims of Satan, and we have seen the proof given by the Lord that His law can be kept; that it *is* possible for us to be perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect. It is time now to move forward in our study to a serious consideration of the implications of these facts as they relate to the judgment.

But before we consider those implications, let us establish very clearly the truth that there is indeed going to be a judgment; that your name and my name is to be called up in that judgment. It is plainly taught in the Scriptures that there is to be an investigation of character. Paul very clearly taught the coming judgment to a wicked king:

And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the *coming judgment*, Felix was alarmed. *Acts 24:25*

The same Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, said:

Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. *Acts 17:31*

For *we must all appear* before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. *2 Corinthians 5:10*

It is important that we understand the requirements of that judgment. Those who pass it will enter into the joys of eternal life, so it is important for us to know what the judgment will expect to find in us.

The Bible leaves no doubt as to *what* that expectation is and of *whom* it is expected. Very naturally we expect to have perfect harmony and consistency in the Bible and in all the dealings of God with men. Therefore we expect to find that the requirements of that judgment, and the nature of its decisions, will be consistent with the issues of the controversy itself, especially when it is considered that the judgment is the climax of the finishing of the whole argument of the controversy.

Let us look at the whole controversy in a nutshell. At the outset Satan claimed that the law could not be kept. God maintained that it

could. So the matter was subjected to test and to contest and for almost six thousand years that contest has been in progress. There will come a time when the whole matter has been explored and tested from every possible angle. When this point has been reached, then the time has come for the final review of the whole question so that the final decision may be made. In this final decision not only is the overall issue of the great controversy itself being vindicated, but the individual lives of those who have stood for God in the controversy are also being vindicated and fully and finally justified.

Now think about the implications of all this. In view of the established fact that God maintains that the law can be kept by human beings even when they are clothed in sinful flesh, and that only those who do keep His law can have a part in heaven, then, in the very nature of the case, *that judgment must determine those who are in actual fact keeping that law as distinct from those who are not*. No other conclusion consistent with the nature of the case could be drawn. To draw any other would be to deny the doctrine of Christ and place one's self in the camp of antichrist, as the previous chapter demonstrated.

But lest some should charge that this is teaching righteousness by human works or effort, let me reiterate the fact that this righteousness is not achieved by man of himself at all. It is as it only can be, *of Christ*. But that which is *of Christ* we must receive into our very selves so that it becomes *ours*, and so that *in our* lives there is that perfect obedience which the law requires. As we proceed with this series and shortly come to the way in which we can keep the law, then this point will be very plain.

For this stage of our study however, let us keep in mind that our purpose is to establish that the law can be kept, and that it is to be kept by all who will inherit eternal life. Therefore, the judgment will distinguish those who keep the law, as distinct from those who do not.

This means that the judgment is going to be an examination of *me* personally. It is going to weigh my actions and my motives; it is going to be concerned with what I have been doing. There is not another soul who can or will stand in my place, no, not even the Saviour Himself. You and I will stand or fall at that time according to what we are, not according to what someone else may be. We will be judged, and not someone else standing in our place.

Let us turn to the Scriptures and see how explicitly and definitely

this is taught:

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. *Romans 2:5-13*

There can be no mistaking the message of these verses. They plainly and distinctly say that every individual is going to receive his reward according to what he himself has been doing during his life. It will be in the light of his deeds, that the great final decision for eternal life or eternal death is to be taken. Let us honestly face the fact that these verses mean just what they say.

Some may think that there is a contradiction between these verses and the following:

For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin...For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Romans 3:20,28

But there is no real contradiction as long as we bear in mind that one is speaking of the root, and the other of the fruit. In the verses from *Romans 2*, the whole context is the matter of righteousness or right doing in the judgment (the fruit); while the verses in *Romans 3* are concerned with initial conversion and daily experience (the root).

These differences are not difficult to understand. In the first instance, to be justified is to be *made* righteous, and without this justification or act of being *made* righteous, no one can do any works of righteousness at all. Therefore, this justification must come first and the *doing* of righteousness will follow.

THE TWO JUSTIFICATIONS



So it is as it must be, that we are justified *without* the works of the law, but we are justified in order to do the works of the law. The works of the law are the *fruit*, not the *root* of righteousness. The evidence, or proof that we have been justified, is seen in works of righteousness. If the works are not there, then there is no justification either. This was the whole argument in the book of *James*:

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. *James 2:17,18*

In other words, I can *prove* to you that this is an apple tree because it bears apples. But the judgment is not concerned with those who need to be saved *from* sin. It will be too late then to be in that situation. The judgment is concerned with those who *have been* saved from sin and *as*

such are seeking a place in heaven.

The condition of eternal life is salvation *from* sin or justification. The judgment will look for the evidence of that justification, which is righteousness or good works. And those in whom it finds such good works, the judgment will pronounce just; it will confirm their right and fitness for heaven and eternity. In that day it will be “*not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.*”

We will add now the plain words of Jesus to that of Paul to make this truth just so much more firmly established in each mind:

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. *Matthew 7:21*

Jesus taught this same truth in the parable of the marriage which is the description of the judgment. This parable is recorded in *Matthew 22:1-14*. The first ten verses of the prophecy *are* devoted to telling of the efforts of the king to gather the guests so that the marriage can proceed to its consummation. When two calls to those who have been initially bidden fail to bring them to the marriage, the servants are directed to another class: those in the highways. To these the servants went as directed and the wedding was at last furnished with guests. But those invited were required to comply with certain requirements. This is symbolized by the wearing of the wedding garment. Now this wedding garment was a gift from the king and the guest was required to wear that which the king had so freely provided.

Before the marriage actually and finally takes place, the King comes in to examine each guest personally and individually. The King is concerned with just what each person *is* at this time and each and everyone who is found without the wedding garment is cast out into outer darkness forever. So the Scripture reads:

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness.” In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen. *Matthew 22:11-14*

To understand the full impact of the message of this prophecy we

must understand just what the wedding garment really is; we must understand just what the King expects to see when He looks upon each one of us in the judgment. Near the end of the book of *Revelation* our minds are carried forward to the time when the marriage at last is achieved and the bride is ready:

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. *Revelation 19:7,8*

There could be no clearer statement than this. The wedding garment is righteous deeds, and note that the Scripture here states that it is the righteous deeds *of the saints*.

Now this is not intended to teach that this is a self-righteousness acquired by their own human efforts to make themselves good. Not at all. Originally and always it is God's own righteousness and is entirely and fully from Him. But that which He has, He *gives* to His saints, and what He gives is not loaned, but given, and thus it becomes *their* possession.

We must come to understand more and more the absolute reality of this gift. When God promises us His righteousness as a gift, He really means that promise and the gift is real. We actually and truly come into possession of His righteousness.

This is therefore *not* an ethereal something which is credited to us but which we never actually possess. Such is only make-believe religion to which there is no value. It is a real gift that brings us into actual possession of the very righteousness of God.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness. *Isaiah 61:10*

Bear in mind that the word in use here is righteous-*ness* and the suffix “-ness” always indicates “being in the state of.” Therefore if a person has righteous-*ness* it clearly means that he is in the state or condition of being righteous. It is a simple and direct statement of *what he is*. He is a good tree and as such must bring forth good fruit.

That there can be no mistake in our understanding of what righteousness really is:

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. *1 John 3:7*

WHEN THE KING SHALL ASK THAT LAST QUESTION:



"How did you get in here without a wedding garment?" how much then we will long that we had acquired that dress while it could still be had. Today, and not tomorrow, is the day of opportunity.

The wedding garment is the spotless robe of the righteousness of Christ, which, becoming our righteousness by gift from Him, manifests itself in a life of perfect obedience to all the glorious principles of the law of God.



**THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS
TO BE IN THE WEDDING GARMENT
AND NOTHING LESS THAN THIS
WILL PASS THE JUDGMENT.**

We have emphasized that the real problem is a matter of what we are, not what we do, and some may feel that John here is placing the stress on what we do as being the all important thing. This is not so. There is no difference between the statement of John as above and anyone saying: "Let no man fool you. Only trees that bear apples are apple trees." Just so certainly as an apple tree is an apple tree will it bear apples. And just so surely as a tree is bearing apples, is the certain and final evidence shown that it is indeed an apple tree.

In the same way exactly, only a man who has been made righteous within himself by the power and the gift of God, can possibly bring forth righteous deeds. Therefore, he who is truly doing the deeds of righteousness, is thereby showing forth the evidence that he is righteous. Thus the statement of the apostle John is in perfect harmony with the testimony of Scripture which so clearly teaches that *what we*

are is the matter of principal concern.

Thus, from the above Scriptures, we see plainly that the wedding garment is the righteousness of the saints which means that they will be in a condition or state of righteousness within themselves and from this state will flow forth the deeds of righteousness in their daily living.

When the King comes in, this is exactly what He expects to find of each person. If that righteousness is present, then that person remains for the marriage. But, should he be found without that righteousness, then for him there is no place at the marriage at all but only a casting out into everlasting darkness and destruction.

This is the clear-cut standard and requirement of the judgment. And in view of the simple fact that God has clearly and plainly said, and proved, that His holy law can be fully and perfectly kept by all created beings, even by those in weakened sinful flesh, then He is not asking for the impossible when He expects to find us in the wedding garment of perfect righteousness.

And in the light of the great controversy, God must, to be consistent with Himself, maintain that entrance requirement of perfect righteousness on the part of the candidate himself. If God was in the least degree to lower that standard, then to that same degree He would be admitting that Satan was right. He would be recognizing Satan's charge that the law is too hard for created beings to keep and to obey. If the law is too hard to keep, then if anyone is to enter heaven, to whatever extent the law is too hard, to that extent must the standard of admission be lowered. So, any lowering of that standard on God's part is immediately an admission by God that the law cannot be kept.

But God does not need to make any such concessions to Satan. The law can be obeyed to perfection and that then remains as the one and only possible standard of the judgment.

Dear Reader, whether you care for the thought or not, you and I are to face that judgment and your and my eternal destiny is to be decided by that tribunal. Therefore today, while it is called today, is given the opportunity for you and for me to learn righteousness so that when the King comes in to examine you and me we will be found fully and perfectly clothed in that wedding garment, a spotless life of living righteousness.

Thus far we have been studying the standard that is possible and the standard that God expects. With this clear in our minds. we are ready

for the next part of our study, namely HOW to lay hold of and maintain a living experience of victory over every known unrighteousness, every day.

Thus far in our study we have been concerned with the fact that the law of God can be kept and that therefore in the judgment only those who are actually keeping it will be found in the kingdom. We have made no attempt up to this point to deal with the way in which that obedience is to be achieved. Our plan is to take the whole question of living righteously step by step in a logical order with the intention of solving one problem at the time and of establishing each phase of the truth in its own turn.

Before we can approach the problem of how to obey the law we must first have the clear cut knowledge and confidence that it can be done anyway. It would be foolish to even try to seek out a way to do something that God had declared could not be done at all. But as we have seen, the God of heaven has said that the law can be obeyed to perfection by every one of us anywhere at any time, and therefore it is very essential indeed that we search till we do find the way to obey. Our eternal life depends on it.

So we turn to this vital aspect of the question and we will seek to spell it out in such clear, simple and practical terms that none need to fail in the understanding and the vital experiencing of it.

Referring again to the study in the last chapter, we have before us the truth that the judgment will demand that we be living lives of perfect obedience to that law. We today are living in the very time when the urgent warning of the present hour of the judgment is before us with the call to hasten in the work of urgent preparation to face that judgment. This present call in this very hour, is described in prophecy:

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.” *Revelation 14:6,7*

A message of worldwide extent and tremendous urgency is here presented. The angel is spoken of as *flying*, a clear picture of speed and urgency, and he speaks with a *loud voice* indicating the authority and the power of the message. Such a message is one of most serious

importance, involving the life and death matter of every soul's eternal salvation and welfare. As this message is presented in the power of the Spirit of God, the soul trembles as he sees himself before that awful tribunal in which his life is to be examined as if there were not another being upon the face of all the earth. And then comes the very natural and proper question, "How! Oh *how* can I be ready to face that test, that searching examination?"

And right in the message itself is to be found the answer. The angel who brings the warning comes bearing the solution. Notice that it says that he flies directly overhead *with an eternal gospel*. Why does he come with an eternal gospel? He brings that because it is the only means in the wide world whereby a soul can be saved from sin and prepared for the judgment. It is typical of the love and mercy of God that He should state for us in His Word even before the message of the angel is announced, that this angel with these solemn tidings comes with an eternal gospel, the very solution to the problem.

And what is this "eternal gospel?" The apostle Paul presents us with the perfect definition of what the gospel is. He says:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God
for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also
to the Greek. *Romans 1:16*

Think of all the things that he could have described the gospel as being: a doctrine, a creed, a theory, an argument, a theology, a teaching. But he chose none of these by which to describe that gospel. Said he, "It is POWER!" He lifted the gospel clear out of the realm of theory into the realm of living things. It is POWER. It is that which can be applied to a problem, in this case the specific problem of sin and be able to move, to shift, to sweep away before it the actual problem itself and to replace it with a new and a living experience.

Nor did Paul stop by describing it as power only. There are many forms of power in existence and Paul was careful to specify the actual power itself that the gospel is. It is the power of God. This is the greatest power there is in existence. This power is so infinite and so great that it is beyond the scope of the human mind to assess it or to understand and measure it. We see it revealed in the mighty works of creation and if it were possible for us to understand and to measure the power it required to hang those worlds in space and to maintain them there, then we would *begin* to understand the measure of the power of God. In a word,

that power is *infinite*, which means that it is *limitless*. Bring it to the greatest possible problem that needs to be solved and in the power of God there is all the power that is needed to solve that problem, and then an *infinity* in reserve beyond that. That is the power of God and that is the power of the gospel, for the gospel is the power of God.



That very same mighty, creative power
by which the Lord called the world into existence,
is the power brought in to save us from sin.

That is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel is the living, infinite power of a living God by which He created all things. That power is now brought face to face with the sin problem. For we are plainly told that the “gospel...is the power of God *for salvation*.” To have salvation is to be saved, and if saved, then the question arises as to what we are to be saved from?

Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins. Matthew 1:21

Therefore it follows that the full sense and meaning of the verse in *Romans 1:16* is that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation *from sin*. Therefore it is written:

You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 1 John 3:5

There is no question but that sin is a power. This should be apparent to anyone who has struggled against that power and learned how firmly

it holds them in its grasp. It is a power, and no small power either. It is a great power, far greater than the power of the human will. If sin was not a power, then it would not require the *power* of God to solve the sin problem.

It is a simple law of nature and of science that when two powers come into combat, then the lesser power is always overcome by the greater power. The greater the difference in the power, then the more signal and absolute is the victory of the greater power. Now a lesser power might overcome a greater power by strategy and cunning, but inasmuch as the knowledge, wisdom and intelligence of the power of God is as infinite as the power itself, then it is impossible for the power of sin to outwit God.

Therefore it follows that where the power of God has come in, then the power of sin has been driven out, for the power of sin cannot stand before the power of God. The two cannot dwell together for they are deadly enemies and there can never be any treaty or truce between them. Light and darkness can never dwell together. If you have the one then you do not have the other. And just so truly as light is the more powerful of the two so is the power of God greater than the power of sin, for only the absence of light permits darkness to reign. The moment light is brought in, the darkness disappears and is gone.

Let us look again at our profession of Christianity, our claim that we have the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we have the gospel, then we have the power of God. And if we have that power then we are no longer under the dominion of sin. The power of sin will have been broken and driven clear out from our lives. Darkness cannot remain in the presence of light, and so sin can no more remain where the power of God is.

The angel flying in the midst of heaven as described in *Revelation 14:6*, has an eternal gospel. Therefore he comes having the power of God. It does not merely say that he comes *preaching* an eternal gospel, but that he comes *with* it; it is a part of him.

This angel is a symbol of a people or of a movement, and what the angel is said to have, the people he symbolizes will have—the same gospel, the same living power of God. Therefore the angel represents a people in whose lives the power of sin will be broken.

We are living today in the time when that angel is going forth, but where is such a people to be found? Certainly they are there, though in obscurity and fewness of numbers. These are the ones who know by

experience the power of the gospel to save them from sin. But are we among that class? Let us test ourselves.

When we sin, we go to the Lord and repent and confess that sin. Afterwards, do we find ourselves committing that particular sin over and over again? Do we find that our experience is one of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting continually?

Certainly we can point to the fact that we have put away many of the gross and open sins. We no longer steal; we commit no murder; we attend the preaching of the gospel every Sabbath day and to all outward appearances we are good respectable Christians.

But we know that all is not right in our hearts. There are those many things over which we have not gained the victory. There is that impatience when things do not go right; there is that rising tide of resentment when things are done that hurt our pride; there are those lustful thoughts and evil desires and unholy ambitions.

And despite the fact that we have determined we *will* have the victory over these things, and have no more to do with them; despite the earnest prayers and efforts we have put forth; despite the fact we have cried for pardon and the help of God again and again, we have found ourselves sinning and repenting over and over. Exactly the same sins which were the major problem in the life ten years ago are still there.

Is this salvation from sin?

Again and again have I asked this question to audiences around the world and never yet has anybody been prepared to say that it is. All agree that this is *not* salvation from sin.

Therefore we must conclude that many of us have been resting on a false hope, for if this experience is not salvation from sin *then it is not salvation either*. And if we think this through to its ultimate and inescapable conclusion, it means that we do not even have the gospel. If sin is still present in the life then it means that the power of God is not there, for sin cannot remain once the power of God comes in. And if we do not have the power of God then we do not have the gospel, for the gospel is the power of God. To have the one is to have the other.

It is most important that we come face to face with the facts of the case as they are, for there will be all too many that will come to the last days and then see too late that they have been leaning upon a false

hope. Jesus plainly warned us of this:



How sad it is that so many of God's professed children know nothing of the power of God to save from sin, and accept a life of sinning and repenting as Christian experience.

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness." *Matthew 7:21-23*

Let us ever bear in mind that the message to the Laodiceans in *Revelation 3* is to a people who are wretched and poor and blind and naked *but do not know it*. And while they do not know it then they will go on being wretched and poor and blind and naked, and will do nothing to reach out for the solution of the problem. The very first essential experience for us is a realization of our own personal destitution and need. The Lord can do nothing further for us until this is

understood and recognized.

A true sense of our lost condition may come as a very unpleasant awakening, yet it is important not to try and ignore the fact of the case but face it squarely in the realization that the Lord has the whole solution to the problem. We can have the gospel for ourselves, and it is the power of God unto salvation from sin to every one who believes.

For years we have been vainly trying to keep the law of God, but we have to face the fact that we have failed in our efforts and for the most part our service to God has degenerated into a form. There is no question about the sincerity of those efforts. We have not lacked knowledge of what is right, nor the will to obey. But the failure has been caused by a lack of knowing *HOW* to do that which is right. But now, when the end of all things is at hand, the message for this time is:

Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. *1 Corinthians 15:34*

The purpose of this chapter has been to awaken us to a realization that unless we have the *power* of sin broken, then we do not have the power of God and therefore do not have the gospel, or salvation. This is a vital first step in the way of obtaining the victory over sin.

In the next chapter we will set out the next steps in the way of gaining as a personal possession the living power of a living gospel to break and dispel the power of sin in the life and open the door to a new experience of peace and freedom.

In the last chapter we learned that to have the gospel is to have the power of God, and the evidence that we have that power is found in the fact that the power of sin has been broken in our lives. We saw that a sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing experience over the same besetting sins is sure evidence that the power of sin rules in the life, and that therefore, we just do not have the power of God in the life, and thus as surely, do not have the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is indeed a very bad situation to be in. If, while in this situation we realized that it was not the experience of salvation, then it would not be so serious. But so many people, while in this very situation, think that they have salvation. This is a fatal delusion.

The power of the gospel of Jesus Christ can be experienced in the life to the putting away of all known sin this very day, but not one of us can know that power unless we first know our own condition and need.

As the One who above all others desires our salvation, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is working daily to bring us to such a realization of *our* lost condition. He works to have us see that the experience of sinning and confessing is not the experience of one who has the living power of the living God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He works to have us see that, if that is our experience, then we are not one of His, and unless we gain a very different and entirely victorious experience, then we will never find a place in the kingdom of heaven. It is this question that will determine our eternal standing with the Lord, not the question of our faithfulness to the church or to a creed or such.

There need be no mistake nor misunderstanding in regard to this question. Jesus Himself stated the truth of it in these words:

No one can serve two masters. *Matthew 6:24*

We may argue that we have made our decision for Christ and are faithful members of the church of God in the world today, and that therefore, we are serving God and therefore we are not serving the devil. But that is only a superficial view of this verse. The full truth of it is revealed in the book of Peter:

For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. *2 Peter 2:19*

If you, as a professing Christian, are committing known sin, not because you do it willingly, habitually or intentionally, but because you are being overcome by the power of sin, then you are the servant of that power which has overcome you. Therefore, you are serving that power and not God. You may think that you are serving God, but the Word of God makes it plain that if you are serving another master then you cannot be serving God. You cannot serve two masters, only one. Either you belong to the Lord or to the devil. Jesus said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. *John 8:34*

The very fact that you are committing sin is the plain proof as to who is the master in your life, and as to whom you are serving.

How many will come to the great judgment day calm in the assurance that they are the children of God because of the mental attitude of acceptance to the form and the teaching of the truth, but without a living experience of the living power of God to save them from sin. All during their professed Christian life they have been sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing over the same sins year after year. Slaves to the power of sin, they serve another master and when they come to the judgment, they will say:

Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?

But what will Jesus reply to them?

I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.
Matthew 7:22,23

That revelation will come to such when it is forever too late. How much better that they had allowed the Lord Jesus by His Spirit to bring that revelation to them when something could have been done about it to have saved them. There will be no excuse in that day for not having understood this vital truth. There is abundant evidence in the Word of God to alert everyone to his great need.

But right here is a problem. Human nature is very reluctant to accept such a revelation about themselves. In fact human nature positively resists such a truth. It may well be that as you read these very words your whole being rises up to reject such a thought. If it does then do not be surprised but be very careful not to allow your human nature to gain

the better of reason and the evidence of the word. Such a revelation is essential to your souls salvation and no matter how much you may wish and desire another way to heaven, the fact is that there is no other way.

So then settle it in your minds that this is the way, and pray the Lord to give to you the grace and the power to face all that the cost entails and to walk that way even though it is the way of the very death of ourselves. For it is the very truth of the Living God that we must die in order to live.

While we have it, the old life may seem so precious and desirable, but how much more precious and desirable is the life of victory which is eternal life indeed. Be prepared to let the old life go until there is nothing of it left at all so that the Lord can fill the vacuum with His own precious life.

That Life and the power of it can be had. God wills that each one of us should have it, and He is working with all the powers of heaven to bring us to the place where we can receive it.

But it will be ours only if we are prepared to give all to receive it. Remember the man who gained the pearl of great price was the man who sent and sold all that he had to obtain it. So it must be if we would gain the true and living Pearl of Great Price.

Therefore, let us not be discouraged. If we have come to the place where we recognize that we are lost and undone, then that is the best thing that could ever happen to us! Not until we realize that we are in that condition can the Lord help us.

Now let us turn to the practical steps of *how* to enter into that experience. The first of those steps have been dealt with above which is recognizing that we do not have that righteousness and that we are therefore, in a lost and undone state. The next step then is to understand the nature of the problem which we face. Since slavery to sin is the problem, we need to ask, “What is sin?”

Whenever I ask this question in public, the answer is usually this verse:

Sin is lawlessness. *1 John 3:4*

Sin is lawlessness, or the “transgression of the law”, as some Bible versions render it. This answer is wholly right but only if understood in all its bearings. Usually, people only think of sin in terms of actions: a

failure to do what is right, or an actual performance of a wrong deed or thought. Under this definition, sin is an *action* of wrong-doing.

We know that every action of wrong-doing incurs guilt, and that only the pardon of God can free us from that. So we have before us the simple *definition* of sin as being *ACTION*, the result of which is a *condition* of *GUILT* and for which the divine *remedy* is *PARDON*.

ACTIONS → GUILT → PARDON

But this definition does not go deep enough to provide the solution to the problem. So we turn elsewhere in the Scriptures so that the full meaning of *1 John 3:4* will become apparent. There is far more implied in that text than the physical action of wrong-doing. As Scripture is given to illuminate other Scripture, let us turn to it:

Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. *John 8:34*

If the sinner is a slave to sin, then what must sin be? The answer is obvious. Sin must be the master, the slave-master. The committing of the actions of sin are but the outworking, or the fruit, of a deeper and underlying cause. Naturally the actions of sin are those which are the more easily and plainly seen, but behind those actions are the real cause: the sin-master. It might just as truthfully be stated in these terms: “Everyone who is a slave to sin commits sin.”

Therefore it is not *what we do* that is the basic problem, but it is *what we are*. Because we are slaves, we will do what the master commands us to do, namely the actions of sin. This same truth Jesus stated elsewhere when He said:

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. *Luke 6:43-44*

Jesus refers us to a law of nature that is fixed and reliable and cannot be broken. In fact, there is not a single instance in the whole history of the world when this law has ever been broken. It stands inviolate and unbreakable. Never has a thorn bush produced a crop of figs, nor has a bramble bush produced grapes. If you wish to have figs then you must *first* have a fig tree, and if you wish to have grapes then you must *first* have a grape vine. A tree must *first* be a good tree *before* it can produce good fruit. The very same principle which operates in the natural world also operates in the spiritual world.



Only good trees can bring forth good fruit, so only good men can bring forth good deeds. The kind of person that *you are* will determine the kind of deeds that *you will do*. A man must *first* be good *before* he can do good.

Inasmuch as every one of us was born evil, and as such cannot bring forth the fruits of righteousness, then it follows that men must first of all be *made* righteous before they can obey the truth and the law of God. Look and see how clearly this is expressed in the words of Jesus:

The *good* person out of the good treasure of his heart produces *good*, and the *evil* person out of his evil treasure produces *evil*, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. *Luke 6:45*

This takes us down to the basic root of sin and reveals to us what the real problem is. We now have a definition of sin as being a *MASTER*, a resulting *condition* of *BONDAGE*, and the divine *remedy* is *DELIVERANCE*.

MASTER → BONDAGE → DELIVERANCE

But why do we pursue this question, “What is sin?” so earnestly and perseveringly? Why is it so important that we find the answer to that

question? Here is the reason. We know that it is a law of grace that we receive only that which we *ask* for by faith:

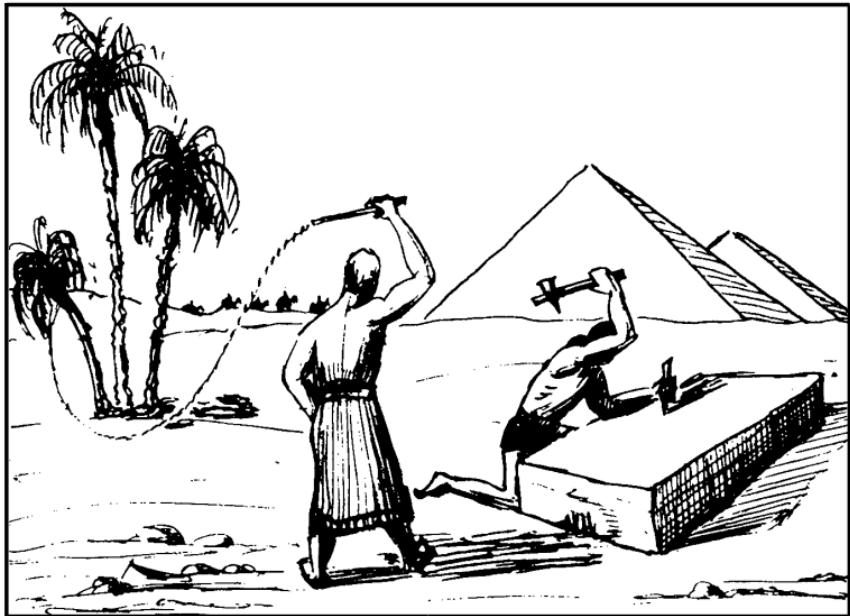
For everyone who asks receives. *Matthew 7:8*

Thus only those who ask for deliverance from the power of sin will ever receive it. The knowledge and the understanding of what sin is, is essential to our taking those steps which will bring us the blessing of salvation from sin and its consequences. Only those who ask for deliverance will ever receive it, and no one is going to ask for that except he understands that he is in bondage, and none will ever understand that they are in bondage except they understand the existence and role of the sin-master.

Therefore the understanding of the question before us is vitally important, and doubly so when it is realized that it has not been generally understood that the real problem which has faced us is not the actions of sin, but the root of sin itself. Thus we have been praying for pardon and the assisting grace of God to deal with the actions of sin and, knowing no deliverance at all. The root has remained and has continued to send forth a stream of sin. The only possible outcome for such a situation is an experience of sinning and then of confessing, over and over again. And so it must and will continue to be until the wretched root of the problem is finally dealt with or, if never dealt with, we will die in our sins and be lost.

The importance of understanding the real nature of our problem cannot be over stressed. In the Word of God, both by teaching and illustration, this lesson is repeatedly taught. Let us turn in the remaining columns of this chapter to study one such illustration, so that the force of this truth may become the plainer to our minds. It is found in the experience of the children of Israel as they were captives in the land of Egypt.

Let us consider the story and the situation together. There is the Israelite working day by day on the task of building the cities of Egypt. But who were these people? They were the children of Abraham, the professed people of God. They knew the law and were the only living people on the earth that the Lord could look to as being His own. But as they worked day by day giving all of their time, their talents and their energies to the task, whose kingdom were they building up? They were building up the kingdom of Satan in this world. Certainly one may truthfully say, the kingdom of Egypt, but the kingdom of Egypt was but



the kingdom of Satan, and to build up the one was but to build up the other.

Here indeed is a curious situation,—the professed people of God were completely devoted to the task of building up the kingdom of the very worst enemy of that kingdom. Why did they do it? Was it because it was pleasant work? Was it because the pay was good? It was neither, for the work was hard and thankless under the relentless and unpitying heat of the Egyptian sun.

Not only was the work arduous and unpleasant, but those people knew in their hearts and minds that they had no business to be there doing that kind of work. They, of all people were the very last on the face of the earth who should have been found in that place doing that kind of work. It was an *unwilling* service which they rendered.

The people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.
Exodus 2:23

Like the man in *Romans 7* they could say:

For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
Romans 7:15

Why then did they do it? They did what they did because of *what they were*. They were slaves, slaves to cruel task-masters who stood over them every day with terrible whips in their hands, and the poor slave did not dare but to obey the dictates of that slave-master. He was powerless to do otherwise. That which he did, he *knew* to be wrong, the very things he wished to do he could not do, while that which he hated the most, was the very thing that he did.

It would be impossible to give a better illustration of a professed child of God under the tyranny of the sin-master. There is the whole situation portrayed to perfection. The more one studies the experience in Egypt, the better one sees the problem of the *unwilling* sinner who knows the law and longs to keep it but is still under the power of the sin-master.

Now it is obvious that the man in Egypt could never have solved his problem by trying to deal with the actions that he was committing in the building of the kingdom of Satan. The only possible solution for him was to have the power of the sin-master broken. When and only when that was removed could he be free to serve the Living God as he knew that he should and must.

And that is the vital point that this chapter is intended to teach and to make very plain. It is the point that we must come to, to know the real cause and root of our problem, and then have the Lord deal with that, for just as truly as the physical slavery of the Israelite ended with the breaking of the power of Egypt, so the spiritual slavery of the professed child of God will end with the breaking of the power of the sin-master.

There was but one power to which the Israelites could look in order to gain the solution to their problem. They had no power in themselves wherewith to overthrow the power of the might of Egypt, which was then the undisputed ruler of the whole world. They could find no help in the nations around then such as the Canaanites, the Hittites and the Philistines. Culture, discipline, education and training were all of no avail. In other words there was nothing on the face of the whole earth that could even begin to save them from that situation. Only the God of heaven had the power to save them from that bondage, and bring them into a land of freedom.

In exactly the same way there is no help for us apart from the direct power of God. Education, culture and discipline are powerless to save us

here. There is nothing in the whole world to which we can look as the solution to our problem. There is nothing in the hand of man that can do it anymore than it is in the power of man to have a thorn bush produce apples or to transform a wolf into a lamb. The delivering of a man from the power of sin is nothing less of a miracle than the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, and only the power of God can do it.

Sin is lawlessness. *1 John 3:4*

In this text lies the truth that sin is more than just what you do, it is what you are. When truly understood, lawlessness is a state of being, it is a position, much more than it is an action. Only those in whom the very principles of righteousness are enthroned, those in whom the power of God resides, only those are within the limits laid down by the law and the life of God. All others have stepped out of harmony, have crossed over the limitations laid down and thus are in another camp. And being in the other camp involves a state of being. It means that one has stepped out of one state of being, namely a state of righteousness, or lawfulness, into another state of being, namely of unrighteousness, or lawlessness. The making of such a change then is sin. Therefore sin as a state of being, as a description of what you are, is indeed and in very fact, lawlessness.

Back in Egypt, the slave-master was easily seen, and his role clearly recognized and understood, but the spiritual sin-master is by no means as easily discerned and understood. He is hidden away in the flesh where he resides and his presence is hard to detect.

In the Bible the sin-master is described in a number of ways so as the better to reveal to us the character of this power and thus better enable us to understand how it works and how it is to be dealt with.

- In *Ezekiel 36:26*, it is described as “the heart of stone”
- In *Romans 6:6* it is “the body of sin”
- In *Romans 7:1-5*, it is revealed to be the fruit from the marriage to the old husband
- In *Romans 8:7* it is “the mind that is set on the flesh”
- In the Bible, disease, especially paralysis and leprosy, are used to illustrate the nature of this power in the man.

By all these names and illustrations we are made aware of the real cause of our difficulty. Whatever name it is called by it is speaking of

the inner evil power in the individual which responds so easily and readily to the appeal of the devil. It is a living enmity to the law of God to which it will never be subject for the very simple reason that by its very nature it never can be.

This is the real sin. The actions of sin are but the fruit or the outworking of this basic problem. They are the fruit. Here is the root.

The solution to the problem does not lie in attempting to set the actions of sin right, but in setting the cause of the actions right. The time has come for us to cease the focusing of the attention on the actions of sin apparent and easily seen as they are, and instead, to make the sinfulness itself the cause of our concern and of our confession.

The actions of sin are an indication to us of the kind of person that we are within. Just as thorns on the thorn bush indicate to us the kind of tree it is, and that it is the type that merits only destruction, so let the actions of sin reveal to us what are and show us that which merits only destruction. Then we are to learn how to come to the Lord and have Him deal with this thing so conclusively that the problem is fully solved.

Before, however, we turn to the way in which this is to be achieved, we need to study the problem a little further from the seventh chapter of *Romans*, for the problem of the man under bondage to sin is more clearly dealt with in this chapter than anywhere else.

Paul outlines and discusses the problem of bondage to sin two times in *Romans 7*. First of all with the illustration of the woman and the two husbands and then of a slave in the grip of sin. For this chapter of our study we shall devote ourselves to the consideration of the second part. Paul describes his experience at the time when he was not conscious of the deep spiritual claims of the Law upon his life:

I was alive without the law once. *Romans 7:9*

That is to say, he lived his life without reference to the commandments of God and as such he was a *willing sinner*.

Those who are “alive without the law” include two classes of people. First, it includes all those in the world who have never come face to face with the message of righteousness and live their lives wholly without it. Secondly it also includes those in the churches who know the law only as a legal document. The more zealous of these strive continually to produce perfect obedience to that law, and are successful in bringing forth an outward conformity to its requirements, which they regard with pride and assurance as being acceptable to God, but this is not so. Such “righteousness” is their own and it is altogether filthy rags.

This makes very plain the vital truth that one can know all the letter of the law, and can give the most exacting observance to its requirements outwardly, without knowing the law of God at all. The testimony of Paul himself proves this. In describing himself during the very period when he lived without the law, Paul said:

According to the *strictest party* of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. *Acts 26:5*

As to zeal, a persecutor of the church; *as to righteousness, under the law blameless. Philippians 3:6*

In such a position as that, he was well versed in all the law of God as revealed in the Old Testament. There were vast portions of the Scriptures which he had committed to memory. He was a most careful observer of the Sabbath of the law, and an intensely zealous worker for the Jewish church. His life was filled with the busiest of religious activity. Those looking on would share with him the conviction that if anyone was a child of God then he certainly was,— if anyone was

keeping the law, it was he.

But when his eyes were opened and he saw the law of God in its spiritual depth and beauty, then he looked back on that time and declared that he was so far off in his understanding of what the law was, that he lived without it altogether. To some this may be difficult to understand. To the legalistic mind that sees only the stern letter of the law and has spent his lifetime bending every energy to keep every particular of that law blameless, it is well nigh impossible to understand.

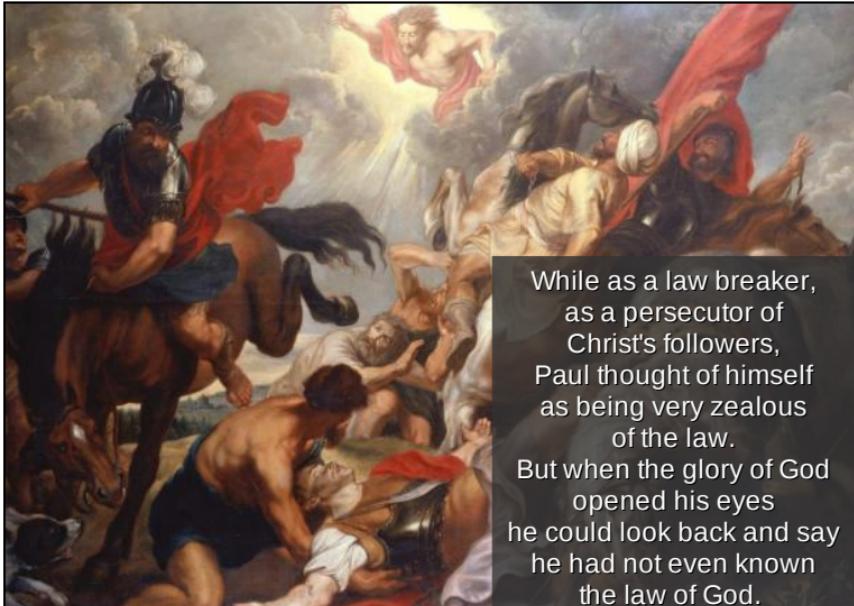
How could it be that one so well versed in every particular of that law could say that he did not have the law at all? It was because the law is a great reflection of the wonderful love and character of God and as such can only be seen and understood by the mind which has been illuminated by the Holy Spirit. The legalist knows only a narrow and restrictive code, the following of which places him in abject bondage. The spiritually minded man sees, along with the apostle Paul, something higher and grander, a wonderful principle that sets the soul free from bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. So it was that when Paul's eyes had been opened, he looked back on that period in his life, and declared that he had lived *without* the law.

It was a sobering, and frightening realization indeed to find that what he thought was salvation was not at all. Instead it was equivalent to completely living without the law as if he had never so much as heard it. And to every reader of these words this truth must come as a cause for the most sober and serious reflection upon our spiritual state and station lest we be like Paul, and while priding ourselves that we have the righteousness of Christ, that we are zealous workers in the cause of the Master, we are yet so far from the righteousness which is of faith that it is as if we had never so much as known the law and are living thus as "willing sinners."

Ponder the message of warning to the Laodiceans who *think* that they are rich and increased with goods, *and do not know* that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, and reflect seriously upon the deadly peril of being so self-deceived.

The Lord keeps a faithful watch over every soul, and to all and for all He will work His divine work of grace if they will but give to Him the opportunity. His first work must be to bring us to a conviction of our real condition, and to do this the law must be brought to us in its

spiritual beauty and power. That is the cure for spiritual complacency and self-satisfaction.



While as a law breaker,
as a persecutor of
Christ's followers,
Paul thought of himself
as being very zealous
of the law.
But when the glory of God
opened his eyes
he could look back and say
he had not even known
the law of God.

I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. *Romans 7:9*

It is true that spiritual things are only understood by those who are spiritual, and that the natural person does not understand the things of the Spirit of God. But the Lord is able to bring enough of the Spirit's illumination to the soul as to enable it to see the true nature and force of the law. If the natural heart refuses to receive this convicting revelation, then there is nothing more the Lord can do for that soul, but if it is received, then the mind is opened to receive spiritual truth.

