



**AND
REFORMATION**

RENEWAL

F. T. Wright

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Cover Picture

REVIVAL and reformation are two works essential for those who would eventually be prepared for the kingdom. Of the two, revival, which must precede reformation, is usually the more dramatic experience, illustrated in this cover picture by the strong upward arrow. This also indicates that it is an event which occupies only a point of time.

Reformation on the other hand is a protracted work involving the remainder of one's lifetime. Therefore, it is illustrated by a horizontal arrow. One cannot designate one or the other as being the minor or major work.

Reformation certainly occupies a great deal more time, and is as essential as revival, but it is not more important. Both are essential. A work of revival without reformation must result in the death of the new life, while reformation without revival will produce nothing more than a modified improvement of the old. Such can never be admitted to heaven.

The objective of this book is to introduce folk to a strong revival experience followed by an equally strong work of reformation.

1. A Pressing Problem

MOMENTARILY I scanned the envelope wondering what the contents might be. It had arrived with the mail that morning. The stamp told me it had come from within my own country, the postmark indicated the city, but the handwriting did not immediately place the writer. I slit it open and began to read.

I am so thoroughly perplexed about my Christian experience that I do not know which way to turn and desperately need help. Sometimes I think it would be easier just to give up, but I cannot do this as there is something which seems to hold me. I look back on the days before the message of deliverance from bondage came to me and remember the sad experience of trying and failing. Then the light came on how to have the old life washed away and a new life take its place. I rejoiced as I experienced salvation from my sins and could positively testify that problems which had troubled me for years disappeared never to return.

But, while some sins disappeared, others have remained to harass me. I cannot understand this. Why did God take away some things and yet leave others? I have come to doubt my experience and have come to believe that I was not truly born again after all. But when I try to repeat the new birth experience to a depth where all these other problems are swept away and I am left totally free from sin, I cannot achieve it. Everything which seemed so clear and simple to me a few months ago, has now melted into a jumble of confusion. What shall I do? Am I to be lost after all?

Even though the writer thought so, there was nothing unique about what she was passing through. It is a typical stage in spiritual development, although the trauma of it is quite unnecessary. If a person who has been introduced to the message of deliverance from sin is carefully instructed in what to expect during subsequent weeks, then he will not suffer perplexity when the predicted situation develops. He

will know how to cope with it. Yet, curiously enough, even though some are faithfully instructed in regard to this, when it does come they are still deeply troubled and confused.

The reason for the difficulty is that many hold the erroneous view that the new birth is the entire solution to the sin problem whereas in fact it is not. It is the complete solution to a sin problem but not to all of them. Therefore it is not the only work of grace to be effected before fitness for heaven is achieved.

The person who sets out to leave behind the sinful condition of his life and enter into a solid work of preparation for the kingdom of heaven, soon discovers that he is confronted with a task which is not accomplished in one day. He learns anew the truth that it is quick and easy to destroy, but slow and difficult to rebuild. He also learns that only those who, with dogged, intelligent perseverance pursue the battle, will in the end receive the crown of life and a place in the bliss of an endless day.

Complicating the work and hindering its rapid advance, is the lack of clear understanding in the minds of most as to exactly what the work is and how it is to be accomplished. Consequently there is groping uncertainty, unnecessary mistakes, expenditure of valuable time and effort in the wrong place and wrong way, and other unfortunate complications. This is discouraging, and to be regretted and avoided if possible. Without a doubt this would be the desire of every individual sincerely seeking to be a true and earnest child of God.

A great deal of the difficulty experienced by the truly born again Christian, is not because he lacks the desire to serve God, or the new heart, but because he does not understand exactly what the work is which follows the initial conversion. Until he does, he will have troubles and problems, and there will be friction between himself and others in the family of God, just as there was between the men who were nearest and

dearest to Christ. Furthermore, the devil will use this situation to his advantage, to bring discouragement and perplexity to God's children.

Such a situation does not need to exist for any of us. There is ample instruction in the Scriptures to deliver us from these problems if only they are understood. It is the purpose of this study to make these distinctions clear, so that each believer will know with certainty where to direct his efforts in the work of sanctification, and how best to meet the temptations and charges of the enemy.

2. Distinctions

THE new birth, wonderful and effective as this experience is, does not provide the full answer to the sin problem, because there are three or more separate and distinct works of grace necessary to complete the work in and for us, which are required to fit the believing soul for the kingdom.

The first three in their order of operation are:

1. Revival,
2. Reformation, and
3. Final atonement.

After this there is still the work of endowing the saved with immortal flesh and blood.

This study will be devoted to the first two only, leaving the consideration of the remainder for other books. For the present, it is basically important that these be understood, for if they are not, then there is no point in worrying about the final atonement or hoping for immortality.

Two Separate Works

Revival and reformation are two separate and distinct works. They are different from each other and do not work concurrently. Each is designed to accomplish a specific mission, and neither will do the work of the other. Therefore, the needy sinner must understand what problem revival is intended to solve, and what reformation is given to rectify so that it can do its work effectively. It is a matter of distinctions properly understood and rightly applied.

To confirm the assertions made in the above paragraph, the following extract is quoted:

Review and Herald, February 25, 1902:

A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are

two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.

God's words are of no value to us unless we see and understand exactly what they say. Note carefully that the second sentence certifies that:

Revival and reformation are *two different things.*

If different, then they cannot be the same. Once this truth is confirmed, there remains the need to determine in what ways they are different and what problems they are individually designed to solve. What, then, is the revival? It is:

...a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death.

Not Merely Excitement

Unfortunately, a wrong connotation has been developed in the religious world over the word, "revival." This has been built up as a result of the experiences through which religious people are taken. A church group sinks into a lethargic state, and to cure them a revival evangelist is commissioned to preach a series of meetings. His messages and methods are designed to stir *the emotions* of the hearers, who become satisfyingly animated in the atmosphere of religious enthusiasm which is generated during the campaign. They are then considered to have been "revived."

However, once the stimulus of the meetings is over with the departure of the preacher to other needy churches, the enthusiasm dies away and the revived sink back into a torpid state, requiring another such shot-in-the-arm religious therapy. Be-

cause the treatment does not produce either a lasting or satisfying result, an immunity is built up, which requires an increasing expenditure of energy on the part of the revivalist to achieve the same result.

I shall never forget sitting in a meeting back in 1964, when a very famous preacher was doing all in his power to stir the audience. Many times before, they had been subjected to this kind of stimulus and had developed a cynicism to such an extent that no matter what that speaker did, he could not awaken any kind of response. They sat there like so many unblinking sphinxes, while he leaped about, shouted, wept, pleaded, cajoled, admonished, and appealed to them in every possible way. They had been “revived” too many times before, and did not want to experience another passing stimulation.

To Live Again

Revival, as it is used in the statement under consideration, is a different experience altogether from that described above. It is important therefore, that care be taken to ensure that the word, as used in this study, is understood according to its correct usage, and not as it is generally known in the religious world of the present.

It comes from two Latin derivations, “re,” meaning *back* or *again*, and “vivo,” meaning *I live*. Thus the literal and actual meaning of the word is to *live once again*.

A person can only live again if he has firstly been dead. Thus the dead are revived, while sleepers are aroused. Yet, when traveling in foreign language areas, I always found problems with the translators who chose the word, “awakening,” in their language for the English word, “revival.” Again and again I found it necessary to explain what the word meant and request that they think of the exact translation.

In respect to the usage of the word in this study, the reference is to revival from spiritual, not physical death. In the

Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were not revived either physically or spiritually, for they were coming into existence for the first time. Since the fall however, every single person needs to be revived, firstly spiritually, and eventually, physically.

The Scriptures make it very plain that the gospel finds us dead in trespasses and sins. This is not a figure of speech. It is a fact. Recognition of this fact makes all the difference between correct and incorrect understandings of the gospel. Too many religionists today teach that conversion is simply a change in the habit patterns and loyalties.

This is not conversion. Being born again is the receiving of a new life in place of the old, not a modified improvement of the existing life. The latter would be nothing more than an awakening and could never be described as a revival.

The Desire of Ages, p. 172:

The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.

What is Reformation?

On the other hand, reformation...

...signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices.

It is a reshaping, a remodeling, a renovation, basic and essential to which is a process of re-education. In fact, as this study proceeds it will show that re-education is of tremendous importance in the work of reformation.

The Desire of Ages, p. 330:

“Learn of me,” says Jesus; “for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest.” We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemp-

tion is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God.

Immediately, the differences between the work of revival and that of reformation begin to be manifest. The revival is a resurrection from spiritual death and as such is an act of God. He calls forth the dead to life, not as a long drawn out process, but as the creative work of a moment, for He speaks and it is done. He commands and it stands forth:

Psalm 33

⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

On the other hand, reformation is a process requiring a great deal of time. It occupies the whole of our lifetimes so far as the individual is concerned, though in its collective and full extent, it fills the entire span of human history between the fall and the close of probation.

Millions of believers have experienced the revival, but very few, if any, have had the work of reformation completed in them. There will be a people at last who will have experienced the revival and also will have had the reformation brought to full maturity in them. When that generation is developed, the church will be translated directly from this earth to heaven.

Through sin, Satan inflicted a deforming wound on humanity. When any living thing suffers such a stroke, God sets to work at once to heal the damage. Likewise, the moment sin appeared with its scarring deformation of God's children, the Lord began the great work of reforming mankind into His

own likeness again.

But the devil did not simply inflict one wound and leave it at that. As fast as the Lord worked to rebuild the damage, Satan came repeatedly to tear down what had been built up. Thus the battle has raged back and forth through time with the devil being unable to fully and totally destroy the family of man, and the Lord being so far unable to fully restore him.

The Finishing of Reformation

But there is coming a time when the work of restoration will be complete and then, the reformation ended, the children of God will again find their place in paradise.

This fact is most clearly demonstrated in the experience of the advent believers who neared, with bright expectation, the termination of the 2,300 year prophecy in 1844. Here were a people who had certainly experienced the revival so that they were truly born again sons and daughters of God. They had also experienced the work of reformation, but only to a certain extent, for it had not been *completed* in them. It was for this reason that they were disappointed in their hopes of a speedy translation, having to continue instead, a further space of re-education and reshaping for the kingdom.

A description of their condition and experience as they approached the great moment when they confidently expected that Jesus would return, runs as follows:

Early Writings, p. 239:

A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain. God's people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortal-

ity.

They were indeed a people who walked very close to God, but they did not understand just what heights of experience must be attained by those who will be translated. They did not know of the many things in the work of reformation which yet lay ahead before they were fitted to leave this earth without dying. They had yet to learn of the Sabbath truth, of dress and health reform, of true education, of the great truths of the sanctuary service, and of the final atonement, to name but a few. So,

Early Writings, p. 239:

They were destined again to be sadly disappointed. The time to which they looked, expecting deliverance, passed; they were still upon the earth, and the effects of the curse never seemed more visible. They had placed their affections on heaven, and in sweet anticipation had tasted immortal deliverance; but their hopes were not realized.

How clear it is that this disappointment was not because they had not been revived, for they certainly did have this blessed gift of the resurrection from spiritual death, but because...

Early Writings, p. 250:

They were not free from errors.

The Great Controversy, p. 424-425:

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished *for them*. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church. Says the prophet:

Malachi 3

² Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above, are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.

While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of *Revelation 14*.

Thus, a great work was to be accomplished for the believers after the close of the 2,300 year prophecy, even though a very great work had already been done before that time ended. That work involved first the shedding of a light from the ministry of the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, by which new duties would be revealed to them. As these new duties were made plain, God's people were to have their lives reshaped or reformed into the pattern shown to them.

Such a work would take time, and it required not only the grace of God but also their own diligent effort. In view of the fact that they had finally arrived at the point where they had the ending of the work before them, and the availability of the wonderful light and instruction from the innermost apartment of the temple, the time had come for a special work of putting away sin. This indicates that the time of opportunity had come to see the reformation through to its finality.

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.

How much we look and long for the day of Christ's return, but that day will not come until the work of preparation is complete in the church. It is not enough to rejoice in the glory of the spiritual resurrection, for that is but one work. That accomplished, we must start upon the second—the long protracted phase of reformation. Only when that too is complete will there be a people ready for translation.

Summary

At this point, a summary listing the major distinctions between revival and reformation will help to make the subject clear, while laying an excellent foundation for the material which follows.

Revival and reformation are two different things and must be distinguished as such. Inability to recognize these differences will prevent a correct understanding of the subject and will in turn frustrate the successful development of the character fitness for eternity.

In the first case, revival is a resurrection from spiritual death, while reformation is the reshaping of the habits, practices, theories and ideas.

This means that revival is an act final and complete when it is done, while reformation is a *process*, long continued, in which the work is accomplished, not in one single act but in a steady progression from one level to a still higher level.

Further, this means that the revival takes place only once, in the very beginning of the Christian experience, while reformation is a repeating work, each section of which takes care of some problem not dealt with before.

Revival is the act of God in which the believer does not participate, for only God can put life where there is death. On the other hand, reformation is a work in which the believer does play a definite part. Here, God and man work together, for it is...

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

...by the grace of God and their own diligent effort,

–that they are overcomers in this battle with evil. By the revival, we become sons and daughters of God, for by this the life of God is placed in the believing heart, but, like a child just born, we have learned nothing yet. In fact, worse than a child just born, we have a great deal of wrong to *unlearn*. We enter the school of Christ to learn these lessons during the reformatory period.

*Revival is the entrance qualification
into the school of Christ.
Reformation is that school.*

If, having been blessed with the revival, we should die without the work of the reformation having been finished, or because of shortness of time, barely begun, then, provided we have learned the lessons taught to us, and reformed our lives accordingly, we shall be raised in the first resurrection.

On the other hand, should we live in the time of the final church and share with it in a finished work of reformation subsequent to a genuine revival experience, then we shall experience the glory of translation.

From this there emerges the important fact that inasmuch as these are two entirely different works, then revival will never do the work of reformation, and reformation will never do the work of revival.

A great deal of the difficulty in Christian experience, lack of solid progress in reformation, and the confusion and discouragement which have beset so many of God's children, have resulted from their not being able to understand just what they could expect revival to solve, and what the reformation would deal with.

Because of the expectation that the revival would do more

than it is able or intended to do, they have looked to that to do what the reformation alone can do, with the result that the problems which only the reformation can solve have been left unsolved to the dismay and discouragement of the believer.

Finally, revival provides us with perfection of the heart—not total perfection. Final and total perfection can only be when the reformation completes the work begun by the revival.



In the development of an oak tree, we can observe two distinct events: first, the planting of a seed and second, the growth of that seed until it is a fully matured tree. Likewise there are two distinct events in the work of grace: revival and reformation.

Revival precedes reformation just as the implantation of the seed precedes its growth. The first event occupies only a moment of time, while the latter is a life-long process. Neither the one nor the other is more important. There can be no growth without the implantation, and if there is no growth after implantation, the seed would die.

3. Problems and Solutions

IT IS APPARENT that the sinner seeking salvation must have two works done for him before he is ready for the third work—the final atonement and the cleansing of the sanctuary.

This leads to the next development in the line of reasoning being pursued here, and it is that if two different works are provided by God, then there must be two different problems needing solutions.

The next logical conclusion is that the two solutions must be different from each other in order for them to be capable of handling problems divergent from one another.

In order to simplify the explanation, let the revival be indicated as work A, and the reformation as work B. Inasmuch as work is the solution to a problem, let them in turn be respectively designated, solutions A and B. Where there are two different solutions there must be corresponding problems which we will label problems A and B.

The task now is to identify and describe the problems in their turn and then to link the respective solutions to them. It will be emphasized that problem A cannot be dealt with by using solution B nor can solution A be used to remedy problem B. This is a very important point.

There was a time when we understood only the work of the revival and believed that this was the total solution to the sin problem. We then found perplexity in the seeming confusion of having some sins washed away never to return, while others remained and refused to yield to the revival work. We came to question the original experience, or to conclude that it had been only partial. Some even left the truth because they could not reconcile these differences.

Then came the time when light revealed the existence of

two different problems and divinely ordered matching solutions. Then we learned to take problem A to solution A and problem B to solution B. Wonderful relief resulted, enabling those who saw and experienced this to testify:

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

The heavenly Teacher, recognizing how vital it is that these principles be understood and applied, has taken great care to see that they are spelled out with clarity in the Scriptures. He has chosen not only to speak them in words. He has also presented them in illustrated form which is both the most easily understood and most impressive form of education.

Resurrection from Death

We will now move from evidence to evidence in logical sequence to positively identify these works in their turn. Referring to the basic statement with which this presentation began, it is seen that the revival is:

Review and Herald, February 25, 1902:

...a resurrection from spiritual death.

There is no place in the Bible where this resurrection is better described than in *Romans*.

Romans 6

¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

³ Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

In the baptismal service, the believer *symbolically* re-enacts the experience through which he has *actually* passed in order to enter the family of God. The immersion symbolizes the death and burial of the old man, while the emergence from the water points to the resurrection from spiritual death into the new life. If then baptism represents the resurrection from spiritual death, it likewise symbolizes the revival, for they are one and the same thing.

Paul takes the matter one step further by teaching that the death of the old man is deliverance from bondage. His argument is developed in verse 6, and runs as follows:

Know that the old man is crucified or put to death with Christ, so that the body of sin is destroyed so that from that time forward *we should no longer serve sin*. The result, then, of the resurrection from spiritual death,—the revival,—is deliverance from the bondage of sin. Therefore, if the solution is *deliverance from bondage, then the problem is bondage*.

This leads to the conclusion that problem A and its corresponding solution have been found and linked together.

The Passover Illustration

This revelation of truth is not confined to the New Testament. Those who lived in the era before Christ had the same problems and needed the same solutions as those who have lived since. It is now a simple matter to determine where and how in the Old Testament the Lord has taught this same lesson. It is needed only to find where the experience of deliverance from bondage is taught. The following clear statements will quickly direct to the correct place in the Word.

The Desire of Ages, p. 77:

The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an *object lesson* of

redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277:

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.

The Passover is a perfect illustration of deliverance from the bondage of sin, for it was the solution whereby the Lord brought out the Israelites from centuries of physical servitude. As they were in slavery to the Egyptians, so each sinner is in bondage to the sin master.¹

It required the death of the firstborn to break the hold of the Egyptians on the Israelites. So, the death of the old man is necessary to bring release to the soul burdened by sin. As they walked out of that land never to come into servitude to the taskmaster again, so the Christian can experience deliverance from the sin master and never come under his power thereafter.

Comparison with Baptism

The appropriateness of both the Passover and baptism as illustrations of deliverance from bondage, is established by making a simple comparison between these services and the experience of the revival.

The Passover was the first service of the Jewish religious year. It took place in the first month and was performed only once in the year. Likewise baptism takes place only once in the Christian experience and that at the very outset. There are occasions when rebaptism is called for, but in general it is to be a once-in-the-lifetime experience.

¹ For a more detailed study of this symbolism, see *From Bondage to Freedom* (also called *Freedom from Sin*), and *Living Righteously*.

So the revival experience is to be a once-in-the-lifetime event. God does not give repeated gifts of His life to His children, for this is not necessary. It is true that we come to feel that we have lost the life of Christ and need to have it given again, but as we proceed, it will become clear that this is not so.

This is not to say that it is impossible to lose the gift of the new life, for this is very possible. But, should a person come to this point, it will only be because he has committed the unpardonable sin and is lost forever.

Mentioning the unpardonable sin is frightening to many people who dread the possibility that they have already gone beyond this point of no return. It is much more difficult to do this than many suppose as will be shown as this study develops. In fact, those who truly understand the nature of the work of revival and reformation, will be relieved of this haunting fear without drifting into the opposite peril of complacency.

While the Passover represented the beginning of a new year, it was not the only new year in the Jewish economy. Prior to this one, there was the civil beginning. Thus they celebrated two openings to the year, the civil and the religious.

Likewise, every Christian has two birthdays. Firstly, there is the date when he was physically born, and secondly there is his spiritual birthday. Interestingly enough, while we all have a record of the date on which we were born, very few of us have a remembrance of the actual day when the burden of sin was lifted, and we became the children of God.

But then, this is just as well, for it is not God's way to celebrate His works on the anniversaries of the date on which they were accomplished. Rather, He sets aside the seventh day of the week as the memorial of His wonderful works of which

the act of sanctification is one.²

Only the Beginning

When they left Egypt, they did not step at once into the promised land. There were long journeyings and hard lessons to be learned and much to be unlearned before they finally crossed the Jordan. It was a school in which they set their own learning rate, which unfortunately was so slow that they expended much more time over it than necessary. They could have obtained their inheritance forty years before they did, had they applied themselves with dedicated diligence to their lessons.

In the same manner, baptism is not the sign that the believer is qualified for translation. This service has not cleansed him of the many erroneous ideas and theories nor removed numerous wrong habits which were acquired in the school of Satan. Nor has he yet had the time and opportunity to learn the many lessons and truths which are to replace those old concepts.

Instead, baptism is the declaration that he has left the family and school of Satan, come into sonship with God, and been placed in the classroom where Christ is the Tutor. Herein, Christ does not set the pace. The learning rate is determined by the level of dedication and determination exhibited by the student. He can apply himself earnestly and diligently and thus advance rapidly toward ultimate readiness for translation, or he can dawdle along and run the terrible risk of never making the needed preparation.

If all that is signified by the Passover is the complete answer to the sin problem, then that is the only service the Lord would have provided for them. But those who had received the spiritual benefits available through this initial ceremony

² For further discussion on this truth see *Living Righteousness and the Sabbath of God*.

were then called upon to come to the sanctuary for the blessings and provisions afforded in the daily service. This service was quite different from the Passover because it had to meet a different need. Both were cleansings from sin, and both used blood as the agent of purification.

The Lord's Supper

Likewise, if the revival experience symbolized by baptism solved the sin problem completely, then the Lord would have required no further services in the New Testament era. But there is a counterpart to the daily service of the Old Testament. It is the service of foot washing. It is quite different from baptism as it has to cope with a different kind of problem. Yet it is a cleansing from sin employing, as does baptism, water as the symbol of purification.

There is a tendency to conclude that the foot washing service is the New Testament replacement for the Passover. This conclusion is reached because Christ instituted it on the occasion when the last Passover was to have been celebrated. It is thought therefore, that this service symbolizes what the former did.

But, more careful thought will show that it is not a true replacement.

In the first case, while the Passover was given to a people still in bondage, the Lord's supper was administered, as will be proved later, to men who had been delivered from the bondage of the old sin master, though not yet from many wrong ideas and theories which caused them considerable trouble. In harmony with this, those who to this day *rightfully* participate in this ordinance, have been delivered already from the power of the old man and are baptized members of the body of Christ.

Secondly, the Passover was to be celebrated only once in the year, but the Lord's supper is to be observed many times dur-

ing the lifetime of the believer. Jesus gave specific instructions to this effect.

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come.

Thirdly, the whole pattern of the service and the symbols used were different from those of the Passover. Jesus did not produce a modified version of the older service but a new ceremony altogether, representing, not the work of revival which is deliverance from bondage, but the work of reformation which follows this original restoration.

Fourthly, only those who had participated in the release obtained through the Passover could enter into the services of the daily. So, only those who have been baptized can rightfully join in the celebration of the foot washing and the Lord's supper. Thus is emphasized the truth that the revival must precede the reformation, the latter not being truly possible until the first has been achieved.

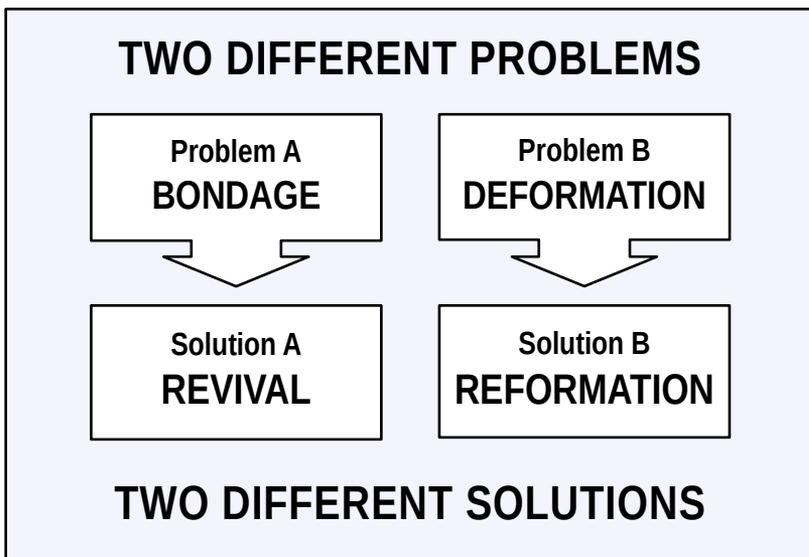
Two Different Works Required

In the Old Testament dispensation, those only who had faithfully observed the Passover and who had, during the subsequent months, entered into the requirements of the daily cleansings could receive the benefits of the final atonement. No matter how faithfully they had observed the Passover, they were still lost if they did not continue on into the full program of the daily.

So, it is not sufficient to be baptized in order to pass the great judgment day, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed of all sin. There must follow the thorough and deep work of reformation whereby those sins not dealt with by the revival are removed and righteousness takes their place.

It is now established that there are indeed two different works of grace which must be done in and for the believer be-

fore he is ready for the final atonement. The first of these,—solution A: the revival,—deals with problem A, which is bondage to sin. The second,—solution B: re-*form*-ation,—copes with problem B, which is de-*form*-ation.



Now that we are aware that there are in fact two different works of grace, each of which is specifically designed to solve its related problem, the foundations are laid for a careful investigation of the nature of these problems and how these solutions will remove them. This provides for a totally successful approach to the sin problem and guarantees that those who understand and apply these principles will certainly be ready for the judgment.

The grasping of these understandings will mark the cessation of the perplexities and bewilderments which harassed those who honestly sought to gain full and complete preparation for eternity but who, in their confusion, kept attempting to solve both problems A and B with solution A.

| REVIVAL | REFORMATION |
|---|--|
| <p>Work A Solution A: Deliverance To Problem A: Bondage The Spiritual Resurrection</p> <p>An Exchange of Life</p> <p>The New Birth</p> <p>The Beginning</p> <p>Symbolized by: The Passover in the Old, and Baptism in the New Testament</p> <p>The Work of a Moment</p> | <p>Work B Solution B: Re-form-ation To Problem B: De-form-ation The Subsequent Re-education</p> <p>A Change in Ideas, Habits, Practices and Theories</p> <p>The Growth</p> <p>The Continuation</p> <p>Symbolized by: The Daily in the Old, and the Lord's Supper in the New Testament</p> <p>The Work of a Lifetime</p> |
| <p>Two Different Things</p> | |

4. The Problem of Bondage

EVERY person born into this world enters it as a lost soul and would remain so but for the adequate provisions made by the Heavenly Trio to remove this burden of sin and restore the image of God in the individual.

Once the person has obtained sufficient knowledge of the kingdom of God and the offer of salvation, he finds himself confronted with his first major problem—bondage. He has learned to hate sin and to desire separation from it. He has developed a love for the righteousness of Christ, and has a fixed determination to obey the principles of the law. He sets himself to the task, confident that he will be successful, but to his frustration and dismay, finds the achievement elusive. The problem remains with him—unsolved.

The Romans 7 Experience

As he reads the Scriptures, he discovers that the experience outlined in *Romans 7*, is an exact description of his:

Romans 7

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

The usual reaction once this identification has been made is to conclude that Paul has here described real Christian experience. There are several reasons for this.

The strongest one seems to be that the revered and inspired apostle describes this in the first person causing folk to reason that if this was the way he lived, then this is the pattern for the true child of God.

The second reason is that there are certain aspects of the life lived by the *Romans 7* man, which make it superior to the life of the abandoned sinner or the generally irreligious. The person in this state compares what he is with what he was, and sees in the differences for the better, evidences to support the view that he is a Christian.

He adds to these arguments his having joined a church, become faithful in its financial support, and become active in an extensive program of good works including missionary endeavor. He has developed an extensive knowledge of the doctrines of the Bible, accepts them fully and looks forward to the day of Christ's return.

None of these things were present in his life prior to his acceptance of Scriptural truths, and he assures himself that he is living a life no different from his fellow church-members. He is firmly convinced that he is a member of the church wherein the saved are to be found, but sees no one there better than he *evaluates* himself. Therefore, he concludes that his is standard Christian experience and that no one has anything superior. Inasmuch as *Romans 7* describes what he deems to be normal Christian experience, he naturally concludes that Paul is here

describing the life of God's true children.

It is true that Paul has used the first person in this depiction, and this certainly *tends* toward the view that he was portraying the condition in which he found himself as a servant of God. There are however, abundant and convincing evidences to show that it was not his situation as a son of God, but one that he suffered before he obtained deliverance from bondage. When these further evidences are taken into account, consideration will need to be given to discern Paul's reason for using the first person to describe an experience which was no longer his when he wrote these words.

The entire witness of *Romans 7* is of captivity to a power which ruled the person against his will. He knew what to do, desired to do it, and put forth his best efforts to achieve it, but to no avail. After trying and failing to the point where he is convinced of the futility of further effort, he cries out,

Romans 7

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Specifically, what he is pleading for here is deliverance from the situation outlined in the previous verses. This is what he would not be doing if that was true Christian experience. Instead, he would be asking for more and still more of it, for Christianity is something to be desired, not something to escape from.

Therefore, the very fact that he seeks release from what is described in this chapter, is certain proof that it is not the experience of a true child of God but of one who is in the bondage and service of sin.

In response to his plea, the Lord answers his prayer as is certified by the testimony which follows:

²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The remainder of this verse simply sums up what he has been saying:

²⁵ So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

No better summation of *Romans 7* could be given, for, throughout that passage, Paul has been discussing the situation of all who, having come to understand the claims of God's law, give willing, mental assent and service to it, but, at the same time, because they are locked in bondage to sin, actually serve the law of evil with their flesh and blood bodies.

This of course makes the bondage more unendurable for, having caught a glimpse of freedom, the longing for it is surcharged. With increasing intensity, he desires that his flesh will serve the law together with the mind, thus initiating a harmony of spirit and action into the whole man.

Far from being an impossibility, this is both what the Lord wants and will achieve. Paul found it to be so. Having confessed his utter inability in himself to achieve the right, he pleaded with God for deliverance from the problem of bondage. The Lord gladly granted his request, whereupon he was able to testify to an entirely changed situation, the thrilling witness of which is recorded in the early verses of the next chapter.

Romans 8

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

What is being argued here is that once Paul experienced the deliverance sought, condemnation ceased. This is to confirm that previously there was condemnation, establishing the connection between bondage and condemnation on the one hand, and freedom and no condemnation on the other.

This proves beyond a doubt that the man in *Romans 7* is under condemnation, which means that he has no *justification*. A person without this gift certainly is not a child of God and does not yet have the title to heaven. Should he die in this condition, he will not rise in the resurrection of the just, because only the just, or justified, rise in that resurrection.

Two Masters

The teachings of Jesus further confirm these truths. He said that it is impossible to serve two masters simultaneously.

Matthew 6

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

When this rule as laid down by Christ is applied to the man of *Romans 7*, it will certify in moments where he stands. The only question which needs to be asked is whether he is able to testify to serving God or not. It is not a question of what he wants to do or knows he should do. It is a matter of what he is actually doing, because this is what the Saviour was talking about in *Matthew 6:24*.

The man of *Romans 7* is, by his own testimony, under bondage to sin and therefore carrying out a service to this master. He confesses that he is doing neither God's will nor his own, but the will of the power of sin resident within him. Therefore, God is not his master. He is in the service of sin and Satan, who pay in the currency of death and destruction. The words of Christ make it quite clear that the man of *Romans 7* is not a true child of God and is still in a lost condition.

Spiritual Life

The apostle John under inspiration of the Spirit provides further confirmation of this. He wrote:

1 John 5

⁴ For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

If that which is born of God overcomes the world, then that which is overcome by the world is not born again. It is needful only to ask if the *Romans 7* man is overcoming the world or is being overcome by the world to know if he is born again or not.

Through this lament, there is not one positive note of victory expressed. He can only tell of being overcome. Therefore, this man is not born again. As surely as this is so, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God as Christ solemnly averred in the audience with Nicodemus.

John 3

⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

In *Desire of Ages*, the man of *Romans 7* is categorized as being destitute of that life which will bring the sinner into harmony or peace with God.

The Desire of Ages, p. 203:

By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it. In despair they cry,

Romans 7 [margin]

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?

If those described here are still longing for that spiritual life which *will* bring them into harmony with God, then they do not yet have it, for no one is found longing for that which he

already has. Furthermore, they are pictured as vainly striving to obtain this. Therefore, they do not have that life which will bring them into harmony or peace with God, the peace which can be enjoyed only by the justified as Paul teaches in:

Romans 5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

To be justified is to have peace, but to be without peace is to be unjustified or condemned. Those described in the statement in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 203, are without peace, are identified as the ones spoken of by Paul in *Romans 7*, and are unjustified. Therefore it must be clear that this statement witnesses that there is no salvation in *Romans 7*.

Testimony of E. J. Waggoner

Finally, E. J. Waggoner, the great preacher of righteousness by faith in verity, who was sent of the Lord to proclaim blessed release to the captives in sin in 1888, plainly states that the man of *Romans 7* is still in bondage and has no place in God's kingdom as such:

The power of faith in bringing victory may be shown by another line of Scripture texts, which are exceedingly practical. In the first place, let it be understood that the sinner is a slave. Christ said:

John 8

³⁴ Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.

Paul also says, putting himself in the place of an unrenewed man:

Romans 7

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

A man who is sold is a slave; therefore the man who is sold under sin is the slave of sin. Peter brings to view the same fact, when, speaking of corrupt, false teachers, he says:

2 Peter 2

¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the

servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

The prominent characteristic of the slave is that he cannot do as he pleases, but is bound to perform the will of another, no matter how irksome it may be. Paul thus proves the truth of his saying that he, as a carnal man, was the slave of sin:

Romans 7

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

The fact that sin controls, proves that a man is a slave; and although everyone that commits sin is the bond-servant of sin, the slavery becomes unendurable when the sinner has had a glimpse of freedom, and longs for it, yet cannot break the chains which bind him to sin. The impossibility for the unrenewed man to do even the good that he would like to do has been shown already from *Romans 8:7-8* and *Galatians 5:17*.

How many people have in their own 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 of 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,

Romans 7

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Is a true Christian experiencing a body of death so terrible

that the soul is constrained to cry for deliverance? Nay, verily. Again, who is it that, in answer to this earnest appeal, reveals himself as a deliverer? Says the apostle,

Romans 7

²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In another place he says of Christ:

Hebrews 2

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Again, Christ thus proclaims His own mission:

Isaiah 61

¹ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

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 a child of God, but of the servant of sin.

It is to deliver men from this captivity that Christ came; not to deliver us, during this life, from warfare and struggles, but from defeat; to enable us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, so that we could give thanks unto the Father “who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,” through whose blood we have redemption.³

Further comments by this great preacher are found in his

³ E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, chapter 13, “Bondservants and Freemen.”

Bible Studies on the Book of Romans:

In the latter part of the chapter, the apostle shows what that oldness of the letter is from which we must be delivered.

Romans 7

¹⁴ I am carnal, sold under sin.

We do great violence to the apostle Paul, that holy man, when we say that in this he is relating his own Christian experience. He is not writing his own experience now that he is united with Christ. He is writing the experience of those who serve, but in the oldness of the letter, and while professedly serving God, are carnal, and sold under sin.

A person sold under bondage is a slave. What is the evidence of this slavery?

Romans 7

¹⁵ ...for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁹ For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Have we ever had any such experience as that in our so-called Christian experience? Yes; we have fought, but with all our fighting, did we keep the law? No, we have made a failure, and it is written upon every page of our lives. It is a constant service, but at the same time it is a constant failure.

I fail, I make a new resolution,—I break it, and then I get discouraged, then make another resolution, and break that again. We cannot make ourselves do the thing we want to do by making a resolution. We do not want to sin, but we do sin all the time. We make up our minds we will not fall under that temptation again, and we don't—till the next time it comes up, and then we fall as before.

When in this condition, can we say that we have hope, and that we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God”? We do not hear such testimonies,—it is solely of what we want to do, and what we have failed to do, but intend to do in the future. If a person has the law before him, and acknowledges that it is good, and yet does not keep its precepts, is his sin any less in the sight of God than the sin of the man who cares nothing for the law? No.

What is the difference between the would-be Christian,

who knows the law, but does not keep it, and the worldling who does not keep the law, and does not acknowledge that it is good? Simply this: We are unwilling slaves, and they are willing slaves. We are all the time distracted and sorrowful, and getting nothing out of life at all, while the worldling does not worry himself in the least.

If one is going to sin, is it not better to be the worldling, who does not know that there is such a thing as liberty, than to be the man who knows that there is liberty, but cannot get it? If it has got to be slavery, if we must live in the sins of the world, then it is better to be in the world, partaking of its pleasures, than to be in a miserable bondage, and have no hope of a life to come.

But thanks be unto God, we can have liberty. When life becomes unbearable because of the bondage of sin, then it is that we may hope, for that leads to the question,

Romans 7

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Mark; there is deliverance.

²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ came that we might have life. In Him is life. He is full of life, and when we are so sick of this body of death, that we are willing to die to get rid of it, then we can yield ourselves to Christ, and die in Him; and with us dies the body of death. Then we are raised with Christ to walk in newness of life, but Christ who is not the minister of sin will not raise up the body of sin; so it is destroyed, and we are free.⁴

Two Types of Struggle

Many point to the statement in *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 452-453, as being a parallel to *Romans 7*, but in doing so they fail to see some vital distinctions between what is described here and the *Romans 7* experience.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 452-453:

The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with

⁴ E. J. Waggoner, *Bible Studies on the Book of Romans*, chapter 11, "Romans 7 – Deliverance from Bondage."

self. He said,

1 Corinthians 15

³¹ I die daily.

His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature.

The life of Paul is here correctly pictured as being a constant battle against his own will and desires. *Romans 7* is also a struggle to do the will of God. On the basis of this, most folk reason as follows:

“The life of Paul as a Christian was a struggle. *Romans 7* is a struggle. Therefore, *Romans 7* was Paul's experience as a Christian.”

This is like saying,

“Americans love watermelons. John Williams loves watermelons. Therefore John Williams is an American.”

How quickly the fallacy of this second argument is discerned. So should that of the first proposition. The struggle pictured in *Romans 7* is certainly not the same as the one Paul endured throughout his Christian life. The major difference is readily apparent. In *Romans 7* there is no victory, no accomplishment, no serving of God at all, whereas in the life of Paul,

...he *did* God's will, however crucifying to his nature.

The fact being overlooked is that there is more than one type of struggle through which humans pass. He who sets out to leave the world and enter the family of God, immediately finds himself involved in a struggle in which he knows only defeat, for the simple reason that he is in bondage to a power greater than his own. His life is a continual battle against sin, but it is also one of unchanging failure and frustration.

However, once the new birth has been attained, this struggle is over, but another takes its place, the latter being the

conflict with the desires of the flesh as distinct from the indwelling sin master. It is unfortunate that too many are unable to distinguish between these two things so that they are apt to think of them as being the same. This is not so, and it is quite important that the differences be understood.

Disease as an Object Lesson

The simplest way to make the distinction clear is to use the illustration of physical disease. All who have been sick know that a disease in them is a power which rules them against their own wills and desires. Important work cannot be done, appointments cannot be met, pleasures cannot be enjoyed, and serious losses are sustained under the dominion of this despotic ruler.

But the disease *in* the flesh is not the flesh itself. It is an invader who has become an occupant. When the disease is conquered and eradicated from the body, the flesh and blood organism is still there imposing its own peculiar set of restrictions and burdens on the individual. All will recognize the handicap of weakness, lack of energy and indisposition characteristic of the flesh, which makes it difficult to really accomplish all that we would desire. It is not hard to see that the struggle against disease when it is present, is different from the struggle against the weakness and inefficiency of our bodies without the disease present.

So it is in the spiritual. Sin dwelling in the person is a master. It is not the flesh and blood body itself but an invader who has come to be an occupant. While in residence, it is the governor, and we cannot achieve any aspirations toward righteous living. This is the problem of bondage which must be solved before entry into the freedom and accomplishment of Christian living becomes the joy of the believer.

But when this transition does take place, the weak, fallen, sinful flesh and blood body is still there, not only limiting

through its weakness, but actually seeking also to draw the mind from the loftier pursuits of spiritual excellence to the lower level of the sensual and fleshly. It is against this tendency, not the indwelling disease of sin, that the Christian has to war day by day. But, if he is a true child of God as was Paul, then the will of God will be done no matter how costly to the desires of the flesh.

Slavery in Egypt

Once the mind has been opened to see that there is such a problem as bondage, it is surprising how often throughout the Scriptures, it is referred to, described, or illustrated as being the basic problem which must be overcome.

Romans 7 is perhaps the best directly written description of it, but no doubt the best actual illustration is the situation of the Israelites as they labored for the Egyptians. What those persons were in their physical bondage is an exact picture of what an individual, who knows the will of God and seeks to fulfill it, is in spiritual bondage.

A careful comparison will now be made between the object lesson and the spiritual counterpart.

The Desire of Ages, p. 77:

The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277:

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.

There were among the Israelites two classes of people; those who, because of long subjection to the depraving conditions of slavery, were spiritually dead, and those who still retained a conscientious regard for the principles of God's kingdom

and earnestly longed to escape from bondage, so that they could truly serve God.

The former class hated their condition only because of the personal hardship and deprivation it cost them, while the latter class were concerned with much more than this, namely the honor of God's cause and kingdom.

This latter class knew something of God's purpose for Israel, understood in limited terms the high principles of the law, and longed to be free from bondage. As such they represent the class described in *Romans 7*.

These people were the children of Abraham, and had been called into existence for the purpose of building up the kingdom of God in the earth. They understood this and longed to do it, but every day they devoted their entire time, strength, energies, and talents to building up Pharaoh's empire, which in effect was to build the devil's kingdom.

This raises the question, *Why did they do it?* The work was most arduous and unpleasant. They had to toil under the worst conditions of dust, flies, heat, and other discomforts. They could never relax their efforts because the taskmasters hovered over them continually, ever ready to strike them with the whip if they failed to work at their best. The pay was virtually nothing.

There was only one reason why they did what they did, and it was because of *what they were*. *They were slaves*. This left them no choice in the matter. They had to toil or die. What a perfect picture this is of the words used by Paul in *Romans*. Hear those poor, tortured people moaning out their complaint:

"I know what is right and I have set my will to do that, but I am a slave sold to the Egyptians. Consequently the things I want to do, I cannot do, while those that I hate doing, I find myself doing. I see then that it is no more I that do it, but the

taskmaster who rules over me. O wretched man that I am.
Who will deliver me from the burden of this slavery?"

But the years rolled by and they found no solution. Generations died in this dismal condition. During that time the conscientious God-fearing Israelites sought the pardon of God for their sin of unwilling service to the devil. How dramatically and clearly their experience demonstrates the futility of seeking to solve this problem by asking God for forgiveness.

At the end of a long, hard day, a weary slave returns to his home to eat his scanty meal and prepare for the night's rest. His final act would have been to kneel by his bed and pray to his God. He would review the events of the day and in all honesty would see that he had not been expending his powers and resources in upbuilding the kingdom of the Eternal One. With deep and sincere repentance, he would confess this sin before God and plead for His pardon. No question need be raised as to the sincerity of this repentance, for it was of a quality wholly acceptable to God.

In simple faith he would believe that he had been forgiven and would fall asleep assured of this, but his problem would not have been solved. When the prayer was ended, he would still be a slave. He would sleep and awake still in the same state, and because of this, he must return to the same service the next day. Thus his life was a continual round of sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing because the real problem, bondage, was not solved.

Today, there are many thousands who sincerely wish to serve the Lord, but recognize at the end of the day that they have really served His enemy. With sorrow of heart, they review the events of the day and confess wherein they have not walked in righteousness. They ask for and believe that they have received forgiveness for these sins and then fall asleep.

But the next day they find that things are no different. The same problems assert themselves, the same sins are repeated,

and pardon must be sought all over again. There is a reason for this, and it is that simply asking for pardon does not solve the problem of bondage. Something more than this is necessary.

Until God was able to unfold this to the Israelites, the sad round of frustration continued. In like manner, until the would-be child of God comes to understand and apply the proper solution to the problem of bondage, he will continue to suffer from defeat.

Reflection upon the problem facing the Israelites will quickly convince that the exercise of the will does not provide a solution to this problem. If the slaves back there as individuals, groups, or as a whole, had decided that they would utterly refuse to obey the taskmasters, and would pack their belongings and depart for the promised land, they would have had no success. Instead they would have been put into more arduous service. The children of Abraham had no power wherewith to overcome their oppressors.

Likewise, the will is no match for the indwelling power of sin. No one who has sought to resist the might of the indwelling sin master with the strength of his own will needs convincing of this. An unbroken series of defeats is conclusive enough. The carnal mind is just as despotic, overbearing, and self-willed as was the slave master in Egypt. It completely overrides the will to serve the clamors of the fallen sinful human nature. It is...

Romans 8

⁷ ...enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The strict definition of the word “carnal,” is “fleshly,” leading many to suppose that the intellectual mind is referred to in this verse. This cannot be, for that mind can be brought into subjection to the law of God. In fact, throughout *Romans 7* it is seen as being in harmony with the law and driven by very

strong longings to keep it.

But the mind referred to in *Romans 8:7* cannot be brought into subjection to the will of God. This is as impossible as it is for a thorn bush to yield roses or for a bramble bush to produce grapes. This is another mind, even the mind of the power, which, resident in the flesh without being the flesh itself, rules the sinner against his will.

It is the seed of Satan and is possessed by every person who has not yet been delivered from it, by inheritance. It is impossible to enter this world without this awful heredity. The reason it is called the carnal or fleshly mind is because it is devoted to serving the flesh, not that it is itself the fleshly mind.

While it is true that this mind or nature cannot serve God, it is not true that it cannot promise to. In object lesson form, these vital truths, as given to us in the Egyptian scene, the distinctions between the flesh, the intellectual or reasoning mind, and the sin master, are easily seen.

Each Israelite had a flesh and blood body which was in fact the instrument through which the service to Satan was performed. In that body was the department of the mind, wherein he formed his desires based on his education. Because slavery imposed suffering and limitations upon him, he strongly desired in that mind to be free from it. This desire was not sufficient in itself to give him such freedom, for there was the third element, the slave master who ruled over him and maintained his authority because he was more powerful than the slave.

In this illustration the slave master is a separate entity, operating outside the victim, whereas, in the spiritual realm as well as in the physical, his counterparts, namely the sin master and disease respectively, dwell within and operate therefrom.

Pharaoh was the chief of all the slave masters who in reality

only carried out his will, he being the nerve center and they the extensions of his reach and power. In all his responses and dealings, he manifested the exact character and role of the carnal mind, for nothing served to bring him into conformity to the will of God. No matter how earnest the pleas, dire the threats, or terrible the destructions, he would not and did not come into harmony with God. (We do not deny that as a person he could have done this. What is being presented here is the thought that his behavior perfectly typified that of the carnal mind.)

There were times during the whole performance when he promised God that he would let the people go, but he never carried out those promises. When, in the end, he did release them, it was only because his power to hold them any longer had been broken.

As Pharaoh behaved back there, those in slavery to the carnal mind have been behaving ever since. When death threatens as a result of a life of sin, pious promises are made to God to serve Him faithfully forever, but the moment the danger is past, the matter is treated lightly and the promises forgotten. An excellent example of this is provided in the following report made by Ellen White when she made a journey by ship down the Atlantic coast from Portland, Maine, to Boston, Massachusetts, around about 1846.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 80-82:

A few weeks after this, on our way to Boston we took the steamer at Portland. A violent storm came up, and we were in great peril. The boat rolled fearfully, and the waves dashed into the cabin windows. There was great fear in the ladies' cabin. Many were confessing their sins, and crying to God for mercy. Some were calling upon the Virgin Mary to keep them, while others were making solemn vows to God that if they reached land they would devote their lives to His service. It was a scene of terror and confusion.

As the boat rocked, a lady turned to me and said: "Are you

not terrified? I suppose it is a fact that we may never reach land.” I told her that I had made Christ my refuge, and if my work was done, I might as well lie in the bottom of the ocean as in any other place; but if my work was not done, all the waters of the ocean could not drown me. My trust was in God; He would bring us safe to land if it was for His glory.

At this time I prized the Christian’s hope. The scene before me brought vividly to my mind the day of the Lord’s fierce anger, when the storm of His wrath will come upon the poor sinner. Then there will be bitter cries and tears, confession of sin, and pleading for mercy, when it will be too late. “Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes.”

Through the mercy of God we were all landed safe. But some of the passengers who manifested much fear in the storm made no reference to it, only to make light of their fears. One who had solemnly promised that if she were preserved to see land she would be a Christian, mockingly cried out as she left the boat: “Glory to God, I am glad to step on land again!” I asked her to go back a few hours, and remember her vows to God. She turned from me with a sneer.

I was forcibly reminded of deathbed repentance. Some serve themselves and Satan all their lives, and then as sickness subdues them, and a fearful uncertainty is before them, they manifest some sorrow for sin, and perhaps say they are willing to die, and their friends make themselves believe that they have been truly converted and fitted for heaven. But if these should recover, they would be as rebellious as ever. I am reminded of:

Proverbs 1

²⁷ When your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish comes upon you.

²⁸ Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.

Bondage is a crucial problem and must be solved. Christ has made ample provision to solve it. We have, for instance, His

promise where He said:

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

This is the wish of God for every person on the earth, and it will be the realization of all who lay hold upon the divine provisions whereby it can be attained.

The Desire of Ages, p. 466:

Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul.

John 8

³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

Romans 8

² The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus [sets us] free from the law of sin and death.

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.

True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.

5. The Solution of Deliverance

PROBLEM A is bondage. Its matching solution is deliverance. It would be of little value to explain the nature of a problem if it was not possible to offer a safe, sure, working remedy for it, for this would only stimulate a desire for release which, not being possible, would only intensify the suffering experienced in the continuing servitude.

At the same time it is important that the problem be comprehensively, yet simply understood so that the appropriateness of the solution may be comprehended and intelligently applied. An attempt was made to achieve this level of understanding in the last chapter though it was not an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Nevertheless, it is deemed sufficient to open the subject up and provide a springboard of basic information from which the eager student may be launched into deeper and broader examinations of the subject.

In any case, sufficient information has been presented on the problem to enable a study of the solution to be pursued. God has blessed us with an object lesson in the Egyptian oppression and Israelite escape, which illustrates not only the problem of bondage but also spells out the step by step procedure which constitutes the remedy to the problem.

The outline of those steps is given for us in the instruction passed on from God to Moses to the people. It began with the directions to choose and to set aside a lamb on the tenth day of the first month.

Exodus 12

¹ And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

² This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

³ Speak unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a

house:

⁴ And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats.

There was yet another requirement not directly mentioned in these verses but added elsewhere, and it was that no male could partake of this feast unless firstly he had been circumcised. This point cannot be overlooked, for it has a most important relationship to the whole and has its counterpart in the steps which we must take today.

Exodus 12

⁴⁸ And when a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

It was the law of God that no uncircumcised person could partake of the Passover. During the long period when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, both the rite of circumcision and the Passover were cut off from them. When they crossed the Jordan under Joshua, they had both of these ceremonies reintroduced, the Passover being celebrated only after circumcision had been performed. See *Joshua* 5:1-11.

A careful count confirms that there were six requirements to be met before they obtained release from bondage.

1. Every male had to be circumcised;
2. A spotless lamb had to be chosen on the tenth of the first month;
3. The lamb was slain on the fourteenth;
4. Its blood was then sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of their houses;

5. The lamb was eaten with unleavened bread;
6. The firstborn of the Egyptians died.

Unless every one of these steps was taken exactly as the Lord specified, they did not obtain their release. For instance, suppose that the Israelites had faithfully covered the first five requirements with nothing whatsoever amiss, but the firstborn of Egypt had not died. They would not have gone free. *They would have remained in bondage as completely as if they had done nothing at all.* This point needs to be emphasized, for it is important that it be seen by all. Only when they had faithfully performed the first five directives and the firstborn of Egypt had died, could they leave the land of bondage, and not before.

Each of these steps has its counterpart in the spiritual deliverance from the land of sin. Each step must be understood and taken in its order until every one has been performed. Should the first five conditions be met without the last, then it will be found that bondage will remain just as completely as if nothing at all was done.

If these truths are not understood, then a dangerous deception will fix itself upon the person who will assume that because *some* steps have been taken, a credit therefore has been gained, and the feet have been established in the path to heaven.

If the list above is considered, it will be quickly seen that when the Israelites had been circumcised, even though this was a vital step, they did not obtain their freedom then. So it was with each of the succeeding requirements. When the lamb was chosen and slain, for instance, they had no more freedom then than before they were circumcised. They were not liberated little by little. Not until every specification had been met exactly as God directed were they released from servitude. It was an all-or-nothing situation.

So it is in the gospel. The sinner is not set free progressively. His liberation is fully given to him only after all the vital steps have been taken and not before. While those requirements are being met, the bondage to sin remains, until suddenly and completely, when all the conditions have been met, liberty is his.

Salvation from sin then, is not achieved in one simple step. Instead, a series of steps is required, each one of which is essential to the success of the entire operation. It is not because God has arbitrarily decided that we shall be put through certain paces to satisfy Him. Bondage is a problem for which a satisfactory and successful solution had to be found. God alone had the wisdom to conceive the plan and the power to effect it. Each part of the solution is there because it had to be, not because God simply chose that it should. This will become more apparent as each of the points is examined, beginning with the first and progressing in the correct order to the last.

Circumcision

In unequivocal terms the Lord specified that:

Exodus 12

⁴⁸ ...no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

While it is possible for a person who has not been physically circumcised to eat the literal Passover, it is utterly impossible for this to be done in the spiritual counterpart for the simple reason that circumcision symbolizes a position to which the human must come before the blessing of salvation is received. Just as the flesh was cut away, so from the life of the suppliant there must be a cutting away of that which would prevent the working of the divine power in his experience. To understand this, study must be given to the symbolism contained in the ancient ceremony.

The first mention of circumcision is in *Genesis* 17, when God introduced it to Abraham. At this time, the Lord specifically

taught His servant what this rite was. It was...

Genesis 17

¹¹ ...a token of the covenant between me and you.

Anyone who refused to be circumcised,

¹⁴ ...shall be cut off from his people, he has broken my covenant.

