

Study 1

Healthy Self-Distrust

Today we want to look at this theme, which will be at least the beginning of the camp meeting, and we call it “Healthy Self-Distrust.”

Healthy Self-Distrust

**“The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust.”
The Desire of Ages, 249.4**

The reason we call it “healthy” is because, as you know, almost every term has two meanings. It can be looked at from one side and the other. Self-distrust is something that can lead a person to utter inactivity, to utter burying himself, even to the point of killing himself. But a healthy self-distrust is exactly what we need according to God’s word.

Let us read a statement in connection with this, which we find in *The Desire of Ages*. This quotation comes from the chapter where Peter was commanded to throw out his net. At first he did not want to. Yes, he obeyed his Master, but he was hesitant, he said, “Why should I throw out my net now in the daytime, when I didn’t catch anything all night? At night is the time to catch fish.” But he did it, in obedience to Christ, and his net was absolutely full. Not only his, but also that of his brother Andrew, and James and John. They all needed to help, and the ship almost sank. In this he recognized the almighty power of Jesus, and he was now full of self-distrust, whereas before he was full of self-trust. In this connection it says, “the first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust,” *The Desire of Ages*, 249.4.

The purpose for which we are here at this camp meeting is that we want to be a blessing to the churches we come from. We want to share with them what we have learned in the school of Jesus. We want to encourage them to fight this last battle together with us. However, we have no chance of accomplishing this unless we learn the first lesson: “The first thing to be learned by all who would

become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust.” It’s very interesting that this is the first lesson. It seems to me that this is almost the last lesson that we are learning here. We do not know exactly why, but it’s a lesson we have not yet fully learned. I want to give a few examples of why this is so important for us. We have certain words that we like to use, for example, “I have faith,” and “I have the victory.” When we say this and then we fall again, what will we say then? Another example is that we say, “I don’t need a physician anymore because I have faith, I have God as my doctor.” That is fine and good. However, very often such statements are connected with a lack of self-distrust. That is because we have not learned the first lesson, the lesson of self-distrust. So what is the lesson of self-distrust? Where does self-distrust come from and what it is really? We need to understand it, so we shall dwell on it in this study and in the coming studies.

What is Healthy Self-Distrust?

- A realization of my dependence
- A true judgment of myself
- I see myself as God sees me
- Honesty
- Freedom from
 - Self-confidence
 - Self-condemnation
 - Presumption

What is healthy self-distrust? I will give a brief overview and then we will go into more detail. First of all, it is a realization of my dependence. When I say this, I’m fully aware of Jesus who expressed His dependence with the words, “I can do nothing of Myself,” *John* 5:19. He showed that He was absolutely dependent on His Father. “I can do nothing of Myself.” So a realization of my dependence is the first. The second is a true judgment of myself. By judgment we mean an assessment. As I understand, in relation to people we can call this judgment. Can I really see myself as God sees me? The next is honesty. By honesty we mean honesty toward others, and honesty toward myself. For example, if we still lack in faith, would we like to show this to others? No, to them we give the impression that we have a lot of faith. Likewise, if we do not have means, do we like to show this to others? No, we give the impression as though we have means. So, self-distrust is honesty toward others, and honesty toward myself. We define self-distrust as freedom from self-confidence and also freedom from self-condemnation. You may wonder a little bit what this has to do with a healthy self-distrust; it is very important, and we will look into it further. Finally, it is freedom from presumption. These are very important points in a healthy self-distrust.

It would be good if you write these points down for yourselves, because we will refer to them now step by step. First, a realization of my dependence; second, a true judgment of myself; third, I see myself as God sees me; and then, honesty toward others and toward myself; and freedom from self-confidence, from self-condemnation and from presumption.

A Realization of my Dependence

A Realization of my Dependence

- “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” *John 15:5* (See *Our High Calling*, 146)
- “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” *Luke 10:20* (See *The Desire of Ages*, 493.3)

Let us begin with the first point, a realization of my dependence. There is definitely a statement in the life of Jesus (which I referred to before) in *John 5:19*, where He says, “I can do nothing of myself.” But He says the same thing about us. He says “you can do nothing without me.” We can read this in *John 15*. The same dependence that He had on His Father He expects us to have on Him. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing,” *John 15:5*. Let’s compare this with what Jesus said, in *John 5:19*: “Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” Now, that does not mean that it was not possible for the Son to do anything else. He had the freedom and also the possibility to make His own plans, to go His own ways, and to work by His own power. However, He chose not to.

When it says here that He can do nothing, He really means it this way, “I cannot do it, and at the same time be the Son of God. If I am the Son of God, then I can do nothing except what I see My Father do.” Exactly the same thing is said about the disciples. “If you are my disciples, then you stand in the same relationship toward me.” Let’s begin in verse 1. “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in

the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing,” *John* 15:1-5. Nothing—without Me you can do nothing. I wonder in what way we really realize this and recognize it. I would like to read a statement from the book *Our High Calling* where this verse is first quoted, and then these words are expressed by the writer: “We are finite but a wonderful arrangement has been made that we may have close connection with the Infinite.”

“We are finite, but a wonderful arrangement has been made that we may have close connection with the Infinite.... Finite beings at their best can do but little, but Christ working through humanity may accomplish wonderful results.

It is a painful thought to me that I can do so little. The limited sphere of human capabilities leads me to feel indeed the words of Christ, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Many are endowed with superior talents and do not use them, because they have no living connection with God.... My own scanty knowledge and feeble energies drive me to Jesus, and the language of my heart is, “Oh God, I can do nothing. I hang my helpless soul on Thee, Jesus Christ my Saviour. Put Thy grace into my heart. Attract my mind from my weakness to Thy almighty strength, from my ignorance to Thy eternal wisdom, from my frailty to Thy enduring might. Give me correct views of the great plan of redemption. Let me see and understand what Christ is to me, and that my heart, soul, mind, and strength are bought with a price. Christ has imparted to me that I may impart to others. Lift up my soul; strengthen and enlighten my mind that I may comprehend more clearly the character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, that I may know that it is my privilege to be a partaker of the divine nature,” *Our High Calling*, 146.2,3.

What I found strange at first was this statement: “Many are endowed with superior talents and do not use them.” If we are dependent upon somebody else, then we don’t need special powers, do we? That is how we normally think. You see, we need special powers only when we act independently, but if we are totally dependent upon somebody else, for what do we need special powers or special talents? The connection here is interesting, “Many are endowed with superior talents and do not use them because they have no living connection with God.” This statement shows us something. God has given us special talents, special powers. Now we conclude that He has given us these things so that we can act independently of Him. Automatically we conclude this. However, this is not the purpose for which He has given us talents and powers. For what purpose has He given them to us? So that we will act in dependence on Him and use these talents and powers in dependence on Him.

In other words, let us first of all realize that our talents and powers are from Him, and secondly that they are to be employed as He directs. Thirdly, we must realize that even though we have received talents and powers in the beginning, we need a constant flow of life to keep these talents and powers alive. When we do not connect these talents and powers with Him we are like a battery that runs out after a while. It is charged in the beginning, we have received something, but it runs out. However if we are connected with Him it’s like a battery that is charged again and again. Furthermore, if we use our talents and powers apart from Him we waste them because we use them in the wrong direction. We must use them as He directs. That’s the only way they can be efficiently used, even though we may not see it properly. So, can you see that this statement is very appropriate? Yes, we need talents and powers but we need to still realize that with all these talents and powers we are dependent on Him.

Let us turn to another statement, which is a very interesting Word. You know that Jesus sent out the twelve disciples and later He also sent out seventy disciples to preach the Gospel everywhere around. They went out alone, two by two, without Jesus for the first time. So far they had just been following Jesus and working together with Him, but now they stood alone. When they came back they said, “Oh Master, it works. The power You gave us is tremendous. You know, sick were healed and even the devils were cast out. That is exciting.” However, Jesus dampened their excitement. He quieted it, telling them to be careful: “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but

rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven,” *Luke* 10:20. In other words, what Jesus says is, “You are in danger of self-confidence. Success will always lead you to be too confident in yourself. You must realize your dependence; you must realize that only because your names are written in the books of heaven can you do this job. As soon as you lose sight of this you will fail.” He gave them this warning at the very moment that they were so excited and rejoicing. How much more is it necessary for us, then, to really realize that when we rejoice in something it should be because we have a connection with God and not because we are so strong in ourselves.

Let us turn to *Jeremiah* 9:23-24 for a moment, which confirms this fact.

“Thus says the Lord:

‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,’”

When we realize how our wisdom really helped us, we are warned:

“‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

Let not the mighty man glory in his might,

Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

But let him who glories glory in this,

That he understands and knows Me,

That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these I delight,’ says the Lord.”

Can you see that this is the Old Testament parallel to *Luke* 10:20? Jesus said “But glory not in this, that the devils are subject to you, but rather glory that your name is written in the book of heaven.” “Let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows that I am the Lord.” Let him glory that he understands his dependence on Me. That is the thought.

Now let us turn to *The Desire of Ages*, where we have a very interesting commentary on these words. First of all the text is quoted, “‘Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.’ Rejoice not in the possession of power, lest you lose sight of your dependence upon God. Be careful lest self-sufficiency come in, and you work in your own strength, rather than in the spirit and strength of your Master. Self is ever ready to take the credit if any measure of success attends the work,” *The Desire of Ages*, 493.3. Do we believe that? “It is the self of my brother that is ever ready to take credit, but not myself, because I’m humble and I have myself under control.” Is this how we think? Let’s not think like this. Let’s see self as “I.” It’s me. “Self is ever ready to take the credit if any measure of success attends the work.” When we read this we should fear success, honestly.

“Self is flattered and exalted, and the impression is not made upon other minds that God is all and in all. The apostle Paul says, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:10. When we have a realization of our weakness, we learn to depend upon a power not inherent. Nothing can take so strong a hold on the heart as the abiding sense of our responsibility to God. Nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ. We are to come in touch with God, then we shall be imbued with His Holy Spirit, that enables us to come in touch with our fellow men. Then rejoice that through Christ you have become connected with God, members of the heavenly family. While you look higher than yourself, you will have a continual sense of the weakness of humanity. The less you cherish self, the more distinct and full will be your comprehension of the excellence of your Saviour. The more closely you connect yourself with the source of light and power, the greater light will be shed upon you, and the greater power will be yours to work for God. Rejoice that you are one with God, one with Christ, and with the whole family of heaven,” *The Desire of Ages*, 493.3.

When I had just recently acquired my driver’s license, somebody told me, “I will never ride with someone who has never had an accident.” I said, “What?” “Yes, because he who has never had an accident does not realize how dangerous driving is! You know, he is always in danger of going a little

bit too far in driving too fast, or not keeping proper distance or whatever; but he who has once had a bad accident, he knows. He will be careful.” Well, I don’t know if this is entirely the case in car driving because some never learn, but others learn. It is often true, once we have had a bad accident, we are more careful. Isn’t it so? However, when we have been forgiven by Christ, when we have fallen and truly been forgiven, and we have a sense of being forgiven and work in that attitude, Sister White says nothing has such a power to help us to do the right thing. Let’s read this again, “Nothing can take so strong a hold on the heart as the abiding sense of our responsibility to God. Nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ.” Only those who are aware that they are forgiven can do a work for others. When we come to others without that awareness, we cannot help them. Impossible! Why? Because we don’t realize our dependence on Christ. That is the point. In other words, there is only one way to work, and that is to be constantly aware of our weaknesses.

Self-distrust is the first lesson that we need to learn. “We are to come in touch with God, then we shall be imbued with His Holy Spirit, that enables us to come in touch with our fellow men. Then rejoice that through Christ you have become connected with God, members of the heavenly family. While you look higher than yourself, you will have a continual sense of the weakness of humanity. The less you cherish self, the more distinct and full will be your comprehension of the excellence of your Saviour,” *The Desire of Ages*, 493.3. So we see that recognizing our utter dependence on God is the first definition of self-distrust, which is the first lesson that we need to learn when we want to be workers.

Self-Judgment

Self-Judgment – False and True

False

- “I am rich ...”
- “I have need of nothing ...”
- My own judgment of myself

True

- “I am wretched, miserable, poor ...”
- “I am blind and naked ...”
(*Revelation* 3:17)
- God’s judgment of myself
(*1 Corinthians* 4:3-5)

Now we come to the second point: Self-Judgment. Self-distrust is having a proper self-judgment. We want to show that there is a true and a false self-judgment. What is the false, and what is the true?

Let's make a very brief list. A false self-judgment would say, "I am rich," where the true self-judgment will say, "I am wretched, miserable, poor." The false self-judgment says, "I'm in need of nothing." The true self-judgment says, "I am blind and naked." This is made very clear in *Revelation* 3:14-16, in the message to Laodicea. Let's read the context. "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.'"

Why are you lukewarm? What is the reason for this? "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked," *Revelation* 3:17. This is a very, very bad misjudgment of myself. Now, let ask ourselves the question, "What can we do?" I mean, here somebody comes and tells us, "You are poor, blind and naked." But we don't see it. What can we do? It's like somebody tells me that it is raining outside and I say, "No, the sun's shining," but he says, "But it's raining." What can I do? I see only sunshine. Maybe look on the other side of the house, maybe it really is raining over there, that is possible, but here I see sunshine.

The point is that we have to rely on the Word of God. We have to rely on it more than on our own judgment. Therefore the false judgment is my own judgment of myself, and the true judgment is how God judges me. True self-judgment is when I see myself as God tells me. So when we talk about an awareness of our own weakness, when we talk about a healthy self-distrust, this can come about only by consulting the word of God and thereby seeing myself in the light that God sees me. Then—I am absolutely sure, there is no question about this—I will have no reason for self-glorification, whatsoever. There is no room left for that.

Another aspect of true self-judgment in self-distrust is also that we do not defend ourselves, even when we are unjustly accused of something. Let's suppose somebody says, "You are haughty, you are unreliable, you are doing this wrong and that wrong," and we are only doing our best, we are conscientiously trying to do our best. What do we tend to do then? We immediately defend ourselves. We explain ourselves and declare our good intentions.

However, when we do this we begin to place an estimate upon ourselves. Immediately, once we begin the path of self-justification, we begin the path of judgment of ourselves and that is a wrong path. We cannot judge ourselves. Paul made this very clear when he was judged by others. They said, "Paul, you are doing this wrong and that wrong." How did Paul react to these matters? Let's turn to *1 Corinthians* 4:3-5: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God."

The only judgment that Paul gave of himself was this: "I am the least of all the apostles, and I am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the Lord," *1 Corinthians* 15:9. That was the only judgment he gave upon himself. All the rest he left to God. If that is our attitude, then we realize our dependence upon God, and so Paul did. Therefore, the false self-judgment is the judgment we make of ourselves.

Honesty – What needs to Change?

Deception of Others

- Intention to deceive by
 - Word: overstatement
 - Word: hint or insinuation calculated to convey erroneous or exaggerated impressions
 - Glance of the eye
 - Motion
 - Expression of countenance
 - Appearance: status symbols

Self-deception

- Ignorance of God's warnings
- Reading only those words that fit the inclination
- Closing the eyes to everything that goes against inclination

The next question we want to ask is “What is honesty?” What needs to change in our lives so that honesty is truly there? Where are we dishonest? These are the questions we want and need to ask. First of all we deceive others. The Bible says, “You shall not bear false witness,” *Exodus* 20:16. But this false witness can be given even to ourselves. There is a self-deception that is practiced so long that we really believe what we have deceived ourselves to believe. What is deception of others?

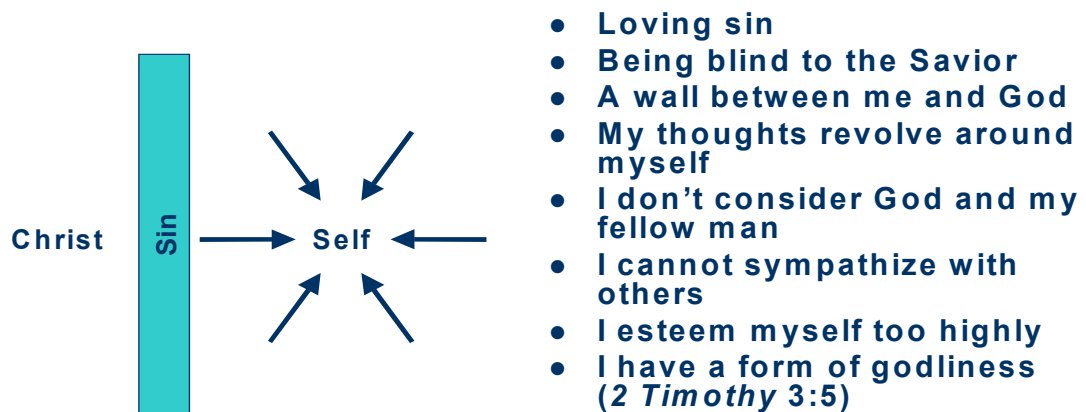
Deception always goes along with an intention to deceive. For example, it can be done by words, when we make over-statements. That means, we present the thing a little bit exaggerated, so that the others shall think better of a situation than it really is. It means that we give a hint or an insinuation calculated to convey erroneous or exaggerated impressions. It means that maybe only a “glance of the eye” could deceive. I don’t say that our every look is deception, but if we want to lead somebody in a wrong track, it can be done even with a glance of the eye. It can be done by a motion. If I ask you, for example, “Have you removed this chair?” and you shake your head, I suppose you mean no. Maybe that’s what you calculated to make me think. That is deception already. But it can also be the expression of the countenance.

In another camp meeting a few years ago we have studied what lying is. We have seen that it is half-truth, exaggeration, and so forth. All this comes back again here. It is to give a certain appearance of what we are not. For example, I’m poor, miserable, wretched, and blind but I give the appearance to others as though I am rich. We are not really many members, but we give the appearance that we are many members. Let’s suppose we don’t have much money, but we give the appearance that we have much money by buying an expensive car. We do it so others shall think better of us, and so forth. We could use many examples here, of the so-called status symbols. They are used to deceive others, to make them think something that is not really there. How often is that practiced in the world? Think about this, in what way we are a part of this machinery?

Dishonesty is also self-deception, ignorance of God's warnings. It's reading only those words that fit the inclination and closing our eyes toward everything that goes against our inclination. I simply don't listen anymore, I go out, or whatever. I haven't heard it. That is self-deception. What we need in order to really have true self-distrust is honesty. We cannot say that we have a wonderful victory when we don't. We cannot say that we have great faith when we don't. We cannot say that we have the Latter Rain when we don't have it. We must learn to be honest in order to really understand how weak and how dependent we are. We cannot behave as though we did nothing wrong when we were sinners. Jesus has forgiven us and we must live in the consciousness of our own weaknesses. We can fall into the same sins again, unless we are constantly on guard. This requires honesty.

Self-Confidence

What is Self-Confidence?



The next question we want to ask is “What is self-confidence, then?” We have defined self-distrust as the absence of self-confidence, so what is self-confidence? First of all, self-confidence means that we love sin. Yes! Self-confidence means to love sin, in the end. It means that we are blind towards the Saviour. There is a barrier between Him and us, and that is sin. We don't see Him. It means, as we have indicated here in this diagram, a wall between me and God. It means that my thoughts turn around myself, whether positive or negative, it doesn't matter, they turn around myself. It means that I don't see God and my fellow man; I just see myself. It means that I cannot sympathize with others, because I see only myself. It means finally that I esteem myself too highly. We could say that I judge myself too highly. Finally, it means to have a form of godliness. Let us turn to *2Timothy 3* to see how it is expressed in that context.

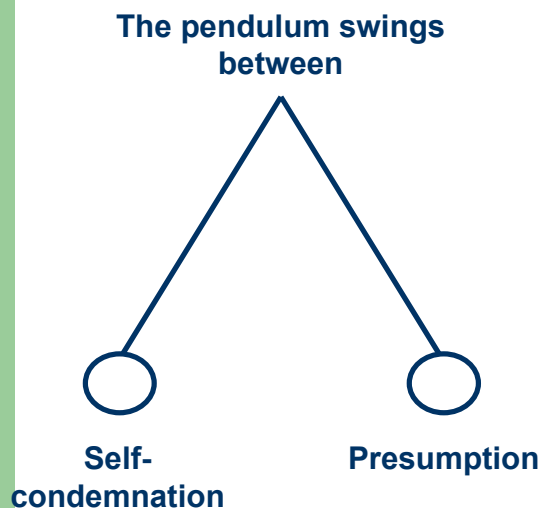
“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters,” that is, not people who have self-distrust. I mean, self-distrust is something that you don't find in the world today, surely not. “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” *2Timothy 3:1-5*.

Now, to deny the power of godliness does not mean that we say we don't have it, it means that we actually don't have it. You see, whereas we say, "We have it," we say we have it but we don't have it. That is the haughtiness described here. "Having the form of godliness, but denying its power. From such people turn away!" All of this is self-confidence, and as we have seen from *2Timothy* 3, I think is very, very clear that we are living in a world that is literally steeped in self-confidence. Self-distrust is not a popular word today. For that reason we are going against the flow when we really put this into practise.

How Self-Confidence Covers Itself

Now we need to see how self-confidence covers itself.

How Self-Confidence Covers Itself (1)



Instead of giving up sin which leads man into perdition, the sinner condemns himself and tries to deliver himself by his own works.

Examples: Israel at Kadesh, Cain, Judas

What we have here is a pendulum, and because a pendulum is moving, we have it in double form. That's a string here, and that's a stone, or whatever. You know how it goes from one side to the other. The pendulum is swinging between two extremes. One is self-condemnation and the other, presumption. These are the two statuses, which can sound very much self-distrustful. Presumption not so much, but self-condemnation sounds as if it was self-distrust, but it is not, in reality. It is self-confidence. Even self-condemnation is self-confidence. In what way? Well, instead of giving up sin, which leads man into perdition, he rather condemns himself and tries to deliver himself by his own works. Behind self-condemnation, there is quite a lot of self-justification or righteousness by works.

Very often people who have this turn to the other extreme soon afterwards, and that is presumption. The people of Israel at Kadesh are an example. At first they said, "We cannot take this city, we cannot take this country. The Canaanites are too hard for us to conquer," and so forth. Then God said, "Okay, then you go back. You are full of self-distrust, right?" But that was really distrust in God. In the next moment they said, "We can, we can, and we have the faith," but it was nothing but

presumption. Cain is another example; Judas is another example, who wavered between self-condemnation and presumption. In the end, everything was based on righteousness by works. We can't save ourselves. Not by self-condemnation either, that is not the point that we are studying here. What we are studying here is a healthy self-distrust, which really clings to the Saviour.

Next time, we want to look at another way that self-confidence covers itself, and maybe you can think about yourself, to find more ways in which self-confidence covers itself. We must know our enemy in order to be able to properly fight the sin in God's strength. We have to overcome the self-confidence, and for that reason Jesus shows us what self-confidence really is.