This is the eyesalve offered to the Laodiceans so that they might see the true condition and nature of their lost state. It is the gift of God through the ministry of the Spirit that is so necessary; without it, no one would ever be brought to the place where they would be prepared to go on to salvation.

We may have flattered ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our life has been upright, that our moral character is correct, and think that we need not humble the heart before God, like the common sinner: but when the light from Christ shines into our

souls, we shall see how impure we are: we shall discern the selfishness of motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. Then we shall know that our own righteousness is indeed as filthy rags, and that the blood of Christ alone can cleanse us from the defilement of sin, and renew our hearts in His own likeness.

One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ. *Steps to Christ*, 28,29

These are the first steps to Christ. The first step is a knowledge of the law of God not as a mere legal document, but as a convicting power. At this stage Paul had that knowledge, for he says:

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good...For we know that the law is spiritual. *Romans 7:12,14*

As a person sees himself as he really is, such a knowledge will always bring a very deep conviction of sin. Such conviction if not resisted will lead to genuine repentance.

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it.
Steps to Christ, 23

True repentance is distinguished from the false repentance of Esau, Balaam, Achan and Judas who did not hate their sin, but only the consequences of it when they saw that they were going to reap the result of their course. True repentance means that we hate the sin itself because *it is sin*, just as we hate filth because it is filth. That there is an experience of true repentance in this chapter is evident from the confession of Paul:

I do the very thing I hate. *Romans 7:15*

Here is a genuine hatred of sin and with it a very definite effort to turn away from it as well. He had not yet learned the one true and successful way to put away the sin from him, but he was turning away from it with all the power and the will that he knew. In fact so great

was his effort and determination that he was all but beside himself.

I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. *Romans 7:14,15,18*

A definite number of steps have been taken toward Christ:

Knowledge,
Conviction,
Repentance,
Confession,
and an obvious Decision to walk with the Lord.

But while these are definite steps *to* Christ, they are not yet steps *with* Christ. Before we truly and fully walk with Christ there must be an acting upon the decision and an intelligent consecration. There is one right way, and many wrong ways of approaching God. Unless we know the right way we shall search and seek in vain until that right way is discovered.

Here in the seventh chapter of *Romans*, Paul had just about everything that he needed:

a knowledge of the law
a deep hatred of sin
a recognition of his own desperate condition of sinfulness
a firm decision to serve the Lord
a putting forth of the utmost effort to do that

But lacking the knowledge of God's way of righteousness, he could still only confess that he was "of the flesh, sold under sin."

For *I have the desire* to do what is right, but *not the ability* to carry it out. *Romans 7:18*

So, while Paul had all of that, he still had a further step to take before he could find the peace and the rest of God. He had taken certain essential steps to Christ, but he had not yet taken any steps *with* Christ, and *how* to take that next step was the great perplexity of his life.

It is very evident that Paul thinks of man as consisting of three different aspects of his nature. He refers to all three in the course of his teaching in these chapters, and they are as follows:

Physical Body

First there is the physical body which is the instrument by which the actions of sin are carried out:

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. *Romans* 6:13

Intellectual Mind

The second aspect of the human make-up is the intellectual mind. Here is the kingly power of reason and the power to learn, to think, to choose and to make decisions. It is possible to have learned some very high ideals and aspirations in this realm of human nature but which man lacks the power to achieve. This brings to light the fact that it is not those who hold up the highest ideals and standards that have the true religion, but those who not only hold aloft those standards but teach *how* to reach them.

All the great men of ancient times such as Plato and Marcus Aurelius taught high standards of morality and virtue, but what they lacked was the power to live what they taught as being right. This very precisely is the problem of the man of *Romans* seven. He *knows* what is right and he *desires* to do what is right, has even set his will to do the right but he finds that he cannot.

Spiritual Nature

And the main trouble lies in that third aspect of the nature of man. In the Bible this aspect has a whole list of descriptive names:

“...the mind that is set on the flesh.” *Romans* 8:7 (or “...the carnal mind” *King James Version*)

“...our old self.” *Romans* 6:6

“...the heart of stone.” *Ezekiel* 36:26

“...the diseased tree.” *Matthew* 7:17

See how Paul distinguishes between the intellectual aspirations of the man and the contrary bent of this inner nature:

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members *another law waging war against* the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. *Romans* 7:22,23

There are two forces at work in the man of *Romans* seven. One force is in complete harmony with the will of God and takes only delight in

the law of God. The whole bent and intention of this aspect of the man is to serve the living God with whole and undivided devotion. But, “waging war against” that, is the law of sin *in* the members. Without a shadow of doubt the latter is the stronger of the two powers because the result of this warfare is that “the law of sin” brings the whole man into captivity against the will of the intellectual mind, which is of course the will of the man. The will of the mind is constantly being defeated by this inner power.

THE THREE ASPECTS OF THE HUMAN BEING

BODY

The Instrument
by and through
which the actions
of sin are performed.
See Rom. 6:13

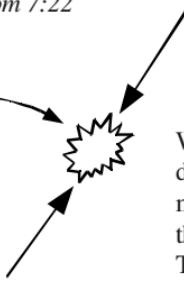
INTELLECTUAL MIND

The area of:
1. Learning,
2. Choice,
3. The will,
4. Reasoning
See Rom 7:22

CHARACTER

The cultivated
hereditary ten-
dencies to sin.
This is the law
of sin in the flesh.
See Rom. 7:23

Having become converted in
mind to the claims of God,
the choice is made to serve Him,
and the will is set to obey God;
but in so doing it meets the
greater power of the carnal nature
working in the opposite direction,
and thus experiences defeat every time.



When two
determined forces
meet in opposition,
there is a war.
Thus this man
knows no peace.

Now let us pause to note the difference between the man who is passing through the experience described in *Romans* seven, and the man he was before he entered into that experience.

Previously it was said that the life was lived without the law. This is to say that at this time he was a willing sinner. He was content to go on sinning and had no conscience about it or, worse still, believed himself to be very much a Christian. This is the state of the Pharisee in the synagogue who lifted up his head and thanked the Lord that he was a righteous man, and it is the exact state of the Laodicean who thinks that he is rich and increased with goods and has need of nothing, but does not know that he is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and

naked. And not knowing anything of his great destitution, he is content to go on as he is to the end of his life. He is indeed a *willing* sinner.

But the man of *Romans* seven has a knowledge of the law, a conviction of his sinfulness and need, a living hatred of the sin that so easily besets him and is making an effort to turn away from it. He has made a confession of his condition and states his delight in the law of God and has set his will to obey it.

Intellectually he is persuaded of the rightness of the truth of God and therefore has an *intellectual* conversion. And this is followed by a very extensive compliance with the requirements of the law so far as the outward act is concerned. He acquires church membership, is a faithful worker for the cause, never fails to pay his tithe and his offerings, and to all outward appearances he is as good as the next man and has a very fine reputation of respectability and decency.

So he has gained much. But,—*he is a sinner still*. While previously he was a *willing* sinner now he is an *un-willing* sinner, but, let it be repeated, *a sinner still*.

There have been some changes, it is true, but the change has gone no further than the reasoning part of the mind. There has not been a change in the spiritual nature of the man which, being the root of the trouble, must be changed before the man can begin to produce the genuine fruits of righteousness.

If we have understood the picture that Paul is seeking to draw in this chapter, it will be recognized that this is the description of the experience of the average church member of today.

I sat one day in the office of a man who was a high official of a large church. He had been the leading elder of that church for many, many years and enjoyed a good reputation among his fellows, but he confessed with dismal sadness that the picture of defeat in *Romans* seven was an exact picture of his life. And what is true of that man is true of the majority of others. Just read *Romans* seven to the average church member and ask the question, “Is that your experience?” and they will indicate that it is surely enough.

This raises a very serious and important question: Should any man in the spiritual condition described in *Romans* seven come to the end of his life’s probation while still in that condition, would he come up with the righteous on the resurrection morning? To this question some people unhesitatingly answer, Yes! Others as quickly answer No! while

others are undecided. We will let the Bible answer for itself. In the last verses of *Romans* seven Paul cries out in desperation:

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? *Romans* 7:24

He is praying for *deliverance*, to be set free, to be emancipated. This is the cry of one who is not free, of one who is in bondage. In response to his cry he is given the gift of freedom, as is evident from his prayer of gratitude immediately following:

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! *Romans* 7:25

The opening words of *Romans* eight introduce a contrast, a new state of things:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. *Romans* 8:1

If there is no condemnation now that he is set free what must there have been before he was set free? The obvious answer is that there must still have been condemnation. The man who is under bondage to sin is under condemnation, while the man that is free is not under condemnation.

If we want to know whether the man in *Romans* seven is free from condemnation, we only have to ask, “what is his position? Free or bound?” There is no question about the answer. The whole testimony of the chapter is that he is in bondage.

I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. *Romans* 7:14,15

This is not the language of the man who is free. It is the language of the man who is in bondage and cannot do the very things he wishes to do, and which he could do if he were free. He is not free from the bondage of the law of sin and death, and therefore must be under condemnation.

“Condemnation” is a legal term, of which the opposite is “justification.” No condemnation means justification. Therefore, where there is condemnation there is most certainly no justification. Inasmuch as the man of *Romans* seven is under condemnation then as surely he has no justification. Reason as one might, the plain facts of the case stand thus.

So then the man in *Romans* seven is in bondage, stands under

condemnation still, and so does not have the wonderful gift and blessing of justification. Justification is our entrance title to heaven. The unjustified will never walk there.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. *Romans* 5:1,2

The man in *Romans* seven does not even have the title to heaven. Unjustified, he is therefore unsaved. Should he die while still undelivered from this experience then he would perish eternally. The Word of the Living God makes this very plain indeed. But the Bible has more to say on this matter:

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.
1 John 5:4

This is but to say that everyone who is not born of God is overcome by the world. To determine as to whether the man of *Romans* seven is born again or not, all that we have to do then is to ask the question, "Is he overcoming the world or is he being overcome by the world?" And the answer is as plain as it could be that he is being overcome by the world *and therefore is not born again*. Jesus forever made it clear that if a man is not born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. *John* 3:3

So again the Bible has made it plain that the man in *Romans* seven is not prepared for the resurrection of the just. Nowhere better is this described than in the following paragraphs:

How many people have in their experience proved the truth of these Scriptures. How many have resolved and resolved again and yet their sincerest resolutions have proved in the face of temptation as weak as water. They had no might and they did not know what to do, and unfortunately their eyes were not upon God so much as upon themselves and the enemy. Their experience was one of constant struggle against sin it is true, but a constant defeat as well.

Call you this a true Christian experience? There are some who imagine that it is. Why then did the apostle in the anguish of his soul cry out "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Romans* 7:24. Is a true

Christian experiencing a body of death so terrible that the soul is constrained to cry out for deliverance—nay verily...

What this bondage and captivity are has already been shown. It is the bondage of sin, the slavery of being compelled to sin even against the will by the power of inherited and acquired evil propensities and habits. Does Christ deliver from a true Christian experience—no indeed! Then the bondage of sin of which the apostle complains in the seventh of Romans is not the experience of child of God, but of the servant of sin. E.J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 86,87

The Bible makes it abundantly plain, that while the man in *Romans* seven has gained much, he has not yet gained salvation. True, he has a knowledge of the law of God; he has deep personal conviction of his own sin; he is repentant so far as he hates the sin and with his own power has turned away from it. He has frankly and openly confessed his problem; has no doubt joined the church; and can even be as Paul himself was, a very zealous worker for the church. But because he still has the old spiritual nature, and is therefore a slave to sin, he belongs not to Christ but to Satan, and therefore still is weighted with a body of death. He has not yet gained the life eternal.

The realization that the experience of *Romans* seven is not the experience of a true child of God, can be a very distressing revelation to those who have prided themselves for many years that they have been God's true children. In fact it is too much for some to take and they prefer to think, even though the evidence is against it, that their standing with God is all right. So they turn against and reject this plain revelation of where they really stand.

But there is no need for this revelation to cause distress. On the contrary, we should be very thankful to God that He does reveal to us our shortcomings and our failures. The whole experience of *Romans* seven is divinely designed to bring us to such a realization of ourselves and our needs that we will be led to take hold of the wonderful gift of salvation which is freely offered to us. Without the *Romans* seven experience we would never learn to give up trying to save ourselves; we would never learn what our real trouble is and thus never learning, we would never be able to seek and to find a solution to it.

These vital steps to Christ, as outlined in Paul's struggle in *Romans* seven, do not cease with the new birth. On the contrary, they are with

COMPARISON OF THE MAN

BEFORE ENTERING THE ROMANS 7 EXPERIENCE	DURING THE ROMANS 7 EXPERIENCE	AND IN THE ROMANS 8 EXPERIENCE	ROMANS 8 EXPERIENCE
Without the law of God in truth No delight in the law No conviction – self-satisfied In bondage but knows it not Under condemnation Therefore not justified Being overcome Not born again Unrighteous Cannot please God Death In the flesh Makes no effort to obey God A willing sinner Not a son of God No covenant No response to God	Knows the law of God in the truth Delights in the law in the mind Convicted and repentant In bondage and knows it Still under condemnation Still not justified Still being overcome Still not born again Still unrighteous Still cannot please God Still death In the flesh Makes every effort to obey Now an unwilling sinner Still not a son of God The old covenant in force here Preparation for entry into the new covenant	Knows the very spirit of the law Delights in the law in mind and heart Convicted and repentant Free from the power of sin Now no condemnation Justified Now more than a conqueror Born again Righteous Does indeed please God Life In the Spirit Obey by nature Willingly obedient A true son of God The new covenant applies now The old covenant done away	STILL NO SALVATION HERE IS SALVATION!

us right along in our Christian walk. Those which were originally steps to Christ now become steps to a still closer and closer union as we walk *with* Him. We do not, and indeed can not receive all the knowledge of the law that it is possible to receive, at the outset of our Christian experience.

The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. *Proverbs 4:18*

The knowledge that we receive at the beginning then is to be followed by deeper, and still deeper illuminations of truth and each will bring to us a corresponding sense of the depth of the sinfulness of sin. We will see aspects of unrighteousness in our lives that we did not see before, and so our conviction of personal sin and our repentance of that sin will deepen and extend. There will be a more heart-felt confession and decision to serve the Lord and with it all: a sound, abiding, intelligent consecration to God.

And throughout the whole path to the kingdom we shall ever be repeating these experiences in that sequence, but it will ever be on a higher and a higher level. It will not be a confession for the same sins and problems as were there yesterday, over and over without any change. Each sin will be dealt with and left behind in its turn. The old experience of frustration and defeat will be a thing of the past.

It has now become very clear and very plain that our real problem is not what we *do*, but what we *are*. It is this evil heart in us that is our master, and therefore is the fountain of sin. If the evil heart is the fountain, then the actions of sin are the stream. The stream is impure for the simple reason that the fountain is impure, or, to use another illustration, the fruit of the tree is evil fruit because the tree is an evil tree.

Everyone knows that the only way to solve the problem of an impure stream is to cleanse the impure fountain; the only way to stop the production of evil fruit is to destroy the tree. The problem in each case is not the stream or the fruit, but the fountain and the tree. The stream and the fruit are only the inevitable results of the basic problem.

In exactly the same way the actions of sin are not our real problem. They are but the inevitable outworking of the cause of the problem,—the evil nature within. It stands as the truth of God that we do what we do *because of what we are*.

No truth does the Bible more clearly teach than that what we do is the result of what we are. *Education* 146

Therefore we must turn our attention to the real problem,—the source of sin—if we would have the actions of sin brought to an end of our lives. Just as surely as the cleansing of an impure fountain will cleanse the stream that flows from that fountain, so the cleansing of the very nature of man will purify the actions of the man.

But how shall we deal with this fountain of sin? The first thing to know and to realize is that it can never be brought into subjection to the principles of God's law:

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, *it cannot*. *Romans* 8:7

Let us read what that text says, believe what it says, and recognize the truth of what it says. It plainly and distinctly says that the mind that is set on the flesh, which is the evil spiritual nature, is not subject to the law of God: and cannot be. Here the word of God flatly, finally and plainly declares that it is an utter impossibility to cause the old nature to obey God's law. Let us repeat that. *It is an utter impossibility*.

That means that no amount of education, no amount of discipline, no amount of subjugation, no amount of will power, no amount of consecration and decision will ever get our old hearts to obey. How then shall we come into obedience to the law of God?

If the old nature cannot be made to obey the law of God, then the obvious and only thing to do is to get rid of it. This is what you would do with an evil tree. You would not spend a minute trying to make a thorn bush produce apples. You would dig it out by the roots and put it in a fire and burn it. In like manner the evil nature must be taken out and destroyed. And this we find is the one and only plan that God has for it. But we have no power to free ourselves from the old life. This is the work that only God can do and which He is anxious to do.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. *Romans 8:1,2*

Now what does Jesus do? He *sets us free* from the law of sin and death. The whole symbolism of sin which we see in these chapters is that of a slave-master, a despotic ruler. To be made free from him is to have the power of that slave-master completely removed from us, just as completely as the death of the first-born in Egypt removed that power from the children of Israel. So likewise Jesus will set us free by taking away from us the power of the slave-master so that it is no longer in charge of our lives.

This is the only possible solution which can come to any human being to enable him to begin to live the law of righteousness in Jesus Christ. Now *how* does Jesus do it?

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. *Romans 6:6*

That which is crucified is not imprisoned, nor exiled, nor subjugated, but it is put to death, it is destroyed and the one and the only program that God has in mind for your old nature and my old nature, is its complete destruction and annihilation. It must be taken out of the way. It must be crucified out of existence, it must be done to death. There is no other solution!

However, it is not sufficient for the old nature to be put to death. There must be another life brought back into its place. It is not sufficient to have an empty house; we must have a new occupant. This is God's

purpose for every person redeemed and saved from the power of sin.

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. *Ezekiel 36:26,27*

Note carefully what God proposes to do. He says, “**I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh.**” That which is taken away is certainly no longer there. It is quite impossible to take a thing out of something else and still have it there.

But God does not stop there! Into the place where the old heart was, He now puts a new spirit and a new heart. This new spirit and this new heart is His own life of righteousness. Consider what this means. It means that where there was a fountain of evil, a fountain of death which brought forth a stream of sin and death, now there is a fountain of life, even the life of the righteousness of God, and this fountain can only bring forth a stream of righteousness.

It should be obvious that this is the only possible solution that will bring righteousness into the human life. Compare this with the law of nature:

As in nature so in grace. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 65

We come to a plot of ground and in that ground we find a great old thorn bush growing and producing its thorns. No gardener would ever attempt to make that thorn bush produce fruit of any value such as apples, grapes, pears or peaches. Every gardener knows that the thorn bush is not subject to the law of fruit-growing, neither indeed can be. Therefore he wastes no time with pruning, fertilizing, irrigating, but with the axe and the mattock he digs that old thorn bush out, and casts it to the destruction of the fire. Thus it ceases to exist. But now there is but an empty space where the thorn bush was, and still there is no fruit coming forth, so *into the place where the old thorn bush was* he now puts a good tree, a grape vine, an apple tree, a peach tree or whatever other tree he chooses. Now that he has a good tree, then from that good tree comes good fruit.

As in nature so in grace, and here is the perfect illustration of the one and only way whereby the life can be changed and a stream of righteousness begin to flow forth from the human life. A new heart *must be put* in the place of the old heart.



No amount of the most diligent TRYING will ever make that old thorn tree produce good fruit.



Only by its DYING, by its being dug up by the roots to be destroyed in the fire where it is burned to ashes is the way prepared for the planting of the good tree which alone can bring forth good fruit.

We know that our old thorn bush is dug up by the roots, that the tree might be brought to nothing, so that it would not produce thorns.

SO

"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin." Romans 6:6



The space where the evil tree was, cannot be left empty. The good seed must now be planted where it was. Then the good tree will grow which will bear the good fruit.



**IT IS NOT BY TRYING, BUT BY DYING,
THAT THE VICTORY IS WON**

You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. *John 8:32*

This brings home to us a realization as to why we have not found that blessed freedom before. It is because we have not understood the truth of the old nature, of its power, of its role and the way which God will deal with it. But now that we know what our problem is, and how God will deal with it, and of the fact that He alone can deal with it, let us therefore come before God and pray a prayer that will be intelligent, and a prayer which will be in complete cooperation with His will. Let us kneel down before Him and say:

“Lord I have now come to learn the fact that I am in myself a sinner and a slave of sin. The old sin-master, called by Paul, the law of sin in my members, has me in its control. A lifetime of trying to overcome this sin-master has at last convinced me in the light of the Word of truth that I have no power to prevail against it. I am but an abject slave. But Lord, you have promised to take out of me this sinful nature. You have promised to take it *out of* and *away from* me. Lord I thank you for this wonderful promise of this wonderful work, and right here I give myself over to you. Take this sinful nature, crucify it to death and into its place put Your own spotless life, the fountain of righteousness. Lord, You have promised to do this. I accept the promise. I believe that You *have* done the work for me, and I thank You for it. Amen.”

We must learn to put away the old prayers of unbelief: “Lord, I trust that You *might* give me the victory over this sin.” Such prayers are filled with doubt and unbelief and a complete lack of understanding of what God proposes to do for us. Let us come *boldly* to the throne of grace and there before God, and through Jesus Christ, clearly and explicitly claim the promises and believe in them and rest in them. Thus will begin for us a new life altogether, the kind of life such as we have never dreamed possible.

For too long we have sought the right thing in the wrong way. We have not known the truth on the matter, and not knowing the right way have therefore not been able to find the thing desired at the end of that right way. And even when we are shown that right way we are slow to learn it. So, in the Word of God this truth is emphasized over and over again to make it more clear to our minds.

It is needful therefore that this truth be reiterated once more before we proceed further. In the following verses Paul uses the illustration of a woman who is married to a husband:

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. *Romans 7:1-3*

Here we have the picture of a woman married to a husband, and it will most certainly give added force to the illustration if we think of this husband as being a cruel, despotic over-lord, a man who has no sympathy, no tenderness, no kindness, no love, and no appreciation for the desires of his wife. This woman finds that her marriage to this man is irksome and burdensome, and is a relationship which utterly prevents her from living the life which rightfully she should be allowed to live, and which in her heart she desires to live. She groans under this terrible bondage, under this cruel exacting service. She hates it, and she longs to be free.

Now over here she looks and behold, and sees a man who would be to her the perfect husband,—a man who has every attribute of kindness, and sympathy, and tenderness, and love, and mercy; one who would be a true protector, a true husband indeed. It is utterly impossible for her to be married to this other and much-to-be-preferred husband, while ever she is united to the first husband. She must be freed from the first before the second union can take place.

If there is one thing the law will never allow, it is the marriage of a

woman to two partners at the same time. Any attempt on her part to be married to the second man while she is still united to the first would be soundly condemned by the law. Therefore, she must be freed from the first husband to the entire satisfaction of the law, before there can be any union with another man. This is the message of these verses and as such represents the vital heart of the gospel message.

But once she has been made free from that first husband by his being taken right out of her life then she is free to marry the new husband. Now, the very same law which previously condemned any relationship with the new man, actually unites her to him. For this to be, there had to be a change somewhere, but note very carefully that it was *not in the law*. That is not where the problem lies. The problem lies in the situation of the woman and that is where the change must come.

There are many professed Christians who attempt to solve the whole problem of salvation by doing away with the law, but that is not the place where the problem lies. The problem lies in the sinner and he is the one who must be changed. When he is changed then the problem just does not exist anymore.

Before we take the illustration from the natural world further, let us now draw the spiritual illustration in this whole question. In the fourth verse Paul has spoken:

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. *Romans 7:4*

It is not difficult to discover from this verse who is symbolized by the three parties involved in the illustration above. In the illustration we have the woman, her husband, and the other man. Let us identify these one by one. First of all the other man is He who is raised from the dead, and that obviously is Christ the Lord. It is equally obvious that the woman in the picture here indicates those who are seeking a living relationship with the Lord.

This leaves then but the third party to be identified, namely, the old husband. We have already seen that the new husband, being He who is raised from the dead, must be none other than Christ. Therefore, if Christ is the new husband, His opposite number, the only other contender for the affections of the human race must be Satan. Who else could it possibly be? The force and value of this illustration will be come

more apparent as we proceed with this study.

We cannot say that the old husband is the evil heart, because if this was so, then the new husband would have to be the new heart, in order for the interpretation to be consistent. Our study of this passage of Scripture will shortly reveal that the marriage with the old husband *produces* the evil heart, but that the husband himself is not the evil heart. That old husband is Satan.

It is not difficult to identify the old husband once we have been clearly told as to who the new husband is. This identification having been accomplished then it is time to go on and gain an understanding of the purpose of the new marriage. This is stated in the Scriptures as being to bring forth fruit unto God:

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order *that we may bear fruit for God. Romans 7:4*

In searching for the meaning of the expression, “that we may bear fruit for God,” we shall first ask the question, “What is the fruit of an earthly marriage?” To this the answer comes quickly, “Why! Children of course!” When a man and a woman become united in marriage, it is for the purpose of bringing forth after their kind and the fruit of this union are children. Therefore the fruit of thy marriage of Christ with the believer, or in other terms, of divinity with humanity, is a family of spiritual children.

We are always interested in the names of the children of a physical marriage. So likewise, we are interested to find the names of the children which are the fruit, or the offspring of the spiritual marriage between Christ and the believer. These names are plainly and clearly revealed in the Scriptures:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. *Galatians 5:22,23*

The sum of these attributes is the divine nature. They are the characteristic of a life in which dwells the presence of Christ by His Spirit, and the fact of this bears out the thought presented above that the divine nature is the *result* of the union with the new husband, and not the husband Himself.

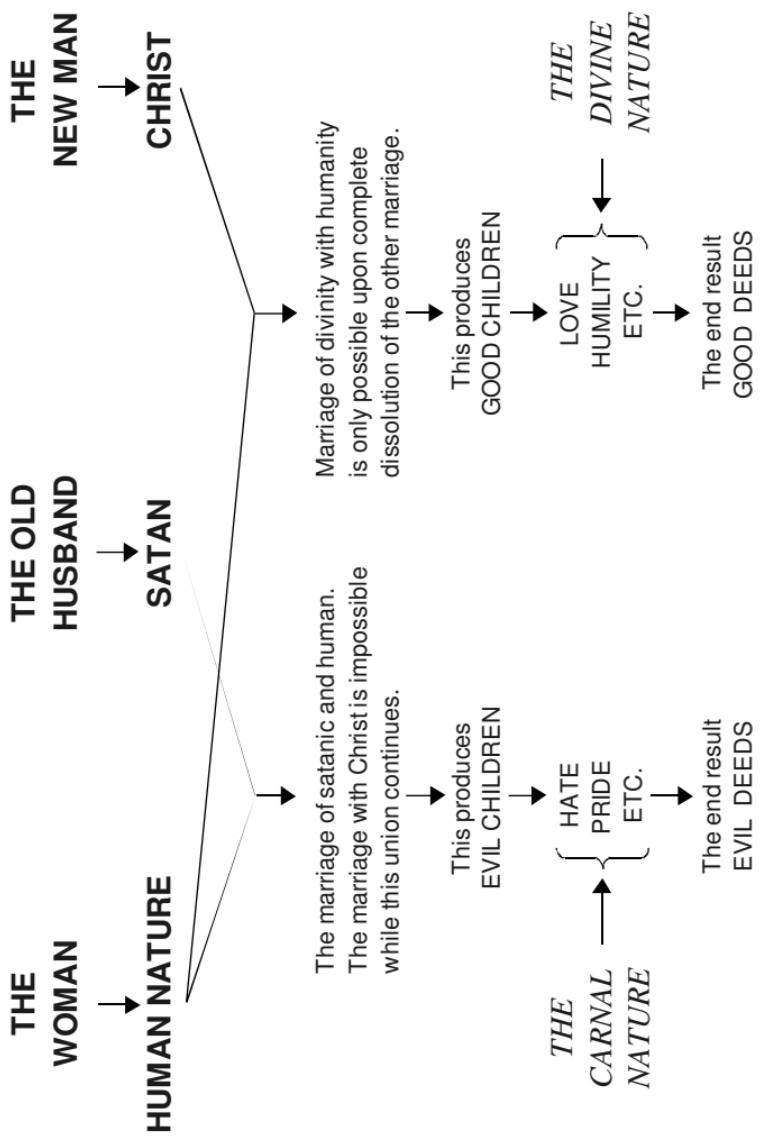


DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING ROMANS 7:1-4

And it also follows that just as the good children are active and busy and energetic, so too the children of the evil marriage are active and energetic, and they too produce deeds which are the exact reproduction of the character which they are. They cannot be loving, gentle, kind, patient, and so on. They can only be evil and malicious and thoroughly hateful.

Our basic and fundamental problem is not the kind of deeds which are appearing in our lives through the instrument of our humanity. The basic problem is one of marriage. A wrong marriage of the satanic with the human will produce evil children, who in turn will send forth a stream of evil deeds. That can only mean then, it would be utterly futile to attempt to bring forth good deeds, while we still had the evil children of the old spiritual nature and were married to the old husband.

The real solution is to marry the new husband and bring forth better children, but we cannot marry the new husband *because we already are bound up to the old husband.*

Let us now consider this illustration of the marriage in the light of the rest of the verses of *Romans* seven and Paul's struggle to be free from the power of sin. Initially the woman is completely unaware of her true situation. She is unaware of the problems in her marriage, and so is happy with her life up to this point. The time comes when the law of God opens up to her a realization that her own life and the behavior of her children are such as will never permit her to pass the searching scrutiny of the judgment. She recognizes that in the society of heaven she is condemned to eternal death for the behavior of her children,—the hatred, the malice, the bitterness, the pride, and all the other evil flowing forth from her heart.

Then she looks upon the perfect man Christ Jesus and recognizes in Him the model of purity and peace and power and so she begins to long to live a life which would be pleasing to him. She longs to be married to him and to name him as her lawful husband.

But the husband in this relationship is not sharing his wife's conversion. He neither has desire nor interest in relinquishing the old life and plans to carry right on living just as he has done before. Here now we have two people at cross purposes. The woman in the marriage desires to serve God. The husband has no such intentions.

What now is going to happen? The peace is now broken and, while the wife is pulling in one direction seeking to bring her children under

the control of the law of God, the husband in the picture will resist her and incite the children to rebel against her to break all the laws of God and to continue in their own head-strong way of doing evil.

Consider now the impossibility of this woman ever achieving her hearts desire. Is she, as a frail weak woman, any match for a powerful husband and a family of robust and vigorous children? Why certainly not! The more she attempts to bring them into submission to the principles of righteousness, the more her husband is going to resist her and the more he is going to stir up the evil natures of those evil children who, on their own have no mind to serve God. She will find that every effort upon her part only seems to make the matter worse.

It must be very evident to our readers that this is a perfect illustration of the situation of every would-be Christian as described in the experience of *Romans* chapter seven, which we previously have studied together in this book. How well this frustrated mother could say with the apostle Paul, “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (*Romans* 7:19). She wants those children to obey God just as we want our natures to bring forth the fruit of righteousness. But the very nature of those children is such that they cannot and will not obey God any more than a wolf will behave like a lamb. In *Romans* seven we learned that there is only futility and defeat in the efforts of man, *while he has the old nature*, to attempt to bring forth good fruit. It is impossible. It just simply cannot be done.

We have learned too that an evil tree cannot, and will not bring forth good fruit. Again this is an impossibility. We learned too, however that it is the way of human nature to attempt to bring forth righteousness in this way just as this mother is valiantly trying to induce her children by compulsion to obey and submit themselves to the standards of God’s righteousness. But she has no hope because, pitted against her, are the wills of these willful children and the power of a husband who, in full sympathy with his children, is inciting them to disobey every desire and wish of their mother.

Without the least shadow of doubt her situation as it stands, is a hopeless one. It would seem that she must surrender all hope of success and submit herself to the wishes and desires of the husband and the children and return with them to the old life of sin again,—*unless* there is some other way of doing this which would bring her the success she is seeking. Certain it is that to continue in the way in which she has

been going, is to bring her only repeated failure and defeat. That way is certainly not the way and never could be the way.

That there is a way is very evident from the fact that the possibility of obeying all the law of God is stated in the Scriptures again and again. Study again the opening chapters of this book should that truth have become dimmed in your vision.

If then there is a way, then the question which must now present itself is this,—What is that way? How can she go about the task of getting obedience where there is now only disobedience? How can she see a harvest of good deeds where now there appears only mischief and trouble? This is the question. There is an answer to it and that answer must be found for our salvation's sake.

The first and natural answer which might come to us is an instinctive one. If the power of the woman is no match for the combined power of the children and the father, then call in more help to stand with her against them. Then all she has to do is to see to it that the power she calls in is sufficient to overpower the combined forces against her.

But this is not the solution.

There is just no self-respecting man on the face of the earth who is going to come into the home of another man, subjugate him and his children and then begin run the home in a proper fashion to please the woman of the house. No one, just no one, is going to take on that kind of task.

This is true of the situation as we face it in the world of human relationships and it is even more true in the realm of the spiritual. There is one Man and only one who has more power than the combined power of the devil and his children and that is the man Christ Jesus. And if there is one thing He will not do, it is to come into the home of another man and take over from that man the control of his home.

Jesus would not do that not even to the devil. He will not share the house with another husband. That is very definite and final. Therefore it is useless to come to Jesus and ask him to *help* you control the evil elements in your nature. He does not work that way at all.

*Regardless of how strong and successful
a good man may be in his own home,
he will never enter the home
of another man, no matter
how much the wife
may appeal to him
to take control
of things in
that home.*



Once we see then that this is not the solution, then we must not waste a minute seeking to have the matter answered in that way. Let us look again and see what the Word of God says the solution is. Here in the seventh chapter of *Romans* we are plainly told that while ever she remains legally bound to that husband she has no hope in the world of bringing forth good children. She must be released from that marriage.

There is one way and only one way out of the situation. It is firstly to frankly recognize the incorrigible nature of the children and of the husband and to give up all hope and attempt at reforming them. It can no more be done than can a thorn bush be made to produce a crop of figs or a wolf to behave like a lamb. Instead, without a moment's hesitation, walk to the door and fling it open with the invitation to the law to come in and take away the old husband and his children.

Do not delay. The law will never force an entrance. Patiently the

Saviour waits for us to open the door but time is running out. Our probation will not last forever and should it close before the work is done, then, if the old husband is still with us and in us, our condemnation will, with his, be eternal. Let us escape from this today while the door of mercy stands open and probation still lingers. Just as soon as the door is opened and the old husband and his children are dragged away, then we are free to marry the new Husband Christ Jesus, *but not until*.

Not only must the husband go but the children also must go with him. Jesus Christ will never adopt such children into His family. They can have neither part nor place in His household. He will never tolerate in His house, hatred, malice, bitterness, pride, envy, jealousy. He knows perfectly well these children are such *by very nature* and will never consent to change into being good children.

Now right here we find uncovered the great secret as to why religious people will resist the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here we find uncovered the reason as to why they will so gladly listen to preachings about Christ,—preachings from the Word of God, why they will attend church service and go through almost limitless forms and ceremonies to express a devotion and loyalty to God, but when the living messenger of righteousness comes among them such as Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Christ, Paul, Luther, or any of these other great preachers of justification by faith, they will ruthlessly persecute them even unto death. Consider all the way down through history how it has been the great religious bodies who have been the destroyers of God's messengers. Here we find out why.

Think of the love a mother has for her children. It does not matter how wicked and how bad the son or daughter may be, the last thing in the wide world a mother is prepared to face is the death of the child. So likewise the evil children of hatred, malice, bitterness, pride, jealousy and so on, which are born within us as the result of the marriage of our humanity with Satan, are our children, are a part of us, are our very life, and every human instinct wars against the barest thought of their being torn from us and committed to death. This is hard to take, but in this thing we have to realize that the penalty is just, and though it is hard to surrender them to the death, it must be done if we are to stand for the kingdom of God and see it established and prospering.

The solemn testimony of history is that religious bodies can be very

religious outwardly, and yet persecute to the death the messenger whom the Lord sends with the message of living righteousness. Again we ask, why is this so?

Consider the story of Abraham and Ishmael. There was nothing more that Abraham desired than to have the promised son. But he did not know the *power* of God nor the *way* of God, and he set to do the *right* thing in the *wrong* way. Likewise the churches with their high profession of being the followers of Christ seek to bring forth a system of worship and religion, which the Lord can accept but it is again seeking to do the right thing in the wrong way.

But the effort put forth does produce a semblance of righteousness, and in our story, Abraham did produce a son. We do manage in our efforts to produce an appearance of good works, by leaving off many bad habits and working zealously for the organization. The church as the cumulative effort of such individuals builds up an organization which does a great deal of "good works." The numbers increase, the institutions enlarge and the sense of well-being grows and increases. The conscious thought of all the members is that this must be the church of God, if there is such a thing in the earth. Comparisons with other denominations strengthens the conviction and the assurance that they are most assuredly on the way to heaven.

But just as surely as Ishmael was not a child born in the way of true righteousness, God could not and would not accept him. Just as surely as the "good works" produced in the wrong way are not the works of righteousness, but only our own filthy rags, our own sinful and deformed children, the Lord just simply cannot and therefore will not accept them. Likewise just as the "good works" and well-oiled machinery of a fine organization are the result of other than truly righteous principles, the Lord cannot and will not accept them either.

But Ishmael was Abraham's very own son! He was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and Abraham was filled with consternation and dismay when the Lord called upon him to believe that the heir would come through Sarah and that there was *not a place at all* for Ishmael in the covenant promise. How every instinct in Abraham fought against this. How there burst from his anguished lips the cry,

Oh, that Ishmael might live before You! *Genesis 17:18*

But God would not waver nor deviate from that strict principle. Ishmael would not and could not find any place in the covenant

promise. He was as good as dead and Abraham had to accept this. Praise the Lord that Abraham was honest enough to let it be that way, and to let go all that a lifetime had built up, for the making of a fresh beginning altogether. He would have been glad to have welcomed any message but the one which declared the rejection of Ishmael. Anything but that. Anything! But from the Lord the only word was, "Nothing but that and that alone."

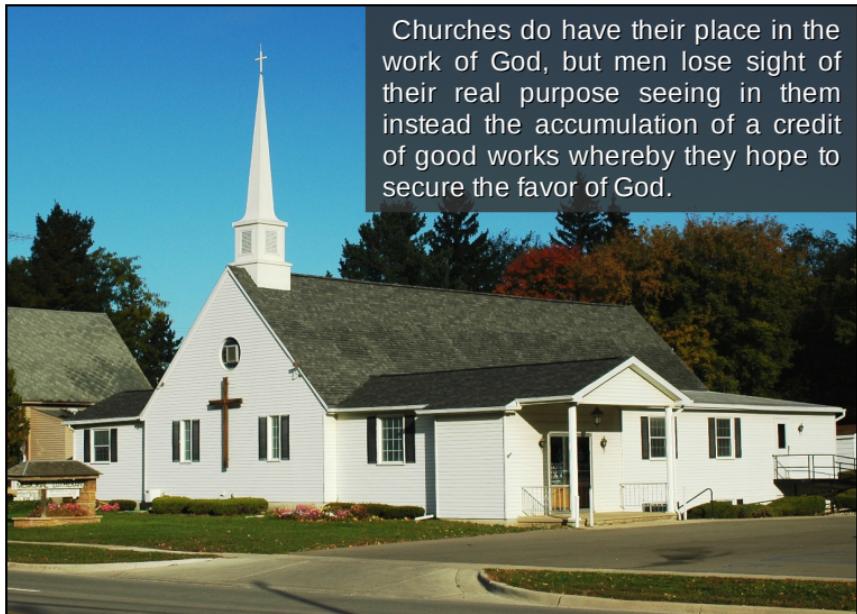
And this is the picture with the individual and the churches. The Lord speaks to them as He spoke to Abraham and the message is that the covenant is not with the "good works" which they have built up. All this must go and a fresh beginning be made. It is no use to point to all the zeal, the devotion, the position, the years of service, the acquisition of institutions and buildings, and the sacrifices made for the Lord. It all has to be recognized as the result of an attempt to do the right thing in the wrong way, and as such can have no part in the covenant promises. It all has to be sacrificed to the death and a new beginning made altogether. There is no life through Ishmael.