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 364, is a statement which confirms that circumcision is a sign of the covenant.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 364:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.

Let this truth be kept clearly in mind, for this rite was not a symbol of the new birth or of the death of the old man, but only of the covenant formed between man and God. It is the everlasting or new covenant formed between God and Adam in the Garden of Eden, expressed in the wonderful promise of *Genesis* 3:15, and renewed to Abraham before the birth of Isaac. It certainly is not the symbol of the old covenant of works whereby humans seek by their own efforts to secure salvation.

The everlasting *covenant* is *not salvation itself*. It is the *agreement* through which salvation can be obtained. This is an important distinction. If there is difficulty in seeing this, the

problem will be clarified by the illustration provided in the forming of a building contract. One man needs to have the house built, the other man will construct it.

Firstly, they will form a contract between them. *But this is not the building itself.* The contract is formed before construction begins, and no work will commence until the contract has been made. Exactly so, no saving work begins in us *until the covenant has been formed between us and God.*

There is considerable significance in the setting for the introduction of circumcision. In fact, the full meaning of it can hardly be understood unless it is studied in the context of its introduction.

To Abram and Sarai the promise had been given that they would have a son whom they recognized to be the progenitor of the Messiah. Therefore, they knew that the salvation of mankind depended upon the appearance of this promised one. There was nothing in life they desired more than this, but, as the years went by and the promise tarried, they began to express words of unbelief in God.

This only served to make a serious situation worse, for it was by faith and faith alone that the child could be born. Yet they had some faith. It was by faith that they left the land of Ur and followed the command of God to go to a country that He would show them.

Hebrews 11

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.

This required great faith, but, while they had faith to reach to this level, they did not have that which would believe that God could and would put life where there was death. Sarai was unable to bear children, God being the only one who could put life in her where death reigned. When God made

the promise that they would have a son of promise, He knew the problem which confronted Him in respect to the barrenness of Sarai. But, He made the promise just the same, for He knew that, provided Abram and Sarai laid hold of that word by faith, He could and would put childbearing capability into her.

The Scriptures contain many assurances from God that He will give us the ability to work the works of righteousness. When those words reach us, we are in a condition where death reigns in us. While that is there, there is no possibility of righteousness proceeding forth. Sin and sin alone is produced through such lives. As we become aware of this, we despair of ever achieving the glorious ideals laid out in the Word of God, seeing ourselves as being as far from this as was Sarai from bearing Isaac.

But, let the heart be warmed with the knowledge that God was fully aware of all the problems when He made the declaration that He would lead us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. He knew exactly what was needed and that He had the fullness of power with which to achieve it.

When the faith of Abram and Sarai was not able to reach to laying hold on God as the Life-giver, then they turned to their own works and devisings to achieve the same objective. Sarai came to her husband, frankly confessed her own barrenness, and proposed to him that he take another woman through whom to have this son of promise.

Genesis 16

² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing: I pray you, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

Through this means they obtained a son but not one from God nor one that He could accept as the one He had planned and promised. Yet there was much about this that naturally

assured them, for the time being, that they were fulfilling the will of God and that He was pleased with them.

They did have faith in God, that He had planned their salvation, that they were His children, and that He would take them to heaven at last. They also knew a very important fact, namely that, because God had verbally committed Himself to its being that way, a son had to be born of them. If this did not happen, then the plan which the Lord had formulated would not work.

While God could initiate alternative schemes upon the failure of this one, that worthy couple knew that such a failure would cost them eternity, for it would mean that they could not be part of the plan of salvation. This fate was to overtake many Israelites later, who, because of their unbelief, were deprived of a part in a plan which had to be discarded and accordingly they lost their eternal lives.

Realizing these implications pressed upon Abram and Sarai a mounting sense of concern that the plan be successfully implemented. They wanted this son. They longed for the coming Messiah, and they yearned to be saved. Therefore, when the years passed and the child did not appear, their anxiety correspondingly increased. The problem was further compounded by their increasing ages which told them that the possibilities were vanishing, not strengthening.

Finally, they concluded that the only chance remaining was for them to turn to their own devisings. They lost sight of the fact that the Lord had been fully aware of all the problems when He formed the plan and chose them to be participants in it. Faith in God as the One who knows exactly what He is doing and who will do it at the right time, would have led them to have rested in the assurance that it would be done and that they would not die till it was done, even if they had to live a thousand years or more.

The step which they took can well be likened to a drowning

man clutching at a straw. Natural law certifies that a straw does not possess the buoyancy needed to support a human being, so this measure cannot save him. In like manner, what Abram and Sarai did could never fulfill the requirements of the plan. Therefore, they were actually further from its fulfillment, rather than closer to it, when Ishmael was conceived. Only God could put life where there was death in Sarai. It was not that He had arbitrarily reserved this role to Himself. It was because only He had the power to do it. Therefore, the solution worked out by Abram and Sarai could not possibly meet the plan.

But the mischief lay in the fact that to them it *appeared that it did*. There were aspects to the situation which gave it an appearance of being entirely of God. Their motives were unimpeachable. They had only the best interests of the cause of God in mind and were prepared to make the highest sacrifices to ensure its success. Sacrifice is an indispensable part of true religion, and it was not lacking in the lives of both of these wonderful people. At the very outset when God had called on them to leave Ur of the Chaldees, the most advanced and comfortable civilization of the day, where their friends and business interests lay, they had unhesitatingly gone forth to an uncertain future in an unknown land. Relatives, friends, and a glowing business future all went into the crucible of sacrifice.

Those remarkable steps were eclipsed by the amazing spirit of sacrifice exhibited by Sarai when she seriously and sincerely proposed to Abram that he have a child by another woman. Only a woman whose love for God and His cause transcended her natural instincts, could do what she did.

No person who turns to his own works or devisings to accomplish the work of God, can live without a liberal supply of self-assurance. Both Abram and Sarai would have found in their spirit of devoted self-sacrifice, much to assure them that

what they were doing was pleasing to God. They reasoned,

“After all, how could God do anything else but approve of that which was done for Him at such cost?”

They had yet to learn the lesson missed by so many and grasped by so few, that the possession of such commendable attributes does not necessarily sanctify all that is done. They can drive a person to attempt to accomplish the right thing in the wrong way, as did Abram and Sarai, and all those who are in the *Romans 7* phase.

In both situations, the attempt is to bring life out of that which is already existing, but this is an impossibility, for the real need is to bring forth life where none exists. Only God can do this. Therefore, faith must reach beyond that required to leave one’s relatives, friends, and country; beyond belief in the truths of God’s Word, important as this is; and the conviction that God will save us in the end. It must rise to the point where it grasps the certainty that God can and will put life where there is death.

It can take a long time for a candidate for eternal life to come to this level. After the initial scheming on Abram’s and Sarai’s parts to bring forth the child, thirteen years of divine silence passed during which they continued the cultivation of that which was the product of their own works. This interval was necessary in order that some sense of futility might penetrate the confidence of this pair. Likewise the *Romans 7* experience is permitted to continue until such time as the struggling sinner is aware that victory just does not come by this means.

Then God came to Abram again and reiterated the covenant promise. At the same point He spelled out the significance of the rite of circumcision which was introduced at this time.

Through this ceremony, God was instructing Abraham, as he was now to be called, that he had wrongfully used the in-

strument of his flesh in his search for righteousness. That flesh must now be circumscribed, or rechanneled into the true service of God. Abraham must utterly renounce all interest in Ishmael as the child of promise, must leave behind all effort to achieve righteousness by his own devisings, and trust instead in the power of God to do what God had promised He would do.

It was a transition point from Abram's way of questing after righteousness to God's way. Only if Abraham and Sarah understood and accepted where they had been wrong and utterly rejected that in favor of God's way, could they receive the promise. The birth of Isaac depended on that.

So with the man in *Romans 7*. He is striving with all his powers to do the works of righteousness but without success. He does produce some works, described in the Scriptures as a modified improvement of the old, but this is not the righteousness which will inhabit heaven and the new earth.

Abraham did accept the instruction God gave him as is proved by two events. Firstly, on the very day that God spoke with him, he carried out the work of circumcising himself and all the males in his household.

Genesis 17

²³ And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin *in the selfsame day*, as God had said unto him.

His doing so was an acknowledgment on his part that in the past he had approached the problem in the wrong way, that his good intentions and commendable zeal for the cause of God did not sanctify the method used. He now fully accepted the covenant wherein God promised that He would put life where there was death both in the body of Sarah and Abraham who had now become impotent, so that the child would

come to them as the *gift* of God and not as the result of their own works.

The second event which proves this is that Isaac was duly born, close to a year later. This is conclusive proof that the covenant terms were accepted by Abraham, and were truly witnessed to in the rite of circumcision, for, if they had not, then Isaac could not have been born.

What Abraham passed through, every person who will finally be saved must also pass through. No uncircumcised person will ever enter the kingdom of God. *Not one!* Reference is not being made here to physical circumcision by which a piece of skin is surgically removed, but to the experience which this rite symbolized. God made it absolutely clear that no one who did not submit to this ordinance could have any part with Him or His kingdom.

In the Old Testament, physically, circumcision was required as a witness to the *heart* experience, but, since the cross, the outward symbol is not required. It is sad that, with the Jews, the meaning of the act was lost, while the physical sign was deemed to be all-important and all-sufficient.

But, when the Lord said that no one who was uncircumcised could have a part with Him, it was not with the physical and outward sign that He was concerned. There was no particular virtue in that. It was merely the sign of a heart condition and attitude. When this was lacking, the outward sign had no significance, and even though the person was outwardly circumcised, he still had no part with the Lord. Israel, unfortunately, missed this point, so to *them*, the presence of the outward sign was all that was needed to make them part of God's family.

In harmony with these principles, the Lord specified that no one could partake of the Passover who was not firstly circumcised. When the purpose and meaning of circumcision is recognized and understood, then the reason for this is clear. The

Passover was *God's* way of salvation. No one could receive the benefits of this if he still retained the disposition to solve the problem of bondage by any trace of human devisings. This attitude must be rejected and replaced with a determination to do exactly what God said to do, leaving the matter of their being freed to God's power and planning.

God left none of this to them to work out. He devised and communicated the plan to them in exact sequence and detail. It was up to them to do as they were bidden with nothing added or deleted. Therefore, they had to enter into the program already committed to exact obedience to God's directions and requirements, for any deviation from this would ruin the solution. Therefore, circumcision, the committal on their part to this path of complete submission to the works of God, had to precede all other steps in the pathway to freedom.

Let the attention of every believer today be focused on the fact that no uncircumcised person can have any part in the everlasting covenant and therefore, in the blessings of salvation.

- Study to learn what this means.
- Come to understand that the vast majority of those who belong to a church organization, have a pronounced zeal for the cause of God, have made great sacrifices for the truth, and who would deny themselves of life itself if need be, are still seeking to achieve the right thing in the wrong way.
- Know that no matter to what lengths they may go, unless they have abandoned their own works and have left the saving of their souls to Him who alone can put life where there is death, they can have no part in the kingdom.

When these things are understood, assess where you stand and then take steps to ensure that, as a truly circumcised believer, you have entered into the covenant blessings.

The greatest hurdle which the Lord has to overcome in bringing salvation to the lost is this one. How many are brought to the point where the *Romans* 7 man is and then go no further? Uncircumcised in heart and life, they struggle with all the power of their wills to achieve that which God alone can give them. Falsely assured that they are in the family of God, they are being carried toward that day when the awful realization will come that, uncircumcised in heart, they are found to be without the sacred oil in their lamps, foolish virgins. Let all determine that they will not be found in this situation.

Choosing the Lamb

Once the prerequisite of circumcision had been met, whereby the people affirmed their acceptance of the terms of the everlasting covenant, the succeeding steps could be taken. The first of these was the choosing of the lamb in exact accordance with the specifications God laid down.

Exodus 12

¹ And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

² This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

³ Speak you unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house:

⁴ And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: you shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats.

None of the remaining steps could have followed if this one had not been taken, for then there would have been no death, no blood to sprinkle on the door, and no flesh for the Passover

supper. Without the protection of that blood, they would have perished that night in their houses. Instead of deliverance they would have found only death in the land.

There is little point in studying the Passover merely as history. It is given to us as an...

The Desire of Ages, p. 77:

...object lesson of redemption,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277:

...pointing...forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin.

Therefore, there must be a matching of the historical event or type with the antitype.

None will have the least difficulty in seeing that the lamb symbolized the Saviour. Every lamb sacrificed in the ceremonial system pointed forward to Christ, and the Passover lamb was no exception to this rule. Paul confirms this in these words:

1 Corinthians 5

⁷ For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Choosing the lamb finds its antitypical counterpart in the acceptance of Christ to be our personal Saviour. He offers Himself freely for our salvation, but He cannot move forward in the work of our personal deliverance until we have accepted His offer and commit the work to Him.

Let none make the mistake of supposing that choosing Christ to be the Saviour, is salvation. When the Israelites had selected the lamb, they were not yet free. Other steps had to be taken before this could be accomplished. Likewise, appointing Christ to be our Saviour is not, at that moment, freedom. Instead, it enables Christ to embark on the work to which we have now commissioned Him according to His gracious offer to us.

There are literally millions in Christendom who today have specifically chosen Christ to be their Saviour from sin. They recognize that they need salvation, and they know that there is no other One through whom such salvation can come. Because they have done this, they rest in a confidence that they do have the salvation they desire, but it is to be emphasized that this is only the first step, which, while absolutely essential, does not alone bring salvation.

The Death of the Lamb

That lamb, which had been selected, had to die, and this is the next step in the procedure.

Exodus 12

⁶ And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

The great antitype of this act of death was Christ's death upon the cross of Calvary. Belief and trust in that death as the only possible propitiation for the sins of men, is just as necessary a step on the believer's part as was the choosing of Christ to be that sacrifice in the first case.

Just as truly as there are millions who have chosen Christ to be their Saviour, so there are the same millions who believe in the death of Christ as the only atonement for their sins. The cross is the great center of their preaching, the theme of their songs, and the subject of their writings. One has only to turn the radio on any Sunday, and especially at Easter or Christmas, to the stations from which church services are being broadcast, to hear this exaltation of the cross from the lips of the ministry in their preaching, and the choirs in their singing.

In principle there is nothing here that should not be, for the cross is to be at all times the great center of all preaching and living. Paul declared,

1 Corinthians 2

² For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 245:

To Paul, the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene, he had never ceased to glory in the cross.

So it will be with every true Christian.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 560:

The cross of Christ is the central pillar on which hangs the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 209-210:

If those who today are teaching the word of God, would uplift the cross of Christ higher and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God’s compassion and the sinfulness of sin.

Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father’s love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.

Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour’s love; and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy; for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place man can attain.

Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”? It is our privilege also to glory in the

cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness.

The cross then, is to be the center of all preaching and teaching, and in this the churches are not in the wrong. Yet it is a fact that the living experience of deliverance is not known in these churches except, perhaps, for a few individuals here and there.

It may be asked in the light of the above statements, why this is so. The answer is that there is more yet that must be done before salvation is experienced. That these churches fail to go and do all that needs to be done is the simple reason why they do not experience deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Back there it is to be seen that when they had slain that lamb exactly as they had been instructed to do both as to time and to procedure, they were still very much slaves in the land of Egypt. There was more yet before Pharaoh should acknowledge that they were no longer under his power to keep them, and unless each and every one of these things should take place, that pronouncement would never be made.

The Sprinkled Blood

The blood of the lamb must be applied to the doors of their homes.

Exodus 12

⁷ And they shall take of the blood, and strike it upon the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it.

That blood upon the door was the mark of protection. When the death angel passed through, wherever he saw the sign, the firstborn in that home was spared from death. By this aspect of the ceremony there is taught the great truth that but for the

protection afforded by the blood of Christ, every one of us today would have passed under the dominion of death.

Even the wicked, to a certain extent, are protected by that blood, though in the end they will perish. It protects them at least until such time as they have had the opportunity to hear and to decide in regard to the gospel. They are unconscious of this protection, but it is there, nonetheless.

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one.

Satan is the great destroyer, and God is the Healer and Protector; the Giver of life, not the taker of it. Even Egypt had enjoyed God's protection from the malice of the great destroyer. They had not known this, but in the plagues which befell them in Moses' day, they were receiving a demonstration of the results of God's protection being withdrawn. When that happened, there was nothing to save them from the inroads of destruction, the ultimate of which was death.

Again and again the Lord had called upon them to obey. Repeatedly they had refused. As they refused, Satan claimed them as his with the right to destroy them, but the Lord held in check the malignant power of the wicked one.

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown.

Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown, which yields its unfailing harvest.

The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan.

The Egyptians did not understand this, and when the Lord would have shown it to them in the worsening plagues which came in quick succession, they still would not learn the truth of it. But, while the Egyptians did not understand this truth, the Israelites did, even though dimly, and were careful to place the blood upon their doors.

So today, the Christian world is aware of its need of the protection of the covering blood of Christ to stand between them and the death angel. That they do this is good, but to trust in that covering blood as being all that is needful for deliverance from bondage is a grave mistake, and in the end, eternally fatal.

The common but tragic error is made wherein a part of the whole is made to be the complete solution to the problem. The sprinkled blood was a vital element in the plan of deliverance but it was only one step in the six. Beyond that there was still the partaking of the lamb and the firstborn's death before the Israelites experienced deliverance from bondage.

The distinction between these two steps is further illustrated in the father's actions towards his prodigal son. When the son first returned to him clothed in filthy, ragged garments, the loving parent immediately put his own robe, clean and whole, over and around the dirty garments of his son.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 203-204:

The father will permit no contemptuous eye to mock at his son's misery and tatters. He takes from his own shoulders the broad, rich mantle, and wraps it around the son's wasted form, and the youth sobs out his repentance, saying,

Luke 15

²¹ Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son.

The father holds him close to his side, and brings him home. No opportunity is given him to ask a servant's place. He is a son, who shall be honored with the best the house affords, and whom the waiting men and women shall respect and serve.

This is where the average religionist of today stops. Once the robe has been wrapped around his filthy garments, he feels that he has the righteousness of Christ and that he has been restored to the family of God. But this is only a very temporary stage in the restoration process.

No sooner was the son brought to the father's house than the command was given to bring the best robe and put it on him.

Luke 15

²² But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

²³ And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry:

²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The servants clearly understood that this command required them to strip away the dirty garments in which the son had returned. They would not even think of doing otherwise. Furthermore, this is the only way in which a parent would deal with a child who had come home with soiled clothes. The only occasion when a mother would wrap a clean garment around a child's dirty, wet clothes, would be when, on a cold day, the child had been met some distance from home and was in danger of catching cold or worse. As a temporary measure, to protect till the proper procedures could be adopted, the parent would wrap a clean garment over and around the dirty one. But, once home, the change would be made.

So, the wrapping of the clean garment around the prodigal's dirty one was but a temporary measure adopted till they

could reach the house and do the transfer properly. Once he reached the father's house, the change of raiment took place. According to *Christ's Object Lessons*, what was done by the servants at this point in full obedience to the father's directive, is more fully explained in the parable of Joshua and the Angel.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 206:

Your heavenly Father will take from you the garments defiled by sin. In the beautiful parabolic prophecy of Zechariah, the high priest Joshua, standing clothed in filthy garments before the angel of the Lord, represents the sinner. And the word is spoken by the Lord,

Zechariah 3

⁴ Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with change of raiment.

⁵ ...So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.

Even so God will clothe you with "the garments of salvation," and cover you with "the robe of righteousness." Isaiah 61:10.

Psalm 68

¹³ Though you have lien among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

There is no deliverance from bondage in the sprinkled blood but only protection for the time being until entrance is made into the full experience of righteousness. If the individual progresses no further than to stand under the sprinkled blood, he will never enter into freedom nor inherit the kingdom reserved for the free.

Some may want to argue that the coming of the prodigal to the father's house is equivalent to our coming to heaven. They have no difficulty believing that, at that time, the filthy garments will be taken away, but argue that the best we can hope for in the meantime is to have them covered by Christ's right-

eousness.

This is not the understanding in God's Word. It is now that this work is to be done in each and every believer. It is *now* that the stripping away of the dirty garments as portrayed in Joshua and the Angel applies.⁵

Reference back to the experience of Israel shows that when they had sprinkled the blood, they were still not free. There remained yet two more things which must happen before they could leave the land of bondage and oppression.

So today, one may believe most earnestly in Christ as one's Saviour; may trust in His death on the cross as the only atonement for sin; and may rest under the protection of His covering blood as the stay to the hand of the destroyer, *and yet be still very much in the grip of the bondage of sin*. Unless, as did the Israelites, he makes the remaining additional steps, to that power he will remain a slave and, in the end, be eternally lost.

Feeding on the Word

The flesh of the lamb had to be eaten by those who stood under its protecting blood.

Exodus 12

⁸ And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

⁹ Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

¹⁰ And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire.

Thus the life of the lamb became the life of those who partook of it.

⁵ See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 470-472. See also *Facing the Judgment. Are You Ready?*

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277-278:

The flesh was to be eaten. It is not enough that we believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sin; we must by faith be constantly receiving spiritual strength and nourishment from Him through His word. Said Christ,

John 6

⁵³ Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

⁵⁴ Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life. And to explain His meaning He said,

⁶³ The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Jesus accepted His Father's law, wrought out its principles in His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John,

John 1

¹⁴ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must receive and assimilate the word of God so that it shall become the motive power of life and action. By the power of Christ they must be changed into His likeness, and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them. The spirit and work of Christ must become the spirit and work of His disciples.

The timing of the Passover supper in relation to the other events in the series is very important. Here it is listed before the firstborn's death, but in fact, it was both before and at the time of this development. The lamb was slain in the early evening. Then the blood had to be sprinkled on the door, the body dressed, and cooked whole without a single bone being broken.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277:

The lamb was to be prepared whole, not a bone of it being broken; so not a bone was to be broken of the Lamb of God, who was to die for us. Thus was also represented the com-

pleteness of Christ's sacrifice.

In the primitive cooking stoves which they had in those days, it would take four to six hours to roast a whole lamb. The Passover supper would have commenced very close to the midnight hour. Thus they would have been eating of it before, at the time of, and immediately after the death of the first-born. That they were still partaking of it at the time of the firstborn's death is confirmed by this statement.

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 199:

And while this token should be without for a sign, and they should be eating the lamb, roasted whole, with bitter herbs, within, the angel of God would be passing through the land of Egypt doing his dreadful work, slaying the first-born of man and the first-born of beast.

The partaking of the Passover lamb was intended to convey to the Israelites the fullness of the wonderful truth of:

Colossians 1

²⁷ Christ in you, the hope of glory.

In this lesson is revealed much more than the receiving of Christ's life in the new birth experience. There is also brought to view the necessity for nourishment and instruction by feeding on Christ through the written Word.

These two aspects are made clear by the light contained in the seed principle. God established in this world the law that the only way for life to commence once the initial creation was established, was through the implantation of seed. There is no organism, be it animal, vegetable, reptile, bird, insect, or human, except it commenced life through the impregnation of seed. This is the established law and God will not violate it.

The result is that there never has been a single instance in history where a life form has commenced any other way. Therefore, except for Adam and Eve who are the only created humans, every one of us is a begotten being who has sprung

from a seed.

When God placed Adam and Eve in Eden, He gave them the power to be seed bearers so that through them and their descendants, there were unlimited possibilities for the multiplication of the human species. Each of these offspring would be a true reproduction of the parents, for it is the law that seed bearers transmit themselves through their seed. Therefore, while there was righteousness and life in Adam and Eve, they would have passed these wonderful blessings on to their children.

But, before any sons or daughters appeared, sin and death entered into them. Thereafter, in all who have received Adam's seed, sin and death reign until Christ delivers them. Salvation from spiritual bondage is available today, while that of the physical will be accomplished at the second advent.

Romans 5

¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

This settles the question in regard to the "innocency" of the new born babe. Some feel that because the baby has never had the opportunity to actually commit a conscious act of sin, he is perfect and spotless when he enters the world. This cannot be so for he is the offspring of Adam in whom was death and sin. None of us can escape that heredity. We have obtained existence through receiving the seed of Adam in which is sin and death. Therefore, all are born with sin and death already in them.

The great human need then is for more than mere forgiveness. It is life that is needed. A forgiven dead man is no better off than an unforgiven dead man. There have been instances where men were wrongfully condemned to death for a crime they never committed. Years later the cases were reopened as fresh evidence came to light or confessions were made. A man

would be found innocent, the records against him expunged, and some restitution made to his surviving relatives.

But none of this has done him any good. He does not even know anything about his being forgiven, and he is certainly not able to enjoy any advantages of his new status. What that man needs in addition to forgiveness, is the gift of a new life to replace the one taken from him. But those who took his life have no power to give it back. Therefore, the gift of forgiveness is nothing to him.

Likewise, if God offered us only forgiveness, it would be pointless. We must have the gift of life to replace the one which has been lost. As the law stipulates that the only source from which life can be obtained is through a seed, then it is necessary that seed be available in which is the presence of righteousness and life. This in turn calls for a seed bearer to produce that seed. Obviously none are to be found within the human family, for in every such person is the inheritance of sin and death.

It is unspeakably fortunate for humanity that there is a seed bearer who has in Himself righteousness and life, and who is willing to provide His seed to the lost. In order to do this He had to become a member of the human family, for the law requires that marriage precede the implantation of seed.

Christ is the wonderful seed bearer who took the place of Adam, so that all those who have received Christ's seed and therefore, His life and righteousness, have the hope of glory. It is through the implantation of Christ's seed in us by the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit who is the divine gardener, that God gives us the life which replaces the one lost by Adam.

1 John 5 [RSV]

¹¹ And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of

God has not life.

The only place from which this seed can be obtained is from Christ. It is not even in the Scriptures. The Pharisees in Christ's day made the mistake of seeking it from the written Word and the Saviour told them plainly of their error. He said to them:

John 5 [RSV]

³⁹ You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me;

⁴⁰ Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

Thus Christ instructed them that they had gone to the Word to find what could not be found there, while, at the same time they had failed to come to Him for the life which could be received only from Him. This did not deny that there is life in the Scriptures, but it is a life force designed to accomplish a different work from the life which is in Christ. It is critically important that these distinctions be clearly understood.

The principle is illustrated by earthly seed sowing. For the generation and sustenance of human life two different kinds of seed are necessary in both of which there is life:

1. Human seed, designed by God for starting fresh human lives.
2. Food seeds, legumes, nuts, and grains, which can never start a human life, but are essential for its nourishment once it has been started.

Both have their place and must be used for the purposes God designed they were respectively to serve.

No woman, by eating food seeds, would ever thereby become a mother. But if she receives seed from her husband she will achieve this. Once the baby is born, he must be fed from the life contained in food seeds or from plants which have sprung from plant seeds.

So there is the seed of life which can be found only in Christ, and there is the seed of the Word found in the Scriptures. In both is life, but no amount of feeding on the Word will give the life which can be acquired only from Christ. Once that life has been acquired, then feeding upon the life in the Scriptures is essential to its steady and vigorous growth.

A third factor which must not be overlooked is that the Word is also a book of instruction. Christ said,

John 5 [RSV]

³⁹ It is they that bear witness to me.

All of these things are symbolized by the partaking of the Passover lamb. Before deliverance from bondage is possible, the candidate for salvation must feed upon the Scriptures as a book of instruction teaching him God's way of deliverance.

At the same time, his faith must be fed so that it grows to the point where it is able to lay hold upon God's offer of cleansing and the implantation of the new life in place of the old, the life which is in Christ alone and can be obtained from no other source than this.

Then once the new life has begun, there needs to be continual feeding on the life of Christ as found in the Word, to nourish, develop, and sustain the precious gift.

For the Passover to be a truly accurate object lesson of redemption, these various aspects of life impartation and sustenance had to be illustrated in the eating of the lamb. They were.

The people ate of the lamb before the death of the firstborn to illustrate the feeding on the Word as a book of instruction and as a builder of faith *before the firstborn died*. Their continued eating of it even as the death angel destroyed the Egyptians, symbolized receiving Christ's seed and thus becoming a newly born believer.

But the feeding on the Word must not stop at this point. Thus, every year they partook of the feast again to teach the continual necessity of receiving the life-giving Word as Jesus said:

John 6

⁶³ It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

The initial Passover was the only one in which the firstborn died and the meal was eaten while they were fully girt for travel. Had these elements been repeated every year, the symbolized message would have been that the old man had to die and the believer be reborn many times.

Deliverance from bondage, the death of the old man, and the generation of Christ's life within, is an experience which takes place only once in the lifetime. After that, in order to nourish and develop the new life, there must be continual partaking of the nourishment supplied by Christ in His written Word. This is done in a context of freedom from bondage and the absence of the old man, Satan's offspring.

This is the situation which is exactly prefigured in the subsequent Passovers as distinct from the first.

An examination of the paragraph from *Patriarchs and Prophets* confirms that both aspects of feeding on Christ are symbolized by the partaking of the Lamb. The first half of the paragraph distinctly speaks of...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277:

...constantly receiving strength and nourishment from Him through His Word.

This is the assimilation of life from the Scriptures which must both precede and succeed the new birth experience. Note the wording very carefully:

The flesh was to be eaten. It is not enough that we believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sin; we must by faith be con-

stantly receiving spiritual strength and nourishment from Him through His word. Said Christ,

John 6

⁵³ Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

⁵⁴ Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life.

And to explain His meaning He said,

⁶³ The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

But the symbolism is not left at that. The second half of the paragraph outlines the fact that the life of Christ Himself must become the life of the believer. Note such expressions as:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 278:

Jesus accepted His Father's law, wrought out its principles in His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John,

John 1

¹⁴ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...

Paul makes it clear that dwelling *among* us is dwelling *in* us:

2 Corinthians 6

¹⁶ ...I will dwell *in* them.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 278:

The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must receive and assimilate the word of God so that it shall become the motive power of life and action. By the power of Christ *they must be changed into His likeness, and reflect the divine attributes.*

These changes can never be achieved simply by feeding on the written Word and seeking the life of Christ there. The believer must receive the seed of life which is found only in Christ Himself and which can be implanted only on the eradication of the old man, Satan's offspring. With these facts in mind consider again the last half of the paragraph:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277-278:

Jesus accepted His Father's law, wrought out its principles in His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John,

John 1

¹⁴ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must receive and assimilate the word of God so that it shall become the motive power of life and action. By the power of Christ they must be changed into His likeness, and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them. The spirit and work of Christ must become the spirit and work of His disciples.

Thus this paragraph gives to the eating of the lamb a wider significance than receiving Christ's life in the new birth experience. It also symbolizes the believer's receiving the nourishing, sustaining life of Christ through the channel of His Word, the Scriptures. The first is to be a once in a lifetime experience while the latter is to be daily and continual. In the Passover, both aspects are beautifully portrayed with the timing in relationship to the other events being just right.

That Other Death

Between bondage and freedom for the Israelites there were two deaths. The first was the death of the lamb, the second that of the firstborn of Egypt. There are a list of contrasts between these two.

| The Lamb | The Firstborn |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Willing to die | Unwilling to die |
| Without blemish | Deformed by sin |
| Innocent | Guilty |
| Died for others | Could not do this |

There is no doubt that the lamb's death was very real. It was no make-believe demise. The same is true of the death of the firstborn. The one was as real as the other. Only when both of these had taken place could the Israelites go free. That second death was as essential to their deliverance as was the former.

This is easily proved by simply considering what would have happened if they had faithfully fulfilled the first five steps from the circumcision to the partaking of the lamb, without the firstborn's dying. They would have remained in bondage as completely as if they had done nothing at all.

As all this is the object lesson of redemption, it is to be expected that what was in the type will be found in the antitype. In other words, just as there were two deaths between physical bondage and deliverance, so there will be two between the spiritual bondage and freedom. The same contrasts will be found between the two and *there will be no deliverance until the second death has taken place.*

This is the truth which must be understood, accepted, and experienced by all who will be finally saved. It is that:

There can be no deliverance from spiritual bondage into the freedom of God's family, unless the second death has taken place.

It is impossible to accept the Passover as a divinely provided object lesson of redemption and, at the same time, deny this. To omit this second death from gospel teaching is to ignore the dominant and significant place that it occupies in the typical service, while to reject or deny it, requires a rejection of the Passover as a revelation of the gospel.

I have seen the truth of these assertions supported by fact. On one occasion when a certain minister was challenging my teaching of the gospel, we entered into discussion on the matter of the second death. I referred him to the crystal clarity of the Passover object lesson as proof of the vital necessity of

this event. He smilingly observed that I had a remarkable imagination to be able to see a gospel parallel in what was, in his view, nothing more than a recital of historical events. He scornfully marveled that I drew spiritual antitypes from it.

This teaching is not, of course, derived only from this experience. In the Old Testament, it tends to be revealed in pictorial form, whereas in the New, it is more likely to be stated in words. Here is such a reference:

Romans 6

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

This verse constitutes a perfect summary of the lesson taught by the Passover. It likewise declares that there must be two deaths, Christ's and ours, before the service to sin can be broken. The first part of the verse announces the crucifixion of the old man together with Christ, so that the body of sin is destroyed. Thus it is emphasized that the death of the old man through crucifixion is as real as that of the Saviour who died by the same means.

This compares with the death of the firstborn of Egypt whose destruction was as complete as was that of the Lamb's. Thus in the first part of *Romans* 6:6, two deaths are shown as surely as they are in the Passover.

It was necessary that there be two in the ancient deliverance so that they could escape from Egyptian bondage. Paul as clearly shows that the purpose of these two deaths, Christ's and our old man's, is that we should no longer serve sin, which, in other words, is to be delivered from its bondage into freedom.

One can only conclude from these evidences that there is no salvation from sin or this world unless these two deaths have become a practical reality in the experience of the individual.

Therefore, it is vital that each person understands this truth. All must come to know what the firstborn of Egypt symbolizes, and how he is slain so that deliverance from bondage can be obtained. Failure to make the effort required to obtain such knowledge will result in the soul's perishing through lack of it.

A comparison of the Passover with *Romans 6:6*, quickly shows that the firstborn of Egypt finds his spiritual counterpart in the old man. They have to be one and the same thing, nor could a more fitting symbol be found for the old man than the firstborn, for this is exactly what our old man is—our firstborn.

Just as certainly as the firstborn of Egypt did not and could not leave with the Israelites, so the Christian cannot take the old man along with him in the Christian path way. It is the second-born or newborn life which goes with the believer.

The general concept is that the old man is the flesh and blood body and that the new man is superimposed upon the old so that the two go forth from the land of sin together. This thinking gives to the old man a fleshly quality and to the new man a spiritual quality.

But this is not the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. Both the old man and the new are spiritual. Neither of them is the flesh which is a third and distinct entity. This is the truth which Christ sought to impart to Nicodemus and which he had so much trouble in comprehending. To that man the Saviour said:

John 3

³ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

The ruler's thoughts did not rise above the physical as is revealed by his responding question:

⁴ How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the

second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Christ then went on to explain to him that the birth He was referring to was a spiritual birth effected by water and the Spirit. The water was the symbol of the cleansing away of the old, while the Spirit was the power by which the new life is implanted where the old was.

Nicodemus had quite a struggle to understand the nature of this new life even though he was a religious leader in the movement which God had called and instructed.

It would be a mistake to calmly rest in the assurance that we are more enlightened than he and can see quite clearly what he failed to see. For years I imagined that I understood the instruction of Christ to him, but only recently I came to see that I had really been missing the point all the way along. It was a humbling warning to me not to take my thinking too much for granted in the future.

My view had been that our first birth is the physical emergence into this world through our fathers and mothers, and that the second birth is the spiritual birth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is added to the first birth. By comparing notes with other people, one quickly ascertains that this is the common and virtually universal understanding of Christ's words.

But this is not what Christ was talking about. The first birth is a spiritual birth of which neither God nor man are the parents. Of this, Satan is the father. In gospel preaching, a great deal is said about the Christian being a child of God, but little if anything, is clearly taught that before sonship with God, there is sonship with Satan. Satan is our first *spiritual* father. God only becomes our parent when Satan has been deprived of that role by the death of his offspring, the old man of sin.

Only human beings can fill the position of parent to our physical bodies because God has ordained that we enter the

world after this manner. He could create every one of us as He did Adam and Eve in the Garden, but He does not work that way. To them He gave the power and the work of reproducing other human beings and they, in turn, others. This power was never given to angels. Therefore Satan cannot reproduce himself physically. We know this on the authority of Christ's words:

Mark 12

²⁴ And Jesus answering said unto them, Do you not therefore err, because you know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?

²⁵ For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven.

But while Satan has no power to reproduce himself physically, he is able to do it spiritually, thereby implanting within the physical bodies of the human, his evil characteristics. Once these things have become a living part of us, the devil assiduously cultivates them to the most evil intensity possible. In the cases of the Jewish leaders of Christ's day, he was marvelously successful, leading Christ to declare their spiritual parentage to them.

John 8

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Christ was not being merely rhetorical when He spoke these words. He was talking in facts, so when He said that Satan was their father, He really meant it. Satan was their father in fact. To support His assertion, Christ referred them to the presence within themselves of Satan's reproduction of himself. Satan was a liar and a murderer, and so were they.

There are two ways in which a person can become the fa-

ther of another. One is by adoption, and the other is by the process of reproduction. There is seldom any difficulty in determining which is which in given cases. The adopted child will not bear the resemblance of his adoptive father. They can, in fact, be very different even so far as having different colored skins as is the case when a European father adopts an African child.

When a man becomes a father by reproducing himself in a child, the offspring cannot but be like the parent. They will share the same color of skin, physical likenesses, general aptitudes, talents, and so forth. Those who observe the two together will immediately conclude that one is the child of the other.

On the basis of these facts, it is simple to determine the answer to the question of whether the Pharisees of Christ's day were the children of Satan by adoption or by reproduction. (Let every reader be reminded that the question relates to spiritual and not to physical reproduction.) All that has to be asked is this:

“Were they like or unlike him in their spiritual natures?”

In stating that they were Satan's children, Jesus pointed to the likeness between them and the devil as the proof that they were. Therefore, they were not the children of the devil by adoption but by direct birth. So it was that they still had the firstborn and did not yet have the second-born, for it is impossible to be born of God and Satan at the same time.

This situation was not unique to them. It is the lot of every person born into this world. We arrive with a physical life endowed upon us by our earthly parents and a spiritual life impregnated in us by our father the devil. This is so because in the Garden of Eden our father Adam gave us all to the devil when he surrendered himself to Satan's rule.

From the moment we enter this world, the devil is continu-

In Egypt
There Were Six Steps
BETWEEN BONDAGE

1. *They* had to be circumcised
2. *They* had to choose the lamb
3. *They* had to kill the lamb
4. *They* had to sprinkle the blood
5. *They* had to eat the lamb
6. The first-born of Egypt died

AND FREEDOM

If they had carried out 1-5 to perfection without the first-born dying they would have remained in bondage as *if they had done nothing at all.*

TWO DEATHS
ARE NECESSARY

Each Must Be As Real As The Other

| THE LAMB | THE FIRST-BORN |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| The Innocent | The Guilty |
| The Saviour | The Destroyer |
| The Pure | The Impure |
| The Righteous | The Unrighteous |

So
There Are Six Steps
BETWEEN SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

1. We must give up our own works
2. We must choose Christ
3. We must trust in Calvary
4. We must stand beneath His blood
5. We must feed on His Word
6. Our first-born—the carnal mind—must die

AND FREEDOM

If we carry out 1-5 without experiencing the second death, we remain in bondage as fully as *if we had done nothing at all.*

TWO DEATHS
ARE NECESSARY

Each Must Be As Real As The Other

| CHRIST | THE CARNAL MIND |
|---------------|------------------------|
| The Innocent | The Guilty |
| The Saviour | The Destroyer |
| The Pure | The Impure |
| The Righteous | The Sinful |

ally seeking to develop these evils to their fullest intensity and efficiency. This power of sin within us, called by a number of names in Scripture, such as the firstborn, the old man, the body of sin, the stony heart, leprosy, and others, is a taskmaster which rules over the mind and body to do its will against the will and desires of the individual.

That firstborn must die as verily as did the firstborn of Egypt, and be replaced by a new life born of a new parent, the heavenly Father. Only when this is done can departure from sin's land of bondage be commenced.

Six Steps There Are

Outlined in the Passover service, and confirmed by the teachings of Scripture, are six definite and indispensable steps between bondage and deliverance. It is essential that every one who desires to obtain God's salvation understands exactly what is involved in each and then appropriates the provisions of every step in turn.

It is a sad thing to see mighty church organizations supporting the presentation of an incomplete series of steps as a total way of salvation. This gives the impression that they are a truly Bible-based religion, because they talk about choosing Christ alone to be the Saviour, present the efficacy of Calvary, extol the power of the sprinkled blood to protect from the destroyer, and teach that all must have the life of Christ within.

This impression strengthens the false assurance that they have the way of salvation, when the real truth is that if any one of those requirements are not met, then the person remains in bondage as fully as if nothing had been done at all. That is the way it would have been in Egypt, and that is the way it is for thousands and tens of thousands who are led to believe that a partial provision achieves a complete salvation.

It is God who has mercifully worked out a solution to the problem of bondage. Man cannot do it. Therefore, it is left for

us to accept it *exactly as God has provided it*. Any attempt on our part to tamper with the specifications or to omit any section of it can only ruin the entire formula and assure of eternal damnation.

6. Vital Distinctions

THE understanding of distinctions is vital to a saving knowledge of the truth.

Jesus made a distinction when He said to the Pharisees that, while they were children of the devil, He was a Son of God. At the same time, He recognized that both they and He were sons of men. Thus He referred to three lines of descent, only one of which He shared in common with the sinful leaders of the Jewish Church.

The only conclusion which can be drawn from these facts is that, while every one of us is a child of man, we are in addition either a child of God or of Satan. It is impossible to have both the divine and satanic heredity at the same time. Either the offspring or reproduction of God is formed within, or that of Satan dwells in the human organism.

Because the two can never dwell together in the same person at the same time, the reproduction of Satan, which is always in a person initially, must be put to death and eradicated from the life. Only then can the Spirit of God implant the seed of Christ in the place where the old nature was.

The Scriptures state this truth very explicitly, so much so that it is difficult to understand why it is so widely denied:

Ezekiel 11

¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I *will take the stony heart out of their flesh*, and will give them a heart of flesh.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: *old things are passed away*; behold, all things are become new.

These Scriptures along with many others do not promise the removal of the flesh but the taking away of that which is in the flesh. Everyone must surely know that when a person

becomes a child of God, his flesh and blood body does not become a new creation. If it did, then it would not become subject to death.

The “all things” which are passed away are not the elements of life received from our earthly parents, for it is clear that they remain. What is removed, is that which dwells *within* the flesh—the offspring of the devil,—so that the new spiritual creation can replace it.

Two Things Called the Same

Generally speaking, the average religionist makes no distinction between the flesh and the evil nature which dwells in that flesh. They are seen to be the same thing. Thus only one thing is perceived by them where two should be recognized. This is a common, but eternally fatal oversight.

The Jews saw only one coming of Christ prophesied in the Old Testament where they should have seen two. When Christ did not come at the first advent as they were led by their reading of the second advent prophecies to expect Him, they rejected Him, and thus cut themselves off from eternal life.

In like manner the Protestant churches have failed to see the difference between the ceremonial and moral laws. When they read of the former being abolished at the cross, they conclude that all law is involved and thus reject the obligations of the ten commandments. This is a fatal mistake costing all those who cling to such error, eternal life.

A Figurative Death?

There are others who have not been ensnared by either of these deceptions who are taken by the error that there is no distinction between sinful flesh and the sinful spiritual nature which dwells in the flesh.

It is impossible to overlook these differences and at the

same time hold the gospel in verity. Inevitably, such failure to differentiate will result in a theological position in harmony with this oversight. No one can see the sinful human nature and the old man as being one and the same, and, at the same time, believe that the old man dies. They could not, because the death of the old man would be the death of the human being. If this was so, then conversion would mean the instant end of this earthly sojourn, which in turn would result in there being no living Christians on the earth.

Few would contend that there are, or ever have been, no living Christians on the earth. Likewise, it is generally understood that to become a Christian does not involve laying down this earthly existence. Therefore, it is understood quite correctly that the death of the old man is not the literal death of the human being. This is true, but because the belief persists that the human nature is the old man, it is concluded that this death is not a literal death but only an allegory, a figure of speech.

Inevitably, this leads to the conclusion that the old man and the new abide together until the resurrection day when the touch of immortality will remove forever the presence of sinfulness.

This, of course, has the appearance of truth, for it is correct to say that the new man will abide with the fallen, sinful, human nature until the second coming of Christ. But, the human nature is not the old man of sin. Therefore, it is not true to say that the old man and the new man abide together till Christ returns.

The Romans 7 Man

Without exception, anyone who believes that the two natures are one, will hold that *Romans 7* is the true Christian experience. So reliable is this fact that it is not necessary to inquire what a person holds in regard to the two natures. Ask

only whether he believes *Romans 7* is the experience of a child of God or not. If he says it is, then you know that he does not make a distinction between the fallen, sinful, *human* nature and the old man of sin.

He will *correctly* identify the daily struggle of a mind determined to serve God, against the indwelling power of the sin master, as the experience described in *Romans 7*, but he will *incorrectly* classify it as Christian experience.

In such teaching, the old man is very much alive, ever ready to rear his ugly head to harass and overcome the struggling human. This is in direct contradiction to the Scriptures which witness that the old man is crucified to death and thus destroyed in the life of God's true children.

Yet those who are in error profess to believe exactly as the Bible teaches. How then, do they explain the texts which so clearly and explicitly speak about the *death* and *destruction* of the old man? Is not death the cessation of life? Does it not deprive its victim of activity and power? Certainly it does!

Then how can it be taught that the old man lives on when the Scriptures declare that he must die?

In order to give credence to this rather obvious contradiction, the teachers of this false doctrine treat this death as being only a metaphorical or symbolic one, not a real one. The old man is not dead, they theorize, but is subdued or kept under control.

An Illustration from Nature

No better illustration of this kind of thinking can be found than is contained in this incident. In the State of Tennessee lived a farmer of my acquaintance who was and is an active proponent of this false theory. One day he was in the field talking with a person whom he desired to influence for his version of the gospel. In seeking to communicate the point that the old man is not really dead, he pointed to a small

thorn bush growing out of the soil. He likened this to his old man.

This is a very apt simile, for the Bible does the same. As the thorn bush grows in the soil without being the soil itself, so the old man grows in the human body without being the humanity itself. As the thorn bush can be eradicated from the soil without the latter being removed or changed, so the old man can be eradicated from the body without its being changed or removed.

But this farmer was not thinking in terms of removal. Instead he placed his foot squarely on the little bush, hiding it from view, and preventing it from tearing his flesh with its thorns. He informed his friend,

“In the same way, I am required to hold the old man under subjection throughout the day. But, when the evening comes, and I have to retire, this guard has to be relaxed.”

The result was that the old man reared himself up just as the little bush sprang erect again as he removed his boot from it. This required the reassertion of his and God’s power to bring it under subjection again the next day.

The most incredible part of this tale is that it was a farmer who projected this idea in the midst of a field. This solution was *not* the course *he* would pursue on the farm. *He* would not even consider standing there all day holding that bush down. The only course *he* would follow would be the rooting out and destroying of that thorn bush.

Strange that, in the daily pursuits, men will pursue a rational and sensible course but in theology, a course that has neither Biblical nor natural support.

Modified Improvements

To those who believe as this farmer does, conversion is nothing more than a redirection of the mind, and an at-

tempted redirection of the powers in the life. No actual death takes place. The old man is not destroyed. He is as alive as ever and will rise from time to time to harass and annoy the believer.

That which aids in the acceptance of this theology is the definite improvement in outward deportment and behavior which accompanies it. The believer in it:

- gives up many gross and worldly pursuits and pleasures,
- attends church,
- becomes zealous in missionary endeavor,
- supports the church's programs and
- in many ways follows a cleaner pattern of living.

This passes for Christian experience whereas, in fact, it is but a modified improvement *of the old*. It cannot be anything else, because this theology does not provide for the removal of the existing spiritual life. Therefore it is still there, so that any changes or improvements must be of that old life.

It is possible to achieve this. Even irreligious people do so, many of them being models of courtesy and kindness, though making no profession of service to God.

But, while the old life can definitely be improved, it can never go to heaven, for it is the offspring of the devil. Only the life of Christ can return to heaven.

John 3

¹³ And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

When Christ spoke these words, He was not denying the ascension of Enoch, Moses, and Elijah as some suppose. He was saying that only when His life came down from heaven and entered into a man, could that man ascend into heaven.

This confirms the truth that the life of Satan in us, which never did come down from heaven, cannot under any circum-

stances go to heaven. Therefore, modified improvements of the old life will not walk the streets of gold, but a new life altogether. This truth must be grasped by all who would inherit eternal life.

Only One Way

If righteousness could be attained by the careful redirection and improvement of the existing life and powers, then well and good. One happy result would be the salvation of millions more than will eventually receive it. This would delight the heavenly Trio who desire that none be lost.

But there are no alternative routes to heaven. It is not that God has arbitrarily decreed it to be so, but because there is only one possible way whereby man can be saved. Sin is a problem that requires a solution which man cannot even begin to find from or of himself. God has formulated the one and only answer to it. It is required of man that he study to understand and apply the remedy.

It is not given to man to pick and choose, to modify, change, rearrange, or in any way deviate from the divine perfection of this plan. Any who spend time at this will deprive themselves and all those who permit themselves to come under their influence, of eternal life.

When the Israelites left Egypt, God did not offer them the choice of a number of different procedures. Nor did He in any way call upon them to work out how it might be achieved. In no way were they consulted, but only instructed in respect to the plan.

In the light of this it is evident that there should be only one doctrine of salvation taught in the world. Sadly enough, this is not so. Men have formulated procedures and theories by which they believe they will return to heaven. Those who espouse one system will either vehemently condemn that of others or will philosophize that inasmuch as the ultimate ob-

jective is to reach heaven, all will end up there no matter what route is taken.

Ecclesiastes 7

²⁹ Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

These various inventions have one thing in common. They all propose in one way or another to make the sinner fit for heaven by improving or covering the life already existing. This will never achieve fitness for heaven for the simple reason that the old life is no more capable of producing the fruits of righteousness than is the thorn bush able to bring forth useful fruit. The truth of this is emphasized in this Scripture.

Romans 8

⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*

In our world are only two categories of forces—those which are subject to others and those which are not. The latter class can only be masters. Here the carnal mind is classified as a power which not only is not subject to God's law but cannot possibly be. There are some who argue that it can be, when Christ is brought in, but this is not what the Scriptures say. Rather it is affirmed that it cannot be, and so it will not be.

Therefore, any theology which proposes to bring salvation while the carnal mind still remains, is looking to the impossible. Most certainly, such a solution never originated with God. Furthermore, this verse very clearly establishes the difference or distinction between the carnal mind and the flesh, proving that they are not one and the same thing.

Carnal and Fleshly Natures

There are those who find difficulty in seeing this because the word "carnal" means "fleshly," so that the literal translation of "carnal mind" is "fleshly mind." Therefore, the conclusion is generally drawn that the carnal or fleshly mind is the

mind made of flesh and incorporates the whole of the human organism.

But let a careful comparison be made between what the Scriptures have to say about each of them, and it will be seen that there are differences between them which they can never hold in common.

Firstly it is stated that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. So then, here is a mind which will never be obedient to the divine requirements, but this is not true of the flesh and blood body. There is not a Christian in history who has been delivered in this life from fallen, sinful, human nature. Even Christ was possessed of it, yet these godly men and women served God. Their carnal or fleshly natures did the will of God.

Because it is possible for the carnal nature to serve God, Paul appealed to all to yield their members as instruments of righteousness and refuse to give the same fleshly powers to the service of sin. Here are his words:

Romans 6

¹³ Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

So then, the carnal mind cannot be obedient to God's law, but the human or carnal nature can. Therefore, they cannot be the same thing. The gaining of victory over sin and ultimate admission into heaven depends, among other things, on this distinction being understood.

Be assured that the enemy of souls, who is well aware of the importance of this, does not want anyone to understand it, and works unceasingly to cloud the issue, just as he successfully prevented the Jews from seeing the two comings of Christ, and the Protestants, the two different laws.

To the great gospel preachers this distinction was clear. In fact, no one can be a true gospel preacher unless he does understand this. Paul stands out in this category and in *Romans 7* shows his firm grasp of the matter:

Romans 7

²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Reference is made here to various powers at war with each other. There is:

1. The law of the mind;
2. The law of sin; and
3. The members.

Of the three, the one in supremacy is the law of sin, which holds a person in captivity according to its will. Arrayed against this bondage is the law of the mind wherein is known what constitutes righteousness together with the earnest desire to possess it. The members are the physical elements of the human nature in which the law of sin is resident.

Nowhere in the verse does Paul say that the law of sin *is* the members. Instead he specifically refers to it as being something *in* the members just as disease resides in the human frame, feeds upon it, and rules over it.

The law of life which is in Christ, is not mentioned in this Scripture for the simple reason that it is not to be found in the man of *Romans 7*. The life of Christ cannot enter into a man until the old carnal mind has been removed, a step which has not yet been taken by the man described in *Romans 7*.

Therefore Paul does not refer to what is not yet there. When he moves on to the point where this transaction is accomplished as he does in the next chapter, then he speaks no longer of the law of sin being in the members, but of the life

of Christ being there.

The Law and Power of Sin

In effect it is being argued here that what is called *the carnal mind* in *Romans 8:7*, is known as *the law of sin* in *Romans 7:22-23*. There is value in this varied use of descriptions of the same thing, for thereby we are able to receive a more comprehensive enlightenment of the nature of this power and problem. Calling it the *law* of sin is another way of describing it as the *power* of sin. Arriving at this conclusion requires use of the simplest logic.

No law framed by anyone ever becomes a law *in fact* unless those who frame it have the power to enforce it. Therefore, effective law cannot be divorced from power, by which we are to understand that the law of sin is the power of sin. The verse itself makes this quite clear, for it states that this law of sin brings the whole man into captivity. This it could not do unless it had the might to achieve it.

The law of the mind is a reference to the thought processes whereby decisions are made and every impulse from the citadel of the intellect put forth to achieve these ideals. Strong as the mind may be, it is no match for the mighty power of the law of sin in the members. There are no exceptions to the rule that anyone in whom the sin master resides will be in captivity.