Study 2

Welcome to study number two of our International Camp Meeting of the year 2004. In our first study we studied self-distrust, and maybe you still remember the important key quotation on which we based the study. Maybe we will learn it by heart, as time goes on during this camp meeting. One of the first lessons, the first thing to be learned as a worker for Christ is the lesson of self-distrust. We have seen that self-distrust is the absence of self-confidence. However, self-confidence covers itself. It often does not look like self-confidence. When a person condemns himself, we don't think of him as a person who is self-confident, but this is one of the many coverings. The real background is that instead of giving up sin which leads us to ruin, we would rather condemn ourselves and in this way try to deliver ourselves from the pit by our own works. This, as we mentioned before, is also another form of self-pity, really. Very often the pendulum swings between self-condemnation and presumption, and this is a revelation of the fact that self-confidence is really at work here.

“Faith” Covers Self-Confidence

How Self-Confidence Covers Itself (2)

Self-confidence covers
itself as faith



“Faith”

In order to prove my “faith” to myself and others, I have a form of godliness.

Examples:

Luke 20:47

Colossians 2:23

2 Timothy 3:5

There is another cover which is very often found and frequently used, and that is the cover of so called “faith.” Maybe we can call it presumption again, but it does not look like presumption at all because all the right things are said. You know, I know exactly what must be said in a given situation. I say all the right things. When you ask a person, he says all the right things but he never does them. This often looks like faith, but it just covers up a lot of self-confidence. In order to prove my faith before myself and others, I have a show of godliness.

A very important example of this is the Pharisees in the time of Christ. Remember how they prayed long and used many words, and for what purpose? To give the impression to others that they were men of very large faith, when in fact they were not. Let us read these texts in *Luke 20:47*, *Colossians 2:23* and *2 Timothy 3:5* (which we read already). Let's turn to *Luke 20*, from verse 45. This is how

Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, “Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, ‘Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation,’” *Luke 20:45-47*. For a pretense they make long prayers. *Colossians 2:20-23* expresses this problem: “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh,” *Colossians 2:20-23*. We want to really stress the fact that this is not self-distrust. Even though it looks like the Pharisees may be very humble in this work, it is not self-distrust. Real self-distrust is something else altogether.

How Self-Confidence Shows Itself

How Self-Confidence Shows Itself?

- “I do not need a doctor.”
- “I am not getting sick.”
- “I will prove it to them.”
- “They have given me compliments.”
- “I have found the professionals.”
- “I do not need help. I’ll do it myself.”
- “The others are bad. I am good.”
- “I will take care of that myself.”
- Self-defense

Let us then ask ourselves the question, how does self-confidence show itself? We want to look at some expressions that say this. We want to get a handle on it, so to speak, so that we can recognize it. That’s our effort here. I want to just use some expressions that show when self-confidence is present. You may want to add other things. Let’s read these words now.

“I do not need a doctor, because I have faith.” “I’m not getting sick, because I have faith.” “I will prove it to them.” You see, when we have a discussion, self-confidence says, “I will prove it to them.” “They have given me compliments.” You see, if I relate a story and I tell how many compliments I got, that shows that there is self-confidence. Too much self is there. “I have found the professionals.” You know, when we are looking around for the right people and we have found them: “I found the very people that will do the job.” “I do not need help. I will do it myself.” “The others are bad, I’m good.” When my relating of events always ends like this, “the others are bad and I am good,” that shows there is self-confidence, too much self-confidence. “I will take care of that myself.” We can also say it like this, “I will see to it that I handle the situation.” Any self-defense also shows that there

is wrong self-confidence because I have to defend something. I'm not realizing my dependence on God.

How Self-Distrust Shows Itself

How Self-Distrust Shows Itself?

- “I don’t know everything. I need help from a doctor.”
- “I am sick. I need help and healing.”
- “Did I give the right testimony?”
- “Did the others praise God after I helped them?”
- “The Lord gave others wisdom for me.”
- “I need help because I tend to make mistakes.”
- “I am not better than the heathen.”
- “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”
(*James 4:15*)

If this is what self-confidence looks like, what does self-distrust look like then, in contrast? Let’s just use some expressions again: “I don’t know everything, I need help from a doctor.” “I’m sick, I need help and healing.” It may be spiritual or physical. When I look back to an event where I spoke of my faith, I ask myself, “Did I give the right testimony?”

“Did the others praise God after I helped them, or did they praise me?” “The Lord gave wisdom for others to me.” “I need help because I tend to make mistakes.” “I’m not better than the heathens.” “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that,” *James 4:15*. Not “I will see to it that this is done,” but “If the Lord wills and we live, I will do this or that.” Do you know the statement in *James 4:15*? This statement really tells us to have self-distrust, to be careful, because we cannot add one minute to our lives. You cannot make sure that this and that happens. Everything that you do, do it as though this was your last moment. Do it with thoroughness and conscientious dependence on God. This is a little indication, but not a conclusive evidence, that there is self-distrust. Likewise, the other is not necessarily always a strong evidence that there is self-confidence. However, when we look at our own expressions and our own feelings, let’s look for these things and see what is in our hearts, self-distrust or self-confidence? We need to recognize the enemy. For that reason we are looking at these expressions a little bit.

Jeremiah 9:23, 24

- “Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches. But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the Lord.”

Now let us look at the text in *Jeremiah 9:23-24* again, because that is an important text. *Jeremiah 9:23-24*:

“Thus says the Lord:

‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

Let not the mighty man glory in his might,

Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

But let him who glories glory in this,

That he understands and knows Me,

That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these I delight,’ says the Lord.”

Can you see that this text really summarizes the whole study? We may have received gifts of wisdom, we may have received might, we may have received glory, influence and whatever else, but the important point is that we understand God--that we understand what His will is, that the whole attention of the people is turned to Him, that it is Him that exercises “lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness on the earth. ‘In these I delight,’ says the Lord.”

Healthy Self-Distrust

- “The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust.”
The Desire of Ages, 249.4

In the next several sessions (I don’t know how long it will take us really, because these thoughts are developing as we are studying them here), we want to ask ourselves, how do we get this healthy self-distrust that we need so much as the first thing to be learned by all who become workers together with God. How do we get it? This will be our important question, since it is what we really need to study, understand and practise.

How do we get Self-Distrust? – The Tree of Knowledge (1)

The Lesson of the Lord

- “Stay away from the tree, because you are weak.”
- “Be on guard, because you are weak.”
- “Stay in communion with Me, because you are weak.”
- “Stay in fellowship with one another, because you are weak.”
- “You need the law for protection.”

The Great Deception

- “I have sufficient wisdom to discern evil.”
- “I have enough strength to withstand evil.”
- “Do not rely on God’s word, but on your own beauty.”
- “You will get wisdom which is more reliable than God’s wisdom.”
- “The law has been done away with.”

First of all let us begin in the beginning. How did God bring self-distrust to man? How did He bring it near to them? Even when man was created in his innocent state, in the Garden of Eden, already God had implanted the lesson of self-distrust. And it was found in the tree of knowledge. We can read this in *Genesis 2*, that is when God created the earth, He described the garden and He speaks of one tree in the garden which was the tree of knowledge. Where He says to man kind, in verse 16, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." *Genesis 2:16*. Now, there is a lot of information in this verse. This tree of knowledge was for one purpose there, and that is to show man his dependence on God and to really bring him very close to God and to bring man also close to one another. You may wonder why I say all these, how can I see these in a tree of knowledge?

Further information is given unto us in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* to which we want to turn now. It's in the chapter "The temptation and fall of man". And we turn here first of all to page 53. Before man was placed in the garden where God knew that Satan will be, he was thoroughly warned of that danger that brought so many angels to rebellion. "The angels (the good angels) warned them to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help. If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 53.2

What a strange statement for a sinless being. Imagine a person who is in full possession of himself, who is sinless, who is holy, and so forth, and you need to tell him that if he yields once, he will from there on be powerless and have no disposition to resist Satan. "The tree of knowledge had been made a test of their obedience and their love to God. The Lord had seen fit to lay upon them but one prohibition as to the use of all that was in the garden; but if they should disregard His will in this particular, they would incur the guilt of transgression. Satan was not to follow them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree. Should they attempt to investigate its nature, they would be exposed to his wiles. They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them and to be content with the instruction which He had seen fit to impart. In order to accomplish his work unperceived, Satan chose to employ as his medium the serpent" *Patriarchs and Prophets* 53.4

Now before we go on here, what were the lessons the angels gave them? How can we summarize all this? 'Stay away from the tree, because you are weak, they said. You are weak. Be on guard, because you are weak. Stay in communion with Me, because you are weak. Stay in fellowship with one another, because you are weak.' We did not actually read about the fellowship with one another, but as you go on. Let's turn to page 53, the last paragraph, now: "The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labour in the garden;" *Patriarchs and Prophets* 53.5. What? Beware of separating from her husband? 'You are weak. And because you are weak, you cannot separate from him. You have to stay near to him.' It seems almost, how shall I say, almost like mistrust or like as though God could not appreciate His creatures, that He gave them so many warnings and so much caution. But He gave it for good reason. And when we receive warnings and caution, we should not think for a moment that this is unnecessary or superfluous. We need every caution. This is the lesson that God gave them.

One more: 'You need the law as a protection, as a protector. The law is your protector. Keep close to it.' On the other hand, there was this great deception which we will now read about. I just mentioned it here. First, 'I have sufficient wisdom to discern evil. Second, I have enough strength to withstand evil. Third, I do not need to rely on God's word, because I rely on my own beauty.' In fact that is what the serpent said to Eve. - Do not rely in God's word, but on your own beauty. 'You get more wisdom

when you disobey, upon which you can rely more than on God.' And, the law is done away with. This is a popular teaching today in the world. This is the great deception of Satan. And all this comes out in the fall of man. So we have to decide whether we want to accept the lesson of the Lord or the great deception. Let us now read about this as we read it in *Patriarchs and Prophets* 53:5 going to page 54. "The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labour in the garden; with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she was alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. On perceiving that she was alone, she felt an apprehension of danger, but dismissed her fears, deciding that she had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and to withstand it. Unmindful of the angels' caution, she soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them. Now was the tempter's opportunity. As if he were able to discern the workings of her mind, he addressed her: "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Eve was surprised and startled as she thus seemed to hear the echo of her thoughts. But the serpent continued, in a musical voice, with subtle praise of her surpassing loveliness; and his words were not displeasing. Instead of fleeing from the spot she lingered wonderingly to hear a serpent speak." Was she aware of her weakness? What was lacking here? Self-distrust. Instead, she had self-confidence. It goes on to say: "Had she been addressed by a being like the angels, her fears would have been excited; but she had no thought that the fascinating serpent could become the medium of the fallen foe." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 53.5.

So we see very clearly this is the great deception. "I have sufficient wisdom to discern evil." "I have enough strength to withstand evil". This is a very clear expression of self-confidence and not of self-distrust. So what is the lesson then that we can learn out of that tree of knowledge?

How do we get Self-Distrust? – The Tree of Knowledge (2)

- The fall of Adam and Eve teaches us an important lesson about self-distrust.
- A further lesson was given through their nakedness. (See *Genesis* 3:7, 21)
- We learn how weak we really are in our fallen condition.
- Our only hope is Christ.

First of all, therefore teach us an important lesson in self-distrust. By looking upon them we see, we can definitely not rely on our own wisdom to discern evil. We cannot definitely rely on our own strength to withstand it. It really teaches us how weak we are. It teaches us how much we are

dependant on God's power. We are dependant on the law that protects us, we are dependant on Gospel Order, we are dependant on communion with Christ to not fall as Adam and Eve did. We are dependant every moment. If even they fall in their sinless state, how much more dependent are we today?

A further lesson was given through their nakedness. Let us turn to *Genesis 3*, and see what happened after they ate of the tree. Verse 6 and onwards. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." *Genesis 3:6*

It's very interesting; in that moment they realized that they were naked. How did they realize this? We are informed that they had a light garment around them which was now not there anymore, but there was more, their eyes were opened. In other words, there was a realization of a nakedness that goes beyond just absence of the light garment. They realize that something was very wrong. This statement "the eyes of them were opened" speaks of conscience speaking to our heart. And they knew that they were naked. So, what are we doing when we know that we are naked in order to deceive ourselves and to deceive others? Cover it. "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." Now you may say this is understandable, doesn't a person want to hide his sin, doesn't he want to not make public his weakness to others. That is understandable, very understandable. Nobody likes to show his nakedness in a spiritual sense definitely not. Even in the physical sense. And the physical is a picture of the spiritual. But what we need to realize is that there's a tremendous danger of being too concern about hiding our nakedness instead of doing God's will. In other words, when my main concern about going forward is to hide my nakedness, instead of getting rid of my sin, which is the cause for my nakedness, then there is something wrong.

How shall I describe it? In the past year, we have had many confessions, in several camp meetings, you recall this. And these confessions were very blessed and for the first time many believers realized that hiding sins is not the solution to a problem. But it has been looked upon like this a little bit. I will give more evidence of this later in a further study. Very often we have looked upon a solution to the problem as the hiding of a sin. And in fact we must admit that are even statements in the book "Sabbath Rest" which gives this impression. We have to correct these statements, we have to face a wrong concept that we had held in the past. It is not a solution to a problem when a sin is really hidden. A problem is solved only when the sin is really cleansed from our heart, but not when it is hidden. The reason why I say this is the very sin that is described in this book "Sabbath Rest" that was remained hidden for a while, did not remain hidden for long. It came to light afterwards. And eventually all our sins will come to light, if not in this earth, then in the judgment. There is not one sin that will remain secret. We must be very, very aware of this. To hide a sin is never a solution to any problem. The only solution is to get rid of that sin which causes our nakedness. But how often do we find refuge in hiding our sin, in trying to cover our nakedness? Now in verse 21, God showed that He could not acknowledge or recognize this hiding because we read the following in here: "Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them." *Genesis 3:21*

And thereby He showed that their coverings are worthless. They were not acknowledged by Him. They were not recognized. So as long as we hide our sins, ourselves and seek refuge in hiding, God cannot solve our problems. God's problems solving is not necessarily hiding, maybe that in one or the other case He will not make public a sin of a person, that may be so, I don't say that it is always wrong when sin stays in secret. There are many secret sins that have been committed which we have not knowledge, and we don't need to have knowledge of everything. It wouldn't be beneficial for us. But that is not what is justifying a person. That is not a solution to a problem. The solution to a problem is when God takes away the sin and instead gives us His covering which is His righteousness.

Now let us turn to further lessons. We learned how weak we really are in our fallen condition because the weakness of Adam and Eve is now our weakness. Their fall is became our fall. So finally we learned of the tree of knowledge that our only hope is in Christ. Now when we go on in looking to lessons, how we get self-distrust, and we obviously must get it from the word of God. Where else can we look for a source? Then we can see that God was very opened and direct about the weaknesses of our forefathers, of the patriarchs. When we think of the weaknesses of Abraham, how he fell into sin when he was lying to Abimelech, to the Egyptian king, when he took Hagar, and so forth, we see how weak man is. This man was so strong that he could even sacrifice his own son, this man was weak. And if he was so weak, how much weaker are we? How little can we rely on our own strength?

The next lesson, that we really want to look at, is the lesson of the sacrificial system, which is a very important lesson. Let's turn to *Patriarchs and Prophets* 68.01, "The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death. To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast." So what is the great lesson of the sacrificial system? Let's put it down step by step:

How do we get Self-Distrust? – The Lesson of the Sacrificial System

(*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 68.1)

- A perpetual reminder of our sin (weakness)
- A penitential acknowledgment of our sin (weakness)
- A confession of faith in the promised Redeemer
- An impression upon the fallen (weak) race that sin causes death
- A realization of the infinite goodness of God



A revelation of our weakness and His strength

It's a perpetual reminder of our sin, in other words of our weakness. Because sin is not only what we do but what we are. The sacrificial system is a perpetual reminder of our weakness. The sacrificial system is a penitential acknowledgment of our weakness. The sacrificial system is a confession of our faith in the promise redeemed. So, is not good only to see our weakness, but we must see also the strength of our Redeemer, other wise we would give up hope. The sacrificial system is to impress upon the fallen that is the weak race that sin causes death. And, the sacrificial system gives a vision of the infinite goodness of God. This we want to read as we go on. "To Adam, the offering of the first

sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate. And he marvelled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of its utter desolation." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 68.1 what we see here, is a very, very strong lesson of self-distrust. Can you see this too? It couldn't be given stronger. God really wanted to help us in Adam. And it is important that we constantly remind ourselves of that sacrifice, which is Christ. "Nothing goes so deep, to the motives of man, than the knowledge of sins forgiven and the love of Christ." As we have read before *The Desire of Ages* 493, maybe you remember this. So, the sacrificial system was to give a vision of the infinite goodness of God. Let very briefly turn to *The Desire of Ages* 493.01, "Nothing can take so strong a hold on the heart as the abiding sense of our responsibility to God. Nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ. We are to come in touch with God, and then we shall be imbued with His Holy Spirit, that enables us to come in touch with our fellow men. "

So, what gives the deepest motives of conduct? A sense of the pardoning love of Christ. And this is what sacrificial system was to teach man right from the beginning. So we can see that right from the beginning of man's fall, the lesson of self-distrust was given, in a very powerful way. A revelation of our weakness and of His strength. There's another system that God gave to mankind, to teach them dependence on Him, to teach them how weak we are. And that system is the system of tithes and offerings. It shows that God is the source of every blessing. It shows then that we are dependent receivers. What God require of them is the temple shekel, the sin and thanks offerings and the first fruit. We really have to look at this. We don't have the time to do this all here. Tomorrow we will continue this entire important subject. But I want to stress the fact that these systems had one purpose only. It was never to enrich God, because to Him belongs everything. He owns everything. I mean, He could create means from business, from anything He likes. But He required His people to give these things. And for what purpose? To teach a lesson of self-distrust. Now, when we withhold tithes, first fruits, or any other gift, then we prevent the lesson of self-distrust. And as a result we will become self confident. And this means that we will fall, that we will leave God's way, for sure.

Let us turn now to the 50th chapter in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Page 525, because here we find this chapter on tithes and offerings. "In the Hebrew economy one tenth of the income of the people was set apart to support the public worship of God. Thus Moses declared to Israel: "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock...the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." *Leviticus* 27:30, 32. But the tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His and this claim was recognized and honored. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the highest God. *Genesis* 14:20. Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and a wanderer, promised the Lord, "Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." *Genesis* 28:22. As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, the law of tithing was reaffirmed as one of the divinely ordained statutes upon obedience to which their prosperity depended." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 525.2.

Why did their prosperity depend on tithes and offerings? Simply because that was the lesson God gave them to show them their need of self-distrust and their dependence on Him. "The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth--that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man's gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." *Acts* 17:25. The Lord declares, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." *Psalms* 50:10. "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine." *Haggai* 2:8. And it is God who gives men power to get wealth. *Deuteronomy* 8:18. As an

acknowledgment that all things came from Him, the Lord directed that a portion of His bounty should be returned to Him in gifts and offerings to sustain His worship." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 525.4
Here we have to close. Mean while, we can meditate about this lesson that God gave mankind and we can meditate what other lessons God gave to teach us this important, first lesson, if we want to be a worker with God, and is self-distrust. Amen.

Study 3

So we want to go back to the question, how do we learn the lesson of self-distrust? Or how do we get healthy self-distrust? I left the word healthy away because it's a bit long, and the last item that we studied or the last lesson I should say, that God gave to His people in order to teach them this important characteristic is the lesson of the sacrificial system. We saw how this system was given to Adam. How it was a perpetual reminder of our weakness, a perpetual acknowledgment of our weakness, a confession of faith in the promised Redeemer, an impress upon the fallen or weak race that sin causes death and a vision of the infinite goodness of God. We have seen that both elements are very important and necessary in order to have this healthy self-distrust, the one is to see the weakness of humanity and the other element is to see the goodness of God and His power. Both elements will be studied here as we go on. I was reminded of the fact that Sister White saw all these characters in vision. She saw Adam and Eve, she saw their fall, she also saw the fall of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob. She had it very clearly before her; she saw the good characteristics of these people but after seeing all this how much trust would she have in the human strength? What do you think? Nothing, there would be no trust left. I will read with you a statement that will make this point very clear. It's from *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* Page 387.

“That which I have seen of eternal things, and that which I have seen of the weakness of humanity, has deeply impressed my mind and influenced my lifework. I see nothing wherein man should be praised or glorified. I see no reason why the opinions of worldly-wise men and so-called great men should be trusted in and exalted. How can those who are destitute of divine enlightenment have correct ideas of God's plans and ways? They either deny Him altogether and ignore His existence, or they circumscribe His power by their own finite conceptions. Let us choose to be taught by Him who created the heavens and the earth, by Him who set the stars in their order in the firmament and appointed the sun and the moon to do their work.”

I was very impressed by this statement, ‘That which I have seen of eternal things, and that which I have seen of the weakness of humanity’. Sister White is not just talking here as an elderly lady who has a lot of experience. She is talking as the servant of God, who had the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. She has seen these things in a very special way and what she had seen has deeply impressed her mind and influenced her life work. Now I wonder if we can get such a vision too because we need it really. We need to be influenced in the same manner so that our life work can be as deep, as thorough as that of Sister White. We need to make an end of sin, bring in everlasting righteousness but how can we ever do this unless we have the same vision of number one: eternal things and number two the weakness of humanity. And the only hope that I can see is that we really apply the lessons God gives us in His word, which is the sacrificial system, and which are the other lessons that we shall learn today. When we see our own weakness or the weakness of our movement then we shall also see something of the weakness of humanity. But at the same time let us also look at the eternal things, to see the contrast between both because its not only necessary for healthy self-distrust to see the weakness of humanity, it is also necessary to see the eternal strength of Jehovah.

Yes, so let us look at the next lesson which we started last time, or yesterday evening. And that was the system of tithes and offerings. A very important lesson to be learned from that system. God gave us that system for good reason, He knows how quickly we tend to self-confidence, to self sufficiency and for that reason He gave us this blessing to keep away from self sufficiency. Now it is very important not only that we are faithful in our giving tithes and offerings but that we also do it with a right spirit. If, for example, we give our tithes and offerings in the spirit of the Pharisees, it wouldn't do us much good, but if we give it in the spirit of the widow who gave her two mites, it will really not fail to give us the lesson of self-distrust which God wants to give us. So let us turn again to chapter 50 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*

“In the Hebrew economy one tenth of the income of the people was set apart to support the public worship of God. Thus Moses declared to Israel: "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, . . . the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Leviticus 27:30, 32.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 525.1

“But the tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored”.