But this is the last thing that the churches are prepared to do. If a messenger comes to them with a message which would announce that they have done very well with all their zeal, and that the Lord is well pleased with all this, then such a messenger would be well accepted among them, and such messengers are. But when *the Lord* sends a messenger, He sends him with only *one* message and that is that all these things are of no account, and that there must be a new start made with new principles altogether. Abraham had to see that all the effort and the training expended on Ishmael was as good as lost except for the personal benefit to Ishmael. It was almost too much for him to see such waste. But he had to accept it. There was no other way.

But with organizations and with the majority of individuals it is too much altogether. They cannot bear to see such a death. It is too much for their pride and their love of themselves. In consequence they rise up against the message and refuse to receive it while all the time doing their best to silence the voice of the messenger.

Think and ponder how this is all so perfectly shown in the illustration of the woman with the old husband and his children. She knows that they are evil. She knows that her union with them is literally sapping her life. She knows that they all stand condemned by the law, yet her greatest terror is that the law will exact the penalty and

they will forfeit their lives. This is the thing which she dreads the most and she is prepared to make any sacrifice whereby she might save them from this fate. She is even prepared to have a new man come right into her home and take control of the situation, preventing the old man from



Churches do have their place in the work of God, but men lose sight of their real purpose seeing in them instead the accumulation of a credit of good works whereby they hope to secure the favor of God.

committing his evil deeds.

All this is well illustrated by an experience of a friend of mine. One evening this man was walking along the street when he came upon a drunken fellow beating his wife unmercifully. She was crying out in pain and fear, and quite naturally he hurried to her assistance. Imagine his amazement to find in a moment that as he tried to pull off the man, the woman turned upon him and began to beat him furiously all the while calling upon him to stop attacking her husband. Now she was not drunk. She was not mad. She was simply acting, not by reason or good sense, but from blind instinct and fear that the only husband she knew, her means of livelihood and support, was in danger of being taken away from her. He was a part of her life and she feared the loss of this life of hers.

This helps to explain the difference between modern popular religion and the true religion of Jesus Christ, while at the same time showing us how the two can appear to be so nearly identical. Let us look first of all

at the similarities. Both the false and the true condemned sin. Even if they do go so far as to teach that the law has been done away, yet they still preach against adultery, murder and so on. Both the false and the true declare that Jesus Christ is the one answer to the problem. Modern religion will make the most touching appeals to receive Jesus Christ into the heart, to give Him your whole life and to make Him your one true husband. But there is no clear cut and plain teaching that the old life must be taken right out of the individual before the new life can come in. Satan does not mind in the least how much the hearer may be exhorted to receive Christ into the life, *provided that he is not taught to get the devil and his children out first*. Such a religion is very acceptable with the devil for he knows that no one who believes that is ever going to find deliverance from his power, and it is acceptable to the world because it *seems* to be a way whereby they can keep the old life and have the new as well.

If you can see it and understand it you will realize that what modern religion does in actual effect is to invite you to receive the new husband Jesus Christ to come and share your life with the old husband, the devil. Now of course, if you were to charge them with this they would flatly deny it, expressing horror at the very thought of it. It may well be that they are completely unaware of the true nature of the doctrine they are teaching, but it does not alter the fact of the nature and the results of that teaching. Their doctrine is actually one wherein they are urging and admonishing their hearers to enter into a relationship of spiritual adultery with Jesus Christ. Not only is this a most wicked and fearful thing to do but it is one which degrades the character of Jesus to the level of an adulterer.

There is not the least salvation in such a doctrine, for while from the point of view of men, such a relationship of spiritual adultery is entirely acceptable, to Christ it most certainly is not. Could you ever imagine the spotless Lamb of God entering into a relationship like this? Why never! While He is most anxious to secure you as His bride, He will never relinquish the least principle to do it, not the least. First the old husband and his children *must* go. This is imperative and Christ will not move an inch on this point. Then and only then can there be a new relationship and a new marriage. How vital this fact is and yet how sadly overlooked and lost sight of. May the Lord open the eyes of our understanding to see this and give us the faith to lay hold upon it in its wonderful reality.



Greater than the joy of a bride being united to her husband
is the unity of the believer with the true husband,
Jesus Christ.

TRUE HONESTY

There is a statement in this regard which has puzzled many of us for a long time:

Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. *The Great Controversy*, 522

We have met up with people who are, to all appearances, very honest indeed. They are particular to pay their debts, never to defraud anyone not even the taxation department. Naturally we expect that these will be the surest ones to accept the gospel truth when it is presented to them. Yet much to our astonishment and disappointment, they are often the very ones who fight it the most vigorously. This does not mean the the statement is false, but it means that we have to learn a little better how to evaluate honesty. Satan has his counterfeit of this as

surely as of any other part of the gospel message.

This must not be interpreted to mean that honesty does not involve the faithful and exact paying of debts, but it does mean that we can do all that and yet fail to be truly honest. Here is a situation which will help to clarify the point:

A certain lad is exceptionally lawless and unruly much to his mother's mounting concern. She fears that soon he will collide with the strong arm of the law with regrettable consequences. Every appeal and effort on her part having failed, she seeks out a counselor and relates to him the sad stories of her son's activities.

The counselor listens gravely and attentively to the problem and assumes that the woman honestly seeks a solution. Herein lies his mistake. What she is really seeking is an assurance that her son is not so bad after all. If the advisor whom she has chosen was to say to her that her son was going through a passing phase of his growing up, and that while he might in the meantime do a little damage and even get run in by the law, there was no need to worry for, in the end, he would emerge from the experience and settle down, she would have been very happy and have gone away thinking him a very nice fellow indeed.

But she has asked him for his advice and so he honestly gives it. He begins by agreeing that her son is certainly the worst young man in the little town, and that if he is not arrested in his mischievous and destructive career, then he will certainly end up in the prison and might well develop into an habitual criminal. He says it without rancor or bitterness, but with a calm, objective manner and approach. Here is a problem, let us face it, and we must recognize its existence first if we're ever going to solve it. This is his approach.

At this point a look of fear appears on her countenance and she hastens to assure him that her son is not a bad boy at heart. He just has too much energy and enthusiasm and some of the company into which he has fallen is not the best. Thus she hurriedly goes on. The counselor, unless he is experienced in the workings of the human mind, will marvel at this sudden change of face.

Right here is the true test of real honesty. That woman was not honest. She allowed her instinct to take command over her reason so that the law of self-preservation was allowed to take the ascendancy over the truth and righteousness. This is not honesty and many a person is going to lose out eternally because he is not prepared to face facts as they stand, and to recognize things exactly as they are, even in their closest family ties.

The same thing is true in church relationships. We come to the home of a family who are interested to hear the message. We find them with minds filled with distress over the condition in the church. They tell a long story about this wrong and that wrong and how this and that should be corrected. We listen until we are convinced that they are ready for the truth. We say nothing about the wrongs in the church, but simply open the Word of prophecy and show them that this is exactly what would come and that the church according to the sure Word of God is finished.

Now comes the shock. They suddenly and completely reverse their stand, becoming intensely loyal and defensive of the church. They have completely forgotten all about the evil things of which they were just speaking and suddenly the church can do no wrong. From that time on you become the worst people in the world and they never wish to see you again.

This is not honesty. It is self-protection. If only those who thus are seeking to save their lives could see that that is the very way to lose it. Likewise it is the very thing which will cause the gates of heaven to be closed against us forever.

The price we have to pay for the kingdom is a heavy one. It truly demands all that we have. In this illustration from *Romans 7:1-4*, the woman has a husband to whom she is united and she has a whole family of strong and robust children. She wants the new husband, surely enough, but look at the price! Put yourself in the position of this woman, and feel the pain and the anguish she must suffer in order to gain the new husband. So likewise, if we would be a Christian it means that *all* of that which a whole life-time has acquired must go and a completely fresh beginning made. For many it is too much, the price is too high.

Yet, what is there in the old marriage worth keeping? Let it go,—all of it. The new husband has better things than the old could ever give.

Frankly and honestly confess the nature of the husband which you have, declaring along with it the shameful character of the children of this marriage. Acknowledge that they are all condemned to death and deliver them one and all to the law which awaits to execute the sentence. Then let the Saviour in and He will make with you a fresh beginning of a life of joyous fulfillment and happiness. The only way to life is through death. There is no other way but this. You cannot have two husbands at the same time, so let the law exact the penalty. Then out of the ruins, let the new husband build a new and far better eternal home for you.

And it will not be an empty, childless home. This new marriage will always be a fruitful one, building a home filled with the joyousness of happy and good children filling our days with the good deeds of the righteousness of the Father.

While the cross of crucifixion for the old husband and his children will be a hard one to take, yet when it is done, when we do let go and let the Lord accomplish it, there will come such a sense of blessed relief as we never thought possible and into the emptiness of the home of the heart will come the joy of the presence of the true husband and His children. Then you will wonder as to why you held to the old husband so long and never after will you want to go back to his cruel bondage.

Before proceeding further in this series of studies it will be necessary to clarify a certain point so as to provide a safeguard against the possibility of the message being misunderstood. It is important that this point be made very clear for otherwise there will be some who may well be discouraged in the way and thus be hindered rather than helped.

Right along through this series it has been made clear again and again that there is no possible solution to the problem other than the eradication of the old nature. This has been stressed in different terms such as the thought that it is not by trying but by dying; that we must become good trees *before* we can do good; that the old husband must be taken and put to death *before* there can be any possible unity with the new husband, Christ Jesus. And all this amounts to the conclusion that the old impulses of the evil heart *will no longer be there* but in their place will be *entirely new* and opposite impulses and desires. It means that whereas *by nature* we previously did the evil things of unrighteousness, so *by nature* we now do the very opposite things to what we used to do.

Every one of us knows by experience how naturally we have done the wrong things. We never had to decide that we would become angry and lose our tempers. It happened so naturally and spontaneously and was so strong a force that even when we would not do this it happened just the same. Now we are to know the very opposite experience and find that whereas it was natural and spontaneous to lose one's temper, it is now natural and spontaneous to experience a quiet, unruffled calm and patience.

If this seems too much to accept and to believe, then let us turn to what the Scriptures have to say about the matter:

Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble. Psalm 119:165

"Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the *fruits* of the Spirit, 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith meekness temperance.' They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure.

The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become serious and unobtrusive. The drunken become sober and the profligate pure. The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside." *Steps to Christ*, 58

"A healthy man, who is able to attend to the vocations of life, and who goes forth day after day with buoyant spirits and with a healthful current of blood flowing through his veins, does not call the attention of every one he meets to his soundness of body. Health and vigor are the natural conditions of life, and therefore he is scarcely conscious that he is in the enjoyment of so rich a boon."



"Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs, or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of God with a willing heart." *The Sanctified Life*, 13.

Now notice that this statement distinctly says that love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, will be the fruit or the natural outworking of the life. But we know that in the life before we received this transformation of nature that anything but these things were the natural outworking of the life and the nature and that it was far from natural for us to manifest these attributes of the Spirit and the power of God. If we wanted to be loving to those whom we did not like we had to force ourselves to be pleasant.

The message of these statements, and of the whole of the word of God, is clear that unless we do become transformed in nature we can

never hope to be a Christian, and we can never hope to really do the will of God. Therefore there is no question but that the true Christian is indeed a new creation and an entirely opposite person to what he was before, so far as the spiritual nature is concerned. Now, he has the divine nature in the place of the old nature that he had before.

But this does not mean that we have ceased to be a *human* being with all the affections, passions and appetites of a human being. Christianity does not make a person un-human, but if anything very much more human.

In fact in some respects the becoming of a Christian will actually make some of these aspects of our natures stronger and more sensitive. It is said in the Scriptures that in the last days there will be an evil generation that will be “without natural affection.” *2 Timothy 3:3*. If wickedness deprives one of natural affection, then it follows that the receiving of the life of God in the soul will restore natural affection in its proper power and place.

When the Lord created man in the first place, He gave him a natural healthy appetite for good food. Therefore when the Lord makes man over again He is not going to do something different in the *re-creation* from that which He did in the first. Likewise, the Lord gave to man passions, which is but another way of saying that He gave to him certain desires, the fulfillment of which, in their right place and in their right sphere are for the good, the blessing, the health and the happiness of the human race. These the Lord does not take away either.

And as well as this, in the field of passion may be listed the feelings and responses of the human to given situations. We respond to certain situations with a sense of sadness, to others with disappointment, again there will come a sense of frustration as we see hopes dashed and aspirations ruined. We will know joy and delight at beauty and in fellowship together. It is not a sin to be sensitive and responsive to all these feelings.

But they can lead to sin. The devil uses all of these things to lead us on into sin, and in fact it was through these very avenues that he succeeded in causing the fall of our first parents. We have to be very careful to keep these things under control and in their proper place, for the devil, in this world of sin, will always offer to us the satisfaction of these natural desires *in the wrong way* and *at the wrong time and place*. Therefore the fact that the Christian no longer has the evil responses of

the old heart which can be categorized as hatred, bitterness, wrath, lust, pride, envy and such like, nor the fierce and burning appetites for such things as nicotine and alcohol, is not to be understood that he can no longer be tempted of the devil. The fact is that while ever the devil does live, we can and will be powerfully tempted to commit sin, for the evil one can, and does still appeal to the natural appetites, affections and passions. And that which makes it the more difficult for us and the easier for him is that we are living in a very corruptible and mortal flesh in an environment charged with all that unlawfully appeals to the appetites, passions and affections.

To understand this a little better let us return to the experience of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. This example is of particular merit for we know that they were indeed a sinless pair, and that there was no hatred, malice, bitterness or spirit of rebellion of any kind in them that the devil could appeal to by way of an evil heart. Yet he came to them and he did tempt them, and so successfully did that temptation find a response and an appeal in them, that he over threw them both in their turn. It therefore follows that, if they could be tempted, then how much more certainly the Christian today in this world can be tempted *even after he has lost the old heart.*

Now it comes as a surprise to many to learn that Adam and Eve had to keep *under control* their appetites, passions and affections:

Man was to bear God's image both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is the "express image" of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; *his appetites and passions were under the control of reason.* He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 45

This statement is plain and clear and states the situation as it was for Adam in the garden of Eden. This was no mistake on the part of the Creator of man as with all the other creatures there was the fact that he must be made with perfect freedom.

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. *John 8:36*

God endows us with the powers. They are given to us for our benefit and blessing, and we are left perfectly free to use them as we will. But it is a simple fact that anything in life is a blessing if used aright, but it

becomes a curse and a destruction if used wrongly. We are familiar with the statement that fire is a good servant but a bad master. Fire serves us well when it is kept under strict control. This power God had provided for the blessing of man but the usage and the control of this power is man's responsibility. So God has endowed man with appetites, passions and affections which are powers in man for his blessing and benefit but, unless controlled, will as surely destroy the man as will ever the uncontrolled fire destroy the fair creation and man with it.

And Satan knew this and so it was that he came to Adam in the garden and directed his subtle temptations to the overthrow of our first parents. Having secured the allegiance of Eve by causing her to lose control of and to misdirect the passion of her ambition to be like God, which in its right sphere and place was a very holy and right ambition, the devil then used Eve as the means of overthrowing Adam. She at once became the devil's very efficient agent.

In a state of strange, unnatural excitement, with hands filled with the forbidden fruit, she sought his presence and related all that had occurred. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 56

This naturally stunned Adam with the terrible realization that the very thing that the Lord had warned them against had happened and that was about to lose his beautiful and beloved bride. All the powers of his God-given, natural and very proper affection for his companion arose strongly within him and so much the more under the threat of his losing this beautiful companion.

An expression of sadness came over the face of Adam. He appeared astonished and alarmed. To the words of Eve he replied that this must be the foe against whom they had been warned; and by the divine sentence she must die. In answer she urged him to eat, repeating the words of the serpent, that they should not surely die. She reasoned that this must be true, for she felt no evidence of God's displeasure, but on the contrary realized a delicious, exhilarating influence, thrilling every faculty with new life, such, she imagined, as inspired the heavenly messengers. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 56

But Adam was not deceived as was his wife. This is made very plain in the Scriptures:

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. *1 Timothy 2:14*

He knew what had happened and he knew that his beloved wife must die and be separated from him altogether. Therefore he was not deceived into thinking as she was, that this was all to usher them into a higher and more glorious experience. His temptation was of a different nature and appealed to a different aspect of his nature and that was to his very natural God-given affection for his wife.

Adam understood that his companion had transgressed the command of God, disregarded the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love.

There was a terrible struggle in his mind.

He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. But now the deed was done; he must be separated from her whose society had been his joy.

How could he have it thus?

Adam had enjoyed the companionship of God and of holy angels. He had looked upon the glory of the Creator. He understood the high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the fear of losing that one gift which in his eyes out valued all other.

Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator,—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 56

So there was the issue in the life of Adam at that moment and the intensity of the struggle can be measured only by the tremendous strength of the God-given love and affection that he had for Eve. Either he was going to keep that affection and love *under the control of reason* and thus in second place to his love for the great principles of righteousness that are the hallmarks of the character that is God, or he would let the affection rise uncontrolled above all other claims and considerations and thus lead him into sin, the sin of cutting himself from the Source of life and existence.

Adam was a sinless being. There was nothing evil in him that the devil could call into life to bring forth the fruit of disobedience as he can with fallen man. Neither was he deceived as to the nature of the temptation. Therefore the only thing in him that the devil could appeal to was that which in itself was right and good but which could be

turned to evil and wrong. He would so shape circumstances and matters that he would lead him to put the things that he treasured above Him who gave him the gift.

A COMPARISON OF

THE HUMAN NATURE

AND

THE CARNAL NATURE

This is
made up
of the

APPETITES
PASSIONS
AFFECTIONS

This is
made up of

HATRED
PRIDE
ENVY
LUST
Etc.

These must be
disciplined, controlled
and educated.

These must be
eradicated
and replaced with
a new life altogether.

While uncontrolled *appetite*
and uncontrolled *hate*....*ARE BOTH SIN*;
controlled appetite is not sin.

But, controlled *hate* is still *hate* and is *STILL SIN*.

*Therefore, the only way to deal with hatred
is to have it taken right out
and the love of God take its place.*

So too, after we have been converted there will remain with us the normal desires and needs of human life. We will be subject to feelings of dismay and disappointment. There will be the pressure of

discouragement upon us and the frustration of our plans and our hopes and ambitions. We will be subjected to ridicule and persecution, and this will bring forth from us reactions and feelings that will be a real trial to us, but these reactions are natural and not sinful unless they are allowed to fulfill Satan's desire to make us lose trust in the Lord.

But the devil does his very best to make us *feel* that these things are sinful in themselves, and if we do not understand the principles involved, he can and does, cause us needless perplexity and sorrow of heart, and the result is that we do fall into sin, especially when worn and weary human flesh is tempted to protest against the abuse that is suffering.

A great deal more can be said on this subject and as this series of studies continues, this question will become clearer and clearer. For the moment as a general rule we can understand and expect that those things that are the expression of the desires of the old heart must be totally and completely eradicated and removed from the life so that they are there no more, and in their place there must be entirely new and opposite desires and tendencies. Such are in the category of pride, hatred, malice, bitterness, rebellion and the like. All these the Saviour will remove and replace with the opposite attributes.

But on the other hand the natural responses that arise under stimuli will remain in the realm of the natural appetites, passions and affections. The devil knows this, and he also knows that these are powerful forces in the life. In fact in some areas they become the more powerful as we advance in the Christian experience. So the devil so arranges circumstances so that we will be powerfully tempted to lose faith in God or to satisfy the natural longings of the life in the wrong way.

Therefore it follows that the beginning of the Christian life in reality *is by no means the end of temptation*. This is proved by the fact that Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden were powerfully and successfully tempted, and if they could be when in the full strength of their spiritual, intellectual and physical powers, then how much more certainly even after we have been born again, will we suffer temptation. But we do not have to yield. There is power and then some to enable us to fully overcome.

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 Ministry of Healing*, 180

But a great deal of the secret of success lies in the ability to understand the difference between the old spiritual nature and the human flesh, and the dealing with each type of temptation in the right way. The old spiritual nature must be eradicated but the human flesh must be subdued and controlled.

The very real differences between the human flesh and the spiritual nature as discussed in the last chapter are not overlooked in the study of the woman and the two husbands. While the predominant lesson to be gained from that passage of Scripture is that we can never have the second husband, his children, and his deeds until the first husband and his children are taken out of our lives forever. Yet the relationships between the human flesh, the old spiritual nature, and the new divine nature, are all clearly portrayed.

The woman here represents the human being as such with all the desires, frailties, weaknesses, and needs of a human being. The old spiritual nature, which is resident in every unconverted person, is here symbolized as something physically apart from her, namely her children by the first husband, while the new divine nature is symbolized by the good children which are born through the union with the new husband. This example helps us to see that sin is not an irremovable part of the human organism but something which dwells in it and rules over it, using it as the instrument for the fulfillment of its own evil desires and purposes.

In the object lesson of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the old spiritual nature was symbolized by the slave-master of Egypt, who stood *outside* of the bodies of the Israelites, and ruled and dominated them, just as the old spiritual nature dwells in the body of the individual and likewise fully rules over it.

How adequately the marriage illustration here demonstrates certain wonderful truths in the matter of salvation and of sin!

When Satan came to this world he was at the point where every effort to perpetuate his sin had been frustrated and there was left for him but the prospect of eternal annihilation. He needed to have some means of reproducing the evil life which was in him, and in his search he came to the sinless pair in Eden.

He knew that if he could plant the evil seeds of the spirit and nature of his own rebellion in the human family, he then would have reproduced himself and at once have extended his kingdom. He reasoned that now he would have a base from which to work and an argument which would prevent his immediate destruction. And he

succeeded. But note how essential it was that there should be a human co-partner in the scheme before there could be success.

If there is one thing which humanity is seeking today, it is immortality. Every man is looking for the perpetuation of his name. In the Old Testament, it was always regarded as the ultimate punishment if the name of a man was obliterated from the earth.

I knew a certain man whose brothers all had produced only daughters. When he married, the first several of his children were girls, and there was a growing and very real concern for the continuance of the family name. Finally, to the great relief of all concerned, the fourth child was a boy, who was thereafter consciously regarded and often referred to as the sole perpetuator of the family name. But for that young man to continue the family name, he would have to find a wife through whom he could reproduce himself. Otherwise the name would stop right there with him and that would be the final end of it.

Likewise with Satan, he must have "the woman" through whom to reproduce his own evil character and thus to carry on "the family name." This more clearly reveals to us the role Satan is seeking to have us fulfill, and on the other, the glorious role which is offered to us by Jesus Christ instead.

So far we have been concentrating on the changes which take place in the life of the woman. We have seen that the old husband, symbolizing the devil is taken away and with him the evil offspring of this union of the satanic with the human, which offspring is the old spiritual nature. Obviously this represents a tremendous change in the life.

Now it is time to look and see what has *not been changed* and what this means to us in our Christian experience. Without this understanding we shall not be able to rightly interpret our reactions to given situations nor know how to cope with those situations. The resulting confusion will result in defeat and discouragement in the life.

The *husband* has been changed, the *children* have been changed but the *woman* has not been changed. The flesh and blood human organism with all of its frailties, weaknesses, and liabilities to sin still remains, and will go on remaining till the end of this life's history. Only at the coming of Jesus will the body be replaced by an eternal and indestructible one.

While the fact that we still have to live on in a flesh and blood body,

weakened and degenerate after almost six thousand years of sin, is still absolutely no excuse for sin, yet it is a factor which cannot be overlooked. Recognition of this and provision for it must be made in the warfare against sin. It will mean that we will ever need to confess the sinfulness of that nature, will never put any confidence in the flesh, will ever be watchful for its breakdown, will ever in the divine power of God keep over it the strictest controls and tough discipline lest it lead us astray.

But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. *1 Corinthians 9:27*

The marginal reading for this reads, “*But I bruise my body...*” The thought being that he denies the desires and longings of his body, and brings it under subjection to the higher powers of the mind and his divine nature.

When the Spirit of God controls mind and heart, the converted soul breaks forth into a new song; for he realizes that in his experience the promise of God has been fulfilled, that his transgression has been forgiven, his sin covered. He has exercised repentance toward God for the violation of the divine law, and faith toward Christ, who died for man’s justification. “*Being justified by faith,*” he has “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

But because this experience is his, the Christian is not therefore to fold his hands, content with what has been accomplished for him. He who has determined to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle with evil. Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is to be ever on guard, striving in Christ’s strength for victory. *The Acts of the Apostles, 476-477*

Because of this,

None of the apostles or prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men who God has honored with divine light and power, have

confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ.
The Acts of the Apostles, 561

At first reading it would appear that we are here quoting statements which are the complete denial of the very message put forth in the preceding pages of this book. For anyone who does not understand the difference between the spiritual nature and the human nature, for anyone who sees the woman as illustrating the whole person and not just the human part of the individual, these statements will certainly appear to be the contradiction and a denial of the message so far presented. In fact, those who propound the theory that it is impossible for the human being to be sinless in this life, use these statements as strong evidence to support their view.

But there is not the least contradiction between these statements and the messages set out in these pages and throughout the entire Word of God. The true Christian will certainly find that “all the powers and passions of *unregenerate* nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness are arrayed against him.” He most certainly will confess “the sinfulness of his nature.” How else can it be when the woman is not changed, but is the same woman still, to use the symbolism of the illustration by Paul?

To understand this further let us look more carefully at the statements above. Notice that it specifies *which* nature will be arrayed against us. It will be an *unregenerate* nature.

What is this unregenerate nature?

To find the answer let us go back to the garden of Eden and the first creation of man. At that time the Lord gave to man the natural world or *the world of nature*. This was his environment, the natural world around him. Second, the Lord gave man a flesh and blood body which we call the *human nature*. Thirdly, he was given a *spiritual nature*, which is the character and life of God in the soul of man.

All three of these were in the perfection of the handiwork of God in the garden of Eden, but when man sold out himself and all that he had to the devil, then all three passed under the dominion of death. All three were in need of re-generation, or re-creation. Thus they are currently described as being un-regenerate.

There is no provision in the work of the gospel to provide the escape

from the penalty of death that is upon each of these natures. What the gospel provides for is a replacement of the old with a new creation that is not under the condemnation of death.

Sentence of death has been pronounced upon every man, and that sentence will be executed. Every man must die for that all have sinned. But there is given to every man a choice as to when he will die. Christ died for all men. We can acknowledge His death, and die in Him, and thus get His life; or on the other hand we may, if we wish, refuse to acknowledge Him, and die in ourselves. *But die we must.* Death has passed upon all men, and all men must die. The life of every man is forfeited, of ourselves we have no life at all. *Bible Studies on the Book of Romans*, by E. J. Waggoner, page 17. Emphasis his.

So we have these three areas of creation that all passed under the dominion of death. We know that the flesh and blood body will be regenerated in the resurrection (*1 Corinthians 15:42-49*). We also know that the world of nature will be regenerated at a future time, when the earth is made new (*Revelation 21:1*). But the spiritual nature must be regenerated now...in this lifetime:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. *2 Corinthians 5:17*

That nature is under the condemnation of death and the sooner we let the law execute the penalty the better for us. Once the law has exacted that penalty, dragging that nature off to be crucified to death, then there is “therefore now *no condemnation* to those who are in Christ Jesus.” We are then regenerate, and the new nature in us is not arrayed against us, but will be mightily for us.

If this was the only nature we had, then how automatic it would be to live the Christian life and how impossible to ever fall again. But it is not the only nature we have. There are two other natures both of which are unregenerate still and both of which are arrayed against us in the battle against sin and uncleanness.

A practical example will illustrate this. Let us suppose the Lord handed you a seed right out of the garden of Eden. It must be obvious that in that seed there was life and vitality such as cannot be found in any seed on the earth today. In no sense of the word could it be said that that seed was unregenerate,—that there was death in it as must be said of any seed we can find now. But the only soil in which you could

possibly grow that seed, is not the soil of the garden of Eden but the soil of a degenerate world of nature, very much at war with man in his efforts to grow food and clothing. Think how all the powers of that unregenerate nature would be arrayed against you in your efforts to grow that seed. Constantly you would have to do battle with the external forces of nature, no matter how perfect the seed was.



In the first creation God gave to man:

A perfect home,
A perfect body, or human nature,
And a perfect character, or spiritual nature.

But, because of sin he lost all three;

All three became unregenerate, or condemned to death.

In the work of the second creation God again gives to man
all three of these same gifts but not at the same time:

The perfect character is given at the new birth;
The perfect body at the second coming of Jesus;
And the perfect home at the end of the millennium.

But it will not ever be so. There is coming a time when the whole world of nature will have become regenerate. That will not be until the close of the millennium, when after the full penalty of the law having been exacted in the total destruction of the existing world of nature, God will create an entirely new and perfect one in its place. Then and only then will the gardener find that all the powers of a degenerate nature will not be arrayed against him. The nature he will then know will be a kindly and highly productive one.

And that same unregenerate world of nature certainly is arrayed against us in the pursuit of a Christian experience. We are sensible every day to the handicap which it imposes upon us. Day by day we have to press against it in the heavy task of winning our physical existence until the mind and the body are so wearied that there is little time or inclination for the study of the Word of God. This fact is so well and presently experienced by all of the professed people of God that it needs no further elaboration here.

But let us note this point with care. The fact that you are living in a world of nature which is under the condemnation of certain destruction, does not of itself make you a sharer in its condemnation.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. *Romans 8:1,4*

It is not *where* you are but *what* you are that is the important thing. And it is important to remember and to understand that it is not the world in which you live which makes you what you are, neither is it the flesh and blood body in which you live, but the character within, the spiritual nature. *This is what makes you what you are.*

In other words, the all-important question is, *Which husband do I have?* If you have the right husband, then you cannot possibly help but bring forth the right family of children and in turn manifest the right kind of character and deeds.

Jesus said, Be perfect as *your Father* is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (*Colossians 2:9*); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in your mortal flesh" (*2 Corinthians 4:11*). That life in

you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for “the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.” *Psalm 19:7*, margin. Through love “the righteousness of the law” will be “fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” *Romans 8:4*. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 77,78. Emphasis original.

So then the fact that we live in a condemned world does not place us under its condemnation. As we noticed, this truth is made plain by the fact that it is of a people living in that very world that the Lord says, “*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” If it was true that the living in a world under the condemnation of the law meant that we too were under its condemnation because of this, then that Scripture would never have been written. It must say something other than what it now states.

But that Scripture goes even further than this, for it speaks not only of a people who live in a condemned world, but who also live in a condemned and unregenerate flesh and blood body, and even of them states, “*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” That divine life of Christ in the soul of man as the result of the marriage with the Lamb, is not a temporary provision for this life, but is the life which you are going to have for eternity. You will never get any other life than this one. Of course we can lose it again and die eternally, but if faithful, then that life is good for eternity.

But the body in which that life must reside for the present, and through which it must find its expression and action, is good only for this world. It can never and will never enter the heavenly kingdom. It is “sinful flesh,” the “sinful nature,” which the apostles and prophets confessed themselves as having. It is under condemnation of death and destruction, and that sentence will be executed.

The fact that this mortal flesh and blood body has to go anyway, is the great comfort for the martyr as he faces the death of it. Well can he say, “Let it go. It is no good to me anyway. The Lord has a new and incorruptible, immortal, sinless body for me which is fit for heaven and eternity. So in losing this I am losing nothing at all.”

Yet man will decorate it when it is alive, embalm it when it is dead and erect costly monuments over its last resting place. What a sad commentary is this on the distorted values of human judgment.

The certainty that this flesh and blood which we now have, will never enter the kingdom, is made clear in the following words:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. *1 Corinthians 15:50-54*

Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. *Therefore man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs. *The Great Controversy*, 323

The sinful flesh is very much a factor in the life of the Christian which he must reckon with. Therefore we need to understand what to expect from it and what we in turn through the power of God can demand of it.

Let us go back to the woman of *Romans 7:1-4*, and look for the answers there. Here is a woman who all her lifetime has been married to the old husband. During that time she has thoroughly learned the ways of that husband and formed certain habits of living, which are not going to disappear the moment she marries the new husband. It is going to take some time to unlearn certain things and newly learn those things which properly belong in the new society. This would be absolutely true in any human marriage and it is equally true in the spiritual counterpart.

The Saviour knows this and makes full provision for it. We might do well to begin with the more simple illustrations of this. Under the old marriage, Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, and other of the reformers learned to observe the first day of the week as their day of worship. All of their lifetimes they had done this. It was the way of things in the household of the devil and part of his defiance of the God of heaven and of the true husband, Jesus Christ. So deeply had they been steeped in Papal darkness by the old husband, that it was too much for them to see and know the nature of this habit of life, when they first came over into

the new household of Jesus Christ. In fact, for the whole of the rest of *their* lifetimes *they* remained very firm Sunday keepers.



While Martin Luther and the other reformers came out of great darkness, they did not find all the light and thus still retained many of the habits of life learned under the old marriage, such as Sunday keeping. But this did not mean that the old husband and his children had not been eradicated from their hearts. While they brought with them some of the habits of the old life, they brought none of its spirit or nature. That was gone.

But while they brought over this habit and this thinking from the old to the new marriage, they did not in any sense of the word bring over its spirit or its character. They had in them the divine life of the Son of God and in spirit and in life they were Sabbath keepers even though they still observed the wrong day of the week for the Sabbath.

All this the new husband understood, and with infinite love and patience instructed these believers, ever seeking to lead them away from these erroneous habits to the correct way of life. And while He was not able to bring them in their own lifetimes to the point where they understood this, He was able to bring them to it in the lifetimes of their children's children, of whom a remnant showed that they still had the spirit of their fathers to walk in all the ways of the heavenly Husband perfectly, as soon as they could learn those ways.

There are other habits too. Habits of eating and dressing which have been so long the habitual way of life under the old marriage do not pass in a moment when the new marriage is entered into. Some of these things take time to learn but learn them we must. The new Husband is ever seeking to prepare us for the home He has in store for us. He has come from a very far country to claim us as His bride, and now we are with Him on the journey back to that land of promise and hope. On the journey along through life toward that beautiful home we have many lessons to learn.

Ever with loving diligence the Lord is seeking to teach us these things, and on our part we must be diligent and eager to learn and cooperate. While old habits will strive for the mastery, yet we are to resolutely refuse to live again in that old way, but to live in the new as far as we have learned it.

Something of this may well be summed up in the truth that it is not enough to have a good husband in order to have a happy family. We must also have an educated and efficient wife. Likewise living successfully in the Christian way is not only a matter of having a pure heart in which are only the very best of motives. Without that of course, we cannot possibly live the Christian life, but it in itself is still not enough. We also need a Christian education.

This does not mean that we have to dash off to a college for it. Such an education finds its beginning in the home and is to be carried on day by day throughout life by our own diligent prayer and study. Therefore, it is the duty and the responsibility of every child of God to study and search for an understanding of the way of heavenly life so that we can intelligently face the problems which will test us day by day.

FRAILTY AS WELL

Before closing this chapter, we need to turn to the consideration of a problem which faces Christians and which causes many to doubt if they have really been converted. This problem arises simply because we have not understood what has been taken away in conversion and what has not been taken away.

As we saw above the old husband is gone and his children with him, representing Satan and the evil heart. This evil heart we recognize by the presence of indwelling hatred, malice, bitterness, pride and the like. While these things are gone and have no part nor place in the life of a Christian, the frailties, weaknesses, and liabilities to sin of the human

flesh remain. And in that human flesh we can experience joy, sorrow, disappointment, frustration, and the pressure of life. By these means the human spirit can be provoked and stirred. There is the temptation to fretfulness and the giving away to impatience. These things will be stirred within us and when they are then it is that many doubt that they have ever been converted.

It may sound here as if there is a contradiction but there is not if we clearly define the difference in our minds between the evil of hatred and pride which can have no place whatsoever in the Christian, and these human responses. Very early in her life Ellen White gained a true and living connection with the new heavenly Husband, and yet as a mother she could write of her experience as follows:

When I have felt roiled and was tempted to speak words that I would be ashamed of, I would keep silent and pass right out of the room and ask God to give me patience to teach these children. *Child Guidance*, 254,255

How shall we understand these facts?

God, as a very necessary and wise precaution, has built into the human organism the wonderful law of self-preservation. It is to be ever subject to the higher laws of self-sacrifice and love, but it will always seek to exert itself to first place in the life. It can and does carry a very strong appeal to the ruling power of the mind and we need to understand the working of it in order to keep it in its rightful place.

It should be quite simple for any of us to understand the following, for we are experiencing it every day. There is a certain limit to what the physical organism of an individual can stand. For some this is much less than for others because of their weakened state of vitality and health, a combination of heredity and of wrong living since birth. Yet daily, this human organism is being subjected to demands and pressures which are sapping away our strength and vitality. As these constant calls come in and we find ourselves under obligation to perform this and that responsibility, our strength is being worn away. As we have only a limited amount of strength, if this process is not arrested long enough to enable us to replenish our diminished physical resources, then the obvious result would be death.

Therefore it follows that there has to be some inbuilt guidance and warning system to warn us as to when we are approaching the limit of our endurance. Otherwise we would go on and on, unconscious of our

danger until we had reached and passed the point of no return. Right here then, is where the law of self-preservation comes in.

The more worn and exhausted the strength becomes, then the more it exerts a warning on the mind and calls for a retreat from this situation. This warning takes the form of tension, frustration, a mounting sense of anxiety, and so on. Eventually, the spirit may break down altogether, and manifest its protest to this treatment in words of impatience and fretfulness. The fact that we live today in a flesh which has been so weakened by six thousand years of sin, means that the limitations and shortcomings are so much the sooner reached than they could ever have been in the early days of human history.

It is important that we understand the nature of these feelings within. Anything which we do not understand is mysterious and frightening. Therefore, the first step in successfully living victoriously over these things, is to understand them as part of that which has not been taken away from us in the new marriage. The next step is to take notice of what they are saying to us and then to study to avoid situations which will bring the human spirit to the breaking point. Thus Ellen White in the statement quoted above, tells how she did it. When the pressure had become so great that she was tempted to be roiled up, she would quietly retreat from the pressure until she had the time to pray and gain strength and perfect control over her spirit and then she could return complete master of herself, to deal with the situation victoriously.

But we may find ourselves in a situation from which there is no escape at the moment. We feel that we have come to the end of our resources and that we are on the very verge of losing control over the pressing demands of the body for escape from this. We cannot stand it much longer. Do not despair, for at this time a living prayer of faith to the throne of Grace will bring the strength to cope with the problem and you will be enabled to go calmly through the crisis victorious all the way.

For no matter how weak the human frame may be, no matter how strong the law of self-preservation, no matter how heavy the pressure upon us, *there is still no excuse for sin*. Weak and human though we be, we do have a very wonderful and loving and all-powerful Husband who will most certainly never permit temptations to come to us which are too much for us to bear at this given stage of our development. If we

understand these things and know the living power of God, then we can face anything with a calm consistency which just none of the powers of the devil can destroy.

There is then no need to doubt that you have the new husband because the law of self-preservation is doing its God appointed work. Understand the place for these things in the experience and then apply the solution as provided in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Remember, there are some things which have to remain. If the Lord should take away your appetites, passions, and affections then you would cease to exist. If you lost your appetite which is the desire to eat then you would very soon starve to death.

But at the same time we cannot, and do not as Christians, give the free rein to the appetites. *Uncontrolled* appetite is sin, while an appetite under control, even though it be defective through the general depravity of sin, is Christianity. But on the other hand, controlled *hatred* is still *hatred*, and controlled *pride* is still *pride*. In no sense of the word can it be said that they are love and humility. Never! Therefore, while the first must be kept under very strict control, the latter must be totally eradicated and replaced by its opposite number altogether.

The whole lesson taught to us in the first few verses of *Romans* seven then, is very clear and plain. It shows that there can never be good deeds in the life unless there is first of all a good character, which, in turn, never exists unless there is *first* of all a union of the divine with the human. This in turn can only take place when there has *first* of all been a setting free from the old connection and character.

But, while all this has been taken away, we are still human beings and therefore are compassed with all the weakness and frailties of the human organism. But if we understand this and what to expect of the human organism then we can be a step ahead all the time and will know that we do not need to sin at all.