The members are the various elements of the human body in which is resident the human nature as distinct from the law of sin which dwells in the flesh and rules over it. This flesh is a very great problem to the Christian who finds that he has a continual warfare to wage against its weaknesses, desires, appetites, and passions. But let none confuse these difficulties with the carnal mind which is not the flesh itself but a power which resides in it and controls it against its will.

What does make it hard to make this differentiation is the

fact that these two natures become so closely interactive that it is frequently difficult to see the role of the one against the other. They appear to blend together into one entity.

The Illustration of Disease

Because of these problems of identification, the Lord has been careful to provide ample illustration of the identity and role of these different powers. One of the simplest of these is disease.

Christ regarded disease dwelling in and ruling over the flesh, without being the flesh itself, as a fitting illustration of the indwelling presence and dominion of the sin master. Every miracle whereby the poor victims of sickness were delivered from its presence and power, was an illustration of the identical work of saving from sin.

There was the occasion when the man was let down through the roof at the feet of Jesus to be healed of the palsy, upon which...

Matthew 9

² Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; your sins be forgiven you.

When Jesus discerned the thoughts in the hearts of the blind and critical Pharisees, He said,

⁴ Wherefore do you think evil in your hearts?

⁵ For what is easier, to say, Your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Arise and walk?

Here, Jesus plainly declared that the work of healing sickness, and the work of healing the disease of sin, were both the same. They were both so much the same that to do one was like doing the other. Thus Jesus testified for us that the problem of disease in the physical realm, and the problem of sin in the spiritual realm, are identical, requiring identical solutions.

If they were different in nature and power, then it would re-

quire a different solution for each of them. We can learn a great deal about the nature of the indwelling power of sin by the simple study of the nature of disease and its power over the human body.

The Spirit of Prophecy makes this point very clear in these statements:

The Desire of Ages, p. 266:

The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is *an illustration* of His work in cleansing the soul from sin.

Steps to Christ, p. 50:

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.

The Desire of Ages, p. 203:

By sin we have been severed from the life of God. *Our souls are palsied.*

The Desire of Ages, p. 271:

Physical disease, however malignant and deep-seated, was healed by the power of Christ; but the *disease of the soul* took a firmer hold upon those who closed their eyes against the light. Leprosy and palsy were not so terrible as bigotry and unbelief.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 280:

He [the sinner] realizes his *diseased* condition, and seeks healing from the great Physician...

These statements make it clear that disease is to be equated with sin in the soul and that the same might, the same faith, and the same procedures are used to bring deliverance from this power, as from physical disease.

This point established, the way is prepared for the study of sickness as an illustration of the presence of sinfulness in the soul. In this way it will become very clear that just as disease

is not the body itself but a power which resides in the flesh, feeds on it, and rules over it, so the carnal mind does the same.

The solution applied by Christ to disease involved its removal from the human nature which remained with the person as fully after the cleansing from sickness as before it. Christ applies the same solution to the sin problem by eradicating the old man and implanting the new in the same flesh and blood as that from which the sin nature was removed.

There must be scarcely a person living on the earth today who has never had a day of sickness in his life. Some individuals may have suffered no more than a bout or two of influenza while others have been afflicted with the most terrible diseases. This being so, most will know by personal experience the power of sickness over the body and will.

An excellent illustration is the experience of the small boy who lived in a time and place where the annual school picnic was the great event of the year. For months he looked forward to and planned for this day. As it drew nearer, his excitement mounted until the very night before, when he went to his bed early, with a glad and expectant heart for what the morrow would bring. But during the night, a stomach upset gave him sleepless hours, he threw up his supper, and the morning found him with aching head and burning fever.

His desire to go was as strong as ever, and his will to go was likewise as urgent as before, but now he was in the grip of a power over which he had no control. He tried to rise and dress, but the room revolved around his spinning head. He was forced to return to his bed once more and spend an agonizing day of disappointment there. Why did he do it? Because he was now under the command of a master against whose will he had no choice but to obey.

Such was the condition of each and every one who was either brought to Jesus or to whom the Saviour came Himself.

The man at the pool of Bethesda lay there impotent, not because he chose to, or wished to do that, but because of the power within him which dictated to him what he could and could not do. So it was with the leper and the man with the palsy who was let down through the ceiling.

No better illustration could be found of the way in which the indwelling power of sin holds and controls the sinner, than the way in which disease as an indwelling power, holds and controls the sick. Therefore, we have before us an identical problem. One is in the spiritual realm. The other is in the physical realm.

If any have difficulty in seeing this, then remember that the Word has declared that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 266:

The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is *an illustration* of His work in cleansing the soul from sin.

If the illustration is to be of any value, it must be valid. That which is used for the illustration—in this case physical disease—and the matter being illustrated—in this case spiritual disease—must be things which, though in a different realm, have everything else in common. Otherwise the illustration is of no value.

The more one studies disease from the divine point of view, the clearer it will be seen that it is a most fitting illustration of the power and workings of sin, and the better it will be understood as to how Jesus provided healing for the soul.

That disease is a living, controlling power, is recognized and understood by anyone who has been sick. Such people need no convincing that this is so. They know it by experience. Furthermore, they know that disease is not the power of the fleshly or human nature which has been perverted or directed into new channels, but that it is a separate entity in the body

which rules over and weakens the powers of the human nature.

None should have difficulty in seeing that the disease is one thing and the body in which it dwells, something else again. In this we have the clear illustration of the difference between the human nature and the disease of sin which dwells in that human nature.

When Jesus came to the man or woman who was held in the grip of the power of the sin disease, He cured that person, not by giving to the human nature a power greater than that of the disease so that it could be brought into subjection; nor by taking away the human nature itself, but by removing the disease from the human nature so that it was no longer there. He put that disease to death so that it ceased to exist. When this had been done, the person still had his human nature, which was still fallen, sinful, and unholy.

We may not understand exactly what the nature of disease is. It certainly is not something which can be picked up physically and looked upon as a visible entity, but this does not mean that it is not a very real force to be reckoned with. Likewise it is not possible for us to pick up the sin nature and look upon it as a visible entity, but it is still an entity which has an actual presence in the body of the slave to sin, and it must be removed, as an entity, from him.

Clearly then, the illustration provided for us in the familiar field of disease shows the distinction between the actual sin nature, the carnal mind, and the flesh and blood body in which that sin nature dwells. They are two separate and distinct elements, and understanding this is essential to a correct understanding of the way of victory over sin.

7. The Place of the Will

A KEY point on which the message of living righteousness set forth in this book stands or falls is the distinction between the carnal mind which dwells in the flesh and the flesh in which it resides.

The role and power of this carnal mind result in the subjugation of the individual to enslavement. He may think himself free but is, in fact, in abject slavery. This message is proved completely false if it can be proved that the carnal mind and the carnal nature are the same thing, as is commonly believed in religious groups today.

Furthermore, the reformation work which follows that of the revival cannot be understood and practiced unless the role of the human nature, the advantages it gives to the tempter, and the way it can cause even the most righteous person to sin, are recognized and comprehended.

For this reason, added Bible illustrations of this will now be surveyed with special reference to an element not introduced so far in this study—the place of the will.

Egyptian Slavery

The Egyptian bondage has already been considered as an illustration of bondage to sin. Further attention will now be paid to this situation to develop still greater clarity in the distinctions already made. Particular focus will now be upon the mind and will of the slave versus those of the slave master. The parallel will be drawn between the mind and will of the individual, and the mind and will of the sin master which rules over the sinner against his will and desires.

Let our minds span the ages of history till we look upon the desert scene. The slave bends over his task, while the slave master hovers over him with the ever ready whip in his hands. Study the slave first, to see that he has his own flesh

and blood body and his own mind and will. That body, in which is resident not only his physical strength but also feelings, desires, likes, and dislikes, loathes the work he has to do, the appalling conditions under which it must be done, and longs for more congenial work in a better environment than burning desert heat.

All these desires of the flesh are registered in the mind, wherein is the accumulated knowledge of his life, and some awareness of God's purpose for the children of Abraham. Thus the appeal of the body to the mind, in addition to the convictions of the mind itself, calls for the cessation of those activities of service to Satan and his kingdom.

It cannot be argued that as far as the feelings, desires, likes and dislikes of that man's body or human nature are concerned, there was the least disposition to relish or enjoy the actual service to Egypt.

However, the body did love that which was congenial to its tastes, such as the leeks, the garlic, and the fleshpots of that land. This is proven by the fact that when they were removed from the pain of the bondage and had forgotten much of its arduous and restrictive nature, their flesh called upon the mind to provide it again with those lustful satisfactions. With their minds agreeing, and remembering that Egypt was the place where the fleshpots were to be found, they set the will to return to that land again.

How typical this is of human nature. Sin offers us the satisfactions of sensual pleasures beyond that which is disciplined and legitimate. To the human nature this is very appealing and desirable, but once these pleasures have taken a firm hold upon us, they bring only suffering and misery. Against that, the flesh rebels and calls upon the mind to deliver it from such suffering, but not from the pleasures causing the suffering.

However, it may be recognized that the pleasures are the cause of the trouble, and for the time being at least, the per-

son is prepared to forgo the pleasures entirely, just as the Israelites were so happy to be delivered from the land of Egypt. But when the pain of the bondage is only a memory, then the flesh cries out again for the lusts in which it previously found such satisfaction, while it forgets the severe price to be paid for such indulgence.

We have only to study our own experience to see how true this is, and from it we are to understand why it is impossible for the entire work of sealing against sin to be accomplished by the revival. A prolonged work of educational reform must be accomplished beyond the initial work of deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Therefore, when it is said that the slave did not, so far as his flesh was concerned, have any desire to do that work, it must be remembered that reference is being made to the hatred for the consequences of his bondage—the sufferings he was experiencing because of it. So it is written,

Exodus 2

²³ The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

This does not mean they had lost their relish for the lusts which Egypt provided, but that they hated the work, and the conditions under which they had to work. Their conscience told them that they had no business rendering this service to the man of sin.

The reason why it is pointed out here that the human nature as well as the mind and will of the slave were opposed to the work so required of them in Egypt is to show the distinction between the will of the slave's flesh, and the will of the slave master.

It is abundantly clear that while the slave, both in body and in mind, had no desire whatsoever to render that service, the

slave master not only desired that he should, but was determined that he would. Furthermore, he had the power to enforce his will, for his power was greater than that of the slave. Therefore, he exercised that power to ensure that the unwilling slave did do the service Egypt demanded of him.

See then, the distinct entities in the illustration. There was the slave's body or human nature, whose every fiber hated the bondage in which he was forced to serve. There was the mind of the slave in which was both the reception of the protest messages sent to it from the flesh plus its own convictions of conscience in respect to that service. Thirdly, possessing entirely different and opposite desires and intentions, was the will of the slave master himself.

There is something different about this illustration from Egypt which makes it a valuable aid in understanding the distinct identities of the carnal mind and the carnal or fleshly nature. Whereas in the object lesson provided by disease, the power resides within the flesh, here in Egypt the dominating authority is outside of and separate from the flesh of the slave. This removes any possibility of mistaking the flesh for the power which rules over it. The slave master can be studied as a separate entity as can also the role played by the flesh and blood, fallen, sinful, human natures of the slaves themselves.

It is just like an exploded drawing of a mechanical device or piece of furniture, in which all the hidden parts are separated from the other components so that their place and role in the plan can be clearly recognized.

It is as an exploded view in which each of the elements have been separated for clearer identification, that the Egyptian scene is of so much value to us. Like the illustration afforded in the diseased person, it tells the same distinct story of there being a power apart from the human organism itself which rules over and controls the human being, body, mind, and spirit. This power must be removed from that position of

dominance, by being destroyed, before the individual can do the works of the Lord.

No provision whatsoever, is made for the discipline or subjugation of the slave master as likewise, there can be no provision made for the discipline of the carnal mind, because it is not possible for it to come into subjection.

Good and Evil Trees

The same truths are repeated in the illustration given by Christ of the good and evil trees.⁶ He said:

Luke 6

⁴³ For a good tree brings not forth corrupt fruit; neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit,

⁴⁴ For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

The illustration clearly portrays the distinctions between the various elements involved. There is the tree, the fruit it produces, the soil in which it grows, and the gardener who decides its fate. There are clear and simple, yet vital differences between each of these.

Depending on the seed implanted in the soil will be the nature of the tree growing therefrom, and the kind of fruit produced by that tree. It is impossible for good fruit to grow on an evil tree. This is a law which has never been violated nor ever will, for it is impossible to do so. Even a child knows better than to seek grapes on a thorn bush.

This law has been formulated in the wisdom and love of God for the good and the happiness of all His created subjects.

⁶ In this book, this will be touched on only briefly as it has been thoroughly covered in other publications. See *Living Righteously* and *Freedom from Sin* (also titled *From Bondage to Freedom*).

A few moment's reflection will secure all against any desire for the annulment of this precept. Imagine the consequences should the law be done away with.

Let it be supposed that on January 1, 1990, the law which declares that all things produce after their own kind is abrogated. On that day or any time thereafter, a farmer goes forth with a supply of wheat seed and sows his field. While the law operated, he knew that he could rely on every seed which germinated to grow into a productive stalk of grain, but now that guarantee is withdrawn. Instead there comes up thorns, thistles, briars, barley, wheat, and any number of mixed plants. Even if everything which did come up was a variety of good plants, it would be such a disorganized mess that no one could harvest it.

That would be bad enough but imagine his consternation when his cattle produced a wide variety of offspring—dogs, cats, sheep, snakes, frogs, goats, and so forth. Worst of all would be the plight of expectant mothers who would never know what their children might be until the day they were born, and then be horrified to find that they had given birth to a lion, a snake, a monkey, or be relieved to find that they had been the fortunate one to actually have a human baby.

In the meantime, out in the jungle, human babies would be appearing among the mixed issues of the savage beasts. What kind of adults would they grow up to be? What a hopelessly confused world this would be if that law were to become inoperative.

Many will object that such is impossible. Fortunately it is, but only because the Lord will never permit that law to be changed. This fact can be regarded with deep gratitude, for this unchangeable law guarantees a security we would never wish to lose.

Observe that the kind of soil in which the plant or tree grows does not determine what the tree shall be, that is,

whether it will be a grape vine or a thorn bush. That is decided by the seed impregnated in the soil. While, however, it cannot choose what the seed will grow into, it can greatly affect the vigor of the growth and the fruitfulness of the plant or tree. Fertile soil in favorable climatic conditions will support a much, much larger and more fruitful tree than will poor soil.

The final factor in the illustration is the gardener who fills the role of the will which decides the fate of the tree. He is the one who has to assess the problem, determine the appropriate solution, and apply it.

The problem is that he has a thorn bush, but he desires good fruit. The only solution ever recognized by the man on the land is to root out the offending tree and then place in the same soil the good seed which in turn produces the kind of tree and the kind of fruit he is seeking. No such man would even contemplate the idea of achieving his objectives by removing all the thorns from the tree. What he would then have would be a thornless thornbush, but it would still not be a productive grape vine or apple tree.

This object lesson of a vital factor in the matter of salvation is taken from an area of life with which all are more or less familiar. The Master Teacher, recognizing the importance of these principles being understood, directed the minds of all to this illustration so that none would have any difficulty in understanding the same principles as they are found in the human problem of meeting sin. No difficulty should be experienced in matching the elements in the type to their counterparts in the spiritual application.

- The soil in which the tree grows is the human nature.
- The tree corresponds to the evil nature growing in that soil.
- The new tree growing from the new seed in the soil, represents the life of Christ which grows from the di-

vine seed once it has been implanted in the individual.

- The gardener represents the will of the individual who decides what shall be done with the evil tree. He can choose to keep it, or he can give it to God for destruction so that the way is prepared for the implantation of the new life within.

The same laws apply in the natural as in the spiritual realm. Christ certified that in the Scripture under consideration here. Therefore, let no one imagine that righteousness can appear in the life in which the old man is still resident. He is the seed of Satan and as such can produce only evil fruit. It is true that he can be given a good deal of polish and can be brought under a certain disciplined control, but the best that can be achieved is, in effect, a thornless thornbush which can never be transplanted into the gardens of paradise.

As the study here is on the distinctions between the various parts making up the nature of man and of sin, attention is once more directed to the clear teaching contained in the parable of the good and evil tree. Just as the tree growing in the soil is not the soil itself, so the evil nature growing in the body and life of man is not the human nature itself, but something growing therein.

It must also be clear that the exertion of the will of the gardener will never force the evil tree to bring forth good fruit. This is no more the solution than any setting of the will in Egypt would have enabled the slaves to overcome their taskmasters. There is a place for the exercise of the will, but it is not in directing the energies at its command in a direct confrontation with the power of sin. Here it is powerless to bring the enemy into subjection to it, for sin is not only the greater power, but it is not subject to any change. The only solution for it is destruction and replacement. Therefore, the role of the will is to surrender the old man to God who removes it from the citadel of authority and puts His own precious life in its

place.

In all these illustrations, the assurance is given that the one element can be destroyed and replaced without the man himself being executed.

- The slave master of Egypt passed away without the Israelites dying;
- The disease is expunged from the system leaving the sufferer very much alive; and
- The thorn bush is removed from the soil without doing away with the earth in which it grew.

With the taking away of each of them, the way is cleared for the new to replace the old, and for the first time the fruit desired can be produced.

The Implications

Some may feel that the point has now been labored beyond necessity. This would be true if a subject which is so simple were not so little understood. The erroneous concepts are so firmly fixed in humans' minds that it requires a thorough presentation of the information available to penetrate the haze and admit the light.

There are still more illustrations of the point such as the old and new husbands presented in *Romans 7:1-5*. However, we will omit this here as it has already been covered in our other books.

Every *false* presentation of justification by faith, argues no difference between the carnal mind and the human nature. Not all draw the same conclusions from this position. The differences though, may be classified under two main streams of thought.

The first and usual development is to conclude that the solution is to be found in the enforcement of righteousness by the action of the will. In support of this, many statements and

verses are quoted such as these:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 176:

The tempted one needs to understand the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man—the power of decision, of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will.

1 Corinthians 9 [RSV]

²⁶ Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air;

²⁷ But I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 311:

How much more important that the Christian, whose eternal interests are at stake, bring appetite and passion under subjection to reason and the will of God! Never must he allow his attention to be diverted by amusements, luxuries, or ease. All his habits and passions must be brought under the strictest discipline. Reason, enlightened by the teachings of God's word and guided by His Spirit, must hold the reins of control.

These statements, in fact, all have reference to the discipline and control of the physical or human nature, and therefore have nothing to do with the problem of the old man. But, because many make no distinction between the old man and the sinful, fallen, human nature, they apply these and other statements like them as guidelines for dealing with the old man.

Having satisfied themselves that this is the solution to the problem of the old man, no other is sought, and so no other is found. Thus the teaching that the evil offspring of Satan is to be eradicated and destroyed, has no place in their thinking. Righteousness is sought by carefully collecting and emphasizing all the requirements laid out in the Scriptures, accompanied by a will set to carry out all these injunctions.

This religion becomes characterized by rules and regulations governing dress, diet, Sabbath-keeping, church organiza-

tion, deportment in the house of God, and much more. The basic reasoning, though they would never admit it, is that because breaking the law incurs the penalty of death, keeping it must restore the lost gift of life.

The continual emphasis that only those who reach a standard of perfect obedience will be readmitted to Paradise, generates a continual striving to reach this level of excellence. But, because this can only be achieved when there is firstly a transformed nature within, those who deny the eradication of the old nature and the infilling with the new, experience a perpetual sense of shortcoming.

No question is ever raised regarding the correctness of their procedures, and this causes reassurance to be sought in other ways. This takes the form of observing the progress of other people and then of measuring their apparent progress with one's own. The more faults and shortcomings that can be found in the other person, the more comforting things are. If the others around you are not doing as well as you, then you have the security of being in the vanguard of those going to heaven.

In other words, it is reasoned, if you, whom you judge to be ahead of all the rest, are not going to heaven, then no one is. But it is known that some will go. Therefore, your chances are better than any other.

This cannot but result in a critical and judgmental pattern of behavior on the part of all who belong to such a system. It is a legalistic and Pharisaical type of religion which never brings its followers a true satisfaction or rest of spirit. Its adherents shrink in mind, body, and spirit because their attention is focused on one another as the measure of personal progress. It is a law that we become changed into the likeness of what we behold.

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory

of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Man is the smallest thing in existence when it comes to character marred by sin, so when the focus is upon one another, the attention is fixed on this smallest of characters. The result is that the character cannot expand and grow but shrinks into something smaller still. Only by beholding the greatness of the perfection of Christ's character can true growth in Christian experience be achieved.

There are varying degrees to which this religion is taken. In its worst and most extreme form, it is found in the religion of the Pharisees as it was in Christ's time on earth. Between Christ and this religion there was no meeting place. The Saviour met only an ever intensifying hatred of Himself and His message from the protagonists of this supposed path to eternal life.

Jesus never gave the slightest endorsement of this in His earthly ministry but rather pronounced that there was no eternal life whatsoever to be found in these procedures.

Matthew 5

²⁰ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

These are plain words indeed. "*In no case,*" said Christ, would any whose religion was no better than that of the Pharisees enter into heaven. Let all who today still rely on this system for salvation, give careful thought to these words. There can be nothing more terrible than to suppose that salvation is secure to us and then come to the judgment day when it will be too late to acquire the real thing, to find that eternal loss is our only portion. Better to have enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season than to have this experience.

In time, there comes a reaction to this pressure. As decades

roll by and the children of those who have enforced this exacting religion become weary of its burden and disillusioned as to its effects, they swing away to the opposite end of the scale. No question is raised in regard to the falsity of the foundation which sees no difference between the carnal mind and the fallen, sinful human nature, but, instead of trying to put apples on the thorn bush, they do recognize that this is impossible.

So instead of teaching that heaven is for those who achieve perfection of character in themselves, they believe that Christ alone could achieve it. This He did while on the earth where He developed such a supply of righteousness as to adequately cover the needs of every sinner. Those who wish for eternal life have only to accept this on their behalf as a credited or substitutionary righteousness. Thus, it is expected that entrance to heaven will be on the merits of Christ with no necessity of forming a righteous character on the part of the sinner.

Those who believe and teach this, deny that any righteousness is formed within. It is all up with Christ in heaven where He credits it to the sinner's account in the books of record.

Of the two propositions, the second is the more realistic, for at least it does recognize that the carnal mind cannot produce the works of righteousness at all. Therefore, for a religion to offer a solution to the sin problem without doing away with the carnal mind, it can only propose that someone else provides the righteousness necessary for readmission to heaven.

One might gain the impression from what is said here, that the true religion is one in which the believer provides the righteousness which is fitness for heaven. This is not the truth, for Christ alone can provide this. The difference between the two is that in the false, effort is made to bring forth fruit from a thorn bush, or alternatively the fruit of the thorn bush is accepted as being the norm for Christian living.

In the true gospel, the Lord is given the task of eradicating the evil nature and of putting His own life in its place. As the believer beholds in Christ the standard of character perfection and, as he feeds on the life of Christ from day to day, he is changed into the same image from glory to glory until he is fit to walk the golden streets. While it is true that he has a part to play, the achievement is the gift of God all the way.

It may be asked as to why both of the spurious pathways to heaven gather such large followings among those who claim to follow the Bible and the Bible only, when neither are taught in the Scriptures.

It is because of a combination of two things. Man has inherited from the devil a disposition to serve God on his own terms, not God's. Satan very cleverly manipulates Scriptural truths into a doctrine calculated to appeal to this disposition. Thus Satan's and man's way of serving God is apparently given divine approval. Men are led to think that they are serving God according to God's specifications, when in fact they are not.

This false theology is formed by taking a part for the whole. In true religion there is a place for the exercise of the will and the exertion of our own diligent effort. There is also a place where the substitutionary righteousness of Christ is the answer to a certain aspect of the sin problem. For those who want to be saved by their own works, Satan presents the exercise of willpower as the total way of salvation. He leads them to take all the statements calling for diligent effort to justify their valiant attempts to bring forth fruit from an evil nature.

For those who wish to be saved in their sins, he points to the righteousness of Christ as the cloak to cover all their iniquity.

One religion gathers all the Scriptures which apply to the control and discipline of the flesh and applies them to the control of the carnal mind, while the other takes all the state-

ments about the substitution of Christ's righteousness and makes that the entire message. Thus, they are each able to make it *appear* that they have a true Bible solution to the sin problem, when in fact, neither have.

The Alternative

The true child of God recognizes how totally impossible it is for the carnal nature to produce the fruit of the Spirit. He knows that the old nature must be removed and, inasmuch as it is a separate entity from the human nature or his own mind, it is possible for this to be done without terminating his very existence. So he has the Lord remove it as Christ healed the diseases of His day, and in its place he receives a new nature altogether, even the very life of Christ in the soul.

But he knows now that the work is not ended. He has not achieved instant and absolute sanctification. Ahead is the long, hard road of re-education and reformation during which he must learn to deny the lusts and desires of the flesh, put away old theories and ideas with their resultant habits and practices, and thus develop an experience in sanctification.

It will be a battle from which there is no release until this earthly life is ended, but it will not be the battle of the *Romans* 7 man who is struggling to make a carnal mind do what it can never be made to do. It will be a struggle to overcome *the flesh* and *its* desires, a thing which in the power of God and in the aftermath of the revival can and must be done, if we are to inherit eternal life.

The nature of this struggle must now be studied, but not without the repeated warning that it can never be truly understood unless it is seen that there is a distinction between the carnal mind and the human nature, and that the former must be eradicated entirely, while the second remains clear through until the coming of Jesus.

A Pig Still

You can take a pig, a real live flesh and blood pig, and lift him out of the environment of the pigsty with its slush and filth and mud; you can scrub him ever so clean and put him into dry lodgings devoid of stinking mud; you can liberally apply powder and scent to his coat; you can teach him clever tricks and even induce him to observe better manners; you can dress him in fine clothes; you can change his diet to the most healthful kind; but when you are all done, *he will be a pig still.*

So you can take a carnal man and change his environment, thus lifting him out of evil associations; you can educate him, teach him the finest manners and dress him in the best of clothes; you can give him a high title and send him to church every week, but when you are done, *you have a carnal man still.*

8. The Men of Romans Seven and Eight

THE experience of the man of *Romans 7* is a struggle. The experience of the person who has been delivered from the *Romans 7* experience and has entered into the work of sanctification is also a struggle—a bitter battle to overcome the flesh and finally emerge as a truly victorious Christian. What then, is the difference?

Those who hear our assertion that the beginning of the Christian experience is marked by the total eradication of the carnal mind, without understanding the nature of that carnal mind as distinct from the flesh, immediately declare that we are teaching holy flesh, that we cannot possibly sin again if this is our experience, and that this is a teaching of instant sanctification.

Such charges witness that those who make them are ignorant of the truth that the revival at the beginning of the Christian experience is a distinct and separate work from that of reformation which follows thereafter.

Those who see the carnal mind and the human nature as being the same thing, naturally equate the struggle of *Romans 7* with the battles of the Christian life and therefore conclude that the experience described in *Romans 7* is the experience of a truly converted child of God. But there is a great difference between the two.

The Man of Romans Seven

The man of *Romans 7* is not a rebel against God, for his will and his intentions are devoted to God's service. He is a slave who is bound to the service of the carnal mind. The whole picture of *Romans 7* is this picture of bondage.

Romans 7

¹⁴ ...I am carnal, sold under sin.

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I

not; but what I hate, that do I.

²³ But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

The situation then, is that this man has the carnal mind which, as a cruel, despotic master, rules over his will to serve every lustful desire of the fleshly human nature. This results in a constant stream of sin pouring forth from the life of such a man. It is clear that the area of mastery or dominion is this indwelling nature and while that is there, the will cannot exert its power to change the situation. The right exercise of the will has its place but not in solving the problem of the man in *Romans 7*. Here the will is powerless to resist the demands of the indwelling power of sin.

It is here that many so tragically go astray in their search for the living truth of salvation from sin. The statement is read which declares that:

Ministry of Healing, p. 176:

Everything depends on the right action of the will.

And, because it is understood that the carnal mind remains, it is assumed that the secret of victory over sin lies in setting the will in unity with the power of God to resist and overcome the powers of the carnal mind.

What is overlooked is the actual wording of the statement in which there is one vital word in particular. That word is “right,” for it says that everything depends on the *right* action of the will. It shows that the action of the will must be directed at the *right* time, at the *right* place, and in the *right* way if everything upon which that depends is to be achieved.

That *right* time and place is *not* in the area of the dominating rulership of the carnal mind. Clear proof of this is afforded in every illustration already studied in connection with this

evil nature. If the slave in Egypt had decided that he would set his will to never again do the command of the slave master, it would only have made his situation considerably worse without accomplishing anything. He would still have been forced to work, and his sufferings would have been made that much greater. The exercise of the will there would have only increased the bitterness of his bondage.

See too how the strongest exercise of the will in the case of the sufferer from disease does not enable him to do that which the sickness declares he cannot do, nor will the most determined effort of the gardener's will enable him to bring forth good fruit from the evil tree. In all these things, the will is not the answer to the problem.

This does not mean that the will has no part to play in conversion, the solving of the carnal mind problem, for the willpower being the choice power, must be exercised to *choose* to have the Lord remove the old man and replace it with the seed of Christ. This is a very different operation from pitting the will against the power of the carnal mind with God helping, as many suppose He does. It is also different from the role of the will during the reformation period. It is the willingness to abandon the effort to achieve righteousness by striving to keep the old man under, and the willingness to give the task entirely into God's capable hands.

The Man of Romans Eight

The experience described in *Romans 8* contrasts strongly with that pictured in the previous chapter.

The man of *Romans 8* no longer has the carnal mind. He has been delivered from the "body of death"; has been "made free from the law of sin and death," and therefore stands under no condemnation. In place of the carnal mind he now has the divine mind, which is the mind of Christ and, as such, he is a born again creature.

This is a very real transaction between God and man. The old nature born of the devil by the implantation of his seed is actually removed from within the man so that it is no longer there. Into the vacuum, the new life which is the seed of Christ is placed. It springs into life, grows sturdily, and graces the entire experience.

Let none cling to the misconception that the old life is removed little by little and the new is introduced as gradually. None of the Bible illustrations provide for this.

- The slave master of Egypt in the person of the firstborn died in one hour or less.
- The thorn bush is taken out completely before the apple tree is planted in its place.
- When Jesus commanded disease to flee or the dead to rise, it was but the work of a moment.

In these object lessons, the Lord desires us to see how totally the old man is removed and as totally replaced by the new. Each illustration also shows that the old life is well developed when it is uprooted, while the new life taking its place is but in its infancy.

To the human mind unenlightened by the Holy Spirit, this is incomprehensible. Most quickly argue in response that if conversion consisted of such a work, then it would be impossible for the child of God to sin again, there would be no more battle or struggle during the Christian life, and such a person should and would be translated instantly to heaven. It is then contended that because Christians, even great Bible Christians, have sinned after conversion, do struggle against temptation during their Christian experience, and do not go to heaven after conversion, the doctrine has to be false and misleading.

From those who are actively supporting false doctrines, the objections have a flavor of scorn and sarcasm to them. Others

find themselves genuinely puzzled by this problem. There need be no confusion as there is a very clear and simple explanation centering in a factor which most have completely overlooked.

The failure, as usual, is in not making the proper distinctions. The man in *Romans 7* is in bondage to the power of sin. He cannot do what he wishes but must serve the dictates of the old man.

But, when he passes into *Romans 8*, he does not pass into another bondage to a different master. The transition is not from bondage to bondage but from bondage to freedom. This means that while he was under the old master, he was not free to serve the Lord in any sense, but when he enters the Lord's service, he is free to serve sin if he so desires though not with impunity.

It is not that the Lord gives him license to sin, but He does not force him to do the works of righteousness. If he sins, he must still suffer the consequences.

The very purpose of the gospel is to set men free, not to transfer them to another servitude. Jesus said:

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

The Desire of Ages, p. 466:

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the guidance of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom.

God has made angels and men intelligent. He has *made* them free to choose, and has *left* them perfectly free to choose. He made them free to think as they choose. God is

the author of intelligence, of freedom of choice, and of freedom of thought. And He will forever respect that of which He is the author. He will never invade to a hair's breadth the freedom of angel or man to choose for himself, nor to think as he chooses.⁷

Therefore, no one is compelled by the indwelling power of God to do right but is set free so that he might choose to do the right in every hour of temptation if he wills so to do. Being born again does not make it impossible for a person to sin, but it does make it possible for him *not to sin*. The will is delivered from bondage and being thus set free "everything depends on the right action of the will."

The New Pattern

So the divine mind in the newly born again serves the will to control, subdue, discipline, and subjugate the flesh, its lusts, passions, and desires wherever those are illegitimate and therefore sinful.

It must be emphasized that conversion, or the revival experience, does not take away the flesh, nor change that flesh, nor deliver us from the erroneous ideas and theories and their resulting habits and practices which were learned in the school of Satan. These are still very much there and are a source of difficulty until we gain the victory over them as will be demonstrated from the Bible accounts of truly converted people. They are fountains of evil upon which the devil will work again and again to effect, if possible, the destruction of the individual.

An excellent example of this is the story of the quarrel which erupted in the early Christian church shortly after it had been filled with the mighty gift of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal fullness. It would be expected that under such conditions as these, when the Spirit had such fullness of presence, there would be no possibility of sin emerging among the be-

⁷ A. T. Jones, *Ecclesiastical Empire*, p. 587, emphasis original.

lievers. Yet the record plainly tells of this grumbling and complaining on the part of the Grecians against the Hebrews, resulting from a supposed partiality of treatment against them.

Satan was, of course, the instigator of this trouble, but what could he appeal to in these people to cause such friction? The answer to this is given:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 87-88:

The hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles, were softened and united by Christian love. Despite former prejudices, all were in harmony with one another. Satan knew that so long as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth; and he sought to take advantage of *former habits of thought*, in the hope that *thereby* he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion.

Here were a spirit-filled, and therefore, converted people, yet they were still possessed of certain former habits of thought which they had learned and developed in the old school of Satan. These did not disappear on their being converted, but remained to provide the devil with an area in which he could tempt and try. As we well know, he was all too successful in doing this, causing a dissension which was settled by the appointment of the seven deacons.

This is a fine statement which shows that the revival does not solve the total problem of sin, but leaves a further work to be done in the process of the reformation during which those who would at last be found in the kingdom, must gain the victory over every wrong idea, theory, habit, and practice as fast as the Spirit of God is able to show these things to them.

Thus, the situation for the converted man of *Romans 8* is that he still has the same human nature as the man of *Romans 7*, with, for the most part, the same ideas and theories, and the *consequent* habits and practices as the man *before* he was converted.

It is said, "for the most part," because conversion does bring about immediate deliverance from some of the wrong ideas and theories of the past. Further, it is specifically stated that the habits and practices which remain are those *consequent* upon the wrong ideas and theories which carry over. This is specified, for it is true that at conversion many habits and practices are dropped never to return, but they are not the ones resulting from erroneous thinking not corrected by the conversion experience.

Of these former habits of thought, the devil will constantly seek to take the utmost advantage, so that the individual suffers under the pressure of continual temptation. The difficulty with this kind of temptation is that the person, at this stage, is not aware that the idea he has retained is wrong, so he does not understand what the devil is doing to him.

An excellent example of this is the situation with Christ's apostles who labored under the erroneous idea that the Messiah was to establish the kingdom of David as a temporal empire, straddling the whole earth. As we shall study later, the devil took advantage of this again and again to cause them problem after problem, but they could not be delivered from this temptation until they had first been delivered from the wrong idea.

The flesh has as its very makeup, the passions, the appetites, the affections and the inbuilt law of self-preservation and self-interest. All these have been either perverted or given an exaggerated importance in human thinking, and constitute a very valuable field in which Satan can apply his specious temptations. The story of the fall of our first parents is clear proof that even holy and sinless beings can be tempted through the avenue of the flesh and its interests, so, how much more those who have been subjected to almost six thousand years of degeneracy.

The Vital Role of the Will

Thus the flesh has in it the resident weaknesses which are so responsive to Satan's temptations.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 496:

In the human heart there is a natural selfishness and corruption, which can only be overcome by most thorough discipline and severe restraint; and even then it will require years of patient effort and earnest resistance.

So it is that:

Review and Herald, January 13, 1891:

Every Christian will have a hard battle to fight with wrong habits. He must overcome his unbelief, his deformity of character, his inclination to self-indulgence. His long resistance of light, warnings, and appeals has left its mark upon his life...

The Desire of Ages, p. 122:

Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the *physical* nature have been *most* effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind.

When such temptations appealing to the physical nature come, the divine nature in us, even though it has plenitude of power to more than do it, *is not going to automatically subdue the desires of the natural heart*. Every such temptation is a point of choice requiring that we specifically and decidedly refuse to do the wrong and turn to the right.

If that choice is made in the simple faith that the power of God within us is not only more than willing to effect that deliverance but also has the power to do it, then victory will be as absolute as it is certain.

On the other hand, if, when temptation comes, the mind is confused so that it is unable to discern the real nature of the tempter's call, or if the mind bends to the desires of the flesh, or, if the faith of the soul has grown weak through neglect to

study the Word or by preoccupation with things material and earthly, then it is certain that defeat will follow.

Defeat is certain here, because the mighty power of God in the individual can do nothing unless, first, the will is set to serve the Lord. The power of God is there, not to dominate and control the life, but to serve it, to give it victory over sin and to maintain the living life of God in the soul. In order for this power to operate, it must first have the cooperation and directives of the will.

A Qualification

The fact that God's power in us is there to serve, is not to be interpreted as meaning that the will *uses* the divine nature as it chooses, so that the will becomes master and the divine nature the slave. In no sense do we use the Holy Spirit. This absolutely cannot be, even though the Holy Spirit, which is the life of Christ in the soul, is there to serve and not to be served.

This may seem a contradiction in terms, but only because of the human tendency to think of things spiritual in the light of the earthly. There is a service which is rendered by the worldling to higher power, but it is forced from him. He renders it because he is compelled to, either by the sheer force of another will, or by the compulsion of circumstances.

But the service rendered by the Christian and his God, is a *willing* service which is not commanded, but given to fill the need which is there. So, the divine life of God in the soul serves the will without being under bondage to it.

It must ever be remembered, however, that it will not fill the need automatically for the very simple reason that it is not the way of God to intrude where He is not welcome. Therefore, the power of God in us will never rise to fill the need unless called upon by the strong cry of living faith.

The Differences Then

The difference then, between the man of *Romans 7* and the man of *Romans 8*, is that the former is a slave to the carnal mind which, as a cruel, despotic slave master, overrides the will to serve the flesh, while the latter is set free from that bondage. He is given the divine mind in its place, which, as a servant, provides when called upon in the hour of temptation, the power necessary to subdue every evil desire of the flesh.

In both cases the flesh is the same, but in the latter the center of control has passed from the carnal mind to the will. This being so, everything does indeed, depend on the *right* action of the will, for if it does not act correctly in the face of temptation, then the power of God cannot come to our assistance and we will certainly sin.

9. Battlefields

AN IMPORTANT objective of this series of studies is to show the changing nature of the battle as one moves on from a successful entry into the revival experience, to the reformation phase.

No one will cope successfully with day to day Christian warfare, who does not understand that there is a difference in the battle to be fought to *gain* the victory from the battle needed to *maintain* it. The solutions provided for the sin problem are very specific and must be applied so. There are so many who are content with a vague and indefinite application of God's merciful provisions.

Before a person obtains the revival, he is in a certain state of being. He still has the carnal mind, the seed of Satan, the indwelling power of unrighteousness. Therefore, Satan is able to tempt and overcome him with certain success, for it is impossible for a person in this state to do the works of God.

But, when he has been revived, then a new life has been implanted in place of the old. He has been delivered from the bondage of the old nature into the freedom of the new.

This change in conditions places Satan at a very serious disadvantage in the struggle to destroy God's children. But, he still has certain avenues to exploit if possible and he makes the most of these opportunities. Recognition of this and how to handle the problems is essential to a successful development in righteousness during the reformation period.

Comparison of Romans 7 and 8 Condition

In an effort to make the differences clear, the diagram on the following page has been developed. In conjunction with it, reference will be made to the progress of a large and victorious army to illustrate the factors on which an abiding victory depends. In this diagram a comparison is made between the

situations of the *Romans* 7 and 8 men.

The former still has in him the carnal mind, which, like an indwelling disease, rules over the desires of the will and serves the lusts, appetites, passions, and cravings of the fallen, sinful, human nature. This man is in slavery to this power and cannot do what he wishes to do. Notice with care that the deciding, controlling element in this situation is the carnal mind.



Once this despotism has been broken by the deposing of that despotic ruler, some changes are instituted. The divine mind has replaced the carnal mind. This mind has an alto-

gether different character from that of the former ruler. It is not a despotic master but a loving servant. It does not take over the life. The child of God is not one who has passed from one bondage to another.

When this is realized, it will be seen that there is no foundation for the idea that the person filled with the divine life of Christ cannot sin. Such a person can sin and sadly, very often has. However, while he can still sin, he is no longer compelled to, so that any appearance of iniquity in him must result from his failure to live in full accord with his privileges.

The area of decision has been moved from the carnal mind to the will. It is now the governing factor in man. Equipped with the indwelling presence and power of God augmented by the heavenly resources available from without, the will is able to achieve its highest aspirations.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 333:

As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command, may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.

Having been set free by the revival procedure, the victory is gained. It is now the task and responsibility of the Christian to allow Christ to *maintain* that victory in him. The fallen, sinful flesh is still there with its appetites, passions, affections, and cravings just about the same as it was before he was born again. It is the role of the will to ensure that instead of being satisfied, those desires are kept under perfect control and sternly denied. In this everything depends on the right action of the will.

It is Satan who seeks to drag us down through the instrument of the flesh, while Christ is ever working to uplift us through the mind. But the Saviour cannot preserve us from evil without our intelligent cooperation.

Our responsibility is to become familiar with the devil's line of attack. As he works to arouse the desires or fears of the flesh, we are to recognize his tactics and respond with a positive decision not to yield.

However, this stand will not bring success if it is taken without a strong faith connection with the Almighty. It is only as we know and trust the power of God in us and around us that the enemy will be routed. Any confidence in ourselves is to guarantee defeat. We cannot save ourselves from temptation. This is the work of Christ.

We may be assured that His wonderful life within us, in addition to all the resources of heaven, is only awaiting the setting of a faith-filled will in the right direction, to come to the rescue of the tempted one. Satan is no match for that power and flees before it on every occasion.

It is important to understand that the divine mind and the Holy Spirit are not servants in the sense that we command and use them. Just as they do not rule over us, so we cannot rule over them, for these procedures are foreign to God's ways of working. But these mighty powers are only waiting to serve, to fill the need that is there. Call upon them, and they are instantly present and victory is assured.

When the youthful Christian, Joseph, was confronted by a powerfully tempting appeal from his master's wife, his refusal was successful not because of his own power but because of the heavenly resources on which he, by faith, depended. He absolutely knew he did not have to commit that sin for the simple reason that the life of Christ was in him and the power of God was available to him. It was by faith that he overcame.

The temptation to Joseph was not merely a call to satisfy a physical desire. There was much more to it than that as shall be shown later when the life of Joseph is studied in more detail.

Comparison to an Army

The mighty power of God is certainly well able to handle any clamors of the flesh, for it is infinitely more powerful. Well might it be asked then why the Christian does fall into sin at times when, in fact, there is neither true reason nor excuse for it.

The greatest armies of earth can be overcome if they fail to keep a faithful watch. Let the various aspects of the Christian's life and equipment be compared to a mighty army. Firstly there is the general, illustrious examples of which are Caesar, Napoleon, Charlemagne, Rommel, Montgomery, and so on. This man is the decision making element in the picture. He decides where the army is to fight, what the battle plan is to be, and how the various parts of the forces are to be deployed. The army never moves without a decision first being made by him.

The army represents the mighty power by which the will of the general is made effective. It is the counterpart of the power of God in the believer. There are, of course, differences between the character of such an army and the life of God in the soul:

- The former is trained to destroy and to slavishly obey the directions of the commander, whereas the character of God is to save and uplift.
- Neither does the Holy Spirit accept orders from the believer as an army does from its general, for He remains forever free to serve according to His infinite wisdom.

While there are these differences between the two, the illustration still serves to make a certain point clear as we will show.

Then there is the enemy. In the case of the general it is some kingdom or tribe who is either attacking them or standing in the way of world dominion. In the case of the Christian it is

the devil working through his ally, the flesh.

It will now be supposed that a great army has marched across the world along a trail marked by an unbroken series of victories. Finally, there is only one battle left to fight, and this is against a small force of fierce mountain warriors. The general evaluates their power as being much inferior to other mighty armies he has already conquered and, as the next day is an important festival, he decides to delay his attack on them until the day after.

On the evening before the attack a great feast is organized in honor of the special day. Large amounts of liquor are consumed, feasting is continued into the small hours of the morning, and revelry is the order of the night until by dawn the general and his aides lie insensible on the floor. The officer whose responsibility it is to appoint the guard has failed in his duty because he is incapacitated by the debauchery. Thus the will of the army has been rendered totally ineffective and the guards have been dropped.

The enemy meanwhile, has carefully studied the situation and recognizes that the opportune moment for attack has arrived. They launch this just before the dawn, the small but desperate force bursting upon the unguarded multitude like a flash flood. Caught entirely by surprise, the army looks instinctively to the general for direction and strategy. But the general is incapable of doing a thing as he lies in his drunken stupor. The outcome can only be a humiliating defeat for the famous general. His army will have been battered but not destroyed. It will regroup, sadder but wiser, and will storm the fortress of the opponents to defeat them soundly.

This is an excellent illustration of what happens in the experience of God's children. Their wills are the general in the battle. This does not deny that Christ is the ultimate commander in the struggle, but it does recognize that He does not take over the wills of His children. They must make decisions upon

which the outcome of the struggle definitely depends.

Anything which weakens or beclouds that will, provides the enemy with the opportune moment to attack. The devil studies the life of each Christian while at the same time endeavoring to manipulate circumstances which will render the decision power ineffective. Once this is achieved, he knows he has a victory over them. All that remains is to make a sudden, subtle, and unexpected attack and the child of God falls into sin.

It is comforting to know that, although a victory has been gained by Satan, he has not won the war. He has not obliterated the forces of God which are still there awaiting the right decisions from the Christian, who, chastened but wiser, counterattacks with omnipotent forces resulting in Satan's prompt discomfiture.

The Trap of Despair

The tempter seeks to avoid being the recipient of this counteroffensive by leading the Christian into a state of miserable despair. He tries to persuade him that he is a failure, that he can never achieve righteousness, and most certainly that the Lord cannot forgive such inexcusable behavior.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 156:

It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon.

Special note of this must be taken by every child of God. Knowledge of it has been of great help to all those who have become aware of this device, because, on learning that it is Satan's work to keep the one who has failed in fearful despair, they will turn quickly to God for restoration from the mistake made. Thus God's purpose is achieved, and Satan's plan thwarted.

Messages to Young People, p. 100:

If you have made mistakes, you certainly gain a victory if

you see these mistakes, and regard them as beacons of warning. Thus you turn defeat into victory, disappointing the enemy, and honoring your Redeemer.

This can only mean that the matter of greater importance is not whether a person sins or not, important though that be. The truly significant consequence lies in what he does about it:

1. He can succumb to Satan's device and be too filled with shame and remorse, and fear to seek pardon and restoration of the Lord, or,
2. Though shamed by the sin, he can turn with true faith to the unlimited forgiveness of God and be placed on higher ground again.

Some make the mistake of thinking they must live a good life for a period to prove that they are worthy of being forgiven. It must be repeatedly emphasized that there never has been and never will be a time when the children of men will be worthy of God's forgiveness. There is nothing in man of himself to commend him to God, therefore it is a fallacy to think that we can and should produce a pattern of good behavior after we have sinned in order to qualify us for the reception of God's pardon.

The only safe and satisfactory way is to turn to the Lord the instant we are overcome by the enemy, frankly and fully tell Him what has happened, and pass the whole problem into His capable hands. He will give us true repentance, forgiveness, and restoration. What was a nasty defeat will be transformed into a glowing victory.

But primarily, the objective is to live without defeat. Study should be given to the impregnable fortification of the soul's defenses so the devil will have no opportunity to mount a successful assault. As anything which weakens the will assures the enemy of success, study must be given to the factors which do induce this weakened condition.

Overconfidence

Overconfidence is in reality, self-confidence. Its development occurs in the following way. Possessed of mighty spiritual powers within and without, the child of God enters on a very successful period of warfare against sin and Satan. As he sees victories piled on victories, his confidence grows and grows until a subtle transfer takes place from confidence in God to belief in himself. This happens so insidiously that a careful watch must be maintained to detect and guard against it.

This guard is secured in two ways at least. One is to constantly reject any tendency to put confidence in one's self and the other is to spend time every day in contemplating the marvelous power, love, and character of God, that the true helplessness of the human will be better and better assessed.

The Desire of Ages, p. 382:

Those who fail to realize their constant dependence upon God will be overcome by temptation. We may now suppose that our feet stand secure, and that we shall never be moved. We may say with confidence, I know in whom I have believed; nothing can shake my faith in God and in His word. But Satan is planning to take advantage of our hereditary and cultivated traits of character, and to blind our eyes to our own necessities and defects. Only through realizing our own weakness, and looking steadfastly unto Jesus, can we walk securely.

Overconfidence does not change the power of God available to us, but disconnects us from it and weakens our faith in it. Because faith is so critical an element in victorious or righteous living, anything which weakens it will increase the prospects of humiliation.

When self-confidence enters the experience, the sense of need to strengthen the soul's defenses through much prayer and study, is lessened. The life becomes more and more preoccupied with earthly things, while a false sense of security

builds. But, it is impossible to build and maintain an effective spiritual fortress without continual Bible study and communion with the heavenly powers. The seed of Christ in the believer daily requires spiritual food to flourish and grow. We should no more think of neglecting the feeding of the spiritual nature than we would our fleshly bodies.

The inspired Psalmist understood this when he said,

Psalm 119

¹¹ Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 458-459:

The reason why the youth, and even those of mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin, is that they do not study the word of God and meditate upon it as they should. The lack of firm, decided will power, which is manifest in life and character, results from neglect of the sacred instruction of God's word. They do not by earnest effort direct the mind to that which would inspire pure, holy thought and divert it from that which is impure and untrue. There are few who choose the better part, who sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn of the divine Teacher. Few treasure His words in the heart and practice them in the life.

The truths of the Bible, received, will uplift mind and soul. If the word of God were appreciated as it should be, both young and old would possess an inward rectitude, a strength of principle, that would enable them to resist temptation.

No matter how deeply and sincerely converted a person may be, or what wonderful victories he has gained, if he does not carefully and faithfully feed upon God's word, the power of God will become less and less in his sight and his own sufficiency will become more and more adequate. As certainly as this happens, he will fall. It is the guaranteed outcome.

Those who are finding that they are falling under temptation even though they can look back upon and testify to a genuine new birth experience, should look firstly to see if

they have been feeding diligently and faithfully on God's word every day. If this is lacking then there is no need to murmur against the promises of God, or to complain of the hardness of the way or to seek excuses in the frailty of humanity. To adopt such measures is to delight the devil.

Instead, let each frankly recognize the real cause of the trouble. Behold your malnutrition, your starved and sickly spiritual state. Let there be no more bemoaning a life of virtually accepted defeat. Rise "quit you like" honest and noble "men." *1 Corinthians* 16:13. Determine that there will be a feasting on the Scriptures daily till living strength and vitality exude from every spiritual fiber.

Then what a change in the experience will be found. As temptation comes, the spiritual eye will instantly discern its nature, the will chooses not to bow to the pressure, and, as the decision is taken, living faith lays hold on the power of God to save. The response is instant as the mighty powers of God within and without come to the rescue. The devil is routed and disappointed, while God and His truth are honored, and the Christian is filled with the joy of His salvation.

Blurred Borders

The lack of spiritual feeding resulting from the development of self-confidence, spawns other problems besides the weakening of faith. The distinct lines separating righteousness from evil become blurred. The mind is no longer certain where one ends and the other begins. This rules out the possibilities of decisive stands being taken. While the confused brain is seeking to unravel the answer, the devil does not passively and patiently wait, but, recognizing the advantage this affords him, seizes upon it. When the mind finally sees what should be done, the believer is too ensnared to escape being overcome.

To understand this better, consider the quandary of a guard

who cannot establish the identity of an approaching person. His challenge receives only a deceptive answer. He thinks it might be a friend, or is it? All the time the enemy is advancing, the gap is closing, and time is running out. Still the sentry strives to obtain certainty, but he cannot. Finally, the assailant rushes him from a position so close that the guard has no hope. He is defeated and the camp lies exposed to the peril in the night.

To safeguard from such an outcome, the army demands that an oncoming person stand off at a safe distance until identity has been established beyond doubt. Should the person refuse to comply, he will simply be shot regardless of whether he is friend or foe. Satan never waits until we are sure who he is, necessitating that we speedily recognize both who he is and the nature of the temptation he brings. There is neither time nor safety in delayed identification.

Victory is assured only when a decisive choice is made not to be involved in Satan's schemes, while faith instantly lays hold upon the mighty power of God to make effective the stand taken by the will.

The better informed and more thoroughly educated the Christian is, the greater the assurance of his living a victorious life. Because God has invested in man the freedom to choose, He does not remove or disregard this in the struggle to return to ultimate perfection. Neither does He plan the way of salvation without reference to this factor.

Therefore, man must know what is right and wrong, and he is the one who must make the choice. God will never accept this responsibility. He will direct us in the principles and paths of righteousness, educating our minds, sharpening our perceptions, and strengthening our wills. He has made available every facility for effecting these objectives, but He will never do the choosing for us. This is *our* work. Therefore it is written,

John 8

³² And *you* shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

There can be no mistaking who is to know the truth. Jesus declared that His people are the ones who must know it and in the knowing of it will be made free. Those who do not take the trouble to learn the truth as it is in Jesus will perish, as, once again, it is written,

Hosea 4

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

The Scriptures reveal Satan's methods and devices so there is nothing which he fears so much as a people who are so thoroughly conversant with the Bible that they are able to penetrate his disguises and detect his subterfuges, while on the other hand, he knows that those who neglect to fortify the mind with the truth will be an easy prey to his temptations.

The Great Controversy, p. 516:

So long as we are ignorant of their [the evil spirits] wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working.

There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices.

The evil one is not content to simply distract us from the study of God's word. He is constantly offering us alternatives to occupy the mind. Through the communications media of television, radio, newspapers, and the novel, he is injecting into millions of minds, concepts which are sharply variant from the principles of truth. Thus he makes right appear to be wrong and wrong right, until the borders between them are thoroughly blurred. So serious are the consequences that ulti-

mately men will do the very works of Satan and think they are defending and promoting God's cause.