Now Sister White here talks especially of the tithe, but when we think of the system of tithes and offerings it goes back to the very beginning. The sacrifice of the first lamb was an offering already and you remember how they also brought the fruits as an offering to God. All this was closely connected, that is the sacrificial system and the system of tithes and offerings. It all was connected in this one lesson, we need to learn self-distrust.

“But the tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. *Genesis* 14:20. Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and a wanderer, promised the Lord, "Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." *Genesis* 28:22. As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, the law of tithing was reaffirmed as one of the divinely ordained statutes upon obedience to which their prosperity depended.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 525.2

Now we read the purpose of this system. “The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth--that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man's gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence. He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." *Acts* 17:25. The Lord declares, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." *Psalms* 50:10. "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine." *Haggai* 2:8. And it is God who gives men power to get wealth. *Deuteronomy* 8:18. As an acknowledgment that all things came from Him, the Lord directed that a portion of His bounty should be returned to Him in gifts and offerings to sustain His worship. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 525.4

Now we may say well we understand that all things come from God. Theoretically we probably know this very well, but if we really have this in our heart that everything comes from God, how will we act, how will we react. If for example we get an income, what will we do with this income? Well, lets suppose you get a new job, and this job gets you an income, lets take a high figure, 40,000 Euro, what will you do with it? Would you buy yourself a machine? Would you buy yourself a car? Would you buy yourself a projector? What are you doing? What are your thoughts? Where are your thoughts running, in what channel? Well I put away a tithe before I buy myself these things. Am I still recognizing Gods ownership? Am I seeing my dependence on Him? "The tithe . . . is the Lord's." Here the same form of expression is employed as in the law of the Sabbath. We come back to the Sabbath in a minute.

"The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." *Exodus* 20:10. God reserved to Himself a specified portion of man's time and of his means, and no man could, without guilt, appropriate either for his own interests. The tithe was to be exclusively devoted to the use of the Levites, the tribe that had been set apart for the service of the sanctuary. But this was by no means the limit of the contributions for religious purposes.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 525.5

You see, if you look at the tithe as a necessary duty that we have to do in order to give a certain acknowledge and nothing more, we have not understood the point. It is not just a portion we are to give to the Lord. He wants everything. He wants everything really put on the altar.

“The tabernacle, as afterward the temple, was erected wholly by freewill offerings; and to provide for necessary repairs and other expenses, Moses directed that as often as the people were numbered, each should contribute a half shekel for "the service of the tabernacle." In the time of Nehemiah a contribution was made yearly for this purpose. See *Exodus* 30:12-16; *2 Kings* 12:4, 5; *2 Chronicles* 24:4-13; *Nehemiah* 10:32, 33. From time to time sin offerings and thank offerings were brought to God. These were presented in great numbers at the annual feasts. And the most liberal provision was made for the poor.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 526.1

So we have here a few principles and offerings which we have named, that is the tithe, the temple shekel, the sin and the thank offerings and now comes the first fruit. “Even before the tithe could be reserved there had been an acknowledgment of the claims of God”. Now that is interesting because we have several offerings here and now we come to a very essential offering and that is the first fruit.

“Even before the tithe could be reserved there had been an acknowledgment of the claims of God. The first that ripened of every product of the land was consecrated to Him. The first of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the grain when the wheat was threshed, the first of the oil and the wine, was set apart for God. So also were the first-born of all animals; and a redemption price was paid for the first-born son. The first fruits were to be presented before the Lord at the sanctuary, and were then devoted to the use of the priests.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 526.2

Now it seems to be little bit much to give Him all the first fruit and you know, people who tend to legalism, they then ask the question well the first fruit one of the years income, of the months income, of the weeks income, of the days income. That is not the question here. The question here is what spirit do I have?

When Israel, for example, was commanded to conquer Canaan, the first the city that they conquered was Jericho and the whole gain they got in Jericho belonged to God. Everything, not one little bit belonged to the people. But you could say that they were starved from their wilderness wanderings, they were destitute and they had very little. So they were really coming out of a situation where they were deprived of many things and now for the first time there was an opportunity to really feast of the country. They had this city in their possession, and why should they not be allowed to take something, after such a long time of drought. No, everything belonged to the Lord at this moment, everything.

Now, why did the Lord require this from them? Not because He was arbitrary, not because He wanted to hurt them, not because He wanted to intentionally keep them poor. He knew very well that if they would give that offering in the right spirit, it would show them their dependence. Well, they did give the offering, except one Achan. But did they give it in the right spirit? The answer is no because very soon afterwards after the conquering of Jericho they did not feel their dependence on God any more. They acted independent. They made their own plans; they behaved as though conquering the country was to be done without God. How quickly a reversal from one moment to the other. And that shows very clearly that we are in the same danger. If we would get the same vision of the weakness of humanity that Sister White got, we would be very swift and very quick to follow the Lord’s lessons in the tithes and offerings. The first fruits were to be presented before the Lord even before the tithe could be separated. In other words it was absolutely dedicated to the Lord right from the beginning.

“Thus the people were constantly reminded that God was the true proprietor of their fields, their flocks, and their herds; that He sent them sunshine and rain for their seedtime and harvest, and that everything they possessed was of His creation, and He had made them stewards of His goods.”

“As the men of Israel, laden with the first fruits of field and orchard and vineyard, gathered at the tabernacle, there was made a public acknowledgment of God's goodness. When the priest accepted the gift, the offerer, speaking as in the presence of Jehovah, said, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father;" and he described the sojourn in Egypt and the affliction from which God had delivered Israel "with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders." And he

said, "He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which Thou, Jehovah, hast given me." *Deuteronomy* 26:5, 8-11. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 526.3-526.4

"The contributions required of the Hebrews for religious and charitable purposes amounted to fully one fourth of their income. So heavy a tax upon the resources of the people might be expected to reduce them to poverty; but, on the contrary, the faithful observance of these regulations was one of the conditions of their prosperity. On condition of their obedience God made them this promise: "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field. . . . And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." *Malachi* 3:11". *Patriarchs and Prophets* 527.1
Now before we read on, let us look at these principles in a diagram.

How do we get Self-Distrust? – The System of Tithes and Offerings

(*Patriarchs and Prophets*, Chapter 50)

- God is the Source of every blessing
- We are dependent receivers
- Tithes & Offerings
- Temple shekel; Sin & Thank offerings
- First fruits



First stands liberality. With liberality we don't mean just doing a duty legalistically because the law says so but being grateful that we are allowed to do it. When David, for example, was giving offerings to the house of God, even though he himself could not build it but he did give a rich contribution of his own, what did he say? He said to God "who am I and who is my family who are my people that we are allowed to give such a thing?" They were giving it with the right spirit and this is the only spirit that can be described as liberality. Now this liberality leads to self-distrust because it is a clear acknowledgement that everything belongs to God and not to me.

Now the next point is when self-distrust is truly there, what will it generate again? Even more liberality because I wonder myself what is the cause of which, both are strengthening each other. If I have the true healthy self-distrust, liberality will be the natural result. I would want to acknowledge everything, I would want to say yes it belongs to the Lord. So the spirit of self-distrust leads to more liberality. This leads to prospering according to God's will. With prospering we don't necessary mean that we become rich in this earth's goods but we will be balanced, we will be happy, we will have enough to eat and we shall want nothing. That is the result of true liberality as we read it here in this

chapter. So can you see this connection between tithes and offerings and the spirit of self-distrust? We must see it. At that moment we keep back, at that moment loose our self-distrust. It may be we have self-condemnation as a result of keeping back but this is not true self-distrust as we have learned. Now in the case of not having liberality but greed, which is the opposite, what will this generate? We just need to look at capitalism. The pure teaching of capitalism and the pure application of capitalism to what does greed lead to? Self-confidence. People are very, very self-confident in proportion to their greed. The more greedy man becomes the more trusts himself. There is a direct relationship between these two. And the more he trusts himself the more mistakes he will make. The more problems he will create and this will create a fearful situation. Let us read on now, first of all as it is illustrated in God's people.

"A striking illustration of the results of selfishly withholding even freewill offerings from the cause of God was given in the days of the prophet Haggai. After their return from the captivity in Babylon, the Jews undertook to rebuild the temple of the Lord; but meeting determined opposition from their enemies, they discontinued the work; and a severe drought, by which they were reduced to actual want, convinced them that it was impossible to complete the building of the temple. "The time is not come," they said, "the time that the Lord's house should be built." But a message was sent them by the Lord's prophet: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 527.2

Now the reason why the Lord asked this, is not for His own sake. Very often these questions are asked by people that want to create sympathy. You know, for example, I need a big offering for a poor country, like Bangladesh or so, then I show starving people in Bangladesh, and that creates sympathy and then people give something. That is not how God does it. That is not the way that it is said here. It's in a very different manner that we have to read this. God shows this contrast of their own wealth and the poverty of God's cause in order to help them come out of this selfish spirit. He says "You do yourselves the greatest harm by doing this" and this is clear as we read on, "Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." Consider your ways, not look at the house of God how poor it lays down all the time but consider your ways. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." *Haggai* 1:2-6." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 527.2

I find it interesting capitalism maybe was at its greatest about 10 to 5 years ago. There was a big boom in the economy in many respects especially in the so-called new technologies. People got rich very quickly and young people too but how self-confident they were. How self confident and even scornful of other people and so forth. You know it just took a few years and the bubble collapsed and the very people that boasted so much became humbled very much too. In a way its good for them, really. I wonder if they learned the lesson. I fear not because they couldn't learn it from the right background. The word of God is lacking to them but that would be an opportunity. Consider your ways, you're clothed but are not warm, you think your very, very rich and wiser than all the other economists, but look now were you stand. Some of them even got into prison because of their business dealings.

"And then the reason is given: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands." Verses 9-11. "When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands." *Haggai* 2:16, 17." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 527.2

Now, we must not understand this scripture as though God arbitrarily made it hard for them. The same you can say about the thorns and the thistles were produced as a result of man's sin. What God here does He says that this is the consequence. He puts it in the language as saying I smote you because He takes responsibility, He allows it to happen. That's the real background of this matter but the real reason for this poverty of the people, is the result of their own doing. It's a natural consequence, a natural result but God allows it to happen for their sake. So that their eyes can be opened and He says "Now behold, look at your own ways." "Roused by these warnings, the people set themselves to build the house of God"

That, really, was a help, it was an eye opener at least. "Then the word of the Lord came to them: "Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, . . . from this day will I bless you." Verses 18, 19. Says the wise man, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." *Proverbs 11:24. Patriarchs and Prophets*, 528.1,2

It is a little bit old English; maybe we should translate this in more understandable language. There are those that throw the seed away and what will the result be? It increases, it gets more and there are others who hold back more that they need and what will be the result? They tend to poverty because that what we give away that we receive back many fold. That which we keep more that we need, that will mold away.

"And the same lesson is taught in the New Testament by the apostle Paul: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." *2 Corinthians 9:6, 8. Patriarchs and Prophets*, 528.2

"God intended that His people Israel should be light bearers to all the inhabitants of the earth. In maintaining His public worship they were bearing a testimony to the existence and sovereignty of the living God. And this worship it was their privilege to sustain, as an _expression of their loyalty and their love to Him. The Lord has ordained that the diffusion of light and truth in the earth shall be dependent upon the efforts and offerings of those who are partakers of the heavenly gift. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth; He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai, with His own voice; but in His infinite love and wisdom He called men to become colaborers with Himself, by choosing them to do this work." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 528.2-528.3

And further more by choosing others to support them in that work. In other words, require the whole co-operation of man. Why does God want our co-operation? So, that we feel our dependence on Him. That's the only reason. He would not need us, but we must realize how weak we are and how strong He is. This can be seen only in co-operating with Him, it's the only way. There is a very interesting statement in another text that maybe we will turn to this later. It's in *The Desire of Ages* in the chapter where He calls the twelve disciples. But let us look quickly at the other diagram because liberality leads to self-distrust. So what does greed lead to? Self-confidence. Self-confidence leads to more greed. It leads to a low spiritual condition, often coupled with loss. I said often and not always because sometimes Satan prevents loss to happen in order to get a person even deeper involved into his ways. Only at the end he then drops him and then he is really poor. So think about the prodigal son. Satan has learned this lesson from the prodigal son, he knows that when the prodigal son is eating at the trough of the swine, that he will then run back. So he gives him a little better food, for the moment, so he doesn't go back. I was reminded here of a situation where one person who was in danger of self-confidence and greed and the combination of these two. When she was making a lottery game in the papers and as a result she won a car. What do you say about this? That is Satan's way of doing things. He wants to keep people in the spirit of self-confidence. That is what he wants. So it is not always

coupled with loss, mind you. Sometimes there is a deception here but very often God allows these things to happen, that our material possessions are taken away so that we wake up. Let us accept this as a blessing and not as a curse. Let's read on a little bit here.

"In the days of Israel the tithe and freewill offerings were needed to maintain the ordinances of divine service. Should the people of God give less in this age? The principle laid down by Christ is that our offerings to God should be in proportion to the light and privileges enjoyed. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." *Luke 12:48*. Said the Saviour to His disciples as He sent them forth, Freely ye have received, freely give." *Matthew 10:8. Patriarchs and Prophets, 528.4*

Now I would think almost that such a thing doesn't need to be said because when liberality is from the heart it will create self-distrust and self-distrust will create more liberality. There will be a natural desire to give to God. So why should we need these words? Why does somebody need to tell us? Shouldn't there be more liberality in the time of the gospel? Isn't this naturally coming forth? It is but if we don't maintain that spirit self-distrust, it will not maintain itself. In other words, there will be a loss again. I must tell you honestly that we have observed this again and again. When we have a camp meeting and there is a great blessing and there is true self-distrust, there are true confessions, it goes for a while. Then months pass and this spirit of liberality is lost again. Self-distrust is lost. Confidence creeps in, re-creeps in and as the result the low spiritual condition comes in. So we do not maintain self-distrust until we constantly keep communion with God. Until we maintain that which once we have received and therefore we need to be told these words that we read here.

"Said the Saviour to His disciples as He sent them forth, Freely ye have received, freely give." *Matthew 10:8*. As our blessings and privileges are increased--above all, as we have before us the unparalleled sacrifice of the glorious Son of God--should not our gratitude find _expression in more abundant gifts to extend to others the message of salvation? The work of the gospel, as it widens, requires greater provision to sustain it than was called for anciently; and this makes the law of tithes and offerings of even more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy. If His people were liberally to sustain His cause by their voluntary gifts, instead of resorting to unchristian and unhallowed methods to fill the treasury, God would be honored, and many more souls would be won to Christ." *Patriarchs and Prophets, 528.4*

So, what would be an unchristian and an unhallowed method to fill the treasury? Sister White makes this clear in other parts. It is for example, to make a lottery, to make any amusement activity to make the people give more. Such things would be definitely unhallowed. Everything that does not create true liberality. I would say unhallowed method is also to try to create simply sympathy and nothing more. If I show only pictures of starving people and I appeal to your sympathy then it will keep for maybe a few minutes but then it will be over again. After a while you will become used to these pictures that it doesn't matter anymore, it makes no change. So that is definitely not a hallowed method. It's an unhallowed method. Also exaggerations and things like this, these are unhallowed methods. The only method that heaven can approve is something that creates true liberality and that is a true appreciation of what Christ has done for us. It is the preaching of the gospel, really.

"The plan of Moses to raise means for the building of the tabernacle was highly successful. No urging was necessary. Nor did he employ any of the devices to which churches in our day so often resort. He made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement". - Here we have it. - "neither did he institute lotteries, nor anything of this profane order, to obtain means to erect the tabernacle for God. The Lord directed Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring their offerings. He was to accept gifts from everyone that gave willingly, from his heart. And the offerings came in so great abundance that Moses bade the people cease bringing, for they had supplied more than could be used." *Patriarchs and Prophets, 529.1*

So here it was the Holy Spirit who worked. This is the only bases for true liberality. "God has made men His stewards. The property which He has placed in their hands is the means that He has provided for the spread of the gospel. To those who prove themselves faithful stewards He will commit greater trusts, Saith the Lord, "Them that honor Me I will honor." *1 Samuel 2:30*. "God loveth a cheerful giver," and when His people, with grateful hearts, bring their gifts and offerings to Him, "not grudgingly, or of necessity," His blessing will attend them, as He has promised. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." *Malachi 3:10*." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 529.2

But let us emphasize this; this is not in mechanical giving. It is when the spirit of liberality is in our heart, which is the spirit of true self-distrust, of healthy self-distrust. This is my prayer that we shall acquire this spirit. Amen.

Study 4

We want to come back now to the lessons that God gave to man on self-distrust or a lesson that should teach us self-distrust. We later will also come back to the school of life again. But for the moment let us turn back to the chapter on tithes and offerings. (*Patriarchs and Prophets* 526.4). In this chapter we saw that God gave us the privilege to co operate with Him, to work together with Him and in this connection I would like to read another statement with you which we find in *Desire of Ages* 297. This chapter 30, "He Ordained Twelve". It talks about the disciples, their weaknesses, their strengths how God called them, or how Jesus called them. In the last paragraphs of this chapter we find a little description of why Christ at all called disciples, why did He do this why did He send them out and why does He commit this work to man, when at the same time He could commit His work also to angels who would do the job much better. The answer is given with the text that we have studied in the past *2 Corinthians* 4: 7:

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." R. V. *The Desire of Ages* 297

In one of the Sabbath school lessons I think we've asked the question: Why did God use this earthly material to present Himself? Why did He come in the form of fallen flesh? Why did Jesus come in our flesh? For what reason? Why didn't He come as an angel or at least in the human flesh that Adam had before the fall? Why did He come in our fallen weak human flesh? It is like an artist who is absolutely able and skillful, not using the most expensive instrument but a very cheap one.

You know, if for example we would have the best guitar player here among us, I don't know who this is at the moment maybe a Spanish person or so and if you would invite him and give him one of our guitars I don't even know if he would even play on them because he would be use to much better guitars to very expensive ones, and if you ask him to please give a concert. I think he would definitely refuse to give a concert unless he has his very expensive guitar. But what kind of instrument is God using? A much worse guitar than this. He would go and use Duncan's guitar in Kenya and He would get a fantastic melody out of it. I really must say when I hear Duncan play on his guitar I am always amazed. He plays very, very well. You know he gets something out of it. I can't for me it sounds very shabby but when he plays it sound much better. So you really have to see that the real skill of an artist is when he use the lowest instrument to play on. You see if I use a very expensive guitar even what I play sounds not bad, if I train awhile, but you know to use a cheap guitar and bring something out of it that requires real skill.

God uses this contrast, He uses the cheapest material to bring out the excellency of His power. And He uses weak man to show His power and our dependence on Him that is His purpose and that is the way should read this text here we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves. You know what the earthen vessel is like? It's fragile, it's dirty, it's primitive, it's nothing of be desired of, but "We have this treasure in that vessel that the excellency of the greatness may be of God and not from ourselves. *2 Corinthians*. 4:7, R. V.

This is why the preaching of the gospel was committed to erring men rather than to the angels. It is manifest that the power which works through the weakness of humanity is the power of God; and thus we are encouraged to believe that the power which can help others as weak as ourselves can help us. And those who are themselves "compassed with infirmity" should be able to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." *Hebrews*. 5:2. Having been in peril themselves, they are acquainted with the dangers and difficulties of the way, and for this reason are called to reach out for others in like peril. There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ" *The Desire of Ages* 297.2

But before we get to puffed up again because we do an important work here, we like see that it is a privilege, that it is not merely an honor to be co workers with God it is a tremendous privilege and its the same privilege in the system of tithes and offerings. Now if we are privileged to give our portion of offerings to certain work and the work thereby really goes ahead, what an honor this is. It's an honor. We shouldn't look at it as though we have lead out but we were really honored to do this. Can we see it? David could see it. He said who am I that I could give a gift to the cause of God. It is really becoming a co operator with God by giving my tithes and offerings. Now let us come back to this statement again here and in chapter 50, "Tithes and Offerings" in Patriarchs and Prophets. When an Israelites gave his tithes and offerings, he were to say this words:

"A Syrian ready to perish was my father;" and he described the sojourn in Egypt and the affliction from which God had delivered Israel "with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders." And he said, "He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which Thou, Jehovah, hast given me." *Deuteronomy 26:5, 8-11*. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 526.4 Now, that he should say these things each time meant something it meant that he was reminded each time he gave his offerings, he was reminded that everything he gave here in this case was the first fruit, was at first made possible by God's gifts. In other words he wasn't giving of his own, he was really giving of what he had received in the first hand. It was a clear acknowledgement that he was a dependent receiver. And that he could live by only that constant provision from the Lord. That is the right spirit of liberality and that only. It is an acknowledgement of our dependence it is an _expression of true and healthy self-distrust. Now, this same attitude must also be in the Sabbath. I wish now to turn on the Sabbath, because that is the next chapter we are looking at. Let's turn a little bit back here in this chapter 50 on page 525 the last paragraph,

"The tithe . . . is the Lord's." Here the same form of _expression is employed as in the law of the Sabbath. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." *Exodus 20:10.*" *Patriarchs and Prophets* 525.5

So the next lesson that we are to learn now is the lesson of the Sabbath.

How do we get Self-Distrust? – The Sabbath (*Education*, 250-252)

- That we may know that the Lord is God (*Exodus 31:13; 20:11*)
- It points to God as the Source of creation and redemption
- It is a day of communion with the Lord when we learn of our dependence on Him

And we want to really see what the lesson of self-distrust is in the Sabbath. For this purpose let us first turn to Exodus 20 that is where we have the Ten Commandments. The fourth commandment in verse eight:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”
Exodus 20:8-11

So what is the reason for keeping the Sabbath here? For in six days the Lord created heaven and the earth and therefore rest in other words it reminds us of the fact that God is the creator of this earth but that is a long, long time ago. It is six thousand years ago that God created the heaven and the earth, but would we exist today if He did not created it back then, absolutely no. So, every human being that exist today should keep the Sabbath because it is an acknowledgement that this life is from God. But we don't need to look so far back. Even though this in it's self is reason enough to keep the Sabbath we should think of the fact that even today God is still continuing to let His life flow so that we can live.

In other words creation is a continuous process. Every time a child is born you could say it's a process of creation. There it becomes more obvious, but each time a wound heals it also is obvious. Who can make skin? Who can make it grow? I mean you can't create it like this, it's impossible. You need the principle of life for this. And this principle of this mysterious principle of life is every where visible. In spring time when things come up again and so forth. Now we would not have this would not God continue His creative work. So this Sabbath for several reasons must be kept because of that but you know that it's very interesting this is not the only reason given. Let us turn now to *Deuteronomy* chapter 5 because here we have a repetition of the Ten Commandments. Maybe you know this. "And the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt" and so forth, verse 6 and then we come to verse 12 which is the Sabbath day. Let us read it here because little different to what we read in Exodus 20. Its not a copy mistake by the way its just another way to say the same thing. God intentionally made it this way. So let's read it.