All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard the spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he was; yet this was not allowed to excuse his sin. God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the

pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 421

Therefore, it is for us to be of good cheer, for the weakness and frailty of this human flesh is still no excuse for sin. True, the devil will do all in his power to have you look upon that weakness and frailty until you see it as the only measure of resistance to his threats and assaults. Should you fall for his devices, then you will be so filled with hopelessness and discouragement that you would never gain the victory at all. Look away from the weakness of the human strength to the mighty power of the living God in the gospel in Jesus Christ, and know that we can do all that God has designed for the happiness and fulfillment of the human being through Christ who is our strength and salvation.

Let it not be overlooked though, that we have to take this flesh into account and be aware of its shortcomings and limitations. When in the above paragraph it is stated that we are to look away from the weakness of our humanity, it is said in the sense that we should not be studying it as a weapon with which to fight the devil, for it is too weak and helpless for that.

Yet, while we are to look away from it in this sense, yet we are to understand it, so that we shall know how to deal with it and cope with its demands. Thus, knowing the truth of both the divine mind and what we can expect from it, and the human nature and what we can expect from it, and of the power of God and what He will do for us through the divine nature to the controlling and disciplining of the human, then we can know the perfect peace of victory through our Saviour all the time.

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, *I die daily.* 1 Corinthians 15:3 (KJV)

So often is this Scripture quoted as an objection to the message of living righteousness, that we could hardly afford not to spend a little space in the study of it in this book. One has but to present the living truth of the power of God to save from sin in the life by the eradication of the old man and the bringing in of a new man altogether, and as surely there will be someone in the audience who will speak up and say, "Ah! But we must die daily. Paul did."

Paul did indeed, but when he used that expression, "*I die daily,*" did he mean by that what the usual objector to the message understands him to have said? That is the question. Speaking from experience we would say that there is quite a difference between the two, so we could rightly conclude that the text here under study is one of the most misunderstood and misquoted verses in the Scriptures of Truth.

We might do well to discover first of all what the usual objector means by quoting this text and perhaps this is nowhere better illustrated than by this example. One of the folk who uses this text as evidence that the old nature remains in us and must be subdued again every day, illustrated his theology in this way. He was out in a field talking with an enquirer and before him was a tough and wiry little thorn bush, the indestructible type which will never die. Pointing to it he declared that it was a fit symbol of his evil nature. Instructing his friend to watch, he placed his foot on the plant and pressed it to the ground, stating as he did so that this was the way in which he kept that old sinful nature within him under control every day. But when night came, he must always take his foot away, he declared and did so as he spoke. That little thorn bush sprang right back into an upright position once again. So the next morning, he explained, he had to put his foot right back on that thorn bush again and keep it down under subjection. So likewise, he stated, he had to put his old evil nature under subjection afresh every morning.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about all this was that this man was a farmer, who in real life would never for one moment deal with a natural thorn bush in this way. This leaves us wondering at the

inconsistent and confused thinking of folk who do not have the heavenly eyesalve to see the extent to which they have to stretch things to fit their theories.

That is no way to deal with a thorn bush in nature and it is just as certainly no way to deal with the evil nature in the spiritual world. To turn to the other illustration of the marriage which we have spent so much space in studying, we might well ask the question. Once a marriage has been dissolved does the old husband and his children come creeping back every evening to again be expelled every morning?

Of course not! To imagine so is neither sensible nor logical. It is no more sensible or logical than the above quoted approach to the thorn bush problem. When the old thorn bush needs to be dealt with, no sensible gardener is going to stand there with his foot on it every day, day after day to prevent it from tearing the flesh of the passer-by with its thorns or of taking the nourishment from the good plant which he is anxious to have grow in the garden. He will not waste so much as a single minute doing that but will dig it right up by the roots and burn it, knowing that this will be the end of it. Other thorn bushes may later grow where that one is, if he is a negligent gardener, but that one is well and truly finished.

Likewise, when a man and a woman marry, he is there to stay. He does not have to be remarried to her every morning. True there are renewals of consecration but not remarriage. That is once and for all.

Yet, Paul said, "*I die daily.*" What did he mean by this?

Let us first of all certify what he did not mean. He did not mean by this that the old stony heart had to die again every day. This is made clear not only from the illustration of the marriage already discussed from *Romans 7:1-4*, but from the plain, clear words found in *Romans 6:1-14*.

We shall not take the space to quote all of this here but suggest that each reader take their Bibles and read it thoughtfully and prayerfully for themselves and when doing so note the clarity of the teaching that the experience of death has come to the true Christian to the point where the old man *is dead*.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence forth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. *Romans 6:6,7*

In no sense of the word does this verse teach that the old nature is to be subdued by being held in subjection but that it is to be crucified to the point of destruction. That which has been destroyed does not spring back to life every day and have to be crucified all over again. Take a thorn bush, so aptly chosen by the Saviour as the illustration of the old spiritual nature, and destroy it, and that will be the end of it. You will know that you are not going to have to destroy the same tree all over again tomorrow.

In like manner it is the plan and purpose of God that we should have the evil spiritual nature destroyed right out of us *once for all* at the beginning of the Christian experience. See how plainly this is taught:

We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:9-11



Once and once only, did Jesus have to go to the cross of Calvary and die there for the human race and having died there once, forever after He lives unto God. He does not have to come and repeat this death day

after day after day. It was done once for all time. Having established this fact in verses nine and ten, Paul then brings the application of it right to the human being, stating that exactly as it was with Him, so it is to be with us. As He died once and liveth unto God, so are we to die once and forever after live unto God.

Paul knew this, not only as a truth, but as a living, personal experience so that he could testify,

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. *Galatians 2:20*

Paul knew what it meant to be a new creation in very fact and knew what it meant to have the life of Christ manifesting itself in his life. He would know that the new life in him would not be at war with the principles of the divine government and its laws. He would have experienced the following:

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 into conformity to His will, *that when obeying Him, we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The Desire of Ages*, 668

Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs, or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of God with a willing heart. *The Sanctified Life*, 13

It is certain that no true student of the Word of God would deny but that Paul was a truly converted man, if ever there was one, and as such certainly did consent for Christ to so identify Himself with his thoughts and aims that when obeying Him, Paul was but carrying out his own impulses. For Paul it would most certainly be as natural to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rose bush to yield roses.

If this was not true of the apostle Paul, then the above quoted words are not true either and could never be true of anyone. It would mean that the claim of the devil that the law could not be kept by mortal

human beings is a truthful claim after all and that God is the liar and not Satan.

But these words are true. This *is* the experience of a truly converted man and is the evidence of true conversion. It was true in Paul's day and it is equally true today, not only in the so-called civilized countries, where the name of Christ is known and the written Word is available to all, but it is equally true for the truly converted man who has not even heard the name of Christ, because he is so isolated from the rest of the world. Even these "*by nature do what the law requires.*" *Romans 2:14*

Nothing written anywhere in the Word of God can ever contradict the facts of Paul's living experience wherein he did "*by nature what the law requires.*" "*It was just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs, or for the rosebush to yield roses.*" When obeying God he was but "*carrying out*" his "*own impulses.*"

How then could he say, "*I die daily,*" when the meaning of that passage of Scripture is explained as the following?

Paul's sanctification was a constant conflict with self. Said he, "*I die daily.*" His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature. *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:299

How totally opposite this appears to be to the previous testimony in regard to the experience of a truly converted man. Once again we have what seems to be a flat contradiction, but, inasmuch as there are no true contradictions in the Bible anywhere, we need to study a little further to discover the harmony between these two passages of Scripture.

In the Bible there are often two things called by the same name and yet in every particular they are different and as Bible students we must understand these differences between things which are different but are called by the same name. In both of the apparently opposite sets of passages quoted above, the *nature* being discussed is a different one. If we are able to understand this then all difficulty will disappear and our understanding of the Scriptures will be just that much more comprehensive and accurate.

The two natures being spoken of in the above quotations are the *divine* nature in the first set and the *human* nature in the latter. This conclusion is not drawn by guesswork for the context of the statements themselves makes it quite clear which is under consideration.

Let us look at the first of them before we take the second. There we are told that it will be just as natural to bear the “fruits of the Spirit,” as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rose bush to yield roses. This is but to say that we will *by very nature* be loving, joyful, peaceful, gentle, good, faith-filled, meek, and temperate, these being the fruits of the Spirit. We should know perfectly well that these are the attributes of the *divine* nature and never of the human nature.

It is not and never could be of human nature to bring forth such characteristics. It is the divine nature resident in the human nature which is the fountain of such good fruit, and when obeying God, it will be the carrying out of the impulses of this *nature*, the divine nature acquired as the gift of God upon the expulsion of the old spiritual nature. These things could never be the impulses of the human nature which will always oppose the calls of God to the believer. If we are speaking of the human nature then we shall have to say that we obey God, not as an impulse of this, the human nature, but contrary to it and in spite of it; against its inclinations and dispositions.

No matter how deeply and thoroughly you partake of the life of God in the soul, your human nature will never look forward with eager delight to suffering, tragedy, loss, pain, and the like. The flesh and blood body organism will always shrink back and seek to escape this, yet the call of God into service will again and again lead us into this very kind of experience. Therefore, when God calls for us to make the most demanding sacrifices, even to the very giving up of the life of our dearest and nearest, or even our own lives, we shall do it as a natural impulse of the divine nature within; yet at the same time we shall be doing it against the will and the inclination of the human nature whose strongest motivation is self-preservation.

This does not mean that the law of self-preservation is an evil law, for it is far from this. It is a divinely implanted necessity to save us from throwing our lives away, and obedience to this law is required of God. The watchcare of parents over their children is a part of it. In its proper sphere it operates for the preservation of the life of every one of us. But there is the higher law of self-sacrificing service to others and this higher law cancels out the lower law.

But this canceling of the law of self-preservation in favor of the law of self-sacrifice is not an automatic thing at all but depends upon an act of the will of the individual concerned. We must choose to put to the

death the demands of that law, and we shall have to do it every day of our lives to a greater or less degree. And it is in this sense that we are to die daily exactly as in this same sense Paul died daily.

To see the fact and the truth of this we have but to look again at the context to the words of Paul not only in *1 Corinthians 15:31*, but also in *2 Corinthians 4:7-12*, for these are parallel Scriptures. We shall read the context to the first reference before we take the second.

Why am I in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." *1 Corinthians 15:30-32*

The reference to the fighting with beasts at Ephesus refers back to the occasion when Demetrius the silver smith stirred the whole city against Paul so that his very life was in danger. It is proper to ask at this point though, which life was in jeopardy, his physical or his eternal, spiritual life? All must acknowledge that it was his physical life which was threatened. The subject of the context was not the spiritual life of Paul but his human physical life. This is what was threatened there and he testified that he was prepared to give up that life, even to the very death if need be. Therefore he could say, "**I die every day,**" for God accepts the willingness for the fact, just as the man who hates his brother in his heart is counted by God as a murderer.

Nor is there any injustice on the part of God in doing this, for the man who has hate in his heart is in fact a murderer by nature waiting only for the opportunity to execute the evil impulses of that nature. So likewise in the matter of dying daily God counts it so for it is indeed so. Let us analyze the situation as follows.

We enter into a new day of life with a certain store of physical, mental, and material resources. These things are very precious to us and are our life-supports. As we proceed into the day, we come face to face with a situation which demands of us that we give up some of those resources, which is to say that we are being called upon to give away our very life. But this day God is not yet calling for *all* that we have but only a measure of it, but, if we are truly possessed of the living spirit of self-sacrifice then we will give *all* that the Lord asks of us today, even though we must do it against the inclination and the will of the human nature so bent as it is on its self-preservation.

Tomorrow the Lord comes to us again and asks for *all* that He asked for yesterday and some more besides and again we give *all* that the need demands of us. So then the *all* which we gave today is more than the *all* which we gave yesterday so far as actual quantity is concerned but not so far as degree is concerned. In this it was the same in both cases,—*all*. Then on the next day or later when the Lord demands still more, then we will give *all* of that too and then even more that later demands will make upon us. Now, in the willing giving of the *all* which the Lord demands today we give witness to the fact that there is just no limit to the sacrifice we will make. Therefore, in literal fact in each act of giving of the *all* that is called for, we lay not just the resources of life asked for, but the whole of life on the altar so that if the Lord needed it all right now then it is His to take, right now. Thus it is true that we submit to the very death of the human nature every time that we make a true sacrifice for God and thus we die daily. This is still more clearly shown in the second reference:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; *always* carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. *2 Corinthians 4:7-12*

The words, “every day,” and the word “*always*,” mean the same thing, by which we see that this verse is but the same statement as that of the previous one. “I die every day.” Just as he expressed the thought in those words there, so here he puts it this way: “*always carrying in the body the death of Jesus.*”

But how was it that he was always carrying in the body this death? Was it by putting the old spiritual nature to death again every morning when he awoke, or was it by the submission of his physical and material resources on the altar of sacrifice day by day? Let the next statement answer the question for us. It is a direct comment on the verses under consideration:

Referring to his own experiences, Paul showed that in choosing the service of Christ he had not been prompted by selfish motives, for his pathway had been beset by trial and temptation. "We are troubled on every side," he wrote, "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."

Paul reminded his brethren that as Christ's messengers, he and his fellow-laborers were continually in peril. *The hardships they endured were wearing away their strength.* "We which live," he wrote, "are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you." *Suffering physically through privation and toil, these ministers of Christ were conforming to His death.* But that which was working death in them was bringing spiritual life and health to the Corinthians, who by a belief in the truth were being made partakers of life eternal. In view of this, the followers of Jesus were to be careful not to increase, by neglect or disaffection, the burdens and trials of the laborers. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 330

This statement along with the Bible verses make it very plain indeed that when Paul spoke of dying daily, he was speaking of the subjugation to the very death of the physical and human desires and inclinations of his life, and not about putting to death the old spiritual nature. That had been crucified to the death at the very beginning of his Christian experience. He could testify in truth,

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. *2 Corinthians 5:17*

But it never could be enjoyable for him to endure such suffering and hardship. Human nature is not inclined toward this sort of thing but very much in the other direction so that every day Paul's "will and his desires conflicted with duty and the will of God." But "instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature." But the fact he had to do this and the fact that everyone of us will have to do this is not an indication that we do not have the new nature, the divine life of God in the soul. It only proves that we are human beings, still with all the powers, passions,

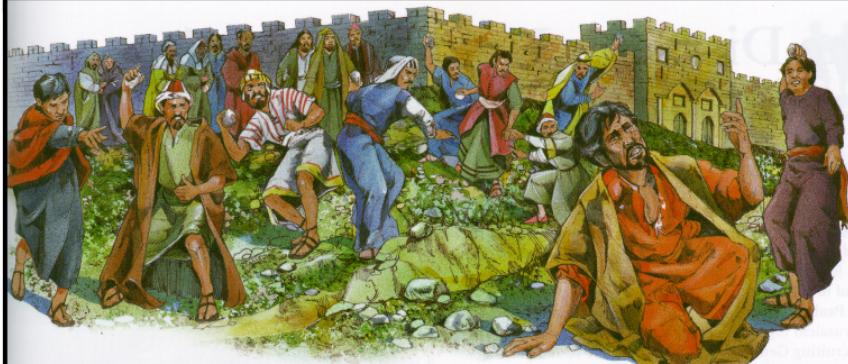
weaknesses, and infirmities of a human being, even though there is now resident in that human organism a new life, a new character and a new disposition altogether.



Every day Paul's life was being sacrificially expended in the service of God. This not only was wearing away his physical resources, but often brought him into very jeopardy of life itself.

But, so strong was his love for God as the outflow of the impulse of his divine nature, that he committed his life everyday to all that God required of it even to the very death, if need be.

It was in reference to this daily committal of all of life's resources, that he said, "I die daily," not to any daily crucifixion of the carnal nature.



While it is true that all selfishness, when this word is defined as the preference for self above the interests of others, especially when taken to the point where we manifest that spirit in actual words and deeds, is sin, self-interest when kept within the bounds of the higher laws of loving service, is not essentially sinful. Here is a point which many fail to understand, the idea prevailing that all self is sin.

The fact that not all self is sin is made evident by the fact that the unfallen beings also have a self, or self-interest, which makes them to be individuals just as our own personal self makes us to be individuals as distinct from each and every other individual. And in heaven before

there ever was a tempter or even the first sin, the angels needed to live out the law of self-sacrifice, self-renunciation and self-discipline in order to live in perfect harmony with each other.

Sin entered when one of the heavenly host no longer was prepared to go on doing that, but determined instead to put *his* self-interest first. On Satan's side the claim is that the more you look after yourself and draw all things to yourself, the happier you are ever going to be. The Lord states that this is the certain way to death and destruction.

But the controversy is settled by the life and death of Christ.

In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of *self-renouncing love* is the law of life for earth *and heaven*; that the "love which seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." *The Desire of Ages*, 20

Here is a statement which plainly shows that the law of *self-renouncing love* is the law of life for *heaven*. Therefore, *in heaven* self and self-interest must be renounced as a matter of Christian principle, but it could never be understood that the self to be renounced there is a *sinful* self. It is not such at all, it only becomes sinful when it no longer abides under the beneficent control of that law, and then it is expelled from heaven anyway.

Now this is true of the angels but this is not all that the statement says. It says that this is the very principle of the life of God and that in His life through Christ it finds its most perfect demonstration. Read the statement again and you will see that the life of God is a life of *self-renunciation*. Reflect but a few moments on the great truths of the gospel, and this will become evident enough to the mind, for the life lived by Jesus upon this earth was the life of God in very fact. It was not an act, designed to give a calculated concept of God, but the most natural and perfect revelation of that life of God, for "*in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.*" *2 Corinthians 5:19*

Was there ever a better picture of self-renunciation like unto that demonstration? Think of all that was in His own self-interest that Jesus left behind in the kingdom of heaven to come to this earth and die for you and for me, but did He ever in renouncing all that, renounce a *sinful* self-interest? Why of course not!

And God the Father Himself has given to us the great demonstration

of the personal renunciation of His own self-interest when He gave Jesus to the human family. It was not an easy thing for Him to do and it required a struggle of tremendous proportions before He could do it. God's inclination and will were opposed to the call of the hour so far as His own self-interest was concerned, but He obeyed the call of duty and put to the very death the desire to preserve Himself in His Son from the death on Calvary. Let us read the story of it as follows:

Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance.

Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, He is in close converse with His Father. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father, His person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and doubt, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express.

He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

Said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no. *It was even a struggle with the God of heaven*, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His beloved Son to die for him." *The Early Writings*, 149, 151

It cost Paul something to die daily, to renounce his own self-interest and press on in the pathway of loving, self-sacrificing service for perishing man. Likewise it cost Christ something to leave heaven and come down and give Himself for perishing humanity. Just as truly and

surely as Paul could say of himself, "I die daily," so also could Christ truthfully say the same thing. For neither of them was it accomplished without suffering and sorrow but they went ahead against every natural human instinct and desire to do the will of God no matter how crucifying to the nature.

So, too, did it cost the God of heaven something to give Himself in His Son to save a perishing world, and it took a very real struggle to do it. God had to die to self-interest completely to do it, so that with Christ and Paul, God too could say, "*I die daily.*"

But in no case was it a matter of putting to death the old spiritual nature. In the case of the Father and the Son, neither of them ever had that nature, being always and forever pure within. And in the case of Paul, it had died once and for all at the new birth experience. He never again allowed the devil to find a home in his heart.

It follows then that we must not confuse the dying daily of the self-interest so that we can give unstinted service to God and man, with the dying of the old spiritual nature which is intended by God to be a once for all time experience at the outset of the Christian life. The two are separate and distinct, involving each in turn a different nature altogether.

This does not mean that we can never afterwards again fall back into a lost condition. Certainly we have the freedom to renounce the marriage with Christ and return to the old evil husband again if we wish. We can tear out the good tree and plant the evil tree back in its place. We are not "once saved, always saved."

It will help a great deal in the battle with sin if we understand that we will always find that the human nature will be reluctant to make sacrifices. If we know this will be so, then we can know how to deny the clamors of the human nature and do the very thing which the divine impulse within is calling upon us to do. In other words, learn to live not by inclination, but by principle.

Previously, we saw the whole experience of the death of the old nature and the resurrection of a new life altogether illustrated by the experience of marriage. It is outlined for us in the first few verses of chapter seven of *Romans*. In the beginning of that chapter the point was made, that because we are so slow of heart to learn and to see, God has to illustrate this point again and again and from every possible angle. So that the full impact and design of this series of studies shall be realized, we will not pass from this stage of our study without taking up at least one more such illustration.

To do this we turn now to the Old Testament, and herein we shall find that God has given to us a very wonderful illustration of the new birth experience, the beginning of a new life, through one of the ceremonial feasts (the old law which Israel was asked to observe until the time when Christ should come).

In *Leviticus* chapter 23, we find outlined for us the seven great feast days of the Jewish year. In their order as they fell throughout the year these were:

- the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month,
- the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
- the Feast of First Fruits,
- the Feast of Weeks later known as Pentecost,
- the Feast of Trumpets,
- the Great Day of Atonement, and
- the Feast of Harvest Ingathering.

This series of feasts was prophetic of great events to take place during the era when type would give place to antitype. In other words each of these feasts was a type, and each feast represented an actual event that was to take place.

For instance, the Passover was typical of the death of Christ upon the cross, and His death was the antitype or the fulfillment of that feast, or that type.

Likewise, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was typical of the experience of the people in their sorrow over Christ's death, and also of the special work of putting away sin, which followed their true

understanding of His experience.

The Feast of First Fruits pointed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Feast of Weeks pointed to the mighty outpouring of the Spirit on the great day of Pentecost.

All of these feasts which typified the first advent of Christ took place at the beginning of the ceremonial year and were grouped fairly close together. In like manner the antitype of each took place quite closely together at the beginning of what we know as the Christian era.

The last three feasts took place in a group very close to the end of the year, and this would indicate that the antitype of each would likewise fall near the end of time. This is true.

The Feast of Trumpets pointed forward to the warning of impending judgment which was not heralded as a present reality till the early part of the nineteenth century.

The Great Day of Atonement heralded the opening of the Investigative Judgment of the dead and then of the living which began at the close of the 2300 year prophecy in 1844.

The Harvest Ingathering is the joyous homecoming for the saints which follows these events.

Now, in this particular chapter we do not plan to deal with each of these prophetic types. But what we do need to understand is that not only do these feasts serve as types of events to come but they were also types or object lessons of the experience that the Lord looked for each one of His children to possess and to enjoy.

Therefore we must understand and experience them for ourselves. If we only know these lessons from the Old Testament as ceremonies that pointed forward to events in the Christian era, and fail to find their counterpart in our life's experience, then the true value and intent of them will be lost to us.

Now these feasts set forth the intended experiences in their order. We are studying at this stage in our series, the new birth, and inasmuch as this is the very first experience of fellowship with Christ we would expect that the first of the yearly feast days would be the lesson book for the new birth experience. This is exactly right and true. *The Passover is an object lesson of the new birth experience.*

What is an object lesson? An object lesson is a system of teaching wherein the instruction is not given by direct oral teaching but instead

is acted out, using objects to represent the reality. This is an especially effective means of teaching especially for the beginner who is feeling his way and has not yet learned to comprehend the deeper things of the Word. But let not the advanced learner scorn this method either, for there is so much that he too may learn from it.

With object lessons, every object and every action with the object is significant. Therefore we need to ask, "what is the spiritual lesson that this is intended to teach *me*, and how is that to find its place as a living part of my own experience?" We will find, as we ask this question and find the answers to it, that we shall marvel at the beauty and the power of the lesson which God has given to us.

So we turn to the Passover as the object lesson of the first experience of the believer in the gospel, which is the first experience *in the power of God* to save from sin. That there is a lesson to be learned from the Passover service is evident from this statement:

The Passover was to be both commemorative *and* typical, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt but *forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin. Patriarchs and Prophets*, 277-278

Now let us ask the question: "When are we freed from the bondage of sin?" The answer must be, "In the new birth experience!" And right here in the above statement we are most plainly told that the Passover is typical, or an object lesson (which is the same thing), of the experience of being freed from the bondage of sin. If we have not seen that in the lesson of the Passover, then we simply have not seen what the Lord has put for us in that instruction. The Passover means nothing to us yet.

Already in this series we have seen how the situation of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt was a complete illustration of the situation of the professed child of God gripped in the control of the power of sin. At that stage in the series we took the illustration no further because we were then concerned with seeing clearly the nature of the problem that we faced. Now we have come to the place where we are concerned with the need of deliverance, and so it is time to take the lesson of the Passover through to the end.

The story is told in *Exodus* chapter 12. Let us follow through this glorious lesson to see the *more* glorious experience of the reality as Paul described it:

For if what was being brought to an end came with glory,
much more will what is permanent have glory. *2 Corinthians 3:11*

At the very beginning of the chapter the Lord said to Moses and to Aaron,

This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be
the first month of the year for you. *Exodus 12:2*

For them it was to be *the beginning of a new life altogether*. It was to be the absolute leaving behind of the old life of bondage and the going forth to a new life of freedom and righteousness. In the Passover the fullest provision was made for that experience, and any who did not enter into it simply failed to avail themselves of the blessings offered.

Each family was instructed to take a lamb of the sheep or the kid of the goats and, after having been specially set apart until the fourteenth day it was to be slain in the evening of that day by the people themselves and the blood was to be applied to the doorposts and the lintel of their dwellings.

That perfect and spotless lamb is a fit symbol of Jesus, the Lamb of God, and let it never be forgotten that, just as the Israelite himself had to take the life of that lamb, so it is your sin and mine that has taken the life of the Son of God. He did not die on the cross from the physical effects of the crucifixion. He died as the fearful weight of sin crushed out His life. By our sins we slew the Saviour on the tree. This truth should reveal to us the fearful consequences of sin, that its wages are death, and as we see the spotless One dying as a direct result of our actions it should lead us to hate sin as we have never hated it before, and to shun it with all the loathing that it deserves.

Without the death of the lamb, none of the next steps in the Passover service would have been possible. Likewise, that great sacrificial act of the Redeemer opened to all mankind the blessings of heaven and without it there is no hope and no life at all for anyone, anywhere, anytime. Everything in the work of redemption hinges upon that which Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary.

But it is not sufficient that we recognize and believe this. It would be safe to say that the entire professed Christian world believes that, and yet by far the greater proportion of them will perish nonetheless. Each family had to sprinkle the blood on the posts of the door to be effective in that situation, and so in the same way the blood must be applied to each one of us individually. That which the Lord accomplished upon

the cross must become effective in the life of each one and it is left with each one to apply the benefits of that atonement to themselves. Nobody else can do it for you.

The Lord brought the benefits of the Passover service to them *right where they were* in the land of sin still. Every person who received and ate the Passover lamb did so without having taken a single step out of the land of sin. They were right there still in Egypt, for although they lived slightly apart in the land of Goshen, that was still a part of the land of Egypt and so they were still in that land. Think of that land. It was the land of sin, of bondage, hardship, slavery, sorrow, frustration, darkness, and death. And they were right there in that land and they themselves were experiencing all the conditions of that land while they were there.

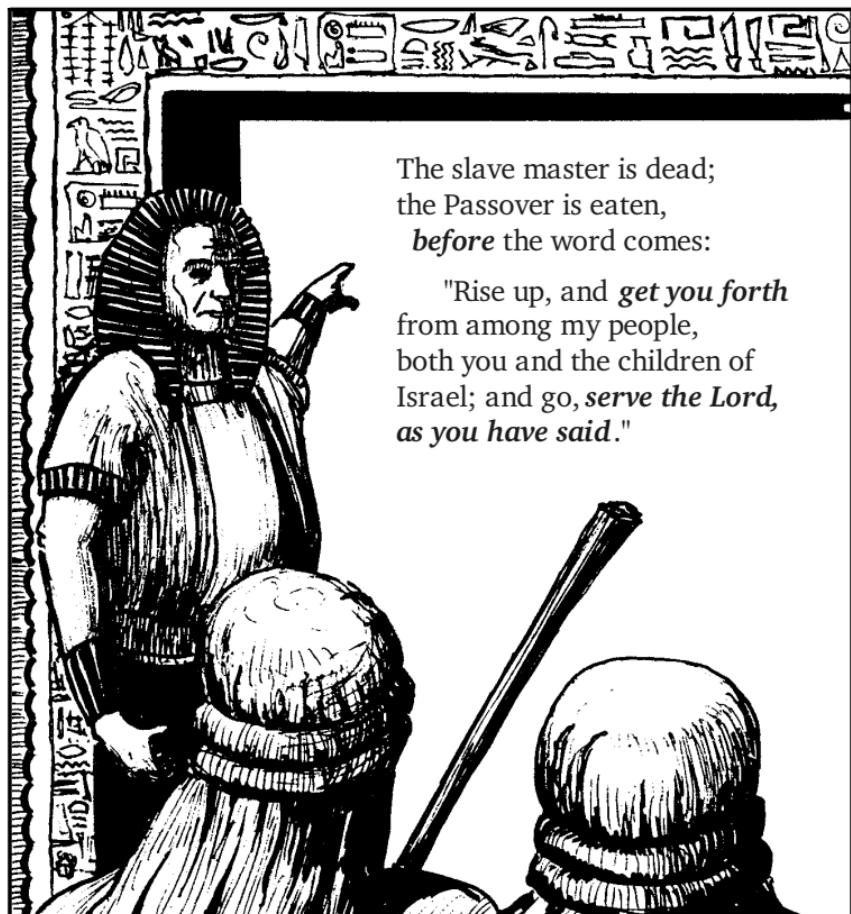
So likewise we are in the land of sin and of bondage, of misery and of death, and right there *where we are* in our captivity and our great need the Lord brings the gospel right to us, and offers it to us as it is, and *as we are*. No greater mistake can be made than to imagine that first we must make ourselves better before we can receive the blessings of redemption.

If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think that they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” *Jeremiah 13:23*. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. *We must come to Christ just as we are. Steps to Christ, 31*

Now, before the Israelite could leave the land of bondage, two things had to happen. Until those two events took place they could not leave, and they did not leave. Mark them well for the same two events must take place in our lives before we can leave the land of sin and of bondage.

The first of those two events was this: *the slave-master had to die*. Nine terrible and devastating plagues had marched their destructively ruinous way across that fair and fertile land, but all of that had not sufficed to break the power of the slave-master. The Israelite remained

securely in his power still. And now it is evident that nothing short of the death of the firstborn could set the slaves free. While ever that slave-master lived on, they remained in bondage. This is not to say that only the firstborn in Egypt filled the role of the taskmaster. It is to say that the firstborn was the heir to all that Egypt was, and in the firstborn was vested the power and the might of Egypt. Therefore, when the firstborn died, the power of Egypt died with him.



The slave master is dead;
the Passover is eaten,
before the word comes:

"Rise up, and *get you forth*
from among my people,
both you and the children of
Israel; and go, *serve the Lord,*
as you have said."

In precisely the same manner, there is nothing that can free us from the power of sin more than the death of sin itself. The old husband *must die*, the stony heart *must be eradicated*. *While that slave-master lives on you remain a slave to sin still.* There is just nothing else for it but that. No truth should be more plainly understood, more firmly held, nor

more definitely experienced than that.

But the Israelite was not required to take a sword and go out and slay the firstborn. That was something that was far beyond his power to do. Instead he must leave that to the One who could do it and by faith wait on Him to execute it.

So likewise, let us remember that it is futile to attempt to put down the old nature. That is God's task. He asks us to come to Him and deliver the task into His hands and leave Him to do that which He alone can do. Any attempt on our part to take over the Lord's task is only to guarantee the frustration of the work of salvation on our behalf.

But the destruction of the sin-master was but the first of the two things that must happen. The second was the partaking of a new life to replace the old. Thus it was that every Israelite that night ate of the lamb before they left that room and began their journey in freedom. By partaking of the flesh of that lamb its life became their life.

There is a baker's shop that backs onto the railway line between the Central Station in Sydney and Redfern. On the wall has been painted in large letters, "What you eat today walks and talks tomorrow." This is true. The life and the vitality of that which you eat becomes your life.

See how clearly and how plainly the lesson is taught that in the life of the Israelite there had to be the ending of one life and the beginning of a new *before* they could depart from the land of Egypt. It was the ending of a life of bondage and the beginning of a life of freedom and righteousness. When and only when these two events had taken place did Pharaoh call Moses and Aaron and say to them,

Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. *Exodus 12:31*

Only now that the two things had been accomplished, namely the ending of the old life and the beginning of the new, could the next event follow, which Pharaoh summed up in the phrase, "Go, serve the Lord."

So it is that in the life of the professed child of God there must follow on, after the death of the old nature, the receiving of the new life. Let us never forget the solemn warning contained in the words of the Master Teacher when He said,

When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when

it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. *Matthew 12:43-45*

We must be emptied of self. But this is not all that is required, for when we have renounced our idols *the vacuum must be supplied*. If the heart is left desolate and the vacuum not supplied, it will be in the condition of him whose house was “empty, swept, and garnished,” but without a guest to occupy it. The evil spirit took unto himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they entered in and dwelt there: and the last state of that man was worse than the first.

As you empty the heart of self, you must accept the righteousness of Christ. Lay hold of it by faith; for you must have the mind and spirit of Christ that you may work the works of Christ. If you open the door of the heart, *Jesus will supply the vacuum by the gift of His Spirit*, and then you can be a *living preacher* in your home, in the church, and in the world.

The Review and Herald, February 23, 1892

That which was true in the Passover experience is equally true in the work of salvation. These two things must be accomplished *before* we can begin to do the works of God in righteousness. Over and over again this truth is taught in the Scriptures:

And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. *Ezekiel 11:19,20*

Notice the use of the word, “that”. Certain things must be accomplished *so that* other things can be. Two things must be accomplished. They are the removal of the stony heart, which is but another way of defining the old man of sin, and the putting in of the new life in the place of the old. All this is done so that we can begin to obey the Word and the law of God.

Other references that teach the same truth are *Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 6:6; 8:3,4*.

When the Israelite applied the blood to the two side posts and on the upper lintel (which would also cause blood to fall on the step), the shape

of the cross of Calvary was thus marked out. Every man, woman and child who left Egypt that night went out through that door, or in other words *by the way of the cross*.

*"I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
There's no other way but this:
I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light
If the way of the Cross I miss."*

When they had gone out of that door, by the way of the cross, and the only way that could set them free, they left behind them the land of bondage forever. They entered at once into freedom, into righteousness, into a life that was under the leadership and guidance of the Lord of hosts. They had begun the march to Canaan's land.

But mark this point with care. They had only begun to march to Canaan. They did not step out of the land of Egypt right into the land of Canaan. In between there was a work of further preparation and training for them. They were free, it was true, but there was much to learn in faith and obedience. It is one thing to have a heart to do the right thing, but it is still further needful to learn what is the right thing. We need a renewed heart and we need education in what are the righteous ways of God.

So they went.

They had acted out a beautiful and a complete object lesson of salvation from sin so far as the beginning of the work is concerned. The great tragedy is that for all too many of them it was but the acting out of a play; the performing of the rites of a ceremony that the Lord had enjoined. And when they had done that then they thought that they had done all that was required. They thought that thereby they were obedient children.

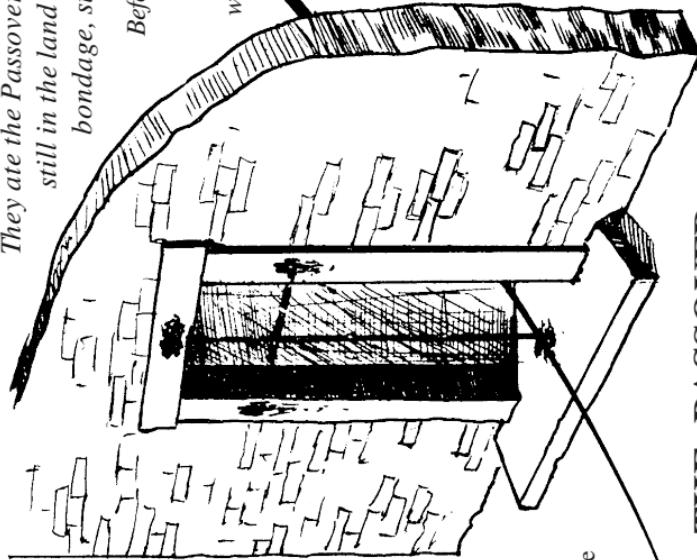
But the Lord intended them to understand that the physical steps they took were to be a revelation to them of what they were to do spiritually. The sad fact is that while they all left Egypt *physically* they did not leave it *spiritually* but they took the old slave-master right along with them in their hearts. And because they did this they were of all men most miserable. To a large extent, this can be attributed as the cause of the murmuring in the wilderness, the rebellion, the longing to return to Egypt again, and the sad failure to finally enter the promised land.

Dear Reader, all these things are written for our admonition upon

They ate the Passover behind that door while still in the land of Egypt: the land of bondage, sin, death, and despair.

Before they could leave that land of bondage and darkness, there were two things which had to happen:

- 1. The power of the slave master had to be removed from all of them, by death at the hand of God.*
- 2. They must partake of the new life: the life of the lamb.*



Through that door,
by the way of the cross,
they entered a new life altogether,
the very moment they stepped
through that door, a life of:
Freedom,
Righteousness,
Life,
Hope,
Divine leadership and protection.
But they were not yet in Canaan,
though very much on the way,
a way wherein they were to daily learn
the essential lessons of faith and obedience
without which they could never enter
that promised land.

THE PASSOVER

The New Birth in Object Lesson Form

God brought His salvation to them right where they were in the land of Egypt, and, having saved them, He took them out of the land, leaving the old slave master dead and behind forever.

whom the ends of the world have come. No longer do we act out the rites of the Passover ceremonial, but the lesson is still there. The message is still to be learned. Are we going to be those of the professed people who leave off all the physical associations of Egypt and yet have Egypt in the heart and carry her right along with us to final destruction? Or are we going to be among those who find the rich and rewarding experience of having all that the Lord has intended for us in the giving of His life to us in the place of the old?

Remember, that by virtue of the death of the Saviour upon the cross the way is open for you to have the old life destroyed and the new life begun. And remember that the great lesson of the Word of God is that it is impossible for you to live the life of God until those two things have been accomplished. On the Lord's side every provision is made. He patiently but earnestly waits for you to come and take hold of this—*and live.*

So far in this series the main concentration of our investigation has centered in the questions, "What is sin?" and "What must be done to get rid of it?" Finding that the Word of God is concerned with the very cause of sin itself, the very nature of man as the root of sin, and learning that it is impossible to do good until we have first become good, we have come to see *what* must be done for us *before* we can live righteously. And this is that the old nature must be taken out, and a new nature altogether take its place.

Having learned the WHAT of it, the time now is to really learn the HOW of it all so that it may become our own living experience.

We come now to that all-important question, "Then how?" or to put it in the words of the jailor of Philippi,

Sirs, What must I do to be saved? *Acts 16:30*

The answer which was given to him is the very answer that is given to us,

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. *Acts 16:31*

But we have heard that verse quoted again and again — and again! We have felt that we believed it and understood it, and that we do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but still we have not found the peace of God in the heart and the soul, and we have to face the fact that the life is still one of sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing over the same sins again and again. We have to admit that we are the slaves of sin and that the things which we wish to do, we cannot do, while the very things which we hate doing are the very things that we do.

What, then, is wrong?

There can only be one answer. It is an answer that we are not very prepared to admit, but let us think it through as follows. The Bible says,

Believe...and you will be saved. *Acts 16:31*

The gospel...is the power of God for salvation [from sin] to everyone who believes. *Romans 1:16*

...and many more such statements.

Therefore, if we have the faith, we have the salvation from the power of sin. Therefore also, if we do not have the salvation promised, it

is because we do not have the faith. It is as simple and as obvious as that. To have the one is to have the other, and you cannot have the one without the other.

You may be one who has been for years in the truth, standing firmly for the message and the doctrines, able to point to many blessings which have come as a result of the prayer of faith. Yet if you lack the experience of victory which you know you should have, you do not have salvation. This may sound somewhat confusing. No doubt you are saying, "But I do have faith, I can look back to many answers to prayer in the past! Now you are saying that I do not have faith! How can this be?"

You may certainly have had many answers to prayer in the past. Your faith may have been strong in the power of God to provide that which you needed. There is no question on the sincerity of that faith and of those prayers. But have you understood the difference between the faith which brings the life of God into us, and that which brings the other blessings of God? It is possible to have the one faith without having the other. This is not clearly seen and understood by most, but it is true. There is a vital difference and that difference must be understood before we have the faith of Jesus.

This distinction was very clear to the mind of Paul, which is evident from his own words:

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. *1 Corinthians 13:2*

Now this seems like a flat contradiction. How can one have all faith and yet not have love? How could this be possible?