That which the world looks upon as entertainment is in fact education and there is no one who, in spending time absorbing the messages conveyed through the media under the guise of harmless amusement, does not thereby place his eternal life at fearful risk. Thereby, he is being deprived of the power to decide what is truth, and thus cannot make positive decisions for the right in the hour of temptation.

In this age, when awareness of the dangers associated with these things is lessening, all would do well to read again the instructions given in the inspired writings in regard to works of fiction, be they in written or acted form. Careful heed should be taken of these counsels in order to strengthen the shield against the power of temptation.

Let it be constantly remembered that anything which reduces the sharp, clear distinctions between right and wrong deprives the will of the power to positively and quickly choose correctly. When this decision is not made, there is no dependence by faith on God's saving power, with the certain result that the soul will fall into sin. This will be true no matter how thoroughly a person has experienced the revival experience.

Intemperance

Strength and clarity of will are directly related to a sound, clean, healthy body. Intemperance in eating, working, or any other human activity, introduces unhealthy conditions into the body which becloud the mind, thereby rendering it unfit to make the kind of decisions essential to victorious living.

In the illustration presented above, the army general, through debauchery, rendered himself incapable of fulfilling his role as the will of the military. So extreme was his intemperance that he achieved this in one short night. While God's

children will not descend so rapidly, yet every act of intemperance has its tragic effect on the entire system in direct proportion to its extent.

Therefore, obedience to the laws of health is not merely for the development of physical well-being. There are direct spiritual consequences which are also involved. It is for this reason that the enemy has concentrated on temptations which bear on the physical nature of man. If only we were all as fully aware of the implications of this as he is, we would be as much on guard against indulgence of the physical desires as he is to gratify them.

Temperance, p. 165:

In the family circle and in the church we should place Christian temperance on an elevated platform. It should be a living, working element, reforming habits, dispositions, and characters. *Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the evil in our world.*

The Ministry of Healing, p. 335:

It must be kept before the people that the right balance of the mental and moral powers depends in a great degree on the right condition of the physical system. All narcotics and unnatural stimulants that enfeeble and degrade the physical nature tend to lower the tone of the intellect and morals. *Intemperance lies at the foundation of the moral depravity of the world.* By the indulgence of perverted appetite, man loses his power to resist temptation.

My Life Today, p. 148:

Every organ of the body was made to be servant of the mind. The brain is the capital of the body, the seat of all the nervous forces and of mental action. The nerves proceeding from the brain control the body. By the brain nerves, mental impressions are conveyed to all the nerves of the body as by telegraph wires; and they control the vital action of every part of the system. All the organs of motion are governed by the communications they receive from the brain.

The brain nerves which communicate with the entire sys-

tem are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate with man and affect his inmost life. Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind. Any part of the body that is not treated with consideration will telegraph its injury to the brain.

It is not only the privilege, but the sacred duty, of all to understand the laws God has established in their beings....And as they more fully understand the human body,...they will seek to bring their bodies into subjection to the noble powers of the mind. The body will be regarded by them as a wonderful structure, formed by the Infinite Designer, and given in their charge to keep this harp of a thousand strings in harmonious action.

To make a success of Christian life, the development of sound minds in sound bodies is of the greatest importance. The harmonious, healthy action of all the powers of body and mind results in happiness; the more elevated and refined the powers, the more pure and unalloyed the happiness.

Temperance is so large and important a subject that entire books could well be devoted to it. There is not that space in this volume. The essential point being established here is that intemperance beclouds the mind, confuses the reason, and reduces the moral strength so that the soul is exposed unprotected to the power of temptation.

This being so, it is necessary that those who would be victors in the battle with evil, concentrate very heavily on eliminating every intemperate habit from their lives.

The Right Action of the Will

In this chapter, the object is to show the difference between the freedom enjoyed by the man described in *Romans* 8, and the bondage described in the previous chapter. The former has the liberty to do the works of God and to stand entirely separate from sin, while the latter is in no such position.

But, victory is not automatic. With the man in *Romans 8*, *everything* depends on the *right* action of the will. The approach of temptation must be discerned for what it is and a positive decision must be made *not* to submit to its call. At the same time, no confidence must be entertained in the ability of the human to resist the enticement. Faith must lay hold on the salvation of God, for He alone can deliver us from the tempter.

This place and role of the will must be clearly understood so that the Christian will know how to keep the mind clear, and the will strong, and will be able to make quick and positive identifications of the enemy's works.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 176:

The tempted one needs to understand the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man—the power of decision, of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. Desires for goodness and purity are right, so far as they go; but if we stop here, they avail nothing. Many will go down to ruin while hoping and desiring to overcome their evil propensities. They do not yield the will to God. They do not *choose* to serve Him.

God has given us the power of choice; it is ours to exercise. We cannot change our hearts, we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. We cannot make ourselves pure, fit for God's service. But we can *choose* to serve God, we can give Him our will; then He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus our whole nature will be brought under the control of Christ.

Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength from above to hold us steadfast. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God.

Be careful to notice that the statement does not say that ev-

everything depends on the action of the will, but on the *right* action of the will.

There are people who form their theology on this statement, but their way to victory involves exerting the will to subdue the carnal mind. This is attempting the impossible. It is the same as if a gardener put forth the utmost power of his will to produce apples from a thorn tree. This cannot and does not work, nor ever will. Therefore, any use of the will in this fashion is not the right action of it and will not bring success.

Before a person is born again, he is enslaved by the carnal mind. To such, God offers deliverance. The *right* action of the will at this point is to choose to give God the full right to remove the old man and implant the new. There is nothing more that the will can do at this stage.

Then, when this change has been wrought, the will must choose to reject every temptation to the flesh, again handing the situation over to the Lord for Him to solve. He is the Saviour, and only He is superior in power to the evil one.

Study with great care to understand what the *right* action of the will is, if you desire to be victorious and find a place in the eternal land. Everything depends on it.

10. Contrasting Characters

THE Scriptures record the lives of many of God's children. These chronicles have been preserved because:

- They illustrate the workings of the plan of salvation in actual case histories;
- They demonstrate the effectiveness of the provisions offered, proving that the gospel is not mere theory, but a living and practical success;
- They show how God deals with sin in His own children;
- How the devil works insidiously to undermine that good work, and
- How victory or defeat comes about.

For these reasons, a great deal of time should be devoted to studying these stories. They are highly instructive and encouraging.

Use will now be made of some of these lives to clarify and develop the points already made. In doing so, no effort will be made to either condemn these men or to excuse their wrongs. This is not the reason for the frank records of the Scriptures. They are there to enable us to analyze where these people went right or wrong, to trace the consequences of such actions so that we will be better informed and thus better equipped to face the foe successfully.

It is to be remembered that only those who have learned not to repeat the mistakes made by God's people in the past will see the battle through to final victory and experience translation. Therefore, the study undertaken here will be analytical, not critical.

Two lives providing a sharp contrast between victory and defeat are those of Joseph and David. Both came to occupy positions of rulership, the former as second-in-command to the king of Egypt, and the latter as the monarch of Israel. The

comparative examination of these two lives is especially valuable because of both the similarities and the differences between them.

- Both were truly revived or born again Christians;
- Both occupied positions of great power, and
- Both were faced with the same temptation—adultery.

But while Joseph was untouched by the temptation, David succumbed to it. Why and how was one totally triumphant and the other defeated?

To everyone who has experienced the revival, and who is in the reformation phase, the same possibilities exist. All are in danger of falling, and are not in the least automatically secure from it. On the other hand, as the life of Joseph proves, not one of us needs to submit. Victory can be the experience of all and is, in fact, the right of every child of God.

There were reasons for David's fate, and there were reasons for Joseph's success. If the factors governing David's life are found in our experience, then our failure will be as certain as his, while the principles in Joseph, if incorporated into our lives, will protect us as fully as they did him. For these things to be in us as they were in Joseph, we must understand and personally apply them as he did.

Joseph

First it must be established that they were indeed born again Christians who had truly experienced the revival and were therefore in the school of the reformation.

It appears that Joseph became a true child of God very early in life and as such, manifested all the characteristics of such a person. Of him it is written when he was still a lad in his father's tent:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 209:

There was one, however, of a widely different character,—

the elder son of Rachel, Joseph, whose rare personal beauty seemed but to reflect an *inward* beauty of *mind* and *heart*. Pure, active, and joyous, the lad gave evidence also of moral earnestness and firmness. He listened to his father's instructions, and *loved to obey God*. The qualities that afterward distinguished him in Egypt—gentleness, fidelity, and truthfulness—were already manifest in his daily life.

The contrast here is between Joseph and his unrighteous brothers. The very expressions used to describe him show that he was indeed a truly born again Christian, for there was “an *inward* beauty of mind and heart”; he “loved to obey God”; while he had within him the fruits of the Spirit, “gentleness, fidelity, and truthfulness.”

A little later the Lord gave to him the two prophetic dreams which he in turn related to his brethren.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 210:

As the lad stood before his brothers, his beautiful countenance *lighted up with the Spirit of Inspiration*, they could not withhold their admiration; but they did not choose to renounce their evil ways, and they hated the purity that reproved their sins. The same spirit that actuated Cain was kindling in their hearts.

Here is the picture of the youthful Joseph with the Spirit of God flowing *through* him in ministry to his brethren, and they in turn, convicted under the power of that witness. It is the truth that the Spirit of God does not flow *through* a person unless He first of all dwells *within* a person. Here it is seen that the Spirit did flow *through* him, by which we can know that it was already *in* him, and if *in* him, then he was indeed a born again Christian.

Yet, despite the fact that he was a born again Christian, he had faults yet to be corrected, as has every other child of God. What made things worse was that in his own home the education he was receiving as the petted child of his father was not reforming him in the right direction.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 213:

His father, strong and tender as his love had been, had done him wrong by his partiality and indulgence...Its effects were manifest also in his own character. Faults had been encouraged that were now to be corrected. He was becoming self-sufficient and exacting.

As Joseph went down to Egypt, his future looked black and discouraging, but then there came before him his father's teachings regarding the Lord's dealings with His people in the past. This reflection revived Joseph's faith and courage and led him to make a full dedication to God, a promise involving his strict faithfulness to all the commandments of the Lord.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

Joseph believed that the God of his fathers would be his God. He then and there gave himself fully to the Lord, and he prayed that the Keeper of Israel would be with him in the land of his exile.

His soul thrilled with the high resolve to prove himself true to God,—under all circumstances to act as became a subject of the King of heaven. He would serve the Lord with undivided heart; he would meet the trials of his lot with fortitude, and perform every duty with fidelity. One day's experience had been the turning point in Joseph's life. Its terrible calamity had transformed him from a petted child to a man, thoughtful, courageous, and self-possessed.⁸

This is the consecration of one who has already been born again. It is the consecration renewal which is made when a great point of test and decision has come, such as had to Joseph at that moment in his life.

So he went into Egypt, and the whole record of his stay there revealed that he did have qualities which only a revived person could have. As such, he was able to receive from the Lord the marvelous blessings of the new covenant, for of him it is written:

⁸ See *the song on this theme* at the end of this chapter.

Genesis 39

² And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

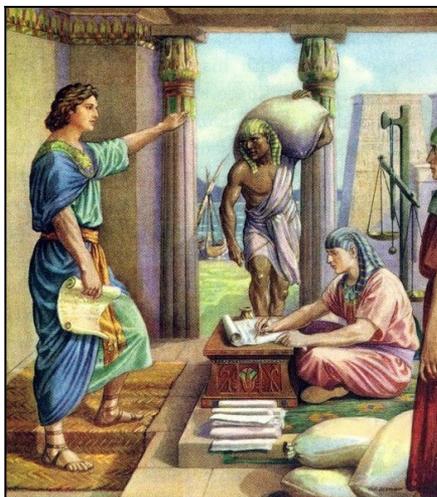
³ And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

⁴ And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had put into his hand.

⁵ And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

Joseph's behavior, while in the house of Potiphar, is in itself evidence that the Spirit of God was in him and working through him. He was indeed a son of God and daily he was making advances in the work of grace.

It is interesting to note that in the whole of the Scriptural records, no sin is recorded against Joseph. This does not mean that he was absolutely perfect and that the reformation in him was complete, for this was not so, but he was a man with such a hold upon God, and such a humble attitude toward his own abilities and qualities that the Lord was able to keep him in every hour of temptation.



Source: His Word in Pictures website

The greatest of all came when Potiphar's wife sought to seduce him into adultery. In that hour he faced that temptation a born again Christian. The fact that he did, however, was not in itself the automatic guarantee of success. He could very

well have fallen. Let us praise the Lord that we have on record the story of a man who could have but did not fall.

And David

It was also as a born again Christian that David faced the same temptation to commit adultery. David's story is the account of things as they might have been with Joseph, but happily were not. Joseph's experience is exactly what David's could have been but tragically was not.

There are abundant evidences to show that David was a truly born again Christian before, and at the time when he faced this great temptation.

The first introduction to David is found in *1 Samuel* 16. This is the record of Samuel setting forth at God's command to anoint a new king in place of the rebellious and wicked Saul from whom the kingdom was to be taken. The Lord rejected each of the seven elder brothers because,

1 Samuel 16

⁷ The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

The man whom God would choose to be ruler of His people must have a heart which was right with God, and the only people who have such a heart are those who are born again. More than that, to have a heart which was right, involved the possession of qualities which would fit one for the high responsibility of being the king of Israel.

That David had the combination required, is evident from the fact that the Lord did choose him to be the future ruler of Israel. We are not so concerned with the other qualities as we are with his having the deliverance from the bondage of sin so that he was truly, in heart and life, a son of the living God. That David was such, is further evidenced by the fact that from the time of his anointing to be king,

1 Samuel 16

¹³ The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

The outstanding quality of Joseph's life was that he did not seek for position. He served to the best of his ability right where he was from day to day. If the Lord had appointed to him the lot of a slave, that he would be, but he would be the best slave in the world for God's sake.

David also, even though he knew that he had been anointed to be king of Israel, did not throw aside the common duties of the day, but set to work as a shepherd as if that were all he would ever do for the rest of his life. He waited with infinite patience for the Lord to give him that for which he had been anointed.

It was during those days of waiting which he filled with diligent service, that he held close communion with the Lord and received from Him such revelations of truth as only a true son of God could receive.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 641-642:

The great honor conferred upon David did not serve to elate him. Notwithstanding the high position which he was to occupy, he quietly continued his employment, *content to await the development of the Lord's plans in His own time and way*. As humble and modest as before his anointing, the shepherd boy returned to the hills, and watched and guarded his flocks *as tenderly as ever*. But with new inspiration he composed his melodies, and played upon his harp.

Before him spread a landscape of rich and varied beauty. The vines, with their clustering fruit, brightened in the sunshine. The forest trees, with their green foliage, swayed in the breeze. He beheld the sun flooding the heavens with light, coming forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. There were the bold summits of the hills reaching toward the sky; in the faraway distance rose the barren cliffs of the mountain wall of Moab; above all spread the tender blue of the overarching heavens.

And beyond was God. He could not see Him, but His works were full of His praise. The light of day, gilding forest and mountain, meadow and stream, carried the mind up to behold the Father of lights, the Author of every good and perfect gift. Daily revelations of the character and majesty of his Creator, filled the young poet's heart with adoration and rejoicing.



Source: David hoc est, 1637

In contemplation of God and His works, the faculties of David's mind and heart were developing and strengthening for the work of his afterlife. He was daily coming into a more intimate communion with God. His mind was constantly penetrating into new depths, for fresh themes to inspire his song, and to awake the music of his harp. The rich melody of his voice poured out upon the air, echoed from the hills as if responsive to the rejoicing of the angels' songs in heaven.

Who can measure the results of those years of toil and wandering among the lonely hills? The communion with nature and with God, the care of his flocks, the perils and deliverances, the griefs and joys, of his lowly lot, were not only to mold the character of David, and to influence his future life, but through the psalms of Israel's sweet singer, they were, in all coming ages, to kindle love and faith in the hearts of God's people, bringing them nearer to the ever-loving heart of Him in Whom all His creatures live.

David, in the beauty and vigor of his young manhood, was preparing to take a high position with the noblest of the earth. His talents, as precious gifts from God, were employed to extol the glory of the divine Giver. His opportunities of contemplation and meditation served to enrich him with that wisdom and piety that made him beloved of God and angels.

As he contemplated the perfections of His Creator, clearer conceptions of God opened before his soul. Obscure themes were illuminated, difficulties were made plain, perplexities were harmonized, and each ray of new light called forth fresh bursts of rapture, and sweeter anthems of devotion, to the glory of God and the Redeemer.

The love that moved him, the sorrows that beset him, the triumphs that attended him, were all themes for his active thought; and as he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart throbbed with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him.

These words truly describe the experience of one who has been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and is walking in the light of heaven. Such a person is certainly not in the darkness of spiritual Egypt but is walking through the pathway of the wilderness school that leads to the gates of Canaan. There can be no doubt that David was a truly converted young man at this time, with an experience which was maturing every day.

The Psalms

It was during this period that many of his psalms were written. No one who has been born again and understands the living experience of righteousness can read the *Psalms of David* without reading in them the sentiments of one who knows by experience what it is to be saved from the power of the old sinful life and to have the infilling of the new life in its

place.

Many psalms were also written during the period when he was a fugitive from King Saul.

Spiritual Gifts, vol. 4A, p. 93:

David composed many of the Psalms in the wilderness, to which he was compelled to flee for safety. Saul even pursued him there, and David was several times preserved from falling into the hands of Saul by the special interposition of Providence. While David was thus passing through severe trials and hardships, he manifested an unwavering trust in God, and was especially imbued with His Spirit, as he composed his songs which recount his dangers and deliverances, ascribing praise and glory to God, his merciful Preserver. In these psalms is seen a spirit of fervor, devotion and holiness.

One psalm which surely was written early in David's career as he sat and watched over his sheep was the *Shepherd's Psalm*. If ever a psalm or a passage of Scripture expresses the gospel in its purity as a living power to overcome sin, this one certainly does. It is not a testimony of defeat but a living declaration of victory and of being abundantly satisfied with the gifts of God to the needy soul.

Psalm 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

These opening words are a testimony of connection with God; of God being his all-Supplier of every spiritual as well as physical need. And what the Lord supplied is listed in the following verses:

² He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters.

³ He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my ene-

mies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Read them again with prayerful thoughtfulness and see in them the testimony of a man who knew his God, who knew what it meant to be delivered from the dark valley of spiritual death, and who knew what it was to be filled with the righteousness of Christ.

Before David came to the throne, he made some tragic mistakes, chief of which was to lose faith in God's promise to give him the throne of Israel. He preferred to believe that Saul would be successful in putting him to death, and so decided to make his home in the land of the Philistines. This was indeed a sad mistake, but it did not deny the fact that he was a born again Christian, nor did it mean that the Lord forsook him for so doing. Patiently the Lord worked it out, and finally David as "a man after God's own heart" (*1 Samuel* 13:14), ascended to the throne of Israel.

Joseph and David

So,

- Both Joseph and David came up to the hour of temptation as true sons of God;
- Both were men who had close communion with God;
- Both had been called to act out a very important role in connection with the people of God—positions of leadership at the very head of the work;
- Both were types of Christ—Joseph as the pure and righteous one who was sold for thirty pieces of silver and David as the type of Christ as king.

With a background of such strong similarity and advantage, it would be expected that both these men would have been victorious in the hour of temptation, but it was not so. One was defeated as soundly as the other was victorious.

Yet there is a reason for this. Certain other factors involved were the cause, though not the excuse, for David's fall. These need to be understood so that we can see what weakened him to the point where Satan had the advantage, and that we might not follow in the same pathway.

I Will Prove True to My Maker

Em G D Em G D

1. Life will bring me man - y lessons; how I take them is the key -
 2. Life's a schoolroom, I'm a student, learning, learn - ing, ev - 'ry day.
 3. Great - er height means greater hardship, great - er toil means great - er trust.
 4. Grant me cour - age, grant me wisdom, that I may my les - sons learn.

Em G Am Em D

Toil and trou - ble - are they blessings, or a curse to hin - der me?
 Proj - ects, les - sons, tests, as - signments; teach me in the nar - row way.
 I will take my schools with gladness God knows all, and He is just.
 For my school, I will be thankful; be it rough and hard and stern.

Refrain (slower)

G/D D G D G C G

I will prove true to my Mak - er, ev - 'ry time, ev - 'ry place. Un - di -

Am D C Am Em D G

vid - ed, I'll serve Him, being strong by His grace. I'll meet my tri - als with

D G C G Am C D G

courage, do each du - ty with care, for my Saviour is with me ev - 'ry - where.

Text: Refrain based on Joseph's resolve, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 214

11. The Long Preparatory Process

WHEN it came to actual confrontation with temptation, Joseph exerted the power of his will in the right direction, but David did not.

Setting the Will

When faced with the complex pressures exerted on him by his master's wife, Joseph did not hesitate for a moment. A number of principles stood with untarnished clarity in his mind, leading him to choose instantly to say a most emphatic "No!" to her appeals.



Source: Wellcome Collection, L. Gruner

Fortified by the knowledge that God had rendered him able not to sin, his faith gave a positiveness to his choice which could not be denied. There was no self-confidence in Joseph. He knew that he could not gain the victory himself. He also understood that he could not experience the victory unless he did his part which was to choose not to sin and to trust in the

power of God to uphold that decision. To that faith God responded as He always will. Joseph was kept secure and clean.

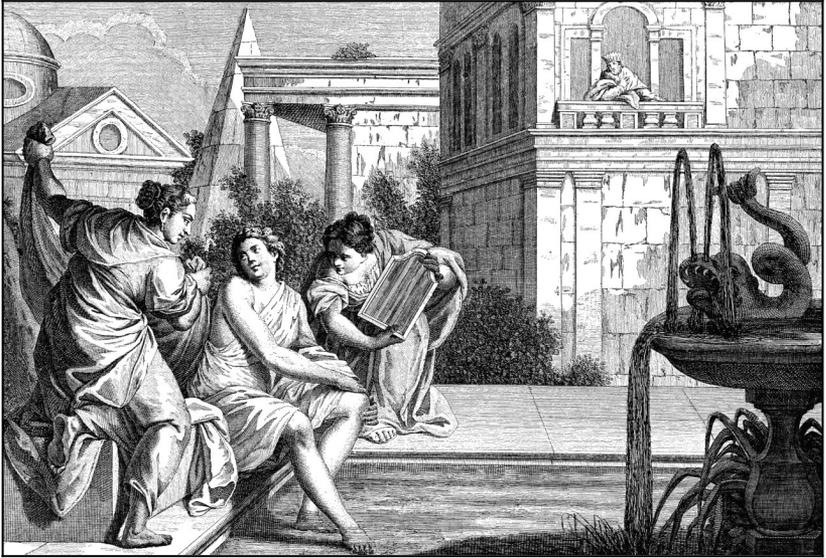
So it will always be. God can do nothing for us until we make a positive decision not to sin and by faith lay the whole matter in His hands for solution. Then He comes to the rescue and renders the choice invincible. No one who faithfully follows such a course can be overcome. It is impossible. But let there be a deviation from this, and defeat is equally certain.

Not only did Joseph refuse the tempter, but he got right out of the place where the temptation was. He recognized this as the devil's ground, and he would not stay there to invite the seducer. This aspect of obtaining the victory is worthy of some emphasis. It is a very practical phase of the encounter with the arch-deceiver. Never allow yourself to be put into a position where you do not have to be, or to remain there if, through some circumstances beyond your control, you are put there.

Suppose that the battle being fought is over novel reading. Over the years the habit has been formed, and quite a library of these books has been accumulated. Finally, conviction is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit's ministry, and a decision is made to do away with the destructive habit. Back this up at once by taking the library to the furnace and reducing it to unreadable ashes. If those books are left on the shelves, they will serve to reawaken the old desires and habits. Thereafter be careful to avoid such places as libraries and book shops where such are to be found. If an errand takes you necessarily into one of these places, then complete your business, refuse to linger, and be out of the place without a straying look.

When the temptation was presented to David, he must have known that the responses and feelings which it began to stir in him were not right, but instead of instantly choosing to turn away from this temptation, he played with the thought

just a little, allowing himself to indulge in the sinful pleasure of it. The moment he did that, the temptation grew stronger and the voice of conscience weaker, until he committed the outward act of sin.



Source: *The Bible and Its Story*, 1909

John Wesley shows a wonderful understanding of this in his description of the fall of David.

“He was walking upon the roof of his house” (*2 Samuel* 21:2), probably praising the God whom his soul loved, when he looked down and saw Bathsheba. He felt a temptation; a thought which tended to evil. The Spirit of God did not fail to convince him of this. He doubtless heard and knew the warning voice; but he yielded in some measure to the thought, and the temptation began to prevail over him.

Hereby his spirit was sullied; he saw God still; but it was more dimly than before. He loved God still; but not in the same degree; not with the same strength and ardor of affection.

Yet God checked him again, though His Spirit was grieved; and His voice, though fainter and fainter, still whispered, “Sin lies at the door; look unto me and be saved.” But he would

not hear; he looked again, not unto God, but unto the forbidden object; till nature was superior to grace, and kindled lust in his soul.

The eye of his mind was now closed again, and God vanished out of his sight. Faith, the divine, supernatural intercourse with God, and the love of God, ceased altogether: he then rushed on as a horse into the battle, and knowingly committed the outward sin.⁹

While in the case of Joseph, God's mighty power was able to operate to his deliverance from temptation when he set his will to obey the law of God, in David's case, God's power in him and with him was able to do nothing because he failed to set his will in the right direction.

Pressure Levels

Interestingly enough, of the two men, the one with the lesser pressure to sin was the one who fell, while the one with the far greater and more complex temptation, was victorious.

With David, the total appeal was to the flesh. There was no social pressure upon him to do it. If anything, the influence pulled in the opposite direction. There was no one to threaten him with the loss of his life if he declined the offer. He could simply have turned his back on the whole matter, and that would have been the end of it. It was a simple, uncomplicated situation.

But this is not true of Joseph's case. The pressures bore down on him with subtlety, weight, and complexity. Satan knew the moral and spiritual strength of this young man. Therefore, he employed all his skill in forming the temptation to give the maximum hope of success. When Joseph's situation is truly understood, no one will envy him for it. Rather, an admiration for his courage and faithfulness will be induced.

⁹ John Wesley, *Forty-four Sermons*, Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God."

So crafty was the foe that he sought to turn even the best qualities of God's servant to his advantage. Such an attribute was Joseph's faithful obedience to the commands of his master and mistress. He had sought to please them, to do just what they wanted and how they wanted it. This was required of him as a slave, but there was a noteworthy difference between the service extracted from the average slave and that lovingly and willingly rendered by this young man.

Satan recognized the habit pattern and disposition so well established within Joseph's life and planned to take the utmost advantage of it. There is not one of us who does not know the power of habit. That which has been trained into the person through continual repetition, builds the tendency to respond in the same way every time the appropriate circumstances are repeated.

For ten years Joseph had been accustomed to obeying the commands of both his master and mistress as instantly as the requirement was given. Therefore, when she called on him to commit this act, the habit pattern so strongly formed would tend to drive him to do it.

But this was not the only pressure. Disobedience on a slave's part was punishable in the cruelest fashion, very often by death. Joseph knew perfectly well that if he did not obey her, he would be subjected to severe chastisement and could be executed. The threat of death is an inducement which is very hard to resist as kidnappers, thieves, terrorists, and hijackers have long since known. Threaten a man with death, and he will give almost anything.

But not in Joseph's case. If obedience to God must cost him his life, then so be it. He preferred righteousness to life on this earth, precious as the latter certainly was to him.

The third powerful inducement to sin was possibly the most subtle, and attractive of all. There is built into the nature of fallen man a disposition to elevate himself no matter what the

cost may be to others. It is a perversion of the God-given desire to grow and to improve. But whereas the Lord gave this incentive so that a person could render a more excellent service to others, the devil and sin have changed this into a self-ish thing.

From the moment Joseph entered Potiphar's service, an excellent spirit was found in him. He did not complain against God for permitting him to end up in this grievous degradation of a common slave. He accepted that the infinite wisdom of God had put him there for a reason, even though it was unknown to him. He knew that even though he would not be understood or thanked for his services, he would render the best possible service to his master.

He was not motivated with the desire to advantage himself. His concern was to serve to the best of his ability, thus truly exemplifying the life and spirit of Christ. This was not so much a conscious, calculated procedure as the natural expression of his converted heart. In him was the mind of Christ from which shone the light of loving, disinterested service.

Although such service is rendered with no thought of personal advantage or advancement, it is impossible to do this without winning favor and exaltation. So it was with Joseph. Potiphar detected the spirit in Joseph and recognized in him a person the like of whom he had never seen before. He came to trust him implicitly, and gave him increasing control over his possessions and business until Joseph was in sole charge and knew more about the man's affairs than he did.

Genesis 39

² And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

³ And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

⁴ And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

⁵ And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

⁶ And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored.

History has amply demonstrated that man is much more able to handle adversity than prosperity. A subtle but fatal change takes place as he progresses from poverty and want to riches and plenty. Few men are able to resist this metamorphosis, but Joseph was one of them.

In the life of the Christian, the progression has more noticeable and troublesome effects than in the worldling. It happens as follows:

1. When the call of God is first heard by an individual, he finds himself commissioned to a work which appears to be nothing less than prodigious. He compares the meager facilities in his possession with the magnitude of the task and his heart sinks. His only recourse is to go in strong faith to the great Provider and ask for the needed blessings to do what God has given him to do.
2. Such trust is rewarded with means which are quickly expended. Again the pleas of faith ascend and are fully satisfied. The work grows, prosperity and success take the place of humble beginnings, and faith is further strengthened.
3. But, as resources are multiplied and the original state of pressure is reduced, so is the sense of need diminished. Gradually, the person comes to rest more and more comfortably in the visible support provided by material prosperity, with a resultant transfer of faith from the God who gave the gifts to the gifts given by God.
4. This is attended with a growing spirit of self-suffi-

ciency, personal greatness, and superiority. God diminishes more and more in the eyes of those who previously had walked so closely with Him.

This is what happened to Lucifer. The Scriptures tell us that it was...

Ezekiel 28

¹⁶ By the *multitude of your merchandise*, they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned.

The exact nature of his merchandise is unknown to us, but whatever it was, it served to give him a sense of security which separated him from God and induced self-sufficiency. It did not have to do this, and it was never intended by God that it should. But the danger is ever present.

The time came when Lucifer's evaluation of himself placed him above God whom he now saw as being inferior and needing reform. Thus began the tale of woe which has plagued the universe since then.

So it might have been with Joseph. When he first entered Potiphar's service, he was the least in the slave household. Before him lay the divine commission to serve the Egyptian. Under the circumstances it seemed an impossible task. How could he, in this household, keep all God's commandments and thus be an unfailing witness to His character of love?

Faith drove him to reach out and lay hold of the heavenly sufficiency, and from the first he prospered. Rapidly he grew in mental, moral, physical, and spiritual stature, until it was evident that God's blessing was much more with him than with his master. In fact, any blessing the master did have, came through Joseph.

It is evident that God assessed Joseph as being the superior of the two men. Joseph did have the better character combined with the outstanding business ability which the Lord had invested and developed in him. The difference was so evi-

dent that Joseph himself must also have known it. But, he refused to allow this to become a source of pride to him. He would not make any claim to higher position on this basis, but recognized that the mark of true greatness is found in using the greater capacity to serve for that purpose alone.

Satan recognized in this, a spirit entirely contrary to his own. But he also saw possibilities for the development of the same spirit that was in him. In heaven he had become the most superior of all the angels. In that position he had developed a pride in himself which demanded that he be accorded the highest place of all, the position of Christ. If he could lead Joseph to think along the same lines, he would be overthrown.

Purposefully, he worked to concentrate Joseph's attention on himself, ever reminding him that inasmuch as he was manifestly the better man, he had more right to his master's possessions. Satan urged that he had been unjustly enslaved, that it was his right to be free and that he ought to grasp the opportunity to obtain his rights. It only needed, the enemy stressed, the cunning moves to be made by which the transfer of power from Potiphar to himself would be effected.

How many times in history has this been attempted and even achieved. Children have ousted parents. An ambitious and skillful employee has robbed the owner of his business. The usual technique is to work for a man until the business is thoroughly understood and warm friendships have been formed with the clientele. Then, notice is given and a rival business is established which draws away the customers built up painstakingly by the original person.

But such was not the character of Joseph. He understood that the business belonged to Potiphar. Whether he was inferior or superior had no bearing on the matter at all. God had given the property and riches to him, not to Joseph. That was all that mattered. Joseph had been placed into the household as a servant, and it was as a servant that he would remain un-

til God should place him elsewhere. Joseph was faithful in the capacity and position in which the Lord had placed him. He expressed no discontent with his lot, nor sought to relocate himself elsewhere. When the time came for him to be moved, the Lord would do it.

Satan had a powerful and attractive ally in Potiphar's wife. She recognized the splendid qualities in the young man and saw that he was indeed superior to her own husband. Therefore, she sought to replace her husband with the better man. She was controlled neither by righteous principles nor fair play, but only by the motive of selfishness. She knew what she would do if she were in Joseph's position. She would take the business over, completely dispossessing the rightful owner. This is what she considered Joseph must do. If he did not do it, then in her eyes he was nothing short of a fool.

As an expression of her decision, she offered herself to the young man. Had he taken her, he would have bowed to the law of self, would have done what Lucifer tried to do in heaven, and would have denied the principles of righteousness. When it is remembered that this is the course most men in history have pursued, then it is clear that the pressure placed upon Joseph was tremendous.

If a pretty maid had offered herself to him, it would have been nothing more than a physical temptation, but for the wife of his master to do it, was truly something else. Hers was an open endorsement to take the husband's place in everything. Had he been entertaining such thoughts, this would have swept aside any lingering doubts, confirmed his aspirations, and encouraged him to take this fatal step. Together they would have plunged into a course which could have brought worldly success, or might have brought speedy ruin, but which would assuredly have closed the gates of heaven against them both.

Joseph would not deviate from the strictest paths of right-

eousness. Let it be remembered though, that when he refused to accede to her daily urgings, he was not merely denying his physical flesh. He was denying the principles of self-exaltation; he was choosing to lose his very life rather than sin, and he was paying the fullest respect to his master's position and rights. He gained a truly wonderful victory that day when she finally put the last pressure upon him.

No doubt, his action saved Potiphar's life. Had he fallen in with the woman's plan, she would probably have quietly but effectively poisoned Potiphar thus becoming the sole possessor of all his goods. She would then have liberated Joseph, married him, and thus have instated him in the place she considered as being rightfully his.

To save his master's life, he faced the sacrifice of his own. He had no doubt that she would falsely accuse him, that the accusations would take effect, and that a slave's making improper advances to his mistress would invite the death penalty. It would be an execution without trial. The only reason Joseph escaped this fate was because of God's special protection and because Potiphar knew the youth well enough to know that he was innocent. Nevertheless, to preserve the honor of the family, he had Joseph stripped of everything and committed to prison.

Such were the terrible circumstances exerting heavy pressure to sin on the youthful Joseph. How different this was from the mild appeals made to David.

Of the two then, it is not David but Joseph whom we would expect to find falling. The situation is compounded by its being the other way about. It would have been easier for us to understand if the one with the greater inducement to sin had been the one to fall. But there is no mystery to the story. It requires only a careful investigation to show why David fell where Joseph stood. As clear understandings of these things are obtained, strength will be gained whereby positive victory

can be maintained in the experience of all.

The Preparatory Process

Before every victory and defeat in a Christian's life there is a long preparatory process. It will appear to the onlooker that a person who led a most exemplary life up to this point, has *suddenly* fallen into sin. But, unknown and unseen, a steady erosion of the defenses has been going on for a long time. Satan has been working to effect the ruin of the soul. When he deems that the preparation has advanced sufficiently, he makes his attack with startling success. The world regards the fall as sudden whereas it is, in fact, the culmination of months or even years of steady spiritual decline.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 459:

A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the heart before *the Christian* commits open sin. The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding, we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him.

The unconverted man is not the subject of this paragraph. It does not say that a long preparatory process goes on in the life of *any* individual before *he* commits sin, but in the life of the *Christian* before *he* commits sin. While these principles do apply to the world at large, it is of the *Christian* in particular that they are written here.

For Christians then, this statement provides the warning that a Christian can be taken in sin, while at the same time revealing what lies behind the defeat. It assures us that once the long preparatory process has taken place, the plunge into iniquity is inevitable. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that this factor be understood and steps taken to arrest this process. It must be replaced with procedures which will as-

sure the maintenance of victory as in Joseph's case. The better the foundations are laid, the more securely the superstructure will stand.

The lives of Joseph and David are excellent sources of information and guidance of what to do and what not to do. They should be studied extensively and thoroughly, for they are recorded for our benefit. Such a study will not be an idle criticism of David's life or an adulation of Joseph's. It is the study of the causes of sin in the Christian, of the eroding subtleties of temptation, and of the way in which God's children can avail themselves of the more than abundant measures provided to make them secure against sin.

While there is always a *cause* for sin there is *never* an *excuse* for it. Though a Christian is certainly not rendered unable to sin, he is definitely placed where he is able not to sin if he so chooses.

Joseph did avail himself of those provisions and he experienced that victory. As there was a preparatory process which assured David's overthrow, so there was an opposite process which assured Joseph of victory. As both men experienced the revival, or deliverance from bondage, the opposite outworkings in their lives cannot be said to have their cause there, but rather in the work of education which followed.

In the case of Joseph, God was able to lead him from classroom to classroom, with each one building on the work done before, while in David's case, there was a classroom which the Lord never planned should exist but did, and in which David learned things very detrimental to his experience.

Joseph's first classroom was his own home in which the parents were the under-teachers and God was the headmaster. Here, he was thoroughly educated in the stories of God's dealing with his forebears. As clear views of the character of God were formed in his mind, the graces of love, humility, peace, integrity, honesty, and general nobility of character were es-

tablished within him. Thus he acquired an inestimable treasure which was to provide great sustaining power in future conflicts with the enemy.

The importance of the role of parents in building these things into their children from the earliest years cannot be overstressed. How many Christian parents have come to the point where they have seen their children grow into wayward teenagers and finally, godless adults, and then longed to have the opportunity to start again and do a far more thorough and responsible work of training those lives. Too late it is seen that the education given in the earliest years determines, to a large extent, the course to be steered later.

Yet, critical as are the early years in a child's life, society does not require special preparation for parenthood. A young couple can marry and bring any number of children into the world with no attention being paid to whether they are fit for the responsibility.

If a person aspires to be an architect, doctor, ship's captain, engineer, builder, airline pilot, policeman, or any one of a large number of occupations, he must go through a specific and often exacting training period, pass examinations, and finally be classed as being qualified for the position. Many of those who start out to achieve such status fall by the way and never do reach it. Men insist on these standards because they know that lives would be endangered if incompetent people were permitted to practice in these occupations.

But not one of these vocations in life is as important as raising children. The whole future of society depends on this being successfully accomplished. While animals possess an instinctive skill in training their young, this is not so in the human field. Everyone who would be a successful parent can only be such if he or she is carefully trained for the position. Yet no such preparation is required, there are no standards set down, and any young, inexperienced and immature person

can undertake parenthood with no restrictions whatsoever.

Behind every truly great person used by God to bless humanity, is a home training wherein good and godly parents instilled into the developing mind the principles of righteousness. Such a home was that of Joseph's. With great care and thoroughness, Jacob taught Joseph the glories of God's character of love, thus laying a foundation which the storms of life could not uproot.

But, there came a time when certain unfortunate elements in his home training necessitated his transfer to another classroom. His father, under the circumstances, could do no more for him. Other teachers, though far less kind and loving, must be called upon to continue the work. This change took place when Joseph was sold into Egypt.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 213:

What a change in situation—from the tenderly cherished son to the despised and helpless slave! Alone and friendless, what would be his lot in the strange land to which he was going? For a time, Joseph gave himself up to uncontrolled grief and terror.

But, in the providence of God, even this experience was to be a blessing to him. He had learned in a few hours that which years might not otherwise have taught him. His father, strong and tender as his love had been, *had done him wrong* by his partiality and indulgence. This unwise preference had angered his brothers, and provoked them to the cruel deed that had separated him from his home. *Its effects were manifest, also, in his own character.* Faults had been encouraged that were now to be corrected. *He was becoming self-sufficient and exacting.*

The first objective of any parent is to ensure that his child has become born again, but it is a serious mistake to assume that once this has been achieved, growth in the Christian graces will be automatic.

I am acquainted with a case where a father cherished the

longing that his son would be truly converted and grow up to give his life in service to God and man. Finally, there came a time when the lad at about the age of twelve, became involved in a petty crime and faced severe punishment in consequence. The father recognized that the time had come when his son could learn by experience the terrible nature of sin and thus be led to seek forgiveness and restoration from the Lord.

With a prayer for divine help and guidance, the father talked to the lad about the ultimate outworking of sin. He showed how it would keep his son from a place in heaven and that while his parents, brother, and sister intended to be there, he would find himself left out. He was asked if that was what he wanted. As the full implications of his sin dawned upon the boy, tears of sorrow and repentance flowed from his eyes.

When God's way of escape was outlined to him, he was glad to accept it. Kneeling, he confessed both what he was and what he had done, asking for deliverance from the former and forgiveness for the latter. He made restitution as far as lay in his power and gave evidence in a happy countenance and changed ways, of being a truly born again Christian.

At that time, the parent did not understand the distinctions between revival and reformation. He did not know that he needed to wisely and skillfully train the lad in the ways of righteousness, but happily assumed that, inasmuch as basic conversion had taken place, the rest would take care of itself almost automatically.

This was indeed a terrible mistake to make. The boy's experience was taken for granted while the parents concentrated on the other children. The sad result was that the boy grew up to wander away from the paths of righteousness and now makes no profession of Christianity whatsoever.

There is no question in regard to the lad's having experienced a genuine revival. What was lacking was the effective reformation phase. So with Joseph, there is no doubt that he

had been truly converted. Furthermore, an effective work of training went forward from day to day, but there remained an element in that training which was forming him in undesirable ways. His father's favoritism toward him caused pride, self-sufficiency, and an exacting spirit to develop within him.

If any find it difficult to understand why it is possible for these things to develop in a born again Christian, then let there be no rest till through earnest prayer and faithful study an understanding of how it is so, is gained. Eternal life depends on it. No one can escape the outworking of these forces. Choosing to ignore them simply because difficulty is found in understanding them, does not change the facts nor the effects.

As self-sufficiency and exactness developed in Joseph, these dispositions were tending to outweigh the sweeter, gentler graces until he would have become an unloved and unwanted person. The longer he remained in the classroom of the home under the indulgent hand of his father, the worse these things would have become.

This teaches us that possession of the new heart is not the automatic guarantee that a person will never sin again, that he will choose with certainty the right course every time, and that every factor in his training will produce the desired results. It indicates that there is a great deal to the work of reformation. It warns of the necessity of studying the nature of the influences at work upon us, so that as far as lies in our power, we can eliminate those which are detrimental and foster those which are beneficial.

While it is true that there are certain circumstances in life we cannot change, just as Joseph could not change his status as a slave, there are things which we can control. The selection of companions, reading material, social activities, and the like, is our decision. Wise indeed is the person who chooses these from the standpoint of their relation to successful

preparation for eternal life.

As Joseph passed into the land of Egypt, he passed into another classroom in the school of the reformation. There, he was to unlearn some of the things he had been learning under the overindulgent care of his father. Also, he was to build a strong moral resistance to the alluring temptations of the sensual world into which he was then thrust.

He entered that classroom after making a most solemn dedication to the Lord that...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

...under all circumstances [he would] act as became a subject of the King of heaven.

Arriving in Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, captain of the king's guard, in whose service he remained for ten years. He was here exposed to temptations of no ordinary character. He was in the midst of idolatry. The worship of false gods was surrounded by all the pomp of royalty, supported by the wealth and culture of the most highly civilized nation then in existence. Yet Joseph *preserved* his simplicity, and his fidelity to God.

Thus Joseph lived in that heathen land where vice of the most advanced type marked the way of life of the people whom he had to serve. *But he refused to allow his mind to even think about such things.*

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

The sights and sounds of vice were all about him, *but he was as one who saw and heard not.* His thoughts were not permitted to linger upon forbidden subjects. The desire to gain the favor of the Egyptians could not cause him to conceal his principles. Had he attempted to do this, he would have been overcome by temptation; but he was not ashamed of the religion of his fathers, and he made no effort to hide the fact that he was a worshiper of Jehovah.

Thus Joseph maintained and strengthened the victory already gained. The life of Christ within is the victory and he

had gained that when he was born again or revived. On the way to Egypt he had confirmed that in the wonderful dedication he had made to be true to his father's God no matter what the cost might be. Then day by day, he shut out the sights and sounds which surrounded him and thus strengthened the life within.

In this way the educational schooling in the reformation phase built on and consolidated the work done in the revival experience. It was because of this long preparatory process that Joseph was able to so decisively reject the alluring appeals of Potiphar's wife.

The most remarkable fact is that he built this fortress while deprived of the fellowship of any other believers so far as we know from the records. There is the possibility that he led others to the Saviour and had spiritual intercourse with them, but we can only assume this, as there is no confirming record. It appears that he walked absolutely alone during those ten years in Potiphar's service.

Let those who find themselves alone in this world take courage from this witness. It is a sad thing when young people leave God's service with the complaint that they must do this to find companionship. By this action it is made obvious that earthly friends are more important to them than the heavenly treasure and eternal life.

When there are fellow believers near, then it is right to assemble with them on the Sabbath day, but when this is not available, let the soul look in faith to heaven, knowing that God will provide the necessary spiritual inspiration to build up and preserve.

Joseph experienced absolute victory because he had the revival experience and because day by day he carefully built on the foundation laid. He refused to permit any wood, hay, or stubble to be incorporated into the character structure. Day by day he made the right decisions, and the Lord was thus

able to mightily bless and strengthen him.

The life of this fine Christian proves that we too can have the same victories if we will seek them as he did. It is not a matter of chance, but of strict obedience to the laws which determine success.

By Words and Actions

Musical notation for the first system of the hymn. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: G, D, G, C, D, Am, D. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes.

1. By words and ac-tions we ex-press the ho-ly gos-pel we pro-fess;
2. Thus shall we best proclaim a-broad the pow-er of our gracious Lord,
3. When we con-fess sin's pois'nous fruit, we will as well con-fess its root;
4. But still our flesh must be de-nied, its passions tend to lust and pride;

Bass line musical notation for the first system of the hymn. It features a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The bass line consists of quarter and eighth notes, providing a harmonic foundation for the melody.

Musical notation for the second system of the hymn. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody continues on a single staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: Am, D, G, C, D7, G. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes.

So let our works and vir-tues shine, to prove the doc-trine all di-vine.
When His sal-va-tion reigns with-in, and grace e-rad-i-cates our sin.
And not go on to sin a-gain, else our for-give-ness is in vain.
But love and temp'rance, hate of sin, re-veal that Christ is form'd with-in.

Bass line musical notation for the second system of the hymn. It features a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The bass line consists of quarter and eighth notes, providing a harmonic foundation for the melody.

12. From Classroom to Classroom

THE study of Joseph's life reveals that the victory was gained long before the hour of temptation came and then faithfully maintained day by day right up until the confrontation.

David's life will show with equal clarity that the victory was lost long before the actual confrontation by the tempter. The devil had seen to it that there was a steady, though apparently imperceptible, eroding away of the king's moral sensibilities until the foundations were so weakened that they collapsed when pressure was finally brought to bear upon them.

This erosion of moral power was not inevitable. Satan had the same plans for Joseph too, but in that case there was no erosion, only a consolidation of strength and power. So too it would have been with David if he had been alert to the subtleties of the devil's arts and crafts.

We, who live in the most corrupt age in history, need to study very carefully the life stories of these two men to learn how we can be like Joseph and avoid being like David. As this is learned, we shall extend to David our sympathy rather than condemnation and feel a very real debt of gratitude for the way in which his life provides us with lessons, which, if thoroughly learned, will serve to safeguard us against the same defeats.

Long before it came, the Lord foresaw all that to which the king would be subjected and, as always, He made every provision in educating David to meet the temptation victoriously. Like Joseph, he was taken from classroom to classroom to learn and unlearn lessons in preparation for the fearful responsibilities which lay ahead.

The Early Days

When we are first introduced to David, he is already a

young man serving as a shepherd boy in the hills of Bethlehem. There,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 637:

The Lord had chosen David, and was preparing him, in his solitary life with his flocks, for the work He designed to commit to his trust in after-years.

A great deal could be introduced at this point, about the appropriateness of country life as an ideal classroom for the young. In the Spirit of Prophecy there is abundant counsel that sets out the value of it as a training ground for children when the foundations of their future life in this world and in eternity are being laid.

Not only is the young person isolated from the centers of vice, immorality, and crime, so that he does not learn these things by personal contact, but he is saved from that idleness which is a curse to any person. Many young men and women who have spent the early formative years of their existence in the close crowded city life, have been introduced to vice and immorality which have crippled them morally for the rest of their days, preventing them from reaching any really useful level of service to God or man.

The city is the place where all the works of man are displayed and developed. The works of God are shut out. Even the clear blue of the sky is obscured by the smoke, filth, and dust rising into the atmosphere. The sun is never viewed in its strength, while at night, whatever might be seen of the stars through the smog, is blotted out by the bright lights of the city streets, and the amusement dens.

It is the law of life that by beholding we become changed. If the subjects of our contemplation are small and belittling, then we will shrink in mental and moral power and, in consequence, physical power also. There is nothing smaller in the universe than sinful man and his sinful works, so the city dweller has, for his contemplation, that which is the cause of

his mental, moral, and physical shrinkage.

By contrast, the country is where the works of God are spread out in wondrous display. Here, the vision can range wide over plain, valley, mountain, and beyond to the glory of the heavens. Here are themes of the grandest height, depth, and breadth. Here is to be found purity—in the unpolluted waters of the sparkling spring as it tumbles down the hillside on its merry way to the sea; in the uncontaminated air which does not cloud the vision of the sky by day nor the glory of the celestial heavens at night.

Here, moment by moment, a person is in contact with the works of God, so that the smallness of the human is seen in the sharpest contrast with the greatness and wonder of God. Than this, there is no greater means of soul development and expansion to be found. All who find themselves under such a teacher in such a classroom will be the gainers in physical, mental, moral, and spiritual power.

Every day, the young developing mind and body is confronted with new challenges, the successful meeting of which call for resourcefulness, courage, and faith. There are obstacles to be surmounted, mountains to ascend, streams to ford, reptiles to avoid, weather to watch, and return paths to be found. On the other hand there is a teeming and varied wildlife in bird, insect, animal, tree, and flower, through whom the Lord will reveal the beauties of His character.

This is the classroom for the young—the best place in the world to form those foundations on which the life can be built. All those who have had the wonderful privilege of growing up in country areas as yet unspoiled by the inroads of modern civilization, will know for themselves the truth of these words.

This was the kind of school in which David was first placed by God in the work of preparing him to meet the duties and temptations of later life.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 642:

David, in the beauty and vigor of his young manhood, was preparing to take a high position with the noblest of the earth. His talents, as precious gifts from God, were employed to extol the glory of the divine Giver. His opportunities of contemplation and meditation served to enrich him with that wisdom and piety that made him beloved of God and angels.

As he contemplated the perfections of his Creator, clearer conceptions of God opened before his soul. Obscure themes were illuminated, difficulties were made plain, perplexities were harmonized, and each ray of new light called forth fresh bursts of rapture, and sweeter anthems of devotion, to the glory of God and the Redeemer.

The love that moved him, the sorrows that beset him, the triumphs that attended him, were all themes for his active thought; and as he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart throbbed with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him.

Such was the school room in which David found himself during those important years of development and this was what he gained in that period. It was a foundation which would last him through this life and beyond.

The Next Classroom

Important as this classroom was, it was not sufficient to provide all that David needed as a safeguard against sin in the future. Other classrooms were necessary to carry the training on from that point.

He was now introduced to a new classroom on a part time basis although the country and life as a shepherd was still his main occupation. When King Saul realized that he had been rejected by God, his fits of anger and depression reached desperate proportions. To cure this, it was suggested that the

sweet singer of Israel be brought to the court to minister music to the king. So David came and remained as long as the music was needed, then returned to his flocks.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 643:

Whenever it was necessary, he was recalled to minister before the king, to soothe the mind of the troubled monarch till the evil spirit should depart from him. But although Saul expressed delight in David and his music, the young shepherd went from the king's house to the fields and hills of his pasture with a sense of relief and gladness.



Source: Bible Studies, 1898

This provided him with a new environment which was indeed different from that which he knew out on the hills. What he saw, what he heard, and what he experienced made a deep impression on his mind which, in turn, had a molding influence on his life. It brought home to him a realization of the kind of life and temptations to which he was yet to be exposed. It was as if the voice of the Lord was saying to him,

“This is a picture of where you will find yourself someday. It is a sobering and frightening picture of the danger of the pressure of great temptations. Now is the time to prepare for it.”

David understood the message delivered to him in this classroom, and he did make very earnest preparations.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 643-644:

David was now growing in favor with God and man. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he now set his heart *more fully* to do the will of God *than ever before*. He had new themes for thought. He had been in the court of the king, and had seen the responsibilities of royalty. He had discovered some of the temptations that beset the soul of Saul, and had penetrated some of the mysteries in the character and dealings of Israel’s first king. He had seen the glory of royalty shadowed with a dark cloud of sorrow, and he knew that the household of Saul, in their private life, were far from happy. All these things served to bring troubled thoughts to him who had been anointed to be king over Israel.

Full Time in Court

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 649:

After the slaying of Goliath, Saul kept David with him, and would not permit him to return to his father’s house.

So ended forever David’s training in the school of the shepherd boy. Now he was in court to learn that which God could teach him there.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 649:

It was the providence of God that had connected David with Saul. David’s position at court would give him a knowledge of affairs, in preparation for his future greatness. It would enable him to gain the confidence of the nation. The vicissitudes and hardships which befell him, through the enmity of Saul, would lead him to feel his dependence upon God, and to put his whole trust in Him. And the friendship of Jonathan for David was also in God’s providence, to preserve the life of the future ruler of Israel. In all these things,

God was working out His gracious purposes, both for David and for the people of Israel.