“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”
Deuteronomy 5:12.

So what is the reason given for keeping the Sabbath here? Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. In other words, each time we keep the Sabbath, we remember that we were slaves in Egypt. And that is the same as with offerings. Each time the first fruit was brought or another offering was brought, the giver was to remember that his father was a Syrian, and that he had been a slave, that he was a sojourner in Egypt. So, the tithes and offerings were designed to show our weak state, our dependence on Him. So like wise the Sabbath is designed to really show how dependent we are, how weak we are. We are really slaves. We, by nature we been slaves, and we were been delivered and as a token as a sign, we keep the Sabbath. So, the Sabbath like the gifts and offerings is a direct school to teach us dependence from God, to show us our own weakness and to overcome our habitual self-confidence.

The other statement I wish to read with you was in *Education* page 250 to 252. We will do this now before we actually turn to the points as I wrote them down, because will be more obvious after reading this text. So turn to *Education* 250. The Chapter is 29, The Sabbath, and here we read:

"The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate." What do we need to be educated in? In the lesson of self-distrust. "The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate. Whatever of ours God claims from us, He returns again, enriched, transfigured, with His own glory. The tithe that He claimed from Israel was devoted to preserving among men, in its glorious beauty, the pattern of His temple in the heavens, the token of His presence on the earth. So the portion of our time which He claims is given again to us, bearing His name and seal. "It is a sign," He says, "between Me and you; . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord;" because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." *Exodus* 31:13; 20:11. The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image".

Now, before we read on here, The Sabbath in a sign of creative and redeeming power, let us couple it with this other statement; What has the deepest influence on our motive of actions? Do you remember that? The pardoning love of God, exactly. It is the fact that God has forgiven us that we have deserved death but He has forgiven us. To see His love, that is giving the deepest influence on our motives and actions. In other words, it helps us to see our dependence, our weakness, it creates a healthy self-distrust and it creates thankfulness to God. Now, this exactly is what the Sabbath does.

"The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image". "The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden". To the family I want to come back later..." and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God's plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the father as priest of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children. But the results of sin, having changed the conditions of life, to a great degree prevent this association. Often the father hardly sees the faces of his children throughout the week. He is almost wholly deprived of opportunity for companionship or instruction. But God's love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another. " *Education* 250.2

So, I find it very interesting, the Sabbath and the Family are really teaching the same lesson and they belong together.

"Since the Sabbath is the memorial of creative power, it is the day above all others when we should acquaint ourselves with God through His works." Now doing this will create a sense of our dependence upon Him. "In the minds of the children the very thought of the Sabbath should be bound up with the beauty of natural things. Happy is the family who can go to the place of worship on the Sabbath as Jesus and His disciples went to the synagogue--across the fields, along the shores of the lake, or through the groves. Happy the father and mother who can teach their children God's written word with illustrations from the open pages of the book of nature; who can gather under the green trees, in the fresh, pure air, to study the word and to sing the praise of the Father above. *Education* 251:1

By such associations parents may bind their children to their hearts, and thus to God, by ties that can never be broken." *Education* 251:2

So, if we want to know how to really teach our children this lesson of dependence we have the message. Unfortunately, we understand this too little, and as a result very often the children are left alone. I mean that is, I would say almost Adventist tradition. I don't know if that is necessarily in all Adventist churches like this, but I've been in many churches and I saw that adults stay studying, they like to study and the children they run around alone. The parents like to talk, and the children, they do their own things on the Sabbath. This is missing an opportunity, to say the least. It means that we do not bind their hearts to God and to us. By such associations parents may bind their children to their hearts, and thus to God, by ties that can never be broken.

We need to change the course here. Parents need to take their children on that day and say: We will study God's nature, we will see how dependant we are from Him, and also the children need to understand how dependant they are from God by seeing first of all how dependent are they from their own parents. Then as they got older their dependence is more fixed to God rather than to their parents.

"As a means of intellectual training, the opportunities of the Sabbath are invaluable. Let the Sabbath-school lesson be learned, not by a hasty glance at the lesson scripture on Sabbath morning, but by careful study for the next week on Sabbath afternoon, with daily review or illustration during the week. Thus the lesson will become fixed in the memory, a treasure never to be wholly lost. *Education* 251:3

In listening to the sermon, let parents and children note the text and the scriptures quoted, and as much as possible of the line of thought, to repeat to one another at home." So instead of criticizing the sermon, let us get out of it what ever we can get out of it, even if it's imperfect. "This will go far toward relieving the weariness with which children so often listen to a sermon, and it will cultivate in all a habit of attention and of connected thought. *Education* 252:1

Meditation on the themes thus suggested will open to the student treasures of which he has never dreamed. He will prove in his own life the reality of the experience described in the scripture: *Education* 252:2 "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jeremiah 15:16. *Education* 252:3 "I will meditate in Thy statutes." "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold. . . . Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Psalms 119:48; 19:10, 11. " *Education* 252.4

So, the Sabbath therefore, let it put it in summary; is the very sign of God's creative power, that our life is dependence of Him, of His redemptive power that our eternal life is depending on Him, and of His forgiveness, that we were delivered from being slaves in Egypt. It constantly reminds us and fills our hearts with gratitude for the fact that He loved us and forgave us our sins. So, the great lesson of self-distrust is that we may know that the Lord is God that He is the source and we are the dependant receivers. It points to God as the source of creation and redemption, as we have said already, and it is a day of communion with the Lord where we learn our dependence from Him. This are just three principles that we get out of this chapter here and of our study. It's just a repetition.

The next I wish to study with you is the family because this we also we read here in this chapter. The Sabbath and the family belong together; because it is that on that day we shall teach to our children dependence on God. It is on that day that we connect them with the heavenly Father. So, let us ask ourselves the question then: What is the lesson to be learned in the family on that very day? Meditate about this for a moment.

How do we get Self-Distrust? – The Family (*Education*, 250-252)

- We are in need of fellowship.
- We need to learn submission.
- We are dependent on each other.
- We need each other's help.
- We see our own weaknesses in our parents/children.

In what way does the family teach us the lesson of self-distrust? This morning I asked this at breakfast table, and I got some very good answers. First of all, the family teaches us the need of fellowship. We have a social need. And that means we are mutually dependent, we must say... I need fellowship, I need it. And some people may think, well, I don't need it. I give you my fellowship if you want it, but I don't need it. This is independence; this is a spirit of independence. You know when Adam was alone for quite some time God said after a while to him, now go and number or name the animals, and as he did so he was becoming keenly aware that he was in need of fellowship. So we are too. Now, in some cases, because sin entered into this world, our family and we cannot have too close a fellowship, because they are in the world that can happen. We may be the only one who is following Jesus. But we have at least the fellowship of the church. In one thing we must be clear, we need fellowship.

The next point is we need to learn submission. And this is also that the family teaches us. This unpleasant lesson to submit to one another. Let us turn to *Ephesians* chapter 5 verse 20 and onwards and read it there.

"giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God." *Ephesians* 5: 20.

Where shall we learn to submit to one another, where we should learn this dependence? Because submitting means I depend on another person. Well, let's see where we learn it.

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." That is number one.

"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be

holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." That means we are dependent.

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Then is going on, the children... "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

Now looking at this, what else do we learn? At this chapter, in lesson of self-distrust, how do we learn this from the family? We learn that we stand in mutual dependence to each other. The mother is dependent that the father brings the money home, the father is dependent on the mother to keep the house in order, the children are dependent on the parents to provide them food and shelter, so we are really mutual dependent. It shows us that we cannot do it all alone. We need somebody else. We need one another. We need another person. And the sheer effect that we are dependent on others is a lesson in self-distrust.

Then another very interesting point is this, that we see our own weaknesses in our parents. When I see the weaknesses of my parents I get ashamed. I can take that attitude. But this is not me, I am so glad that's not me. But if I look more carefully I must say "this is my weakness". If I overcome this weakness, then only by God's grace. And if I don't repeat the same mistakes, even in other areas, then again only by God's grace. And if I do not fall into the same things that they fall in, again only by God's grace, because that is my inheritance. That is my weakness. I in myself will definitely do the same things. That is so. Young people tend not to see this. They tend to think, Oh the old ones...we don't do their mistakes, that is not the case. It's like one egg looks like the others, so like wise the children exactly do what the parents do, in other areas, certainly. And likewise with the children, its embarrassing very often for the parents, when their children are disobedient, but they only bring out that what is in the parents. That is a law, it's a law of reproduction, a law of inheritance, ... how do you say, law of inheritance? In other words, it's there and instead of criticizing our children too much for their weaknesses, we need to ask ourselves, "Where is the same thing in me?" Where do I have this problem? And this is a wonderful lesson of self-distrust.

I can imagine that every time I receive another child, I get another lesson of self-distrust. And definitely as we bare responsibility for other people, and we see our own weaknesses in them we get another lesson of self-distrust. As sister White says: I've seen something of the weakness of humanity and I've no tendency whatsoever to rely on it. Because I've seen it. But I've seen also the power of the Lord and I fully lean on Him to finish the work. Sister White one time she said, when looking to humanity I can't see how can we ever finish the work, but when looking to God we can't see how we fail to finish the work? This is the lesson that we really need to learn in this time, especially and the family is one of the lessons given to it, provided that we accept that school. We have to really see it's a lesson. It's not automatically that this lesson is given, it does not mean, I mean when we have a family, does not mean that automatically we are in that school, that automatically we have self-distrust. It may be that we can be very full of self-confidence, even though we are living in a family. But this is only because we don't accept the lessons contained therein. So let us pray that God really gives us these lessons.

Now I want to come one step closer and one step further in our study of the true self-distrust, or the spirit of healthy self-distrust, by looking to the experience of David. Prophet David or the king David was a man who really had great accomplishments in one hand and on the other hand he fell into great sin also.

There are several things that we can study from his life, for example, his brave behavior when he was a youth, where he killed a lion and a bear to protect his sheep. We can study also the experience when he fought against Goliath, the strong giant, where as every other soldier in Israel trembled and shook, David went forward. Here we see how he really relied on the Lord. He did not do this jobs, I mean he did not kill the lion and the bear or did he killed Goliath by his own strength, but he did this by the strength of the Lord. This is very obvious when we see how it was done, but every success, needs to be carefully guarded, jealously guarded because there is a danger that after success we become self-confident again. And David was not free from this danger.

He did not fall into the trap of self-confidence immediately because was very humbly he accepted the anointment of king but he did not rush forward to the throne, he did not say, "here I am the king now". But he knew that he will go only when God's time was ready. Humbly he stayed in this position at home as a shepherd until he was called. But through the fact that he was called, this very fact cause the jealousy of king Saul, as you know and he become a hunted, persecuted, dear...I was almost to say. Somebody who have to run away all the time. And the time come when he could hardly trust anyone, because everybody will betray him will get a big reward from the king. So he wonder it: Who can I tell and who can I not tell? He could, at last he thought he could trust nobody not even the high priest. And through this deception which he practice then in order to defend himself or to protect himself of, the high priest got into high trouble and was even killed together with the whole city. This story really teaches that even a man who could accomplish such great deeds because he trusted in the Lord, can fall back again to self-confidence. Self-confidence in this case was not expressed in, ... how shall I say, in rushing to the throne or something like this but it was expressed in its own way to find refuge. It was expressed in own problem solving when came to protect himself and defend himself.

Not all the time did he solve his problems himself. It was a mixture. Sometimes God helped him and sometimes he again would find his own ways and he finally he found refuge with the enemy of God, with king Achish. An as you know he lied there to this king. Now what he did was a double mistake: Number one, he entrusted himself to God's enemies, which was very bad. He did not really understand the great controversy any more properly. He was so personally involved that he lost his greater vision for the controversy. Number two, he exposed to the enemy of God the weaknesses of God's people, which is the worst thing that we can do, its betrayal. Number three, Even though this man was a hidden, and an enemy of God, still he lied to him. He behaved as though he now was fighting against God's people, where as he never would do this. And this lie he carried on till the very last. It is true that God delivered him from this situation for the moment, for the sake of His own glory, for the sake of His own honor, David was delivered, but not at all because of any merit in David. We need to stress this very clearly. In fact David himself had to bear the punishment of his lying when he saw, he come back and he saw his city destroyed.

Now I want to dwell on this chapter a little bit in more detail later, we don't have the time now, because in the book Sabbath Rest we deal with that very sin of David when he was with the king. The other thing I wish to study with you in more detail, is his sin that he committed with his adultery and his murder of his soldiers. And later his repentance. We need to study these chapters in order to really understand how David finally comes to be the most humble of God's prophets, really. Because he really had learned dependence on God. Later when his son Absalom rebelled against him, he was showing true greatness, when he thought no revenges whatsoever, but accepted the punishment humbly. And I wish to go over with you over these experiences that we see how to learn the lesson of healthy self-distrust. Amen.

Study 5

Shall my Sins be Kept Secret?

This morning we want to continue to consider the important lessons that we need to learn in this day: the lesson of trust in God and of self-distrust. These two things, stand in relation to each other. Yesterday we looked at what lessons God gives to His people in order for us to learn self-distrust. We saw that He gave lessons right from the beginning to Adam and Eve even before they fell into sin, and then when they fell into sin He continued to give them lessons, because self-distrust is one of the most important things we need in order to be protected against sin. Always remember that Eve fell because she had no self-distrust. Now, self-distrust is one thing and trust in God is another thing. We need both really; to have just one is not enough. This will become very obvious and apparent as we go on in our study. We saw that God gave the Sabbath and the family in order to accomplish this in our hearts.

Now we want to look at some Bible characters before we continue to more particularly ask the question, how do we get self-distrust? In other words, what does God give us? He gives us the Bible history, and when we look at the weakness of David we must see that we cannot trust in humanity. I want to ask a few questions before we study the history of David, which is very important to us. The first question that we need to ask is, shall our sin be kept secret? The second is, does sin have consequences even after it is forgiven? These are questions we really need to answer in order to understand better what to expect, and how God gives His lessons.

I put together a few arguments here why we should keep our sin secret, or why we should not keep our sin secret. I don't want to evaluate them much now, but I'll just give them to you that our hearts speak to ourselves. First of all, yes, we should keep them secret, for the following reasons:

Should my Sin be kept Secret?

(Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 71)

Yes

- "It embarrasses me so much that I cannot see God's love."
- "I need some self-respect to cope with the future."
- "The knowledge of my sins causes others to lose trust in me."
- "I need to guard the secrets of my life so that I can be an example to others."
- "The knowledge of my sins would lead others to follow my example."

No

- "The embarrassment helps me see my weakness."
- "I need to lose self-trust in order to flee to my Savior."
- "The knowledge of my sins causes others to lose confidence in human strength."
- "It is necessary that my brethren watch and pray, because I am weak."
- "It is a warning to others not to follow my example."

1. It embarrasses me so much that I cannot see God's love anymore. That is one reason I give for keeping my sins secret, and I expect God to keep my sins secret too.

2. I need some self respect, to go on in the future. If all my secret things are laid open before everybody I lose all my self-respect and I can't go on in the future anymore.
3. The knowledge of my sins causes others to lose trust in me. If they lose trust in me then I cannot have fellowship with them anymore, I cannot help them anymore, and my ministry becomes enfeebled. Therefore, I must not open my sins to others, so that they don't lose trust in me. This is a point I often say to myself.
4. I need to guard the secret of my life so that I can be an example to others. When others know what I did or what is in my heart, then I can't be an example to them anymore.
5. The knowledge of my sin leads others to follow my example. Therefore I keep it secret.

As I said, I'm not evaluating the reasons much at this point. We want to really study God's word and then see if these arguments are valid or not, or in what way they are valid. So, these are the reasons often given for the need to keep my sins secret. There are other arguments too.

My sins should not be kept secret, why not?

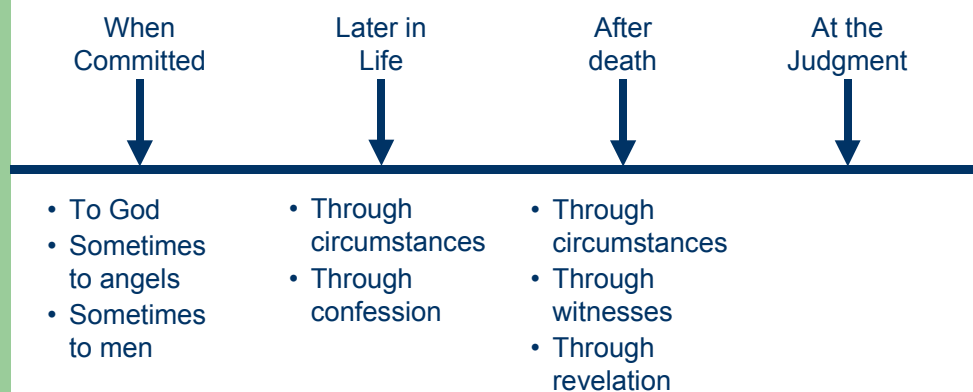
1. Embarrassment helps me to see my weakness.
2. I need to lose self-trust in order to flee to my Savior.
3. The knowledge of my sins causes others to lose confidence in human strength. (In human strength as such.)
4. It is necessary that my brethren pray and watch because I'm weak.
5. It is a warning to others not to follow my example.

So you see there could be reasons for keeping sin secret, and there could be reasons against keeping it secret. I don't know what result you came to when you thought about this matter.

Our Sins will not Stay Secret Forever

We will look at this in more detail, but before we do so one thing must be very clear: our sins will not stay secret forever. That is clear. All sins will be revealed, at one stage or another. We deceive only ourselves when we think that this will not happen.

Sins will be Revealed (*Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 71*)



Often our sins are revealed when they are committed. We may not realize it, but it is so; others see our sins very clearly. Our sins are very obvious to God, there is no question about this, absolutely no question. Adam might have thought, "I can hide myself before God so that He doesn't see," but that is absolutely impossible. Cain also thought this. You can totally forget about it. God knows the sin immediately as we commit it and He even knows more than this. He knows the secret motives and the thoughts, and so forth. Very often the things are also revealed to the angels who are watching us. Remember, we are a spectacle to the unseen worlds. They cannot necessarily read thoughts but they see more than we think. They can interpret our facial expressions and our behavior, and so forth. Sometimes it is also known to man, even though we may not realize it. I'm just interested to watch, for example, children or elderly people. Very often they do something and they think that others don't see it, and yet the others see it very clearly. When I was a child I imagined that when I put my hands over my eyes no one would see me anymore, because I didn't see them. Likewise, we often think that others don't realize what we are doing, and yet our actions are rather obvious. So, often, when we commit them the things are already seen.

Sometimes sins are really kept secret and people don't know about it, but then it comes out later in life through circumstances. Suddenly the attention is drawn to a certain fact and so it comes out. It can also come out through my confession, which would be a better way to reveal it. Think of Achan, for example. His sin came out through circumstances, really—circumstances directly guided by God. It would have been better had he made a confession before. With circumstances we also mean the testimony of witnesses who bring these things out. It could be brought out in a good way or in a bad way. In other words, by people trying to harm us or by people trying to help us, whichever. There are certain circumstances through which it can come out, and when God allows it, then it comes out. Even if it's kept secret at that stage, very often it comes out after death. Again it can be through circumstances, and sometimes through witnesses. Sometimes it is through revelation: God reveals it, God makes it clear. If even then the sin would not come out, there's one stage when it comes out in any case, and that is at the Judgment.

So you absolutely cannot keep a sin secret. However secret it is, it will come out. This is something we must be aware of: with all our efforts and all our desire to keep sin secret, it will come out. This point is made very clear in the Bible where it says that all our secret deeds will be revealed, be it good or be it evil. *Ecclesiastes* 12:14: "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil." Knowing this helps us a little bit better to make an assessment of whether it is good or not to keep things secret.

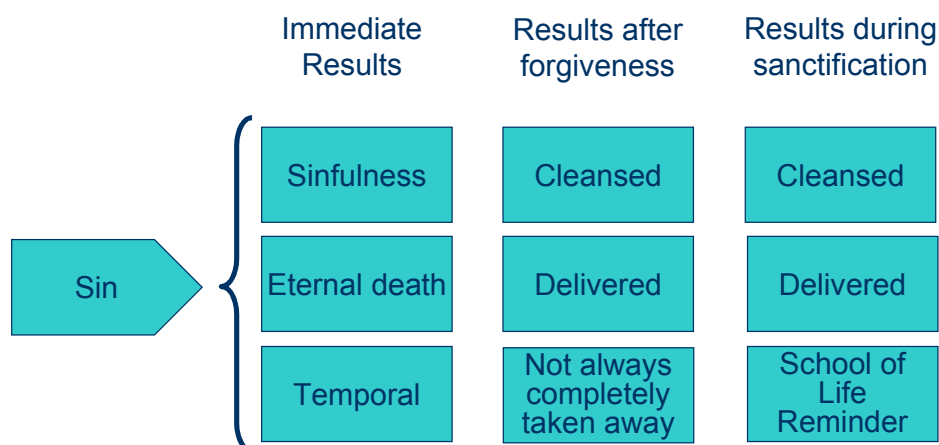
One thing must be very clear to us: to keep a sin secret is not just impossible, it should also not be the most important concern. What should be our most important concern when we know of a sin? To really be delivered from the sin itself, rather than from the entanglement the sin has brought us into. That is important.

What are the Results of Sin?

Now, what are the results of sin? That is the next question we need to look at. Do these results still exist after we have received forgiveness? In other words, how far does God solve our problems? How does God solve our problems, when we have created these problems ourselves by our sins? Can we expect God to really fully deliver us from our problem when we have brought ourselves into it? Basically the answer is yes, but there is also a wrong concept connected with this. The concept is that God will deliver us from the consequences of sins, and thereby take away the school that we need. The most typical example would be our first parents. When they fell into sin there were certain consequences that God still allowed to be there: death—men would still die; the thorns and the hardness of working with the ground; the pain of bearing children, and other things as well. These results were given as a blessing. So, we have sin and first of all we have immediate results.

What are the Results of Sin?

(*Patriarchs and Prophets*, Chapter 71)



The immediate result is sinfulness; every sin creates a disposition to sin, that is, sinfulness. What we do determines what we are, as much as what we are determines what we do. You see, there's an inter-relationship. Another immediate result is eternal death. The moment that we commit a sin we have deserved eternal death. That is a matter that is very often overlooked because we don't die immediately, but this sentence must come over us. We also have immediate temporal results of sin which do not come in that moment necessarily but they eventually come. I call them immediate results because they certainly come as sure as there is cause and effect. Very often it is disease, a bad conscience, mental disease, or when Satan gets power over the mind and so forth.