If one has all faith, then, inasmuch as faith is an active thing, one must have all that faith brings. Salvation comes to us through faith, and salvation is freedom from sin. Sin is, among other things, hatred, and if we are saved from sin, then we are saved from hatred and have love.

We need to understand that salvation from sin involves more than being cleansed from the presence of sin in the life. We must have, in addition, a salvation *that will save us from going back into sin*. That protection is the life of God in the soul, together with the protection of holy angels and the Holy Spirit.

True faith is not just believing in, but in believing to the point where

you actually lay hold upon, the promised blessing. Therefore, to *have* all faith is to *have* the blessing. The great blessing of faith is the life of God in the soul.

Therefore, Paul is saying in effect, “and though I have all faith so as to remove mountains, and am not born again into the new life of God so that I *have* the love of God; I am nothing.”

The question must be asked again, How could this be said? Truly this seems to be a contradiction, but once again it must be emphasized that the contradiction is only a *seeming* one. All difficulty disappears when we realize that *there are two kinds of faith* in the Word of God.

There is that faith which trusts God to the point of receiving from God the removing of mountains of material difficulty, *and*, there is that faith which reaches beyond material deliverance and security to the spiritual deliverance from the power of sin.

One may have *all* the first faith, and thus be able to testify to deliverance from temporal difficulty, without having the love of God in the soul, and thus be nothing. *But* it is impossible to have *all* the second kind of faith without having the first, and without having love. Then we are no longer nothing, but instead become the sons of God.

This truth is wonderfully and clearly revealed in the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings. In the last chapter we saw how the Passover was the perfect object lesson of the experience of the new birth, but the sad thing was that the people went out of Egypt with Egypt still in their hearts. They went out by faith, but they had much yet to learn before righteousness became the experience of even a remnant of them.

Let us turn to the story of the two covenants to learn this distinction between the faith which will remove mountains and that which will bring to the soul salvation from sin and unrighteousness.

The children of Israel had for many generations been in the land of Egypt, and they had become fully preoccupied with material and fleshly things which had shut the God of heaven and His ways out of their reckoning. They had learned to live by what they could see, and to place their confidence *there*. The whole educational process by which the minds of those under that system are molded, is to trust in human wisdom and power. We understand the fact that the education of the human mind has tremendous influence on our attitudes and reactions to situations, and every one of us today, to a more or less extent, has come

under the same educational influences as that of the Israelites, for this same underlying premise of the supreme prowess of man is the foundation of all modern education. This is true not only of the schools, but it is true of the attitude of the scientist and the politician of today. We have it in the very atmosphere around us, and we have but to mingle with men to find ourselves under the influence of it. It is there without our even saying a word.

Such a mind has to be re-educated. All the molding of a lifetime of wrong thinking has to be undone, and a new and entirely opposite mold take its place. Such a mind cannot at first understand and accept righteousness, so the Lord speaks, as He has to do in the nature of the case, first of all in the language with which we are familiar,—the world of material things.

He deliberately led the Israelites down to the water's edge. Before them was the Red Sea. On either side was a towering, unscalable wall of rock, and then, as they turned to look, the Egyptians appeared behind them. Suddenly they found themselves reduced to the utmost extremity, and that which they most highly prized in all the world, their own physical, material existence, was in the most evident jeopardy. And what was worse, there was no possible way out for them. They were truly helpless, and they did not need any convincing to see it.

In this dark hour the Lord presented to them evidence of His protection by placing His Presence between them and the Egyptians, and then came the promise of deliverance in the form of a command, "Go forward." He further promised that He would open the Red Sea before them and let them through, but that the Egyptians would perish.

But, mark this point with care, this promise would only be fulfilled if *they believed* the Lord and *acted by faith*. The Word of God distinctly says that it was "*by faith* the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land." *Hebrews 11:29*. And the fact is that if they had not acted *by faith*, the Lord would have been able to do nothing for them, they would have perished.

The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would *never* have opened the path for them. It was "*by faith*" that "*they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.*" In marching down to the very water, *they showed that they believed* the Word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do,

and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 290

Now that Red Sea was certainly a great mountain of impossibility across their path but they had the *all faith* which would remove that mountain and so they passed over. Let us go a step further and see what else they had at that time and soon after:

In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and to trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 371

So, let us consider what they had:

- they had all faith;
- they had miraculous deliverances;
- they had the daily, visible guidance of God;
- they were fed day by day by the hand of God;
- they had the Spirit of Prophecy in their midst; and
- they were in the organization that the Lord was leading.

All this they had and in *all this* they rested. They were content to stay at that level. They had indeed the “*all faith*” that would remove mountains, and could point to the Red Sea, to the waters of Marah, to the manna, and the destruction of the Amalekites as proof that they had faith. But note this with care, they were bound to God “as their deliverer from *temporal* bondage.” They had the faith that would effect temporal miracles, but they still did not have the faith of Jesus which is unto salvation of the soul.

This is proved by the very next paragraph to that quoted above:

But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught. *Patriarchs and Prophets*,

Thus we are plainly told that this people who had so much,—miraculous deliverance, daily guidance, daily food, the Spirit of Prophecy (in the person of Moses), and church membership,—*did not have*:—

- a true conception of God's holiness;
- a realization of the sinfulness of their own selves;
- a knowledge of their own helplessness;
- and their need of a Saviour.

"All this they must be taught."

The people had all they did have from the hand of God without having these vital things! They had all that material blessing *without having salvation*. Right at this point of the study, it must come home to us that, just as they could have so much and still not have salvation, so it may be with us as well. Let us fear lest we are resting on a false security.

Let us look deeply into our own spiritual condition lest we be found saying, *"I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,"* and not know that we are indeed *"wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."* *Revelation 3:17.*

In the light of the foregoing we can surely better understand the truth of the words of Paul, *"if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."* Could any words be more true?

To the Israelites, as to us, God opens His hands and gives us every wonderful blessing in material prosperity. The tragedy of it all is that we are all too content with this and do not go on to the real blessing of the new life of God in the soul. We interpret the blessings received as certain indications of God's favor, reasoning that God would never give us such deliverance and guidance if it were not that we were His children. We are thus led to conclude that the experience which we have must be the experience of a true child of God.

The very means which God has designed to lead us to a full and living experience, becomes the means whereby we are prevented from obtaining that experience.

God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance. Romans 2:4

This is the plan of God. It is not His plan that His goodness should lead to contentment with an unspiritual but materially blessed

existence.

If then the goodness of God has this undesirable effect on the human mind as is evidenced by the Israelite, and as we see in our own experience, why does God work in this way? The simple answer is that, in the very nature of the situation, there is no other way in which He can work.

It stands to reason that God must first speak to us in the language which we know and understand, and in that language reveal Himself as the God of all power. We must know Him as the God of power before our faith will reach to the laying hold of that power for deliverance from the bondage of sin.

And what is the language which we understand in the place where God makes those first contacts with us? It is the language of temporal and material things. And in this realm, where our interest and our thoughts are so tightly and closely bound, and where we daily walk in fear of our lives, our interests and our wants, God reveals Himself as a mighty Deliverer and Protector.

Having secured our love and faith in Him as a deliverer from temporal bondage, He says in every act of care and beneficence, "The same power and care exercised for you in this material world is Mine to exercise in delivering you from spiritual bondage." God is calling us, not to a life of contentment with the material blessings, not to the assumption that because we have this, that we are the assured children of God, but to an experience of power over sin which experience is the true evidence of our sonship with God. If we do not have that experience then be assured that all the material blessings, guidance and miraculous interventions in our lives will prove nothing of value in the end.

So it was with the Israelites. "*All this they must be taught.*" How? By leading them into another situation where they would see their spiritual helplessness, and thus be led to see that there was help only in the Lord.

So, just as the Red Sea was the situation that showed them their physical helplessness, Mt. Sinai became the place where they were led on to see their spiritual helplessness. There God manifested His glory and gave His law. The people were filled with terror as they witnessed the power and the majesty of God; but, knowing only the confidence of the power of the flesh, they readily entered into covenant with the Lord and said,

All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient. *Exodus 24:7*

They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of a Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from *the bondage of sin*. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 372

Now a careful enough study of these paragraphs will reveal that there were two distinct levels of faith in the experience of the children of Israel. It is plainly evident that after they had gained the first level of faith, they still had to be taught the second. It is evident that they had witnessed tremendous mountains of difficulty being removed, such as the Red Sea deliverance, without experiencing salvation from their sins. The very people, who *by faith* had crossed the Red Sea and were filled with love and gratitude to God as their deliverer from temporal bondage, bowed down before the golden calf and worshiped it right after promising to obey all the commandments of God.

So there is faith *and* faith. There is the faith that delivers from temporal bondage, and there is beyond that the faith which reaches to the deliverance from spiritual bondage. It is possible to have the first without the second, in fact it is usual for us to have the first before the second.

The tragedy is that we are all too satisfied with the securing of our temporal needs and settle down to rest there without going on to gain the true experience of salvation. We do not see that the goodness of God is for the one intent and purpose of leading us on to repentance. *Romans 2:4*. We feel that we are already God's children and let the work stop right there.

How solemn is the warning contained in this lesson and reiterated in the words of Paul, "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

BY FAITH IN GOD YOU CAN TRULY TESTIFY TO -



*Protection from accident
on land and sea and in the air;*



*Adequate provision
of our daily bread;*



A home in which to live;



*Divine guidance
in making decisions;*



*Harvests in the field
year after year;*



*Membership in the
church of God;*

But all of these are the blessings of the Old Covenant, wherein is the faith which reaches only to the material blessings.

Rest not at this level of faith but rise to that level of faith which brings more than this, even the living experience of deliverance from spiritual bondage.

Truly it is possible for us to point back to experiences in the life where the Lord has answered the prayer of faith for temporal blessings, has miraculously delivered us from accident and loss, and has obviously guided us through difficult and trying situations. *But if this is all that we have to look to as the assurance of our acceptance with God, then we are on dangerous ground indeed.* We are in the position of the Laodicean who can point to all these things and in pointing to them says, “I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. I have the faith that will remove mountains.” But what does the Word of Truth say to that soul? “*You do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*” *Revelation 3:17 (KJV)*

There is indeed a faith which will remove mountains, but it is not sufficient unless it reaches to the transformation of the very nature of the man and gives him a new life altogether. We will find that the heart will arise in gratitude to God all the way through for the blessings of temporal things, but unless there arises a deeper and a greater note of praise from the heart for the evident and present blessing of *spiritual* victory, then the evidence is that we do not have the faith which is unto salvation.

Once *that* faith is ours, the victory is immediate, but that faith is something which takes learning. It comes as, and only as, we unlearn the ways of the world. It is all so very easy to glibly say, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,*” but there is more to living faith than meets the eye of the average would-be Christian.

What this living faith really is and how it is to be obtained will be the subject of our continued study.

We have come to the point in this series of studies where our search is centered on the effort to discover the living faith of Jesus that truly brings deliverance from the power of sin in the life. It is by faith that we are saved. There is just no other way but that. But, as we saw in the last study, we must understand the distinction between the faith which will reach to the deliverance from the temporal difficulty, and the faith reaching beyond and above that to the deliverance from the spiritual bondage. It is this faith we want and so desperately need.

In the life of Abraham these facts are most clearly and wonderfully illustrated. He, too, had to learn the faith which reached beyond the physical promise to the great spiritual promises, and what is more it took him many years to do it. This fact is both a revelation to us of what we have to learn and also an encouragement that if he found this truth so difficult to grasp, then we can know that our own problem is not one that is so unique.

So we turn to the life of that great man, the father of the faithful and there in it, we shall learn much that is vital and needful for us to understand in regard to what real and living faith is.

In the book of *Galatians* the following is recorded concerning Abraham:

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.

Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.”

So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 4:22-31; 5:1

Now note from the above that the two sons of Abraham came in two different ways. The one by the bondwoman came by the flesh, but the one by the freewoman was by promise, the promise of God.

Let us go back to the story in the Old Testament. In *Genesis 12* the Lord God of Heaven gives the promise to Abram, as he was then called:

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.” *Genesis 12:1*

This was the first requirement,—complete separation. Then came the most wonderful of promises,

“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:2,3

Now we shall utterly miss the whole point of the lesson if we fail to understand the nature of the promise. There was far more in this than the promise of the birth of the physical son. The very statement, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” points forward to the promise that it was Christ who was the Son who would be born to Abram. So Paul plainly understood it:

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.

Galatians 3:16

So then, to Abram was promised a Son, and that Son was *the* Son, Christ. But the gift of that Son to any one of us as well as unto Abram is

not just a promise but it is *the promise*,— it is *the promise of righteousness*, for every one to whom the Son is given has the righteousness which is that gift. You cannot have the Son of righteousness without having the righteousness of the Son.

Now it is impossible to receive this gift except by faith. There is no power in man to bring forth that righteous generation, and when the promise was first given to Abram, he did not have the faith to lay hold on and to receive the promise. True, he had the faith to believe that the Lord had called him out of the land where he was born and reared, and he had the faith to forsake all the associations of his earlier life but he had not yet the faith to receive that promise and it took him more than *twenty-five years* to get it.

We have but to study the story through to learn that. In verse four of *Genesis 12* we read that Abram was 75 years of age when he left Haran. Without a doubt he believed that the Lord would fulfill the promise that He had made. But he looked for the promise to be fulfilled through the powers in his and Sarah's flesh. In other words he looked to bring forth righteousness from where there was no inherent righteousness as so many today are still seeking to do. The very effort of many to force themselves to bring forth the good deeds of the law while still possessing the old spiritual nature, is simply to repeat the mistake of Abram. It is trying to bring forth righteousness from where there is no righteousness, and it just cannot be done.

Abraham had to learn, as we have to learn, that there is *no power in us* which can in the least degree bring forth the Son of righteousness. Sarah had not the life in her and it is just not possible to bring forth life where there is no life. The years went by and while Abram clung to God yet the promise was not forthcoming. This was a continual sorrow and bewilderment to Abram. His faith even staggered to the place where he lost the assurance that the seed would come through him.

Yet the promise was there, and he believed it would be fulfilled. His faith did go this far, but when the promise was not forth coming then he began to look around and to propose another invention. How human this is. The very existence of the many different voices in the world today each one claiming they have the answer is the outworking of the fact that the living experience has just simply not been found.

See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes. *Ecclesiastes 7:29*

So Abram invented another way and proposed that other way to the Lord:

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. *Genesis 15:1-6*

To Abram came the word of encouragement in the hour of his sorrow and despair, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." Oh, how wonderful is the loving kindness of God! When faith is weakening, the Lord comes with a ray of light to encourage us. Without it we should fail altogether. But notice the answer of Abram, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless... Behold, you have given me no offspring."

Abram lamented the failure of the promise not knowing that it was *his* lack of faith alone which had frustrated the promise. Not seeing that the failure lay with him, he offered a substitute,—a scheme. He proposed an offer of another and lesser way for the fulfillment of the promise, "The heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus...a member of my household will be my heir."

He proposed to make his trusty servant Eliezer his son by adoption, and the inheritor of his possessions. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 136

But there is only one way with God and that is the way of righteousness and faith. God would not accept this proposition nor any other proposition either and He specifically said to Abram:

"This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness. *Genesis 15:4, 6*

But still the promise did not come, and soon we find that after ten long years had passed the man Abram was still childless.

So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. *Genesis 16:3*

There was nothing in all the world that Abram and Sarai wanted more than the promise. But they were growing older and older and the prospect of its fulfillment became less and less. They grew anxious about the matter and the eternal human mistake came ever more strongly into the picture, until they sought out and put into effect another scheme. "Perhaps," they thought, "we have to do something towards bringing forth of the Son of righteousness."

Instead of patiently seeking to understand the way of the Lord in righteousness and developing the faith to lay hold upon the gift, they grew fearful that the Lord was not able to fulfill His own promises and that He needed their help to work the whole thing out. In it all there was the realization that they were both growing older, and they felt that they must do something about it quickly.

So Sarai proposed that Abram take another woman. The woman proposed was Sarai's servant, an Egyptian and a bondwoman. How symbolic indeed that this should be so, for just as the son of promise was the symbol of our receiving the promise of righteousness and that which the Lord alone could bring forth by His miracle working power, so the coming forth of the son, Ishmael, from the bondwoman is the symbol of that proposed righteousness which man brings forth from his condition of bondage, and which he offers to God.

Just as the professed child of God has turned his back on the world so had Abram left his home and his country and his kindred and had gone out into a strange land to serve the Lord. Just as the professed child of God believes in the promise of righteousness and that only a righteous people can inherit the kingdom, so did Abram. But Abram did not fully understand *the way* by which alone God could and would bring forth that Son. He believed and looked to see this child come forth *from themselves by the power that was in themselves*. So today the average professed child of God looks to see righteousness achieved by making the old spiritual nature produce the life of righteousness, but this is an utter impossibility. Yet we never seem to learn. Year after year we struggle on, sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing and yet getting nowhere. As with Abram, all the human effort fails to bring forth the Son of promise.

God said that he would have a son, and God had never directed him to take another woman for the purpose and therefore Abram should have waited till the Lord did what He had promised. God had made the promise and it was the duty and the joy of Abram to wait for the Lord to do what He had promised. It was not for him to work out for God the part which the Lord alone could do. But he was both determined and desperate that there should come the Son of Promise and to produce that he went from the dead and unproductive body of Sarai to the bondwoman and now he succeeded in bringing forth *a* son but it was not nor ever could be *the* Son.



YOU MAY
TEACH A TIGER
MANY TRICKS
BUT BEWARE FOR
YOUR LIFE
FOR HE IS
A TIGER STILL.

*Obvious as this fact is,
yet it is a principle of life
which, in the spiritual realm
we are slow to learn.*

So many imagine that righteousness is a matter of developing that which is already there in us. But righteousness is life and you cannot bring forth life from the dead. There is no raw material in us which God can use. As Abraham had to learn that God had first to put life into Sarah before the son could be born, so we have to have righteousness put into us before we can see it grow and develop. In other words, do not waste a lifetime trying to train a tiger into being a lamb. It will never work.

The birth of righteousness into this world, into the family of Abram,

into your heart and mine must be by faith for it is a miracle and there is no power in man to bring forth that son. The bondwoman was not free, and her son could only be like herself, in bondage.

Yet the Lord did not cast off Abram for this. Patiently He waited for him to learn, and in all this deviation into the realm of righteousness attempted by works, the Lord let Abram have his way while the Lord waited and waited.

But Abram was happy and loved his son and saw in *this* son the child of promise. His faith had not reached to the real son, which he felt was an impossibility that could never be, so he looked to *this* son, the son of his own devising, as the son whom the Lord would accept as the son of promise and the one through whom the Lord would work for the blessing of the nations.

Abram had been in the land of Canaan eleven years and was eighty six years of age when Ishmael was born. All that time had gone by and still he had not learned the lesson, and now he was satisfied with the substitute he had worked out himself.

Thirteen years later the Lord appeared to him again. It was now time to bring to Abram another call into the true way, to make an appeal to him to turn aside from the ways of the flesh to the way of faith; from the way of works to the way of righteousness.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly. Genesis 17:1,2

Without a doubt Abraham, as he was from henceforth now called, was glad to hear again this word from the Lord but he interpreted all that the Lord said, as referring to his only and very loved son Ishmael. *In Ishmael* he saw all this being fulfilled and as the Lord talked on to him he rejoiced in the thought that the Lord accepted and approved the plan of taking Hagar and bringing forth Ishmael. This finds its exact counterpart in the modern attitude of the professed believer who looks to the institutions and organization which the hand of man has built under the supposed blessing of the Lord, and feels well pleased that the Lord does, as they feel He must, approve of this.

It came as a real surprise and cause for great dismay to Abraham to find that the Lord did not in the least degree accept Ishmael as the son of promise. God spoke to Abraham in the repeating of the promise

almost as if He did not even know of the existence of Ishmael.

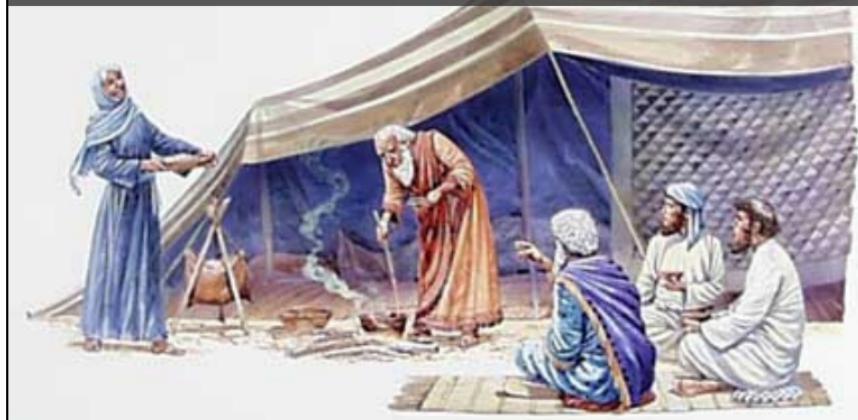
And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” *Genesis 17:15,16*

This was too much for Abraham. He just knew that it was impossible for Sarah to produce a son!

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” *Genesis 17:17,18*

Indeed this was quite a frightening experience for Abraham. He longed for the assurance of his acceptance with the Lord and had trusted for that assurance in the works of the flesh. Long since had he abandoned any hope that the child of promise could be born through Sarah. He did not have the faith to believe that it could ever be that way and if the Lord was going to insist that it be that way then he was a lost man indeed.

How diligently Abraham trained Ishmael to be the son of promise. He was so happy that his and Sarah's works had borne such pleasing results, little dreaming that their effort to do the right thing in the wrong way was completely unacceptable to God.



Everything depended, as *he* saw it and could only see it then, on the

acceptance of this son of the flesh and the bondwoman. He had nothing else to cling to but that. He had nothing else to trust in but that, and if the Lord would not accept that then what more could he do? What would be the end of him? Suddenly Abraham saw all that which had been his anchor and trust swept away and he expressed this in the words: “O that Ishmael might live before you!”

These words are repeated today in the life of every professed child of God who is brought to a similar place. When the Lord sets before him the fact that He will not accept the very thing that has been looked upon, trusted in, and built up as the fulfillment of the promise, then the same cry will be made again.

Every one of us who has found the faith of Abraham, as he was yet to learn it, and finding that faith saw the child of promise brought forth, can look back now and see how it was that we trusted in the good deeds of our lives as the evidence to us that the Lord had accepted us. We looked to our connection with the true church, to the wonderful organization and far-flung missionary enterprises of that church as the assurance that the Lord was with this people and, inasmuch as we were with them, the Lord was with us too.

Then came the time when the Lord laid before us the fact that He could not accept this, but only the true child of righteousness. We heard His voice calling for the witness that the Son of Righteousness had arisen in our hearts and lives, and when such a real and living testimony was not to be found then we saw that we had nothing to offer that the Lord would accept even though we cried out, “O that Ishmael might live before You!”

How that revelation reduced us to the place of utter hopelessness and desolation. How we came to realize that we were lost, totally lost and that we had nothing at all to offer and that the very way we thought to be the way of life was but the way of death, and the Son of promise was not yet even born, we had not even begun the Christian experience. We had reached the bottom, we were humbled to the dust and we could be brought no lower.

And then when we acknowledged what the Lord showed us was indeed true, then in that moment the promises of God came all alive as if they had been written just for us, and a faith sprang to life in our hearts the like of which we had never known before, and lo! in a moment it seemed the Son of promise was born in us and life began.

So it was with Abraham. That Son of Promise could come to Abraham only by faith, and until Abraham had *that* faith, *that* son could not come. And if Abraham did not gain *that* faith, then the Son could never come. But that son did come, and it was only by living faith:

That is why *it depends on faith*, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring...In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He *did not weaken in faith* when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. *No distrust made him waver* concerning the promise of God, but *he grew strong in his faith* as he gave glory to God, *fully convinced* that God was able to do what he had promised.

Romans 4:16,18-21

It was because Abraham was not weak in faith, because he did not waver, because he grew strong in faith, and was fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised, that the Son of promise was born.

But this is not the picture of the Abraham whom we see in *Genesis* 17, "*when Abram was ninety-nine years old*." Here is a picture of a man who was weak in faith, who did waver at the Word of God, who was anything but fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. Is there a contradiction between the testimony of Paul in *Romans 4* and that of *Genesis*? Is Paul here painting a nice but rather unrealistic picture of Abraham? Never!

Genesis paints the true picture of Abraham up till that time when the Word of the Lord came to him, as it did right then, and reduced him to the place where he saw that all he had trusted in, the Lord could not and would not accept. From the ruins arose the pathetic plea of Abraham, "*O that Ishmael might live before you!*" This was more than an expression of appeal for the future of the son whom he loved. *Abraham was crying out for a system of religion*. He was pleading for that system of religion which was the best he knew till that time and in which alone he had hope and trust. Being all that he had, if that was to be taken from him, he would find that he had nothing to turn to. So it seemed to him.

ABRAHAM

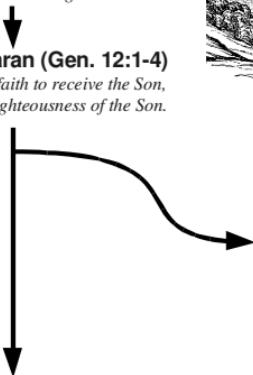
To him was given the promise of righteousness through the Son before he left Ur of the Chaldees.
(Acts 7:1-3)

The seed is Christ (Gal. 3:16), so to have the righteous seed, is to have righteousness.



At 75 he left Haran (Gen. 12:1-4)

But not yet with the faith to receive the Son, nor therefore, the righteousness of the Son.



At last at 100 years Isaac is born by faith in the impossible.

Because Abraham's faith had grasped the promise of God. In the self same moment God put life where there had been only death.

God's covenant of peace is here—not with Ishmael.

The Religion of Living Righteousness

At 85 he marries Hagar – the Egyptian bondwoman.

This was Abram's and Sarai's attempt to help God out.

This was attempted righteousness by works.

The result – Ishmael at 86

Abram believed he had achieved the promise and was sure God was pleased with him. But God could not and so would not be pleased with him. All formal religion answers to this – Jerusalem which is below and is in bondage with her children. (Gal. 4:25)

The Covenant of righteousness is not here.

The Religion of Formal Supposed Righteousness

But the Lord would just simply not recognize nor accept this system that Abraham pleaded for. He went on as if ignoring his plea.

No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. *Genesis 17:19*

Heretofore Abraham just simply did not have the faith to believe that. But now in the dark hour when all appeared to be lost the promise

was presented to him again and living faith sprang up in his heart and he grasped the promise and believed the Word of God. To him the impossible was no longer impossible. Now he truly had become strong in faith, he did not waver concerning the promise, and he was fully convinced.

And what followed? Why, the true Son of Promise of course! Just so soon as the faith of Jesus was born in the heart of Abraham, then just so soon was the living child conceived. And from this it is evident that the only reason for the tarrying of the promise was the fact that the faith to believe the promise had not come. The birth of the child of promise waited for the birth of that faith in Abraham but, just as soon as the faith was born in his heart, then just as soon was the birth of the Son of Promise. And from this it is further evident that the child would have been born many, many years before this had Abraham possessed the faith to believe earlier in his life.

Is it not the most amazing thing that Abraham should come to the age of ninety nine years before he found the living faith which would bring forth the child of promise, the righteousness of Christ that is the Child of Promise? This is not to say that Isaac was Christ, but it is to say that it required the same faith to bring forth that child as it did to bring forth in the soul of any one of us the experience of living righteousness.

There is faith *and* there is faith. Abraham had the faith to follow the Lord out of his home and country and go into a strange land. He enjoyed the leadership and protection of the Almighty God and could trust Him in all the material things of life but he did not have the faith needed to bring forth that child.

What a picture this is of the sad plight of the human family of professed believers today. Many have the faith to believe that the Lord will lead them and guide them and they look to Him and receive all the physical and temporal needs. But there is not that living faith which makes the apparent impossibility of living a perfectly righteous life achievable even by you and me.

Then when we say that righteousness is by faith, let us understand that it is not the faith which will bring the temporal and material blessings of life. It is a higher and totally absolute faith. It is the faith of father Abraham and it is the faith of Jesus. Let us just keep this in mind as we proceed to study this faith and see what it is and how it is to become the vital gift of each one of us at this critical hour.

The previous two studies should have made it very clear that there is a definite distinction between the faith which is really only a belief in the existence of God and that faith which reaches to the point where we lay hold of the actual promises and find the new life, which is living victory over sin and sinfulness. This kind of faith is not natural to the human heart and therefore it must be learned or rather taught to us by the Lord Himself. This kind of faith is the *gift* of God as are all the other blessings the Lord has for His people.

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. And the heart in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, “O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” *Psalm 119:97*. And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” *Romans 8:1 Steps to Christ*, 63,64

The time has come to study this faith itself, and no better source can be found than the first three pages in particular of the chapter in *Steps to Christ*, entitled, “Faith and Acceptance.” The previous chapters have discussed the various steps to Christ leading to this point, such as knowledge, conviction, repentance, and confession. Now we come to the study of that faith by which we accept the offered salvation.

The first paragraph of this chapter is a recapitulation of the ground already covered in the book and in these studies as well. Let us turn to the book and begin to follow the thought through.

As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, its power, its guilt, its

woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. *Steps to Christ*, 49

This sentence speaks of the quickening of the conscience which can only come when the Lord has brought to us a *knowledge* of His law or as Paul put it, “when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.” (*Romans 7:9*) Now there is a real conviction of sin, and this is expressed in the following sentences:

You *feel* that sin has separated you from God, that you are in bondage to the power of evil. *ibid.*, 49

It was when Paul came to this selfsame point in his experience that he cried, “I am of the flesh, sold under sin,” (*Romans 7:14*) and then he proceeded to describe the battle he had wherein the things he wished to do he found himself unable to do, while the things he hated were the very things he found himself doing. This bitter struggle continued until that point where he was driven to a sense of his own utter helplessness and then it was that the deliverance came.

The more you struggle to escape, the more you realize your helplessness. *ibid.*, 49

And this is the very intent of the *Romans* seven experience. God cannot save us while, in the least degree, we are trying to save ourselves. This is an impossibility. Here we need to be very much aware of the danger of thinking that we are not trying to save ourselves when we are doing that very thing. Only God can save us. He alone has the power to do it. We cannot change our hearts and make ourselves holy, but God promises to do this for us if we will deliver the whole work over into His all-powerful hands.

This may make it sound very easy to be saved and in actual fact it is easy in the sense that we do not do the work, but it is very difficult to come to the place where we can let go of our own effort and let the Lord do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. We will find ourselves up against the training of a lifetime in a world where the entire philosophy is the teaching of the prowess and ability of man.

Built into the mind of every one of us from our childhood up is the concept that there is just nothing which man cannot do, given enough time and money. Look at the teaching of the history book and see that it is filled with the stories of what men have done. Think of the message delivered daily in the press, on the radio and via television, and again this is the continual theme delivered to our receptive ears. Always there is a hero. He is a super soldier, airman, explorer, detective, lawyer or

such who is able to master the most impossible situations, and pull off the most unlikely victories and always he is a human being.

All this serves to fire us with the imagined thought of doing the same thing and, when we come down to something near to the reality of it, we know that we cannot match what we have seen and heard of these remarkable heroes, there is still ingrained into our thinking the idea that we can and must do for ourselves anything which is ever to be done.



**On every hand,
the world is filled with the exploits of men:**

- his conquest of his enemies in battle;
- his conquest of space;
- his leveling of mountains;
- his inventions;
- his heroism,

until the philosophy of man's inherent ability to do anything becomes the subconscious thought of the race. This is a great handicap to the receiving of the gospel, for one thing man cannot do, is to change his own nature. Therefore man must first unlearn the education of his lifetime before God can save him.



But, while it is true that men have conquered some formidable problems and done some amazing things, there is one area where man is absolutely helpless. He may change the course of a river, level a mountain, gouge out a harbor, conquer his enemies but he cannot change his own evil heart and make himself righteous.

He may train a thorn bush to grow into a certain shape, but he cannot change it into an apple tree. He may train a wolf to do certain tricks but he cannot change it into a lamb. Here is where man is helpless. In like manner he may put off many bad habits and put on quite an appearance of righteousness but he cannot change the evil heart and make it good. Here is where he is absolutely helpless.

But we have never been taught this. Rather the whole education of the world in which we live is the opposite and so accustomed have we become, so ingrained has this notion been, that when it comes to the problem of the sinful heart then we seek to solve it in the same way we have conquered the problems of the material environment,—by our own

effort. But it does not work.

Therefore, because we have been so wrongly educated to take the wrong approach to this problem, we must first learn the futility of it before we will forsake the wrong approach. It is not enough to know very well what is right, and desire to do what is right. We must also know *how* to do it. To try to achieve the right thing in a way so wrong as to never bring success, will fail as surely as if we had never tried at all.

But how are we going to learn? How will the Lord teach us? Certainly telling us does not succeed, for the scales are upon our eyes and when the Lord speaks so plainly that we cannot save ourselves, even those words are misunderstood and we hear them with a “but” in our minds. With our lips we say, “I cannot save myself, for only the Lord can save me. I know that.” But in our minds though there is this qualification, “*But I will have to work really hard on this thing if I am going to get this salvation.*”

There is only one thing the Lord can do now and that is to let us go right ahead and try to do it our way. And so we do try and find that we meet with only failure and defeat. But not yet are we prepared to see and to admit that our basic concept is wrong. That has been too deeply ingrained to be discarded any too readily, and so we now reason that we have not tried hard enough. So we struggle on all the more diligently but the result is the same. This may go on for years, but eventually it will end up in one or the other of two results. The tragic result for some is the conclusion that we could never do it anyway, the law is just too hard to be kept by any one, and we settle down accepting a life of defeat and submission to the power of sin.

But, on the other hand there are those who will not admit that it cannot be done and struggle on until they do come to the realization that they are helpless and, unless the Lord shall save them, they are without hope. Now they have come to the place where God can work. This is what He has been patiently waiting for. Here is the point where,

For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Hebrews 4:10

The very struggle to obtain the victory has the purpose, not of gaining the victory for us, for it can never be gained in this way, but of breaking the power of the old concepts and teaching us that we cannot gain it in this way at all. We are taught our helplessness and are led to

give the whole work over into the hands of Him who alone can do it.

The more you struggle to escape, the more you realize your helplessness. Your motives are impure; your heart is unclean. You see that your life has been filled with selfishness and sin. You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain it? *Steps to Christ*, 49

All of this is a perfect picture of the man in *Romans* seven, and it is worthy of notice that the Word here plainly tells us that the man in *Romans* seven has not yet even received forgiveness.

It is peace that you need—Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. *ibid.*, 49

We absolutely must come to know that we are utterly helpless to do any saving of ourselves in the least degree. Curiously enough we may even admit with our lips that this is so and still not really realize it. But we cannot save ourselves at all.

You can never hope, by your own effort, to secure it. *But God offers it to you as a gift, "without money and without price."* *Isaiah* 55:1. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it. The Lord says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." *Isaiah* 1:18. "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you." *Ezekiel* 36:26. *ibid.*, 49

Let us pause and think on that for a moment. "God offers it to you as a gift. It is (not *will be* but *is*) yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it." That makes it sound so simple and so easy, does it not? And yet so many fail to obtain the precious gift! Where is the difficulty? The difficulty lies in not understanding the real nature of the problem. We must be brought to the place where we are prepared to receive the precious gift. We saw that in the experience of Abraham in the last chapter. And when in simple faith we cast our helpless souls on the Lord and ask him to take away the old root of sin and put in a new tree altogether and believe that he does this because He has promised, then He does this for us right there and then.

You have confessed your sins and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. *ibid.*, 49

But a decision to be united to Christ does not mean actual union with Him. Herein is the fallacy of calling people to make a decision for Christ and then leaving them there with the supposition that they are now secure in the fold of the Master Shepherd.

In the seventh chapter of *Romans* Paul had come to the place where he had made a definite decision for Christ. In verse 18, he says, “*for I have the desire to do what is right.*” Paul had made a decision for righteousness. “*For I have the desire to do what is right,*” he said, “*but not the ability to carry it out.*” He did not know and no one was able to tell him. Therefore he was in the altogether frustrating, disappointing and unhappy state where he desired above all else to be united to Christ but did not know how and just no one was able to tell him either. And this is exactly the predicament of many would-be Christians. How desperately is the message needed that will tell hungry souls *how* to look, *how* to trust, and *how* to live.

You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him...
ibid., 49

Exactly as a young woman who is to be married must go to the altar of consecration and there give her life to her husband, so we too must *go to Him*. And where will we find Him? The great meeting place between God and man is the cross of Christ and this was typified in the Old Testament sanctuary service by the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard of the sanctuary. There we will find the Master as the great High Priest, waiting for us.

But we must actually go to Christ and make this consecration. Nobody, just nobody, can make it for us. *We must ourselves go and make this consecration to the Lord.* We will find Him wherever we can be alone with Him. That altar of consecration could be our own bedroom, the quietness of the forest glade, the lake shore or the secret recesses of the valley. This is not a covenant that can be made in a public meeting or in a mass altar call. It must be made alone with God, and unless we make the definite step to go, *and actually go*, then we will be like the young maiden who desired to be married and had resolved to be married but never did actually get around to being married.

Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. *ibid.*, 49

When the young woman comes to the altar she literally gives away

her life to her lover to be his possession and he in return as utterly gives his life to her. Now in like manner you must utterly give away your life to Christ and totally receive His life in exchange. What kind of a life do you have to give to Him? Why, it is a desperately wicked and unclean life. It is a life of sin and worthlessness that we do not want to ever have back again because it is so bad. The devil is right there to tell you that the Lord would never want it either but you are not to listen to him for he was a liar from the beginning. *John 8:44*

So come to the Lord and give your life to him. But do not pray the old useless prayer, "Lord help me to overcome this sin." Instead, pray the far more intelligent prayer, "Lord I can now see that the life which I have is sinful and therefore is only a fountain of sin. I have learned that it is impossible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing. Therefore while ever I have this life I can only go on sinning and sinning *and* sinning. But you have promised to take this life away from me. Lord here it is; You take it,—I do not want it anymore. It is now yours and not mine. Lord, you have promised to give to me your own life in its place. By faith I reach out my hand and take the gift and it is mine and I thank you that I *have* it." Now note what follows,—

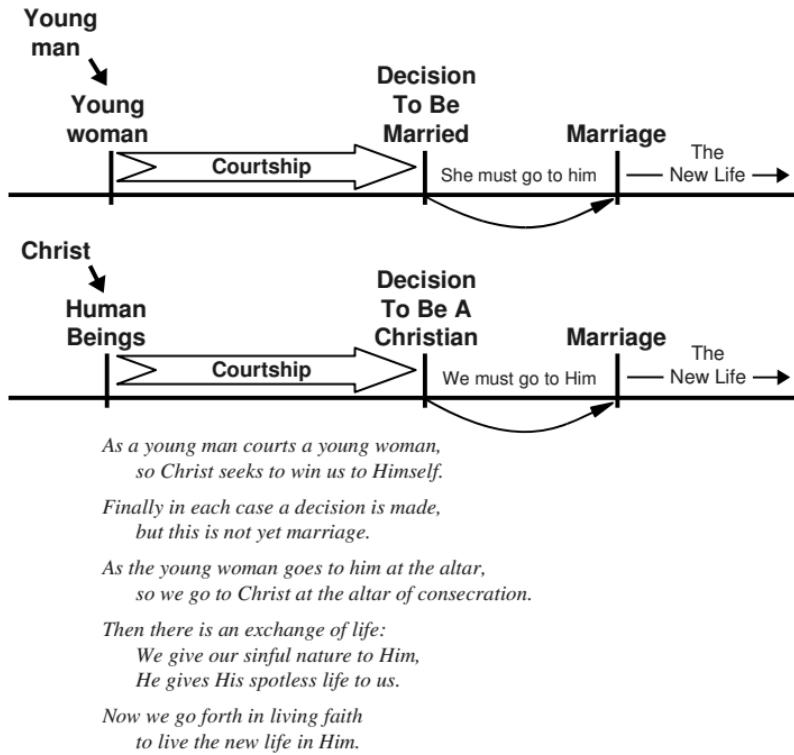
...then believe that He does this because He has promised. *ibid.*,
49

The time has now come to really emphasize this point. We are to believe that He does this because He has promised.