In this classroom, God used the enmity of Saul as a powerful safeguard for David. Any tendency to become involved in the corruption of the court life was checked by the need for continual dependence upon God's protection against the enmity of Saul. He was in a position where he did not dare let down his guard either against Saul or against the temptations of the court. Not only would this give the king the pretext needed to legally put him to death, but it would cause him to forfeit the needed protection of God.

Thus he was placed in a situation where all around him the luxury and vice of court life was seeking to corrupt him, but where he had to discipline himself against it all. This was building into him a pattern of behavior which would serve as a safeguard against transgression.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 651:

Proverbs 9

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
—and David's prayer was continually directed to God, that he might walk before Him in a perfect way.

As a Fugitive

David's stay in Saul's court was of limited duration. The king's intensifying suspicion and hatred of David forced his graduation from this classroom into another, the toughest up till that time. As a hunted man, he was continually on the move to avoid the malicious and murderous designs of the king. The education thus gained, though painfully unpleasant, was essential to reveal weaknesses and shortcomings not brought to light heretofore. These must be corrected.

Up until David fled from Saul for the first time, there is no record of his having made any mistakes. At every turn, no matter how great the demands placed upon him, his faith rose to the occasion, and he triumphed. He was never seen to place

confidence in the flesh but only in the arm of Omnipotence. Thus he met and slew the lion, the bear, and Goliath. Thus he successfully waged war on Saul's behalf.

But, when he reached Nob, and saw Doeg the Edomite there, he came under the pressure of severe temptation. He knew that he was in great danger of losing his life and did not know whom to trust. There is nothing the flesh fears so much as death, and Satan exerted all the pressure he could on that flesh to preserve itself from destruction. Powerfully it appealed to David's mind to do something to save himself from the murderous king. Everything at this point depended on the right action of David's will, which in turn depended on his faith being so undiminished that he could make the right decision because of his confidence that the Lord would fulfill His promises.

At the same time, the Spirit of God was appealing to him to resist the call of the flesh and to commit the keeping of his life into God's hands. There was so much evidence to confirm that God would not fail him.

Firstly there was the history of his past experiences. Never once had the Lord been delinquent in any time of crisis.

Furthermore the King of the Universe had specifically anointed him to be the king. This in itself was an assurance that he could not be destroyed, for it was the Lord's responsibility to keep him alive so that this commission could be fulfilled. When God chose David to be king, He was perfectly aware of all the dangers which would threaten to deprive the young man of this position. Therefore, God was not caught by surprise in any event which subsequently transpired. He knew all that was coming and had made full provision for every emergency.

Had David carefully kept these facts in mind, his faith would have been unshaken at this time. He did not have to sin by lying to the high priest. He was a born again Christian, not

a slave to sin. Any transgression must be the result of his own choice. Everything depended on the right action of the will, which could only be taken if faith was strong. Would David refuse the temptation to save himself and put his whole confidence in God, or would he lose his grip on God and do something to save himself?

The predicament in which David stood is perfectly illustrated by the diagram back in chapter nine. Study it again in connection with this example. See with clarity that David had two possible courses to follow. The situation demanded immediate action, forcing him to decide for one course or the other. God would not, and Satan could not, compel him to take one road or the other. The only being in the universe who could decide that, was David.



Source: David hoc est, 1637

Sadly, he chose the way of the flesh. Losing sight of all the powerful assurances that God would preserve and keep him, he was found with more confidence in his own power to save himself than he had in God to do it. When any attempt is made to measure the power of God and His capacity to save, against the power of man and his incapacity to save, then it

seems preposterous to choose the latter in preference to the former. Yet this is just what is done over and over in human experience.

The only weapon to which David had access was deception. To the high priest he gave an untruthful reason for his being there. The horrendous result was the eventual slaughter of the high priest and his entire family. At least eighty-five good people perished in direct consequence of David's lie.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 656-657:

David had displayed noble traits of character, and his moral worth had won him favor with the people; but as trial came upon him, *his faith was shaken, and human weakness appeared*. He saw in every man a spy and a betrayer. In a great emergency, David had looked up to God with a steady eye of faith, and had vanquished the Philistine giant. He believed in God, he went in His name. But as he had been hunted and persecuted, perplexity and distress had nearly hidden his heavenly Father from his sight.

Before moving further into this study, several points need to be established.

The first one is that this appearance of iniquity was not caused by the continuing presence in him of the old man, the firstborn. That had been removed when he was born again. Therefore, he was no longer a slave to its power, in which position he would have had to sin regardless of his choice. He was now a free man who would sin only if he chose to.

The problem was not one of bondage but of wrong ideas; the idea that he was more able to save himself than God was. Therefore, it was during the reformation phase that this problem asserted itself, and he failed. It is necessary that these facts be clearly understood to avoid any conflict with the message on revival.

It must be strongly emphasized that there was neither the necessity nor the compulsion for David to sin. What he did

was completely inexcusable and unnecessary. In this study let none develop the impression that we are making room for sin, excusing it, or suggesting that it is inevitable anyway. We are studying reasons for this thing appearing in David's life, not offering excuses for it. The warning is that if the same reasons appear in our lives, then we will certainly sin as he did.

So far, study has been given to the processes by which David entered into this defeat. Now comes the time to consider what course God desired him to follow in order to remedy the damage done. This involves an understanding of God's attitude to His servant at this time.

God did not, as Satan would like us to believe, turn His back on David and leave him in hopeless despair. Instead He viewed this experience as a valuable schooling for His servant. With tender and loving understanding, He drew near to His tried and failing child, offering fullness of pardon, complete restoration, and instruction pointing out the lessons to be gained from the incident.

While no encouragement should ever be given to enter into sin so that God's character can be better appreciated, yet the fact remains that those who have stumbled as David did, and then experienced the pardoning power of God, learn to know and appreciate His love as is otherwise impossible. With what precious meaning the words quoted below are read by those who have been through severe trials, have slipped, and then experienced the closeness of a God who knows only how to love and save. Tears of gratitude and humility spring to the eyes as the works of God are remembered, when it is recalled that in our utter unworthiness, when we deserved and felt that we ought to receive the outpouring of His wrath, He came instead with healing in His wings.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Oh, how precious is the sweet influence of the Spirit of God as it comes to depressed or despairing souls, encourag-

ing the fainthearted, strengthening the feeble, and imparting courage and help to the tried servants of the Lord! O, what a God is ours, who deals gently with the erring, and manifests His patience and tenderness in adversity, and when we are overwhelmed with some great sorrow.

This is the way of God because it is God's character to be thus. This is the way in which we are to come to know Him, for such a knowledge will be of immeasurable comfort, uplift, blessing, and restoration in times of stress and temptation.

There is nothing more dangerous than to succumb to Satan's lie that once we have fallen, we so seriously incur the displeasure and wrath of God that there is no hope for us. God does not destroy the sinner; he is destroyed by the sin into which he falls. Therefore the more speedily the sin is recognized and the sinner turns to God for deliverance from this crushing load, the less time and opportunity the iniquity has to work out its destroying power. The man bitten by a poisonous snake does not delay for an instant. He seeks help at once. So should all who fall into sin. Delay is fatal and pleases the devil mightily.

Most importantly, no time should be wasted in brooding over the sin committed. Instead, grasp the opportunity to learn from the error, thus becoming better acquainted with the enemy's devices and more ably equipped to meet them. In this way, the very fall Satan designed for the ruin of the soul, serves instead to strengthen its resistance to sin.

This would make it appear that it is necessary to fall into sin in order to acquire eventual victory over it, but this is not so. The same lessons can be learned by *successful* encounters with temptation. In addition, the Scriptures detail the steps of those who have fallen, thus providing clear instruction as to the causes of sin in a Christian. By thorough and detailed study of these records, one can enter into their problems as if they were one's own, thereby learning from what they went

through, how to avoid making the same missteps.

Unfortunately, it does not work this way as effectively as it should. The more usual pattern is for the Christian to make his own mistakes, thus being forced to learn from his own painful errors. Then, as he reads the accounts in the Bible, he is able to identify with the erring ones there, see how he and they made identical errors, why they made them, and how they can recover from the problem.

The real marvel is that, while equipped with the life of Christ within and blessed with the abundant provisions of divine protection from Satan, the Christian does fall. He need not, ought not, and should not succumb to temptation, yet the sad fact is that all too often he does. To clearly understand the reason is a first step in insuring that there is no repetition of the fall.

There is one simple reason for these failures, and it is lack of faith.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of *the children of God* is due to *their* lack of faith.

None of the mighty resources at the Christian's command are available to him if he loses sight of their power and availability. In that moment when his faith in God falters because he cannot see what God can and will do, then he will resort to trust in his own powers to deliver himself. As surely as he pits *his* strength against the greater power of the enemy, he will fail.

In a military struggle, the same outcome would result from the general's going out to battle the entire enemy army alone, instead of directing his soldiers to do it for him. He would have no hope of being the victor in such a confrontation.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to

their lack of faith. When shadows encompass the soul, when we want light and guidance, we must look up; there is light beyond the darkness.

David ought not to have distrusted God for one moment. He had cause for trusting in Him: he was the Lord's anointed, and in the midst of danger he had been protected by the angels of God; he had been armed with courage to do wonderful things; and if he had but removed his mind from the distressing situation in which he was placed, and had thought of God's power and majesty, he would have been at peace even in the midst of the shadows of death; he could with confidence have repeated the promise of the Lord, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed."

The key to maintaining the victory over sin once the person has been born again and obtained the victory, is the careful retention and strengthening of faith. In every crisis there are two witnesses pressing for attention:

1. Sight and circumstances.
2. The power of God.

Satan is constantly at work to so fill the attention with the frightening appearances of the situation that God will be completely hidden from view. If Satan can succeed in doing this then he knows the victory is his.

On the other hand, God is striving constantly to keep the eyes fixed on His all-sufficient power and immediate presence so that the problem in hand will diminish in magnitude as it is viewed in the light of God's greatness and majesty. If God succeeds, then faith is strong and the victory is certain. These are the lessons to be learned. The failure is always our fault, for God has provided more than sufficient grace to meet the direct emergency.

Though he had failed, David was learning, albeit the hard way.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Yet this experience was serving to teach David wisdom; for it led him to realize his weakness, and the necessity of constant dependence upon God.

Nonetheless, the lesson was not fully learned the first time it was given. The sad record is that David reverted to his own wisdom repeatedly in subsequent temptations. Immediately after lying to the high priest, he fled to the Philistines and there again resorted to deception to save his life.

1 Samuel 21

¹⁰ And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

¹¹ And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

¹² And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

God did not send him for shelter to the enemies of Israel. This was his own devising, reflecting a loss of awareness of, and faith in, the power of God to lead and protect Him. By resorting to his own works to save himself, he was placed in a position of great danger.

Even though he had put himself there, the Lord would have saved him from it if he had turned to Him with trust and patience. Instead, having lost his grip on God, he again reverted to the weapon of deception to deliver himself.

¹³ And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

¹⁴ Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, you see the man is mad: wherefore then have you brought him to me?

¹⁵ Have I need of mad men, that you have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?



Source: Holman Bible, 1903

David was extremely fortunate to have escaped with his life, for the Philistines possessed a spirit of revenge for the humiliating defeat of their champion Goliath. That he did escape was due to the special protection the Lord gave him in spite of his trust in his own works. But in it all, David dishonored God, His people, and himself.

Grasping the opportunity provided by the king's dismissal of him, David fled back to Israel and found refuge in the cave of Adullam. Here he was joined by refugees from the oppression of the godless Saul amounting to a small army of four hundred men. He sent his parents to the land of Moab for safe keeping, but the word of the Lord expressly directed him to return to his own country again.

1 Samuel 22

⁵ And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

From this time on began Saul's relentless pursuit of David.

Time became extended, and no relief or solution was visible to the fugitives. This was a very depressing and wearing experience. Human nature looks for speedy remedy and expects God to effect it. But where no visible evidence is seen of God's doing anything at all, the pressure begins to mount to take matters into one's own hands and *do something*.

When this kind of experience comes to the Christian, he needs to realize that while he cannot discern the working of God, this does not deny that the heavenly Father is working out the wise counsels of His will.

David lost sight of this. The time it took God to do things became too long for him and because he could see no evidence that anything was being done, he concluded that if he continued to remain in the land of Judah, Saul would catch him and terminate any possibility of his ascending the throne.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 672:

David's conclusion that Saul would certainly accomplish his murderous purpose, was formed without the counsel of God. Even while Saul was plotting and seeking to accomplish his destruction, the Lord was working to secure David the kingdom.

God works out His plans, though to human eyes they are veiled in mystery. Men cannot understand the ways of God; and, looking at appearances, they interpret the trials and tests and provings that God permits to come upon them, as things that are against them, and that will only work their ruin. Thus David looked on appearances, and not at the promises of God. He doubted that he would ever come to the throne. *Long trials had wearied his faith and exhausted his patience.*

The Lord had given him specific directions to repair to the land of Judah and he had no business whatsoever leaving that land until he had received further directions from the Lord. But when he decided that the Lord's promise would never be fulfilled, then he had no more faith in the Lord's leadership

and took matters into his own hands. Without direction from God, he departed from Israel and went to find refuge with the Philistines.

This was another failure on his part, the cause of which was the loss of faith.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith.

Thus David continued on through school. Both by success and failure the Lord was preparing him for his future work. To David himself, the failures must have been discouraging. He would have tended to see in them the evidence that God had forsaken him and could no longer work to give him the kingdom. Herein, he was mistaken. When God chose him to be king, He knew exactly what strengths and weaknesses were in the young man. In the full knowledge of these, He had made the choice. When those problems appeared, the Lord was not caught by surprise and did not need to revise the decision taken.

Instead, with infinite patience and love, God took advantage of the mistakes to teach David vital lessons. He did everything possible to prepare David for his future work. He foresaw the spiritual pressures under which the king would labor when he had become the absolute ruler of Israel. He knew that it would be far more difficult for David to stand in the luxury of an affluent court and in a position of great power, than it would have been if he had remained a farmer in Bethlehem. Consequently, the work of preparing him was very thorough.

It is to God's credit and our spiritual comfort that the work was very successful. David's reign must rank as the most righteous and just of all the kingships in history. There have been other great kings but none so great as David. He was the second and last to ever be directly chosen by God. From that time forward, the position was one of inheritance or usurpa-

tion.

During David's administration, Israel reached a height of glory never to be equaled again. The magnificence of Solomon's court, the extent of his dominion, and the power of his armies were the direct inheritance of David's wise and righteous rule. Solomon's departure from God's ways injected an element of decay into the kingdom, the full effect of which did not become apparent until the momentum from David's era had subsided.

It is true that David's kingship was marred by the murder of Uriah the Hittite and the adultery with Bathsheba. There was no excuse for this. But, the fact that it was the only major sin recorded against him during this time, is tribute to the effectiveness of the schooling he had received.

Moreover, in the hour of terrible darkness when Satan, having led him into the transgression, claimed him as his lawful prey, the knowledge of God's character previously built up, served to fix his faith in the forgiving, restoring power of God. But for that, he would either have hardened his heart under reproof as did his predecessor, or have perished in hopeless despair.

David's experiences prove what an able educator the Lord is. The results would have been even more satisfactory if God had obtained the king's full and intelligent cooperation. He remains hopeful that the story of David will yet bring out a people who will give Him that desired level of cooperation. Then what mighty spiritual power will be exhibited in their lives, what freedom from sin, and unspotted righteousness.

13. David in Philistia

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 672-673:

The Lord did not send David for protection to the Philistines, the most bitter foes of Israel. This very nation would be among his worst enemies to the last; and yet he had fled to them for help in his time of need. Having lost all confidence in Saul and in those who served him, he threw himself upon the mercies of the enemies of his people. David was a brave general, and had proved himself a wise and successful warrior; but he was working directly against his own interests when he went to the Philistines. God had appointed him to set up his standard in the land of Judah, and it was want of faith that led him to forsake his post of duty without a command from the Lord.

God was dishonored by David's unbelief. The Philistines had feared David more than they had feared Saul and his armies; and by placing himself under the protection of the Philistines, David discovered to them the weakness of his own people. Thus he encouraged these relentless foes to oppress Israel. David had been anointed to stand in defense of the people of God; and the Lord would not have His servants give encouragement to the wicked by disclosing the weakness of His people, or by an appearance of indifference to their welfare.

Furthermore, the impression was received by his brethren that he had gone to the heathen to serve their gods. By this act he gave occasion for misconstruing his motives, and many were led to hold prejudice against him. The very thing that Satan desired to have him do, he was led to do; for, in seeking refuge among the Philistines, David caused great exultation to the enemies of God and His people. David did not renounce his worship of God nor cease his devotion to His cause; but he sacrificed his trust in Him to his personal safety, and thus tarnished the upright and faithful character that God requires His servants to possess.

THIS was the second occasion that David sought refuge among the Philistines. He went there because the wit-

ness of sight and circumstances dictated he should, even though he had received no directive from God. Having arrived there, that same witness of appearances strongly endorsed what he had done. He was warmly received by the king and his people, who were flattered that the champion of Israel would seek asylum among them. They were further delighted at the revelation of the weakness and division in Israel which this action of David's revealed.

Apparent Success

David felt so secure here that he brought his family to be with him as did all of his followers.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 673:

David was cordially received by the king of the Philistines. The warmth of this reception was partly due to the fact that the king admired him, and partly to the fact that it was flattering to his vanity to have a Hebrew seek his protection. David felt secure from betrayal in the dominions of Achish. He brought his family, his household, and his possessions, as did also his men; and to all appearances he had come to settle permanently in the land of Philistia. All this was gratifying to Achish, who promised to protect the fugitive Israelites.

This was a pleasant contrast to the fugitive band. It was comfortable and restful to be able to settle down without the constant danger of betrayal and pursuit. Because they had achieved things important to the flesh—security, comfort, rest, and peace—they felt assured that the course they had chosen was the correct one.

But this was a wrong evaluation of the situation. What they had acquired was at fearful cost to the cause of God on which their present and eternal welfare depended. They had betrayed sacred trusts, encouraged the Philistines to make war with Israel, and caused doubts and discouragement to possess their own people.

While the immediate results seemed to be all that could be

desired, the long-term outworking was detrimental to the interests of both David and his followers. God was disappointed and hindered, while Satan was delighted.

Every Christian who, during the reformation period, desires to live a truly victorious life, should take careful note of this experience of David's. When stress and trouble dog the footsteps in the Christian battle, the devil comes offering a way of escape. Sight and circumstances declare that there is no future in staying where he is, whereas, if he will but take certain steps, he will find release from pressure and trials. The temptation is too alluring and the Christian, without receiving any clear directive from the Lord, succumbs to the pressure, adopting a course of his own devising.

At once he feels the heat of the battle receding, while the friends into whose company he enters, give him a warm welcome and pleasant hospitality. He finds himself assured by all this that he has certainly chosen the right path.

How often have we heard and seen this in respect to those who have been in a movement proclaiming the truth and then have left it to join the enemies of that movement. So warm and friendly are those among whom they now find themselves, that they feel sure they have done the right thing.

But to measure such a situation from the angle of personal comfort and relief, is to make a very wrong evaluation. The only correct way to examine such a situation is from the point of view of what it is doing to God's cause. No matter how painful and frustrating our experience may be, there is no reason to retreat from it unless a directive from God authorizes it.

A Mixed Service

It is important to notice that while David, through loss of faith, had turned to his own works, he had not turned aside from the service and worship of Jehovah. He was still a child

of God, and the Lord recognized him as such.

There are those who find this difficult to understand, for they think in terms of absolutism. Either a person is absolutely in God's service, or he is not. With them it is one or the other. They find it impossible to grasp the fact that a person who is a child of God can render a service to Satan.

David's life proves that this certainly can be done. The service to Satan is really service to one's self of which the devil makes great capital. The Christian so involved is not a direct servant or slave of the devil. He does something which, while calculated to relieve his own problems, provides Satan with considerable help and advantage.

The same thing works the other way too, for Satan's slaves, devoid of any respect or love for God, have done things from selfish interest which have greatly assisted God's work. For instance, it was an ambition of the Emperor Charles to subdue the reformation in Europe, but his designs were frustrated by several activities on the part of Satan's servants.

One of these was the pressure exerted by the Turks who invaded Europe from the east, penetrating as far as Vienna. Another was the quarrel which developed between the Emperor and the Pope, resulting in an attack by the Emperor on the Pope at one stage.

But for these diversions, the Reformation in Europe would have found itself pitted against military forces beyond its capacity. Neither the Turks nor the Emperor were in God's service but, by their pursuit of their own selfish aims, they frustrated Satan's objectives and greatly helped the work of God. This did not make them God's servants as such, any more than David became Satan's servant.

Having put himself in the land of the Philistines, David determined to remain separate from their idol worship. Accordingly he requested a domicile away from the capital and court.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 673:

At David's request for a residence in the country, removed from the royal city, the king graciously granted Ziklag as a possession. David realized that it would be dangerous for himself and his men to be under the influence of idolaters. In a town wholly separated for their use, they might worship God with more freedom than they could if they remained in Gath, where the heathen rites could not but prove a source of evil and annoyance.

This was a wise move worthy of emulation by all, even by those who are in a position where they have put themselves by their own works. At least God then has the opportunity to educate and deliver them from such a place.

Solving Problems With Deception

David, of course, once he had put himself in the wrong place, found that he had to resort to his own works to maintain his security. He again reverted to the use of deception to achieve this. Most look upon the affair with Bathsheba as being the one blot on his life's record, but this happened only once, whereas his recourse to deception continued over quite a period of time.

While living at Ziklag, he went frequently to attack the Amalekites, the Geshurites, and the Gezrites. He was careful to leave none alive to report him, and on his return he told Achish that he had been warring against the Israelites. This was a blatant lie which he continued to repeat as long as he remained in Philistia.

Such deception served to confirm Achish's confidence in him. The king reasoned that David would not dare to return to Israel and was therefore committed to remain forever in Philistia. As he was dependent on the king for a place to live, Achish was assured that he could count on David to be a faithful and powerful ally in any time of crisis.

While the device of deception served to guarantee immu-

nity from the sleeping wrath of Achish, eventually it must bring David to a crisis of insoluble proportions so far as human wisdom was concerned, for, while David had resorted to his own works and was lying to sustain himself in that position, he still recognized Israel as being God's chosen people and would not, under any circumstances, go to war against them.

There is a terrible tendency for every Christian to get into the same quandary that David did. The liability of turning to our own works has proved to be the greatest risk faced by the church in every generation. It is safe to say that on this rock every movement has foundered.

Only God Can Deliver Us

The question then is: Having placed ourselves in a position where God never designed we should be found, what should be done to correct it? What should David have done when he found himself committing open sin to sustain the fruit of his own works?

The natural tendency, once it is determined that the feet have been placed in the wrong pathway, is to take steps to get out of it again. This only further compounds the problem, for the same means is used to deliver us from the problem as confined us in it. Only God has the wisdom to know where each should be and what each should be doing.

Therefore, the only correct procedure is to confess the sin of turning to our own works, acknowledge that we have put ourselves where the Lord did not intend we should be, deliver the whole problem into His hands, and then move only as He gives direction. If David had done this, he would have been saved from the situation which was developing around him. Instead, he continued to maintain the deception on which he depended for security.

It is heartening to see though, that when the crisis finally

came upon him, he did not stir a finger to save himself from the dilemma, but waited hopefully on the Lord to do it for him. This story is one of the most wonderful revelations of God's character which I know. It has been a cause of great help and comfort to me, leading me to lay problems in God's hands with a trust which has brought the most complete and satisfactory solutions.

The crisis came upon David with the rising of the Philistines to war against Israel.

1 Samuel 28

¹ And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know assuredly, that you shall go out with me to battle, you and your men.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 674:

David had no intention of lifting his hand against his people; but he was not certain as to what course he would pursue, until circumstances should indicate his duty. He answered the king evasively, and said,

1 Samuel 28

² Surely you shall know what your servant can do.

Achish understood these words as a promise of assistance in the approaching war, and pledged his word to bestow upon David great honor, and give him a high position at the Philistine court.

But although David's faith had staggered somewhat at the promises of God, he still remembered that Samuel had anointed him king of Israel. He recalled the victories that God had given him over his enemies in the past. He reviewed the great mercy of God in preserving him from the hand of Saul, and determined not to betray a sacred trust. Even though the king of Israel had sought his life, he would not join his forces with the enemies of his people.

Between that time when David had fled from King Saul till this moment, in hours of great temptation, David had looked again and again to the arm of flesh rather than to the mighty

power of God. The result was that he turned to deception to effect his salvation. But on this occasion he did exactly the right thing. Careful study should be given to this story noting well the course David followed and the blessed outcome of it. What he did, assured him complete victory. Those who carefully copy the procedure will likewise experience precious and total victories in their lives.

He made no effort to devise a way out of the dilemma. Instead, he focused his attention on the wonderful manifestations of God's power as he had witnessed it in the past.

- He remembered that he had been called to rule Israel.
- He reviewed the wonderful victories over the bear, the lion, and Goliath.
- He meditated upon the occasions when again and again he had been protected from the malice of Saul.

As he did this, his view of God, with His wisdom, majesty, love, and power, strengthened with a corresponding increase of living faith which enabled him to leave the whole matter in God's hands.

What is most encouraging is that he knew God well enough to know that, even though he had brought himself into this trap and deserved to be left to the wrath of his enemies, the Lord would work for him in a marvelous way. David knew that God would not manifest Himself toward David in a vengeful way. He apparently understood that God is not a destroyer or a being who condemns the fallen but is a wonderful Saviour, Restorer, and Deliverer.

Having abandoned his own works, David was at rest as he journeyed down to the battle front. The matter of his salvation being committed entirely to God, it was no concern of his. God, not he, was the Saviour.

God sent His angels to move the Philistine lords to protest the presence of David among them, until, in their mounting

concern, they pressured the king to send the warrior and his band home again. Though the king was most reluctant to do this because of his great confidence in David, he felt that he had no option but to accede to the demands of his lords.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 690-691:

David and his men had not taken part in the battle between Saul and the Philistines, though they had marched with the Philistines to the field of conflict. As the two armies prepared to join battle, the son of Jesse found himself in a situation of great perplexity. It was expected that he would fight for the Philistines.

Should he in the engagement quit the post assigned him, and retire from the field, he would not only brand himself with cowardice, but with ingratitude and treachery to Achish, who had protected him and confided in him. Such an act would cover his name with infamy, and would expose him to the wrath of enemies more to be feared than Saul.

Yet he could not for a moment consent to fight against Israel. Should he do this, he would become a traitor to his country,—the enemy of God and of His people. It would forever bar his way to the throne of Israel; and should Saul be slain in the engagement, his death would be charged upon David.

David was caused to feel that he had missed his path. Far better would it have been for him to find refuge in God's strong fortresses of the mountains than with the avowed enemies of Jehovah and His people. But the Lord, in His great mercy, did not punish this error of His servant by leaving him to himself in his distress and perplexity; for though David, losing his grasp on divine power, had faltered, and turned aside from the path of strict integrity, it was still the purpose of his heart to be true to God.

While Satan and his host were busy, helping the adversaries of God and of Israel to plan against a king who had forsaken God, the angels of the Lord were working to deliver David from the peril into which he had fallen. Heavenly messengers moved upon the Philistine princes to protest against the presence of David and his force with the army in the ap-

proaching conflict.

1 Samuel 29

³ What do these Hebrews here?

–cried the Philistine lords, pressing about Achish. The latter, unwilling to part with so important an ally, answered,

³ Is not this David the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which has been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?

But the princes angrily persisted in their demand:

⁴ Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which you have appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us; for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?

⁵ Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

The slaughter of their famed champion and the triumph of Israel upon that occasion were still fresh in the memory of the Philistine lords. They did not believe that David would fight against his own people; and should he, in the heat of battle, take sides with them, he could inflict greater harm on the Philistines than would the whole of Saul's army.

Thus Achish was forced to yield, and calling David, said unto him,

⁶ Surely as Jehovah lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the host is good in my sight; for I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming unto me unto this day. Nevertheless the lords favor you not.

⁷ Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that you displease not the lords of the Philistines.

David, fearing to betray his real feelings, answered,

⁸ But what have I done? and what have you found in your servant so long as I have been with you unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

The reply of Achish must have sent a thrill of shame and remorse through David's heart, as he thought how unworthy of a servant of Jehovah were the deceptions to which he had

stooped.

⁹ I know that you are good in my sight, as an angel of God, [said the king:] notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

¹⁰ Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with your master's servants that are come with you; and as soon as you be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

Thus the snare in which David had become entangled was broken, and he was set free.

As often happens, David was tested again immediately. It is often the case that a person who comes through triumphantly with the first test, will utterly fail the second, but with David this was not so.

A Further Problem

When he and his band returned to Ziklag, they found that it had been attacked by the Amalekites during his absence, thoroughly looted, and razed to the ground while their wives and children had been carried off.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 692:

After three days' travel, David and his band of six hundred men reached Ziklag, their Philistine home. But a scene of desolation met their view. The Amalekites, taking advantage of David's absence, with his force, had avenged themselves for his incursions into their territory. They had surprised the city while it was left unguarded, and having sacked and burned it, had departed, taking all the women and children as captives, with much spoil.

Dumb with horror and amazement, David and his men for a little time gazed in silence upon the blackened and smoldering ruins. Then as a sense of their terrible desolation burst upon them, those battle-scarred warriors "lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep."

The terrible situation in which David now found himself would never have developed if he had not turned to his own works to establish his security. God had given him instructions both through the prophet Gad and through the princi-

ples laid down in His word, to remain in the land of Judah. But this had meant constant pursuit, unending uncertainty, and the perpetual threat of death. To relieve himself of this he had gone to Philistia where he supposed he would have no more worries about security. He was to learn that he was no more secure in this land than in Israel.

The difference was that if he had remained in Israel where the Lord had put him, then the Lord, not he, would have been responsible for the safety of himself and his band. God would have done His work so capably that not one hair of their heads would have been harmed. If there is one lesson God's children must learn, it is that there is no safety or profit in our own devisings. Safety and progress are to be found only when we are exactly where the Lord would have us and has put us.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 692:

Here, again, David was chastened for the lack of faith that had led him to place himself among the Philistines. He had opportunity to see how much safety could be found among the foes of God and His people. David's followers turned upon him as the cause of their calamities. He had provoked the vengeance of the Amalekites by his attack upon them; yet, too confident of security in the midst of his enemies, he had left the city unguarded. Maddened with grief and rage, his soldiers were now ready for any desperate measures, and they threatened even to stone their leader.

Once again the pressure bore down heavily on David. The situation demanded that something be done, especially as he was confronted by his own men turned hostile. The threat to him was more immediate than it had ever been before, making the temptation to turn to his own wisdom and devisings greater than he had ever known it. Yet, whereas he had failed so many times previously, this time he took exactly the right steps. As surely as he did, the deliverance was complete.

Careful comparison of David's actions here with those adopted when he unwillingly marched with the Philistines to-

ward the war with Israel, shows that he followed the same procedures in each case:

1. The course adopted was in perfect harmony with the principles of God's working with man. This was one witness that he was right.
2. The results which followed were all that could be desired. This was the second witness.

These two witnesses confirm that this is the formula for successfully coping with this kind of temptation. All would be well advised to study this formula until it is thoroughly understood.

The Hour of Utmost Extremity

The critical factor in this type of situation is the possession of strong faith. If a person is born again, then he has at his command all the power necessary to overcome temptation, but that power will not come to his aid unless by strong and living faith he lays hold of it and trusts in it to do the work. Therefore, when the pressure of sight and circumstances makes the enemy look terrifying, and God seemingly far, far away, it is of paramount importance that the eye should be turned resolutely away from this witness to the promises of God.

Especially should the wonderful experiences of the past, both your own and those of God's great men, be carefully reviewed. As this is done, faith and confidence will spring up in the heart, the mighty power of God will come to the rescue, and the Lord will work out the problems in a most astonishing way. Note how David did this:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 692-693:

David seemed to be cut off from every human support. All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him. Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city;

his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar friends had banded against him, and threatened him even with death.

In this hour of utmost extremity, David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances, looked earnestly to God for help. He “encouraged himself in the Lord.” He reviewed his past eventful life. Wherein had the Lord ever forsaken him? His soul was refreshed in recalling the many evidences of God’s favor.

The followers of David, by their discontent and impatience, made their affliction doubly grievous; but the man of God, having even greater cause for grief, bore himself with fortitude. “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You,” was the language of his heart. Though he himself could not discern a way out of the difficulty, God could see it, and would teach him what to do.



Source: *Omnium Virtutum*, 1632

The king elect made absolutely no plans for himself. He

waited to see what plans the Lord had, and then he followed them to the letter. The outcome was all that he could have wished for. Not only did they recover every one of their wives and children and acquire a massive amount of spoil, but they nearly annihilated the Amalekites.

The lessons are clear and of great value. Not one child of God ever needs to sin. It all depends on faith for:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith.

David's experiences show very clearly how and why Christians have fallen under temptation. This is not evidence that it had to be so, for it was not necessary that they fall. All the provisions for complete victory had been provided so that the fall had to be solely their fault.

The Desire of Ages, p. 311:

There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.

14. King and People—Shared Fault

DAVID'S best known sin is his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. It was indeed a dreadful crime, but to isolate him as the only one to blame, as most people tend to do, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the role others played in bringing him to the place where he could transgress so iniquitously.

Shared Guilt

The fact that others must share his guilt does not excuse the king. He was indeed blameworthy. In the great judgment day he will be unable to plead any excuse for what he did. But, in that same day of reckoning, the people of Israel will have their eyes opened to see wherein their behavior imposed upon David a pressure which he should never have been required to bear. They were accessories to the crime and deeply implicated in it.

Yet, when he committed the sin, and it became known across the nation, the people tended to lose confidence in him. His authority was weakened, and the door was opened for the general demoralization of the nation. Because they had not openly committed the same sin, and because it is not in the nature of man to examine and see wherein he is a contributor to the sin of another, they looked upon him as sinful and themselves as righteous.

Far better it would have been for all concerned if the people had been prepared to see that what David did was the natural outworking of their own evil course in asking for a king like the nations around them. They were getting exactly what they had asked for. They had been warned that if they asked for a king like the nations around them, serious consequences would eventuate. They should have acknowledged that these words were coming to pass and not condemned the king for what they were basically responsible for.

Human beings have not changed since that time. Modern courts of law sit on cases in which the only person being considered is the one who openly committed a crime. They do not reflect on the fact that the very people who judge him represent the society which made him what he is. Because they have not openly committed the crime themselves, they regard themselves as righteous, while they judge him as being criminal.

Modern society feeds its members from a very early and impressionable age on scenes of violence, murder, intemperance, and lust. Comic books, novels, television, and the movies are the media through which this is provided. All this naturally forms their characters into the same pattern and stimulates the desire in them to emulate what they see. When the results develop into active crime, then the society which provided the material to make them what they are, condemns them for being it. The man is sent away to imprisonment or death, while they, who are even more guilty than he is, remain free to continue their deadly work.

We, who are God's children, should ponder this lesson very seriously. When a brother or a sister falls into grievous sin, resist the disposition to lay all the blame upon him. Examine very carefully our own attitude and behavior to see where, by our influence or our neglect, we have been responsible for pushing that person into the pit.

This can only be successfully done if we enlist God's aid to show us ourselves. When we do see where we have been responsible for that person's sins, let us go to him and confess the part we have played, thereby, through the witness of our example, the admission of our involvement and by verbal invitation, encouraging him to confess and return with us to the Lord.

What healing power would be in the church if this practice were followed with true sincerity and clear understanding.

What power it would have brought to ancient Israel if they, too, had followed this course.

A King Like the Nations

The fall of David should have been a blessing to Israel. Throughout Saul's reign, enough oppression had been laid upon them and enough unrighteousness exhibited in the king's life to persuade them that they had made a terrible mistake in asking for a king. But, they could hope that a king of better character such as David, would rise above such shortcomings. When he sinned, this man after God's own heart, they should have said,

“It is enough! Let us go to the king, confess to him the terrible wrong we have done him in asking for a king like the nations around us, and invite him, with us, to retrace our steps by giving the kingship back to God to whom alone it belongs.”

When originally, they had asked for a king like the nations around them, they had not fully understood what they were asking for. They had hoped, because of their good intentions, to get a king who featured the best qualities of the kings around them, and shunned the worst ones. But now they were learning that it is not possible to have one without the other. They were discovering, if they would only admit it, that they were indeed getting kings like the kings around them.

What were those kings like? Were they men of honor and integrity? Were they morally sound? Did they respect the rights and property of other people?

They were nothing like that! They were immoral and adulterous murderers. If they saw a woman they fancied, they took her. If the husband or family objected, they lost their lives. What was law for the people was license for the king. He was amenable to no one and did just as he pleased so long as he remained in absolute power.

The Israelites certainly did not envisage that their kings would become so totally like the kings around them that they took their wives from them. They did want a righteous king, but they were committed to having unrighteous kings by the very nature of the request itself—*like* the kings of the nations about us.

Even though they had asked for such a king, the Lord required righteousness of him and trained David to be a righteous king. It was not God's will or plan that he should be otherwise. But certain things attached to kingship are demoralizing because of their very nature. There is the pomp which tends to pride and arrogance. Just as the influence of an overindulgent father was so detrimental to Joseph's character, developing in him self-sufficiency and an exacting spirit, so the luxury of court life and the possession of absolute power had its effect upon David.

The last classroom into which David was taken and from which only death, the total repentance of the people, or his own deliberate abdication from his divinely appointed responsibilities could release him, was one that the Lord never intended for any man. It was set up against God's will at the demand of the people.

God allowed it, for He would not force them to follow Him. At the same time, He did not desert them. He worked with them as far as they would accept Him in the hope that eventually they would come to see where they had chosen disaster instead of life.

Far back when David was first chosen for the role of kingship, the Lord knew that He *would* have to school David beforehand so well that, when he entered the last classroom, he would be fortified to live above its influences. That David only fell once, is a marvelous tribute to the thoroughness with which the Lord did the work with weak, frail, sinful human nature.

So while Joseph could be delivered from that classroom where he was developing wrong characteristics, David, at the peak of his life, was committed to that situation with all its eroding influences for the rest of his days. This does not mean that he had to let the erosion take place. One of the greatest lessons we have to learn from the kingship of David is that one can be aware of these influences, and can take definite and successful steps to prevent them from having their effect on the life.

It may be argued that Joseph also became a ruler in Egypt where he was daily surrounded by every form of vice and corruption. There was one difference though, between his position and David's—Joseph was only the second-in-command, whereas David was absolute monarch.

Perils of Power

Consider the perils of being in a position of absolute power such as David's when he ruled what was then the most powerful nation on earth.

Bear in mind that God never intended such an exaltation should ever exist. His plan was that there would be a humble prophet acting only as His mouthpiece. Such a man would not have absolute power over the people but would merely be God's spokesman. He would command no powerful armies, would sit upon no glittering throne, and would not preside over a pompous court. Therefore, he would not be subjected to the corrupting influences which all these bring.

David was on ground which the Lord recognized as being very detrimental to maintaining a living victory over sin. Let those who are quick to accuse David consider how well they would have endured the subtle influences of such a situation.

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717, an examination is made of the influences which did undermine David's strength. First, it is stated that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 717:

As all the lessons of Bible history teach—it is a perilous thing to praise or exalt men; for if one comes to lose sight of his entire dependence on God, and to trust to his own strength, *he is sure to fall.*

By calling for a king, the people placed David in a position of great peril. It was something David had neither desired nor sought. Because the people demanded it, the Lord appointed the best man available for the office. By so doing, God manifested the character of a saviour who sought to save them from the worst consequences of their choice. It was David's privilege to share in this work of love and sacrifice. Had he refused, then he would have forfeited eternal life by denying the principle at the heart of the gospel—service to others no matter what the cost or risk to one's self.

Just as the Saviour came down to save mankind even though it would risk His own eternal life, so David, with the call of God, had to go on into the last deadly classroom where he was subjected to every pressure designed by Satan to destroy all that the Lord had previously built up.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, by choosing their own way, created an emergency situation which necessitated Christ's risking everything. Likewise, the people's demand for a king, which was also their own choice, created an emergency necessitating David to risk everything for the sake of the sinners. His chances of eternal life would have been much greater if he had stayed a shepherd all his life.

It is comforting to see that in the end the Lord did bring him safely through, despite the troubles experienced along the way.

Fault Lay with the People

When investigating how the people were at fault in the sin committed with Bathsheba, there is no shifting of blame from

David to the people, but a recognition of the fact that it must be shared. David cannot be exonerated any more than he can be isolated. He could have resisted the influences present in the position in which they had put him. The people are to blame for putting him in that place. He is to blame for not recognizing and resisting the eroding influences of his environment. David was not the helpless victim of circumstances. No one who is a Christian is, for there is every power and provision from God to overcome the effect of all circumstances.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 717:

Man is contending with foes who are stronger than he.

Ephesians 6 [margin]

¹² We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.

It is impossible for us, in our own strength, to maintain the conflict; and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is *surely preparing* the way for our overthrow. The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power.

This is a statement of truth, the full impact of which should be understood by every Christian. Here is the plain statement that it is impossible for us to maintain the conflict. Therefore, anything which diverts the mind from God and leads to self-exaltation and self-dependence, prepares the way for the fall. It is a process so steady, so subtle and insidious, that no one is really aware of what is happening, unless constantly on the alert, until it is too late. So it was with David.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 717-718:

It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall. Flattery, and the subtle allurements of power and luxury, were not without effect upon him. Intercourse with surrounding nations also exerted an influence for evil. According to the customs prevailing among Eastern rulers, crimes not to be tolerated in subjects

were uncondemned in the king; the monarch was not under obligation to exercise the same self-restraint as the subject.

All this tended to lessen David's sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he began to trust to his own wisdom and might. As soon as Satan can separate the soul from God, the only source of strength, he will seek to arouse the unholy desires of man's carnal nature.

The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It begins in apparently small things, —the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world.

Because the people demanded a king like the nations around about them, they put one man into a situation of such luxury and ease that it exposed him to influences which were most conducive to the destruction of his Christian experience. It is impossible for a man to be in such a position without being affected, unless he takes unremitting steps to counteract it.

This is what led David to lose sight of God and to trust more and more in himself. Satan worked very hard to see that he did lose his close grip on the Lord. It was on this that Satan concentrated first, not yet concerning himself with leading David into open sin. That would have been bad strategy for, before it could have happened, David would have seen where he was going and would have pulled back from it.

The devil worked at one thing first, and when that was accomplished, he worked on the next stage—to arouse the fleshly desires of the human nature. He knows that success is guaranteed once the first objective has been reached, and it is impossible for us to resist the effects of these things in our own strength.

Moral Sensibilities Blunted

Of great interest in this connection is the fact that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 717:

Intercourse with surrounding nations also exerted an influence for evil.

As a monarch among monarchs like himself, David had to have intercourse with these other kings. Thus he saw how *to all appearances* they prospered in their immoral living, seemingly sinning and enjoying the satisfactions of the flesh with impunity.

At first, the sight filled him with loathing and disgust, but as time went by and he saw it again and again, that feeling began to diminish until he could look upon it first without reaction, and then at last with interest.

All this tended to lessen David's sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

His moral sensibilities were blunted and thus, when temptation was presented, he did not see it in the light in which he should have seen it.

It is not easy to look back from the twentieth century and obtain a clear perspective of David's transgression. In the church, adultery is somewhat disproportionately rated as the worst of all sins. For instance, the adultery with Bathsheba and not the murder of Uriah, is the sin which is most remembered. In fact, the latter hardly seems to get a mention. Yet murder is every bit as evil as adultery. Add to this the fact that David's sin is not viewed in its proper context, and modern Christians are appalled at what he did and are unable to understand how he could ever have done it.

Sin in another is always viewed in darker hues than the same or even worse evils in ourselves. It would be well to put ourselves in David's place, so that we study his story as if we were he. Follow the process by which the court life of ease

and splendor and the constant contact with evil as he had intercourse with surroundings kings, diluted and diminished his sense of right and wrong. Let an awareness of the danger which attends the footsteps of every Christian grip the mind, and then it will be easier to understand how that wonderful Christian did fall. The spirit of judgment will be replaced within such students with that of sympathy, love, and understanding.

Lest any of us feel more righteous than David, let it be understood that every one of us is morally depraved to a larger or lesser extent. Today's world is filled with iniquity and vice, the appearances of which suggest continually that it is the transgressor who prospers. Even among those who profess Christianity, strict safeguards against evil's entrance have been alarmingly relaxed. Consequently, the sense of sin's exceeding sinfulness has been lost to a frightening extent.

To check one's self in this respect, it is necessary only to think back to the time when we first heard of a great disaster or savage crime. This induced feelings of horror and revulsion then. But as time passed these things became increasingly frequent and even more terrible. We passed through the horror of the first world war and the atrocities of the second.

Think now of the reaction when, for instance, two or three young men pulled submachine guns and grenades from their baggage in the Lod Airport, Tel Aviv, and cut down with wanton disdain for human life, a number of perfectly innocent and uninvolved men and women. The news evoked no more than a passing interest without any real feelings of horror and disgust. It was dismissed with a shrug as being something all too common these days.

What has happened to us? There has been a gradual eroding away of moral sensibilities until, in a world where life is cheap and blood is so easily shed, our regard for it has lessened. It would be well for each to think about this and dis-

cover for one's own self that there has been a subtle but definite change.

But this is not the only area where each Christian is subjected to this influence. This is an immoral world in every respect. Day by day, we are involved in business contracts with other people whose only aim is to see that they get the best end of every bargain. The result is that while a person may begin to do business early in life with a noble and generous spirit, he soon finds it necessary to be on guard against the other man, and there is a hardening of the spirit—the noble and generous impulses drain away to be replaced by a closer, more covetous one.

This is the most licentious of all times. Never have lust and vice been so well supplied with the means for their proliferation. On every hand, in the streets, in magazines, in daily conversations, inducement is held out to indulge. At first this is positively resisted by the Christian. But, as days and years go by, its continual presence reduces the sense of distaste until it is simply accepted as the modern way of life. Imperceptibly, a love for these things can develop and often does. This process is not inevitable. Its possibilities must be recognized and definite steps taken to resist it. Otherwise it will grow on us remorselessly.

Let each pause and compare himself now with what he remembers being in the early days of youth's idealism. While it will be evident that real progress has been made in many things, it will be seen that there has been loss too.

Do not make the mistake of looking only at that particular point wherein lies your strength. Every person has some point in which he is strong, while other areas are weak and deficient. This suits Satan very well. His tactic is to have the person look at the area of strength, while the areas of weakness are overlooked or excused. The result is that the person measures his character by his strength, rather than by the

overall picture. Thus the devil is able to make a person see himself as virtuous when in fact he is quite morally deformed.

The capacity of a person to honestly, and accurately evaluate himself, is a faculty of the greatest value.

Only in the light of the relationship of revival to reformation, can David's sin be understood. In the light of that, there is no room for any spirit of condemnation on our part toward him, for we are of the same flesh, are subject to the same eroding pressures, and, like him, have become the victims of moral deformity. Few of us have had so fine a beginning in life as he had, and fewer still would have endured as much as he did and yet sinned as little. Every one of us is in danger of falling in the same way as he. Many have not committed the outward act simply because there has not been the opportunity which David had.

What a revelation to us of the insidious workings of sin in all its deceitfulness, is the history of this great and wonderful Christian. What a lesson to us to keep the moral fibers strong and disentangled so that, when the temptation comes, we will first see it for what it really is, then hate it, shun the poison of it, and set the will in living faith in the power of God to save us from that evil. In such a way, victory will be ours as it could have been for David.

In this too, is the revelation that the Christian cannot complacently fold his arms, believing that there is no more need to be fearful of temptation, believing that from now on, he will not find it possible to sin. We still have that fallen, sinful human flesh, and while we have that, we are forever faced with the peril of its gaining the upper hand.

15. The Christian Life is a Perilous Way

THE history of Joseph's steadfastness and of David's victories and defeats is a lesson book for every Christian. Here the truth is revealed and emphasized that God's children are battling against forces far stronger than they are. Only by understanding the nature of the conflict and by laying hold of God's provisions can victory be assured.

Their experiences remove all doubt about the *possibility* of a *Christian* committing sin. Note carefully that this is not speaking of the *certainty* of their transgressing, but of the *possibility* of it. There can be no such thing as the Christian who is permanently immune to the power of temptation. The sad truth is that Christians can sin. In fact, those men who as Christians, have erred most grievously, were great Christians for whom the Lord had done much. They were, as is said of David, men "after" God's "own heart." *1 Samuel* 13:14.

These are facts which must be faced as such. In accepting them, however, what conclusions are to be drawn?

- Is it to be concluded that if men like David committed sin, there is no hope of anyone having complete victory over temptation?
- Must it be accepted that because the influences all around are calculated by Satan to induce corruption, eventually and inevitably all must succumb to the pressures?
- Is it to be deduced therefore, that in this life sin is the lot of all, and that only in the spotless environment of heaven, will abiding righteousness be experienced?

These are conclusions which may be drawn. If this is the pattern of thinking, then sin will certainly lie at the door and Satan will be the victor in the struggle.

On the other hand, if this study is entered into with the firm

conviction that there is no need to sin; that victory is the provision made by God for all who have been delivered from the bondage of sin, then the attitude to David's life will be very different. Rather than having an accusing spirit, there will be a sympathetic understanding of the problem and a searching for the lessons his history provides. David sinned, it is true, but no one has to walk in his footsteps.

The Classrooms

Every person in the world is in school. Reference is not being made to classroom courses, but to work and social situations which daily exert their educational influences. Those situations have in them influential forces working to mold the thinking for good or evil. So real is this power that it must not be discounted in assessing our choice, as far as we can make it, of what we shall do and be.

Choices must be made long before the hour of temptation comes upon us. They must be made as far as possible in regard to the classroom in which we shall be found. The victory must be won in decisions made long before the hour of temptation finally comes. Consider this question of decisions a matter of vital concern for every soul.

The Dangers of Position

There are many types of classrooms to be shunned. One above all others in which there is great peril is the place where a person occupies a position of authority, power, and wealth.

In the physical realm, it is easy to keep one's balance on the level lowlands, but it is extremely difficult to keep from falling when on the lofty mountain peak with space for only one to stand. So it is in the social, business, political, and religious world. Many a man who did well as a common citizen has been ruined irretrievably by exaltation to the loftier pinnacles of fame and fortune.

Nor have such ruined lives been those of unconverted men alone. The converted have also marred their life record when exalted to the higher places. There is the sad story of King Saul, the first monarch of Israel, and the tragedy of David's sin. Down through history there have been others unable to endure the subtle pressures.

No true man of God is ever to be found entering this classroom willingly. The spiritual vision is such that he knows before he even enters, what some of the perils are. He sees it all, in the consciousness of the frailty of his sinful, human nature, and in the power of environment. He knows that he will be covered with praise at one time, and abused at another. He knows that there will be those who accept every word he says simply because he says it, while others will reject every word only because it came from him. Too few will seek the truth for themselves and build a character fit for eternity. As he sees all this, fear fills his heart that under such pressure, after having preached the truth to others, he himself will be discarded.

See with what reluctance Moses, Jeremiah, William Miller, and so many others before whom the Lord laid the call to higher and wider service, finally entered into it. The fact that they did so with such trembling, with such a sense of their own unworthiness and insufficiency, was in itself a safeguard against the power of temptation, for it caused them ever to put their trust in God, rather than in themselves.

Not one of those men would have survived the pressures of their positions *if they had put themselves there*. There is a vast difference between being called of God to occupy a position of trust and responsibility as were David, John the Baptist, Paul or William Miller, and putting yourself there.

When God calls a man to occupy a position, He not only prepares him for it, as we have seen with David and Joseph, but He provides special protection for that man. The Lord knows that the perils of such places are so great that they are

beyond the power of a human being to escape, so He provides all that is needed for complete victory to be obtained. Proof of this is recorded in the life stories of Daniel, Joseph, and even David, for, although the latter did fall, the overall story of his life was a picture of victory, not defeat.

Yet, in spite of this, too often men will seek for position; actually struggling and scheming to obtain it even in the church of God where it is most dangerous to occupy a position of trust. Such men will not only be a miserable failure in their self-appointed work, but will be an actual curse to the cause. The testimony contained in *Early Writings*, p. 97-101, in its reference to this matter, is all too true. Many a man would be saved from eternal disaster if he would only read these words and profit by them.

Those who occupy a humble and apparently insignificant position in the work of the Lord and the world, should be very thankful that they are not as exposed to temptation and difficulty as they would be if placed in higher places.

Should a call come to occupy a position of larger power and responsibility, then the one called would be very wise to apply every test to ascertain that it is in fact God who is putting him there. He must know with absolute certainty that the call has not come from his own ambitious heart or from some other human being.

No one can be too thorough in testing such a matter. All must learn to distrust the deceitful human heart so powerful in its tendency to believe what it wants to believe, rather than the strict truth. Human nature finds position and authority very attractive, so much so that the issue tends to become distorted. Therefore, unless conclusive and unmistakable evidence is present ensuring that the call is really from the Lord, it must be totally rejected.

Balaam is an excellent example of a man who was determined to believe that the Lord had sent him when this was

not the case. His story also provides an illustration of the beautiful character of a loving God, who sought to save him even after he had made his wrong decision, by letting him know he had. The stubborn and determined man would not heed the counsels but determined to go his own way.

Likewise, if for any reason we have failed to really test the call and then find ourselves in a wrong position, the Lord will kindly let us know it. By now, it will be much harder to vacate the position than if we had refused it initially. However, if doors to destructive temptations are to be closed and eternal life secured, the step must be taken no matter what the cost may be.

Recently there was drawn to my attention the story of a young man who had gone to work in a large business. There he sought day by day to reveal the Master in cheerful, industrious application to his work. The result was that in time, he was promoted to the position of manager in the particular branch where he was working. This meant an increase in salary, and he felt sure that all this was the blessing of the Lord. There was considerable rejoicing in the household and among his friends as a result.

But this young man soon discovered that he had been promoted far too soon for his level of experience, and the job therefore proved so exacting and time absorbing that it made serious inroads into his family and spiritual life. He found no time to study and to pray. The worries of the business so pressed upon his mind that he was unable to give any thought to eternal and spiritual things. A decision had to be made at once. That decision would be either to keep the position with all that it meant in the way of earthly advantage, or to resign so that he could spend more time with his Bible and his Lord.