When we receive forgiveness that means we have received cleansing from the sin, so what are the results of that sin which still remain? True forgiveness means not only a judicial act by which we stand before God as though we had never sinned, but an actual cleansing from sinfulness. So we expect to be cleansed from that sin, and the result is that there is true forgiveness. Likewise, we are delivered from eternal death, and that is the next point. That deliverance is done by a judicial act, because we stand before God as though we had never sinned. How is it with the temporal results? That is a difficult question now. Temporal results would be, for example, sickness, shame, embarrassment, and so forth. Well, certainly these are not always completely taken away. I would not say that God does not take away temporal results at all, because He often heals them undeservedly, but He does not always completely take them away.

There is a good reason for this, so let us look at the later results of this sin, those remaining during our sanctification. Again our sinfulness is cleansed and is even further cleansed as we grow in the Lord. From our eternal death we are delivered, and the temporal results are now a school of life. They are a constant reminder of our sins. Maybe they are not so temporal after all. Some of the results, for example, are the marks in Jesus' hands and in His side that He received when He was crucified. They are not merely temporal, they are eternal in a way, and yet they are temporal in His character, if you know what I mean. God could have taken these marks away when translated His Son, but no. He left Him with this so that we have a constant reminder. It's a school, it's a warning against sin, it shows us

our weakness, and this will help us never to sin again in the universe. We need a reminder of our weakness, and of the love of God, and this is the marks on the hands, feet and side of Jesus, which we have caused. That shows us very clearly that we cannot and must not expect that God will take completely away all the results. We will have to have some results of these sins in order to have a reminder, a school in which we can really grow.

Now when we talk of the entanglement of the sin, we must clearly see that the entanglement as far as the sinfulness itself is concerned, we need to be delivered from completely and the sooner the better. But as far as temporal results are concerned we should not be too worried about these entanglements. Let them be, let them be even if they limit our service, because maybe our service should be limited. I really want to stress this fact: maybe our service is even more effective when we cannot serve as we think we should serve. This is because when I am weak, then I am strong. When Paul was in prison everybody would look at it as though it was the end of his service, but that is when he wrote the most beautiful, important and powerful letters. That was the time when he witnessed before kings and emperors. That was the time when he was really used as a tool. So when we are weak, we are strong. Let us be very careful to understand that the temporal results of sin are not always bad for God's cause. God will always deliver us from the eternal results, provided we are truly repentant and accept the grace offered to us.

Public Confessions

Before we go on I wish to study a little bit more concerning confessions. The reason is, when we come to the sin of David we come to the question of when and how a confession should be made. With a confession, I myself open a sin to others, I make it known, and the question is always, should I do this or shouldn't I? And when should I do it? So let's study public confessions.



Public Confession

The correct application of a God-given
instrument for the purification and edification
of the Church



You know that for a long time David did not want his sins to become public, therefore he did not make a public confession. Surely not, he hid it as much as he could. He hid it even though it ate him up, as he latter confessed. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is

the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long." *Psalm 32:1-3*

David shows us very clearly that keeping sins secret is not a solution. "My bones grew old through my groaning all the day long." Even though it saved him from terrible shame, embarrassment and entanglement, he had no peace. We cannot have peace; keeping things secret is not a solution. At some stage we have to make a public confession; the latest, as we have seen now, is in the Judgment. Then God will simply look at us and we will confess, you can be sure of it.

The Danger of Wrong Applications

When shall we confess, then? We call confession here "a God given instrument for the purification and edification of the church." Confession should be an instrument for the purification and edification of the church. Unfortunately I must say that confessions do not always bear this character, even though they are honestly given. Very often confessions deprive us of all our strength, we are exhausted and, in the end, downcast. It happens so sometimes, and I wish at times that we could now come to a different end than simply these confessions. It is an instrument whereby the church can be purified and edified, but it must be rightly used. This is what we want to study here in connection with David.

The Danger of a Wrong Application

"In many of our religious awakenings mistakes have been made in regard to confession. While confession is good for the soul, there is need of moving wisely."
Testimonies for the Church 5:645.1

There is the danger of a wrong application of the instrument of making public confessions, and a warning of that danger is clearly given to us in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume five.

"In many of our religious awakenings mistakes have been made in regard to confession. While confession is good for the soul, there is need of moving wisely. I have been shown that many, many confessions should never be spoken in the hearing of mortals; for the result is that which the limited judgment of finite beings does not anticipate. Seeds of evil are scattered in the minds and hearts of those who hear, and when they are under temptation, these seeds will spring up and bear fruit, and the same sad experience will be repeated. For, think the tempted ones, these sins cannot be so very grievous; for did not those who have made confession, Christians of long standing, do these very

things? Thus the open confession in the church of these secret sins will prove a savor of death rather than of life,” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:645.1,2.

When especially would such an argument be put forth? “For did not those who have made confession, Christians of long standing, do these very things?” Such an argument would be very valid if these Christians continue in their sins, wouldn’t it? It would be a valid argument if they continue in their sins without any punishment. Then such a confession would do more harm than good. If, for example, I confess my sins and yet continue in them, then everybody says, “Well, now what?” If I confess my sins but I have no victory over it, what then? “Well if he does it, I can do it as well.” That is what the sinner will then certainly argue. Thus the open confession in the church of these secret sins will prove a savor of death rather than of life.

“There should be no reckless, wholesale movements in this matter, for the cause of God may be made disreputable in the eyes of unbelievers,” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:645.3. This is another aspect that we need to consider. Often in our assemblies there are unbelievers and if we reveal our weaknesses to the enemy he will certainly not make a good use of it. The good use would be a warning, it would be a help for those who have confessed their sins, but a bad use would be to exaggerate even that which was confessed. From there on, our enemies will work to destroy our influence as much as they can.

“If they hear confessions of base conduct made by those who profess to be followers of Christ, a reproach is brought upon His cause. If Satan could by any means spread the impression that Seventh-day Adventists are the offscouring of all things, he would be glad to do it. God forbid that he should have occasion! God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the Spirit of God. God knows the heart, even every secret of the soul; then do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear.

“There are confessions of a nature that should be brought before a select few and acknowledged by the sinner in deepest humility. The matter must not be conducted in such a way that vice shall be construed into virtue and the sinner made proud of his evil doings,” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:645.3, 4. For example, as we have heard in the past already, if somebody boasts how much he drank or smoke, or of other sinful actions that he did, it helps nobody, it’s rather something to almost elevate evil. Even if it may not be intended like this, that is what it amounts to.

“If there are things of a disgraceful nature that should come before the church, let them be brought before a few proper persons selected to hear them, and do not put the cause of Christ to open shame by publishing abroad the hypocrisy that has existed in the church. It would cast reflections upon those who have tried to be Christlike in character. These things should be considered.

“Then there are confessions that the Lord has bidden us make to one another. If you have wronged your brother by word or deed you are first to be reconciled to him before your worship will be acceptable to heaven. Confess to those whom you have injured, and make restitution, bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. If anyone has feelings of bitterness, wrath, or malice toward a brother, let him go to him personally, confess his sin, and seek forgiveness.

“From Christ’s manner of dealing with the erring we may learn profitable lessons which are equally applicable to this work of confession. He bids us go to the one who has fallen into temptation, and labor with him alone. If it is not possible to help him, because of the darkness of his mind and his separation from God, we are to try again with two or three others. If the wrong is not righted, then, and only then, we are to tell it to the church. It is far better if wrongs can be righted and injuries healed without bringing the matter before the whole church. The church is not to be made the receptacle for the outpouring of every complaint or confession.

“I recognize, on the other hand, the danger of yielding to the temptation to conceal sin or to compromise with it, and thus act the hypocrite. Be sure that the confession fully covers the influence of the wrong committed, that no duty to God, to your neighbor, or to the church is left undone, and then you may lay hold upon Christ with confidence, expecting His blessing. But the question of how and to whom sins should be confessed is one that demands careful, prayerful study. We must consider it from all points, weighing it before God and seeking divine illumination. We should inquire whether to confess publicly the sins of which we have been guilty will do good or harm. Will it show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light? Will it help to purify the minds of the people, or will the open relation of the deceptions practiced in denying the truth have an after influence to contaminate other minds and destroy confidence in us?

“Men have not the wisdom from God and the constant enlightenment from the Source of all power that would make it safe for them to follow impulses or impressions. In my experience I have seen this done to the destruction, not only of those who acted upon this principle, but of many others who came under their influence. The wildest extravagance was the result of this impulsive work. A declension in faith followed, and unbelief and skepticism became strong in proportion to the extreme in religious excitement. The work that is not wrought in God comes to nought as soon as the excitement is over,” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:645.4-647.1.

We see very clearly here what is the wrong way of making public confessions. It is when it is coupled with an undue excitement, when it is coupled with just getting rid of what I have to say without considering if it is good, if it is really an instrument of elevation to others and to the church. We must always ask ourselves, is it an instrument of elevation to the church? “In many of our religious awakenings mistakes have been made in regard to confession. While confession is good to the soul there is need of moving wisely.” This wisdom I hope that we will receive so that we will truly be elevated by our confessions.

Two Dangers of a Wrong Application

Fanaticism

- Exaggeration of facts
- Exaggeration of feelings
- Confessing from impulse
- Carelessness
- An unwillingness to be taught
- Lack of humility
- Misguided zeal

Lukewarmness

- Failure to confess fully
- Hypocrisy
- Laziness
- Unkindness
- Complicated thinking
- Cowardice
- False humility
- No zeal

There are two dangers of a wrong application, as we see in *Testimonies for the Church*. The one we would call fanaticism or undue excitement, and the other we would call lukewarmness. Sister White

says she sees the effort to keep things secret where we have wronged others or exerted a wrong influence on them.

Fanaticism would be if we exaggerate. It would be if we confess on the basis of impulse, and not of thoughtful, prayerful consideration. The reason for thoughtful and prayerful consideration is that we want to be a blessing to others, and not just give them our burdens. Fanaticism would be an expression of exaggerated feelings. It would be carelessness. It would be an unwillingness to be taught. “Well, I have made my confession, now don’t you tell me anything further,” would be the attitude. In the end it’s a lack of humility.

Lukewarmness, on the other hand, would be a failure to confess fully—to make only partial confessions, thereby giving the impression that everything is okay. It means being hypocritical. It means that we are simply lazy, we don’t care. We don’t even think about the influence of our wrong actions. It means being unkind. It means that my thoughts are very complicated. Some people have such a complicated way of thinking that you never know what the real situation is, and we must come away from this. We must go into the school of Christ, where things are very plain and rather simple. Lukewarmness means cowardice. It means false humility. There is no zeal. These are the aspects of lukewarmness.

There is danger of both in confessions, the one and the other. Each confession that is made must be considered. There is also a time to make an immediate confession: when we see, “Now is the time, now I must say something.” It may be necessarily that we don’t wait for another week or so, but that we say it in that moment. In this case, maybe later we will make a more careful confession. As a general rule let us really ask ourselves the question, and prayerfully so, “Does my confession elevate the church?”

An Important Difference

- Confession because there is victory over a sin
- Looking for the help of parents or experienced believers

There are two reasons for making a confession, and I would say it is important to make a distinction between these two reasons. The one is that we confess because we have the victory over a sin. Such a confession would mean that we want to exalt God, that we want to give honor and glory to Him, that we want to show the power of the Gospel that has delivered us from this evil. That is good, that’s a

good confession, it is elevating. But there is another reason sometimes too for giving a confession and that is when we simply look for help. We look for help from others, because we are weak. We tell them, “Here, this is my weakness, can you help me?” If that is the reason for our confession, then it must definitely be a circle of a select few, as Sister White says. To make the whole church the recipient of my weakness when I am simply looking for help is not really appropriate. This is especially because very often there are very weak ones among them. However, if it is a confession because there is a victory over a sin, that is a different matter. You know, that is more strengthening, more encouraging. Can you see the difference between the two? That makes the difference whether we say it in a wider circle or a smaller circle of a select few. Very often this difference has not been considered by us.

I just want to go into a little bit more detail to explain what exaggeration in public confessions would be, so that we understand these things.

Mistakes in Public Confession

Part 1- Wrong Concepts

- To earn righteousness
- To please men
- To gain recognition
- Exaggerating the facts
- Glorifying the sin
- To satisfy human expectations
- Confessing before the wrong people (those whom it does not concern)
- Confessing only when pressed by circumstances
- Unnecessarily publicizing secret sins
- Superficiality (a lack of preparation through careful, prayerful study)
- Confessing before the victory is gained

One situation would be that the confessions are the result of wrong concepts. For example, we confess because we believe that a confession itself will give us favor in the sight of God. This certainly is not the case. With our confessions we cannot atone for our sins. We cannot, it's impossible. Many people think, “I must make a confession in order to atone for my sin,” but that is a false concept. It is not the case. The confession will not make me better. Another error is confession in order to gain righteousness.

Another error would be that I make a confession in order to please men. They want to hear confessions, so I give a confession. That is not elevating for the church, definitely not.

Another error is to gratify the desire for recognition. You know, everybody makes a confession, so I must make one too; otherwise I am not recognized as an honest person among my fellow believers. Such a motive would be very wrong. We could make a confession in order to be noticed. “Here I am, I have something to say too.” Sometimes there is even a competition, of who has done the worst things. That can happen.

Giving an exaggerated account is an error which we have seen already.

The next is, “to glorify sin,” as Sister White puts it.

Making a confession before the wrong people, whom it does not concern, and especially before our enemies is another mistake. If David, for example, went to the enemies of Israel, and confessed the weaknesses of his people, that would be bad enough. It was also not expected of him to confess his own sins before Achishh, and that is one of the reasons why God delivered him there. Achishh was not a person who could handle confession properly. He could not handle it properly because he was definitely a very bitter enemy of God’s cause.

Confessing only when we are pressed by circumstances, like Achan, would also be wrong.

Unnecessarily publishing secret actions, in other words going into too much detail, helps nobody.

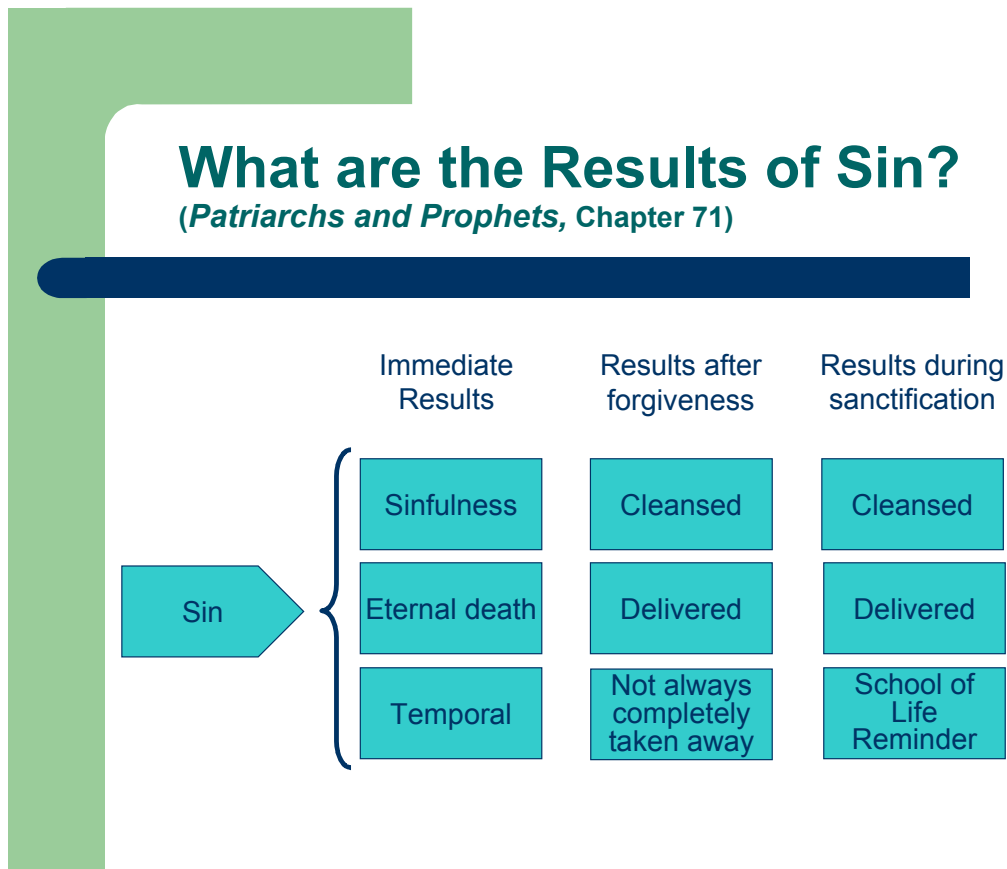
Another error is superficiality, a lack of preparation through careful, prayerful study.

Confessing before the victory over sin is obtained could also be a mistake, especially when it’s before a large audience, as we have seen.

We will leave this for the moment, and in our next study we want to look at other aspects of wrong confessions, so that we can avoid them.

Study 6

We now want to come back to the weaknesses of humanity in connection of the consequences of sin. This was the diagram in the last study.



Sin has immediate results and it has also later results. But these later results are for our best, because they are a school of life and they are a reminder of our weakness. In this connection it is necessary that we have a brief look at the experience of the apostle Paul

"It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me." *2 Corinthians* 12:1-6

When Paul speaks like this he how the human nature wants to boast. That is the reason why he writes as he does. He says I could boast and maybe I am tempted to boast, but I will not boast, I refuse to boast. And then this battle with boasting is described in another way. From verse 7 forward.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." *2 Corinthians* 12:7-9

Here we see another confirmation of the fact that our weakness must be more prominent before our eyes. It is too much the tendency of the human nature to overlook our own weakness and to think, that we are strong. Therefore even this great Apostle Paul needed a constant reminder. Which he called "The thorn in the flesh." He does not particularly say what it is, but we suppose it was his eyesight, knowing that he had to write in big letters to the churches because he did not see so well. Knowing also that he was once blind when he was at the gate of Damascus.

Therefor I take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches in needs, in persecutions, in distress for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. And Sister White says to this: "When Paul prayed that the thorn in his flesh might be removed, the Lord answered his prayer, not by removing the thorn, but by giving him grace to bear the trial. "My grace," He said, "is sufficient for thee." Paul rejoiced at this answer to his prayer, declaring, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 *Corinthians*. 12:9). ... *In Heavenly Places*, 82.3

How often do we find ourselves complaining about the consequences of sin? Well you may say it is understandable even Paul asked for deliverance of these consequences. But once he knew for what purpose he had them, he rejoiced in them. And so likewise we should understand that consequences of sin that still remain – I talk of temporal consequences, not eternal consequences – are not a reason of despair, but a reason to be thankful for. He says most gladly will I therefor rather glory in my infirmities. Let's read some other statement. Sr. White herself was in such a situation. Let us read a few sentences from this.

"Some present at the meeting were anxious to have us visit New York State again; but feeble health sunk my spirits, and it was a time of despondency with me. I told them that I dared not venture unless the Lord should strengthen me for the task. They prayed for me, and the clouds were scattered, yet I did not obtain that strength I so much desired. I resolved to walk out by faith and go, clinging to the promise, 'My grace is sufficient for you.' God had been my helper hitherto, and why should I now doubt? The language of my heart was, 'I will still trust in the strong arm of Jehovah. If like Paul I am to be troubled with a thorn in the flesh, I will not murmur. It will cause me to feel my dependence upon God, and to walk tremblingly before him.'... *Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White* (1888) 262.1. Sister White understood how important it is to understand our own weakness. There is another statement.

... It may be given to one to gain spiritual strength and discernment easily, while another has to contend with "a thorn in the flesh" 2 *Corinthians*. 12:7, and at times is ready, apparently, to step off the heights over the precipice. Yet who dare say that God does not still love and regard as His child the one so sorely beset, and that His hand is not still stretched out to save? *This Day with God*, 67.2

The rest of the statements we do not need to read, they are repeating themselves very much.

Let us come back to the other list of confessions. We come back to the thought whether we should reveal our weaknesses to others or our sins to others or shall we not.

We have seen that there are two reasons, why confessions are made. I mean two proper reasons; everything else would be wrong reasons. The one would be to glorify God, to glorify the power of the gospel to deliver from sin and the other would be to seek for help. But if it is merely for seeking for help then we would do it in a more selected circle of a few.

On the other hand, there is the effort to hide our sins as Sr. White says. I recognize on the other hand that we do not make a full confession of our sins. These failures could also be the result of a wrong concept, namely the concept, that it is Gods will to keep my sins secret. A failure to confess all because sin is considered to be a private matter, where maybe it is not a private matter. We have to find out what a private matter really is. Because we have learned that private sins have to be confessed privately and public sins have to be confessed publicly. So we want to know what a private matter is

and what a public matter is. It would be wrong to make a confession but it is also wrong to retain a confession.

Mistakes in Public Confession

Part 2- Failures

- Failure to confess enough because sin is considered to be a private matter
- No true sense of the sinfulness of sin (no true repentance)
- An attempt at self-justification
- Blaming the circumstances and other people for the sin
- Attempting to avoid the consequences of sin
- Giving only a partial confession
- Confessing without true repentance
- Confessing as a last option to save the reputation
- An attempt to avoid saying that which should be said
- An attempt to escape from the shame as cheaply as possible
- Watering down the real issue
- A failure to call sin by its right name
- Missing the golden opportunity

- When we have no sense of the sinfulness of sin, then there is no true repentance and the confession does not say much.
- When we would attempt self-justification.
- When we would blame circumstances and other people for the sin. That would be a failure to make a complete confession. When don't we do a complete confession? When we had no sense of the sinfulness of sin. When we attempt to justify ourselves and when we blame circumstances and other people for our sins.
- Also when we avoid the consequences of sin.
- When we only give a partial confession.
- When we confess without true repentance. This is a failure.
- Confessing as a last option to save reputation. Achan in the end he did confess his sin didn't he? But it was a failure to confess.
- An attempt to avoid saying that should be said.
- An attempt to escape from the shame as cheaply as possible.
- Watering down the real issue.
- A failure to call sin by its right name.

These are the failures we have to guard against. I am sure that you can find out much more. These are just some examples. We have to meditate about these things to see what we have to avoid. Very often we also miss the golden opportunity. For example, now is the time to say something. In the case of Judas I am thinking of here at the moment. When Jesus said very openly: One will betray me, and then everybody asked: Is it I, is it I, is it I? This would have been the golden opportunity for Judas to say something. But he left it to pass by and as a result he never would confess again.

When should a Public Confession be Given?

- When the Holy Spirit impresses me to do so
- When I have true repentance
- When my sin brings consequences to the Church
- When my sin is known
- When it will take away the disgrace from another person
- When it causes good
- When God is praised
- When it contributes to the cleansing of the Church
- When I am prepared for a deeper cleansing
- When I have prepared myself through careful, prayerful study
- When my sin is a public sin

When should a public confession be given?