There is no more beautiful an illustration of faith than that which a bride has in her husband as they walk away from the altar on the wedding day. She has nothing, just absolutely nothing but his word and yet she goes forth with the sweetest and most implicit confidence that he is just the finest husband that the world could ever give her. Other marriages, other husbands may fail but not this marriage and not this husband. She has a glow of perfect peace, of perfect trust. She has in him a faith that seems unshakable. And remember that she has only his word that he will be faithful and true and loyal to her, and that he will protect her from all the perils of life.

And that is exactly the faith which every true child of God will have in Christ on that day when they walk forth from the experience of true consecration with Him. Earthly husbands may and do fail either more or less and many a poor woman has been sadly disillusioned, but that will never be true of the Man Christ Jesus. He cannot and He will not

fail.



This is the lesson that Jesus taught while He was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we *do* receive, and it *is* ours. *Steps to Christ*, 50

Now if this is the lesson that Jesus taught while He was on the earth, then it follows that this is the lesson which above all else we must learn, not just in theory but by living experience. And what is more, it will be the lesson which above all else the devil will attempt to prevent us from learning.

So it was that the Saviour demonstrated this lesson for us in the many contacts which He made with men and women of the earth and in His every act of healing this lesson is taught over and over again that we might not miss it.

The time has come when we must turn to one such miracle of healing for therein is this lesson taught so plainly and clearly as never to

be misunderstood.

From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about *how to believe in Him* for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. *ibid.*, 50

The purpose of the recording of this story is to teach us *HOW to believe in Him* for the forgiveness of sins. It is not given to teach us that we *must* believe but *how* to believe. So we will obey the injunction and we will turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda.

The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The sick man might have said, "Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word." But, no, he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he *willed* to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole. *ibid.*, 50

Having described the experience of the paralytic it then says,

In like manner you are a sinner. *ibid.*, 51

Consider the physical state of this man to see in what way it is a true picture of our condition as sinners. That man was born into the physical world to live a normal life. He was born to move and work and carry out the normal actions of every day living. In short, he was born *to do*, but we find that his whole life was devoid of any kind of doing at all. He was impotent, and lay helpless year after painful year there on that mat.

In like manner, we are born with the intent that we carry out the actions of righteousness and do the things that the law of love and justice requires; but, just as surely as there was a complete absence of any of the normal deeds from the life and existence of that impotent man, then just so surely is there the same spiritual impotence on the part of all who have not yet been delivered from sin. This may come as a surprise to many who look back to their "good works," their fine reputation and all such as actions of righteousness. But the Lord says that these things are not in the least degree the deeds that He will accept just as surely as that man did none of the deeds of righteousness.

We previously read from the same chapter, "You see that your life

has been filled with selfishness and sin.” And in these words the apostle Paul said the same thing, “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.” *Romans 6:20*. To be free in regard to righteousness is but to say that there is a complete absence of it in the life. That is the sad picture of one that has not yet learned to be united to Christ in the true sense of the word.

Now why was it that the impotent man could do nothing? It was because of what he was. And what was he? He was a slave to a disease which was in his members. That disease was his master indeed, and dictated to him just what he could do and what he could not do. What more perfect picture can one get than this of the situation of the sinner. He does *what he does* because of *what he is*. In every sinner is the *disease* of sin. It is his *master* and, while that law of sin and death is in his members, then he can do nothing of that which the Lord desires him to do. He is free from righteousness.

Now let us consider the state of that man further. He was utterly helpless and *he knew it*. He had come to that place where he had reached the very end of hope and could see himself now as one who was in fact lost and nearing his end. *And this is the place to which we must be brought before Jesus can come to us and bring to us His marvelous salvation.*

At that point of time the Lord came to Him and made the wonderful offer, “Do you want to be healed?” *John 5:6* In answer the man confessed simply, plainly and openly his condition of utter and desperate helplessness. Likewise in our prayer to God for deliverance there must be a plain, direct, simple and open confession of what we are and the state of utter helplessness in which we find ourselves.

Here is the way of living faith enacted before us for our study and imitation.

The sick man *might* have said, “Lord, if thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.” But, no, he believed Christ’s word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once, he *willed* to walk and he did walk. He *acted* on the word of Christ, *and God gave the power*. He was made whole. *ibid., 50*

Now let us in our minds eye see the man lying there on the portico, helpless and sick after thirty-eight years. Look and see the compassionate Saviour bending over him and saying to him, “Rise, take up

your bed, and walk." Now that man might have said to the Master, "I believe You. I know that You have all power in heaven and in earth and that You can and that You will heal me. And I am just waiting till I can feel in my fingers and toes and in my arms and legs the new life and power. Then just as soon as I can feel that and know that I have been healed, then I will be on my feet in a moment."

But that is *not* the way of faith. If the man had done that, then the Lord could never have healed him. Deliverance is by faith and not by sight; and, if he had waited to *feel* that he was made whole before he should act, then that would have been acting by sight and not by faith.

But what did he do?

Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed, and walk."

The man did not wait to question that. Jesus had said it and therefore it was true. He simply *believed* the Word of Jesus, and he *accepted* that Word for himself and then he *acted* on that Word. Without waiting for the least feeling or any other visible evidence, he set himself to obey the Word of God and, *the moment that he did*, then the Lord gave the power and he was made whole.

And that is the way of faith. And there is no other way of faith but that. Faith does not wait till the pathway is cleared and we can see the visible evidence that we are saved. Faith takes the Word of God against the evidence of the senses and the sad record of the past, and believing it is already so, as the Word has spoken, steps out on that Word, leaving all in the hands of the Lord. Faith is living and active. Faith is acting on the Word and expecting that the Word will hold us up—nay more than that, *knowing* that the Word will uphold us all the way without failure at all.

Now in the chapter that we are studying, the parallel is drawn between the situation and the experience of this man, and the experience of the soul who is seeking salvation.

In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy.
ibid., 51

Two aspects of the problem are introduced here. There is the problem of things that we have done, and there is the problem of what we are. It is the plainest of facts that we cannot in the least degree save ourselves in these two spheres. It is as impossible for us to change our

hearts and make ourselves holy, as it is for us to take a wolf and make it into a lamb, or even to make it behave like a lamb. It is just as impossible to make ourselves holy as it is for us to take a thorn bush and make it produce apples. So why attempt it??!

You cannot do it, but,

God promises to do all this for you through Christ. *ibid.*, 51

The words “all this” refer back to those two things, namely the atoning for our past sins, and the changing of the heart and the making of ourselves to be holy.

But we have a part to play. True, it is a very small part, but the Lord can do nothing till that small part is done. And what is that part?

“You believe that promise.” *ibid.*, 51

That means that we take the Lord at His Word. What does it say that He will do? It says that He will atone for the sins of the past and that He will take away the old heart, give us a new one, and make us to be holy. Does He mean what He has said? Most assuredly He does! In fact, the complete honor of His throne depends upon His keeping His promises. If the Lord should make a promise and then fail to keep it, then the confidence of the whole universe in Him would be shattered and it would be but the first step in the complete collapse of the whole universe and the destruction of His kingdom. But God is faithful and what He says He will do, He *will* do. Therefore, take Him at His Word, and leave the whole thing with Him—*believe* the promise.

You confess your sins and give yourself to Him. *ibid.*, 51

This confession must cover more than just what we have done. It must include a recognition of the fact that the very life which is in us, is capable only of committing sin, and therefore must be taken away. Having made the confession of it to the Lord, we must hand it right over with all the speed and willingness that we would a dead body. Do not make the mistake of thinking that the life must be first made a little better before handing it over. If we wait for that we will never hand it over *because we cannot make it any better*. Give Him that life right now, sinful, polluted, dead in trespasses and sins, and let Him deal with it as only He can. It is worth nothing but to be gotten rid of anyway.

You *will* to serve Him. *ibid.*, 51

The example of the paralytic at Bethesda is the true picture of what it means to *will* to serve Him. It means that we step right out in willing,



*As the impotent man at the pool could do nothing,
because of the disease in command of his human organism,
So we cannot do the works of righteousness
because of the sin in command of our human organism.
This man understood the nature of his trouble and confessed it.
So we must understand the nature of our trouble and confess it.
To him, as to us, Jesus comes with all heaven's power and says,
"Rise, take up your bed and walk."
He believed and acted on that belief and he was made whole.
So we too must believe and act upon that belief to be made new.*

**BEFORE JESUS CAME
HE WAS:**

Erring from life's
responsibilities though not by
choice.

Helpless in himself and of
himself.

Condemned to a bed of pain
and death.

Sick because of the disease in
his human organism holding
the mastery over it.

AND HE KNEW IT!

**AFTER JESUS CAME
HE WAS:**

Obedient to life's
responsibilities by choice and
by power..

Able in himself but
not of himself.

Uncondemned, being made
free from that bed.

Whole and sound in health
because the disease had
been taken out of him.

AND HE KNEW IT!

confident obedience on the basis of the Word of God. We do not wait till we see the evidence that the work is done before stepping out. No! We believe that the work *is* done and that we *have* the victory and that the Lord will keep us in the hour of temptation from all that the enemy can bring against us. This is the way of living faith, and there is no other way of faith but this.

So here are the simple steps which are our part of the transaction:

You *believe* that promise.

You *confess* your sins,

And *give yourself* to God.

You *will* to serve Him.

That is your part of the covenant. Make no attempt to do any of the Lord's part for only He can do that, and any attempt on your part to do His part of the contract will only frustrate and prevent Him from doing it, and thus deprive you of the very blessing which you are seeking to have.

Now listen to these wonderful words of life:

Just as surely as you do this, *God will fulfill His word to you*. If you believe the promise,—believe that you *are* forgiven and cleansed,—God supplies the fact; you *are* made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It *is so if you believe it.*" *ibid.*, 51

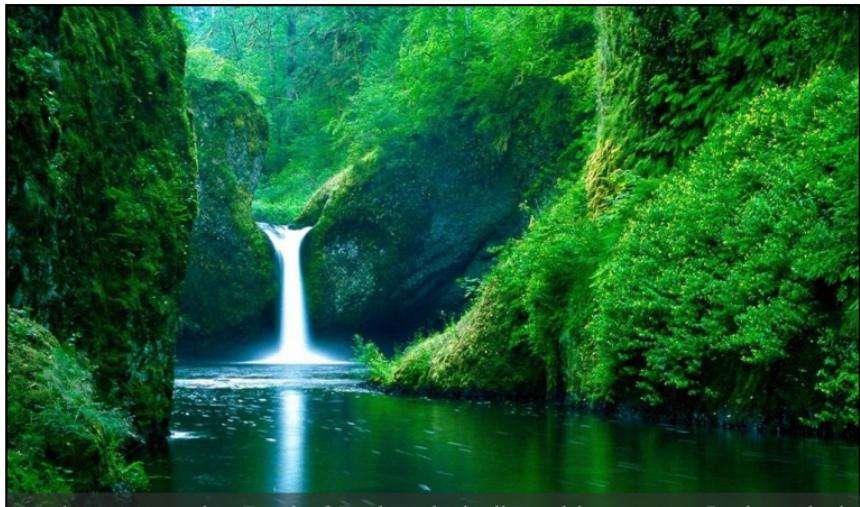
It says here that *if you believe that you are* forgiven and that you *are* cleansed, then and only then does the Lord make it so and provide the fact of it. That is to most clearly say, that only *if you believe that it is already done can it be done*. If you can only believe that the Lord *will* do it, then that is not enough. You must believe that the very moment that the conditions have been fulfilled that it *is so*, and then the Lord at once makes it so. It becomes an actual fact. You are forgiven for the old sins and there is given to you a new life of purity and holiness in the place of the old.

In this transaction you cannot and you must not depend on your feelings. They can be greatly influenced by your surroundings and can change from moment to moment, but the promise and the power of God never changes and it is upon the witness of that Word upon which we are to stand, *and on it alone*.

Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, "I believe

it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.”

ibid., 51



As the man at the Pool of Bethesda believed it was so, God made it so. The cleansing flood of the river of life straight from the throne of God poured healing power through him, and the disease was gone. To those who believe in it today, that same river of life will break the power of sin and flood their souls with healing power.

Again and again people have said to me, “But it would be presumption to do that!” What do you mean, it would be presumption? If the Lord says, that when we come and give our lives to Him, that He will take the old sinful life and give to us a new one, and we take Him at His Word and believe exactly what He has promised, how can that be presumption?! But it would be wicked unbelief not to believe that. In fact the Bible calls such “an evil, unbelieving heart.” *Hebrews 3:12*

Jesus says, “Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” There is a condition to this promise,—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we *have* received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh,

but after the Spirit.” *Steps to Christ*, 51

Thus by faith, and by faith alone begins the new life, and by faith, and by faith alone it is to be maintained. And remember that it must be maintained. Like a perfect newborn babe it needs to be diligently and properly fed. Faith must be maintained and strengthened and we must ever be on guard against an enemy that will take from us the gift of the new life if ever he gets the opportunity.

This is but the beginning of the new life. Many battles and struggles await him who would yet make the kingdom, but of that we will have more to say later.

For now, remember that living faith is believing that *it is* so because He has promised. Therefore the Christian begins with the victory and takes it with him and therefore the devil meets, not a man who hopes to get the victory, but one who already has the victory.

And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 John 5:4

The first great sin in heaven with Lucifer, began with a loss of faith in the wisdom and goodness of God's righteousness, and all other sin likewise has been the result of a loss of faith in God. This is evident from the following:

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. *Romans 14:23*

If the descent into sin and all the loss which that entails was the result of a loss of faith, then the recovery of all that was lost must be gained by the recovery of a perfect faith.

Through faith in Christ,
every deficiency of character may be supplied,
every defilement cleansed,
every fault corrected,
every excellence developed,

"Ye are complete in Him." *Colossians 2:10. Education, 257*

No other study is as important as the study of what genuine living faith really is. And in the study of that vital subject, one must come to an understanding of what true prayer is, for the two are quite inseparable:

Prayer and faith are closely allied, and *they need to be studied together. Education, 257*

In the previous lessons we have seen emphasized in the Word of God the fact that there is a very definite difference between what we commonly accept as being faith, and the real and living thing which actually and truly does bring deliverance from the old sin problem. To many of us, this may have come as a rather surprising revelation of truth, and, if we have grasped the lesson, as the introduction to a richer experience in life altogether.

Just as truly as living faith is something much more than we have previously understood it to be, so, true and effective prayer is something much more than we have previously taken it to be. In fact, Ellen White goes so far as to say that it is a *science*:

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. *Education, 257*

We are plainly told that in a certain type of prayer, the prayer *of faith*, there is a divine science. The one and only prayer that is effective, that ever does any good, is the prayer of faith, so we are not interested in any other than that. But, this kind of prayer is not a hit and miss, haphazard affair. It is not something that we "say" each morning and night as we spend a few hasty moments on bended knee. This kind of prayer is a science.

This is quite a statement and immediately raises the question, "What, after all, is a science?"

A science is, first of all, a knowledge of the laws which govern the operations of the particular field under consideration. These laws are certain and fixed in their operations and success is determined only by a careful adherence to the procedures required by these laws. Failure to understand and obey these laws will certainly result in our never seeing the desired objective.

Therefore, a science must be distinguished from the way of doing things as a result of native, or natural, untrained abilities or inclinations.

Firstly then, a science is a knowledge of the laws which govern the particular subject, and secondly it is the skill which arises out of that knowledge and the diligent development of those skills toward ultimate perfection of procedure.

From all of this we conclude that a science, including the divine science of prayer, is not something that comes to us easily and naturally. It is something that *has to be learned*.

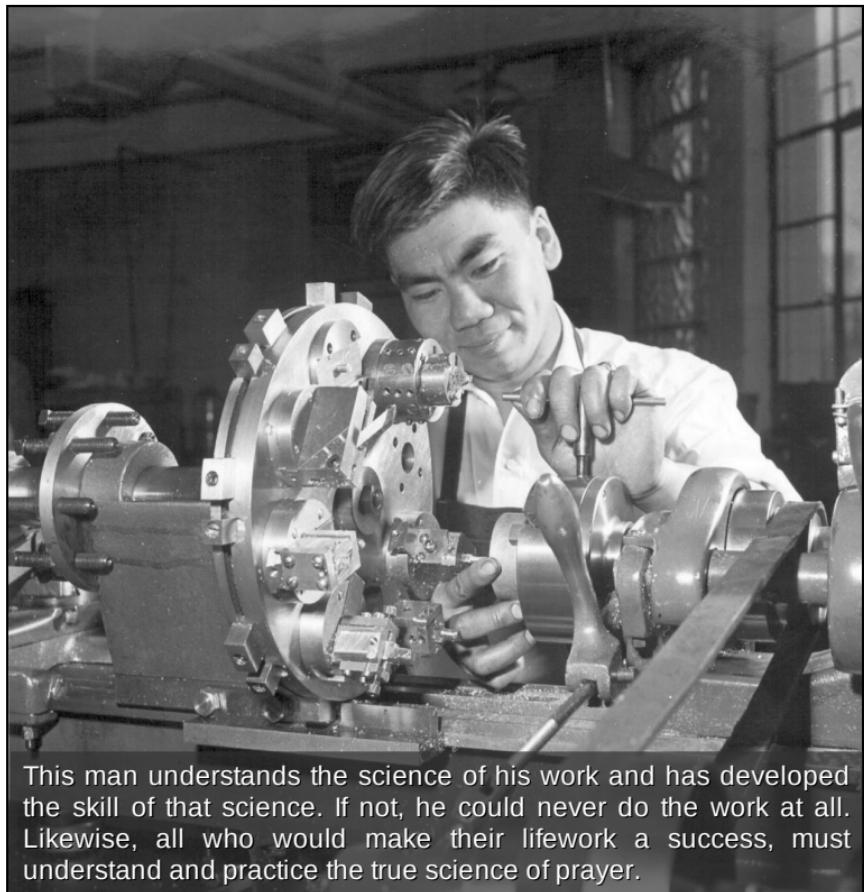
It is not easily learned, for the learning of it requires the setting aside of the old habit patterns which have been deeply inbuilt into the life over many years of practice, and the building of new habit patterns altogether. This would be difficult enough if the science of prayer was natural to the human heart, but it is not, in fact it is contrary to the very things that the natural human heart looks for and seeks in life.

And yet it *must* be learned.

Look again at the statement which we have been studying. It says in the plainest possible language, "It is a science that everyone that would make his life-work a success *must* understand."

It does not say, "*would do well* to understand," nor "*ought* to understand," nor even "*would be better off* to understand." I says only and emphatically, "*must* understand." The penalty for the failure to

understand this divine science is to find that we will not be able to make a success of our lifework.



This man understands the science of his work and has developed the skill of that science. If not, he could never do the work at all. Likewise, all who would make their lifework a success, must understand and practice the true science of prayer.

This is indeed a very serious thing. However, the full seriousness of it will never break on the mind unless we clearly understand what our lifework is. Many will reply that their lifework is to be a builder, a farmer, a technician, a teacher, a typist or some other such vocation as the case may be.

But none of these is your lifework, or can ever be your lifework. These are only the vocations of life, the means of raising the necessary support to continue the processes of life.

The lifework of every single individual upon the face of the whole earth is the same. It is one work. It does not differ from person to

person. It is true that the vast majority of the earth's inhabitants do not know what their lifework is, and thus never take it up, but this does not alter the fact of what it is. What then is our lifework? It is the faithful building of a character temple fit for the eternal indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now, we may be quite a miserable failure in our chosen vocation of life, and still find our way into the kingdom. That is to say, as a teacher, a farmer, or a typist we may prove to be quite unsuccessful and yet still make it into the kingdom, but should we prove a failure in the work of building that character temple, that is, should we prove a failure in our lifework, then the gates of heaven will forever stand barred against us.

Therefore it is absolutely important that we make our lifework a success, and to do this we *must* understand the true science of prayer. This *must* be studied, this *must* be learned, and this *must* be practiced.

Now let us read that statement again slowly and carefully so that the full weight of the message of it may sink into our minds.

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 that would make his lifework a success must understand. *Education*, 257

We could hardly study a more important theme than the true science of prayer, for on the right understanding of this our eternal destiny hangs. Let us turn to this study and discover what the Word of God reveals in regard to it. In so doing it must be emphasized that it will not be possible to make an exhaustive study of it here. Rather we will look into that aspect of prayer which involves the approach to God itself, the practical aspect of the case, the science of it.

It is a wise man who learns by the mistakes of others, and for this very reason the Bible gives example after example of the wrong way of doing things so that we can avoid the same mistake. As well, the Word of God also plainly lays before us the true way of the divine science of prayer with the consequent blessed results of the learning and the doing of it.

We will turn first of all to an illustration of the wrong way to come to God in prayer, and then we shall turn to the correct principles so that we shall have a clear and accurate measuring line by which to know whether our approach to God is true or not. A lesson showing the wrong way is found in the experience of the nobleman who came to

Jesus requesting the healing of his son:

So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. *John 4:46,47*

Here was a man who came to Jesus with a request which is but to say that he came to Him in prayer. This man was in great need for his son was at the point of death, and

Physicians had given him up to die. *The Desire of Ages*, 197

So far as earthly help was concerned, there was none to be had. The case was hopeless and it was only now a matter of waiting for death to come. It is unfortunate that men must so often wait till such a time as this to be driven to the Lord for the help that is needed, when the God of heaven should be *the very first* to be sought out with our great needs.

Consider now the facts regarding the approach that this man made to the Master. In the first case we can say that he came to the one right Person with his request. He came with a true sense of need, in fact he was in quite a state of desperation. He came asking for that which it was the will of God to give him. That this is true is evident from the fact that the request was in the end granted.

So,

he came with the *right* sense of need,

to the *right* Person,

asking for the *right* thing,

but,

he asked in the *wrong* way.

Because of this, *he placed himself in a position* where it was impossible for the Lord to answer his prayer. In other words, he did not understand the true science of prayer.

The *way* in which he came to the Lord in prayer being the wrong way, it is of interest to us to understand that wrong way, so that we can avoid making the same failure as he. Just as surely as he made a wrong approach to the Lord and failed to receive the answer to his prayer, so we too will likewise receive the same denial of our request, if we come in the same wrong way.

What then was the wrong way in which he made his approach to

the Master?

The answer which Jesus gave to his request reveals it. Instead of granting the request for the healing of his son, Jesus said to him,

Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe. *John 4:48*

Rightly understood, this was saying, "I am sorry, but I cannot do for you what you are asking of Me, while you come to Me in that way, for it is not the way of faith. Instead, you are only prepared to believe when you actually see the fulfillment of your request."

This was the way in which he came and this was the wrong way indeed.

The Nobleman

Knew his need

He came

He asked

The fulfillment



THE WRONG WAY TO PRAY

This is not the way of living faith.

This is not the way of the Divine Science of prayer.

This does not bring results.

But that reply from the Master proved to be, as Christ intended that it should, a revelation to him of his own wrong approach to the problem.

Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. *The Desire of Ages*, 198

These comments show that the *first* approach of this man to Christ was *not* the way of living faith. Therefore, it was not and could not be, a *prayer of faith*, which prayer is a divine science. This was not to say that the man did not have some faith. He did have a measure of faith, but it was not living faith and trust in the Saviour's power to heal and to deliver.

But now, as the Spirit of God laid bare to the man himself his sad condition and showed to him most clearly, that the price of his rejection of the offer of living faith,—for this faith is the gift of God—was the life of his son, he did not fight the conviction that the Lord laid upon him but accepted the Lord's judgment of what he was. He frankly acknowledged himself to be what the Lord declared him to be and, in that same moment, the Lord revealed to him His power and might. Now for the first time he really

knew that he was in the presence of One who could read his thoughts, and to whom all things were possible. *The Desire of Ages*, 198

As this knowledge came to him, his faith laid hold on that truth and then he came *again* to Jesus in prayer.

Sir, come down before my child dies. *John 4:49*

His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when wrestling with the Angel, he cried, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” *The Desire of Ages*, 198

It was in response to the faith which was manifested in *this* request, and not for one moment to that which was lacking in the first request, that the boy was healed. After having made the first request, if he had failed to come to the making of the second in the very way in which it was made, the boy would never have been healed. He would most certainly have died.

Inasmuch as we are in this chapter concerned first with gaining an understanding of the wrong way to come to God in prayer, we will spend a little time in the study of this man’s approach to Christ.

What did he do? What was his approach to Christ?

He came to the one right Person with a certain degree of faith asking for that which God did desire to give to him. And having come, he asked that his son be healed. All this he must do.

But in his coming he lacked one vital understanding, and that was a personal knowledge of the power of God, and lacking this, he, having come and having asked, *waited* to see the fulfillment of his prayer *before* he should believe. In other words, he was not prepared to believe until he saw the visible, tangible evidence with his physical senses.

But this is not faith. This is living by sight. This is the way which is so natural to the human being. It is in our very human nature to live

that way, and a lifetime of living that way has ingrained that approach into our very nature, until we come to God again and again in this way, and wonder why we live on so low a level of experience.

While we shall appreciate the wrong approach of this man far better, when we understand the right way, the true science of prayer, yet the understanding of the wrong way as far as we are able at this stage, will help us considerably in finding and understanding the true way.

Now, we might feel that we would not make the mistake which that man made; that we would never come to God in the faithless, unbelieving way in which that man did. But this is the very way in which we come to the Lord in prayer over and over again. The mistake of that man is more easily seen than is our own, because the Word of God so plainly shows to us the error of his ways. And the whole purpose is that we shall see in this man's mistake our own, for this was written for our benefit and salvation.

How often we kneel in prayer and ask the *right* Person for the *right* thing in the *wrong* way! How often we find ourselves praying for the blessing of the outpouring of the Spirit, and our prayer runs something like this: "Lord, we trust that You *might* give to us the blessing of the infilling of the Spirit." Again we gather to a meeting to study the Word of Truth and we pray that the Lord *might* give to us a blessing.

Then we rise from our knees and do not especially look nor expect a blessing, and if the Lord would visit us with a real outpouring of His power, we would be mightily surprised.

Let us examine the prayers that we pray and we will find that they are filled with doubt, uncertainty, and unbelief; that we do not come to the Lord in the way of faith, that we are really waiting to see the evidence with our physical senses *before* we are prepared to believe.

The nobleman wanted to *see* the fulfillment of his prayer *before* he should believe; but he had to accept the word of Jesus that his request was heard and the blessing granted. *This lesson we also have to learn. The Desire of Ages*, 200

And this takes learning. It is not until first of all we are brought to that place where the Spirit of God is able to reveal to us the real condition of our lives and then at the same time opens before our eyes something of the living power of a living God, that we can have the faith which will enable us to approach God in the truly scientific way of faith and prayer.

It is time now to turn to the study of that right and true way of living faith.

Because this matter is so vitally important, the Lord has made it very plain. In that sure and certain Word it has been set out for us both by teaching and by illustration, and once we understand the truth of it, we will see it in every part of the Scriptures.

So we must work from the plainest and the clearest of statements and then find the truth revealed in more complex and wonderful illustrations. And nowhere is this true science of prayer more clearly and wonderfully spelled out than in this statement:

The nobleman wanted to see the fulfillment of his prayer before he should believe; but he had to accept the word of Jesus that his request was heard and the blessing granted. *This lesson we also have to learn.* Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises. When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we *have* received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most. *When we have learned to do this,* we shall know that our prayers are answered. God will do for us, “exceeding abundantly,” “according to the riches of His glory,” and “the working of His mighty power.” *Ephesians 3:20,16; 1:19. The Desire of Ages, 200*

Now let us take this paragraph step by step and study it through for in it is vital practical truth. The first two sentences cover the ground already dealt with so we will begin in this chapter with the third sentence: “Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises.”

But you can never trust a promise that you do not know. Therefore the very first step in the true science of prayer is to *know* the promises. This does not mean to know *about* them or *of* them, but to really *know* them. It means to take the Word of God and search therein as a miner searches for treasure, and when you find a promise which guarantees you the victory over sin, the cleansing away of the old nature, the putting in of the new nature and all the other wonderful and certain things which the Lord longs to give to us, to make that promise your very own. It means more than just to commit it to memory. It means to

make it a constant companion and friend,—a companion and a friend which will be peace to you in time of turmoil, a warrior and champion for you when the foe assails you, a comforter in time of sorrow and distress and a power when you are to give loving service to the needy.

To have this, you must sit down with the promise and become acquainted with it. Read it over carefully and slowly. Ponder it and meditate upon it. Let the Spirit of God break open to your mind the fullness of the staggering reality of what that promise is actually saying to you and for you. All this is intended in the following instruction:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. *Deuteronomy 6:6-9*

Often when I have given this study verbally, I have asked the folk in the audience to repeat quickly a number of Bible promises that guarantee to the believer victory over sin and a new heart and life altogether. But it is very seldom that one finds those in the audience who can really repeat the promises of God for those things.

You may think that to confront a person with the request to produce a string of living promises is hardly fair when done on the spur of the moment, but that is the very thing which we must be able to do. Unless the promises of God are so much a living part of us, that we are able to instantly call them to mind when the enemy assails, then we do not have our weapons in good shape and the enemy will win every time. Think of what kind of a soldier he would be who had to go hunting for his weapons when the enemy was rushing upon him in furious assault, and then you have the picture of the Christian who does not have the living promises of God absolutely at his fingertips. His defeat is a certainty.

Therefore, you must *know* the promises and *know* them intimately, continually, and well. If you do not, then you do not even have the first essential to successful prayer, without which you will never make your lifework a success.

Now, you will make a serious mistake if you try to simply memorize

a list of promises at the outset. That is not the right approach. Rather, you must go to the Word of God and take one promise, just as a soldier takes one weapon first and trains in the use of that and becomes familiar with it. He learns to use it and then he tests it and tries it until he becomes so thoroughly familiar with it and what it will do, that to use it becomes second nature to him. Then add another and another to your armory of spiritual weapons until you have a whole arsenal of power with which to triumph over every problem and difficulty in life.

Some may feel that they do not know where to look to begin. At first one may find it hard to make a start and this is due to the fact that we are so materially minded that we see in some of the greatest of promises only assurances of material security. In this regard take the twenty-third *Psalm* again and read it over and ask yourself what the Lord is really promising. Ever remember that Jesus said,

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. *Matthew 6:33*

Therefore, whenever we look into the promises of God, we must seek *first* therein, not these material things that seem unfortunately to fill so much of our thinking and desires, but the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Therefore, if we come to the twenty-third *Psalm* and, after studying it, have found in it only the assurance of material protection, then we can be sure that we have failed to find that which is first and foremost in the promises of that *Psalm*.

There is not the space here to take up this *Psalm* promise by promise, but we suggest that you do this for yourself, asking for the Spirit of God to open to your mind the wonders and the power contained therein. Ask Him on the basis of the promise in *James 1:5*.

Now, maybe *Psalm 23* is not the best one for you to begin with. Then you might try one of the following: *Psalm 46; Psalm 91; Matthew 1:21; Matthew 5:48; John 8:32-36; Romans 6:6,14,18-23; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:34,57; Ephesians 1:17-22; 3:14-21; 5:25-27; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23,24; Hebrews 7:25; James 1:5; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 1:9; 3:1-19; 5:4; Jude 24; The Desire of Ages*, 311, 312, 490, 664, 668, 805.

These are but a very few of the marvelous parade of promises in the Word of God, and they are only there as starters for your own quest. Once you have really become acquainted with these, or at least some of these, you will begin to find yourself discovering many others not listed here, and will be surprised at how well filled the Word is with these

promises. They are simply everywhere.



*More surely than the sun rises each morning in the east
and sets each night in the west,
will the promises of God be fulfilled
to those who come to Him in true and living faith.*

BELIEVE THE PROMISES

These promises mean exactly what they say and nothing less than what they say. They are the direct statements of God to you and to me, and are not idly made or given. Therefore, we must *absolutely believe* them just as they are written. These promises are not might-be's, or hoped-for's. *They are Divine certainties*, and the throne of God is staked upon the faithfulness with which He fulfills them.

Let us take one of the shining, glorious promises of the Bible and consider it together for a moment.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. *1 Corinthians 10:13*

Now that means just all of that. Think about it. It means that there is not one single temptation that can ever come to you but that it has already been faced by man and overcome. And the Man of all men who is referred to here, is the Man Christ Jesus. He was

In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. *Hebrews 4:15*

Think then of what this means to you. It means that there is no temptation which can possibly come to you that is unique, that is different, that has never been met before. It means that there is nothing which can now take the Lord by surprise. To Him it is all common ground. He knows it all and therefore He has the full and complete solution to it long before it ever reaches you. Satan has not got one single new trick in his bag, and can never have any more forever. All that he has got to throw at you is old stuff that has been answered fully and completely before.

Does that mean anything to us? Oh! Indeed it does! It means everything to us, and I fully and completely believe it. I *know* that there is no temptation which can come to me but that it is common to man, and I do not need to fear it for one single moment. Do *you* know that and *absolutely* believe it?

But you may argue that Jesus was stronger than you, and that He could cope with temptations which are too strong for you. That is the argument of evil unbelief on two counts. In the first case it is not you but He who is to fight the devil and to drive him off. The battle is not yours but the Lord's. So it is not a question of how strong you are, but

only of how strong He is. Get your eyes forever off yourself and your weakness, and fill your vision with the view of His marvelous strength and power.

But in the second case in this very verse is provided the answer to that problem. It says that God is faithful and will not suffer *you* to be tempted above what *you* are able to bear. This contains no contradiction to the truth that the battle is the Lord's and not ours, for the statement that we will not be tempted above that which we are able to bear has to do with the level of our faith, the degree to which we are able to lay hold of the power of God and let Him fight the battle for us.

Now, just as a parent will not allow any responsibility or danger to come to the child which he is not able to bear, so the Lord protects us from tests of faith that are too much for us at our present level of development. Think of the way in which a parent will protect a little babe from cold and hardship which he would think nothing of allowing a two-year-old, and later a four-year-old, to face. A wise parent understands just what the child can be allowed to do and what he can be exposed to at each stage of development and faithfully does he guard and care for the child.

How much more wisely and faithfully does our heavenly Father guard, direct and protect His children. Therefore you can absolutely know and believe that no temptation that comes to you is too much for you to bear. The Lord knows the level of your faith and He is simply providing you with a wonderful opportunity to exercise that faith and to live for Him. Grasp the opportunity with courage and with zeal.

So we must not only know the promises, we must absolutely believe them. But this is not enough. Knowing them and believing them will do us no good unless we

ASK FOR THE BLESSING

Jesus specifically said,

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. *Matthew 7:7*

Therefore, *ask*.

But here is a point where many go far wrong. They do not really ask for the blessings that the Lord has promised. They express a hope that

the Lord *might* be gracious to them and grant their desires, but they fail to ask as specifically and directly for the gift as a child will in simple faith approach its parent.

How many times we hear well meaning and earnest people who profess to be the children of God, come to a prayer meeting and kneeling, say in their prayers, "Lord, we trust that you *might* visit us with a blessing." One would gain the impression that they would be mightily surprised if the Lord did.

Let us come to the Lord, and with living faith, hold up the promise before Him and ask for it, expecting to receive it. This must be done in a true spirit of respect and humility but the Lord is not honored by doubting and halting prayers. He expects us to ask Him specifically for what we need according to His will and promise.

Then, having asked, we are to receive the gift by faith, *right there while we are upon our knees*. Note that the statement we are considering does not say that we are *to hope* to receive, but that we are to receive it right there by faith. It becomes ours, *then*, when we by faith lay hold of it and possess it.

Then, while still there upon our knees we are to

THANK HIM

that we *have* received the gift already. This is the hardest part for believers to learn. All are prepared to believe that there is the hope that they will receive the gift in the future. And they go forth as did the nobleman waiting to see the gift before they should believe. But the statement does not tell us that we are to thank the Lord that we *are to receive* that blessing so much needed, but that *we already have received it*. This is possible only by living faith.

This is only possible if we have truly come to know those promises, see the power of those promises, absolutely believe them and come and ask specifically for that which the Lord is most anxious to give us. Then having thanked Him that we have received the gift we are to go our way knowing

...that the gift which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most. *Education*, 258

"*When we have learned to do this,*" and it takes learning for it does not come naturally to the human being, then "*we shall know* that our prayers are answered. God *will do* for us 'exceeding abundantly,'

‘according to the riches of His glory,’ and ‘the working of His mighty power.’ *Ephesians 3:20,16; 1:19.*” *The Desire of Ages*, 200

And conversely, until we have learned to do this then the Lord cannot work for us according to His mighty power. Oh! How vital it is that we as a people learn the mighty science of prayer! Not until we do, can the work ever be finished.

Know the promises

Believe the promises

Come

Ask

Receive by faith

Thank God you have received

The realization
comes when you
need it most



Go your way possessing the gift by faith
though not yet by sight.

THE RIGHT WAY TO PRAY

This is the way of living faith.

This is the way of the Divine Science of prayer.

This does bring results.

If we have found that the Lord has not been working mightily through us and for us, it can only be that we have not learned living faith,—have not learned and followed the true science of prayer.

It is to be understood that there is a great deal more to the subject of prayer than is contained in the above words.

This study is intended to bring home to us the vital factor of *faith* in the true science of prayer without which our prayer can never be effective. Until the nobleman learned the true way to come to the Lord in prayer the Saviour could do nothing for him at all. That man felt that he could not believe until he had seen the evidence of the fulfilled prayer with his own eyes. But when he saw the living power and certainty of the promises and in simple faith asked directly and specifically for the healing of his son, then living faith laid hold of the promise, and he needed no further evidence to know that the son was well.

He could easily have hastened home that night *to see* if the son was well. He did not do so. He did not need *to see* that the son was healed for he *knew* that he was. He needed nothing more than the promise of God and his sure knowledge that the gift was his. That was all the evidence that he needed and when next day he went home and the servants met him *they simply told him something that he already knew.*

This is the true science of prayer. Either we learn it or we do not. If we do, then the gates of the eternal kingdom will be opened to us, but if we do not, then it will be forever closed against us, for “it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success *must* understand.”

We have been studying the True Science of Prayer, and in this study we have learned that we are to come in faith and ask for the blessing, receive it by faith, thank the Lord that we *have* received it, and then go our way *possessing* the gift which we shall realize when we need it most.

Now it follows that if we are not going to have any visible realization of the gift till the hour of need comes, then the only witness to us that we have the gift before that time, is the witness of faith. Take again the experience of the nobleman of Capernaum who came for the healing of his son as recorded in *John 4:46-54*. This man came to Jesus and made his request. At first, as we have previously seen, he made the request in the wrong way but as the words of Jesus laid bare to him the deficiency of his faith, he asked again in *living* faith, and the Word of Jesus came to him, “*Go; your son will live.*”

His faith took hold upon that word.

He went his way *knowing* that he had the gift; *knowing* that right then, it *was* his possession. How? By what witness did he *know* this to be the case?

Certainly it was not the witness of sight, for the son was far away in another city. Nor was it the witness of any message from home to tell him that the son was healed and restored. The witness of sight and circumstances was entirely absent in the picture. The only thing he had was the witness of faith and that was based on the Word of Jesus which was the Word of God.

He had the Word of God, and that was sufficient. *This is the great lesson that we have to learn.*

There are indeed two witnesses which will forever be seeking to claim our attention and our allegiance. The one is the witness of faith which is based on the Word of God; the other is the witness of feeling which is based upon sight and circumstances. The Lord of Heaven is seeking to have us live by the witness of faith based upon His unchanging, infallible, absolutely reliable and all-powerful Word. His Holy Spirit and His Holy angels labor unceasingly to focus our attention upon this witness to the exclusion of all else, and it seems that they

have a difficult task, for we are a people who are primarily concerned with material things and with material security.

But the devil and his angels are forever trying to fill our minds with the voice of the other witness and to have our attention forever directed to the changing and discouraging picture of sight and circumstances. If he can only succeed, and it seems that he has more success than failure, then we lose sight of the witness of faith and the power of the Word and thus lose our grip on the promises of God and fail in the conflict with evil.

But if we can keep our eyes fixed upon the Word of truth, and maintain a fixed trust in that Word, then all the power of the devil can have no effect upon us whatsoever. We become

impregnable to the assaults of Satan. *The Desire of Ages*, 324

So, the two witnesses are each seeking to claim our attention and thus direct our lives. But neither can succeed in this without our willing consent and co-operation. The two witnesses are there, *but the choice is ours* as to which voice we listen to.