That is one of the most difficult decisions a man can ever be called upon to make. Only one in a thousand will make the right choice. The vast majority will cling to the earthly advan-

tages arguing that this is the blessing of the Lord, when it is really the curse of the devil. This young man made the decision to stand down and accept the lower place where he could walk with the Lord.

In his situation, he made the right decision. This does not mean that everyone must step down from the position they hold. It may be that God definitely and specifically put you there or that circumstances such as in Joseph's life leave you with no choice. It may be that you can successfully cope with the work and maintain your walk with God too. Each person must candidly evaluate his own situation and, recognizing the perils along the way, weigh his choice in the light of time and eternity.

Position is not to be sought. It is to be avoided, for in it there are perils and dangers which can too easily rob one of eternal life.

The Principle Involved

Many chapters could be written to outline in detail the perils of every classroom, with special emphasis on those to be avoided. Pages might be written on the evil effects of city life versus the purer influences of the country. Numerous illustrations could be provided of the lives of great men who have been a blessing to their time and society, who spent their early years in the country.

It can be shown that whenever the Lord wanted a man, He called one with a country background, while, if He set aside a man from his birth for a great work in the future, as was the case with Moses and John the Baptist, God certainly saw to it that he spent many years in the country before beginning his work.

The Spirit of Prophecy is replete with warnings to leave the large cities and settle in the country environment to raise our children. Every advantage should be seized upon to ensure

the greatest possible development of the character and protection against temptation.

It is recommended that each person take the Word of God and study into these things for himself. There is ample instruction given there of what to seek for and what to avoid in the classrooms found upon this earth. For now we will study the principles involved so that the understanding of them will be a safe guide to each soul in his search for total victory over sin.

The basic principle involved is that in this life we are contending against forces immeasurably stronger than we, so it is essential that we go only where the Lord can go with us, and when He sends us into difficult places, that we be extremely careful to maintain a close and trusting connection with Him. We must give particular attention to the little things which, though seemingly so innocent in themselves, have the deadly power to imperceptibly erode away the soul's defenses and lead to self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. Once that point is reached, disaster is sure to follow.

The terrible fact is that in every situation we are living in a hostile environment. Some situations are much more hostile than others, examples of which have already been mentioned. It is far more dangerous to be in the city than in the country. It is more perilous to be in a high and responsible position than a lowly one.

The only possibility of *a Christian surviving as a Christian*, is for him to have the protection of powers which are stronger than the forces pitted against him. That power is the power of God. But God has promised the protection of that power *only* in places where He can go with us, and even in those places *only* if we maintain our connection with Him and our faith in Him.

For instance, if we go to the meeting houses of those who teach error, then the Lord does not go with us, for He has in-

structed us not to attend such places. We go there unprotected, and even though we may go once, twice, or a dozen times and not be conscious of any change in ourselves, a *change*—subtle, imperceptible, and deadly, *has taken place*. You may not know it and may be congratulating yourself on your strength, but the change is there and the full effects will be finally seen when it is too late to make recovery.

Even then, in the new line of thought which has captivated the mind, the deceived one will still think that he is secure and safe, and will be pleased that he has escaped from what he once believed, not knowing that he has been robbed of the only truth which could effect his salvation. That the Lord does not protect us when we go to places where error is taught is made clear in the following words:

Early Writings, p. 124-125:

I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings; for it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good.

If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free, and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, *He will not keep us*. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.

This statement is very plain and must not be misunderstood. It does not condemn the person who has not yet found the living truth, for seeking it here and there as he has opportunity to investigate. In the course of that investigation, he

passes from one group to another. Such a person does have the protection of God as he searches on.

But the class to whom this statement is addressed, are those who have found the truth and know at this stage that the other groups are in error. For such a person to attend the meetings of the others, is to subject himself to the influence of forces vastly greater than he, without having the protection of the Lord with him.

Just as God is not with a person when he sits in front of a television screen to watch a movie on romance, violence, or the like, or enters a dance hall, a gambling den, or a picture theater, so He is not there when a person goes to listen to the teaching or preaching of error. That person is alone. "The angels" have ceased "their watchful care over" him, "and" he is

...left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around [him] becomes contaminated with the darkness.

Learn from the life story of David, the man after God's own heart; the one who had been so carefully and especially prepared by the Lord for the position which he finally occupied and who had in that position the promise of the Lord's special protection. It shows the great truth that no matter how fine a Christian you may be; no matter how long and thorough your education has been in the things of God, you cannot afford to venture unseparated and unprotected onto Satan's ground.

Learn from this the fact that changes will take place within you. At first they will be slight, but as surely as they have happened, they will be succeeded by others, for once the beginning of the trouble is there, the foundation is laid, and upon that foundation Satan will continue to build right through to your ultimate fall.

David's history shows this in the clearest light. It is written

there for our learning and admonition. It shows that the influences around us will shape the life unless, through the power of God, we are masters of those circumstances.

With Sympathy

With what sympathy we should study David's life. Projected into a position the Lord never planned for any man to occupy, he was subjected to forces of great power and subtlety. As evidence of the evil nature of the influences bearing upon the kingship, showing that the Lord never desired anyone to be in that position, is the truth that the most wicked men in Israel's history are to be found among the kings who followed David. It is virtually impossible to find one of them who did not make tragic mistakes against God and His truth.

Rather than condemning David, let each one be thankful that he is not called upon to occupy so terrible a position. At the same time, let every person be aware that in this last and licentious generation, he is being subjected to terrible pressures, so none needs to think that he is secure from falling, no matter how rich his Christian experience may have been.

Today, we may be hardly aware of any loss in our lives, but there is coming a day of test when the work of every day will be revealed for what it really is. Whether each one shall pass or fail is being determined by the work done today in understanding the nature of evil temptations, avoiding them as far as possible, and resisting their power.

16. Ideas and Theories

THE study of revival and reformation reveals how it is possible for the devil to tempt the Christian to sin and actually be successful in that temptation. That there is a very real possibility for the Christian to commit sin, is proved by the fact that many great Christians have been led to sin grievously. David is an excellent case in point.

There are great differences between the situation in which a person is found before being born again, and after that time. Before the new birth, he is a slave to sin and has no power to resist it. He is the sport of temptation and must do as the slave master directs, no matter how distasteful the sin may be to him. This man has no choice. He cannot work the works of righteousness regardless of how much he may want to do so.

But once the revival has taken place, he is set free from sin's power and can live a perfectly sinless life as did the Saviour. In order to do so, he must understand how Satan can get at him and work on him. This is essential knowledge, for no one will be saved in ignorance. The reason why the enemy is so successful in leading so many Christians to sin, is because they are not conversant with his tactics.

So far, we have studied the subtle and deadly effects of losing sight of God's power and trusting in one's own. Also, consideration has been given to the eroding effects of being placed in a position of power the Lord never intended one should occupy. But there are yet other avenues through which Satan can come to the soul, and of these the Christian must also be aware. To these we will now turn our attention.

Wrong Ideas and Theories

Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 128:

[Reformation] signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices.

These changes do not take place during the revival but during the subsequent reformation period. This is not to say that no change takes place in the revival, for a wonderful transformation is effected in this work, but it is not the same as those which follow.

The revival does not remove the wrong ideas and theories which a person absorbs during the long years before conversion takes place. A limited number of wrong ideas will be corrected during the period leading up to conversion, but the main work will be accomplished during the interval between the revival and the close of probation. Some of them will be put right quickly, but others will take years to be seen and corrected.

Everyone who escapes the bondage of sin, still has this work to be done in them, and in every such person, the presence of these wrong ideas and theories gives Satan an opportunity to tempt and to overthrow. A knowledge of their presence and the way in which the devil can use them is essential to all those who would deprive Satan of any advantage.

The only people who will no longer have this problem are those who will, after having received the seal of the living God, live through Jacob's trouble.

Once again it must be emphasized that the presence of these wrong ideas and theories, even though they give Satan a means of access, does not mean that there is either the guarantee that we will sin or any excuse for it. Full and complete victory over all sin is God's provision for every Christian.

The Bible is well stocked with illustrations of how these old ideas and theories, habits and practices remain after conversion, how they affect the life, and give Satan a means of exerting a heavy pressure of temptation on the believer. These dangers must be so well understood that the enemy cannot use them to his advantage.

An Illustration

To help make the distinction clear between the revival and the reformation, the following illustration is offered.

A young woman falls in love with a cattle rancher whose spread is in a remote area of the country. After they are married, she goes to live on the ranch. There is no other woman on the place and her only associates apart from her husband, are the cowboys. For these she has to cook, and often she rides the range with them. Day after day she hears their rough talk, and lives their rugged lives. For twenty years, she exists like this with very infrequent visits to the city.

It is not hard to imagine the effect of this kind of life on her nature. She would tend to adopt the rough and ready ways of the ranch and the equally rough language of the stockmen. Polished manners and elegant attire would be lost to her.

Then suddenly her husband dies. She sells the ranch and goes to live in one of the larger cities noted for its high level of artistic culture. There she meets a very refined gentleman who has for years moved in the society of the educated, the cultured, and the artistic. In one of those unusual cases, he falls in love with her and proposes that they marry. She accepts.

Consider the situation in which she now finds herself. Her old husband is dead and the old way of life is left far behind. No longer is it bawling cattle, dust, flies, heat, flooding rains, droughts, bushfires, and uncouth stockmen. Instead, it is high society—elegance, riches, educated company, splendid furnishings and fine attire.

However, even though she has a new husband and a totally new environment, she has not yet left behind the influence of those years out on the ranch. Her manners and her speech reflect her previous life. Naturally, she begins to change in harmony with the new situation, but it takes time. She repeatedly

makes mistakes that threaten the marriage, the survival of which depends on two things:

1. The husband has to be a wise, understanding, and forgiving person, ever ready to help her recover from the embarrassment and shame of each error.
2. She has to have a sincere determination to overcome the influences of the past, combined with a boundless confidence in her husband's love and faithfulness.

Even under these circumstances, it would take years for all the rough edges to wear smooth.

Likewise, the person who is born again has a new husband and a new environment in place of the old husband who is dead. But this does not immediately deprive him of all the old ideas and theories, habits and practices which were acquired during his time in Satan's school. It will take years to unlearn some of these things.

Fortunately, Christ, the new husband, has endless patience and undying, infinite love to cope with every departure on the part of his beloved bride. Unfortunately, she does not have the implicit faith she ought to have in Him, nor does she always manifest a true determination to come to grips with the faults and have them corrected.

For this reason the work of reformation is seriously retarded and extended. It is, in fact, the reason for the long delay in Christ's return.

A Very Real Problem

That the presence of old habits of thought constitute a real problem is made clear by an experience of the believers in the early Christian Church. This group of people is of great interest to us because they had received the power of God's Spirit as no other group on the earth ever has before or since. They were a truly born again people from whom the old carnal mind had been eradicated, and the divine nature substituted.

Beyond this, they had been equipped with the mighty power of the Spirit of God and their lives witnessed to that power day by day. We are apt to think rather wistfully of that time and to feel satisfied that if we had the same experience as they, then our problem with sin would be a thing of the past. We tend to think that neither the desire nor the possibility of sin would be there any longer.

Of that people it is written,

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 87:

The hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles, were softened and united by Christian love. Despite former prejudices all were in harmony with one another.

Here were a people whom we would tend to assume as being secure from the power of temptation and:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 87-88:

Satan knew that so long as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth.

Naturally, he was determined to break up this unity so that he could check the progress of the gospel truth. But did he feel that there was no hope of success? Did he feel that there was nothing in those wonderful spirit-filled people to which he could appeal?

By no means! He understood the problem far better than we or they did, and he was able to take advantage of that which still remained in them even though they were born again Christians filled with Pentecostal power. What had not been taken away by the revival experience or even by the mighty infilling of the Holy Spirit? It was the old ideas and theories, the old habits of thought.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 87:

The early church was made up of many classes of people, of various nationalities. At the time of the outpouring of the

Holy Spirit at Pentecost, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Among those of the Hebrew faith who were gathered at Jerusalem, were some commonly known as Grecians, between whom and the Jews of Palestine there had long existed distrust and even antagonism.

So, in the old school of Satan before they became sons and daughters of God, there had been a habitual thought pattern of hostility and suspicion between these two classes of people. This habit of thinking was not entirely removed by conversion and lingered on in the memory as each recalled how the other had related to them in the past.

Satan knew this and so...

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 88:

...he sought to take advantage of former habits of thought, in the hope that *thereby* he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion.

Thus it came to pass that as disciples were multiplied, the enemy succeeded in arousing the suspicions of some who had formerly been in the habit of looking with jealousy on their brethren in the faith, and of finding fault with their spiritual leaders; and so “there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.”

There is the picture. They were born again Christians. They had been delivered from the carnal mind and had received the divine nature in its place. Memory of past experiences still remained in their relation with each other so that the old habits of thought were still there. Satan knew this. He regarded it as an area by which he could bring discord and disunity into the early church. So he went to work on it and was successful. Division, discontent, and disunity grew out of suspicion and distrust.

Of course, it need not have done so, *but it did*. That should alert us to the fact that if that people who had the mighty in-filling of the Spirit could be tempted and fall as they did, then

we must recognize the same danger in our situation. We have to understand that the old habits of thought are still with us even though we do not see, recognize, or understand them at the present time. The testimony of the Word assures us that they are there, and in being there, they provide the devil with an area of temptation. The importance of understanding this cannot be overstressed. The Bible sets it out in clear and practical terms.

Twelve Men

Nowhere is the problem of old ideas and theories with their associated wrong habits and practices, better revealed than in the experience of the twelve disciples who followed Jesus day by day in preparation for the great work they were to do after His ascension.

These men were victims of a very wrong theory so far as the nature of the coming kingdom of the Messiah was concerned. They believed that He would come as a glorious conquering king to rout the Romans from the face of the earth and set the throne of David on high once more. They had been born into a world where this was table talk in the homes, the conversation in the streets, the topic of sermons in the synagogue, and the subject of the school lessons from day to day.

So deeply inculcated was this doctrine that when they became Christ's disciples, it was still strongly entrenched. Moreover, despite the skilled and earnest efforts of Jesus to clear up this misconception, it remained with them till the crucifixion.

It must not be forgotten that we are studying the sin problem *as it relates to the converted man*—not to the unconverted. Therefore, the disciples had to be converted men for their experience to be a valid aid to us in studying the problem of the remaining wrong ideas and theories as an avenue of temptation in the converted one's experience.

Converted or Unconverted?

Were the apostles, during the period from their call to Christ's ministry and the crucifixion, converted? In raising this question, it is well known that the average Bible student believes they were unconverted. Instant reference is made to Christ's words to Peter.

Luke 22

³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and *when you are converted*, strengthen your brethren.

These are the words, spoken after they had partaken of the Lord's supper, by which it is argued that up till then Peter had certainly not been converted. Further weight is added by the witness of their behavior, which certainly was not, in their contention for the highest place, the kind of behavior one would expect from converted men.

To most people, this evidence is conclusive. They are quite sure that Peter was not converted, had not been born again and did not come into this experience until after the crucifixion. But there is other very important evidence besides this which raises the question of *which* conversion Jesus referred to when He said to Peter,

³² When you are converted, strengthen your brethren.

Most people think there is only one conversion experience—the deliverance from the bondage of sin to become a child of God, otherwise known as the new birth experience. It is definitely true that this is conversion, but it is *not* the *only* conversion needed by those who will at last stand upon the sea of glass.

There are at least three different conversions needed in the lives of those who will be saved. Reference is made to all three at different times and places in the Scriptures. It is left with the reader to understand which one is being referred to at any given point in the Bible. Thus, when Jesus spoke to Peter of

his need of conversion, the first question to be asked is,

“To *which* conversion was Christ referring?”

The principle of interpretation encountered here is not singular. It repeats itself again and again in the Scriptures. Often there are two or more things called by the same name which are different. As Bible students, we must come to understand this difference between things called by the same name. Failure to do so could very well cost a person his eternal life.

For instance, there are at least two separate and distinct comings of Christ, firstly, as an obscure infant in Bethlehem, and then again as a glorious, eternal king in the clouds of heaven. Both of these comings are foretold in the Old Testament, without any prophet making a specific distinction as to which coming he was referring to. In every case, the reader must determine from the context which coming is being referred to.

The Jews in Christ’s day seeing only one coming where they should have seen two, made the tragic mistake of expecting Christ at His first coming as He was due to come at the second. Thus they were led to reject Him.

So there are two laws: a ceremonial and temporary one, and a moral and eternal one. Again the Scriptures do not make a specific distinction when one or the other is the subject of discussion. It is always left with the student to understand which is which. The Protestant churches see only one law where they should see two, with disastrous consequences.

There is also more than one conversion. First is the intellectual conversion to the theory of the truth which is always accompanied by certain outward changes of life and behavior but does not as yet produce the great changes of nature which are the real conversion. The man in *Romans 7* has this intellectual conversion. He knows the law, loves it, and is dedicated to keeping it though without real success. But he has turned

away from old beliefs to a belief in the word of God and this is a very real conversion.

However, it is not enough to bring salvation. There must follow the literal taking away of the old nature and replacement with the new. This is the second and great conversion. This is what most people think of as being conversion.

If the revival was the final and total answer to the sin problem, that would be the last of any converting work in the life. But we know that it is not the final solution to the sin problem. After the new birth there remains a great deal of work yet to be done.

So, whenever a man has a wrong theory which is causing serious difficulties, as was the case with Peter and the others, and that theory is shown to him as being wrong, to be in turn given up and replaced by the truth, then has not this been a great conversion? Assuredly!

Many *such* conversions are needed after one has been born again. Peter certainly needed to be converted so far as his theory of the kingdom was concerned. Until he had that conversion, he could not and did not strengthen his brethren, for his idea of the nature of the coming kingdom made that impossible. This is the conversion to which Christ was referring—not to being born again.

Numerous other evidences in the Bible show this to be the case. We will see from these evidences that the disciples had been born again and were ordained ministers of the gospel.

They Were Baptized

The first evidence to be considered in searching for the proof that they were born again is found in the fact that they were baptized believers. John the Baptist, not Christ, had performed the ceremony in the cases at least of those who had firstly become John's disciples and then turned to follow Jesus.

It is true that we do not have a direct statement to the effect that John baptized John and Andrew who in turn called Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael to the Master. But we do know that for a man to have become a disciple of John the Baptist, he must first have listened to his preaching, believed in it, repented of his sins, been converted by the truth and then baptized. John certainly would not have accepted anyone as his disciple unless he had been baptized.

It is true today that many have an erroneous concept of what baptism really is. All too often, the preacher simply calls upon his hearer to make an assent to belief in a certain code of doctrine, after which he baptizes the person into an organization. Thereafter he is a “member.”

But this was not so with John the Baptist. He had no organization nor was he concerned with a listed code of beliefs. He was concerned with what baptism symbolizes, namely, the literal, actual eradication of the old man of sin and its replacement with the new life of the divine nature in the person. This was what he had to see in a person before he would baptize him, and, possessed with the Spirit of Inspiration, he would be able to discern whether the testimonies were genuine or not.

The truth of this is revealed in his penetrating denunciation of the Jewish dignitaries who came to him with their pretended piety, but who were inwardly filled with the evil of unsanctified hearts.

Therefore, when John the Baptist took a person down into the watery grave, he did so with the certain knowledge that that person was indeed thereby testifying to a changed life in very fact. As surely then as John and Andrew at least, had been baptized by the prophet, must we know that they were born again Christians. Others may and do baptize formal professors, but not John the Baptist.

While we do not have a direct statement to the effect that each of the apostles had been baptized by John the Baptist, we

do have statements direct from Jesus and from His testimony—the Spirit of Prophecy, that they were baptized.

As Jesus came to wash the feet of the disciples, He arrived before Peter who remonstrated with Him, declaring that Christ would never wash his feet. Whereupon the Saviour gently advised him that unless his feet were washed, Peter and He must forever part, and Peter would thus have no part in the coming kingdom. Christ's words did far more than remind Peter that he was about to lose his place in the kingdom. They also revealed something of the evil of his nature to the point where deep and stinging conviction led him to cry out,

John 13

⁹ Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

There are two washings in the New Testament—the washing of baptism which washes a man, head, hands, and feet; and the foot washing. Jesus was offering Peter the latter, but he felt that he needed the former. He was asking for baptism for the simple reason that he felt he needed it and that the baptism he had formerly experienced was lost and needed to be repeated.

If Peter had not been baptized earlier, then the moment had surely come when this should now be done, so one would have expected Jesus to say,

“You have said well. Let us go to the water and there you shall be baptized.”

Words to this effect would certainly have been appropriate under these circumstances, but the Saviour's reply was very different. He not only refused him this service but stated that, inasmuch as Peter had already been truly baptized, he did not need that experience again.

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.

There is no mistaking the import of the Saviour's words to His erring disciple in this instance. Christ was saying to Peter that because he had already been washed head, hands, and feet (baptized), he did not need that service again but required only the foot washing service. Thus, in plainest terms, Jesus reminded Peter that he had been baptized and the work done under that ordinance need not be repeated.

In other words, we have Christ's own witness that Peter was already a baptized child of God. Just when and where this had taken place we do not know, but inasmuch as Christ Himself did not administer this ordinance, then it almost certainly was John the Baptist. However, irrespective of when and where, Christ's words acknowledge the fact that Peter had had this experience.

More important still, Christ's words also acknowledge that the baptism Peter had received was not merely a formal service, but was, in fact, a very real witness to a true experience. If it had not been, then Jesus would have acceded to Peter's request for baptism—the washing of the whole man, head, hands, and feet.

In clear support of these facts are the words of the Spirit of Prophecy. In the chapter dealing with the foot washing service entitled, "*A Servant of Servants*," we find these words describing the experience of these men at this very time.

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

So Peter and his brethren *had been washed* in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Christ acknowledged them as His. But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace.

Had these words said only that they had been baptized, this might well have left the question of whether the baptism was only a formal immersion in the water as are so many today, but saying more than this, that they had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, makes it clear

that the baptism service for them was the witness of the real thing. It was far more than merely a formal experience. Therefore, they were converted men and nothing more is needed beyond this to prove the point.

However the Scriptures demand that there be at least two and preferably three witnesses to substantiate any fact of truth. Therefore, we must look further to verify this.

Their Occupations

In their occupations, we find further proof that these men were born again Christians. At the time of the foot washing, they were all ordained ministers of religion. What is more, except for Judas, they had been personally called by Christ to the ministry and, including Judas, had been ordained by Christ Himself to this sacred office.

The fact that Judas had not been called of Christ even though Christ ordained him, puts him in some respects, into a different category from the rest. At this stage we will put forth no arguments as far as he is concerned as we are interested in the behavior of Peter and the others at the time of Christ's arrest, not with Judas.

The fact that they were ministers of the gospel, called and ordained by Christ Himself, is clear proof that they were converted men, for the Master would not call and ordain a man who did not have certain basic qualifications, most essential of which was that he be truly born again.

This truth is well set forth in the following statement.

The Desire of Ages, p. 805:

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men,

to minister in behalf of the church.

This paragraph is worthy of careful study as it sets forth principles and facts which need to be better understood. First is revealed just what the impartation of the Holy Spirit is. It is receiving the life of Christ *in* the soul. Nothing should be more clearly understood than that we can never receive the life of Christ into the soul unless first of all, the old evil nature is eradicated. Therefore, receiving Christ's life into the soul is the experience of true conversion, or the experience of really being born again. It is that of which baptism is to be the symbol and witness.

Such an infilling as this imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are born again and are being educated in the school of Christ, can possibly have the attributes of Christ. These are virtues and powers which can come in no other way.

Having stated what the result of the infilling of God's Spirit is, then comes the all-excluding phrase,

“Only those...”

Such a phrase limits that which follows within the closed framework of what has gone before, as it says,

“*Only those* [and therefore no other] who are *thus* taught of God,”

“*Only those*...who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and”

“*Only those*...in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.”

Those who are to stand as representative men to minister in behalf of the church, are those who are the ministers of the church. It must be recognized that today, millions of men who do not have these qualifications are occupying the positions

of ministers in the churches. In fact, as one recognizes that first a person must have the truth of deliverance from the power of sin's bondage before he can actually be free, as Jesus said,

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,

—then the very scarcity of the knowledge of the real message today, is in itself a witness that there is likewise a serious scarcity of the experience which is the qualification for the ministry. How few today are real ministers of the gospel in the light of the truth set forth in this statement.

Many occupy the position of minister but, as far as God is concerned, they do not stand as representative men to minister in behalf of the church. One thing is clear—*the Lord would never call a man to the ministry unless he did have those qualifications.* Therefore, the fact that Jesus did call Peter and the others is clear proof that He understood, knew, and recognized that those men did have the impartation of the Spirit and therefore had the Christ-life in them.

If they had not had those qualifications as a result of the new birth conversion experience, then Christ would neither have called nor ordained them. Once again, evidence is before us that they were indeed born again Christians when the Lord washed their feet.

It may be argued that their behavior at the foot washing was hardly representative of those possessing the inward characteristics of Christ's life. It will be seen however, that they had not lost what they had gained at the conversion experience, but had allowed the evil character of the flesh to become the predominant witness in their lives so that the character of the divine nature was hidden and at rest.

The fact that they were showing a poor spirit does not mean

for one moment that they had not had the great conversion and were not God's children at this time. However, if they had died in this condition, they would have been lost for there were unconfessed and unforsaken known sins in their lives.

Spirit Empowered

A further evidence to be considered is the fact that Jesus sent them forth to:

Matthew 10

⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils...

That which the Saviour had commissioned them to do they went forth and did. What they did was the result of the Spirit of God flowing *through* them in ministry to the needy. They had a most successful and wonderful missionary journey in the whole area through which they passed and returned to Jesus with rejoicing in their hearts to tell Him of the wonderful things they had been able to do.

In considering the ministry of these men, there can be no question but that it was the true Spirit which was manifest through them in this work. If the true Spirit, then it follows that He could only work *through* them if first He had dwelt *in* them, for the Spirit of God can only flow through and use those in whom He has first dwelt.

There are three distinct stages to the Spirit's working, the order of which cannot be changed or reversed:

1. CONVICTING OF SIN

First the Spirit works *on* the person as a Convicter of sin. In this, the Spirit works from a position outside the individual, seeking to reveal to him his undone and unclean condition and to lead him to hate the sin, repent of it, and confess it.

2. IMPARTING CHRIST'S LIFE

Only when this work has been successfully accomplished

can the Spirit then come and, after eradicating the old sinfulness, actually dwell in the believer, imparting to him the life of Christ and thus imbuing him with Christ's attributes.

3. WORKING THROUGH MAN

In turn, only when, firstly, the work on the believer has been done and the Spirit has been able to fill the believer with His Presence, can the Spirit work and speak *through* that man, except in very special cases such as that of the false prophet, Balaam.

As surely as we know that the Spirit of God is actually working *through* a person, then can we know that the Spirit is first of all dwelling *in* him, by which we know that he has received the true conversion experience and has witnessed to it with true baptism.

There is no question but that the *true* Spirit worked mightily *through* the apostles as Christ sent them forth to their work of ministry. Therefore, as surely as the *true* Spirit worked *through* them, then just so surely was the *true* Spirit already dwelling *in* them.

Thus evidence abounds that those men were already converted, so we must conclude that when Jesus said to Peter, "When you are converted, strengthen your brethren," He was not referring to the need to be born again, for Peter already had that experience. He was referring to his need to be converted so far as his ideas of the kingdom were concerned. Until he was, he certainly could not and would not be able to strengthen his brethren.

Seeing this point is very necessary to understanding how old ideas and theories, and habits and practices bring the pressure of temptation upon the Christian. Now that their conversion is established and we know that they were indeed Christians, we can study for our own benefit and salvation the experiences through which the disciples passed.

17. Wrong Concept Wrong Preparation

THERE is no doubt that the Bible contains the records of the sins of men who were great Christians. Outstanding are the sins of David, Abraham, Elijah, Moses, Paul, Peter, and others. At the time when these men committed these sins, they were children of God. They were born again Christians. They had a great and comprehensive knowledge of the Word of God and the plan of salvation. Yet they committed sin.

From these facts, men and women are prone to draw a number of different conclusions, each of which seem logical in themselves. What is more, they would prove to be logical if the basic premise on which the arguments were based, was sound and true.

Why Do Christians Sin?

That basic premise is the belief that the possession of the carnal mind or the evil nature is the one cause of sin in the life. It is generally believed that if you have the carnal mind, unless it is kept in complete submission, you will certainly sin, and if you do not have it, then you will not sin, for that, it is believed, would be impossible.

Naturally, it is concluded from this that if sin appears in the life, then that is sure evidence that the old nature was there all the time just waiting to spring into life and manifest itself once again. So, to those who think this way, when Moses struck the rock in anger, he gave the clearest proof that he still had the old man within him. They argue that it had been lurking there for the whole of his life and, while he had done a most commendable work, with God's help, of keeping that old evil thing under control all those years, the time had come when it got the better of him and came out for all to see.

The next and logical step in this kind of reasoning is this. Moses was a very great Christian. He not only was a prophet

who walked and talked with God, but he was appointed by the Lord to fill the most important position in the world at that time. If he had the old carnal mind in him after all those years of walking with God, then each child of God today will also have the carnal mind, even after he has been born again.

But, what has been overlooked or misunderstood is the fact that there is more than one avenue by which Satan can come to the individual and cause him to fall into sin. After the old evil nature has been removed and replaced by a new nature altogether, *the possibility of sin has not been removed from the Christian*. God does not today, any more than He ever did in the eternity of the past, make any being unable to sin. If He had, then Lucifer, the holy angels who fell with him, and the perfect Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, could never have committed sin. There is a distinction here which must be kept in mind in the study of God's Word and in the daily experiences of life.

It is because Christians can commit sin, and because they have unnecessarily and unfortunately committed very grievous sins, that it is necessary for us to study how this is possible. We must become aware of how Satan can tempt us, so that we will be wise to his approach and meet him successfully.

We who live in these last days are very fortunate to have the wealth of the experiences of those who have gone before. There are the lives of David, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John. The details of their struggles with the power of temptation, of their falls and subsequent recoveries, furnish us with a wealth of information such as is needed to give us escape from the same falls and difficulties.

Preparing for the Kingdom

The disciples, as they followed Jesus day by day right through to the cross and beyond, furnish us with a wonderful

revelation of the sin problem as it confronts the Christian. As these lives are studied, not with the idea of condemning them, but with the intention of learning the way of complete victory, the wiles of Satan will be made plain, and it will be possible to obtain a more consistent and convincing victory over his temptations.

For the study of their lives to be of value in connection with the sin problem as it relates to the *Christian* life, they would have to be themselves converted men. This is why evidences were set forth in the previous chapter showing that they were in fact, in this condition. They were born again, converted and baptized Christians and, more than that, ordained ministers of the gospel.

Yet, when they came to the Lord's supper, their behavior was not what one would expect from born again Christians, especially if it is believed that in the new birth experience the believer receives the very nature of Christ. They possessed a spirit of rivalry and keen competition which generated suspicion, pride, and even hatred toward each other. Their spirit and behavior were contrary to that of a Christian.

How could this be? What was the cause of their problem? By what means was Satan able to get at them to bring forth these things? These are vital questions.

When those men came together to sit around the Passover table, they came with the expectation of setting up the long-expected kingdom. It is true that the time had arrived when a great event in connection with that kingdom was imminent, but there was a most serious misapprehension in their minds as to the nature of that kingdom, and the events to transpire in connection with it.

They can hardly be blamed for thinking that way, for, ever since they had come into the world, they had lived in an environment where the constant and unrelenting pressure of thought and education, was to inculcate one idea exclusively,

that the Messiah would come as a conquering king to set them free from the Roman yoke.

So deeply and permanently ingrained was this idea, that when Jesus Himself tried over a period of years to free them of these erroneous ideas, He was unable to penetrate their earlier training.

Satan, who had trained Israel in this thinking all the years before Christ came, with the express purpose of leading them to reject and war against the Messiah, was well aware of the presence of these ideas and theories in the apostles. His awareness of that, enabled him to use it to his decided advantage in bringing discord and sin into their ranks.

The curious thing is that he was mightily assisted in this by certain commendable aspects of the natures of those men. One such was that they were wholehearted, zealous men. They had sacrificed everything for Christ's cause, including their businesses, their friends, their standing in the synagogue, and their home life. There was nothing they had held back. They really believed that Christ was the Messiah and that He was to build the kingdom, and in this they were right. Consequently they devoted the whole of their energy and power to the work of not only assisting in building that kingdom, but in preparing themselves for it.

Such a spirit of devotion to the preparation for the coming kingdom we can only commend. In fact, the harder and more conscientiously they worked at it, the more they should be commended for their effort.

Likewise today, we expect to see the Lord coming in the very near future. As Christians, our whole expectation focuses upon this event. We long for it to come, seeing in it the end of this long dark night of sin and misery, and the beginning of the eternity of righteousness without sin. The sooner that day arrives, the better we shall be pleased.

We understand that, in order to be a part of that kingdom, we have to reach a certain state of preparedness, which can be attained only through diligent and sustained effort. Therefore, if we are truly God's children, we will concentrate our total energies on the work of preparation for that kingdom.

The more diligently we work at this, the more pleased the Lord will be and the sooner the day will come. On the other hand, wherein the professed child of God fails to devote his total energies to that work of preparation, the more the Lord disapproves in the sense that He knows this course will cost the person his eternal life.

Matthew 24

⁴² Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord will come.

⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

⁴⁴ Therefore be also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man will come.

⁴⁵ Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing.

⁴⁷ Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

⁴⁸ But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays his coming;

⁴⁹ And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

⁵¹ And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Thus the Lord calls for diligence and thoroughness in the

work of preparation. The disciples were not lacking in this respect.

The Nature of the Preparation

But here is a very important point to be considered. *The nature of the preparation will be directly affected by the concept held of the kind of kingdom which is coming.* If the concept is wrong, then the nature of the preparation will also be wrong. In fact, if the concept is wrong, then the more intense the work of preparation, the more difficulty and trouble we will have in the Christian experience.

For instance, we understand today that the qualifications for admission into God's kingdom are *character* qualifications. Therefore, each one who understands this, labors to perfect the *character* which will pass the scrutiny of the judgment. He understands the part which God alone can play and the role of the human agent, so he works in harmony with these principles and in total dependence on the heavenly powers. He adopts this course of action because he correctly understands what is required.

But if entrance to the kingdom was for those who had accumulated in this life, a certain amount of money, then would not our work of preparation be very different from that of character development? We would then devote our energies entirely to the acquisition of the necessary wealth.

Again, if only those with a university education could enter the kingdom, then we would devote our time to gaining that standard of education. The nature of the kingdom and its entrance requirements are going to decide the nature of the preparation we shall make for that entrance.

This situation is the case if our concept of the kingdom and our understanding of the preparation for it are consistent with the truth. But if our concept differs from the truth, then the nature of the preparation will be in harmony, not with the

actual nature of the kingdom and the kind of preparation needed for it, *but with our concept of it*.

So it was with the apostles. The truth about the kingdom was one thing. Their concept of it was another. Consequently the nature of their preparation was in harmony with their concept—not with the truth. Therefore, the more diligently they worked at their preparation, the more deeply into difficulty they descended.

Thus Satan was able to combine something very commendable, namely the zeal and enthusiasm of their preparation, with a wrong idea and theory, to cause real trouble, not only in their experience but also in the church of God at that time.

What They Knew

There was only one kind of kingdom known and understood by those men. They had never seen or known any other but this kind, the reason being that ever since the Israelites had asked for a king like the nations around them, there had been no other kind of kingdom in the earth but that which was built upon and maintained by the sword.

Any peace was obtained and sustained by the authority of military power. The important people were those most proficient with weapons of war, or those who were the possessors of vast sums of money whereby the war could be financed. In such a system, position was the all-important objective.

The king occupied the highest place because he was the richest man in the realm, usually the most able warrior, and able to eliminate those who plotted against him, together with those whom he *supposed* plotted against him.

This had been the situation in the days of the kings of Israel; it was the situation in the Roman Empire, and it certainly was, in its own way, the situation in the power structure of the ruling classes in the Jewish Sanhedrin.

It was, and still is, wherever it is found, a system which developed the worst aspects of human nature. It bred unholy ambition, pride, avarice, hatred, jealousy, and led to murder, extortion, and other evils. Yet when Christ came to this earth, there was no other system in any government, and in earthly governments there has been no other system since. Therefore, the disciples knew no other system than this, and consequently, could only think in terms of the coming kingdom being built along these lines.

Because of this, they would, as a matter of course, direct their work of preparation for that kingdom along the lines of their understanding of what that kingdom would be. In earthly kingdoms, position was the all-important thing. The higher one could climb, then the greater his power, prestige, importance, and influence. In earthly kingdoms that was the thing to be desired, and, if Christ's kingdom was to be built along those lines, then, in that kingdom, the same things were to be sought after and desired.

Each for the Highest

So each of the apostles was bent on securing for himself the highest position in the kingdom. This was Peter's determination, but as he sought to elevate himself to that level, he was very conscious that John, James, and the rest were bent on the same determined course.

This *competitive* spirit could not help but generate in them, *even though they were born again Christians*, certain cumulative evils. The wording of this sentence should be noted for what it says, not for what it does not say. It states that while the *competitive* spirit was there, the rest was inevitable, even though they were born again Christians.

This is the truth. However, it is not the truth to say that because they had a wrong concept, they had to have a wrong spirit within them. If they had learned, as we too must learn,

to study their reactions to a given situation, so as to recognize the first tendencies of a wrong spirit developing, then even though they might not have understood the wrong ideas and theories through which Satan was seeking to develop the wrong spirit, they could still have been free from the evil spirit and thus free from sin.

The fact that the wrong idea and concept exists is not the guarantee that the Christian will sin. But the moment a spirit of competition for position is allowed to rule in the life, then the rest is inevitable. In those men's lives, the spirit of competition was present, and so the rest followed, each evil building upon the one before it.

The first of those evils would be the spirit of fear. As Peter reached out for the highest place in the kingdom, there was the real fear that he would be outdistanced in the race by John, James, or one of the others. That fear led him to watch his fellow disciples with close scrutiny lest they gained an advantage over him. Every move made by the others was suspected by Peter of having some ulterior motive or intention.

Thus fear ripened into intense suspicion even of Christ Himself, for, any supposed favor shown to any of the other apostles, would be suspected as an indication that that one would be chosen ahead of the others for the coveted foremost post in the future.

Out of all this there developed in them such evils as envy, jealousy, and pride, which in turn generated hatred. Without a doubt, these things were actually in those men when they came together for the Lord's supper, even though they were born again Christians and ordained ministers of the gospel. All this is confirmed in the following words:

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

These words mean more than bodily cleanliness. Christ is still speaking of the higher cleansing as illustrated by the lower. He who came from the bath was clean, but the san-

daled feet soon became dusty, and again needed to be washed. So Peter and his brethren had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Christ acknowledged them as His. But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace. When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet.

Thus it is clear that when those men came to the upper room to eat the Passover with the Saviour, they had within, a spirit which prevented them from entering into fellowship with Him. That spirit was the alienation, jealousy, and pride which in turn had caused dissension and hatred. It was from this that they needed cleansing, and it was from this that Jesus cleansed all but Judas in the washing of their feet.

Those problems were generated, not because they were still slaves of the old carnal mind, but because Satan was able to pervert the powers of their human natures through their wrong ideas and theories.

So it was with the disciples after Pentecost when the trouble arose between the Greeks and the Hebrews. So it will be with every child of God who does not understand and close the avenues of temptation through which the enemy can still come to the converted Christian.

18. Perversion

THE disciples came to the upper room with pride, jealousy, and even hatred within them. At the same time, they were born again Christians.

It is the very heart of the message for which this writer stands, that conversion involves the eradication, not in part but in whole, of the evil spirit of pride, hatred, and jealousy to be replaced by the sweet spirit of humility, love, and trust.

Those who understand that this position is held, and at the same time are aware that these things did appear in men such as the apostles, immediately ask how this could possibly be. If the hatred, pride, and jealousy had been removed, then how could that which was no longer there, again appear in the life?

This is a sound question, and, as noted previously, it has led some to take erroneous positions, chief of which is the idea that the appearance of these things in the life after a person has been born again, is clear proof that they were not eradicated at conversion, but suppressed or controlled until such time as they had opportunity to break out again.

This is a natural conclusion to draw. Furthermore, it would be quite accurate if the old carnal mind, which is the spirit and offspring of Satan in the life, was the only fountain of sin. But it is not. What has been overlooked by those who take this position, is that there is a vast potential for sin in the *human* nature of man, whether that nature be still unholy as it will be till Jesus comes, or whether it is holy as in the case of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

It is necessary to make a distinction between sin as it appears to have its origin in the life of the unconverted, and the original origin of sin. In the unconverted, sin appears to have its origin in an existing condition of sinfulness in the individual. Hateful deeds flow forth because there is already the

spirit of hatred within the man. He acts proudly because he is proud.

An Origin of Its Own

But that sinful condition had to have an origin of its own. From whence did it come? This is a question worthy of careful, serious consideration. First thoughts would tend to the conclusion that, whatever origin this sinfulness has, it must be something totally apart from God and independent of Him, for it is the truth that the Lord cannot in any way be held responsible for the evil which is in the world today.

This is strictly true, yet to draw the conclusion that evil has an origin totally apart from anything God has brought into existence, is to suppose that there is another creator—another life-giver. It is to conclude that one of these two creators, namely God, created everything which is good, righteous, pure, and beautiful, while another creator appeared upon the scene to introduce a work of his own which was only evil, unrighteous, impure, and ugly. If this had been so, then it would be well illustrated by the picture of a man planting a field with good seed, after which another man enters in the dead of night and sows a crop of thorns and thistles in the same piece of land, as in the parable of the wheat and tares.

Christ was not teaching in this parable that there were two different creators in the first case. He was speaking of the situation in a world where sin and righteousness are already in existence. Because sin is present, the enemy can sow its seeds where the Lord sows righteousness. Iniquity is here as verily as are the thorns and thistles, but there was a time when none of these evils were to be found. Therefore, they had to have a beginning and a beginner, for they could not and did not simply spring from nowhere.

One thing which all Christians will accept as the truth is that God did not create sin *as such* and put it into the earth.

His repeated evaluation of each day's creative work was that it was good or very good. God called into existence only that which is beautiful, worthwhile, and righteous. Nothing evil came from His hand as any direct act of creation, nor is He in any way responsible for the evil which is the curse of life on this planet.

No Second Creator

Neither has there been a second creator; a second life-giver. God through Christ is the only one.

John 1

³ All things were made by Him: and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Colossians 1

¹⁶ For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.

Therefore, Lucifer did not *create* evil. It may be said that he *introduced* it but he did not *create* it. Then comes the question: If God did not create evil as such, and there was no other creator to bring it into existence, how did it find its origin?

The answer is that it found its origin in righteousness, for there was simply no other place. At first this idea may be difficult to accept, for it is clear that sin is opposite in every way from righteousness. One is led to question how something so different could come of that which is completely opposite.

But when it is realized that all sin is but the *perversion* of that which was good, then it becomes clear where sin found its origin. This is what sin is. It is the *perversion* of that which was good. God created the good, but Satan *perverted* it into something entirely different and deadly.

To help simplify this problem it needs only to be remembered that anything can be used either for good or evil. Think

of the wonderful invention of explosives, the moving picture, radio, television, printing, and many other such marvels. Then consider what an evil all these things have become, simply because they have been perverted to a use directly opposite from that which the Lord intended. God gave all these inventions to man with the desire that they should be used for his blessing and uplift, but Satan has made sure that they have been perverted to a wrong and destructive use.

Good as the above illustrations are, they do not go quite far enough, for in none of these cases is the actual nature of the invention changed. The printing press, for instance, can print all kinds of evil literature and then immediately turn back to producing God's holy Word. But when the righteous powers within the Christian are turned into an evil spirit, they cannot be turned back into something good.

The perfect illustration of this is a bunch of good grapes. This is God's gift to man for his blessing and health. But the grapes can be, and often are, turned into intoxicating wine. This is a terrible destroyer. It is perversion of the original thing which was good. Furthermore, no man can make wine unless he has the good grapes to start with. But, once the grapes have been turned to wine, it is impossible to get the pure, sweet, healthful grapes back again. They are lost forever. The only solution is to throw the wine away and obtain a fresh supply of grapes from the next harvest.

Every power is given by God to man for his blessing and betterment. But every such power can be perverted either into a wrong use, as in the case of the inventions mentioned above, or into a wrong form, as in the case of the grapes. Likewise, love can be turned into hatred, though hatred can never be turned back into love. Therefore, the stronger and larger the supply of God's love in the person, the greater the potential for seething hatred.

In the Converted

Inasmuch as the converted man has in himself the righteousness which comes to him as the gift of God, then as surely does he have the potential from which evil can be made to appear, by perversion. There is no time in this life when we may say in confident complacency that the battle is over, and all risk has departed. Thus, there can be no such doctrine as once saved, always saved. This is simply not so.

Nor does it mean that although the evil disposition or spirit of hatred has been removed from the person at conversion, it can never reappear in the life. The potential for it is always there, though not in the sense of a “sleeping giant” waiting only the opportunity to rise and strike. It is a potential contained in the good already there. That good can be *perverted* in a wrong direction to become a sin of the worst degree.

Hatred

This point needs illustrating to make it clearer still. Such illustrations must begin in the simplest form, so we will start with hatred. When a person is truly converted then:

The Desire of Ages, p. 391:

Love takes the place of hatred.

These words are very clear. One is ousted to make room for the other. The hatred is gone, love has taken its place. Where the first was, the second is now to be found. It is concluded by so many that if this is true, then it would be impossible for that person to hate anyone, any more. It would not be in him to do it.

But now we must ask what kind of hatred is removed and what love takes its place? This question is highly pertinent in the light of the following statement which speaks of what happens to the person who has been truly born again:

Steps to Christ, p. 58:

The things they once hated, they now love; and the things

they once loved, *they hate*.

Therefore, the Christian life is one of loving *and hating* as was Christ's life, and as is therefore the life of God. God loves *and hates*. This is the clear testimony of Scripture. In speaking of Christ it says,

Hebrews 1 [from Psalm 45:7]

⁹ You have loved righteousness, *and hated* iniquity.

That God, Christ, and the Christian love and hate, is a fact from which conclusions must be drawn. These conclusions must be accurate.

For instance, it could be concluded that the act of conversion is not the eradication of hatred, but simply its redirection. This is the current theory of conversion in the minds of all too many, but it is not the truth. The Scripture wording does not paint a picture of Jesus redirecting the sinful hatred, but of *washing it away* so that it is there no more. A clear statement to verify this is:

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but *all this* Jesus *washed away* in washing their feet.

If the hatred is washed away from the person at conversion, then it is not there to be redirected, and for this there is very good reason. The hatred present in the unconverted, is a perversion of something good and is therefore evil in nature. This hatred can never be righteousness and can never hate sin. It is the destroying wine and cannot be used for any good purpose.

When this hatred is present, it is directed against the sinner, not against the sin. Sin in another is only hated when it causes suffering, inconvenience, and loss to other unconverted people. By those to whom sin promises gain, it is excused and even encouraged.

This hatred of the sinner instead of the sin, is intensified in

those who possess it in direct proportion to the extent that it deprives them of comfort and security. It is therefore entirely *self-centered* and of a character which the Lord can never accept or bless. For this reason, this kind of hatred can never be used by God, for its nature is enmity against God, and it can never be subject to His law or commands.

The character of the hatred which God and the truly converted person have is one which hates sin *because of what it is*, not simply because it is inconvenient or painful to us personally. This hatred is one of divine origin, whereas the other is of satanic origin so far as our own lives are concerned, although its first beginnings were, of course, a sad perversion of the powers invested by God in His creatures of whom Lucifer was the chief.

To hate sin is to be godlike. It is a quality of life to be cherished and developed, for the more we hate sin as such in its spirit, nature, and essence, the better it will be for us. This is a God-given power. It is righteousness.

Satan is well aware of this characteristic in the individual who has found his peace with God, and he sees in it the raw material from which he can develop the hatred he desires the Christian to have. He delights in turning good into evil.

What God designs we shall do, is to hate the sin but love the sinner. The difficulty in doing this lies in the fact that the sin is so totally identified with the sinner, that we begin to misdirect the hatred to both the sin and the sinner and in the end, more particularly to the sinner. This is a perversion of the hatred for sin which is the righteousness the Lord has instilled into those who are His children.

To further complicate matters, not one of God's children have been delivered from the frailty of the fallen human nature, nor from the many erroneous ideas and theories gained in the school of the prince of darkness.

Strongest among the drives of the human nature, is the law of self-preservation which is quick to discern the effect of the sin upon our own interests. As it is seen that what the other person is doing will rob us of what we have, be it money, reputation, honor, position, time, health, or friends, then the natural tendency of the human spirit is to rise up in resistance.

This in turn leads us to regard with suspicion the motives and intentions of the one who is either sinning, or imagined to be sinning, against us. Right here, Satan is at hand to turn our attention away from the sin itself, to the sinner, and what he is doing to us personally.

What God desires us to do is to so trust in His protection and provision, that whatever the other person threatens, it will neither concern nor worry us. God intends that the attention be focused on the sin itself to see with compassion and alarm for the other person, what the evil is doing in and to him.

This will engender that same hatred for the sin and yearning love for the sinner which God manifests. Like God then, we will make any sacrifice to save the sinner from his iniquity.

The Potential is There

It must be clearly seen that in the born again Christian, there is a righteous hatred which the enemy can pervert into unrighteous hatred. This hatred, once perverted, is not the same as it was before. Its nature is changed from good into evil. God's hatred of sin is uplifting, healing, and blessed. Its effects are wholesome and good. But hatred against the sinner, so directed because of a personal response on our part, is poisonous, destructive to ourselves and those within the circle of our influence, and motivates deeds of retaliation.

Once the righteous powers within the person have been perverted into this destructive and poisonous hatred, they can

no more be changed back into righteousness than wine can be turned back into good grapes. The only way is to have it eradicated and replaced by the precious love of God which hates the sin but loves the sinner.

It is necessary to understand that every gift from God carries with it a tremendous responsibility. Those who do not recognize the danger and do not take intelligent steps to guard against it, will certainly be in difficulty. Remember that the more the righteousness of God is possessed by the Christian, the greater the power to be perverted to wrong uses, should he turn his back on the truth. Satan knows the possibilities well, and watches to take the utmost advantage of them.

Let the people of God be so well informed of the nature of this problem, and take such steps against it, as will deprive him entirely of this opportunity.

19. The King Today

IN THE ground just covered, it has been seen that the disciples, at the time when they came to the Lord's last supper, were indeed converted men and in addition, ordained ministers of the gospel, despite the fact that their behavior was not such as would be expected from those who had been born again.

It has also been seen that the old ideas, theories, habits, and practices were a source of real difficulty, for their wrong concepts of the coming kingdom led them to make grossly wrong preparations for it.

Finally, the very fact that they had the powers of human nature and even that of the righteous nature, meant they had within them a potential for evil, for all sin is but the perversion of that which is pure and good.

Therefore, when the apostles came to the upper room, they brought with them two things upon which and through which the devil could work, even though, because they had been delivered from the presence and power of the old carnal mind, he no longer held them as his bond slaves. Those two things were:

1. The wrong ideas and theories from which they had not yet been delivered, and
2. The human nature in which is the human spirit.

The reference to the human spirit includes all the natural feelings of the human nature and life—emotions of hope, fear, disappointment, frustration, dismay, self-protection, gladness, and determination. These in themselves are not evil or harmful, but they can be stirred to act in a wrong direction.

Furthermore, in the fallen and degenerate individual living after the time of Adam and Eve's betrayal of sacred trusts, those aspects of the human spirit are far more prone to evil

than good, just as the soil upon which we now grow our food, more readily produces thorns and thistles than cabbages and carrots.

It is Satan's studied object to pervert the powers of the human spirit into an evil spirit. He wishes to bring out of that human spirit the evil attributes of pride, jealousy, hatred, and the like, just as he did with the disciples even though they were converted. He can do this and sadly enough is all too often successful.

To understand that he can pervert these powers, may still be a problem to many. We remember that at the new birth experience, deliverance from the bondage of sin involved the removing of hatred, pride, jealousy, and kindred evils which had developed in the human life. If these things had been removed at that time, then how could they appear again and, if they do, this would surely mean that the same bondage is back again. If this is so, then how can the Christian's condition be any different from that of the unbeliever?

This line of reasoning is good, for it is getting at a genuine problem. It is a question which must be understood, but unfortunately, all too many have drawn wrong conclusions from these facts.

Most people conclude that the appearance of these things in the life is due to the fact that in themselves there has been no real change in the experience of conversion beyond a change of loyalty and mental attitude. They conclude that it is impossible for the human being to obey God's commandments by being at all times loving, patient, and kind, so the only hope of salvation is to have someone else obey the law *for* them even as Christ paid the penalty for them. This righteousness is only a vicarious experience and not an actual one.

Unfortunately, reasoning from the facts of the problem to these conclusions leads to positions which deny the wonderful power and truth of the gospel. It is the truth that every

one of God's children can obey the law and every one is required to obey it.

The Problem of Bondage

But, even though it is possible for any one of God's children to live a perfectly sinless life, generally speaking they fail to do so. When sin is committed, the question of what their status now is, confronts them. The usual conclusion is that they have returned to the same state as they were in before being born again.

This is what Peter thought when, at the foot washing, Jesus revealed to him the sinfulness which marred his life at that moment. No sooner had his eyes been opened to see himself, than he requested Christ to wash him completely; head, hands, and feet. This was a plea for rebaptism. He made it because he felt that he had returned to the same condition he had been in before he was originally baptized. The Saviour however, did not concur with Peter's view. He told him that there was no need for a second baptism, but only for the foot washing. When the disciples had accepted that, then He declared that they were clean in every way.

Of the two, Christ had the correct understanding. He made it forever clear that re-baptism is not necessary every time a person falls into sin by the manifestation of an evil spirit and associated wrong actions. Thus Christ certified that the believer does not return to the same condition when he falls into sin as he was in before being converted in the first case. Not the work symbolized by baptism, but that symbolized by the foot washing, is the solution for the Christian who has fallen into sin.

Understanding this vital point will save a great deal of confusion, and it will thwart the accuser's efforts to discourage the soul into submission to his devices. It certainly is one which is not generally understood, and I have experienced

difficulty in helping folk to see it. Once the light is perceived however, it brings great relief to tempted souls and sets their feet on the victory pathway as never before.