- First of all the Holy Spirit is the measure of everything. I must give a public confession when the Holy Spirit impresses me to do so. I should not confess because other people say so. Or simply because I am excited at the moment, but if I have a deep inward conviction that I must do it, be it pleasant or not. Then I must go forward and make this confession. And nobody can really say in the end, you must make this confession or you must not, because if the Holy Spirit moves me, I must do it. For that reason it is important, that we as fellow believers we do not urge somebody to make a confession because interfere the work of the Holy Spirit otherwise. We have to be very careful with these matters.
- When I have a true repentance of my sin, then I can make a confession. But if the true repentance is not there, then the confession will be of necessity be incomplete. It will not be deep enough, it can not be unless I see the sinfulness of sin.
- When my sin has brought consequences to those before whom I confess. It is the church. I confess before the church. It may be a sin that I have done so secretly that nobody knows it but yet it has an effect on everybody else. When this is the case it would be necessary here this is the reason. Achan for example, what did he do. He stole something, you may say he did not steal from the other Israelites, did he? He stole, from God, from God's treasury. Therefore to whom should he confess his sin? To God, because he sinned against God. But the effect of his sin was to everybody else, so he sinned against every Israelite. Even though not directly, but indirectly through the effect of his sin and therefore it would have been necessary to make a frank confession. So we must be careful to think, well I did not directly sin against somebody else, I do not make a confession. There is an effect, that has burdened him, it may be necessary. How many people died, when they attacked Ai? Thirty six, so there would be at least thirty six families to make an apologize. But not only to the thirty six but to everyone, because they all experienced this defeat in Ai, they all were demoralized, they all were cast down and he was the reason for it and saying nothing. That was quite something. We cannot excuse ourselves in saying we have not sinned directly against somebody. When we are the cause for the weakness for the church we must make a confession.

- When my sin is known. Obviously then I have to say something. When my sin is known and I keep quiet, then everybody will wonder if he really seeing, that he acted wrongly, is he really seeing it? So it is a help to say something, when my sin is known to others.
- When it will take away the disgrace from another person. For example because of my sin it could be that another person looks very bad. He may also have done something wrong and he may have made his confession but he cannot say the whole context, the whole story, but everybody looks upon him, as he was the gay and yet my sin has brought disgrace upon him. For example when the Pharisees drew the adulteress before Christ. Where not they the cause? Or did not they push her into that sin? They would have had to confess first. So it would have taken away disgrace from this woman.
- When it causes good. Then a confession is very appropriate, when it is for the edification of the church.
- When God is praised through it. When I can say something about the power of the gospel to deliver from the deepest depth.
- When it contributes to the cleansing of the Church. Like in the case of Achan.
- When I am prepared for a deeper cleansing. In other words when I give a confession and I do not want to have any questions to have asked because this is the limit I will not go further, this is not a good attitude to make a confession. The right attitude is, I give my confession as far as I know and as I can see it, but I am willing to receive a deeper cleansing.
- When I have prepared myself through careful, prayerful study for this, then a public confession should be given. I said this as a general rule. It could also be, that there is an golden opportunity where I must say something, then I must say it. Like in the case of Judas.
- When my sin is a public sin.

These are some rules that should help us, under what circumstances we should make a confession, so that it is elevating and ennobling for the church.

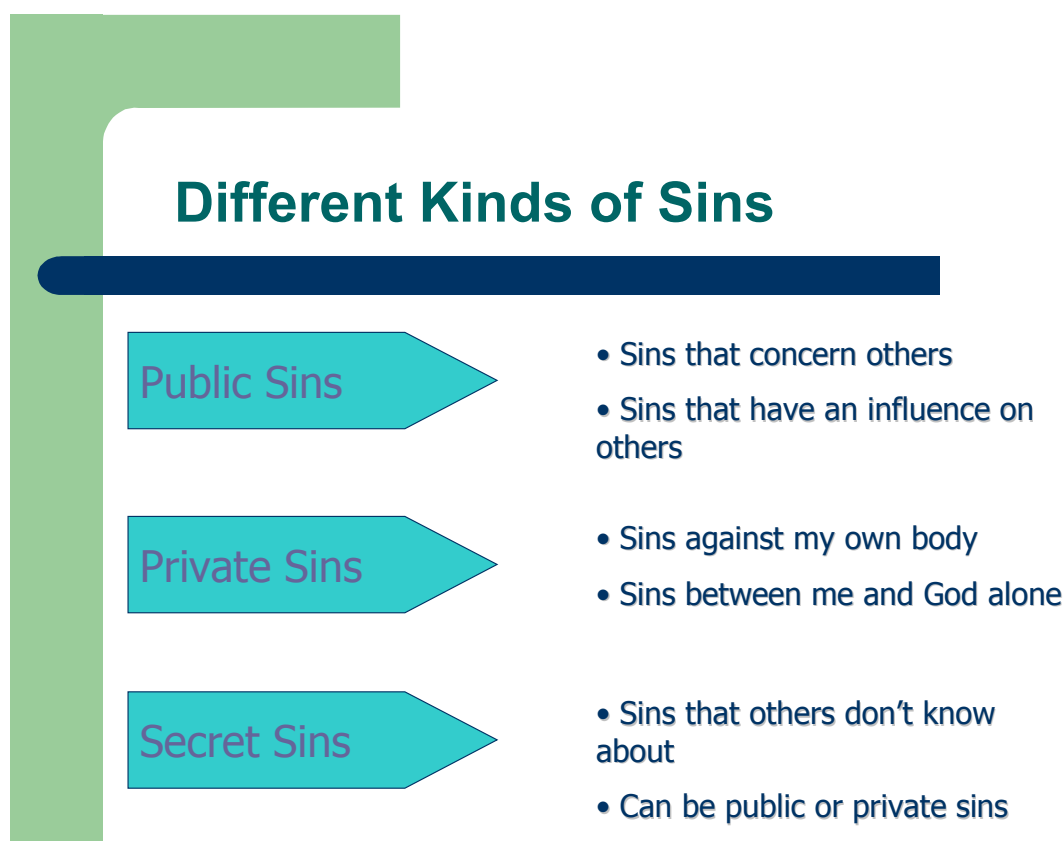
When should a Public Confession not be Given?

- When I have no real repentance
- When I do not have the victory over the sin
- When it will cause harm
- When it pollutes the thoughts of the hearers
- When my trust in the Church or others will be destroyed
- When it will bring disgrace upon somebody
- When it causes evil
- When God is not praised
- When it does not contribute to the cleansing of the Church
- When I am not prepared for a deeper cleansing
- When I have not prepared myself through careful, prayerful study
- When my sin is not a public sin

- When I have no real repentance.
- When I do not have the victory over the sin.

- When the confession will bring harm. It is difficult to determine this is it not? When will my confession bring harm? We will understand this better, as we go on.
- When my confession pollutes the thoughts of the hearers.
- When my trust in the church or others be destroyed. When my trust will be destroyed. The trust of others would be destroyed wouldn't it? Of others in me rather. Sr. White puts this point forth that this could be one reason not to give a confession.
- When I will bring disgrace upon somebody else through my confession.
- When it causes evil.
- When God is not praised.
- When it does not contribute to the cleansing to the Church.
- When I am not prepared for a deeper cleansing.
- When I have not prepared myself through careful, prayerful study, than I should retain from a public confession, so that I will not put a burden on others, that I will not make the Church just a recipient for all my troubles.

As the next point, what do we need to understand? We need to understand the difference between private and public sins. What is a private sin, what is a public sin?



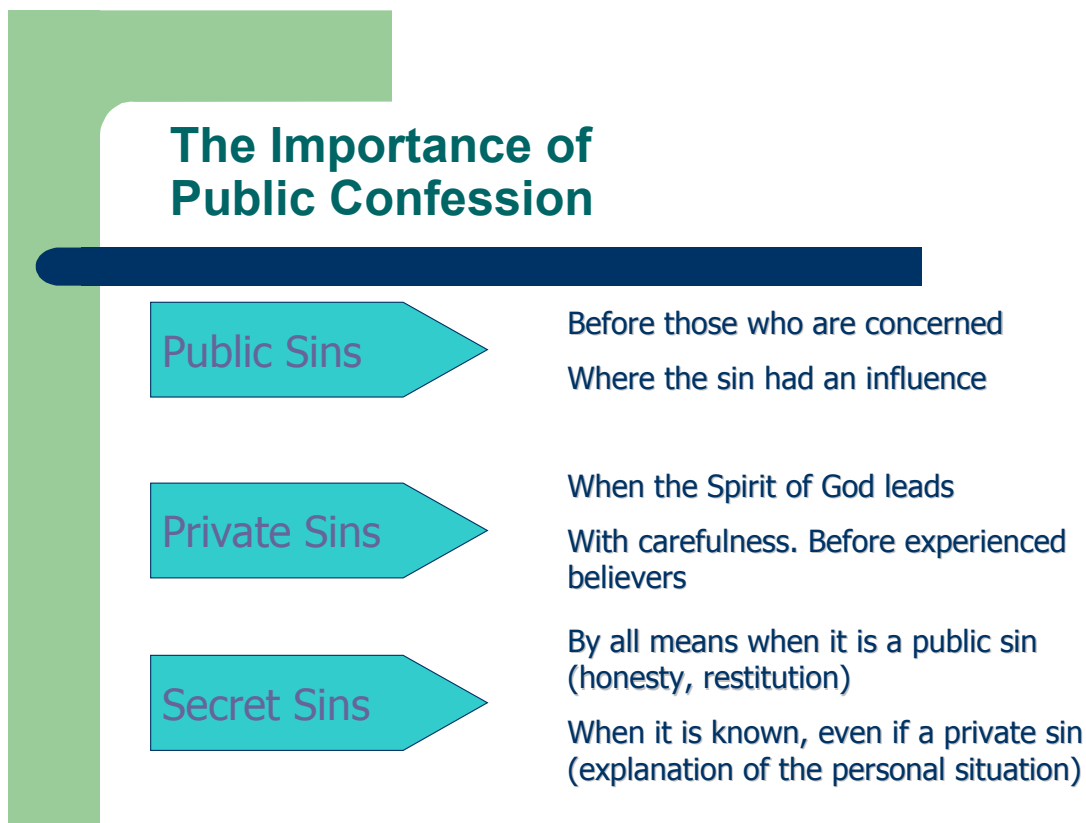
If it is a private sin, we have learned it needs to be confessed privately. When it is a public sin, it needs to be confessed publicly. So how do we define it? Furthermore is a private sin a secret sin? And a public sin, is this an open sin?

Very often people think that is the same thing. In other words when it is secret than it is private, when it is known, than it is public. When my sin is not a public sin, than I should not give a public confession.

So what is a public sin? It is a sin that concerns others. It is not a sin that is necessarily known to others but it concerns others. For example, if I have told a lie to someone, then it definitely concerns you because I have lied. But you may not know that I have lied, so it is secret and yet it concerns you.

Even though it is secret, it is public. The other point is that sins have an influence upon others. While the sins on the other hand are sins that are just concerning me, sins on my own body for example, sins that concern matters between God and me alone.

Secret sins what are these? These could be sins where others do not know about. And these could be public sins or they could be private sins. Secret sins could be both, both sins could be secret. A public sin could be secret and a private sin could be secret. So we must make a difference between a private sin and a secret sin. When we read in the Spirit of Prophecy about private sins not to be confessed we need to understand this difference otherwise we make wrong applications here. It is not just a battle with words; it creates a very important understanding.

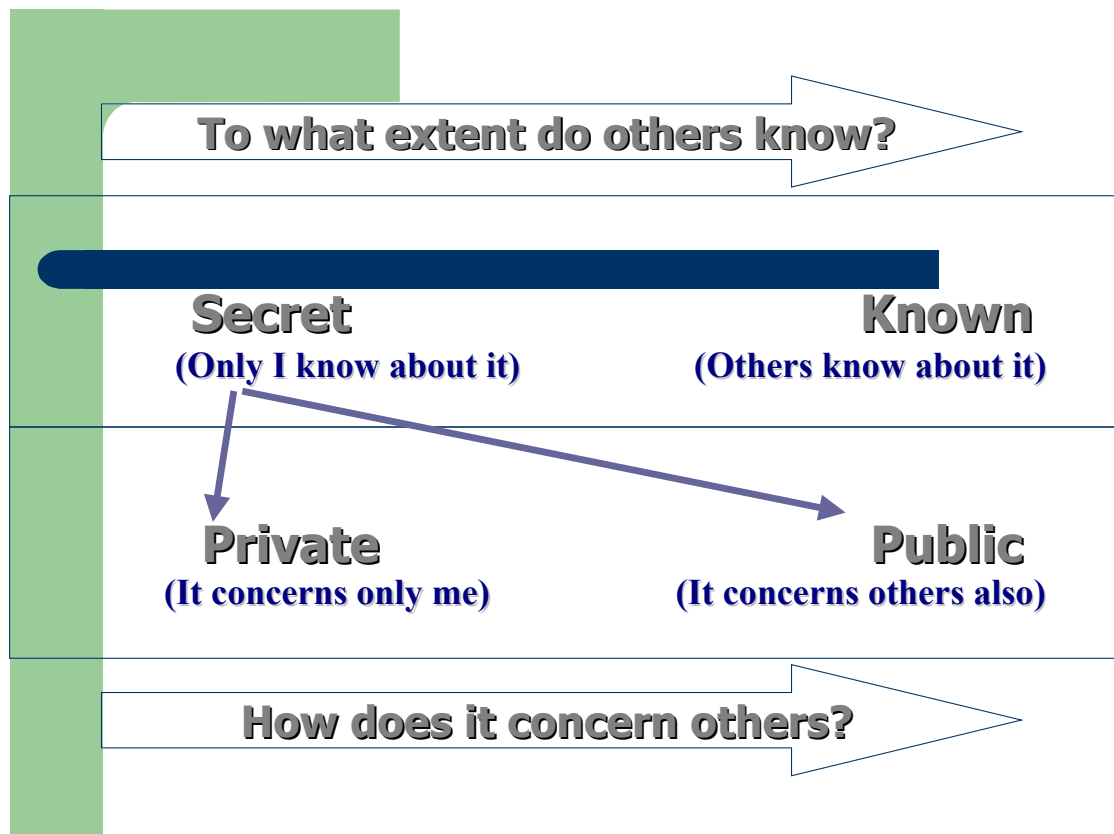


So the importance of public confession is that they are given before those who are concerned and that we give them there where our sin had its influence.

Private sins are given publicly only when the Spirit of God especially leads in this matter. Private sins are usually confessed only privately but sometimes it is valuable for the Church when they are given before the Church, but only when the Spirit of God leads especially. And they are given with carefulness and usually before experienced believers because you must be careful not to expose our weaknesses to the enemies of the cause.

And secret sins obviously we should make them public when they are public sins. Honesty requires this also restitution requires this. A confession is a way of restitution to undo the influence I have made. Also when it is known to others, even the private sin must be confessed, that means an explanation of the personal situation. If others have seen it, I must give an explanation. Where is my position, is my position that I see this wrong or that I justify it. I owe this to others to say, this is my position on that matter.

I want to summarize this in the following diagram.



First of all I ask the question: To what extent do others know that sin? And in this extent it is either secret or known. Secret means, I only know it and Known means, others know about it. The other question is, how does it concern others, and this makes a sin a private or a public sin. When it is private, it concerns only me, when it is public it concerns others also. A secret sin can be a private sin or a public sin. And a known sin can also be private.

What is the Purpose of Public Confession?

- To inspire faith
 - To demonstrate that sin can be overcome
- To create abhorrence of sin
 - To give the trumpet a clear warning sound
- To restore trust
 - Give proof of true repentance
 - Make restitution
- To remove hindrances
 - Restore the reputation of others
 - So that God's blessing can flow
- To look for help
 - To deepen the understanding and repentance of sin
 - To make a covenant of true watchmanship

So what is the purpose of public confessions?

- It is to inspire faith. That means to demonstrate, that sin can be overcome. This gospel, that worked in my brother can also work in me.
- It is to create abhorrence of sin. That means to give a clear trumpet sound of warning.
- It means to restore trust, giving proof of true repentance, making restitution.
- The other purpose is to remove hindrances. Restoring other people's reputation, so that God's blessing can flow.
- Another purpose is to look for help in order to deepen the understanding and repentance of sin and making a covenant of true watchman ship.

It is important, that we understand the purpose of public confessions that we understand when we shall give them and when not. So let us think about this: To inspire faith, to create abhorrence of sin, to restore trust, to remove hindrances, and in some cases or always to look for help. If we understand these purposes, then we can make our confessions intelligently.

Now we want to look to David. We want to study his life in more details, to see in which way the principles apply in his life. And then we want to apply this whole story to our past understanding of confessions and keeping sins secret and we want to challenge this past understanding. But in order to do so, I want to show you in a very positive and definite way when and how sins should be confessed. This is important. We need to get a very firm hold on it.

Examples of False Confessions or Negligence

- Achan (*Joshua 7:16*)
- Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 5*)
- David at Ziklag (*1 Samuel 27 & 30*)
- Simon Magus (*Acts 8*)
- Confession to earn justification by works

Just as a short overview you can review in your mind.

That is Achan, that is Ananias and Sapphira, that is David at Ziklag. (I put a? here, because you know how this is described in the Book "Sabbath Rest". I would say this was an experience, where he definitely failed to make a proper confession. Then Simon Magus, then the confession to a priest and the Catholic Church as earning justification by works.

Examples of Public Confessions

- David in *Psalms 51*
- Peter when Jesus questioned him (*John 21*)
- Daniel (*Daniel 9*)
- Nehemiah (*Nehemiah 9*)
- Job (*Job 42*)
- Isaiah (*Isaiah 6*)
- Paul (*Ephesians 3:8*)

An example of good public confession is David. It is Peter, when Jesus asked him. It is Daniel, it is Nehemiah and Job. There certainly more, but these are very strong powerful witnesses of a true confession.

I would like to study mainly to study David with you. For that purpose let us first turn to Psalm 51. I remember, that he prayed this prayer after he sinned. I want that we understand, that the principles we applied to true confession and when a confession should be given, that they are applied here. This Psalm is a public confession. That is how a public confession looks like and how it should not look like.

Psalm 51:1

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your loving-kindness;
According to the multitude of your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.

Can you see true confession here? Was he concerned with the consequences? He was concerned with the sin itself. Blot out my transgressions.

Psalm 51:2

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin."

Don't put just away the entanglement so that my sins don't get revealed. But cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions. Not that I want, that you keep them secret please, but I acknowledge them and my sin is always before me.

Do you know that this confession was given to the chief musician, what does this mean? It went into the songbook. Suppose you made a confession here before the Church and it would be put into our

songbook. Not only a general confession, but very precisely: The sin of Andreas, when he committed murder or anything like this. And it would be in the songbook and we would sing it from time to time. Would you like this? That is what had happened. It was even sung while David lived.

Psalm 51:3-19

"For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.
Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in your sight--
That you may be found just when you speak,
And blameless when you judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden part you will make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones you have broken may rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
And uphold me by your generous Spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to you.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth your praise.
For you do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart--
These, O God, You will not despise.

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;
Build the walls of Jerusalem.
Then you shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then they shall offer bulls on your altar."

Would you like to be this said about you in the songbook and then sang every now and again? Can you see that this is exalting, it is elevating, it is uplifting, it is a warning against sin. It fulfils the

purpose of a public confession. It is not putting down, it is not saying, I have done this and this and so forth. But it is showing how deep? Repentance.

And it shows how impossible it is in its own righteousness to overcome it. It shows how thoroughly it shall be a warning to others. He desired to make his sin public in this way, so that others should be warned. That was the spirit of David. And I wish that this is our spirit when we make a public confession. Let us see this point very clearly; this will help as to have confession. In our social meetings, this will be elevating and ennobling. Isaiah by the way is another one who made a true confession, and also Paul. Now I would like to look into David's public confession.

David's Public Confession

The causes, consequences, and
cure for his sin

"The Bible has little to say in praise of men. Little space is given to recounting the virtues of even the best men who have ever lived. This silence is not without purpose; it is not without a lesson. All the good qualities that men possess are the gift of God; their good deeds are performed by the grace of God through Christ. Since they owe all to God the glory of whatever they are or do belongs to Him alone; they are but instruments in His hands. More than this--as all the lessons of Bible history teach--"it is a perilous thing to praise or exalt men;" Why is it perilous? "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."

Can you see how it is emphasized again how important to be aware of our dependence on God.

"Man is contending with foes that are stronger than he." "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." Ephesians 6:12, margin. 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." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 717.1

That is the whole message of the Bible from the beginning to the end. This was the message given in garden Eden, this was the message given through the sacrificial system, this is the message given in the New Testament, and this is the message also of David, it is the message of the whole Bible.

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.

What did lead to? This for? Exactly that. Didn't she have enough wisdom, didn't she have enough strength to withstand it? And the same led to David's fall.

Study 7

We are considering together the public confession of David, and one of the most important lessons to be learned from the life, but also especially from the fall of David is: the lesson on distrust that we need have in the human power and the lesson of trust in God's power. This is made clear very much in the beginning of the chapter in *Patriarchs and Prophets* "David's sin and repentance" as we read here right in the beginning in the first paragraphs: "The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power."

It says here the tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust in human power and encourage trust in divine power. Now, since we study the subject here all the time some may get a little tired and weary and say 'He, are we all the time only looking at the negative side of the matter. Can't we study something positive, you know, distrust in man's power seems to be all negative - distrust, distrust, distrust so to speak, but the point is, that this is the greatest obstacle to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and once we really understand this and see the obstacle in our life then we can really go forward with confidence. Now, 'with confidence' does not mean that we have trust in ourselves, it means that we have trust in God's power.

I want to come back later to the history of Moses for example. You know, once he took the plough into his hand, he did not look back, he did not deviate from his work, he did not leave his work when it got difficult, when the situation got thick. But we, can we stand such a test, such a trial. I mean, we have to go through Jacob's trouble, we really have to face a lot of difficulties and for that reason our school may be a little bit weary some, let us accept this. Let us really say: 'Yes, I need it!'. And let us apply this in every phase of our life, in our own education, in the education of our children and even in our worships. We need to see where self-trust or self-confidence, self-exaltation still is there.

So let us with this thought in mind turn back to David and we want to continue to read this chapter 71 in *Patriarchs and Prophets* "David's Sin and Repentance" and you can follow me here. We will stop from time to time to really meditate and get the most out of these sentences.