If you desire to listen to the witness of sight and circumstances, then the devil will provide you with ample evidence for all the discouragement and doubt in the world. He will strip you of every vestige of faith in the living power of that living Word.

But you do not have to listen to that witness at all. You can turn a deaf ear to it all and refuse to listen to it. This will not always be easy, and at times will require a definite struggle and a very real battle, but it can be done and must be done.

Humanity likes to *see* with the eyes and *hear* with the ears and *feel* with the senses the actuality of a thing. But the witness of faith calls upon us to trust in that for which we have no evidence of the senses, and this is difficult for humanity to do. But if that was all it would be difficult enough, but the case is worse in this respect that the witness of our senses is actually *against* the witness of faith. God has spoken one thing and we have come and claimed the promise of it and received it all by faith, but then we go forth every witness of sight and circumstances shouts to us that the opposite is true. And the devil is there, right there, both in whispered insinuations and in the voices of friends and enemies to press this witness upon us in the most discouraging light possible.

To really understand this better, let us turn to some illustrations from the Bible.

One of the clearest in this connection was the experience of the children of Israel in their departure from Egypt. The Word of God to them was that He would guide them, and protect them, and would work only for their good. He would deliver them from their enemies and supply them with all the food and clothing that they needed.

That was the Word of God to them and they were to trust that Word by placing themselves implicitly in His hands to be guided where He would guide them and taken where He would take them, with the promise that this would ultimately be the land of promise, the glorious Canaan. Nor did He leave them entirely without some witness of sight and circumstances for He demonstrated to them His mighty power in the plagues of Egypt.

Reassured by this, the people did put themselves trustingly in the hand of God and He began the long task of leading them out of Egypt to the promised land. They began with high hopes and great courage, but it was not very long before the witness of sight and circumstances loomed up against them in a most frightening way.

The pillar of cloud led them down to the very edge of the Red Sea, and there they stopped.

On the south a rugged mountain obstructed their further progress. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 284

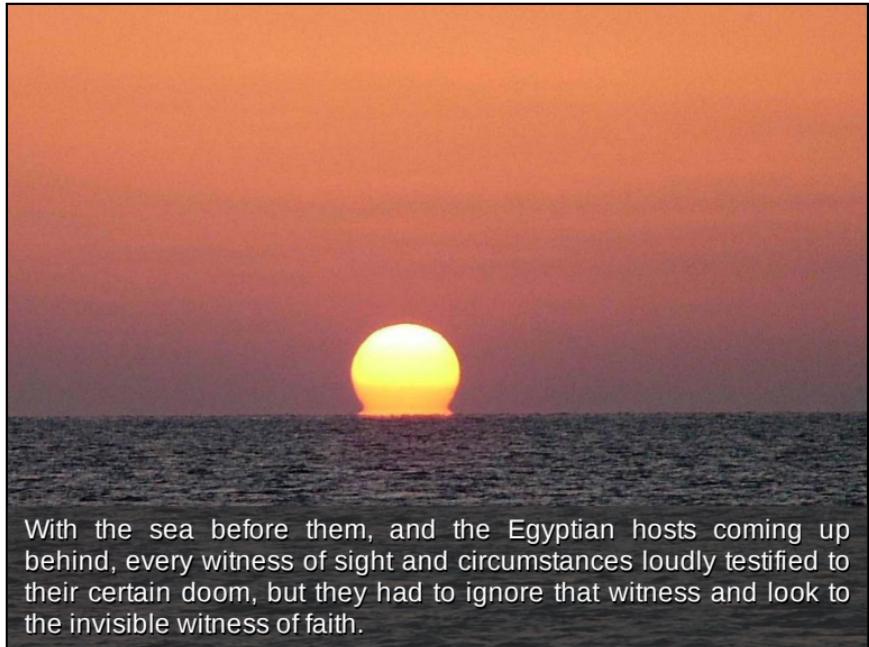
They obviously could go no further, and the evidence began to pile up that the Lord had made a mistake in bringing them here. If they were ever going to reach the land of Canaan there would have to be some retracing of steps before they could go further. Why should the Lord bring them to a point and then require them to go back over their steps again? This surely did not look like a very competent leadership!

But they did not have long to contemplate the situation before they became aware of oncoming peril.

Suddenly they beheld in the distance the flashing armor and moving chariots betokening the advance guard of a great army. As the force drew nearer, the hosts of Egypt were seen in full pursuit. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 284

What a trap that was! They could not have been caught in a worse place. Flight was impossible. The sea was before them, the rugged,

impassable mountains to the south and the Egyptians sweeping down from the west and the north.



With the sea before them, and the Egyptian hosts coming up behind, every witness of sight and circumstances loudly testified to their certain doom, but they had to ignore that witness and look to the invisible witness of faith.

Think now of what a powerful and convincing argument the devil had in the witness of sight and circumstances on that day. *Every single visible evidence* pointed to the certainty of their doom, testified to the suspicion that God had made a terrible mistake and was not really able to lead the people safely to the promised land, and argued to them that the Lord did not really care for them but had only led them out of Egypt to destroy them. *The witness of sight and circumstances* really put the Lord in the worst possible light, and anyone of those people who accepted that witness lost all faith in God right on the spot.

But the Lord had led them there, and, in His leading of them to that place there was a plan which could not be accomplished except by His leading them there. Of this plan He had told them nothing. He was not required to under the contract. He had promised to lead them safely through and it was His responsibility to do this, and theirs to put their trust in Him without a question or a single doubt of any kind.

Here is a lesson for all time. There will be occasions again and again where the Lord will lead us into situations that seem to be impossible

and fraught only with disaster. The witness of sight and circumstances will fill the whole of our vision, and our hearts will sink and fail. But in that hour, let us remember to stand still and in calm, trusting silence wait until that solution emerges.

No situation ever catches the Lord by surprise. Never! How could it! There is nothing which has ever come to pass but that the Lord knew that it would and allowed it to happen. In fact very often He plans that it should happen for the fulfilling of a purpose which is for our very best good and development.

And knowing that it was coming and would happen, the Lord has had the solution worked out long before the situation ever arose. He will not have told us the solution in advance. That is not necessary. We are to trust and to wait, and *wait* until that solution emerges.

Those who surrender their lives to His guidance and to His service can never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. *The Ministry of Healing*, 248

This is a promise to make our very own. It is the sure and certain answer to the challenging arguments of the witness of sight and circumstances. If the Israelites had remembered this that day, then they would never have manifested the sad unbelief which they did. The Lord *knew* where He was taking them. The Lord *knew* the Egyptians would follow them. He *knew* that they would overtake them at that very spot. And He *knew* that there was not a better spot in all the world for them to be overtaken. Thus, what looked to the Israelites as being the very worst spot in the world, was in actual fact the very best spot of all.

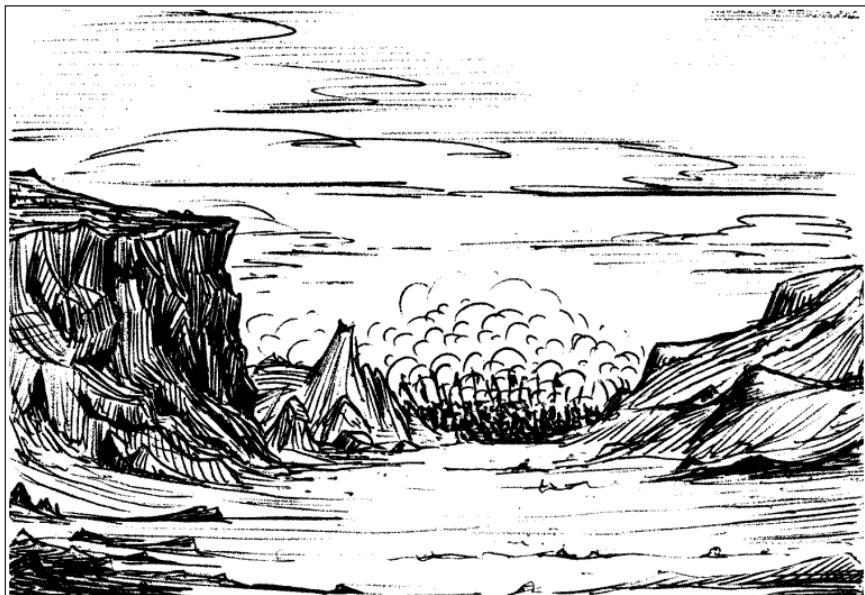
In a situation like that the Israelites should have looked away from the grim view presented by the witness of sight and circumstances, and fixed their eye on the witness of faith based upon the Word of God. They should have simply said, "The Lord brought us here. Therefore it is His task to see us through this situation. Let us calmly wait to see what the Lord will work out in this situation. He has not led us this far to desert us, leaving us to the malice of our enemies. Our God is not that kind of God. Never!"

But they did not do this. All they could see was the witness of sight and circumstances and filled with terror they rushed to Moses and said,

Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in

Egypt, "Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. *Exodus 14:11,12*

How sadly typical this is of the human family. How successful the devil is in having us become fully preoccupied with the witness of sight and circumstances to the exclusion of all else.



But there was one man there who did not share their evil unbelief, and the faith of that man saved the day. His name was Moses. Look and see the way that he reacted in that situation. He could see that the sea lay before them and the mountains to the south. He could see the Egyptians approaching and cutting off all possible means of escape. He could see that, in the natural order of events there was not so much as a vestige of hope for a single one of them. He could see all that *just as it was*, but it did not bother him in the least.

What did distress him was the unbelief of the people.

Moses was greatly troubled that his people should manifest so little faith in God, notwithstanding they had repeatedly witnessed the manifestation of His power in their behalf. How could they charge upon him the dangers and difficulties of their situation, when he had followed the express command of God?

True, there was no possibility of deliverance unless God Himself should interpose for their release; *but having been brought into this position in obedience to the divine direction, Moses felt no fear of the consequences.* His calm and assuring reply to the people was, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 284

Moses could stand that day untroubled by the sight and the circumstances because he looked above and beyond them to the witness of faith. He absolutely knew that the Lord had brought them to this place and that He would not bring them there to abandon them and to destroy them. He knew that the Lord had a plan all worked out to meet the situation, and he was looking forward with the keenest anticipation to see that plan outworked. That which to the Israelites was only cause for the darkest despair, was to him the cause of the highest hope and joyful anticipation.

It was not easy, but his word of courage and faith stilled the multitude, and with uneasy fear they waited events. In a very little while the pillar of cloud that had gone before them lifted and, passing over the camp, stood then between them and the Egyptians. To the Israelites it became a wall of light and protection, but to the Egyptians it was nothing but a wall of darkness that they could not and dared not try to penetrate.

Now what next?

The vital lesson which is taught in this story so far is that when the life is led by the Lord, we *must expect* to be led into places which are fraught with terror and threatened destruction. But let not that situation cause us to tremble and doubt for so much even as a moment. God has not brought us there to abandon us, and He will finish the good work begun, and take us out gloriously if we let Him. Therefore, the Word to us is “Stand still and wait.”

Sometimes this may take quite a little waiting, but we must wait until the Lord displays His power and wisdom in the solving of that problem. What we must never do is to take the problem out of the Lord’s hands and try to solve it ourselves. This will mean that the Lord will never be able to help us through, and the very plan which He has so

carefully worked out for us will never be seen by us and we will suffer great loss. Remember that the Lord had a very wonderful plan for the conquest of Canaan other than that which was finally used, but because of the unbelief of Israel we have never seen what the Lord had in mind.

The Lord will not keep us waiting forever. Sooner or later will come the Word, "Go forward." And in a little while that Word came to the Israelites, "Go forward." But once again the witness of sight and circumstances was against them, for to go forward meant to go into the Red Sea and into certain drowning. But God had said, "Go forward," and that was His word to them. *There was no clear, open path through the Red Sea when the Lord spoke this Word.* There was no need for it yet, and there would be no need until they actually arrived at the water's edge. *Then* would come the real time of need and *then* they were to realize the gift. In the meantime they were to accept that Word, possess by living faith the salvation contained in that Word, and act upon it accordingly. They were to walk down to that very water's edge.

And they did it.



It is well that they did, for victory is only gained—*by faith*. If they had not walked down to the very water's edge against the witness of sight and circumstances then God could never and would never have opened the sea for them.

But they had heard the simple Word of God, and they absolutely believed that Word. By faith they asked for and claimed it as their very

own, and possessing that Word by faith they marched down in the full possession of it *though not yet in the sight of it*, till the very moment when they needed it. They did not need any path across the sea until they came to the sea, and then when they really needed that path and not before, it was there. They *realized the gift when they needed it most.*

But suppose that they had listened to the witness of sight and circumstances. Then they would never have advanced to the sea and it would never have opened for them. They never would have crossed the Red Sea "by faith", nor for that matter by any other means either.

It was "by faith" that "they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." In marching down to the very water, they showed that they believed the Word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet.

The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, "Go forward." We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, "Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;" but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things.

The cloud that was a wall of darkness to the Egyptians was to the Hebrews a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them. So the dealings of Providence bring to the unbelieving, darkness and despair, while to the trusting soul they are full of light and peace. The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, *but it is a safe path.* *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 290

True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil and let our faith take hold of the

promised blessing and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the Word it is ours. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” *Mark 11:24* Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realize it. When the promised blessing is realized and enjoyed, faith is swallowed up. *Early Writings, 72*

Looking down to the very end of time Jesus sadly said,

“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” *Luke 18:8*

But while faith, living faith, will be an exceedingly rare commodity, there will be a little company who will possess it and of them it is said,

Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. *Revelation 14:12 (KJV)*

Only those who have learned to ignore the witness of sight and circumstances, and to pin their entire confidence in the witness of faith based upon the unchanging, all-powerful, living Word of God will find themselves among that number and thus in the promised land. Let us learn this lesson, the lesson of the True Science of Prayer before it is forever too late to learn it.

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. *Revelation 3:21*

This Scripture contains much that is food for the most profound thought but the one thought that we wish to take from it as the basis of this study is that those who sit down with the Son in His throne will be those who have overcome *as* He overcame. That is to say that, by the very same weapons and by the very same methods and procedures that He overcame, so they will have overcome.

This can only mean then that the very same temptations which we have to face, He likewise had to face, and in the facing of them He possessed no advantage over us whatsoever. He overcame them from the same standpoint as ourselves, with the same weapons, and in the same way that we must overcome them. And from that same position, He triumphed. He did overcome. Thus He proved that the way in which He overcame is *the* way of success. Therefore if we would overcome, we must learn to overcome *as* He overcame.

In the previous chapters we have studied something of the way in which we are to overcome. Let us turn now to the victories of Jesus to see that the same way we are to overcome is indeed the very way in which He overcame.

The first great and significant victory gained by the Son of God and man was in the wilderness of temptation after His baptism. The story of it is found in the closing verses of *Matthew* three and the first verses of *Matthew* four.

Let us consider the story very carefully to gain the picture of the implications of it all.

It begins with the baptism of Jesus. Long had He waited for this event. At the age of twelve when in the temple for the first time as a witness of the sacrificial services, the mystery of His mission had opened before Him.

For the first time the child Jesus looked upon the temple. He saw the white-robed priests performing their solemn ministry. He beheld the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. With

the worshipers He bowed in prayer, while the cloud of incense ascended before God. He witnessed the impressive rites of the paschal service. Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour. *The Desire of Ages*, 78

At His visit to the temple in His boyhood, as the mystery of His lifework opened before Him... *The Desire of Ages*, 146

As He thus began to understand more and more the reason for His being in the world, that is to say, as all this began to open up before His human mind, the depth of Divine love and compassion which was in Him laid upon him a very heavy sense of mission. More and more, as He saw the desperate plight of a perishing humanity, He longed to give Himself utterly to the salvation of that humanity. But completely obedient and submissive to the direction of His heavenly Father, He waited till His time had come.

When the tidings of the work of John the Baptist reached His ears He knew that this was the call, the time had come.

The Desire of Ages, 109

He submitted to baptism, and, as He came up from the water, the whole weight of the mission of His life rested upon Him as never before.

He saw and felt it all, but His purpose remained steadfast. Upon His arm depended the salvation of the fallen race, and He reached out His hand to grasp the hand of Omnipotent Love.

The Desire of Ages, 111

There followed such a prayer of dedication as the angels of Heaven had never before heard. They were eager to take to Jesus the answer to that prayer.

But no; the Father Himself will answer the petition of His Son. Direct from the throne issue the beams of His glory. The heavens are opened, and upon the Saviour's head descends a dovelike form of purest light,—fit emblem of Him, the meek and lowly One...From the open heavens a voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Desire of Ages, 112

This was a tremendous moment in the life of Jesus. To understand how tremendous it was let us remember that He was upon the earth as *a man*, and possessed all the limitations of humanity. Like any other man He did not know what was going to happen on the morrow beyond the probabilities that we all can know about tomorrow.

True He did know in general terms the future, so far as it was revealed in the prophetic Word, just as we too can and do know the future to a point. For instance, we know that the Loud Cry is coming and that if we are faithful, and if we live till it comes, we will have a part in that work. But we do not know where we will be at that time, nor do we know just exactly what role we will play in it all. That will become known to us only *day by day* as it happens.

So it was with the Saviour.

So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and *day by day* the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. *The Desire of Ages*, 208

God did not give to Jesus a long term preview of the intimate details of the work which He was to do. The plan was unfolded only *day by day* exactly as it is unfolded by the Father to any one of us. He did not know before it happened that the Father was going to announce from Heaven that He was the well beloved Son.

But now the Father had. The evidence was there that the Father fully accepted Him for the task which was to be done. Throughout His life there had burned within Him the longing for this day. Now it had come. If you have ever been fired with a dedicated sense of mission and longed to do a great work for the King of kings and yet had to wait and wait through many years of deviations from your heart's desire, then you will understand a part of the intensity with which the Saviour came to this moment.

Put yourself into His position and ask yourself what you would *expect* to happen right from that point on. What would you anticipate as being the commission from now on out? The answer is most certainly that one would expect to go right to work for the saving of that perishing humanity. And Jesus, who could not know any better than you or I may know what tomorrow holds, and would know nothing of the Father's intent to have Him away into a wilderness for the next

month and more, would naturally expect that on the morrow, or even on that day, He would begin His great work.

But, expect what He might, He would only go where the Spirit of God would direct Him contrary as it might be to His strongest and surest expectations. And so it was that the Spirit of God did lead Him entirely otherwise than He ever could have expected. He led Him, not into the traffic of man where He could have preached the gospel, but right away from it all into a barren wilderness where there was no man whatsoever and where He could not preach the gospel at all.

After the most patient waiting till He was thirty years of age, after the most soul-thrilling dedicated offering of Himself to the cause of truth ever witnessed, and after such a definite and signal acceptance of it all by the Father Himself, to be led away into that desolate and forsaken place, must surely mean that some grave and terrible mistake had been made somewhere. This, to all appearances, is just contrary to good common sense.

To make matters infinitely worse, the sense of the presence of God left Him, and there settled upon Him a desperate sense of being utterly forsaken of God and man.

Just as the Israelites had experienced the wonderful leading of the Lord and had seen His mighty hand over them and for them, and then had been led to a place where it seemed that God had forsaken them and was even mocking them, so Jesus now was going through exactly the same bitter experience and His faith was being tried to the uttermost. It seemed that He had been led this far by the Spirit of God and then just left, abandoned and forsaken without food or water. Every witness of sight and circumstances cried in the loudest possible voice that Heaven had lost Him somehow, did not even know where He was and did not even seem to care.

And with that tremendous pressure upon Him He might have broken under the strain of it and voluntarily returned to the habitations of men. He might have fled back to the home of Joseph and Mary where He knew He was loved and wanted. He did not do it. The Spirit of God had led Him to this spot and the Spirit of God alone could release Him from that spot and, even if He starved to death there, He would wait and would not move except under the Spirit's direction. That is the perfect example of surrender to the will and leading of the Lord.

At the end of forty days He was

weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." *Isaiah* 52:14. Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed he could overcome Christ. *The Desire of Ages*, 118

Note the fact that He was *worn* and *haggard* from mental *agony*. The struggle of mind through which the Saviour went was fearful. The battle for Him was to turn His mind away from the witness of sight and circumstances which was shouting for His attention, and fix it on the witness of faith based upon the Word of God. And the devil was there to press that witness upon him in the strongest possible way.

But he did not come to the Saviour as an evil angel with forked tail and wicked horns. No indeed! He came to Him as a beautiful angel of light professing to have a message for Him from heaven,—a message which appeared to be the perfect answer to His prayers. Note the words,

There came to the Saviour, as if in answer to His prayers, one in the guise of an angel from Heaven. He claimed to have a commission from God to declare that Christ's fast was at an end. As God had sent an angel to stay the hand of Abraham from offering Isaac, so, satisfied with Christ's willingness to enter the bloodstained path, the Father had sent an angel to deliver Him; this was the message brought to Jesus. *The Desire of Ages*, 118

As soon as the long fast of Christ commenced in the wilderness, Satan was at hand with his temptations. He came to Christ, enshrouded in light, claiming to be one of the angels from the throne of God, sent upon an errand of mercy to sympathize with Him, and to relieve Him of His suffering condition. He tried to make Christ believe that God did not require Him to pass through self-denial and the sufferings He anticipated; that he had been sent from Heaven to bear to Him the message that God only designed to prove His willingness to endure.

Satan told Christ that He was only to set His feet in the bloodstained path, but not to travel it. Like Abraham He was tested to show His perfect obedience. He also stated that he was the angel that stayed the hand of Abraham as the knife was raised to slay Isaac, and he had now come to save His life; that it was not necessary for Him to endure the painful hunger and

death from starvation; he would help Him bear a part of the work in the plan of salvation. *The Review and Herald*, August 4, 1874

It was not as a fierce, two-horned, cloven-footed demon, that Satan came to Jesus.

He came as a very beautiful angel of light, quoting the Scriptures and appealing to the types of the Old Testament in order to deceive and overcome the Saviour.

He came to press upon the attention of Jesus, the witness of sight and circumstances in its hardest and most discouraging light, so as to turn the Saviour's eyes from the witness of living faith and thus cause His fall.

But the Master triumphed as you and I must do: *by faith*.



At that time, and in that situation there was no message that could possibly have been more acceptable to the human nature of Christ. Remember it was *as a man* and not as a God or even as an angel that He faced temptation. Therefore He felt in that situation, and He longed for in that situation, all that you or I would feel and long for in that same situation.

And yet the devil knew that he must make the commission as legitimate and proper as possible, so he turned the eyes of Christ to a type of the very experience through which He was now passing. Claiming to be the very angel who had stayed the hand of Abraham, he argued by implication as follows.

"The experience of Abraham is a perfect type of your experience. Therefore what happened to Abraham must happen to you. He did not have the least idea that when the call of God came to him to offer his son that there would be any stay of execution at the last moment. He expected to go right through with it to the very end. Now you understand that with the Lord, the intention is accepted for the deed. Thus the mere thought of hatred is counted as murder and punished as murder just as if the act had been done. So when God saw that Abraham was indeed willing to go all the way, and the flashing knife was clear proof of it, then it was enough.

"So with you, as you stagger here on the point of death, it is more than evident that you are prepared to go all the way and no sacrifice will be too great for you. But it is enough. The Father is well pleased and satisfied. You need suffer no more. The sacrifice is accepted and guilty man is saved."

Thus from the lips of what was to all appearances, and certainly so far as the Saviour could see, a beautiful angel, and all spoken in tones of tenderest compassion and gentlest love, was offered that which was the most desirable thing in all the world to human nature in that situation. Mark this well that, no matter how converted you may be, you will never relish nor enjoy suffering and hardship. Your human nature will always shrink from it just as Christ's human nature shrank from the conflict back there.

With the most masterful skill the devil built up the picture of all this before the Saviour and when he had presented it all, and when it all seemed about to become a glorious reality with the human nature of Christ already sighing with relief, then the devil called in the witness of sight and circumstance with the most telling power and force at the most telling time. This angel offered all this to Christ and then, when it was all ready for acceptance, he held it all back till a certain condition was fulfilled. Now any human being of any experience knows perfectly well that when something which we want more than anything else in the world is offered to us, and then suddenly withheld on the fulfillment of certain conditions, then the desire for it becomes all the more intense and we tend to lose our sense of values in the passion of the desire.

So the devil played his weapons with the utmost skill.

It was at this point that he said, "*If* you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." Matthew 4:3

When Satan and the Son of God first met in conflict, Christ was the commander of the heavenly hosts; and Satan, the leader of revolt in heaven, was cast out. Now their condition is apparently reversed, and Satan makes the most of his supposed advantage. One of the most powerful of the angels, he says, has been banished from heaven. *The appearance of Jesus indicates that He is that fallen angel, forsaken by God, and deserted by man.* A divine being would be able to sustain his claim by working a miracle; "If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." Such an act of creative power, urges the tempter, would be conclusive evidence of divinity. It would bring the controversy to an end. *The Desire of Ages*, 119

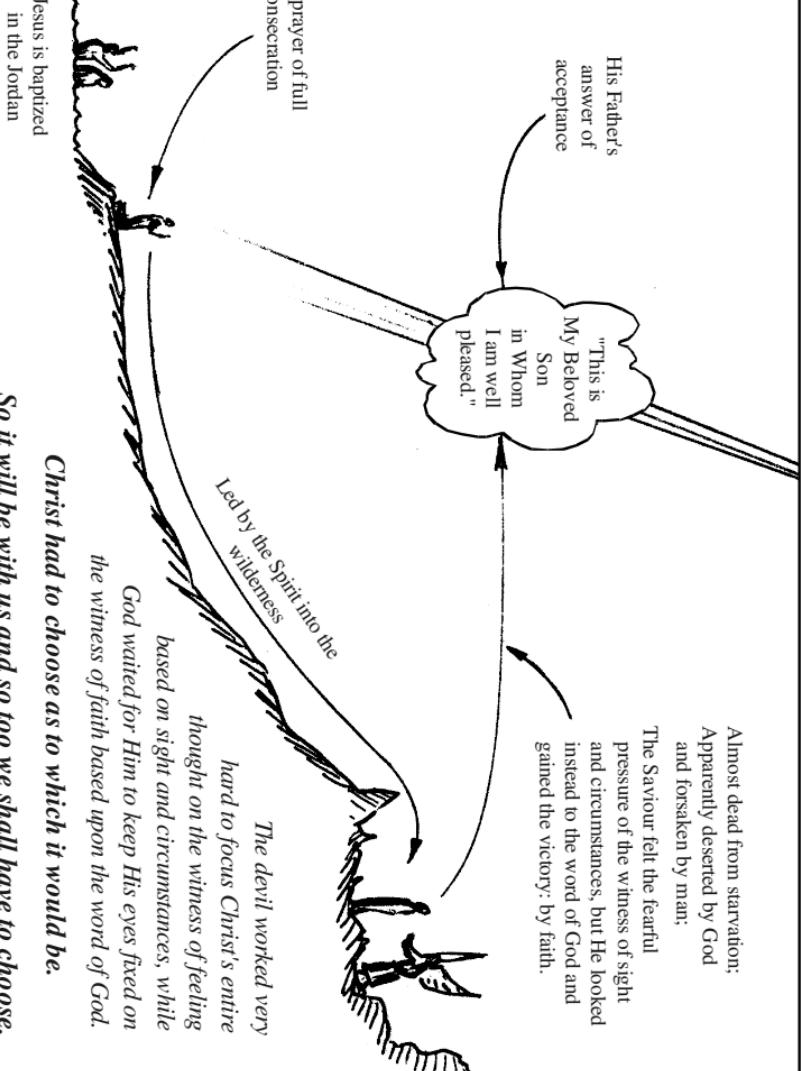
In other words Satan's argument went like this. "I must be absolutely certain that I deliver this commission to the right person. There is a great deceiver abroad to whom in particular I must not give this commission, and while I have been sent to You with it, yet *every appearance* about Your person and Your circumstances causes me to really and honestly doubt that You are the Son of God. After all, I can never conceive of the Father allowing His well beloved Son to be cast away in this dreary wilderness, and be forsaken by Himself and man. Why, you have even come to the point of death. Look at Yourself and Your surroundings. Can You wonder at my doubts? Surely You must doubt in Your own mind that You are the Son of God! So You see I must not make a mistake. So *if*, and let me tell You I really doubt it, You *are* the Son of God then give me a little proof. Make this stone into a loaf of bread and save yourself from starvation. Come now, it will take but a moment and then the whole controversy will be over and done with."

Can you begin to measure the power and the subtlety of this temptation? The devil used no device but that which he has so successfully used on the human race. If you will carefully analyses the failures that you have made in the past you will see the same approach and the same tactics on the part of the devil against you.

His whole objective was to break the faith of Jesus in the Word of God. That was the plan. If he could do that then he would be eternally successful, and the whole plan of salvation would fail.

The words from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," were still sounding in the ears of Satan. *But he was determined to make Christ disbelieve this testimony.*

The Word of God was Christ's assurance of His divine mission. He had come to live as a man among men, and it was the Word that declared His connection with heaven. *It was Satan's purpose to cause Him to doubt that Word.* If Christ's confidence



In the garden of Eden Satan had broken the faith of Adam and Eve in God. That is how it began on this earth. At the Red Sea, he had broken the faith of the people in God, and if that faith through Moses had not been restored, then they would have perished. Now he sought to break the faith of Jesus in God and the struggle was really on.

Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the arch deceiver. *The Desire of Ages*, 119

It was not easy. It was a desperate battle in which His human nature cried out for relief from the hunger pains. But He conquered. How did He do it? He did it as you and I must do it, by utterly refusing to pay any heed to the terrible witness of sight and circumstances. He cast His mind back to that point where He had heard the Word of God speak to Him and say, “**This is My well beloved Son.**” That was the Word of God to Him and it was enough. He overcame *by faith and by faith alone*.

One may wonder as to how the Saviour could detect the deceiver in such a masterful disguise. The answer is that no angel of heaven would ever ask anyone to break the principles of righteousness. And it is a principle of righteousness that all would do well to remember that not one of *us* is ever commissioned to prove *who we are* or to vindicate *ourselves*. The Father had sent the Son to reveal the Father, and in turn it was the task of the Father to reveal the Son.

Therefore, when the devil asked Jesus to work the miracle to prove that He was the Son of God, then in effect he was asking Him to put Himself in the place of God and to do the work of God. This was but the temptation to the same sin that the devil himself had fallen under in the first instance. And here he would lead Jesus into the same sin as himself, knowing that if he did, then he could fully justify his own sin by causing the Son of God to participate with him in that same terrible mistake. Thus he would triumph by making the plan of salvation of none effect. There would be no Saviour at all but the devil and the Son of God bound together in a terrible confederacy of evil against the Father. Well indeed it is that the Son did triumph on that fateful day.

And as He triumphed so we too must triumph.

At that moment when you give your heart to the Lord and allow Him to take out the old life and put in the new, then you are born *of God*. Therefore you become the Sons of God. And that is as plainly stated to you in the written Word as it ever was to Jesus there on the banks of the Jordan.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. *John 1:12*

Beloved, we are God's children now. *1 John 3:2*

At every turn of the road the devil will work to have you lose faith in that fact and in that Word. But we must never lose our faith in that as a fact. “Beloved, we are God's children now.” That Word does not change. It is true today and it is true tomorrow. The Lord never forsakes His children. He may appear to do so but remember that we are not to live by the witness of sight and circumstances but by the witness of faith.

No man ever had the witness of sight and circumstances more heavily stacked against Him than did the Saviour on that occasion. No man had to more determinedly turn himself away from that witness as did Jesus. But He did it, and we are to learn to do it too, for we are to overcome as He overcame.

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. *Revelation 3:21*

It is therefore very evident as the study in the last several chapters shows, that righteousness is—*by faith*. The victory is the victory of naked faith and it is God who saves us. We do not in any sense of the word save ourselves. Victory comes by not only delivering over into God's hands to do all for us that we cannot possibly do for ourselves, but in believing that He will absolutely do it for us personally.

Not only is this truth taught in the study of the true science of prayer, but it is demonstrated in the experience of Jesus as He met and overcame temptation. Inasmuch as we are to overcome as He overcame then this demonstration on His part is of enormous value to you and to me if we will take the full advantage of it.

This may lead some to the conclusion that there is just no part at all for the believer to play in the matter of salvation. In fact there are those who have actually stated that this makes things very easy indeed, and that all they have to do is turn it all over to the Lord and forget about everything further. Salvation, they feel is now sure and quite automatic.

There are others who tend to reject the whole message as propounded in these pages because they say that we have to do battle right along the way and that it is by diligent effort and by striving that we win through in the end and all along the way as well.

The tendency on the one hand to assume that the message produces an easy way to heaven, and on the other to reject it because there appears to be no battle and no effort required is based on a serious misunderstanding of the nature of the battle that is involved. There is a very definite part for us to play, and there is a very real battle to be fought. But we must understand just how and where the striving is to be and just what that battle is and what we are to do in that battle.

We are familiar with such texts and statements as the following:

Fight the good fight of the faith. *1 Timothy 6:12*

If you fight the fight of faith with all your will-power, you will conquer. *Messages to Young People*, 152

Everything depends on the right action of the will. The Ministry of Healing, 176

Through the grace of God *and their own diligent effort*, they

These statements mean exactly what they say, and there is no contradiction between them and that which we have studied so far in this series. Salvation is a work that is a combination of God's power and human effort. Each has a part to play and each must fully and completely play that part if the plan is going to be successful. God has His part and man has his part.

Man should never make the least attempt to do for himself that which God alone can do for him. He should never think that the right action of his will can achieve this, nor should he expend even the least amount of diligent effort in this direction. To attempt to do what the Lord alone can do for us and which is His part to do is to attempt to put ourselves in the place of God. It is but to seek to usurp, no matter how unwittingly or unintentionally, the position of God. This is the spirit and intent of the Anti-Christ.

Not only should we never seek to take the place of God in anything, but we should forever realize that it is impossible anyway. It would not matter how firmly or powerfully the will was set, nor how much diligent effort was put forth, we could never even begin to accomplish that which God alone has the power to do.

Therefore it is of the utmost importance that we understand exactly what our part of the contract is and what part God is to play. Then we can look to God to do His part as we, by His help and grace do our part to the full.

So that we might understand exactly where and how we are to put forth this diligent effort, we will first of all examine the difference between that which is the true gospel and that which is the false. We shall see that the false gospel goes almost the whole way with the real. We shall see that it uses many of the same Scriptures. We shall see that it sounds very much like the real thing, and to many, many people is so easily accepted as the real and true thing. But close as it may seem to come, it is not the real thing and can never hope to bring salvation to the lost.

The point of salvation is that point of time as we have seen, when the Lord delivers us from the Old Man of sin and gives to us a new life altogether in its place. There is a great deal of work on the part of God to bring us to the point where He can do this for us, which work, from

the initial giving to us of a knowledge of the law and of sin, leads us up through conviction, repentance and confession to the point of true regeneration.

Let us review some of these steps as we studied it before from the seventh chapter of *Romans*. In Chapter Eleven of this series we saw that there are three parts to the make-up of a man. There is the physical body, which is described by Paul as being the instrument which is to be presented to God for righteousness rather than for sin. *Romans 6:13*. This of itself cannot do anything except as it is used by the higher powers of the mind and the inner nature, whether those powers be good or whether they be evil.

Secondly, there is the intellectual mind. Here is where we have the capacity to accumulate knowledge, to think and to reason from the facts thus accumulated and to make decisions. It is the realm of the choice and the will. Here, one can admire and desire to emulate the highest moral and spiritual virtues. Here, one can set the will to obey all that the Lord requires. This is the decision.

But the fact that one knows what is right and, not only hating what is wrong, desires to do what is right, does not guarantee that he will actually be able to do what is right. The whole picture of the man in *Romans* seven is a picture of a man in this exact predicament. He knew what he should do. He wanted more than anything else in the world to do it; but, try as he might, he could not do it. Why not? There has to be a reason!

The reason is revealed in this very chapter of *Romans* seven. Here it is shown that above and beyond the power of the will of man, there is a stronger power and that is the power of his real nature. Not only was this power so much stronger than the power of the will, but it was implacably set against any desires of the will to live righteously. Thus it was that every time the mind filled with the high resolve to serve God and the will was set to implement this decision, this stronger power of the inner nature rose to crush the attempt into ignominious defeat. Read it again in the words of Paul:

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. *Romans 7:22,23*

Let us re-state this now in practical terms as it appears in real life. I

suppose that one would be safe in saying that practically everyone has in their lives some person or persons with whom they have not gotten along very well. These persons are such that all they do irritates us and stirs within us feelings of resentment toward them which ripens into intense dislike which is nothing short of hatred. The two parties do not walk together and the rift grows wider as the years go by. But we become a professing Christian and, in the course of our experience, we either read in the Word of God, or hear the living preacher declare that we are to love *our enemies*.

The word, "enemy" instantly brings to mind that one person above all others who has treated us so badly, and the very thought of him stirs to life within us these strong feelings of resentment and dislike. These feelings rise up like a flood-tide of power from within and are the master of the life. We all know the truth of these words by experience, I am sure.

But the Word of God is ringing in our ears calling us to love our enemies, and we can see the threat of the loss of eternal life if we fail to do so. We know too that everything depends on the right action of the will, so we set our will to obey, and determine that we are really going to love that enemy. We make a mighty effort to put away the evil thought and the evil feelings and try our hardest to think the best of the other person. The battle is really on and we are fighting manfully against the evil. But the power of the evil thing in us looms larger and more powerful still and, recognizing that the power of God is greater than the power of evil we ask God to come to our help. "Help me. Oh, help me overcome this thing!" is our earnest cry.

Our determination to overcome is strong. Our proportionate effort is great. There is nothing lacking in our sincerity and we really believe that if we ask the Lord to help us to overcome the evil that He will help. Without question we are making the most diligent effort, we are setting our wills to obey and we are fighting the good fight with strong faith in the power of God to help us.

Have you understood the picture that has been painted above? It should not be difficult to understand it, for this is very much the picture of the experience of every one of us at one time or the other in our lives. Many times have I presented this picture to people to have them nod understandingly and say, "Yes, that is exactly as it is."

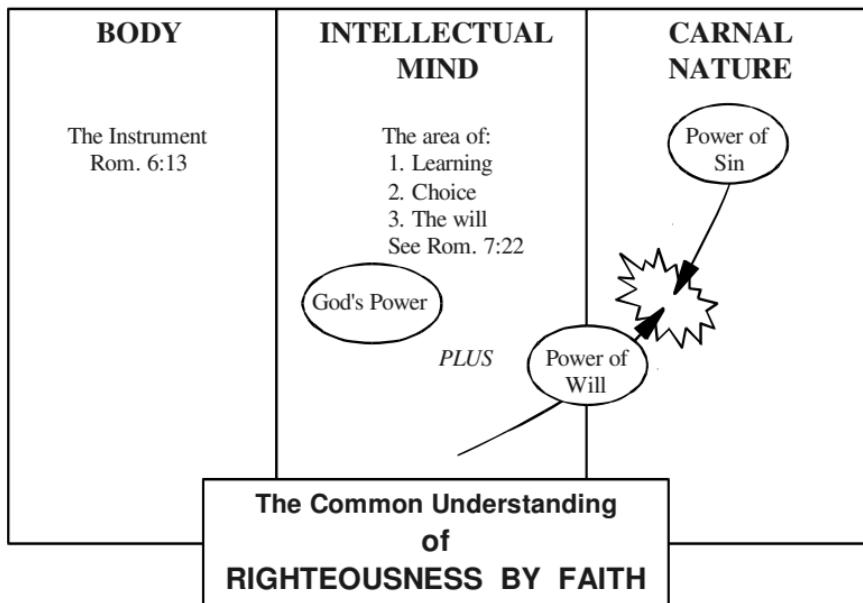
Now comes an important question. Is not this a clear picture of the

average way in which professed Christians come to the Lord and seek to overcome their sin problem? If you think about it you will readily see that it is exactly the way in which most people seek for victory. This is the common understanding of what righteousness by faith is.

But now comes a still more important question.

Is this the true picture of righteousness by faith? Is this the only true and correct way to gain the victory over sin and to inherit eternal life?

To this question most people quickly reply that this is the way of eternal life. They assure one that this is the understanding which they have and always have had.



Now we are not going to deny that this sounds like the *real* thing. It is very much *like* the real thing and goes along with the real thing, but this is but to make it the more dangerously deceptive. *This is not the way of victory.* It can never be obtained in this fashion, and I have yet to meet the person who follows this procedure and yet at the same time can confess to a living experience in righteousness.