Generally speaking, folk tend, as did Peter, to believe that they have become fully possessed of the carnal mind again, and are as they were before baptism. They look at Adam's experience in Eden. He sinned once and by so doing passed immediately and fully out of God's kingdom into Satan's. Therefore, it is concluded, if a Christian sins, he must likewise pass immediately from God's to Satan's kingdom.

But this is not so because there is a very important difference between Adam's position in the Garden of Eden and the position of a Christian ever since. Before looking at the explanation of what that difference is, let further proof be advanced to confirm that a person does not revert to his pre-baptism condition when he finds an evil spirit forming from the perversion of his righteous powers. Consider carefully the content of the following statement.

John 13

⁸ If I wash you not, you have no part with me.

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

These words mean more than bodily cleanliness. Christ is still speaking of the higher cleansing as illustrated by the lower. He who came from the bath was clean, but the sandaled feet soon became dusty, and again needed to be washed. So Peter and his brethren had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. *Christ acknowledged them as His.* But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace.

This sentence—*Christ acknowledged them as His*—clearly reveals that even though those men had succumbed to temptation so that Satan had succeeded once again in arousing in them an evil spirit, Christ recognized them *as still being His children* and His disciples. If they had passed back under Sa-

tan's dominion when they sinned, then Christ would have had to acknowledge that they belonged to the devil. He can only speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Therefore, whatever He acknowledged as being so, was so. As surely as He acknowledged those sinning men to be His disciples or children, they were that still.

Likewise, it was common for the Lord to continue referring to Israel as "My people," even when they had ceased to obey Him perfectly and were beginning to enter a sinful course of action. The Bible is replete with evidences that God did not consider that His people had returned to the condition of bondage under Satan's control the moment they fell into sin, even though it is equally clear that Adam and Eve did.

Enough evidence is contained in what has just been quoted to show that a converted man does not pass back under the dominion of sin when he falls into temptation as did Adam and Eve. Just so, those disciples, even though Satan had generated in them a wrong spirit, were still the children of God. They were not under the actual bondage of Satan.

A Question of Who is King

These evidences establish the fact that the Christian does not return to the state of sinfulness and bondage in which he was before he became a child of God. But it is not enough to know that this is so. It is also necessary to *understand* how and why it is thus.

In a very important and significant way, the position of a Christian is different from Adam's before he fell. If it was not, then we would be God's children one moment and back in Satan's family the next. Then, every time we sinned and repented again, we would have to be re-baptized. The difference between Adam's position and ours is set forth clearly in the following statement.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 110-111:

If you have renounced self and given yourself to Christ you are a member of the family of God, and everything in the Father's house is for you. All the treasures of God are opened to you, both the world that now is and that which is to come. The ministry of angels, the gift of His Spirit, the labors of His servants—all are for you. The world, with everything in it, is yours so far as it can do you good. Even the enmity of the wicked will prove a blessing by disciplining you for heaven. If "you are Christ's," "all things are yours." 1 *Corinthians* 3:23, 21.

But you are as a child who is not yet placed in control of his inheritance. God does not entrust to you your precious possession, lest Satan by his wily arts should beguile you, as he did the first pair in Eden. Christ holds it for you, safe beyond the spoiler's reach. Like the child, you shall receive day by day what is required for the day's need. Every day you are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

In Eden, before any children were born, Adam was king, Eve was queen, and together they amounted to the entire human population of the earth. They held this dominion under God and Christ who were Kings of kings and Lords of lords. Despite this vassalage, it only required one conquest of the king and queen for Satan to gain entire possession of them and the world belonging to them. For this reason it required only one failure on their part for them to come fully into Satan's family.

But the situation is different today. A mighty Champion has entered the arena and soundly defeated Satan. Christ has won back the lost dominion, and He is now the King. But wisely, He does not give the kingdom back into our hands as it was in the hands of Adam...

...lest Satan by his wily arts should beguile you, as he did the first pair in Eden. Christ holds it for you, safe beyond the spoiler's reach. Like the child, you shall receive day by day what is required for the day's need.

Therefore, in order for Satan to regain full control of our lives, *he would have to defeat Christ*. This he cannot do. Christ is invincible. The only other possibility is for him to separate the Christian from Christ so that he is deprived of his defense and thus is recaptured. But this does not come easily. It takes a long time to effect this separation.

To illustrate the above point, suppose that a young man has been left a million dollars in his uncle's will. This is a tremendous amount of money. Anyone with that amount of money who invested it at ten percent, would never need to work again. It would earn him one hundred thousand dollars a year without touching the principal.

This young man is overjoyed with his blessing but, lacking good judgment, he goes down to the bank and draws out the entire amount, puts it in his car, and drives off. Soon he is accosted by a thief who takes the money from him. After only one robbery, how much does he have left? Nothing! Like Adam in the Garden, he has lost all in a single encounter.

But, suppose that the uncle who had a fair assessment of his nephew's lack of wisdom, decreed in the will that the maximum amount the youth could draw in a single day was a mere \$100.00. Though not happy with the restriction, the beneficiary has no choice. So he goes to the bank and draws the limited amount stipulated. The thief stops him and takes all that he has, but how much has he lost this time? He has lost only a small proportion of the whole amount. The loss would be so small in comparison to the money still in the bank. Next day he could return for another supply, being careful this time to give the thief no opportunity to take his treasure. This is the situation in which the Christian is today.

At the same time there is no denying that when the Christian falls, Satan has gained a victory, but it is a victory over the Christian, not over Christ. This means that the heart of the kingdom is still secure and that we have not been taken pris-

oner. A border incursion has been effected, nothing more. It is essential that the believer remedy this by confession of sin, and giving the problem into the Saviour's hands to drive out the intruder and re-establish total cleanness in the life.

So even though the apostles came to the Lord's supper with those unfortunate evils within them, they had not ceased to be God's children. Christ still acknowledged them as His. The enemy had breached the defenses and placed his forces within the kingdom, but he had not overthrown the capital. That was still secure and, in it, Christ was king. This was not a tolerable situation for Christ to endure. There was need to oust the invader. A cleansing work was called for, and this Christ immediately proceeded to accomplish.

The Seed Principle

The truth that a Christian does not return to the same condition of bondage to Satan as was his status before conversion, is a very important one. Each must know where he stands and how to return to the Saviour when he is overtaken by a fault. Otherwise, the enemy is given great advantage in the conflict.

Despite the importance of the matter, there are some who find it very difficult to understand. For this reason, even though the evidences presented above are quite adequate to establish the point, still more will be added. It has been found that the principles contained in the seed sowing have enabled some who otherwise could not grasp it, to see this truth.

A general concept is that when a person is cleansed through repentance, confession, and forgiveness, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in him, but when he sins and becomes unclean thereby, the Holy Spirit departs again. This is not exactly true. A more accurate knowledge of the Holy Spirit's office work is called for.

The Scriptures speak of Christ dwelling *in* the believer.

Colossians 1

²⁷ To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory.

Ephesians 3

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell *in your hearts* by faith.

Galatians 4

¹⁹ My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be *formed in you*.

I was continually puzzled over this truth of Christ dwelling in me and every other Christian until I understood the seed principle. In my mind there was the picture of Christ as a person coming down from heaven and actually entering into the human body. But how could He be up in heaven and in the believer at the same time? Furthermore, how could He be simultaneously in me and in thousands of other believers also? Did He partition Himself into many fragments and put a piece in every person or was it all just a figure of speech?

Today there is no longer a problem. Jesus Christ does dwell *in* each believer, not personally, for the *Person* of Christ is up in heaven. He dwells in each one by the implantation of His seed.

In the Garden of Eden, God established the law that the transmission of all life was through the seed principle. To this day that law stands unaltered. Every plant and tree and creature transmits its life by the implantation of seed which reproduces after its kind. For the multiplication of the human race, Adam was given the power to be the seed bearer, and it was God's intention that every single offspring of Adam would live eternally. By this means, Adam was to be *in* every one of his children. He could and would be in them even though he stood separate as another person or individual.

But through sin, Adam lost the power to be a seed bearer unto life, and became instead the transmitter of death. This

doomed the human race to extinction unless another seed bearer could take his place. Under no circumstance would God alter the law which determines that life on this planet is transmitted by the sowing of seed. Therefore, another seed bearer must be found. Christ is that person. His life becomes ours by the implantation of His divine and holy seed in the life of all who accept Him. In this way He is *in* the individual.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to plant this seed. Thus Christ is the Seed Bearer while the Holy Spirit is the Planter. The truth of this is verified in the following words:

The Desire of Ages, p. 391:

The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature.

It is by the transforming agency of the Holy Spirit that the image of Christ is reproduced in the disciple. The law of reproduction, as has already been observed, is by the implantation of seed. Christ is the Seed. He is the Seed of the woman.¹⁰ He is the Seed of Abraham.¹¹ By the implantation of His seed within the life of the believer, the reproduction of Christ is formed within. It is not the Person of Christ which is there, but His offspring. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to implant it, and this He does with perfect efficiency.

Once the seed has been implanted, it germinates, and, if properly nourished and cherished, grows into a sturdy, healthy life. If improperly cared for, its growth will be stunted. That life in the believer is eternal life. It is that to which Christ was referring in:

¹⁰ **Genesis 3** ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

¹¹ **Galatians 3** ¹⁶ Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ.

John 6

⁴⁷ He that believes on me has everlasting life.

⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

⁵⁴ Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁵⁶ He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him.

⁵⁸ He that eats of this bread shall live for ever.

The seed which Christ places in us is His life which is eternal life. What Christ has put in, *He never takes back*. This point is illustrated by the fact that when an earthly father gives his seed to his offspring, he never takes it back again. The fact is, he cannot. He may regret ever giving life to a child, may even go so far as to murder it, but the seed once given is never recalled. So it is with Christ. *The seed once given is never taken back by Him*. It was never loaned, but given. God will never take from anyone any gift He has given.

Therefore, when a Christian who has become such by the implantation of that seed, falls into sin, he does not lose the divine seed there and then. He still has that eternal life in him. This does not mean that he can never be lost nor does it mean that if he died then and there without repentance for the sin, he would be saved, for he would not. If he refuses to recognize and repent of that sin, he certainly will not pass the judgment's searching examination. Instead, the broken law will lay claim to that life which Christ gave to him, and he will perish eternally.

It is for this reason that the Christian does not have to be rebaptized every time he commits sin. It was because Christ understood this that He declined Peter's request to be baptized again. The importance of knowing this is manifold:

1. No progress can be made during the reformation period if the believer is continually looking to the solution for the problem of bondage to effect the reformation. We have learned this the hard way—by experience. The correct solution must be applied to the problem for a satisfactory result to be achieved.
2. If the believer does not have a clear understanding of what the problem really is, then he will be bewildered and confused. This leaves him open to the enemy's assaults.
3. It is one of Satan's special devices to lead the believer to doubt that he is a son of God. When he is successful in this, discouragement, unbelief, and uncertainty retard the forward progress of the Christian.

This understanding gives a positive, confident certainty to the Christian, enabling him to know exactly how the problem is to be dealt with and thus depriving Satan of decided advantages in the struggle.

20. You Are All Clean

THE study of the disciples' behavior in the upper room has established several facts.

Firstly, it is clear that they had come to the upper room with a basic conversion experience. At the same time, their behavior was not such as is expected of born again Christians. While this would tend to convince us that they were not true Christians, yet the Word of God makes it plain that it was possible for them to fall into sin and still have the seed of Christ.

Of course, Satan is well pleased to have the professed children of God act in an un-Christlike way, for this provides a damaging witness to God's character and power. The evil one happily points to this as proof that the law cannot be kept.

The true preaching of the gospel involves the eradication of the carnal mind and its replacement with the divine mind. Those who oppose the gospel argue that if this were so, then from the moment such a transaction took place, it would be impossible for the fortunate person to sin any more, or, at the very least, he would have no disposition to do so.

But this overlooks the fact that more than one work of grace is required to deliver a person from the power of sin. It is failing to take into account that the wrong ideas and theories learned so well in Satan's school can only be removed through a long process of education.

With the disciples, this matter of old ideas and theories loomed as a large problem, but it was not the whole difficulty. The underlying cause was a root of selfishness which yet remained within them. Combined with the wrong ideas and theories, it constituted a serious handicap in Christ's efforts to bring them into perfect harmony with His life and mission.

The Desire of Ages, p. 435-436:

The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them,

Mark 9

³⁵ If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the *apparent* cause of their contention.

But the real cause lay deeper. By explaining the nature of the kingdom, Christ might for the time have quelled their strife; but this would not have touched the underlying cause. Even after they had received the fullest knowledge, any question of precedence might have renewed the trouble. Thus disaster would have been brought to the church after Christ's departure.

The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above, and which had brought Christ from heaven to die. There rose up before Him a vision of Lucifer, the "son of the morning," in glory surpassing all the angels that surround the throne, and united in closest ties to the Son of God. Lucifer had said, "I will be like the Most High" (*Isaiah* 14:12, 14); and the desire for self-exaltation had brought strife into the heavenly courts, and had banished a multitude of the hosts of God.

Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place.

When studying the problems arising in the experience of those men, consideration must be given not only to the wrong ideas in regard to the kingdom, but to the basic root of selfishness which was still present in them. There was, of course, a very close relationship between the two. Within them initially was the spirit of selfishness with which they and every other person are born. When Adam sinned in Eden, we were all there in his loins even though as yet unborn. Therefore, when he gave himself to Satan, he gave him the rest of us at the same time. We are thus born into Satan's kingdom, not the kingdom of God. The only way we can enter the heavenly kingdom, is by being born again.

The spirit of selfishness is the *perversion* of the laws of self-preservation and self-development. Built into every creature are both of these laws. God put them there, and they are good in themselves. When they become perverted, however, they are deadly things which lead to every kind of conflict, separation from God, and ultimate destruction. It does not matter how converted one may be, these laws still operate within the human nature of the person. In fact, being converted will in some ways strengthen their operation and increase the danger of their being perverted. The Christian has a much higher sense of the value of life than does a worldling, and will work much harder at seeking to save it. Furthermore, he recognizes that it is his obligation and desire to improve the talents the Lord has given.

Before perversion, the motivation for self-improvement was so that more capability for serving others would be developed. After these powers were perverted, the motivation was to seek the highest place for one's self regardless of the cost to others. These powers are simply used for self-elevation if available, or ignored if they are of no value. No human being has moved from an unperverted state to a perverted one except Adam and Eve. The rest of us were born into the latter condition.

This spirit of selfishness in the person is not the old carnal mind. That is the indwelling power of sin which fosters the natural selfishness of humanity. When it is removed, the humanity remains and with it, its natural, sinful selfishness. It is the work of the reformation to deliver a person from any concessions to this factor, so that the whole life becomes trained in the wonderful principles of service.

With the disciples, the work had made some progress, but there was much more to go. The selfishness of the human nature was there, and it was the root cause of their troubles. In addition, their wrong ideas in relation to the kingdom were greatly hindering this vital work. Despite repeated efforts on Christ's part, through teaching and demonstration, to deliver them from these problems, they did not see the difficulty and so clung to it.

Compounding the problem was the fact that their drive to have the highest place was covered with a garment of apparent righteousness. Each one wanted to see the kingdom advanced and sincerely believed that by occupying the highest place, he could best forward the work of God.

By the time they came to the Lord's supper with the knowledge that the climactic hour was due, their emotions and spirits were stirred to considerable intensity. As never before, they were watchful of each other's movements to ensure that none gained an advantage in the race. Satan, fully aware of these things, worked to take the utmost advantage of them. He worked through the wrong ideas and theories to stir up the natural selfishness of their hearts, to create an evil spirit of pride and hatred which, in turn, led to wrong actions.

It is well to emphasize here that even though a person is possessed of holy flesh and lives in the perfect environment of paradise, an evil spirit can still be generated in the human nature. It happened in our first parents, which proves that it could happen to any one. However, the fact that it could hap-

pen does not mean that it must happen. There is no need to sin.

Of all these related elements—the wrong ideas and theories, the natural selfishness of the human heart, the evil spirit and the wrong actions—which is the most easily seen? The answer is, the wrong actions. This does not mean that they will be instantly and openly recognized by the sinner for what they are, especially in a situation such as the apostles were in. Their attention was so concentrated on what the other apostles were doing that they had no time or interest in evaluating their own actions.

How often this happens! Christians become involved in unhappy relations with each other, thus leading them to sin against one another, themselves, and the Lord. The words they use and the actions they take are un-Christlike, but, instead of studying to see where their own actions are wrong, they excuse and justify them on the basis of what the other person has done.

Wise indeed is the person who, in every encounter with others wherein trouble is present, carefully takes his eyes off the other person's actions and studies his own. He must keep continually before him the realization that in the great judgment day, it will not be the other person's actions for which he must give account, but his own *reactions* to those actions. It will be futile to argue to the Judge of the Universe, that he had no option but to react in a certain way in view of what the other person did to him. God will simply reply that what the other man did is not the subject of the present examination. It is *his* behavior which is under scrutiny.

Despite these handicaps, the evil actions of the person are still the easiest of all the related problems to see.

Obviously, the next most easily seen is the evil spirit. Again, understanding the principles involved will help. Take the eyes off the other person, see the wrong actions in the life, and re-

member that no wrong action ever appears unless there is an evil spirit behind it. This is so because we do what we do because of what we are.

Much more difficult to see are the wrong ideas and theories which plague our lives. There is the tendency to defend our way of thinking, for it is the way in which we were brought up and has always been, to our minds, the standard of evaluation. Old ideas die very hard. This is more true in some cases than others. If a person comes from a strongly traditionalist and conservative background, he is less likely to be open to changes in his concepts and ideas.

Fortunately, the Lord understands all these problems and has provided effective solutions for each in turn. Very comforting is the assurance given by Christ at the Lord's supper, that we do not have to wait to be delivered from the wrong idea and theory or the natural selfishness of the human nature before we can be forgiven for the wrong actions and cleansed from the evil spirit. If we did, then we would have to wait for years, and in most cases a whole lifetime, before forgiveness and cleansing could be ours. With the possibility of death overtaking us at any time, this would make the Christian experience one of continual worry lest death should come before this condition had been reached.

You are Clean

Christ verified the blessed assurance that one does not have to wait for the correction of every wrong idea and theory before being forgiven and cleansed. When the apostles came to the upper room, they certainly did not, at first, realize how bad their actions and spirit were. Each was so prepossessed with concern for the achievement of his own ambitions, and was so bent on guarding himself against the closely and tenaciously pursued objectives of the others, that he had neither time nor inclination to study the nature of his own actions.

So righteous in the eyes of each, was the aim they had fixed their hopes on, that they thought any method used to achieve it was justified. In other words, the supposed holiness of the goal, in their judgment, sanctified the means adopted, that is, of course, except when the *other person* used these tactics.

Upon assembly in the upper room, a problem very quickly presented itself. Because of the overpopulation in the city due to the Passover crowds, there was no servant to wash the feet of the guests. Naturally, someone from among the apostles should have shown a willingness to perform this service, but not one of them would make a move in this direction.

The Desire of Ages, p. 644:

The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves.

It is not difficult to understand the working in the mind of each disciple at that moment. They knew perfectly well that the office had to be performed and there was no question about the fact that it was not Christ's duty. One of them should do it.

But, the moment any one of them would volunteer to do it, the rest of the twelve would thereby consider that he had announced the abandonment of his claim to the highest place. They could then eliminate him from the contestants for the chief seat in the new government. Not one of them was prepared to make that kind of announcement, so not one of them moved.

Christ did not utter one word of rebuke, but quietly arose to perform the office Himself. With wonder, the apostles looked on until Christ arrived before Peter. This was too much for

him. Withdrawing his feet, he exclaimed,

John 13

⁸ You shall never wash my feet.



Source: *Historiae Celebriores*, 1708a

Those words expressed much more than was actually said. Peter and his companions had cherished a view of the kingdom exactly contrary to the one Christ had come to reveal and build. In the kingdom the disciples envisaged, the king

and His chief ministers never adopted a servant's role. They were served by others, thus maintaining a class distinction between those who ruled and those who were ruled. It was most attractive to human nature to look forward to such a marvelous elevation from their lowly estate.

When Christ bowed before them, He was literally giving a practical demonstration of the kingdom which He had come to establish. In this kingdom, possession of power was but the means of rendering service. There was no distinction between ruler and ruled. All were possessed by the spirit of service, so nothing was out of place in the king's serving his subjects.

By washing their feet, Christ was not only showing them the nature of His government; He was inviting them to be a part of it. But Peter wanted no part of a system where the king washed the feet of His subjects. If this was what the king had to do, then what would be required of them? Where now, were his dreams of grandeur, ease, and power? If he was to accept Christ's kingdom as demonstrated before him, all these alluring aspirations must go. This was more than he could accept.

Therefore, in saying that Christ would never wash his feet, he was declaring that he utterly rejected the system of government which Christ had come to bring.

No doubt, Peter hoped that by the lodgment of his protest, he would be able to influence Christ to come into line with his desires. He knew that he would have the support of all the others in the room, and he could count on the backing of many of the people. He fully and correctly believed that if Christ was to walk out of that room and announce to the Jews that He would take up the weapons of force and drive the Romans from the earth, they would completely reverse their judgment of Him and give their full support to the plan. He could therefore see that Christ was completely alone in His stand. There was not another person who shared His concept.

With the weight of numbers so totally against Him, how could Christ do anything else but yield?

That question was no sooner proposed in Peter's mind than it was answered by the words of Christ.

John 13

⁸ Jesus answered him, If I wash you not, you have no part with me.

There was a finality combined with loving appeal in Christ's words which carried conviction to Peter's heart. The thought of separation from Christ was not acceptable at any price. His eyes were opened to see something of the real nature of his spirit and attitude. No longer were his eyes focused on the others. He saw himself as he was and repented of it. The desire for total cleanness was expressed in the words,

⁹ Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and you are clean, but not all.

¹¹ For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, You are not all clean.

When Christ elected to wash their feet, His concern for the physical service to be rendered was very minor. He was aware of a serious problem existing in the room. He knew of all their wrong actions and the presence of the evil spirit which caused them.

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed.

Thus the foot washing was to achieve a cleansing work which the baptism had not accomplished. It must not be forgotten that this work could only be done if the baptism had already done its work. What Christ set out to do that night, He was successful in accomplishing.

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, "You are clean." Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable. Except Judas, each was ready to concede to another the highest place. Now with subdued and grateful hearts they could receive Christ's words.

Thus, there was achieved for them forgiveness of the wrong actions and cleansing from the evil spirit. But, Christ had not changed the wrong ideas and theories in the least degree. Proof of this is given in their continued retention of these during the following hours. If they had been saved from these ideas and theories, then Peter would never have carried the sword to the Garden of Gethsemane, and would never have used it to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

Nor had they been delivered from the natural, fallen, sinful flesh, in which is the inherent disposition to selfishness. For the time being, the spirit of selfishness was subjugated to the sweeter and higher spirit of love and service.

But, despite the fact that these things remained, Christ was able to declare that, except for Judas, they were all clean. This means that if they had died at the time when Christ had cleansed them from their evil spirits, even though not of the wrong ideas and theories, they would certainly have arisen in the resurrection.

- For what they could see, they were held responsible in the sense that they must confess it and thus transfer the

responsibility to Christ.

- For what they could not see, even though every provision had been made for them to see it, they were not held accountable. These were the unknown sins, those wrong ideas and theories which must eventually be seen and removed.

Encouragement for Us

Their experience was not unique. It is quite common to every believer to a larger or lesser extent, depending on previous experiences and general temperament.

The Desire of Ages, p. 646-649:

Like Peter and his brethren, we too have been washed in the blood of Christ, yet often through contact with evil the heart's purity is soiled. We must come to Christ for His cleansing grace. Peter shrank from bringing his soiled feet in contact with the hands of his Lord and Master; but how often we bring our sinful, polluted heart in contact with the heart of Christ! How grievous to Him is our evil temper, our vanity and pride! Yet all our infirmity and defilement we must bring to Him. He alone can wash us clean. We are not prepared for communion with Him unless cleansed by His efficacy.

There is not one of us who has as yet been freed from every wrong idea and theory and all of us have the fallen, sinful, human nature. Through these wrong notions, Satan works to stir the natural selfishness of the human heart and, sadly, he is often successful. This troubles us greatly, for we long to manifest at all times the sweet loveliness of Christ. We know we have been born again, because,

Like Peter and his brethren, we too have been washed in the blood of Christ...

—and therefore we expect that we will walk no more in the paths of sin. Yet these problems assert themselves, and life's record is marred. We are not able to detect just what the

wrong ideas are as yet, but we are able to go to the Lord, confess the wrong actions, and give the evil spirit to Him through the process of *acceptable confession*.¹²

The peace of Christ then reigns in our hearts, and we are assured that we have salvation. This assurance is real, for of us at that moment Jesus says as He did to the apostles, “You are clean.”

We are encouraged to believe that that is the end of the matter, but because those wrong ideas are still there, Satan continues to work through them, and he is often successful. This is discouraging, but Christ’s forgiveness and cleansing are still available, and for this we must immediately come to Him.

Despite the fact that Satan can work through the wrong ideas and theories, there is no need for him to be successful. If a careful watch is maintained over the human spirit, any development into an evil spirit can be detected even before it really gets moving. As soon as this happens, the believer can commit the matter into God’s hands, who will deliver him utterly from any further uprising of this spirit. Eventually, the educating Spirit of God will be able to bring us to the place where the wrong idea is seen for what it is and exchanged for the living truth as it is in Jesus.

But, in the meantime, if Satan is successful in leading you into sin, remember that you have not lost the divine seed, the eternal life within. You are still a child of God, you need His cleansing grace, and even though the wrong idea and theory has not been unearthed, you are clean and will go to heaven should you die at that moment. Let every soul take courage with these great realities and press on to the rapid finishing of the work in each heart and life.

¹² See *Acceptable Confession* for a fuller explanation of this procedure.

21. Yet They Sinned

WE NOW need to study the course of events transpiring after the Lord's supper to understand why the apostles sinned in the Garden of Gethsemane and later again in the courtyard of the temple. This study will prove of real help to all who are conscious of the battle to be waged in controlling the human spirit while Satan is working to take advantage of the erroneous ideas and theories with which we are plagued.

As a result of Christ's cleansing work, they went forth from that upper room with a far different spirit from that with which they had entered it. They came in suspicious of one another, ambitious, proud, and even hateful. They went out humble, loving, and preferring one another. They were in the state of being where...

The Desire of Ages, p. 646:

...with subdued and grateful hearts they could receive Christ's words.

It was for them a rich and beautiful spiritual experience to be led through the service of that first Lord's supper. The foot washing was over. Its work of cleansing had changed them so greatly that now, in a truly spiritual state of mind, they were able to sense and appreciate the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit among them.

As they walked the trail to the Garden, Jesus opened to their minds some of the most beautiful instruction He had as yet given them. It was on that journey that He spoke of the wonderful home which He was going to prepare for them.

John 14

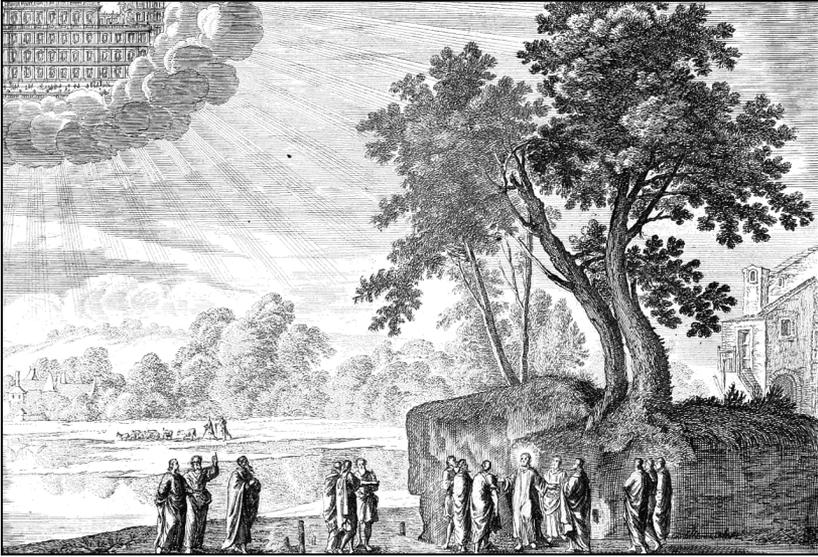
¹ Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me.

² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,

and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

As, with inspired vision, He described that which they were to inherit, the glory of earthly kingdoms faded into insignificance, and in its true light they began to see something of the paucity of the attitude and spirit they had manifested in their quest for earthly glory and riches.



Source: Heilige Augen, 1706

In the remainder of this chapter, He spoke of the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would be to them such a power, a blessing, guide, protector, and instructor. Beautiful and comforting were these words. How attentively they must have listened to His every word; how thrilled their souls must have been as they drank in these glorious promises and expectations.

Then Jesus told them of the vine and the branches, by which He opened to them the intimate life-sustaining connection they were to have to Him—He the vine, they the branches. So the instruction went on, all through the 15th and 16th chapters.



Source: Child's Story of the Life of Christ, 1902

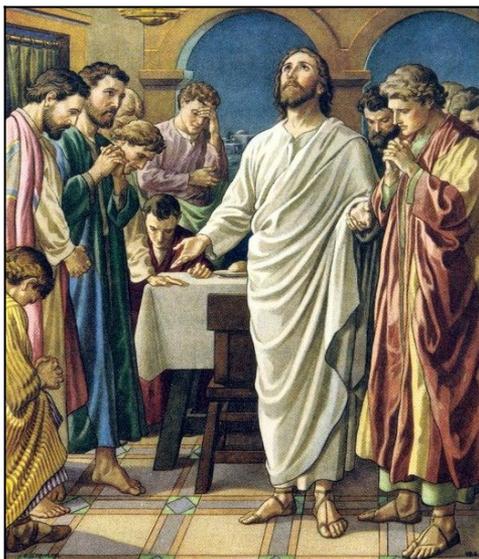
Then Jesus prayed that prayer which is recorded in the 17th chapter of *John*. That prayer was a prayer indeed. The total awareness, on His part,

- of the fearful burden He was to bear in the coming hours;
- of the pressure also which was to be brought to bear upon His disciples;
- of the frailty and weakness of His own and their human

flesh and blood bodies and human natures; and at the same time,

- of the complete consciousness of the marvelous life-giving and life-sustaining power of God,

–inspired that prayer to rise to heights of inspiration which the disciples could not and did not miss. We do not have space to develop the wonderful truths uttered by Jesus to the listening disciples at this time. The student will do well to spend some time in deep, prayerful study of the instruction given to these men in those closing hours of Christ's ministry for them before the cross.



Source: His Word in Pictures (website)

The point to be made is that those men, having experienced the wonderful deliverance from this evil spirit and actions, were lifted into an experience of peace and joy which brought them into sweet and close fellowship with Jesus. The intensity of the inspiration of the hour was further heightened as they were given those wonderful instructions from the Saviour on the walk to the Garden of betrayal.

There have been times when we have listened to a great and inspiring sermon. As the preacher, evidently walking in close contact with the Source of all power, opens up the truths which have been so great a blessing to his own soul, we too have been elevated in spirit and drawn out with love and admiration for the Master. There has risen in us a great desire to

serve the Lord with undivided heart. In moments like these, it seems to us that never again would we have any desire to sin. The world and all in it looks so cheap and worthless that if the Lord should ask us to die for Him at that moment, we could easily and gladly do it.

So it must have been with the disciples. The better we understand the full force and glory of what the Lord opened to them on that walk, the better will we appreciate the spiritual elevation to which they were carried. They were not filled with a happy flight of feeling, but rather with an experience that was very deep, beautiful, and steady.

Yet They Sinned

Yet, despite all that—despite the fact that they were born again Christians and ordained ministers of the gospel; that they had worked miracles of healing and of casting out devils; that they had just been cleansed from the wrong spirit and actions; and that they were the eager, attentive listeners to this beautiful and instructional discourse on the eternal truths—they went out into the Garden and into the temple courts to sin in a terrible and shameful way.

Why? What is the reason? By what means did Satan succeed in bringing them low? There was not one who did not forsake Christ and flee. There is a reason which can and must be understood as a safeguard against our treading the same pathway of shameful defeat.

An Excuse For Sin?

Firstly, it would be well to consider what the *appearances* of this situation suggest. They suggest that sin is stronger than righteousness; that the children of men have no hope but to sin. This is the message of the *appearances*, as this situation unfolded.

The critic will point to the extent to which those men had been the recipients of God's blessing and power, to the

amount they had heard of Christ's teachings, and to the extent to which they had themselves worked miracles. Yet, after all that, they had fallen into sin so badly that they denied the Lord with cursing and swearing in Peter's case and by other denials from the rest.

So the critic would argue that if men in that position could not maintain a perfect victory over sin, then what hope do we have now, when, as he supposes, the Saviour is far away, and the temptations and pressures of life are so heavy upon us?

The true Christian, if able to clearly see the picture of things as they were, must admit that the skeptic has here the *appearance* of an excellent case. He must admit it for the simple reason that it does *appear* that there is no hope for the human family but to go on sinning as long as it is in this flesh and on this earth.

But faith reaches above and beyond the witness of appearances to claim the surety and power of the living Word which declares that:

1 Corinthians 10

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

Faith knows that this is the living Word of the Living God to us and that it means just what it says. What does it say? It declares that no uncommon temptation can ever come to us. Satan has no new inventions to bring against us personally that he has not already used against mankind in the past and against the Son of God in particular. Against Christ he has exhausted every weapon in his armory, and still the Saviour, in exactly the same flesh and blood as we have, overcame every one of those temptations.

Therefore, it is impossible for Satan to catch the Lord by

surprise with something he has never used before, for he has now tried and exhausted every possibility.

The Lord knows just how much we can bear at any level of our development. Just as a parent will not expose a child to dangers too great for it to cope with, so God protects us from temptations too great for us to bear. Therefore we can never face a temptation for which God has not already provided a way of escape. Therefore, in every trial we are to read the promise of the divine provision to meet it.

The Sudden and Unexpected Onslaught

Invariably, when such truths are expressed, some will voice their unbelief in the following way:

“Yes, we know that the Lord has power to give us the victory over sin, but there is always the problem of that sudden and unexpected assault. I can understand that when we have time to see the devil approaching then we can brace ourselves for the conflict, turn to the Lord for deliverance, and so be saved from trouble. But when the onslaught is sudden, it is a very different matter.”

This reasoning is as common as it is human and natural, faithless and erroneous. It does not offer the desired excuse for that which is evil. Far from it. At any time when people express these sentiments, I smile and point them to the plain words of:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 421:

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 any one 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.

This statement leaves no room to find any excuse for sin which is the response of a sudden and unexpected assault by Satan. Read the words of promise again.

However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer.

This means that no matter how unexpectedly Satan comes, there is still no excuse for sin even though so many of us seem to fall under what is supposed to be an unexpected assault.

Not So Sudden

The assault is really only *supposedly* sudden and unexpected. Satan never makes a direct frontal attack until he has successfully made a great deal of preparation against us. He carefully erodes away the soul's defenses until such a breach is made that a sudden inrush of temptation can only be successful.

It often begins with a steadily increasing pressure of work and responsibility which crowds out the fellowship of sweet communion with God, whereby not only power to resist temptation is given, but the ability to perceive the tempter is enlarged. Faith grows weaker, while the things of this earth assume greater and still greater importance. The thoughts turn to things which do not draw the person nearer to God but away from Him. All this occupies a period of time covering days, weeks, and sometimes months.

Then, when the stealthy groundwork has been accomplished and the defenses are crumbled ruins, Satan makes his

bold sally, and the fall is certain. It is *supposed* that one has been overtaken by a sudden temptation, but this is not so. Satan would have us think this way so he can hide the real process by which the fall was accomplished, for he does not desire us to be aware of his particular methods for destroying the soul.

Careful revision of the days previous to falling into “sudden” temptation should be made by every one of us. Investigate step by step the little departures from the path of close and sweet communion with the Saviour, and it will become apparent how the way was prepared for Satan’s successful sally.

When each has clearly seen what has taken place as a development toward defeat, the next task is to learn to see it not only in retrospect, for it is easy enough to be wise after the event, but to see it now as it is taking place. If day by day, the small deviations can be recognized, and definite steps are not taken to rectify the situation, then the forthcoming attack can certainly be anticipated. Its arrival will be neither sudden nor unexpected.

It is important to understand this. When Peter stood shivering in the temple courtyard and the little maid *suddenly* and *unexpectedly* spoke to him, the pressure of her question posed a temptation which did appear to be both *sudden* and *unexpected*, but was really neither.

Her speaking, it is true, was sudden, but the temptation contained in her question and the pressure it placed upon him should have been neither sudden nor unexpected. In the light of what he had done and what he had failed to do in the time intervening between the glorious experience of the Lord’s supper and the wonderful walk with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane, he should have been able to read certain danger signs which showed that he was losing what he had gained in those precious hours.



Source: Wellcome Collection, A. de Paulis

Knowing that, he should have recognized Satan's movements against him; should have identified the enemy's strategy; and thus seen the eroding away of the defenses in preparation for the final and all too successful assault.

We are not judging Peter at all, but we are studying the inspired record of his life which has been provided so that, by tracing through from cause to effect the outworking of events in his life, we can be saved from making the same blunders. It is not always easy to see what the end of what we are doing at this moment will be. The outworking usually occupies some time, even years.

Sometimes it is longer than that. For instance, in the sixteenth century, the papal leaders' ruthless rooting out of France of both the gospel and the reformers who taught it, brought its baleful results some two hundred years later in the French Revolution's reign of terror, as it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 230:

The gospel of peace which France had rejected was to be only too surely rooted out, and terrible would be the results. On the 21st of January, 1793, two hundred and fifty-eight years from the very day that fully committed France to the persecution of the Reformers, another procession, with a far different purpose, passed through the streets of Paris...When France rejected the gift of heaven, she sowed the seeds of anarchy and ruin; and the *inevitable* outworking of cause and effect resulted in the Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

Could the French in the sixteenth century have seen the final outworking of the course taken then, they would certainly not have done what they did. But they could not, for it was not to be fulfilled until two centuries later.

But we have this story. Therefore, we have no excuse for not knowing what the sure outworking of the same rejection would be. This is why these stories are written. They are not written for us to sit in judgment on Peter or any other person, but that we might trace from cause to effect and so avoid making the same mistakes.

Areas of Fault

Having seen that the apostles came out of a very elevating and strengthening experience to fall into grievous sin for which the Bible gives no excuse, we now need to understand in what way they were at fault to allow this to happen.

This may be listed under two headings:

1. WRONG IDEAS AND THEORIES

There was the existence of wrong ideas and theories from

which they had not yet been saved. While this provides no excuse for sin, it does provide a factor the devil can seek to exploit. Had they been truly aware that there was such a problem, even though they could not yet identify certain ideas and theories as being wrong, they would have pursued a much more humble and guarded walk toward the coming temptations.

2. SELF-CONFIDENCE

They leaned too much upon past experience, resulting in an unfortunate level of confidence and complacency in their thinking. With the awareness of coming events which they might have had if they had truly received what Christ had sought to impart to them, they would have made the most of the opportunity to watch unto prayer as He admonished them to do. However, they did not and therefore lacked the strength of character and keenness of perception to know what to do in the hour of trial and defeat.

Once again we will find, as we go deeper into the account of their experiences, that it was not the presence of the old man of sin in them which caused their fall, but the weaknesses of the human nature combined with the weakness of a spiritual experience which should have been powerful enough to resist temptation.

Theirs is truly a tragic story and one which is filled with solemn warning to those who, living in this last period of the world's history, must soon face an hour of test of which that was but a limited type.

The Master had a very clear picture of just what the coming hours had in store for Him and it was no fault of His that the disciples did not have the same, for He had attempted again and again to unfold coming events to their minds. But the picture was unwelcome, so they rejected that revelation as being unacceptable to them in any shape or form.

Thus, while Jesus came to the Garden to pray, they came to sleep. The story is recorded for us in:

Matthew 26

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and said unto the disciples, Sit here, while I go and pray yonder.

³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

³⁸ Then said He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry you here, and watch with me.

³⁹ And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.

⁴⁰ And He came unto the disciples, and found them asleep, and said unto Peter, What, could you not watch with me one hour?

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

⁴² He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done.

⁴³ And He came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

⁴⁴ And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples, and said unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Failing to Build

These men had been led into a very rich and strengthening experience just prior to this, but, wonderful as it was, it would not serve to satisfy the needs yet to arise unless there was a careful, faithful cherishing of that which had been gained, together with a solid building on the foundations already existing.

A certain young man of spiritual promise recently attended

a series of meetings held over a holiday weekend during which the message came through with wonderful power and clarity. In the course of listening to these studies and in fellowship with the believers, his heart was moved very warmly to the point where strong desires to be a true Christian were experienced.

But he did not follow up the good work begun, with the result that the weeks following this experience were marred by a course of behavior which gave sorrow to himself, his parents, and God. A brother who had his spiritual interest at heart drew him aside and talked with him for an hour or more during which he laid out the principle that we do not drift into heaven—there is a part we have to play which the Lord cannot and will not do for us.

The young man recognized that he had as yet to enter into a true new birth experience; an experience which can be obtained only by having such a level of faith as will enable a person to lay hold upon the divine provisions of grace to set him free from the thralldom of sin.

Knowing that he has real need is a very important step in the right direction. Being present at the meetings where the true and living Word of God was preached was the equivalent of Christ's disciples being present in the upper room and listening to His instruction as they walked together to the fateful rendezvous in the Garden. There was stirred in the young man, as there must also have been in the disciples, definite desires to live above sin and to manifest Christ's life and character at all times.

Such good desires are all very well as far as they go, but they do not in themselves mean that the experience has been obtained, or that the blessing gained today will be sufficient to meet the trials of tomorrow.

For that young man to benefit from what he had received there, it was essential for him to build on what he had already

received. He needed to go back to the quietness of his own quarters, take out the Word of God *for himself*, and study through that which he had been given until the message became no longer just what the preacher experienced and preached, but his own personal experience. This point would come when faith, developed as it would be by contact with the Word of God, reached out and laid hold upon the promises to the point where they would be *personal* realities for him.

Fortunately, as with the disciples, he saw the mistake he had made and has determined now to build upon the foundations and seek to find a true, living experience in the things of eternity.

Watch and Pray

It is by faith that the victory is gained and maintained and...

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Only by the Word of God can a rich and effective faith be developed. As failure to partake of physical nourishment will result in the certain loss of physical strength, so the failure to partake of God's Word will as certainly and even more speedily, result in the loss of spiritual stamina.

To those disciples Jesus said,

Matthew 26

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.

Jesus did not merely say, "Watch and pray." He added words which showed the reason why they must watch and pray. This was that they enter not into temptation.

Those who read these studies over are the kind of people whose chief desire in life is to live above and outside temptation's power. Therefore, they are the very ones to whom these words will be of special value, for in them is a secret of the way to be a true overcomer, stated in the words, "*Watch and*

pray.” That counsel is of the greatest value today for:

Messages to Young People, p. 265:

We are living in an age when all should *especially* give heed to the injunction of the Saviour,

Matthew 26

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.

That there is this *special* need today is evident from the condition of the times in which we find ourselves. The science of sin has been developed to its highest pitch with every power of evil to tempt and destroy set in motion to lead astray even those who have in the past had a close and saving walk with the Lord.

The Adventist Home, p. 341:

We are living in perilous times, when there is no assurance in anything save in firm, unwavering faith in Jesus Christ. There is *no heart* that may not be estranged from God through the devices of Satan, *if one does not watch unto prayer.*

These are solemn words indeed. They give the lie to any doctrine which proposes that when once saved we are always saved. It states that *the heart does not exist which is proof against estrangement from God*, if that person does not watch unto prayer at every step of the way. So if there is no watching unto prayer, it is certain that the person will be estranged from the Lord and thus be led into serious sin.

Why is this so? It is because:

Steps to Christ, p. 94-95:

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.

Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock

heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.

These are plain words to which all should give the closest attention, for failure here means a sure failure in the battle against the powers of evil as they are thrust against us.

Our Example

In the story of the experience of Christ and the disciples as they collectively and individually faced the fearful trials just before them, we have witness of the complete success of One, Christ Jesus, and the dismal failure of the rest, the eleven disciples.

He who was successful in this battle watched most earnestly unto prayer, while those who did not, found themselves suffering shameful defeat, which was to be a humiliating remembrance for the rest of their days.

The whole of Christ's life is a witness to the effectiveness of prayer and communion with the Father as a bulwark against the power of temptation. It is to be remembered that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 24:

As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God.

He did not have any advantage over us whatsoever. He was handicapped with all the weaknesses of the same flesh and blood as that with which we are handicapped and burdened.

The Desire of Ages, p. 24:

As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences.

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.

If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore, Jesus was “in all points tempted like as we are.” *Hebrews* 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God.

This meant then, that in His humanity He was as dependent upon the same sources of power and protection as any other of the human family who desires to fight the temptation to sin and be an overcomer. *As we* are to overcome, *so He* had to overcome. Conversely this is equally true, so we can say, *as He* overcame *so we* are to overcome. He is the Example, the One who went before to show us the way and to prove that humanity, even in the state it is found in today, can indeed be victorious over every temptation and sin.

His Prayer Life

Without a doubt, Christ did overcome. He had the true secret of the way, so we can safely copy His example, knowing that the same procedures today will produce the same results.

In studying that life we find that a great deal of time was spent in very earnest prayer to the Lord.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 51:

The Saviour's life on earth was a life of communion with nature and with God. *In this communion* He revealed for us *the secret* of a life of power.

While others slept, He prayed.

Mark 1

³⁵ Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Luke 5

¹⁵ Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.

¹⁶ And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Luke 6

¹² And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

The Desire of Ages, p. 362-363:

In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thoroughfares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father.

As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 55-56:

Often His incessant labor and the conflict with the enmity and false teaching of the rabbis left Him so utterly wearied that His mother and His brothers, and even His disciples, feared that His life would be sacrificed. But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, and the freshness and life and power that seemed to pervade His whole being. From hours spent alone with God He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men.

Education, p. 80-81:

It was not on the cross only that Christ sacrificed Himself for humanity. As He “went about doing good” (*Acts 10:38*), every day’s experience was an outpouring of His life. In one way only could such a life be sustained. Jesus lived in dependence upon God and communion with Him.

To the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty, men now and then repair; they abide for a season, and the result is manifest in noble deeds; then their faith fails, the communion is interrupted, and the lifework marred.

But the life of Jesus was a life of constant trust, sustained by continual communion; and His service for heaven and earth was without failure or faltering. As a man He supplanted the throne of God, till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that connected humanity with divinity. Receiving life from God, He imparted life to men.

The comparison made here between the sad histories of men and what they might have been had they sustained a life of continual communion, and the glorious history of Christ who did sustain such communion, contains a lesson of highest consequence for all those who would be victorious over the sin problem.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 25:

Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied life.

In the light of these facts, the following statement is a clear and true revelation of why so many of God's professed people fall so easily into sin and sorrow when such things should have no part in their lives. They have been born again so that they possess the new life from above. Their natures have been changed, and they are the children of God. Therefore, victory is their heritage, their possession, and right. To them, Satan is a conquered foe and therefore has no more dominion over them. Yet sin does appear in the life where it should not appear.

What is the reason? Here it is!

The Ministry of Healing, p. 458-459:

The reason why the youth, and even those of mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin, is that they do not study the Word of God and meditate upon it as they should.

The lack of firm, decided will power, which is manifest in life and character, results from neglect of the sacred instruction of God's Word. They do not by earnest effort direct the mind to that which would inspire pure, holy thought and divert it from that which is impure and untrue. There are few who choose the better part, who sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn of the divine Teacher. Few treasure His words in the heart and practice them in the life.

The truths of the Bible, received, will uplift mind and soul. If the Word of God were appreciated as it should be, both young and old would possess an inward rectitude, a strength of principle, that would enable them to resist temptation.

We understand of course, that the study of God's Word is just as truly a part of communing with God as is kneeling down in prayer. If truly achieved, communion with God gives entrance to God's presence, and thus provides that power without which no victory can be maintained over our fallen human natures. If we have been truly born again and thus have the Life which is the victory; if we maintain a constant communion with the Father and the Son; then we shall have unbroken victory over sin, even though we still possess some erroneous ideas and theories.

Thus it would have been with the disciples in the Garden if they had watched and prayed with Jesus that night before the crucifixion. Failure to do so was a large factor in their not being able to maintain the living experience which the Lord would have had them cherish and develop.



Source: Rijksstudio (Dolendo)

22. Cleansing and Communion

IN THE Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus prayed, the disciples slept. He had taken them to watch and pray with Him, and it would have been a very wonderful strengthening and comfort for Him had they done so. He specifically asked them to do this, but, when He returned from His first prayer session, He found them asleep.

The Desire of Ages, p. 688:

Rising with painful effort, He staggered to the place where He had left His companions. But He “found them asleep.” Had He found them praying, He would have been relieved. Had they been seeking refuge in God, that satanic agencies might not prevail over them, He would have been comforted by their steadfast faith. But they had not heeded the repeated warning, “Watch and pray.”

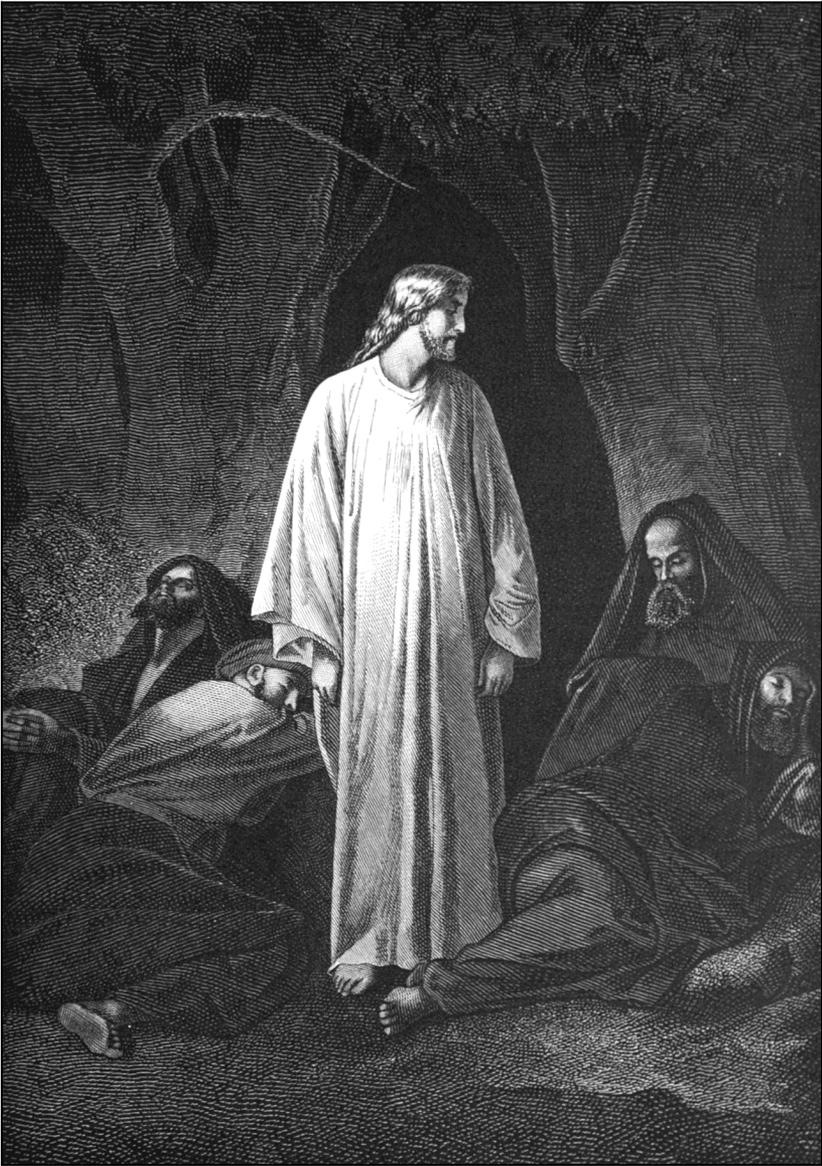
At first they had been much troubled to see their Master, usually so calm and dignified, wrestling with a sorrow that was beyond comprehension. They had prayed as they heard the strong cries of the sufferer. They did not intend to forsake their Lord, but they seemed paralyzed by a stupor which they might have shaken off if they had continued pleading with God. They did not realize the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation.

He appealed to them once again to rouse themselves to watch unto prayer, but when He came back the second time and found them soundly slumbering, He made no further effort to arouse them. He left them to themselves while He returned to His anguish.

When He returned after the third prayer session, He uttered words which are among the saddest in the records of history.

Matthew 26

⁴⁵ Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.



Source: Christ in Art, 1875

Christ was saying to them that they might just as well gather all the physical strength they could, for it was too late now to gather any spiritual power. The hour had come. The betrayal was to take place immediately. There was no time left

for deep, earnest, soul-searching prayer and entering into a communion with the Lord which would provide them with the strength to meet the hour of temptation about to burst upon them.

So they slept a few minutes more, then Jesus roused them so that they, with Him, might go forth to meet Judas, the priests, and the soldiery.

Once Again

What took place back there is to be repeated. Again the church of God is to be brought face to face with an hour of temptation so terrible that it will leave that one back there only a dim reflection. The death sentence will be passed upon Christ in the person of His saints upon this earth. Again there are to be betrayers who will reveal to the authorities the names and places where God's children are hidden.

Exactly as the only effective preparation for that hour then, was the building of a powerful prayer life, of entering into the closest communion with the Father and Son through prayer and the study of the Word of God, so it will be again.

But there will be one difference. Those disciples were able to recover themselves after that mistake and, learning from it, were able to avoid a repetition of it in after years. Probationary time did continue for them, and has continued down to the present time, but when the church in these last days faces the same awful testing, time will have run out. So if the needful preparation has not been made, there will be no time or opportunity to recover from the mistake. Then the Lord will say to all who have so failed,

“Sleep on now and take your rest—*for ever.*”

We have the story of what took place back then as the warning of what will happen if we fail to build a life of communion with the heavenly powers. In addition, we have the

information in the Word which tells us of the finality of the closing hours of probation so we know now that we do not get a second opportunity to learn from our own failure and neglect. They did, but *we will not*.

There is no injustice in this, for we have the warning of their story to guide us. Furthermore, we know that the generation who will pass successfully through the final trouble into the heavenly kingdom without seeing death, are those who are so conversant with the history of the past that they have learned by its witness not to make the same mistakes.