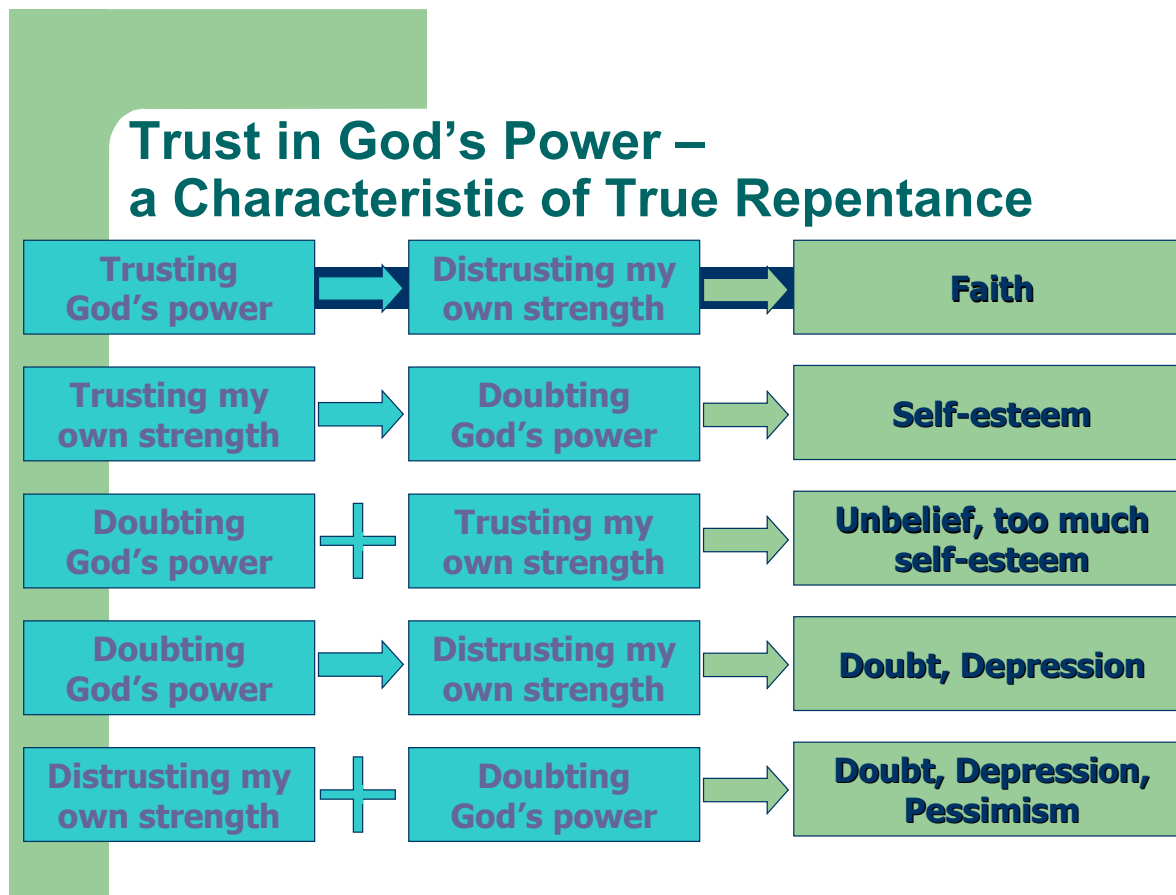
Let us read this again: "It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall. Flattery and the subtle allurements of power and luxury were not without effect upon him." Let's think about this a little bit. I think we don't see ourselves in the position of power and the position of luxury, even though these things are relative. Luxury you could say is everything that is better than my neighbour or anybody else who may live in the world. And didn't we have privileges that others don't have? In the past! And power, we can have a very small power, and if it's only over our own children, but there is power already. But that is not much, okay. But how about flattery? How is it with praise?

Another thing is "... 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 these tended to lessen David's sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin." Do we have that kind of temptation, that we are in a position where we can do things that others can not? Maybe we see ourselves in this because we are God's special children and as God's special children he loves us, he loves us also when we make mistakes. But do we have the same attitude when others make mistakes? That is the question. Or the others ... Do we really see that every sin, every shortcoming is really causing a great pain in the heart of God and deserves eternal death?

"All these 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."

So, this is just the introduction of the chapter. Now we follow the story of how David fell in detail. We want to repeat this things point by point that we really get them in. So, the first question is: What does trust in God's power mean, which is a characteristic of true repentance, in contrast to that which David did not have? Because the point is: Our trust in God's power is often not fully understood as we said already. It is not just a negative, it is not just distrust in ourselves. Trust in God's power is more than this. So let us take some examples.



Here we have distrust; I have distrust in my own strength - and would you say this is good? Yes, that is good. Now, add to this doubt of God's power and what will be the result? If we add the two things together: I distrust myself and I doubt God's power. It will lead to doubts, to depressions, to pessimism. I will always say it's not possible; no can't be done, no can't be accomplished. Pessimism is the great point. Now, you see we can study a lot about distrusting my own strength, but it must be accompanied not by doubt in God's power. Very often that creeps in. Okay, let's take another example. Here we doubt God's power and because we doubt God's power we also distrust our own strength. And that is the same result: It leads to doubt and depressions. You see, whether I added or whether the one leads to the other it doesn't matter, it all has the same result. Now, let's take doubt in God's power and trusting my own strength and that is something we find very often in the world. If I doubt God's power, obviously I trust God's strength; for this result: too much self-esteem, too much self-confidence, unbelief.

Now, if I trust my own strength that leads often into doubt of God's power. It's not just an addition to it, but it leads to it. Too much self-confidence leads that I can not trust God and this is self-esteem. So the only right thing is to trust God's power, which leads to distrusting my own strength, and this is

faith. So, the emphasis of our study and the emphasis of our prayer and thoughts must be always to trust in God's power. This will lead to distrusting my own strength.

The prayer of Elijah, when he prayed for rain really shows this principle. The more he prayed the more he trusted God's power. But the more he trusted God's power, the less he trusted himself. God became more and more and he himself became less and less. So, a true genuine trust in God's power is that which leads to faith. So, let us summarize this.

The Relationship between Trust in God's Power and my own Strength

- The more you trust your own strength, the less you will trust God's power.
- Distrusting my own strength does not always mean that I really trust God's power.
- The key to growth is not concentrating on distrusting our own strength but establishing a deeper trust in God's power.
- Genuine trust in God as well as my own experience teaches me to distrust my own strength.
- When my trust in God diminishes, I trust more in my own power, and then I stumble and make mistakes.

The relationship between trust in God's power and my own strength is this: He, who does not distrust his own strength does not have the right trust in God. That is the conclusion we must draw out of this. That is where the real lack lies, when we have too much self-confidence. Distrusting my own strength doesn't always mean that I trust in God's power, necessarily. It's not automatically so. I can be a terrible pessimist, believing that I can do nothing and really accomplishing nothing. Yes, I distrust myself, but this doesn't mean that I trust God's power.

The key for growth is not that we concentrate on distrusting our own strength, but that we establish a deeper trust in God's power. And genuine trust in God as well as my own experience teaches me to distrust in my own strength. You see, when I look back to my own experience and I see how I have failed then I see how little I can trust human power. When I look back to the history of my forefathers, of my own parents and their parents and so forth I see how little I can trust in human strength. When my trust in God diminishes then I trust more in my own power and then I stumble and make mistakes.

So, which factors then strengthen trust in my own strength?

Which Factors Strengthen Trust in my own Strength?

- Praise (2 Samuel 14:25)
- Frequent recognition of my abilities
- Flattery (Proverbs 29:5)
- Success in the work (*The Desire of Ages*, 360.3)
- A high position
- The possession of strength
- The possession of power
- An easy life
- A luxurious life
- Familiarity with false habits
- The adoption of wrong habits
- A wrong reaction to disappointments

Praise

What was it that let to David's trusting himself more? Can you still remember? It was praise. He was praised for being so skilful a soldier. In fact he didn't even need to go himself anymore, because he had his skilful generals. He had already proven himself to be the skilful soldier. And when we have the custom of praising man we do not know how much harm we cause to that person. You know, it may be an innocent remark even, it may be that we just praise a child for having prayed very well and this can create quite a disturbance to the point where the child can't properly pray anymore, because it always things now in terms of recognition, in terms of self-esteem. I still remember when I was a child I was asked once to give a testimony of my faith; I was a youth almost, 12 or something like this, and there was some praise added to this. I found it very difficult to handle, because I felt when I gave it, I gave it naturally, but I felt when I give it again I must please those people who praised me. Well this does not apply only to children, it applies also to adults. A remark of praise can really bring a lot of turmoil into that person, we have to be very careful with this, very careful! The point is really that there is nothing to be praised.

The Bible has to say very little about the praise of man. And what do we read? This is not without reason, this is not without cause. Let us turn to 2 Samuel 14, 25 to find out what we read here. That is concerning Absalom: "In all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." Well, that is concerning the outward appearance, for which a man can do very little. So, I would say this is even the less harmful praises. A more harmful praise is where a person has accomplished something, let's say his special cleverness has brought him something or his physical strength has brought him something and he is praised for these things.

How often do we have this custom in the world to praise. Applause is just one of this, the whole atmosphere in which we live is confidence in man, the whole atmosphere where we stay and live. You can't go in a concert today without finding these atmosphere - praise of man. You can't go anywhere and where you don't find this principle, whether it's in sport or in society, in school, everywhere.

Praise of man is abounding. And here we need to really see that is the air we breath, for that reason we have to be very much on God in this regard.

Frequent recognition of my abilities

The next is the frequent expression or recognition of my abilities. It's the same thing. I mean basically that is praise: a frequent expression or recognition of my abilities.

Flattery

The next is flattery. Flattery is one step further than praise. Praise is simply an acknowledgement of the accomplishments; flattery is giving praise with a purpose of deceiving a person, isn't it. According to the definition of the word. Flattery means I want to give him more praise than he really deserves so that he is especially favor to me or something like this. So subjects flatter their kings so that the king is merciful to them, for example. Flattery is dishonesty right from the beginning, but this is what we often receive in certain positions. A teacher may receive flatteries so that he gives good grades to his students, a king is receiving flatteries so that he gives favors to his subjects. A ruler of a city receives flattery so that he gives special privileges to those who give him flattery and so forth. Proverbs 29, 5 "A man who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his feet." So, we may want to have some advantages when we flatter somebody, but really what we do we spread a net for his feet. Just before we go on here to be courteous and kind and specially friendly to what's people in high position does not mean flatter. For example, what did Daniel say to the king? 'The king live forever!' This was not flattery. This was an customary usually addressed to the king, which simply expressed courtesy towards him. So likewise when Paul would address the Felix, Festus and Agrippa - what did he say? 'Most noble king!' The address of special customary friendliness is not flattery. That is simply an acknowledgment of the position in which the people stand. But flattery is more. Flattery is giving them the impression that they are something when they are nothing. And that is laying a snare for them.

Success in the work

The next factor that strengthen real trust in my own strength is success in the work. That may sounds strange, but this is so. Success in the work really is a mighty contributor. For that reason we must be very careful how we handle success when we have. For example, when I give a study and people came and say 'That was a good study! - Thank you for the good study' I need to be very careful because I realize I have success in the work, but at the same time I realize that is not due to my presenting the study that is due to the presence of the Holy Spirit. But it's a temptation nevertheless. Every success in the work is a temptation in itself. Let's turn to DA.360.03. "As the disciples had seen the success of their labors....with their own hearts." This is concerning Jesus calling them apart after he sent them out and then He said: 'But do not rejoice in this that the evil spirits are subject to you, but that your names are in heaven.' That is what we read in the beginning. It really shows how important it is to constantly be aware of our dependence, even when we have success.

A high position

A high position - whatever high position means. In the world a high position is being king, being president, being governor, being whatever. That is a high position or having a special profession which is more highly regarded than other professions; in the church I would say we should not have high positions because we are all brethren. But often the position of the minister is looked upon like so it is a high position even so it's not. But that is a wrong concept. And yet because he is looked upon as so he had a high position, he is tempted also to look himself on it like this. And then we have again this terrible element of trusting in my own strength.

The possession of strength

The possession of strength, if somebody is especially strong then it could be mentally that he is specially clever, it could be physically that he is specially strong, it could be even spiritually that he is

able to understand things quicker or whatever. The possession of strength is in itself also a temptation to rely on this strength.

The possession of power / An easy life

The possession of power and as we have seen an easy life. In the case of David after he had won so and so many battles it was not necessary anymore to him to go out himself, because now the victory was basically won. It's only a few battles that were left to clean up the rest and this he could leave to his generals meanwhile he could have an easy life. And that placed another temptation altogether. It's interesting we have studied this in the Great Controversy in our seminar. When Satan puts pressure on the church in one way and the church bravely resists this pressure like the persecution in the first century of Christianity he then uses another tactic by suddenly taken away this pressure and giving them ease. He know persecution suddenly stopped in time of Constantine and Christianity was recognized. It was just a few years prior under Diocletian where the Christians where heavily persecuted. And now came this emperor who made Christianity an honored religion in the state. And the pressure was suddenly released. What temptation this brought to the believers! It was something they couldn't handle. And the same you see with David. First being in battle having to fight in faith and now suddenly ease and luxury. This changes are difficult to handle for the human nature. You can say also the other way around we live today in a time of relative peace and if suddenly we would be throw into a war that would be also hard for us in another direction. So, changes is always something that puts stress on the human nature and is a temptation to trust in my own strength and I must be aware of this.

A luxurious life

A luxurious life goes together with an easy life.

Familiarity with false habits

And another thing is familiarity with false habits. As we have read in the time of David it was customary that the king could do things that the subjects could not do. Even today in the Islam and Emam - I think they call them Emam - that is a special religious teacher. He can have, I don't know how many wives, but many more than an ordinary person. An ordinary person I think he can have four wives. And a special teacher, an Emam or Calief or whatever he is he can have many wives because of his position. You know the very fact that you can have many wives and the fantasies that go along with this (they imagine that paradise means to have many wives), this very fact leads to familiarity with sin and therefore sin is not sinful anymore. You see a king in the time of David it was okay if he just took a wife of somebody else, that was the king, he could do this but not an ordinary man, he couldn't do that. Not that these were the maxims of Israel, but these were the maxims of the surrounding kings, that was the familiarity, that was where he lived in.

Now, I want to say that today we live here rather isolated here in Dickendorf. When we have to attend school like our children, when we would have to go to work as many go to work we are constantly surrounded by sins, sensuality of every kind. And this familiarity with false habits is quite a danger because it tends to undermine pure and noble principles. All the servants of God who remain pure were aware of this danger and for that reason they literally fled into prayer. Take John the Baptist for example. He would flee into the wilderness because he knew that familiarity with evil would undermine principles. Look at Jesus himself, He would see the absolute need to go into prayer in the evening, because He felt if he would not get a fresh hold on God he would lose his pure vision. And that is something we have to be aware of. Familiarity with false habits is a factor that leads us to trust too much in our own strength.

The adoption of wrong habits

And finally the adoption of wrong habits slowly at first, little at first, but strengthened more and more will definitely lead to have too much trust in my own strength.

A wrong reaction to disappointments

There is one more point. A wrong reaction to disappointments. we have briefly discussed this here before. For example the disappointment of 1844 when Jesus did not come as the believers expected led many to react in the following way: they said, "We will not allow this thing to happen to us one more time" and so they added house to house and farm to farm to have some security for the next calamity. Which separated them from God. They relied on their own strength. You have the same after the flood, after mankind grew again they felt that they must do something to secure themselves against another flood and so they gathered together in Babylon against God's counsel and they built a tower in defiance of God's promise to not send a flood anymore. They wanted to make sure that such a thing would not happen to them again. This wrong reaction to disappointments often leads to trust in my own strength.

What were the consequences of David's sin?

The Consequences of David's Sin

- God's name was dishonored
 - David was chosen by God – Did God make a mistake?
 - David was honored by God – Was God biased?
 - David represented God's character – Was this God's character?
- Trust in God decreased more and more
- Israel's piety decreased
- Abhorrence of sin decreased
- Others were encouraged to transgress God's law
- David's conscience was weakened, and consequently his administration of justice was marred
- Confidence in David's judgment decreased
- Concealment of sin was regarded as a solution to problems instead of trust in God's mercy

Let's think about this a little bit. We will read this now soon as we read further in the chapter. But let's summarize this first.

God's name was dishonored

First of all God's name was dishonored. In what way was his name dishonored? What does it mean that his name was dishonored? Well, David was one who was specially chosen by God. Everybody knew this. He was not just elected by the people or he did not come into office by force but he was especially ordained by God. So, the question necessarily goes back to God: did He make a mistake when He ordained this man, because wouldn't God know that this man would fall? How can God ordain such a person? This is a question that necessarily is placed on God's character. His name is dishonored. The next point is: David was not just chosen by God, he was honored by God. How can you honor such a person? Is God biased? Why doesn't He honor another person? And finally David should represent God's character, that's the claim that existed. That he was a picture of what Jehovah is. Is this God's character? Is God hiding his real intentions as David hid his real motives. Is God a

destroyer as David destroyed? So, God's name was really dishonored in many respects. It's a very, very sad story.

Trust in God decreased more and more

The next consequence was trust towards God decreased more and more. Naturally, if God does not know whom He chooses, if God is biased, if this is God's character - then how can I trust this God? You know these things did not come suddenly but they crept into the people more and more. There was a decline in spirituality in Israel. We need to see these consequences very clearly so that we also understand our situation better, because this is very much our experience as we shall see.

Israel's piety decreased / Abhorrence of sin decreased

The next point is Israel's piety decreased, yes that is in connection with this. The abhorrence of sin decreased. Sin was not as abhorrent anymore as it really was. When he could do this, okay. And seemingly at first there were not many consequences in his own life. He continued to live in luxury and ease. Then even later when he felt the consequences very few saw the depth of his true repentance. And this is one of the reasons why he wrote Psalm 51, why he put this in the songbook for everybody to sing so that people would really see that sin needs to be abhorred.

Others were encouraged to transgress God's law

Others were encouraged to transgress God's law, because there was not this abhorrence of sin anymore.

David's conscience weakened / Administration of justice marred

And David's conscience and consequently his administration of justice was marred. And this led him to really not being able to administer his duties properly anymore. His administration became very loose and lax. In other words if there was somebody doing a crime he could reckon with the fact that it wouldn't be punished. If somebody needed justice, well the king was simply not available and so forth. Things got really much out of hand. And the children likewise. They did not get the necessarily discipline anymore and if they got discipline they got it very hard and harsh. So there was no proper handling of situations anymore.

Confidence in David's judgment decreased

And not only that David himself was less able to handle this administration, the confidence in David's jurisdiction also decreased. That means people wondered: Can he really properly judge this man?

Concealment of sin regarded as a solution

And finally, because David had concealed his sin for such a long time until he couldn't conceal it anymore, in fact the people began to talk about it already even before Nathan was sent to David, the people talked about it, it was almost general knowledge already and he still tried to conceal it, the concealment of sin was regarded as a solution for the problems instead of trust in God's mercy. And that is the reason why he also said in Psalm 32: "When I tried to keep it secret my bones waxed old, I was in despair." He says: don't see this as a solution of a problem keep it secret, it burns you up. He was much happier in a way when it was discovered when Nathan came to him and he had to say, "Yes it was me," than he was before, because now at least it was in the open. But before he tried to conceal it and it would consume him, literally. But who understands this? How often do we think that concealment is a solution of a problem. It is not!

So with these thoughts I would like to now continue to read the story with you in Patriarchs and Prophets and let us see as closely as possible in what way this applies to us. We turn back again to page 717.

"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. {PP 717.2}"

In other words familiarity with sin.

"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." {PP 717, 718}

I find it interesting when a fellow believer suddenly comes, let's say with some earrings, that is a little thing may be you may say, but it talks of something already, doesn't it? When he suddenly comes with some jewellery on his necks and fingers and so forth, it talks of something. There is already a familiarity with the world, there is an adaptation of its customs; small at first but it is there.

"Before the conclusion of the war with the Ammonites, David, leaving the conduct of the army to Joab, returned to Jerusalem. The Syrians had already submitted to Israel, and the complete overthrow of the Ammonites appeared certain. David was surrounded by the fruits of victory and the honors of his wise and able rule. It was now, while he was at ease and unguarded, that the tempter seized the opportunity to occupy his mind. The fact that God had taken David into so close connection with Himself and had manifested so great favor toward him, should have been to him the strongest of incentives to preserve his character unblemished. But when in ease and self-security he let go his hold upon God, David yielded to Satan and brought upon his soul the stain of guilt. He, the Heaven-appointed leader of the nation, chosen by God to execute His law, himself trampled upon its precepts. He who should have been a terror to evildoers, by his own act strengthened their hands." {PP 718.1}

Now, this cannot be over-estimated; you see this happen again and again. Just let's look in world history at the moment. There is a nation that wants to stamp out terrorism, but what kind of means are used? What are the means used to stamp out terrorism? The very same means the terrorism uses. So, what is the example given? Exactly that. So, what is the reaction? Exactly that. So, will the decrease or increase terrorism? It will increase! For sure it will increase! I find it very interesting: There was a statistic given out that terrorist acts decreased. And everybody is shaking head and said: That can't be, we hear more and more about terrorist acts in the news and that should increase. And then after a few months they had to correct - No sorry, it is increasing! That was a little bit shameful, but this is really the truth. It's not stamping out terrorism, it's increasing it, because when I, who wants to stop an act do the same things I increase it. So likewise, if I want to stop violence in my child while I beat it, what do I do? I create violence, I will increase it! We really need to understand the real issues here and this is a sad fact that David here strengthened the hands of the evildoers, even so he did not mean to do it, but he actually did it. So, what we do is more important than what we say. How we apply our administration is more important than the content of what we say. Here we have to take a short break and continue the study in the next session.

Study 8

We turn back now to Patriarchs and Prophets to the story of David and let me say again that we want to read the story not just the theoretical story of the past but very much applying to ourselves. Now, we had to deal with that sins too that are described here, but having to deal with it is just enough. We must really see ourselves, our own weakness, and I want to compare this again with Achan.

Achan himself, he was a sinner. He did something that was not good, but it would be wrong to point the fingers on Achan and say "Here, it was him". All Israel had to see themselves in that sin. That was necessary. So when they stoned Achan, they really had to stone themselves and that is something that we really have to do here. Okay, lets read on the story as it is in *Patriarchs and Prophets* on page 718.

"Amid the perils of his earlier life David in conscious integrity could trust his case with God. The Lord's hand had guided him safely past the unnumbered snares that had been laid for his feet. But now, guilty and unrepentant, he did not ask help and guidance from Heaven, but sought to extricate himself from the dangers in which sin had involved him. Bathsheba, whose fatal beauty had proved a snare to the king, was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of David's bravest and most faithful officers. None could foresee what would be the result should the crime become known. The law of God pronounced the adulterer guilty of death, and the proud-spirited soldier, so shamefully wronged, might avenge himself by taking the life of the king or by exciting the nation to revolt." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 718.2

So the issues where larger than simply only the guilt itself. The consequences were larger than just David himself, it was larger even than David and his family. The consequences involved the whole nation. If that proud soldier would have exalted or excited a revolt, it would have involved the whole nation. Though the nation would have been split, some would probably have said "No, David must not die because he is the king", and others would have said "Yes, he must die because that is what our law says". So there would be a split in the nation immediately. So that would be quite a test for them and David was trembling, trembling very much. Now, one of the things that human nature tends to do when we are pressed very sorely in such a circumstance is to seek a way out by our own ways, by our own works, and this is exactly what he did.