This is not the way. It does not work, because it cannot work.

This is the counterfeit which lies in appearance so close to the real thing that none but those with the spiritual eyesalve can discern it to be what it is—a false gospel. All others accept it as the *true*.

We must learn to dismiss from our minds forever the common notion that the Lord *helps* us get the victory. *God does not help us get the victory.* He has never *helped* anyone yet get the victory and He never will, for very good reasons.

You may think that this is stated in strong and very definite terms. You may think that at last you have found the heresy in these teachings but, before rejecting this fact altogether, let us study just a little further so that we can understand why it is that the Lord cannot help us get the victory and why the above procedure is not the right way to salvation.

The exact same laws which govern and operate in the realm of nature also govern and operate in the spiritual realm. That is why the Saviour drew so largely on the book of nature when teaching spiritual truth. In regard to the matter of the nature of man and how it is to be dealt with, the Saviour refers us to the fact that,

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. *Luke 6:43-44*

Thus the Saviour referred us to a law of nature so well known that even a child is not to be found searching for grapes on a thorn bush. In six thousand years there is not a single record of anyone ever finding a single exception to this rule.

Then Jesus turns to the spiritual realm and declares that the same fixed and inviolate laws govern the operation of this realm as well. Therefore we do well to study the operation of growth and life in nature so that we can understand the operation of life and growth in the spiritual realm.

We will now take our previous description of the spiritual battle to produce righteousness and apply it to the natural world. Let us suppose that you had just purchased for yourself a house in the country and this house had an old neglected garden. As such it was filled with thorn bushes and weeds and the like. Now very naturally you have no liking for thorns and would far rather have a fine crop of apples every year.

Now here is a problem which must have a solution. Here you have a big old thorn bush and you wish to have apples. In fact you have a very strong determination to have apples. Now you know that a gardener must have plenty of will power and that everything depends on the right action of that will. You also know that a gardener must put forth

diligent effort to get good fruit. You know that any gardener must fight a relentless war against the enemies of man on the land.

Let us consider what you *might* do next.

With a fixed determination and strong will, you set to work on that thorn bush and carefully cultivate, irrigate, fertilize and prune it in an effort to make it produce apples. Then when you had put forth all the diligent effort you could, with strong faith in the limitless power of God to do just anything, you kneel down before that tree and ask God to help you make it produce apples. Is that what you would do? Why of course not!

You will probably feel that it is ridiculous to even suggest such a procedure, but think again and ask yourself what difference is there between this approach in the natural world to the problem of the thorn bush, and the previously described approach to the problem in the spiritual world?

There is exactly no difference at all.



"Lord, please help me
to make this thorn bush
produce apples."

***This is not the way.
God cannot and will not
answer this prayer.
Yet how many make the
same wrong approach
to the sin problem,
and then wonder why
success is not theirs.***

The man who puts forth the utmost determination to stop himself from feeling evil toward his brother and from saying or doing the wrong actions in response to those feelings, while at the same time calling upon God to help him do this work, is not doing any different than the man who would be so foolish as to go to work on a thorn bush in an attempt to make it produce apples. There is just no difference at

all.

Now suppose that the man whom we have imagined as trying to produce apples from a thorn bush by diligent effort and by praying to God for help, had unlimited faith in the power of God to do anything, and in the power of that faith asked God to help him make that thorn bush produce apples. Would the Lord answer that prayer? Would we wake one morning to find a fine crop of apples on that thorn bush?

The answer is an emphatic, No!

That man could pray there for a hundred years or for a thousand years or for a million years and all he would ever have is a thorn bush still. The only difference is that it would be bigger and thornier than ever, for it would have had that much longer to develop and produce itself after its own kind.

Why would the Lord never answer that prayer in spite of the strong faith of the man and his undying perseverance? That is a very good question! The answer is two-fold:

1. He is asking for something that the Lord has never offered to do nor promised to do.
2. It would involve the breaking of His own laws to make a thorn bush begin to produce apples. And if God was to break His own laws, then where would the whole structure and foundation of the work of salvation be? He, Himself would become unrighteousness.

Therefore, the Lord never could and never would answer that prayer. Never!

And it is equally true that the Lord could never answer the prayer, even of strong faith, when that prayer is asking Him to help you to do that which the Lord has said can never be done. What you are in actual fact asking the Lord to do when you ask Him to help you in your efforts to stop yourself from feeling evil and from doing evil, and instead to act lovingly toward the other person, is to help you to make an evil nature produce righteousness. But this is impossible, for the old heart can never produce righteousness. It can only produce evil.

Success can never come in the way already outlined, either in the realm of the thorn bush nor in the matter of gaining real and living righteousness. And yet, while no one would ever attempt to gain apples by trying, with the help of God, to make a thorn bush produce them, yet all too many are busily trying to make an evil heart act in a kind and

loving way. No doubt because they can be pleasant externally, they feel that they have achieved a victory but this is not righteousness. The evil is still there below the surface. And being still there it will eventually break out sometime, somewhere.

It is now time to look carefully into the other way, and the only real way whereby apples can be produced where there are only thorn bushes, and to get righteousness where there is only sinfulness.

Thus far in this chapter we have studied together the commonly understood and accepted, but unfortunately wrong way of obtaining righteousness. We saw that there is a specific part of the work that only God can do while, at the same time, there is a specific part that only we can do. God will never do our part for us and we must never attempt to do His part of the contract. To attempt to do His part of the contract, no matter how sincerely, is but to put ourselves in the place of God. This is the spirit of the antichrist and to whatever degree we attempt to do the Lord's part of the work to that degree are we possessed, no matter how unwittingly, of that evil spirit. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that each of us should be very certain as to *how* to come to the Lord for salvation and, having learned that, to do faithfully the small part which He requires of us and to trust Him fully to do His part.

This can only mean that we must come to the Lord in the *right* and *proper* way. There is only *one* such way. There are no variations to it. There are no alternatives. Men have sought out many schemes and believe that there are many ways to heaven. You will hear the expression, "After all, we all serve the same God and we are all striving to reach the same heaven and we will all get there in the end even though we do not agree at the moment."

This thinking is dangerous and misleading. There is only *one* right way and only those who find it and follow it out will eventually make the kingdom. This is but to say that no matter how strong our determination or our corresponding diligent effort,—no matter how earnest we are,—no matter how great our longing or intense and real our sincerity, unless we find the one right way of salvation, we shall most certainly fail to gain the living righteousness of the living God and will be lost in the end.

There are many who will take a strong objection to this. They will argue that it would be unreasonable for the Lord to limit things to this extent. They will argue that if we are truly sincere in our efforts and in

our desire to serve the Lord that He accepts this as the best that we can do and will save us anyway.

Our answer to this is but to demand that the ones who make the objection be consistent in their thinking. One could supply a thousand illustrations where, in the daily vocations of life, all know that it is the following out of specific principles which achieve the desired results and that no amount of sincerity will make up for wrong courses of action.

However, we will limit ourselves to the illustration of the thorn bush especially as that is the illustration which the Saviour chose in the teaching of the spiritual truth we are considering here. The very same people who would expect the Lord to save them on the basis of their sincerity, would hold up to ridicule the man,—if they ever found one, who with the utmost of diligent effort, the strongest faith in the power of God, and the most wonderful sincerity, expected that the Lord would help him produce apples from the thorn bush.

Everybody knows that if you wish to grow apples you must first learn *how* to grow them. Everybody knows that no amount of sincerity of purpose will take the place of this essential knowledge and the faithful practice of it. This is a clear-cut and fundamental law of the universe and it cannot be broken with impunity. Consider the case of poor Willy:

Little Willy took a drink
But he will drink no more;
For what he thought was H_2O ,
Was H_2SO_4 .

However sincerely poor Willy believed that he was drinking water (H_2O), that sincerity did not save him when he picked up and drank down sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4) instead.

Nobody thinks that the Lord is unreasonable to demand that we follow out correct procedures before we can expect to get apples. All the information is available. We have been blessed with the power of reason so that we can learn and apply the knowledge gained.

So likewise in the spiritual realm, why should it be thought unreasonable that the Lord would require more than just sincerity and the application of our best effort? All the information needed is set out in the clearest possible terms in the Word of God. The Lord has blessed

us with intellectual minds so that we have the power to search these things out. He has provided the best of teachers in the Person of the Holy Spirit. There is just no need to go astray. Let us never forget that it was Jesus Himself who said,

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. *John 8:32*

When Jesus spoke these words He was but repeating what He had already said through the prophet,

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. *Hosea 4:6*

If we are ever lost it will be entirely our own fault. There will be no one to blame but ourselves for all the information needed is right there in neither complicated nor difficult terms. Let us then forever put away the idea that sincerity and willingness are enough. It is the truth that saves us, not our sincerity. A person can be as sincerely wrong as sincerely right. It is not the sincerity that counts although without it one would still be lost. But following the right way is absolutely vital.

So then we conclude that it is vitally important that we come to the Lord in the *right* way asking for the *right* thing. If we come in any other way we shall be lost and the blame will lie at our own door.

Crossing the trackless ocean is successfully achieved by the very precise following of correct procedures. Every sea Captain knows this all too well. No matter how much effort he might expend and no matter how sincerely he might go at it, if he does not do the right thing in the right way at just the right time the good ship will certainly end up on the rocks.

So it is in every walk of life and just as surely



so in the realm of spiritual things. We each have to cross the broad ocean of life enroute to a hoped-for harbor of life. But it will take more than sincerity to make the crossing safely.

We must learn exactly what God requires of us and then do it at the right time and in the right way.



It is time then to return to the study of the thorn bush and the apples so that we can learn the right way and discover just where our own

diligent effort must come in.

We come back to the garden in which is this thorn bush to see what we must do in order to obtain the apples which we so much desire. There is but one clear-cut specific answer to that question. It is an answer which allows for no alternatives but the one. There are not two or three things which might be done. There is one and one only, and it is this:—that thorn bush must cease to exist. It must be taken out by the roots so that the place where it was is entirely empty of it. It must be taken out by the very roots. It is not enough to prune it back or even to cut it down. That would never solve the problem for it would only grow again and that all the more vigorously.

That is the first thing which must be done. But we still do not have the apples nor the means of getting the apples.

So the second thing which has to be done is to put the life of the apple where the life of the thorn was. The new must take the place of the old. Now right here is a point to be noticed and it is this: *You cannot make an apple seed*. In fact there is no man either upon the earth today or in all history who could do it. Neither will there ever be such a man. In God alone is life. He it is who puts the life into the apple seed and, having put it there, He *gives* it to mankind. We do not obtain that gift by diligent effort, by hard striving and battling. It is *given* to us freely from the hand of God.

Now once that apple seed has been planted where the old life of the thorn bush was, then it begins to grow into the apple tree and, in due time, we have apples. Ask yourself the question, is there any other way of getting apples? The answer is, No! This is *the* way, and it is the *only* way.

That which is true of the apple tree, is equally true of the bringing forth of the fruits of the Spirit in the life here on earth today. As we have seen from the previous studies in this series, we are all evil trees. Sin is not so much what we have done as what we are. What we have done is but the fruit. What we are is the tree and it is an evil tree. As such it can only bring forth evil fruit.

What, then, shall we do?

Again there is but one clear-cut specific answer to that question. It is an answer which allows for no alternatives but the one. There are not two or three things which might be done. There is one and only one, and it is this,—that old nature, that very root of hatred in the very life

itself, must be rooted out of that garden so that the place where it was is as completely empty of it as if it had never been there. It must be taken away and destroyed as verily as the thorn bush was taken away and thrown in to the fire and burned.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. *Romans 6:6*

But, at this point, we do not yet have righteousness. The old sin problem is gone and is destroyed but we are now as an empty piece of ground, or as the room empty, swept and garnished. Now, the new life must now come in to take the place of the old life, just as surely as the apple seed must come in to take the place of the thorn bush.

And just as surely and as truly as the apple seed is something that no man can make, so surely is the new life something that no man can create. It is impossible for a man of himself to make himself good. No one can be good by his own effort. That goodness is the *gift* of God and must be received *as a gift*. There is *no other way*.

While we have the power to dig out the old thorn bush from our gardens, we do not have the power to dig the sin nature out of our hearts and lives. This is something which the Lord alone can do for us.

So, it follows then, that the Lord *does not help us* to get *this* victory. He has never helped anyone to get this new life. *He does not help us* to get it. He gives it to us as a free gift. A gift is something that is offered to you. It is something that you do not have to go after. It is brought right to you *where you are*, and offered to you. You need no help to get a gift. You do not have to strive after it and fight for it.

It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it.
Steps to Christ, 49

This is not to say that there is no fight in the Christian life nor any struggle nor any effort. This has its place, and in *that* place the Lord is a mighty help to His faithful and true people. Later in this chapter we will take up that aspect of the matter, but for now let us pursue together the question of the right way to gain the living experience. Let us see why it is that the commonly understood way of righteousness does not work.

In this system the would-be Christian knows what he ought to do and longs to do that. In due time temptation comes to him and, when it does, the old passions of hatred rise up in his heart. We will choose

hatred as an example of all the other evil attributes which must be dealt with in the self-same way. We choose it because it is one that is so common to all people. All have experienced this at some time or the other in their lives.

Then, as this evil power rises in the heart and in the life, we exert all the power that we have to keep it down under control. We fight with all the powers of the being against it. We set the will to prevent it coming out to the top. But it rises. Its power is greater than that of the human powers, and in desperation we cry out to the Lord to help us in this battle against this evil power. So there we are doing our best to keep well down within ourselves this evil power which is ruining us, when the only possible way of helping the situation is to get the thing right out of us. Is God going to help us to do that? Is He going to help us hold that old nature down within the inner recesses of the soul, securely under control? Why! Never. It is asking Him to help us to do the very opposite to what He knows is the only safe and proper thing to do. It is asking Him to help us to do the very opposite to the plan of salvation. Therefore this is not the way of the gospel but the very opposite of it. It is not the way to heaven but the other way entirely.

You see, God can never take away the old evil nature from us by force or by stealth. There is nothing in the wide world that He wants to take from us more than that. But that old evil nature is you and belongs to you. It is your property no matter how much you may hate this particular piece of property. And being your property the Lord cannot and will not take it unless you specifically and willingly ask Him to. If He were to take it by any other means or under any other conditions God would be a thief. But He is wholly and only righteousness, and never will He steal anything from anyone.

But, sin is such a deceptive thing, that we are not aware of its presence until it is stirred to life. So, the Lord of Heaven must first make us aware of the existence in us of this problem. To do this He allows temptation to come and this stirs up the evil nature to life. God's plan is that then we will then see the evil which is ourselves and, hating it, give it over to Him. This is the Divine Plan but we frustrate that plan by doing the very opposite to that plan. Instead of humbly confessing what we are and handing it over to God so that He can take it out of the way, we do our best to push it back right to where it came from and ask God to help us do it.

Therefore for you to receive that righteousness which He has, then you must come to Him and, instead of asking Him to help you get the victory over this thing, you must frankly acknowledge that *you are hateful*. Tell the Lord that you do not want to be that kind of person at all, and ask Him to take this right out of your life altogether. Ask Him to root out that old thorn bush and to put into the place of it the new life altogether. This is the only way.

But when you are pushing that thing down into yourself and trying to keep it hidden and away from the eyes of other men, when, at a time when you are filled with hatred, and you are trying and battling so hard to act lovingly, then you are battling, striving and fighting to do the very opposite to what God knows alone can solve the situation. You are battling, striving and struggling to put apples on a thorn bush. See and understand that you cannot give up the old nature while you are holding it under and seeking to control it. God can never and will never help you in a situation like that. He has never helped anyone yet in this kind of situation except by waiting patiently for him to come to his senses and learn that this is not the way of victory.

It is not by trying, but by dying that the victory is achieved.

Remember the thorn bush and the apple seed.

Remember that you would never ask the Lord to help you to make that old thorn bush produce apples.

Then never ask the Lord to help you get the victory over your hatred, malice, pride, and jealousy. Instead, come to Him and ask Him to take these things out of you and to put the new life altogether into the place of it.

And all this He will do for you *as a gift*. It is brought to you *right where you are* and offered to you, and it is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it.

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. *The Desire of Ages*, 391

So far we have seen in what area the diligent effort does not come in. The time now is to turn to the study of the sphere where the diligent

effort does come in, to find where the Christian has to fight and to strive if he will ultimately be successful.

To understand where the diligent effort comes into the experience of the seeker after eternal life, we have but to turn again to the illustration afforded to us in the book of nature. We have seen that the good seed which is to take the place of the thorn bush is the *gift* of God to man. We have seen that man cannot make a seed nor can he obtain it as the result of his own diligent effort. It is the *gift* of God.

In like manner, no man can make a good heart and a good life. No amount of diligent effort and striving will enable him to bring that into his life. But the Lord comes to us right where we are and offers it to us *as a gift*. He does not help us to get it. He *gives* it to us, coming right to us where we are, and giving it to us right there where we are.

But now that the gardener has come into the possession of his gift,—the good seed, his work really begins. Think of what would happen if he was to plant that good seed in the soil which had been prepared for it and then go away and leave it there without care and attention. Starved of the necessary plant food, parched in the dry weather, choked out by weeds, attacked by insect pests and disease, and blasted by the hail and the storm, it would never come to anything, much less produce a harvest of good fruit.

Between the sowing of that seed and the coming forth of a harvest of good fruit, there has to be a great deal of diligent effort and battling on the part of that gardener before he can hope to see the fruit in due season. Anyone who has set out to grow good food knows that the battle against the enemies of the gardener has to be unwearied and unceasing. He knows that he must supply that plant with the necessary food. He knows that he must irrigate that tree in times of dry season. The tree must be carefully but faithfully pruned. It must be protected in time of wind, hail and storm, and from disease and insect pest. And all this requires a great deal of very diligent effort indeed. It is no small battle.

But, and this is the vital point to be seen and understood, in all this diligent effort and battling against these things, *he is not striving to get the good seed*. That has come to him as a gift. He has that in his possession. What he is striving to do is to prevent his enemies,—drought, flood, storm, insect pests and disease, from taking away from him that which he already possesses. He is striving to keep this thing in

his possession, and more than that to see it develop and grow into a fruitful tree. *That* is the object of his striving and battling.

And in all this, he now has the mighty help of the God of Heaven to assist him in the battle. While God does not help him get the seed, but gives it to him as a gift, the Lord most certainly comes to the help of every man on the land who looks to him for that help. As the Christian gardener looks to the God of heaven for help and asks for that help while at the same time putting forth all the diligent effort that he has, God sends life and growth down from above, rebukes the devourer and imparts vitality to the tree so that in due season by the grace of God *and* the diligent effort of the man the tree brings forth a goodly harvest of fruit.

As it is in nature so it is in grace. The one is the perfect illustration of the other. This is because the same laws which operate in the natural world also operate in the spiritual world.

And so it is that when we are born again by receiving the gift of a new life altogether, then things have just begun. Now begins the diligent effort and the striving and the battling. Now, as never before we have become the object of the devil's special attack and he musters all of his forces to destroy out of us the blessed gift which the Lord has given to us. And in the face of that determined opposition we have to hold onto that gift and develop it "*by the grace of God and our own diligent effort*" (*The Great Controversy*, 425). And this takes diligent effort and it takes a battle as everyone knows who has set out to do it.

But remember that it is *not* a battle *to get* the righteousness of Christ. That is the *gift* of God. The battle is not to get it but *to keep it*. Our position now is like that of a man in his castle who is being attacked on every side by deadly foes. His task is to watch every avenue of attack, to continually strengthen his defenses and to be on guard lest he lose his position and his power.

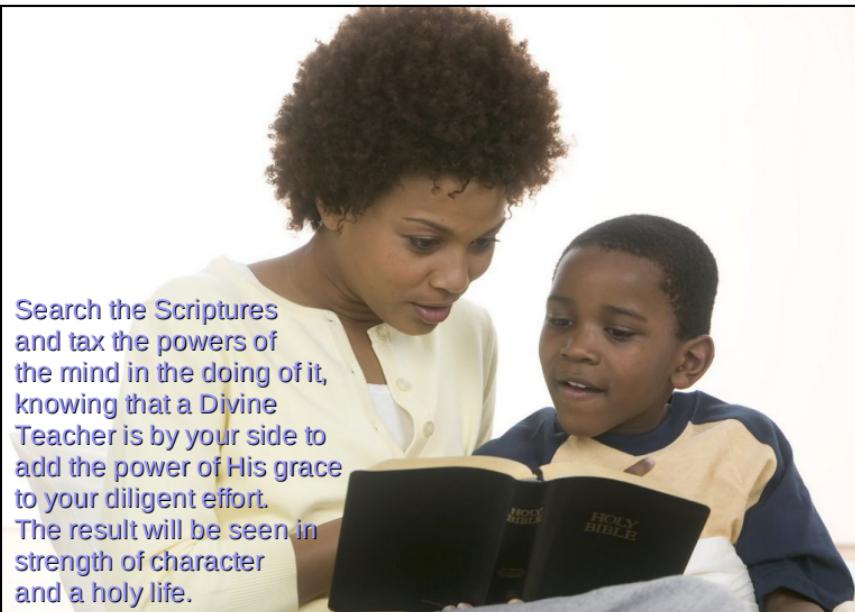
Returning to the illustration of the good tree we can see that just as the tree must be carefully and diligently nourished with the proper plant foods, so the spiritual life must be fed with the truths of the Word of God. True, the Lord of heaven provides the food for the plant, but it is the work of the gardener to find it and to apply it to the plant. The Lord will never do this for us. That is our part and it is left to us.

In like manner the Lord provides an abundance of the best of spiritual food for the nourishment of the spiritual life. But the Lord does

not give this to us without any effort on our part. It is all there in the Scriptures but we must take the time, go to that Book, open the pages and search and study to understand what it means and to make it all a part of our very life experience.

There are some people who believe that they do not need to study the Bible because the Lord reveals all that they need to know to them personally in visions and dreams and by direct impressions. Such a man was Thomas Münzer in the days of Martin Luther. Some of his followers even went so far as to burn their Bibles claiming that they were led by the Holy Spirit and did not need this Book.

But the Lord does not work in this way. There is a place for visions and dreams as a means of communication between God and man but the Lord never communicates with His children in this way to take the place of diligent and earnest Bible study. True visions and dreams from God are never given to those who are not already diligent and sound students of the Bible and are not given to reveal that which can already be found in the Bible. They are given at a time when further revelations are needed beyond those already in the Word so far.



Search the Scriptures
and tax the powers of
the mind in the doing of it,
knowing that a Divine
Teacher is by your side to
add the power of His grace
to your diligent effort.
The result will be seen in
strength of character
and a holy life.

Anyone who wishes to build a strong and fruitful Christian experience must, among other things be a very thorough and diligent

Bible student. It is impossible to achieve this level of experience without that. But to be such a student of the Word requires sacrifice. It requires the sacrifice of pleasures and interests which one would much more naturally desire to do. For instance the very best and most profitable time to study the Word of God is in the first hours of the day. But, that is also the time when the pleasure of our warm and cozy beds is the greatest, and it takes a very definite effort of the will and the sacrifice of that pleasure to arise and meet with the Lord, with His open Word before us.

And when the Word is open, we must *tax* the powers of the mind in our searching for the hidden treasure. No superficial, casual work will suffice here. We must *dig deep* for the buried treasure. But it seems that so few of those who profess to be Christians are putting forth that kind of diligent effort. Herein lies the cause of so much of our weakness and lack of fruit bearing.

Why is it that our youth, and even those of more mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin? *It is because the Bible is not studied and meditated upon as it should be.* If it were made the daily study, there would be an inward rectitude, a strength of spirit, that would resist the temptations of the enemy. A firm, decided effort to turn from evil is not seen in the life, because the instruction given by God is disregarded. There is not put forth the effort that there should be to fill the mind with pure, holy thoughts, and to rid it of all that is impure and untrue. There is not the choosing of the better part, the sitting at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn lessons from the divine Teacher.

When God's Word is made the man of our counsel, when we search the Scriptures for light, heavenly angels come near to impress the mind and to enlighten the understanding, so that it can be truly said, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." *Psalm 119:130.* It is no marvel that there is not more heavenly-mindedness seen among the youth who profess Christianity, when so little attention is given to the word of God. The divine counsels are not heeded; the divine admonitions are not obeyed. Grace and heavenly wisdom are not sought, that every taint of corruption may be cleansed from the life. *Counsels to Teachers, 442- 443*

But just as the gardener is not left alone to do his work so the earnest Bible student is not left alone to do this work. Here is where the Lord comes in as a mighty Helper. He sends His angels to impress the mind, to open the understanding and to direct the student in his searching. Without this help no man could ever understand anything of the truth of the Word of God.

The words of God are the wellsprings of life. As you seek unto those living springs you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect, texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning as a flash of light, you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you *will know* that Christ is leading you, *a divine Teacher is at your side.* *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings*, 20

As it is in nature so it is in grace.

And as in nature the good tree must be irrigated with clean pure water, so the soul must be refreshed with the water of life. But this can be obtained only by communing with the Lord in prayer as well as in study. Diligent, faithful prayer is essential to the growth of the Christian experience. There is not the scope or the space for a study on prayer in the life of the Christian here, but let us note in passing that Jesus spent many long hours of the night in prayer communion with His Father, drinking deeply of the waters of life. You will read such testimonies of His life as this:

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

Mark 1:35

Here was a secret of the mighty power of the Saviour for He had to grow and develop in this life exactly as we are to do. If He needed to go out and pray in the long dark hours of the night, then how much more do we?

Unless we are faithful in our prayer life and put forth the utmost of diligent effort to find and take the time to pray, to rise above the weariness of the flesh and the pressure of life's ceaseless activity then our spiritual tree will never grow and flourish but will become the victim of all the evil enemies who are bent upon its destruction.

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray.

The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. *Steps to Christ*, 94

Above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. *It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected.* *Steps to Christ*, 98

Those words are as plain as they are true. But remember that the responsibility rests upon us to come to the place of prayer and to pray. The Lord will not drag us there. It is up to *us* to come and it requires *our* diligent effort and determination of purpose to fulfill the appointment especially when the devil, who knows better than we do the importance of this exercise, will throw every difficulty and inducement to do otherwise across the pathway.

But, just as the gardener must guard the good tree against all the enemies who come against it, so we must carefully and ceaselessly guard the soul against the many subtle approaches of the enemy. How many times in the Bible comes the warning to “watch.”

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. *Matthew 26:41*

Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed! *Revelation 16:15*

But remember that the Lord will not do the watching for us. He will sound warnings and help us in this work but, it is our work basically, and He expects us to do it. If we do not do it then He will not interpose miraculously to save us because of our own neglect. We must set a faithful guard over every avenue of the soul and, with true spiritual alertness, discern every approach of the enemy and then call upon the Lord to drive the enemy off. This He will instantly do, if we call upon Him in true faith to help us.

So it is that exactly as in nature where the utmost of diligent effort is needed to bring forth the good fruit in its season, so in the spiritual realm no man will harvest a goodly fruitage from his life except he put forth the utmost of diligent effort, after he has received the gift of the good life from heaven. A living abiding experience, a strong symmetrical character, is not developed miraculously nor without effort on the part of the individual.



The Great Creator supplies as a free gift the seed, the sun, the rain, the soil and the life which is in them all. But we have our part to play, a part which the Lord will never do for us. This requires the most diligent effort on our part or else there will be no harvest. As it is in nature, so it is in grace.

If you want that kind of character, and it is your responsibility before God and man to have that kind of character, then, after having received the gift of the new life, you must go to work with all the powers that the Lord has given to you, while all the while trusting to the Lord to be by your side as your mighty Helper.

And so as man works, the Lord works, and the combination of Divine and human effort in the garden brings forth the abundant fruit of the good tree, and in the spiritual realm it brings forth the abundant fruit of righteousness.

It must now be evident to those who are studying through this great theme of living righteously with us, that there is a place for diligent effort, and there is another place where it must not be used. It must be evident that there is a part that the Lord must do, and which only He can do, and there is a part that we must play which the Lord will not do for us. We must not make any attempt to do the Lord's part, and we

must not make the mistake of thinking that He will come in and do our part for us.

Now, when we understand this relationship, then for us, all contradiction in this subject disappears. There are some who take all the texts which describe salvation as being the gift of God, while at the same time ignoring the texts on diligent effort. For such people, everything is to be done by God and for them there is nothing to do at all. They will never grow a good tree and bring forth much fruit.

Then on the other hand there are those who gather all the texts on diligent effort and warfare and press their case. To them, the Scriptures which tell of salvation as being a gift are contradictory, and they feel that they do not have a real understanding of the relationship of the two.

But we must understand the relationship between the two, and get them both in the right place. If we go putting forth diligent effort to get the gift in the first place then we are trying to do the Lord's work, and that we can never do. We shall be lost while ever we try that. On the other hand if we fail to put forth diligent effort to develop and protect the gift, then we shall never bring forth an abundant harvest of good fruit either.

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. *John 8:32*

The great truth forever stands, that it is

Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. *The Great Controversy*, 425

Go to the Lord then and receive from Him the gift of eternal life, and then go to work with all the powers which He has given to you and with His mighty help, build a character fit for this life and for eternity.

We have seen in the plainest way that there is a close similarity between the laws which govern in the physical and those that govern in the spiritual realm. We have seen that just as a good tree must replace an evil tree so must a good nature replace an evil nature in the man before there can be any hope of good fruit in the life.

It is time now to note that the good tree, which replaces the evil tree so full grown and strong as it was, is but a tiny seed before which there is to be a lifetime of growth. If any gardener is to be satisfied, that growth must be active and vigorous. So likewise the life which replaces the strong evil life in the soul, so full grown after a lifetime of sinning and doing evil, is but a babe. Before it then is a lifetime of growth, and once again if the gardener is to be pleased with it there must be rapid, vigorous and active growth. Nothing less than this will do or will satisfy. And so it is written in the Word of Everlasting Truth:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." *Romans 1:16,17*

Today's level of faith and therefore of growth, is not sufficient for tomorrow. No matter how beautiful a baby might be today, if he stays that way, it is only a cause of the deepest anxiety and heartbreak for the parents. Tomorrow, there must be the evidence of growth and progress ever reaching upward to the full maturity of manhood or womanhood.

The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith; that is, from your present faith to an increased understanding of that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. *The Review and Herald, September 17, 1908*

Paul expressed it again in these words:

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those

of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. *Philippians* 3:12-15

And Peter expresses it this way:

By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. *2 Peter* 1:4-8

And the true, earnest seeker after God will find that there is in him that same urge to grow which Paul, in *Philippians*, testified to having. He will find that he will be pressing toward the mark. While on the one hand, he will be so thankful for all that the Lord has done for him thus far, he will not be content to remain at this level of experience but will be continually seeking higher and still higher levels of attainment and efficiency in service for God. He will, with the utmost of diligent effort, be developing all his God given spiritual, physical and mental powers to the highest pitch of excellence.

Already, in the section on the place and importance of our own diligent effort in the battle with evil, we have set out some of the points needful to maintain a steady and satisfactory growth rate in the Christian life. In this final and concluding chapter let us summarize some of these points again.

Just as in the realm of nature the good tree must be fed on the best of food so the spiritual life must also be fed on the best of spiritual food.

The body will die if deprived of suitable nourishment, and so with the soul. In order to have spiritual strength, or even life, it must be nourished by the Word, which is spirit and life. It must be constantly fed by the truth which connects the soul with Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, 7:941

It is our responsibility to come and partake of the food that is provided so abundantly for us. There it is in the Word of God but, unless we come and take that Word and make it the Man of our counsel, and stretch the powers of the mind in our effort to understand what it contains, while all the while trusting the Lord to have that Divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit by our side, we shall die of spiritual starvation. God provides the food and the Spirit to give the understanding but we must do our part or perish.

Coupled with the study of the Word, there must be a faithful prayer life. As Enoch, we must walk with God. Thus we come to truly know Him and the power of His resurrection. And when we *know* that power and what that power means to us then there abides in us that faith which is the victory over all the power of the enemy. One could write a great deal on the matter and the importance of prayer and its power in the life. Here is a subject which cannot be studied too much.

An extremely important point in the development of that faith and experience which we need to have is the knowledge that a Christian does not go out to get the victory over the devil. Herein lies the great difference between the battles of this world and that of the Christian. The generals of great armies go out with the hope that they might be able to get the victory in their battles. Not so with the Christian. That victory has been won for us on the cross of Calvary and we go out to face a *defeated* foe. Jesus has *given* to us the Life which is the victory over the devil and we go out with that Life which is that victory. When we meet the devil with the fullness of the faith of the possession of that Life, then he immediately flees and leaves us completely alone. He will not stand before that Life. It is too much for him altogether.

Note these wonderful words in this very connection:

Henceforward Christ's followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them: that victory He desired them to accept as their own. "Behold," he said, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." *The Desire of Ages*, 490

So there it is. The battle has been fought. The victory has been won and that victory is handed on to us as a gift. But the devil knows full well that there are many who do not know that the battle is fought and the victory won. So he comes right to them and seeks to terrify them

with the show of his power and his cunning and many people succumb to his temptations simply because they do not know the power of the victory which is already theirs.

Therefore the great secret of maintaining the victory is to know that you already have the victory, to know that the devil has been defeated and that the battle is already won so far as this temptation is concerned that comes to you. The devil will come to you with a great show of strength shouting loudly or whispering cunningly that he is the master of the situation and that you will just have to yield to him this time. But, because you are keeping a faithful watch as every Christian must and will, you discern his approach and meet him with the calm confidence that you do not have to yield to him at all. Tell him to his face that he is to be disappointed for the man who used to respond to his temptations is dead and buried and that the new man in you is the man Christ Jesus and He just does not commit sin.

When the devil hears that name; when the devil sees that you are meeting him in sure and certain faith, he will flee from you with the utmost speed. But remember, this will only be if you meet the devil, not in the shaky faith of something which you hope to get, but in the sure knowledge of what you already have been given. You are the son of God and of man and no longer the son of Satan. You have the Life of Christ in you and you are to absolutely know this and to live in the faith and the knowledge and the power of it. Not that we shall be proud and boastful of this for the Life of Christ is a life of humility. In that Life there is no pride at all.

Therefore we must never allow doubt of the power of God and the salvation which is ours to creep into our minds. It is this unbelief that opens the door for the devil to get right in and to lead us into sin once again.

And this also means that we are not to attempt to fight the battle all over again. Remember that the great controversy is between Christ and Satan, *not* between you and Satan. Remember that you cannot fight the devil. So do not attempt to fight against him but deliver him up to Jesus and let Jesus answer the devil for you. This is a most important part of the whole matter. All too often when the enemy assails, we feel that we have to really jump in here or the situation will be forever lost, and we rush in and take over the battle which only the Lord can fight for us. It is as if you were going through a dark jungle in the company and under

the protection of an expert guide, well armed with the best of weapons and experienced in the art of dealing with all the wildest and strongest of jungle animals. You, on the other hand, are unarmed and inexperienced and very weak. At one point out jumps a huge tiger, and fearful for your very life you rush in and fight that tiger with bare hands, calling upon your guide to help you to beat this tiger. He, all the while, is calling to you to get out of the road and stay behind him so that he can deal with this tiger with his wonderful and deadly weapons. But while you are in there, he cannot do a thing for his weapons would destroy you also.



The Christian does not go out to get the victory. That was gained for him back on Calvary and that which was gained there is offered as a gift to the child of God. Thus it is that, clad in the complete armor of Christ's righteousness, he goes forth fully equipped to meet a foe who is already conquered. He does not go out to get the victory. It is given to him as a gift and he takes it with him.

Let us not make this terrible kind of mistake in the battle with sin. Let the Mighty One deal with the devil. He can, and you cannot. One

Christian expressed it this way:

Then the victory is ours in Christ, and He has gained the victory already. He has conquered a peace for us. Just as surely as He gives His peace to us, just that surely has He gained the victory for us. So in the hour of trial we have a victory that is already gained. Well may we say that the battle goes over our heads, and great is our peace. There is peace all the time. E.J. Waggoner, *Bible Studies on the Book of Romans*, 22

One of the most important principles involved in growth is the matter of giving in loving service to others. Only as we give what we have received can we receive more. And if we fail to pass on what we have already received then we not only fail to receive more but we lose that which we already have:

The soul that refuses to impart will perish. *The Desire of Ages*, 417

The soul who has been truly born again has something that he can give to others. The soul who has not been truly born again has nothing to give to others. He may know all the theory of the Scriptures and be wise in the facts of the Word but he has no life and cannot be a channel of communication by the Spirit if he does not possess that Spirit.

We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive. Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting. *The Desire of Ages*, 370

But let us not make the mistake of supposing that we must *make* our light shine; that missionary work is a thing which we have to organize ourselves into and go out along certain well defined patterns. Not at all. It is something which is to be directed of the Spirit and only the Spirit of God knows where we can best serve.

Not everyone is called upon to give Bible studies. Others quietly live out the life of a true Christian and thus even unconsciously are giving very mightily of what they have to others. The effect is not seen by the giver but it is there just the same.

The great secret is to go to the Lord and tell Him that you are there at His service to do just what *He wishes* for you to do. If you are to speak, then well and good, but if you can best serve Him by silence, then also just as well and good. Then, day by day, cheerfully and

happily go about the duties which lie the nearest to you, and you will be surprised at the way the Lord will open doors for you to give a witness for the message which you bear. You will become conscious that wherever you go, your very presence brings a cheer and a joy into the situation where you go. Behind you, you will leave a fresh note of courage and joy; light where there was darkness and hope where there was despair. Yet you may not have said a single word of the gospel story. The influence is there and the way prepared to say those words later, or for someone else to say them instead. Note these beautiful words:

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine.* If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 420

CONCLUSION

And so by nourishing the new experience by a carefully maintained life of study and prayer; by refusing to ever doubt that the Lord has done the work in you and given you sonship with Him; by knowing that the devil is a conquered foe; by never attempting to fight the battle which the Lord alone can fight; and by giving cheerfully and willingly the Life which you have been given to the needs of the perishing all around you, you cannot help but grow into the full maturity of a man in Christ Jesus.

Never forget, that first of all there must be the good tree to take the place of the evil one and then there follows the maintenance and the development of the gift thus given.

There is a great deal more which could be said on this wonderful theme. There is the relationship of the health message to it; there is the following through of the whole matter in the light of the sanctuary; there is the way of living righteously in the judgment of the living.

All these are themes which we will not take up in this particular series, but if time permits we will take them all up in due course. The purpose of this series is to spell out the way of living righteously in the daily life. This is the beginning and without it there can be no eternal salvation.

We want you to think of this series as being but the introduction to this wonderful theme, a theme which you will spend the whole of eternity in studying if you have but learned of the experience here and maintain the beginning of your faith steadfast unto the end.

We trust and we pray that the experience outlined in this series will have become yours in living reality and that you will continue therefrom to grow day by day.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE BOOK

Fred Wright (1925-1997) was born and raised in the small town of Mirani, in North Queensland, Australia. His mother read herself into the Seventh-day Adventist faith, and passed that on to her children.

Fred was the eldest of three sons and entered Australasian Missionary College (now called Avondale) at the age of 19. Marriage in 1949, and some debts incurred while attempting colporteur work, forced him to stop college, and in 1953, he eventually found work as a woodwork and building construction teacher in New Zealand Missionary College, and became a local church elder.

While teaching in the college, the rebellion and resistance of some of the boys tested Fred's patience beyond its limits and he found himself filled with anger and fury towards their stubbornness. This anger was kept under control in the classroom but usually vented itself upon his wife and children on the weekends, where a torrent of angry words would be unleashed. Then came remorse, and regret, and confessions to God and pleas for forgiveness. But there was no deliverance. The sad pattern would repeat over and over in his life, and nothing seemed to help.

At this time there was a revival of the 1888 gospel message of A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Their writings had been rediscovered, and brought to the attention of many. It was through contact with that message of living victory and deliverance that Fred finally found rest and peace in his heart, and the terrible power of anger that had controlled him was broken. He came to a realization that sin is "not what you do, but what you are," and that real forgiveness involved not just taking away guilt for wrong actions, but removing of the roots of sin in the heart of man.

This book is the first one written by Fred (originally published in 1970), and is the clearest presentation of the principles of that everlasting gospel message which brought him peace and freedom, and has blessed many others all over the world since then.