Therefore, each true child of God today will make the history of the past his constant and careful study. He will so closely identify himself with past events that it will be as if he actually lived there and experienced what they experienced. He will not be a mere spectator of the events but will, by the very closeness of his study, become a participant.

For instance, as we closely study the course of the disciples, we recognize that we have many of the same weaknesses and tendencies and thus would have made much the same decisions. Then we can see by what happened to them, as a result of their decisions, what will happen to us if we do the same. We can then revise the decisions we would otherwise have made and thus avoid coming to the same tragic consequences.

Unprepared

So the disciples rose from their sleep unprepared to meet the hour which was filled with startling and shocking surprises.

Having seen now, how failure to commune with God left them in that unprepared state, we will turn again to the role played by the erroneous ideas and theories which were still there in spite of the cleansing experience in the upper room.

That cleansing experience had certainly done a lot for them. It had removed certain attitudes and spirits which made com-

munion with the Father and Son impossible. In other words, the removal of those things had placed them where they could have entered into closest fellowship with the heavenly powers and thus have become equipped for the battle ahead. Therefore, cleansing was a vital element in the program.

It must be stressed here that, while we are emphasizing the importance of communion with the Father as an essential element to victory, it must not be lost sight of that *before* such a *communion* can be entered into, there must be the *cleansing* away of the old evil nature and its kindred spirit in the new birth experience. When that has been accomplished, as it had been with the disciples, then, should Satan be successful in generating an evil spirit within us as he was with those men, again there has to be a cleansing *before* there can be communion with the Father, the Source of all power and light. Let this lesson be thoroughly learned.

It follows from this story that the two essential things for strength to fight for the victory are *first* cleansing and *then* communion. The cleansing, as we have seen, does not necessarily have to reach right down to the wrong ideas and theories, but it must take care of the guilt of the wrong actions and the presence of the wrong spirit within. Then, even though there are unknown wrong ideas and theories, communion with God can be entered into which will bring the needed preparation for power in the life.

The disciples had the *cleansing*, but they failed to enter into *the communion* as fully as they might. There was some communion in the sense that the Master fellowshiped with them and taught them as they walked to the Garden, but they did not do anything on their part to make this their very own, personally.

To illustrate this point further, let me refer to what I have observed again and again. There are believers who come to the camp meetings held every year, wherein their convictions

are stirred to give unreserved assent to the truth and beauty of the message. They attend every meeting and even experience a cleansing from the sin problem in their lives.

Then they go home and re-enter the circuit of ordinary, everyday living, in which they make no decided changes to provide for a period of close communion with the Lord in which to gain strength, and to make the message their very own. It is not enough to hear the Word, or even to walk with the Saviour as they did back there. The message has to be made one's very own so that it becomes the effective force in the life.

Let the lesson provided for us in the experience of the disciples be well learned. They were born again Christians and ordained ministers of the gospel. They even had the power to work mighty miracles. They suffered temptation and were led into sin. They were cleansed from sin and were the recipients of wonderful instructions direct from the lips of the Master Himself.

All those were essential steps on the way to complete victory, but together they were not sufficient without the last vital factor—that of personal communion with the Father and the Son.

How vital it is that we see and understand this and never allow ourselves to forget it. We can look back and see where, in the past, the Lord has done great things for us. We know what the truth is and where the church of God is to be found today. We give full and unreserved assent to the message of living righteousness. We can testify even, to having been delivered from sin and from many bad habits. We come to the meetings, Sabbath by Sabbath and camp meeting by camp meeting, and are thrilled with the truths presented.

All this is good, *but it is not enough*. Beyond it is the last and finishing factor necessary to give us spiritual perception and power to meet the onslaught of the enemy.

Let us ask ourselves if we are really building a life experience of communion with heaven such as Jesus had when upon this earth. If so, then we can be assured of victory, but if not, we can be *assured* of defeat. It will be as if we had never heard the message, never believed it, never been cleansed, and never attended a camp meeting in our lives, so far as the end result is concerned.

When probation has closed and we are found deniers of the Lord as was Peter in the temple courts, then we will have nothing but the memory of that which we had previously gained, and the realization of what we might have been. Solemn indeed is the work of reformation after the revival, and those who fail to fulfill the conditions will suffer eternal loss.

With the disciples, as stated before, there was one difference—for them probation had not closed. As we study, we see that what they had gained in the cleansing experience, they did not lose, for the strife among them for the highest position ended with the cleansing in the upper room and we see no more of that afterwards.

The mistakes and problems which emerged in the Garden and temple court *were of a different character and nature again*. Into these we shall look more carefully as we proceed. But this is clear. If their probation had closed at that time, they would certainly have lost all they had gained in the previous cleansing experiences.

Reasons

Why did they not enter into the experience of communion when this was so essential? This is a very important question, for its answer will tell us why we, in turn, receive so much from the Lord and yet fail to enter into that deep experience of fellowship which is so necessary. To this question there are several answers. Firstly, we have Christ's words,

Matthew 26

⁴¹ The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

What person aspiring to the full Christian life experience does not know the truth of these words? We have only to reflect back on the pattern of our lives, even over the past few days, to see how the desires of the flesh have been preferred above the call of the Spirit to walk and talk with the Lord.

It costs real effort to settle down to quiet peace and study and thus enter into communion with the Master. The indolent, the lazy, the disorganized, the careless, and such like, while remaining so, will never rise to any heights of excellence in this area. There is no possibility of it unless they shake off their deadly inertia and go to work in earnest to build this kind of experience.

How many people today can really testify to a true walk with the Lord? How often the warmth of the bed in the early morning hours is much easier to take than the stern discipline of rising to meet the Lord for the quiet hour of fellowship together.

For those disciples, the hour was late. They had behind them a strenuous week of activity made more so by their earnest strivings to be first in the kingdom. It was well on toward midnight, and the flesh cried out for rest. For a little time they resisted this call and prayed with the Master as He had requested and instructed, but the demand of the flesh was strong. They succumbed and slept so soundly it was as if they were in a stupor.

That was one reason why they did not enter into the communion which, with the other already present factors, would have given them victory in the coming conflict with the powers of darkness.

Another reason lay in the continued existence of wrong ideas and theories. They still looked for an earthly kingdom to

come, the setting up of which depended not upon spiritual qualifications but on physical prowess. This being so, in spite of the counsels and warnings Christ gave them, they saw little need to enter into a close and searching fellowship with God for the purpose of gathering strength and efficiency for the coming conflict.

Had they understood accurately and comprehensively, as they should have done, just what the coming hours held for them and what the true nature of the kingdom was to be, they would have spent much time in the most earnest prayer and study of God's Word. Those wrong ideas and theories were indeed a factor upon which Satan worked to his advantage.

But it need not have been so. If they had trusted the Word of Christ as they should have done, they would have obeyed that Word even though they could not understand the implications of what the Saviour had to say to them.

So we too must learn to obey when we cannot understand, as well as to obey when we can understand. Our lives depend upon it now and eternally. In fact, the way of faith does demand that on many occasions we obey first and understand afterwards. This is the message in the spoken words of Christ when He said:

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

In this statement we have a conditional clause followed by a promise to be fulfilled on the meeting of the required condition. The promise is that we shall know whether the doctrine or teaching is of God or otherwise. The condition is that first we must do what the Lord has commanded to be done. If we do this in faith, the time will come when the Lord will reveal the reason for the command. Often, we will be called upon to obey without understanding why. However, faith assures us that faithful obedience will be followed by clear revelations of

the divine purpose.

This is not to say that the Lord expects in all things a blind, unreasoning service. This is the last thing He wants. He will reveal to us as much evidence and guidance as possible under the circumstances, but in the very nature of things there come times when it is necessary to obey first and have the explanation afterwards. We are then to trust God in the unknown because of what we know in the known.

Portentous Comings

For those who live in this last age of earth's history, so much is known that we have no excuse for failing to obey the Lord's commands.

Over and again we have been told of the urgent necessity to enter into a rich and deep fellowship of communion with the Lord in order to be able to meet the fearful pressures of that which is coming upon us. But the Lord has not simply said to us that this is necessary. He has revealed in the prophetic messages the precise nature of the final conflict and has stated just what kind of men and women we must be in order to survive.

The men who entered the conflict at the time of the crucifixion did so with very erroneous ideas about the nature of the coming kingdom, but those of us who are to enter upon this last and finishing conflict must do so with accurate concepts of just what the nature of the issues will be. Such a concept can be gained only by the most earnest study of God's Word.

In that Word is revealed the coming of the image to the beast, the passing of laws which will become progressively oppressive and punishing as time goes by. There will be callous persecution by those who hate and detest God's truth and the people who carry that truth. It will not be safe from the human point of view for the believers to walk the streets. Then, when the invoking of the law against commandment

keepers with the threat of fines and imprisonment fails to intimidate the righteous, the buy and sell decree will come. In the final unleashing of the storm's fury comes the death decree.

As this future event is studied, it will be seen that the pressure of that decree will not be the mere threat of death. It will be the pressure of death in the same terms that Christ experienced it in the Garden of Gethsemane and later on the cross. It will seem that the sacrifice made will be all for nothing, that there will be no resurrection, no eternal life, and no coming kingdom.

No human words can fully describe the awful experience through which the Advent people will then pass. The pressure will be beyond the weight of anything yet experienced by any human being except the Saviour Himself, and it requires that the people of God today make the most earnest and diligent preparation for that event. As surely as a person fails to do that, then so surely will he fail in the day to come. The apostles' experience in this regard is too plain to be misunderstood and overlooked.

How diligently and earnestly should we study the order of last day events so that we can gain a vivid and accurate picture of what is soon to come upon us as a people. Let us not enter the final conflict unprepared as those men were because of their erroneous ideas about the nature of the coming kingdom.

23. Perplexity and Confusion

AROUSED from their slumbers, the eleven went out to experience disastrous defeat. Earnestly and sincerely, Peter, as spokesman for the rest, had protested that they would follow Him to death, yet when it came to the issue, they all forsook Him and ran for their lives. Worse still, Peter denied his Master with cursings.

The events of that night exhibited some of the worst sins ever committed by the followers of Jesus. As they are viewed in retrospect today, many wonder how Peter could possibly do it, and tend to cherish a smug and righteous assurance that if they had been there, they would certainly not have done as he did.

Fortunately, while the Lord cannot and will not excuse the sin, He does look upon the sinner with understanding, compassion, love, and sympathy. He knew exactly what forces worked upon Peter to lead him into such a predicament. Those who reflect God's character will also view the incident with understanding and compassion.

It is too easy to lightly condemn from a partial knowledge of what took place. Real depth of character and clear spiritual perception will sweep away the obscuring mists, expose the true story, and deliver from any smug self-righteousness. Then the language of the soul will be,

“There, but for the grace of God, go I too.”¹³

It is the plain fact of history that Peter sinned. It was the Peter who had:

- been cleansed, even though unwillingly at first, from the evil spirit and the guilt of wrong actions;

¹³ Allegedly, this quote comes from a mid-sixteenth-century statement by John Bradford, “There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford,” in reference to a group of prisoners being led to execution.

- fellowshiped with Christ in the highly inspirational hour of the Lord's supper;
- walked with Christ from the upper room to Gethsemane and had been an attentive hearer of all that Christ had imparted to them;
- protested that he would go to prison and death with the Master, staying by Him though all men should forsake Him, and meaning every word he said.

It was *that* Peter who slunk into the temple courtyard and with fearful oaths denied ever having been part of Christ's family.

If a man who had experienced all this and more, and who had made a dedication such as that, could fall, then what a warning is contained herein of the ever present danger of our falling into Satan's snares, no matter how rich our experience might have been. There is no such thing as once saved, always saved.

Let it be reiterated so it may never be forgotten that Peter's fall was not because of the presence of the old carnal mind in him. That had been eradicated long before. Neither was it because of any evil spirit in him, for that too had been cleansed away in the experience prior to the Lord's supper, and the evil spirit of contention and hatred against his fellow disciples had not returned. There is not the slightest evidence of the presence of such things as they were aroused from their slumbers and moved forward with Christ to meet those who had come to arrest Him.

Then what caused the disciples' trouble? As already seen, they had not held the strengthening communion with the Father which would have given them the power to stand the coming test.

Courage and Faith

As Peter and his brethren moved out to face the enemy,

they were convinced that the hour of destiny had arrived, that they had reached the point of no return, that now the battle was to be joined wherein Christ had no choice but to assert His right to the kingship. They believed this because of their wrong ideas in regard to Christ's mission. Believing this, they made the most thorough preparation for what they *thought* was coming and for nothing else but that.

As they saw the soldiers led by the traitor Judas, they felt a surge of confidence that all they had expected, all they had trained for, was now about to be realized.

At this point, what splendid attributes do we find Peter manifesting? In the first case, he was motivated by a very strong and wonderful faith. He did not for a moment measure the possibility of victory by the numbers on the respective sides. On his side were the Saviour and the other ten disciples. In their possession were two swords, no spears, no armor, no training, and no experience in the use of arms and warfare. On the other side was the combined power of the Jewish forces, backed by the most highly trained, best equipped, experienced, and successful army in the world—the Romans.

But Peter was not in the least afraid. We do not see him skulking in the shadows, ready to run for his life. Instead we see him right there in the front line where the bravest and most vigorous soldiers are found. Why is this so? Was he a rash and foolhardy man who was not able to evaluate the forces on either side?

No, he was not! Impetuous as he was, he still was not so impetuous as to throw away his life in a hopeless cause. He was out there in front, manifesting such courage and initiative, because of his tremendous *faith* in the power of Christ.

- He had seen Him drive the money changers and sellers from the temple courts, unarmed and unassisted.
- He had seen Him command the multitude to go home

after the feeding of the five thousand when they would have taken Him by force, and made Him king.

- He had seen Him heal the sick, cast out devils, and raise the dead.

Peter was not afraid of being wounded or even killed, for the Master would heal or resurrect him as the need arose. With such knowledge and convictions as these, why should he be afraid and why not have great faith in the Master? Let full credit be given to Peter at this time, for this quality so fully manifested.

In this, he was also giving proof of his declaration that he would follow the Master even to prison and death, for surely he was risking his very life in doing what he was? There can be no question but that it was with *courage, faith, and dedication* that Peter went forth to meet the Saviour's persecutors.

These are highly valuable attributes to possess, and we have to give Peter full credit for their possession. *Yet he sinned.*

Perplexing Disappointment

As Peter leaped to bring his weapon flashing toward the nearest opponent which proved to be the high priest's servant, he expected Christ to heartily approve his action, stand behind him, give power and direction to his sword and, in general, prove to be the world's ablest battlefield commander. *This is what he expected.* His whole lifetime of training and thinking, apart from what the Saviour had *tried* to teach him, led him to think and expect just that.

Instead, the Saviour spoke with gentle authority,

Matthew 26

⁵² Put up again your sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

It was unbelievable. Peter doubted that his ears had heard correctly. His mind groped desperately for an explanation.

Nothing about it made the least sense to him. Shocked and bewildered, he stepped back and watched with stunned gaze as the chief priests and soldiers laid hold upon the One in whom all Peter's hopes had centered. He saw Christ calmly allow Himself to be bound even after the demonstration of power wherein the light of the angel guards had swept back the assailants.



Source: Met Museum, Giolfino 1546

It was as if the whole world had fallen apart. Certainly his world was falling apart, for all he had ever expected, all for which he had ever trained, all he had ever hoped for, was suddenly swept away with nothing to take its place. It was not a case of his being able to see that he had been mistaken in his expectations and that something more beautiful, wonderful, and desirable was to take its place. While this was indeed the

case, he could not see it as such. He could not see that he had been wrong in his expectations nor that God's plan was much more wonderful than the mere setting up of a temporary and passing earthly kingdom. While he could not see this, the unfolding of events was so out of harmony with his expectations and planning that nothing made sense.

So he fled as will every one of us if we allow ourselves to be placed in the same situation. While we cannot escape being handicapped with wrong ideas and theories, we do not need to neglect the deep, close communion with the Lord which will enable us to pass through such situations victoriously. Then, when perplexity surrounds us as it did Peter, we will not run away and deny God's cause. Instead, there will be a calm, trustful, waiting on the Master until light reveals where the problem lies.

But, without that faith, developed from a close walk with God, we will flee and deny the Lord as badly as Peter did. He fled and so will we, not because at the time he was, or we are, evil in nature. This was not Peter's problem, for he was a born again Christian and a very sincere follower of the Saviour. As has been repeatedly emphasized, born again Christians can sin, because there are other causes for sin apart from the domination of the old man.

Peter sinned because he was bewildered, confused, and uncertain and because he had not taken care to build a strong and living faith. This left him unable to calmly and trustingly wait until clearer light should be given.

Upon every Christian at some time or the other, troubles will come which defy explanation. It will seem as if every promise of God has come to naught. Perplexity and confusion will surround the soul, for not one of us will be exempt from such experiences. The Word of God positively assures of this.

When the gospel promise was made to Adam and Eve in the Garden, they were plainly told that the serpent would bruise

the heel of the seed of the woman.

Genesis 3

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

As surely as the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's seed, which seed Christ and every Christian is, then we can know that we will not pass through the Christian walk without periods of trial and perplexity.

Messages to Young People, p. 63:

Those who are finally victorious will have seasons of *terrible perplexity and trial* in their religious life; but they must not cast away their confidence, for this is a part of their discipline in the school of Christ, and it is essential in order that all dross may be purged away. The servant of God must endure with fortitude the attacks of the enemy, his grievous taunts, and must overcome the obstacles which Satan will place in his way.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 43:

We are on the very verge of the time of trouble, and perplexities that are scarcely dreamed of are before us.

There are many more statements which further emphasize this fact. Study them until the realization is firmly fixed that there is nothing abnormal about going through a period when great trials and perplexities press upon the soul. Being able to enter into such, knowing that it is normal, is a great help in coping with these problems. We then know that they will soon pass and that when they do, we will be better for the experiences.

God permits them to come so that we can be thoroughly educated in the principles of heaven. Zerubbabel, the divinely appointed leader of Israel during the restoration from Babylonian captivity, had the correct attitude during his time of test.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 577-578:

To Zerubbabel their leader—he who, through all the years since their return from Babylon, had been so sorely tried—was given a most precious message. The day was coming, the Lord declared, when all the enemies of His chosen people would be cast down.

Haggai 2

²³ In that day, says the Lord of hosts, will I take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant,...and will make you as a signet: for I have chosen you.

Now the governor of Israel could see the meaning of the providence that had led him through discouragement and perplexity; he could discern God's purpose in it all.

This personal word to Zerubbabel has been left on record for the encouragement of God's children in every age. God has a purpose in sending trial to His children. He never leads them otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose that they are fulfilling. All that He brings upon them in test and trial comes that they may be strong to do and to suffer for Him.

Let it be stressed that trial and perplexity do not ensure that sin will follow. It is when they are there *and* there has been a failure to develop a strong faith experience that sin is sure to follow. Always remember that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith.

Therefore, it is not the presence of trial and perplexity but the *absence of faith* in those hours of test which causes the Christian to fall into sin. So it was with Peter. It is a vital part of the reformation experience to ensure that faith is kept strong and active so that there will be adequate defense against sin no matter how pressing the trial, or confusing the perplexity.

In the light of this, let a careful, intelligent, and sympathetic

study be made of Peter's situation, the course he elected to follow, and the sad consequences. When Christ allowed Himself to be taken prisoner, Peter was confronted with a situation for which he was not prepared because he had refused to believe it could ever happen. Therefore, he could neither understand nor identify with Christ at this time. He had literally ceased to be a follower of the Saviour.

But, at the same time, neither could he identify with the persecutors of his beloved Master. Consequently, he found himself on neutral ground, giving allegiance and support to no one. He longed to fathom the mystery of it all, to see light where there was darkness, and clarity in the place of confusion.

So he elected to adopt the position of an uncommitted observer until such time as he could know just where to place his allegiance. This sounds like good sense and, under certain circumstances, it is. But in that situation, it was a grave mistake which invited and brought serious trouble.

During the previous three and a half years of association with Christ, Peter had received abundant evidence that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, was empowered by heaven, and guided in all that He did by His Father above. More than once he had been perplexed by Christ's actions, but always things had become clear as the light was advanced. So, there was nothing different in the situation in the Garden from what there had been before. He ought to have carefully reviewed these mighty evidences and assured himself that Christ was doing what He had come to do, even though he could not understand it. It is far better to *believe* without understanding, than to *doubt* without understanding.

Messages to Young People, p. 107-108:

When temptations assail you, as they surely will, when care and perplexity surround you, when, distressed and discouraged, you are almost ready to yield to despair, *look, O*

look, to where with the eye of faith you last saw the light: and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His glory.

There was no excuse for Peter to take the place of an uncommitted and nonaligned person. Furthermore, it put him into a position of grave danger, so much so that when the devil attacked, he had no hope of standing. He ought to have carefully reviewed the great evidences given to him during his past association with Christ. This would have confirmed to him that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, that He was led of God, and therefore, even though he could not understand what was happening, he could rest in the assurance that it was right.

Bible history strongly teaches this lesson. God's people experience His leading and receive His teachings over a period of time. The evidences given are more than adequate to show where the truth lies and that God knows exactly what He is doing. Then comes a sudden and unexpected test. Perplexity and confusion surround them, and often they are beset by great dangers.

On every occasion when, at this point, a careful, prayerful review of the evidences of God's work among them had been made, the believers were able to rest in faith. They knew that God had not forsaken them, and, even though the whole situation was perplexing and confusing, they knew that God had it in hand and that all would work out for the best. In every such instance, the most remarkable deliverances were experienced.

On the other hand, when there was a failure to carefully review the past, the doubt and perplexity threw the individual or group into utter confusion, leading them to turn to their own works to solve the dilemma, and this resulted in disastrous consequences.

An outstanding example of this is the debacle at Kadesh-

barnea. Israel had witnessed God's wonderful leadership and teaching in all their journeyings from Egypt to that present time. Then came the crisis caused by the discouraging report of the spies.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 388:

The people *did not wait to reflect*; they did not reason that He who had brought them thus far would certainly give them the land; they did not call to mind how wonderfully God had delivered them from their oppressors, cutting a path through the sea, and destroying the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh. They left God out of the question, and acted as though they must depend solely on the power of arms.

Every believer in God should most carefully study these lessons, for they provide a safe and sure guide to maintaining faith in a time of perplexity and confusion. It is safe to say, in fact, that only those who do thoroughly learn and practice this procedure will be able to endure the coming trials.

Peter did not practice these procedures, with the result that he fell. Fortunately, however, he had sufficient remembrance of Christ's wonderful life and teachings to prevent him from utterly abandoning his faith. In reality, he knew that deep down in his heart, he really belonged to the Saviour and not to the world.

His carefully formed plan went to ruin when he slipped unobtrusively into the temple courtyard. He mingled with a small group warming themselves around the fire, hoping that their attention would be so concentrated on Christ's trial that he would go unnoticed. But a damsel spotted him, suspected him, and, out of curiosity, asked if he was one of Christ's disciples. The outcome was now predetermined. Peter had no chance of acknowledging Christ. He had failed to take the necessary precautions and because of that, he placed himself in a position where, under the circumstances, he could not stand.

This does not mean that he had to sin. It is saying that once he had come to a certain point, then escape was virtually impossible. From this, we are to learn that victory is gained or lost in the first steps taken. Once the feet have been placed in a certain direction, once concessions have been made to the tempter, sin is sure to follow. It always does.

The Desire of Ages, p. 713:

It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him watch and pray that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin.

Peter had denied his Lord at a time when above all others, Christ needed loyalty and support. The fault lay entirely with Peter. It was a manifestation of selfishness in the place of love and appreciation. A terrible load of condemnation fell upon him as soon as the cock crowed, a load which would have crushed him to death but for the wonderful look of love and compassion which the Saviour directed to him at that moment.

The Desire of Ages, p. 712-713:

While the degrading oaths were fresh upon Peter's lips, and the shrill crowing of the cock was still ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple. At the same time Peter's eyes were drawn to his Master. In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but there was no anger there.

The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips, that look of compassion and forgiveness, pierced his heart like an arrow. Conscience was aroused. Memory was active. Peter called to mind his promise of a few short hours before that he would go with his Lord to prison and to death. He remembered his grief when the Saviour told him in the upper chamber that he would deny his Lord thrice that same night. Peter had just declared that he knew not Jesus, but he now realized with bitter grief how well his Lord knew him, and how accurately He had read his heart, the falseness of which was unknown even to himself.

Precious indeed to every struggling, tempted Christian is

this revelation of God's character in and through Jesus. Christ understood to perfection the reasons for Peter's sin. His attitude toward him was one of sympathy. He was only interested in saving His beloved follower, not in condemning or destroying him.



Source: Wellcome Collection - E. Scriven, 1814

In this there are two valuable lessons for us. One is that we should cherish an attitude toward sinners like Christ's. The other is to know that, when we sin, the Lord is anxious that

we come to Him at once to receive His merciful pardon and restoration. He then sends us forth to continue the battle, wiser for the last encounter.

The history of Peter's fall has lessons of great consequence and tremendous value for the believer in Jesus:

- It clearly shows that a born again Christian can fall, even though he has been cleansed from every evil spirit and forgiven for every wrong action.
- It emphasizes the fact that once certain preparatory steps have been taken, then sin will surely follow.
- It calls for a careful watch to be set so that the enemy will not gain these advantages and thus involve us in sin.

There is no need to sin. All believers who do, must recognize that not only is it their own fault, but they must also come to understand why it has happened. Only then can satisfactory steps be taken to ensure that the problem is not repeated.

WEEPING PETER

*"And Peter went out,
and wept bitterly." Luke 22:62*

Charles Wesley



1. Je - sus, let Your pit - ying eye call back a wan-d'ring sheep;
2. Sa - viour, Prince, enthroned a - bove, re - pen - tance to im - part,
3. See me, Sa - viour, from a - bove, nor suf - fer me to die;
4. Look, as when Your lan - guid eye was closed that we might live;



False to You, like Pe - ter, I would fain, like Pe - ter, weep.
Give me, thru Your dy - ing love, the hum - ble, con - trite heart;
Life, and hap - pi - ness, and love drop from Your gra - cious eye;
Fa - ther, at the point to die my Sa - viour prayed, For - give!



Let me be by grace re - stored; on me be all long - suf - f'ring shown;
Give what I have long im - plored, a por - tion of Your grief un - known;
Speak the rec - on - cil - ing word, and let Your mer - cy melt me down;
Sure - ly, with that dy - ing word, He turns, and looks, and cries, 'Tis done!



Turn, and look up - on me, Lord, and break my heart of stone.
Turn, and look up - on me, Lord, and break my heart of stone.
Turn, and look up - on me, Lord, and break my heart of stone.
O my bleed - ing, lov - ing Lord, You broke my heart of stone!

24. Moses and Elijah

FROM the lives of Joseph, David, and the apostles of Christ, it is possible to see what, in the life of a child of God, can lead to sin.

The experiences of Moses and Elijah furnish further light on this troublesome problem. Both of these men are now in heaven. Moses died and was raised, while Elijah experienced direct translation from this earth to paradise. Both of them:

- had received wonderful revelations from God,
- had walked very closely with Him, and
- had been the instruments for the working of mighty miracles.

Yet both of them sinned grievously. The reasons were the same in both cases.

Moses Striking the Rock

Consideration will be given to Moses first. The great sin of his life was striking the rock in anger when he should have only spoken to it. Because of this, he was denied the privilege of leading the Israelites into Canaan, even though he longed for the experience.

His case is quoted by those who deny that the old man is eradicated at the new birth, to prove that the old man was there all the time, only awaiting the opportunity to arise again. On the surface, this appears to be a plausible argument, but it ignores the truth that the old man is not the only cause of sin.

In Moses' case, it was deep discouragement which caused him to lose faith in God's power to lead the Israelites into Canaan. In his deep disappointment, he let go of God's hand and expressed the frustration he was feeling.

In his earlier days, he had made a tremendous decision. Be-

fore him was the opportunity to be the most powerful monarch on the face of the earth. Egypt and, in fact, the world was his. But he chose to renounce all that to give his life to God's cause.

Hebrews 11

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

He shared the high hopes of the people when they left Egypt that they would speedily occupy the promised land. Despite the outbreak of the various rebellions along the way, Moses' faith in the fulfillment of God's promises was undimmed.

Then they came to Kadesh-barnea where the people manifested the wicked unbelief which barred them from entry. God did not dare to lead them in, in that state of faithlessness, for He knew that it would only be to their slaughter. Moses did not lack the faith to go in, but his place was with the people who needed him more than they knew.

But when, with heavy and disappointed heart, he turned back for forty years of wandering, he did so with the assurance that at the end of forty years they would come again and that they would then enter in. For forty years, he was able to endure every uprising, complaint, and hardship in the knowledge that there would be an end to it, and they would leave the wilderness behind forever. God's purpose would be fulfilled, Israel would become God's witness to all nations, and righteousness would be established in the whole earth.

But, toward the end of their journeyings, a situation arose which robbed Moses of that hope. As they neared the borders of the promised land, the water which had followed them with great certainty, dried up.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 414:

Before God permitted them to enter Canaan, they must show that they believed His promise. The water ceased before they had reached Edom. Here was an opportunity for them, for a little time, to walk by faith instead of sight.

Had they done so, the heart of Moses would have been cheered and uplifted. Strong confidence would have buoyed him up as he saw that there was a different spirit in the children from what there had been in the fathers. The witness of sight and circumstances would have told him that all was well and the land was as good as theirs. But, instead, the children manifested the *same spirit of murmuring, unbelief, and rebellion as their parents had done.*

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 414, 417:

But the first trial developed the *same turbulent, unthankful spirit that had been manifested by their fathers.* No sooner was the cry for water heard in the encampment than they forgot the hand that had for so many years supplied their wants, and instead of turning to God for help, they murmured against Him, in their desperation exclaiming,

Numbers 20

³ Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!

That is, they wished they had been of the number who were destroyed in the rebellion of Korah. Their cries were directed against Moses and Aaron:

⁴ Why have you brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

⁵ And wherefore have you made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

Forty years before, Moses had correctly seen that the reason for their not entering the promised land was the wicked unbelief of the parents. It had not been an arbitrary decision from God that had prevented their entry, but their own wayward course which had caused the trouble. Because of the promises of God, Moses did not believe that the same spirit would be present when the next generation came again to Kadesh-barnea. He knew that if it was, then they would have no better hope of going in than the parents. Only a people of living faith could enter the promised land, either then or now.

But, to his unspeakable disappointment and alarm, he found that the same spirit did emerge under stress. He rightly reasoned that these people were as unfit to receive the promise of God as had been the previous generation. He could not find a single witness to assure him that God's word would be fulfilled.

It is true that he had the promise, but he had also had that the first time they came to Kadesh-barnea. He also knew that the fulfillment of God's assurances was not unconditional. God could and would do His part with great certainty, but only if the people fulfilled theirs. Otherwise there was no hope. So now the promise was no encouragement to him, for he saw that the people were not, in any sense, fulfilling the conditions.

Moses was now an old man. He was wearied by the long journeyings and distressed by the persistent murmuring and unbelief of the people. He had been tried to the limit, and this was now too much. He saw that all the sacrifice he had made was apparently for nothing. He naturally concluded that there was no hope of God ever fulfilling His promises and plans through this people. He thus lost faith in the works of God and, as surely as he did, he sinned.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 417-418:

Moses manifested distrust of God. "Shall we bring water?"

he questioned, as if the Lord would not do what He promised. “You believed me not,” the Lord declared to the two brothers, “to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel.”

At the time when the water failed, their own faith in the fulfillment of God’s promise had been shaken by the murmuring and rebellion of the people. The first generation had been condemned to perish in the wilderness because of their unbelief, yet the same spirit appeared in their children. Would these also fail of receiving the promise?

Wearied and disheartened, Moses and Aaron had made no effort to stem the current of popular feeling. Had they themselves manifested unwavering faith in God, they might have set the matter before the people in such a light as would have enabled them to bear this test. By prompt, decisive exercise of the authority vested in them as magistrates, they might have quelled the murmuring. It was their duty to put forth every effort in their power to bring about a better state of things before asking God to do the work for them. Had the murmuring at Kadesh been promptly checked, what a train of evil might have been prevented!

The people of Israel had brought enormous pressure to bear on Moses. Had this been done in only one instance, then that would not have been difficult to meet, but when it had been persistently loaded upon him for forty years and more, and then at the last mile of the journey so applied as to sweep away all visible hope of achieving the long-cherished goal, it proved to be more than Moses could bear. He gave up his faith in God’s ever being able to bring that people into the promised land. The moment that faith fails, sin begins. There is nothing more certain than that.

A careful consideration of the situation in which Moses was placed will show that there was every visible reason for him to disbelieve in the success of the movement. The simple fact was that while God had made the promise that He would take them in, its fulfillment depended on the people’s meeting their side of the contract. The first visit to Kadesh demon-

strated this. They had emerged from Egypt with the specific promise that they would be led into Canaan, but that promise had never been fulfilled because of the lack of faith on the part of the people.

Numbers 14

³⁴ You shall know my breach of promise, [said the Lord].

When they came to the borders of the promised land for the second time, the same conditions of entry prevailed. They had the promise of God, but they had to fulfill the conditions of faith if they were to see the promise materialize. Instead, they displayed the same lack of faith and spirit of murmuring which had kept their parents out. Can you appreciate how Moses must have felt at that point of time? Can you visualize how you would have felt if you had been in the same situation?

Yet, understandable as the failure of Moses was, God did not excuse him for a moment. The Lord expected him to stand with faith undimmed through it all and had provided every means by which he might do so. This may seem a high and uncompromising standard to be maintained, but nonetheless it is what God has provided for us to sustain. Therefore, He expects that we will, especially when the success of the cause depends on our doing so.

In no sense of the word does Moses' sin prove that the old man was still lurking in him. His problem emanated from an altogether different cause. His sin was the expression of extreme frustration and despair resulting from a breakdown of faith occasioned by incessant pressure from the people. As in David's case, so in Moses', the people have a fearful responsibility to bear for the part they played in the drama.

Elijah's Flight from Jezebel

This prophet's headlong and cowardly flight from the threat of Jezebel is the dark blot on his record. Like Moses, he had

endured much before that fateful night. He had seen the most wonderful revelations of God's character and power, yet, like Moses, he fell into sin fateful to the cause of God.

Without a trace of fear, Elijah arose in the darkest hours of Ahab's wicked reign, marched into the presence of the startled monarch, denounced his iniquitous course, and prophesied that there would be no rain till he, and Israel, repented of their crimes and returned to God.

With patience, he endured the solitary wait firstly at the brook where he was fed by the ravens and then in Sareptha. After three and a half years, God directed him to confront Ahab and call for a showdown between God and the priests of Baal.

The auspicious event took place on Carmel where Elijah stood absolutely alone so far as human support was concerned. As the day wore on, the Baalites became more and more frenzied in their determined efforts to set the sacrifice on fire, but to no avail. Finally, the man of God quietly sent his prayer to the true God, and the spectacular consumption of the sacrifice took place. The people responded like men wakened at last from a trance, the priests of Baal were slain, and Elijah went to pray for rain. In response to that magnificent prayer of faith, the rains came and the relief of the land brought joy and gratitude to the multitudes of Israel.

After so convincing a display of God's power and so total a defeat of the enemy, Elijah was confident that there would now be a wonderful revival and reformation in Israel. Jezebel's power, he knew, would be broken and she would be forced from the throne and executed. With these happy thoughts in mind, he lay down to sleep outside the gate of Jezreel.

1 Kings 19

¹ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

² Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.

When this news was brought to him, Elijah got up and fled for his life. By so doing he cut short the mighty reformation which the Lord planned for Israel and which would have taken place if he had not deserted his post of duty. Why did it happen? Why did he, who had displayed such wonderful faith and courage as to enable him to stand undaunted before king, priests, and people, now flee for his very life?

It was because the witness of sight and circumstances did not match the witness of faith. His strong convictions led him to believe that the people would no longer tolerate their wicked queen, but the evidence was that her power was in no way diminished. Otherwise, how could she, with such confidence and authority, send a message of doom to the prophet? Obviously Ahab was still under her power and, if this were so, then there would be no reformation in Israel. All the effort was for nothing. Righteousness was doomed and evil was in power. This is how it seemed to poor Elijah that night.

With the loss of faith came the severance of his connection with God. Instead of looking to God for guidance as he had faithfully and steadfastly done in the past, he resorted to his own counsels and fled.

Prophets and Kings, p. 159-162:

It would seem that after showing courage so undaunted, after triumphing so completely over king and priests and people, Elijah could never afterward have given way to despondency nor been awed into timidity. But he who had been blessed with so many evidences of God's loving care was not above the frailties of mankind, and in this dark hour his faith and courage forsook him. Bewildered, he started from his slumber. The rain was pouring from the heavens, and darkness was on every side. Forgetting that three years before, God had directed his course to a place of refuge from

the hatred of Jezebel and the search of Ahab, the prophet now fled for his life. Reaching Beersheba, he “left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness.”

Elijah should not have fled from his post of duty. He should have met the threat of Jezebel with an appeal for protection to the One who had commissioned him to vindicate the honor of Jehovah. He should have told the messenger that the God in whom he trusted would protect him against the hatred of the queen. Only a few hours had passed since he had witnessed a wonderful manifestation of divine power, and this should have given him assurance that he would not now be forsaken.

Had he remained where he was, had he made God his refuge and strength, standing steadfast for the truth, he would have been shielded from harm. The Lord would have given him another signal victory by sending His judgments on Jezebel; and the impression made on the king and the people would have wrought a great reformation.

Elijah had expected much from the miracle wrought on Carmel. He had hoped that after this display of God’s power, Jezebel would no longer have influence over the mind of Ahab, and that there would be a speedy reform throughout Israel. All day on Carmel’s height he had toiled without food. Yet when he guided the chariot of Ahab to the gate of Jezreel, his courage was strong, despite the physical strain under which he had labored.

But a reaction such as frequently follows high faith and glorious success was pressing upon Elijah. He feared that the reformation begun on Carmel might not be lasting; and depression seized him. He had been exalted to Pisgah’s top; now he was in the valley. While under the inspiration of the Almighty, he had stood the severest trial of faith; but in this time of discouragement, with Jezebel’s threat sounding in his ears, and Satan still apparently prevailing through the plotting of this wicked woman, he lost his hold on God.

He had been exalted above measure, and the reaction was tremendous. Forgetting God, Elijah fled on and on, until he found himself in a dreary waste, alone. Utterly wearied, he

sat down to rest under a juniper tree. And sitting there, he requested for himself that he might die.

1 Kings 19

⁴ It is enough; now, O Lord, [he said,] take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

A fugitive, far from the dwelling places of men, his spirits crushed by bitter disappointment, he desired never again to look upon the face of man. At last, utterly exhausted, he fell asleep.

Elijah's experience was not unique. Every one of God's people will pass over the same ground and will suffer the same testing. It is then that the better versed we are in the experiences through which these great men passed, the more steadfastly we shall stand for the right and be the instruments through whom God will finish His work.

Prophets and Kings, p. 162-165:

Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement—days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many lose their hold on God and are brought into the slavery of doubt, the bondage of unbelief. Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being.

The faithful Job, in the day of his affliction and darkness, declared:

Job 3

³ Let the day perish wherein I was born.

Job 6

² O that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

⁸ O that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!

⁹ Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would

let loose His hand, and cut me off!

¹⁰ Then should I yet have comfort.

Job 7

¹¹ I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

¹⁵ My soul chooses...death rather than my life.

¹⁶ I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

But though weary of life, Job was not allowed to die. To him were pointed out the possibilities of the future, and there was given him the message of hope:

Job 11

¹⁵ You shall be steadfast, and shall not fear:

¹⁶ Because you shall forget your misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:

¹⁷ And your age shall be clearer than the noonday; you shall shine forth, you shall be as the morning.

¹⁸ And you shall be secure, because there is hope...

¹⁹ You shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto you.

²⁰ But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

From the depths of discouragement and despondency Job rose to the heights of implicit trust in the mercy and the saving power of God. Triumphantly he declared:

Job 13

¹⁵ Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him:

¹⁶ He also shall be my salvation.

Job 19

²⁵ I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

²⁶ And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

“The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind” (*Job* 38:1), and revealed to His servant the might of His power. When Job caught a glimpse of his Creator, he abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. Then the Lord was able to bless him abundantly and to make his last years the best of his life.

Hope and courage are essential to perfect service for God. These are the fruit of faith. Despondency is sinful and unreasonable. God is able and willing “more abundantly” (*Hebrews* 6:17) to bestow upon His servants the strength they need for test and trial. The plans of the enemies of His work may seem to be well laid and firmly established, but God can overthrow the strongest of these. And this He does in His own time and way, when He sees that the faith of His servants has been sufficiently tested.

For the disheartened there is a sure remedy—faith, prayer, work. Faith and activity will impart assurance and satisfaction that will increase day by day. Are you tempted to give way to feelings of anxious foreboding or utter despondency? In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary.

Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. The apostle Paul has testified:

2 Corinthians 12

⁹ He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...

¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Precious indeed are the promises and counsels here quoted for those who are striving to attain success in the vital work of reformation. Study and obey them until they become second nature. Then victory will be assured.

Equally comforting is the fact that when we do fail, the Lord loves us just as much and is as close to us as is needed.

Prophets and Kings, p. 166:

Did God forsake Elijah in his hour of trial? Oh, no! He loved His servant no less when Elijah felt himself forsaken of God and man than when, in answer to his prayer, fire

flashed from heaven and illuminated the mountaintop.

And now, as Elijah slept, a soft touch and a pleasant voice awoke him. He started up in terror, as if to flee, fearing that the enemy had discovered him. But the pitying face bending over him was not the face of an enemy, but of a friend. God had sent an angel from heaven with food for His servant.



Source: *Historiae Sacrae tam Veteris*, 1700

1 Kings 19

⁵ Arise and eat [the angel said].

⁶ And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head.

After Elijah had partaken of the refreshment prepared for him, he slept again. A second time the angel came. Touching the exhausted man, he said with pitying tenderness,

⁷ Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for you.

⁸ And he arose, and did eat and drink.

And in the strength of that food he was able to journey “forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God,” where he found refuge in a cave.

The lessons to be obtained from the lives of these splendid Christians are very clear indeed. Neither of them sinned because they still had the old carnal mind. This was not the

problem.

Instead, they lost faith in the cause of God being successful because the powerful witness of sight and circumstances declared that it could not be. They allowed themselves to be convinced by that witness. In doing so they let go of the arm of faith and the sure and certain result was that they sinned.

Let it never be forgotten that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 657:

Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith.

25. Saul

THE lives of David, Moses, Elijah, and the apostles, as well as those of many other great Christians, were marred by loss of faith and severe failures, yet they all recovered by God's forgiving and restoring grace and will be in heaven so far as we know. Moses and Elijah are already there.

But not all who began the Christian pathway as truly born again Christians will be saved at last. One such is Saul, Israel's first king. There is ample evidence to show that he did experience the change of nature brought about by the new birth experience. Like every other Christian, he faced tests during the reformation period, but unlike those lives already studied, he refused to face the reality of his true condition and need. The consequences were that the good work so well begun was frustrated, and he lost his kingdom, his life, and eternity.

Particular stress was laid upon the fact that each of the great men already studied had been truly born again. It is equally important to realize that King Saul, at the time of his anointing, certainly did receive that life from above which effected that transformation of nature known as the new birth or revival experience.

Saul's Conversion

In tracing the story of Saul's conversion, it is firstly stated that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 608:

He had not in youth learned to control his rash, impetuous passions; he had never felt the renewing power of divine grace.

But after the intimation that he would be the first king of Israel, a wonderful transformation took place in his life.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 610:

As Saul united with the prophets in their worship, a great

change was wrought *in him* by the Holy Spirit. The light of divine purity and holiness shone in upon the darkness of the natural heart. He saw himself as he was before God. He saw the beauty of holiness.



Source: Pictorial Sunday Book, 1854

He was now called to begin the warfare against sin and Satan, and he was made to feel that in this conflict his strength must come wholly from God. The plan of salvation, which had before seemed dim and uncertain, was opened to his understanding. The Lord endowed him with courage and wisdom for his high station. He revealed to him the Source of strength and grace, and enlightened his understanding as to the divine claims and his own duty.

This paragraph certainly states that Saul had the essentials for conversion. The light of divine purity and holiness shone into his heart. He saw himself as God saw him. The plan of salvation became clear to him, and as a result...

...a great change was wrought *in him* by the Holy Spirit.

Then, when the Spirit of God came upon him to give Israel

the first great victory of his reign, the people were so enthusiastic that they wanted to give Saul all the credit and also to put to death those who had been reluctant to accept him as the king of the land. But Saul promptly refused to be party to this in any way. He gave all the credit to the Lord and refused to allow any of those who had not recognized him to be punished.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 613:

Here Saul gave evidence of the change that had taken place in his character. Instead of taking honor to himself, he gave the glory to God. Instead of showing a desire for revenge, he manifested a spirit of compassion and forgiveness. *This is unmistakable evidence that the grace of God dwells in the heart.*

This action on the king's part testified to the nobility of character which he then possessed and showed that he had in his new nature, characteristics like those of his Father in heaven.

A Day of Opportunity

Under the inspiration of the Lord, Samuel saw that this was an opportune time to bring Israel to repentance for their sin in electing a king. With the spirit which Saul then manifested, there was every promise that he would continue to take the right stand. So,

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 613:

Samuel now proposed that a national assembly should be convoked at Gilgal, that the kingdom might there be publicly confirmed to Saul. It was done; "and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly."

The people had come to appreciate Saul as a king, so that they were willing to accept him as their ruler. Thus the time had arrived for his complete confirmation. At the same time, the Lord wished to bring them to full repentance for their

wrong actions in calling for a king. Here, then, is a situation wherein God on the one hand expressed His complete willingness to let them have what they wanted, while at the same time, He lovingly sought to save them from the course they had chosen. It was a critical point in the history of both Israel and Saul. Their future would be determined by the decision made that day.

The choice of location for this meeting was also significant, for it was a spot of great historical interest to the Jews.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 613-614:

Gilgal had been the place of Israel's first encampment in the promised land. It was here that Joshua, by divine direction, set up the pillar of twelve stones to commemorate the miraculous passage of the Jordan. Here circumcision had been renewed. Here they had kept the first Passover after the sin at Kadesh, and the desert sojourn. Here the manna ceased. Here the Captain of the Lord's host had revealed Himself as chief in command of the armies of Israel. From this place they marched to the overthrow of Jericho and the conquest of Ai. Here Achan met the penalty of his sin, and here was made that treaty with the Gibeonites which punished Israel's neglect to ask counsel of God.

Upon this plain, linked with so many thrilling associations, stood Samuel and Saul; and when the shouts of welcome to the king had died away, the aged prophet gave his parting words as ruler of the nation.

It was in love to them that the Lord had planned this meeting to be in such surroundings. He knew better than they, the consequences of pursuing a course wherein He was no longer their guide and counselor. For this reason, He longed to save them from so terrible a fate. The choice lay with them, and to assist in making it the right way, He placed them where history had witnessed both to the effectiveness of His leadership and the disastrous consequences of their turning from Him to their own ways.

When they had implicitly obeyed His directions, they had secured a complete triumph over Jericho. Then they had gone against Ai, following their own counsels with quite opposite results. This was rectified by their seeking God's guidance and attacking the city according to His strategy. Again they had turned to their own ways in making the decision in regard to the Gibeonites, thus bringing on themselves a permanent punishment.

The message from the past was very clear. Its lessons had been repeated too many times to be missed or ignored. They needed only to reflect carefully on what had happened in the past to see what they should do in the present. Failure to do so was to bring upon themselves permanent loss and trouble.

It was God's way to rule them through a prophet such as the aged Samuel, but they had chosen their own way despite the Lord's solemn protest as to the outworking of such a choice. To add to the witness provided by their surroundings, Samuel called on the people to recognize that there was no fault with God's form of government.

1 Samuel 12

¹ And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that you said unto me, and have made a king over you.

² And now, behold, the king walks before you; and I am old and gray-headed...and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

³ Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you.

Thus Samuel, under God's direction, called the people to witness to the perfection of God's government in contrast to the oppression that was to be theirs in the years to come under the hand of a despotic king, like the ones around them.

The people had no choice but to acknowledge that what Samuel said was true.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 614:

With one voice the people answered, “You have not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither have you taken aught of any man’s hand.”

There was no disposition on Samuel’s part to justify his own past behavior. He was not seeking a receipt for good conduct so that he would never come under any charges which might be leveled against him when the new power took over. His was a heart of love like that of His Father in heaven.

It was not for himself but for the people that he spoke these words. If only *they* could be brought to see the error of their ways and the blessings and security to be gained from God’s ways, then all would be well. God would be restored to His rightful place from where He would lead Israel into unlimited and certain success.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 614:

Before there could be any hope of prosperity for Israel, they must be led to repentance before God. In consequence of sin they had lost their faith in God, and their discernment of His power and wisdom to rule the nation,—lost their confidence in His ability to vindicate His cause. Before they could find true peace, *they must be led to see and confess the very sin of which they had been guilty.* They had declared the object of the demand for a king to be,

1 Samuel 8

²⁰ That our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

It was an exceedingly critical moment in Israel’s history. They had made a wrong choice in calling for a king. Now they must either confirm or reject it. The opportunity to recognize and rescind the decision would never again be as favorable as it was then. If they could not make things right under such favorable conditions, they would never do it in the future. What

a tragedy that they were not prepared to see the full implications of their wrong choice.

In the setting of those wonderful events of the past, Samuel, under the inspiration of the Spirit, then preached them a wonderful sermon in which he recounted God's dealings with them in their previous history.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 614-615:

Samuel recounted the history of Israel, from the day when God brought them from Egypt. Jehovah, the King of kings, had gone out before them, and had fought their battles. Often their sins had sold them into the power of their enemies, but no sooner did they turn from their evil ways than God's mercy raised up a deliverer. The Lord sent Gideon and Barak, and "Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you dwelt safe." Yet when threatened with danger they had declared, "A king shall reign over us," when, said the prophet, "Jehovah your God was your king."

To confirm the truth of the words spoken, God appended a startling and even frightening physical and visible sign. In the midst of the wheat harvest when rain was unheard of, a savage storm came up and broke loose upon them.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 615:

1 Samuel 12

¹⁶ Now therefore, [continued Samuel,] stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.

¹⁷ Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call unto the Lord, and He shall send thunder and rain; that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.

¹⁸ So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day.

At the time of wheat harvest, in May and June, no rain fell in the East. The sky was cloudless, and the air serene and mild. So violent a storm at this season filled all hearts with fear. In humiliation the people now confessed their sin,—the very sin of which they had been guilty:

¹⁹ Pray for your servants unto the Lord your God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.



Source: Biblia, 1751

So powerfully convincing were all the evidences presented that day, that the people were brought to recognize and confess their sin. They did this very specifically by saying:

1 Samuel 12

¹⁹ Pray for your servants unto the Lord your God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

Not Far Enough

Thus a great work was accomplished, *but it still did not go far enough*. It is a rule that confession only becomes effective if appropriate forsaking of the sin accompanies its confession. Having acknowledged the evil they had done in asking for a king, they ought then to have taken the step of renouncing this request and placing God back in the place which none could manage but He. This they did not do. They chose to retain the king they had requested.

Not one word is heard from Saul at this time by which we are led to believe that he did not nobly step forward and ask the people to dismiss him as king and give the rulership back to God. Here the king failed very sadly. We cannot read his heart and Inspiration does not reveal what was in it just then. What we do know is that both king and people, even though they recognized and confessed the sin, *chose to cling to it*. This makes the situation much worse. It is a dangerous and evil thing to choose a wrong course without realizing the implications of it, but it is far worse to cling to the sin when its unrighteousness does come to be understood.

An infallible guide to the wisdom or error of a decision is found in its outcome. Often, the full outworking is not seen in the lifetimes of those who make the choice, but enough is usually revealed to show the character of the decision.

It has been argued above that this event was a critical one in Israel's and Saul's history. Furthermore, a very wrong stand was taken at this opportune time. Therefore, we should expect to see a marked difference in the king's behavior as it was before and after this event.

So it proves to be. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find the king doing any good thing from this point of time on, whereas the record of his previous behavior was excellent. He had been humble, courageous, and self-sacrificing, but subsequently became despotic, corrupt, and cruel.

Immediately following the assembly at Gilgal, he disbanded the army instead of leading it in its enthusiastic state into active war against Israel's enemies. Then Jonathan struck a telling blow by overcoming the Philistine fortress of Gaba. This led the Philistines to assemble a powerful army in retaliation.

Saul was expressly directed by God through Samuel, to wait for him at Gilgal where sacrifices were to be offered before they went into battle. But Saul became impatient with the delay and presumed to take the office of priest. Because of this, Samuel separated himself from the wicked king. But for the faith of Jonathan and his armor bearer, a disastrous situation would have developed at this time. So Saul went from bad to worse until he died a suicide's death.

He had started so well as a child of God, born of His Spirit and transformed in heart and life. Then came the work of reformation, and in the early stages he made excellent progress. A crisis followed which called for a positive decision for the right to be made. He failed to make it and from that time on, declined in spiritual experience and power.

The Lesson for Us

The lesson is clear. Let none fail to catch its sacred import. During the reformation period in the lives of every Christian, there will come crises when a positive decision must be made to either continue or discontinue practices and stands which were not previously recognized as being erroneous. At such a time, Satan will exert subtle pressures to cloud the issue and induce the individual to make wrong decisions.

Great care must be taken to see that the principles involved in the problem are thoroughly and deeply understood. Much time must be spent in prayer with pleas for guidance and deliverance from human works ascending in faith and earnestness to the Lord. Humility, sincerity, and faith are treasures of great value in times like these.

When the decision is finally made, then watch the outworking of it very carefully. This will be a valuable confirmation of whether the right or wrong course was chosen.

The lives of every one of the men studied in this volume confirm the truth that being born again does not guarantee a person a place in heaven. Being born again is only the first wonderful work of salvation. It must be followed by a deep, thorough, and successful work of reformation. In this phase there will be long, hard battles to fight in overcoming wrong ideas and theories. Many mistakes will be made and unfortunately, though unnecessarily, sins will be committed.

Provided, however, a person is careful to cope with these by availing himself of the provisions God has supplied, victory at last will be assured. But if wrong decisions are taken in the face of great and clear light, then the soul is in terrible danger. Let none be like Israel and Saul, but rather, like those who, having committed errors, made sure work of repentance and already are, or will be, in the kingdom above.



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