"Every effort which David made to conceal his guilt proved unavailing. He had betrayed himself into the power of Satan; danger surrounded him, dishonor more bitter than death was before him. There appeared but one way of escape, and in his desperation he was hurried on to add murder to adultery. He who had compassed the destruction of Saul was seeking to lead David also to ruin. Though the temptations were different, they were alike in leading to transgression of God's law. David reasoned that if Uriah were slain by the hand of enemies in battle, the guilt of his death could not be traced home to the king, Bathsheba would be free to become David's wife, suspicion could be averted, and the royal honor would be maintained." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 718.3

"Uriah was made the bearer of his own death warrant. A letter sent by his hand to Joab from the king commanded, "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die." Joab, already stained with the guilt of one wanton murder, did not hesitate to obey the king's instructions, and Uriah fell by the sword of the children of Ammon." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 719.1

Now, we abhor this act and I understand why, but in the mind of David you could also justify it to some degree, because first of all, by killing this one man, or lets call it killing, he wouldn't have called it killing, but by killing this one man, or by sacrificing this one person, you would save a much greater evil that would result. So, in order to avoid greater evil, you had some collateral damage, unfortunately. But you had to accept this in order to save a bigger good and this is even said to the

point "It was no murder, but because look, God could have protected Uriah. Didn't He protect His children in the hottest battle everywhere?" So, he did not directly murder him, he just allowed him to come into a difficult situation, that's all. And after all, Uriah died honorably. You know, he was a real hero in the sight of everybody. But cover it as you want, it was murder and it was murder for the purpose of covering sin, and that is really what needs to be very, very clearly seen. I want to draw a parallel today which is the same thing but which maybe you look at a little bit different. Let's suppose, somebody who knows that it is wrong, would commit adultery and get a child from another man. Now let's suppose that because the shame would be so great among the fellow believers and so forth, that very person would be counseled to abort the child. What would we have? What would this be? It would be murder for the sake of concealing sin. This has happened and has happened more than once in history as we know but we tend to cover it and we must call it by its name first of all. I don't say that God cannot heal it. He could heal it in the case of David but before He heals it we must be able to name sin by its name. It is murder.

"Heretofore David's record as a ruler had been such as few monarchs have ever equaled. It is written of him that he "executed judgment and justice unto all his people." 2 Samuel 8:15. His integrity had won the confidence and fealty of the nation. But as he departed from God and yielded himself to the wicked one, he became for the time the agent of Satan; yet he still held the position and authority that God had given him, and because of this, claimed obedience that would imperil the soul of him who should yield it. And Joab, whose allegiance had been given to the king rather than to God, transgressed God's law because the king commanded it. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 719.2

Again, when we think of this in terms of the results of the sin, you may think, "Well, to sacrifice the one life is a less evil than to let all the results happen." But, whatever you call it, it is a human way of problem solving. This must be seen very, very clearly.

"David's power had been given him by God, but to be exercised only in harmony with the divine law. When he commanded that which was contrary to God's law, it became sin to obey. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1), but we are not to obey them contrary to God's law. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, sets forth the principle by which we should be governed. He says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:1.

An account of the execution of his order was sent to David, but so carefully worded as not to implicate either Joab or the king. Joab "charged the messenger saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, and if so be that the king's wrath arise, . . . then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for."

The king's answer was, "Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him."

Bathsheba observed the customary days of mourning for her husband; and at their close "David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife." He whose tender conscience and high sense of honor would not permit him, even when in peril of his life, to put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, had so fallen that he could wrong and murder one of his most faithful and most valiant soldiers, and hope to enjoy undisturbed the reward of his sin. Alas! how had the fine gold become dim! how had the most fine gold changed!

From the beginning Satan has portrayed to men the gains to be won by transgression. Thus he seduced angels. Thus he tempted Adam and Eve to sin. And thus he is still leading multitudes away from obedience to God. The path of transgression is made to appear desirable; "but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12. Happy they who, having ventured in this way, learn how bitter are the

fruits of sin, and turn from it betimes. God in His mercy did not leave David to be lured to utter ruin by the deceitful rewards of sin.

For the sake of Israel also there was a necessity for God to interpose. As time passed on, David's sin toward Bathsheba became known, and suspicion was excited that he had planned the death of Uriah. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 719.3-720.3

It became known among Israel, but David somehow didn't catch it. You know he was just living in his own prison I would almost say, in the prison of his guilt, of his guilty conscience, and he could not see what was going on outside again. His sin toward Bathsheba would have, would have to be made known somehow. I mean, it's very difficult to conceal this because in that moment, right after her customary days were over, he took her as his wife, number one. Number two, immediately she got, I mean, not immediately but after the time, everybody could reckon, she got the child. Everybody could almost calculate and say that there must be something wrong and next is the question, there is Uriah, "Why did he die", "What happened to him". Suspicion was raised.

It tended to lower the standard of godliness in Israel, to lessen in many minds the abhorrence of sin; while those who did not love and fear God were by it emboldened in transgression. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 720.4

And here we have another result of the sin of David. It emboldened those who did not have the love and fear of God. It strengthened their hands, it strengthened their hand of the enemy of God.

"Nathan the prophet was bidden to bear a message of reproof to David. It was a message terrible in its severity. To few sovereigns could such a reproof be given but at the price of certain death to the reprover."

We tend to think, well, he was a prophet and he was saying one of the members of the church of Israel, what their sins was, but he was not an ordinary member, he was the king and the king in those days was a person of absolute authority. A king was a dictator and he could do what he wants, literally. Everybody would have obeyed him. If David would have said "Here, take this man out; He is insane! Kill him!" That would have been the end of Nathan.

"Nathan delivered the divine sentence unflinchingly, yet with such heaven-born wisdom as to engage the sympathies of the king, to arouse his conscience, and to call from his lips the sentence of death upon himself."

Nathan was very wise really. In many respects, first of all, Nathan did not fear to give the message of God. We must make this very clear. The fact that he was wise did not betray any fearfulness in himself. The reason why he was going tactfully to the king, why he rose his sympathies first and his conscience was to help the king. It was not to protect himself and to draw out sentence of death upon himself was much wiser than if he would have done so. You see, it is much more effective when the guilty one condemns himself and that is why in the last judgment, God will not himself pronounce the judgment, but who will pronounce the judgment upon the sinner? He himself! That is much more efficient. It really makes it very clear.

"Appealing to David as the divinely appointed guardian of his people's rights, the prophet repeated a story of wrong and oppression that demanded redress.

"There were two men in one city," he said, "the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress

for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him."

"The anger of the king was roused, and he exclaimed, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing is worthy to die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'" 2 Samuel 12:5, 6, margin. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 721.1,2

The way around, first restore and then to die. But it is amazing isn't it, for the sake of a lamb, this man had to die. I mean, this man, this king had a sense of justice; no question about it but he would not have the strength to apply this same justice to himself.

"Nathan fixed his eyes upon the king; then, lifting his right hand to heaven, he solemnly declared, "Thou art the man." "Wherefore," he continued, "hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight?" The guilty may attempt, as David had done, to conceal their crime from men; they may seek to bury the evil deed forever from human sight or knowledge; but "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." Matthew 10:26." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 721.3

When we read this story, I wonder how we feel? Do you feel relieved in a way that we are not David? That we have not done exactly the same thing as he? Or do we feel condemned because we see ourselves in this? We really have to see that this sin even though it is very unpleasant to deal with, is really something we must identify ourselves with. We have seen wherein we have failed in a similar manner. Every sin that we have covered or tried to cover is really eating up our strength.

"There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known."

There is nothing that can be covered forever as we have seen, all sins will become opened anyway. It is just a question of when.

Nathan declared: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul. . . . Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house. . . . Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor. . . . For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 721.4

Now that was very brave on the part of Nathan that he could speak out so directly and so openly to the king, but it was good for the king.

"The prophet's rebuke touched the heart of David; conscience was aroused; his guilt appeared in all its enormity. His soul was bowed in penitence before God. With trembling lips he said, "I have sinned against the Lord.'"

That was his first word, "I have sinned against the Lord." He may have said that I have sinned against Uriah, I have sinned against Bathsheba, I have sinned against the nation, but his first words were, "I have sinned against the Lord." He really began to have a true concept of his sin here. "I have sinned against the Lord."

"All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. David had committed a grievous sin, toward both Uriah and Bathsheba, and he keenly felt this. But infinitely greater was his sin against God." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 722.1

Now, let us think about this and dwell about this a little bit. What does it mean that he had sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, against the nation, but his sin toward God was infinitely greater? We must understand that every sin is primarily and firstly directed against God, because by sinning, we misrepresent His character, especially those of us who bear his name. You see when we call ourselves children of God, and we act as we do, we really show another character. Whatever we do, we steal God's property. In the case of David, I mean, obviously the life of Uriah belonged to God and it was not just stealing Bathsheba from Uriah, it was stealing everything from God; and it means also that we kill God's property.

Every Sin is Against God

Sin against God

- Distorts His character
- Steals His property
- Kills His property

Sin against my neighbor

- Distorts God's character
- Steals God's property
- Kills God's property

By sinning against my neighbor, I am even more guilty toward God, the Creator, than I am toward my neighbor.

So the sin was really directed against God first of all. Uriah belonged to God. If a man raised his hand to kill another man, even if it's done in a war or as an executioner in an official sentence, death sentence, he is taking away that alone what God can give. You know, I find it strange, very, very strange how one can justify the death sentence. I mean, true, the justification is given, it's a deterrent against sin, I understand this, but think about this, you raise your hand to take away that which does not belong to you which you cannot give. If had given life to that person, I can take it away again, but I haven't given it. Another one has given it. So that really means, to enter into God's sphere to do His job which He would have to do. But to do this even in order to cover up our own sins, that is doubly problematic and this really must be realized very clearly.

It is also a sin against my neighbour because before my neighbour, I misrepresent God's character. I mean, it's not just against Him directly but also my neighbour has more, greater difficulties to really see how God really is and the same is true with the other things, stealing God's property is a sin against my neighbour as well, and killing God's property is a sin against my neighbour. So when sinning against my neighbour, I'm even more guilty towards God the Creator than I am towards my neighbour, that is the principle that David clearly saw when he sinned, because he was standing there and his first words were, "I have sinned against God, and I have done very, very wickedly against him. Let us now continue to read the story.

"Though there would be found none in Israel to execute the sentence of death upon the anointed of the Lord, David trembled, lest, guilty and unforgiven, he should be cut down by the swift judgment of

God. But the message was sent him by the prophet, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." Yet justice must be maintained. The sentence of death was transferred from David to the child of his sin. Thus the king was given opportunity for repentance; while to him the suffering and death of the child, as a part of his punishment, was far more bitter than his own death could have been. The prophet said, "Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

When his child was stricken, David, with fasting and deep humiliation, pleaded for its life. He put off his royal robes, he laid aside his crown, and night after night he lay upon the earth, in heartbroken grief interceding for the innocent one suffering for his guilt. "The elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not." Often when judgments had been pronounced upon persons or cities, humiliation and repentance had turned aside the blow, and the Ever-Merciful, swift to pardon, had sent messengers of peace. Encouraged by this thought, David persevered in his supplication so long as the child was spared." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 722.2,3

Now, what do you think about this attitude of David here, of praying for the child as he did? You may say it was hypocritical almost because here something was taken away from him but he had taken away life from another person, hadn't he? He had much less scruples to kill Uriah and now he was pleading for the child. You know, he should have thought about this before. That's the attitude that we could take to David couldn't we? But you could also look at it like this: he really saw his own guilt in this whole matter, and he felt as though he himself killed this child; and because of this he pleaded for it as he did, not because it was his child, but because it was the very object of God's wrath against sin. It was the very object of his sin, of the result of his sin and because he felt that others should not suffer for his sin, that is the reason why he prayed as he did.

I just hope it was like this, to be honest. Maybe there was also some fatherly feelings in this matter mixed among these things which would mean because it is my child, the question is would he have prayed for another child like this in the same way? If it was the subject of the results of his sin, would he have done this? That is a good question, isn't it? We don't know. We would have to find out one day in heaven. But the point is, that we can give David credit here that he felt true repentance in this matter, which is clearly expressed also in Psalm 51.

After all, the repentance that was starting here was not an act that was immediately finished. It would go on as we have read in *The Acts of the Apostles* in another camp meeting. Maybe you remember what is repentance? It is an ever deepening experience that we can never say "Now I'm finished. I've seen the depth of my sin and I don't need to repent anymore." That would be self-sufficiency. That would be self-confidence and how easy do we put an end to our repentance by saying, "Yes, now I have it. Now I have the victory. Now this can not happen to me any more. Now I am over it. This is past. It is not a part of my life anymore." We like to make such expressions in order to create confidence in ourselves but it wouldn't help. It will only create more self-sufficiency, more self-confidence which is most dangerous.

"Upon learning that it was dead, he quietly submitted to the decree of God. The first stroke had fallen of that retribution which he himself had declared just; but David, trusting in God's mercy, was not without comfort.

Very many, reading the history of David's fall, have inquired, "Why has this record been made public? Why did God see fit to throw open to the world this dark passage in the life of one so highly honored of Heaven?" PP 722

So let us ask this question ourselves, why was this record made public? Before we read on, just think about it. What could be the reason that God did such a thing? Is there any benefit? I mean, it's absolutely unpleasant; it's unappetizing to deal with such a sin. And remember, we read his Psalms and we say they are inspired and we pray them and we sing them. Well, there is a good reason which

we shall learn as we go on. The main reason is evidently that we do not trust in human power. The main is that what we are studying here that if the Bible has to teach one thing above anything else is, to have less trust in human power. That is the first lesson that we need to learn. So let's read on.

"The prophet, in his reproof to David, had declared concerning his sin, "By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.""

Blaspheme, what does it mean? Yes, it is especially directed against God. It means to speak against God, basically. It could be directed also against the people of God but they are the enemies of the Lord, so he is blasphemed. The question was asked in the end of the last study, "Was it not directed against the messengers of the Lord. Yes it was, but really it was directed against the Lord. Really, behind the messengers, he is standing.

"Through successive generations infidels have pointed to the character of David, bearing this dark stain, and have exclaimed in triumph and derision, "This is the man after God's own heart!" Thus a reproach has been brought upon religion, God and His word have been blasphemed, souls have been hardened in unbelief, and many, under a cloak of piety, have become bold in sin." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 722.4

That is no theory, that is really so. People have really used this as an example.

"But the history of David furnishes no countenance to sin. It was when he was walking in the counsel of God that he was called a man after God's own heart. When he sinned, this ceased to be true of him until by repentance he had returned to the Lord. The word of God plainly declares, "The thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord." 2 Samuel 11:27, margin. And the Lord said to David by the prophet, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? . . . Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me." Though David repented of his sin and was forgiven and accepted by the Lord, he reaped the baleful harvest of the seed he himself had sown. The judgments upon him and upon his house testify to God's abhorrence of the sin. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 723.1

So the consequences that fell on David were double really. First of all, the very fact that the whole sin was made open was a calamity in itself was a consequence in itself. You can imagine how he lost respect before the others and how he would find it difficult to approach them in future, especially as their king because they would constantly think of his son's sin wouldn't they? And he would be constantly aware that they are aware. There would be this knowledge upon each other. Number two, the death of his child, and number three, there was another death still promised. Fourfold it would be repaid him and this really happened in the death of a few other sons, namely Absalom, Amnon, . . . who else? The one that already died, that is threefold. Did I forget somebody now? Oh yes, that's right, there was another child in this time. Okay, the point is really that still more calamity would come and David did not know exactly how and where but he just knew it would come to his house. It was a terrible thought.

"The judgments upon him and upon his house testify to God's abhorrence of the sin"

Now, again, the question is, why did God do all this? We need to see, it's a strong lesson for David and for Israel and for us, that we cannot depend on humanity. We have to see our dependence upon God every moment and our repentance must constantly deepen. That's our only chance.

" Though David repented of his sin and was forgiven and accepted by the Lord, he reaped the baleful harvest of the seed he himself had sown."

This teaches another lesson, and that is this lesson that, it is not so that provided we repent of our sins and really feel sorry for it and put it away that God will remove the results. That is not so. God will not necessarily remove the results. And why? Because it is good for us. I really need to emphasize this because this has been partly in our heads in the past. I will give evidence of this a little later.

"Heretofore God's providence had preserved David against all the plottings of his enemies, and had been directly exercised to restrain Saul. But David's transgression had changed his relation to God. The Lord could not in any wise sanction iniquity. He could not exercise His power to protect David from the results of his sin as he had protected him from the enmity of Saul.

"There was a great change in David himself. He was broken in spirit by the consciousness of his sin and its far-reaching results. He felt humbled in the eyes of his subjects. His influence was weakened. Hitherto his prosperity had been attributed to his conscientious obedience to the commandments of the Lord. But now his subjects, having a knowledge of his sin, would be led to sin more freely. His authority in his own household, his claim to respect and obedience from his sons, was weakened. A sense of his guilt kept him silent when he should have condemned sin; it made his arm feeble to execute justice in his house. His evil example exerted its influence upon his sons, and God would not interpose to prevent the result. He would permit things to take their natural course, and thus David was severely chastised.

"For a whole year after his fall David lived in apparent security; there was no outward evidence of God's displeasure. But the divine sentence was hanging over him. Swiftly and surely a day of judgment and retribution was approaching, which no repentance could avert, agony and shame that would darken his whole earthly life. Those who, by pointing to the example of David, try to lessen the guilt of their own sins, should learn from the Bible record that the way of transgression is hard. Though like David they should turn from their evil course, the results of sin, even in this life, will be found bitter and hard to bear.

"God intended the history of David's fall to serve as a warning that even those whom He has greatly blessed and favored are not to feel secure and neglect watchfulness and prayer. And thus it has proved to those who in humility have sought to learn the lesson that God designed to teach. From generation to generation thousands have thus been led to realize their own danger from the tempter's power. The fall of David, one so greatly honored by the Lord, has awakened in them distrust of self. They have felt that God alone could keep them by His power through faith." PP 723,724

That's the whole purpose why we studied this. We need this experience, distrust of self.

"Knowing that in Him was their strength and safety, they have feared to take the first step on Satan's ground.

Even before the divine sentence was pronounced against David he had begun to reap the fruit of transgression. His conscience was not at rest." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 723.2-724.1

I am sorry, we have to take a break here, but we want to put a list together why David's sin had been revealed. Think about this a little bit till tomorrow.

Study 9

The Example of David

We are studying together the history of David and the purpose of doing this is because we need to clearly see the weakness of humanity, and we need to get a true sense of self-distrust on the one hand, and trust in God in the other hand.

We have seen that one of the major reasons for our weakness and for our fallings and failings, and for delaying the coming of Christ is that we have too much self-confidence. It is sometimes hard to see because in our own estimation we are not so self confident maybe, especially since we are often discouraged maybe and so forth. But this kind of discouragement is not self-distrust; that is something else. As we have seen, it is even often self-confidence, because the pendulum swings between total discouragement on the one hand and presumption on the other. So, what we need is the true or the healthy self-distrust. And this we shall learn by David and even from David's fall.

We have studied his fall in our last session; we have also studied something of his repentance and on this we want to continue today. So we turn again to the chapter "David's Sin and Repentance" on page 723 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. We need to look at this chapter and then also at the next chapter because this also deals with his sin.

"For a whole year after his fall David lived in apparent security; there was no outward evidence of God's displeasure. But the divine sentence was hanging over him. Swiftly and surely a day of judgment and retribution was approaching, which no repentance could avert, agony and shame that would darken his whole earthly life. Those who, by pointing to the example of David, try to lessen the guilt of their own sins, should learn from the Bible record that the way of transgression is hard. Though like David they should turn from their evil course, the results of sin, even in this life, will be found bitter and hard to bear." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 723.4

Now, when we read this, we must not think for a moment that God is please to give us or to allow these results of sin to fall upon us. He does not like to see us suffer, there is no question. Neither does God arbitrarily steals things that we should suffer. That is not his character. But when these things come he does not prevent them for our best. And this we shall see clearly as we go on. Now, we have another very interesting statement in the Spirit of Prophecy, I turn to this for a moment. Let's turn to *The Desire of Ages*, page 224.5.

"God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him."

And that is a very interesting statement, now apply this to David for a moment, apply this to a sinner who cannot avert the consequences of his sin even with repentance. I mean there is genuine repentance and yet the consequences of sin are still there. Would he still choose these things to come upon him, if he could see the end from the beginning? A sinner who truly repented but in spite of his repentance the consequences of sin still come upon him, would he still say: This is exactly what I would want. I read a letter a few days ago, where a brother who realized that God wanted to save him out of a entanglement of sin, but it happened in a way that he did not expect. It happened in a way that really brought terrible consequences upon him; and he said: had I know how God would answer my prayer I would not have prayed. I understand this, from seeing the consequences that came upon him. But,, is this an agreement with the statement here? Certainly not; what we need to see is, it requires faith to express such a step. It really requires faith because we cannot sometimes see beyond the moment, and we just see the terrible situation which we are in. And for that reason, we seem to be depressed, but it is our duty, not to rely on our feelings on those moments. But to rely on the word of

God, and that is a problem that many of us have. Instead of relying in the word of God, we rely on feelings. We rely on certain circumstances. We must come away from this. Let us by faith grasp this fact: God never leads his children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which are fulfilling as coworkers with him. Now, in the case of David as we shall see; so likewise in the case of others, the consequences of sin, what is their purpose? Well, we will come back to this. I won't say everything right here. Let's turn again to *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 723.4 and read this again.

"Swiftly and surely a day of judgment and retribution was approaching, which no repentance could avert, agony and shame that would darken his whole earthly life. Those who, by pointing to the example of David, try to lessen the guilt of their own sins, should learn from the Bible record that the way of transgression is hard. Though like David they should turn from their evil course, the results of sin, even in this life, will be found bitter and hard to bear."

Now, when we just read this and nothing more, the outlook of the Christian life seems to be rather dreary, rather dark and hopeless and so forth. Well, we have to suffer. And many people look down as the result of this. They can never look up. They never can be cheerful and happy. Now, they do not see the purpose of these things. You can read this statement from two angles. You can read this statement here from the angle: Oh, what do I have to suffer, or you can read the statement from the angle: This is God's means to bring about a glorious purpose. A glorious purpose indeed! And, if I can see this by faith, I will not make a sour face because of such a statement, but I will be rather curious, now what is the lesson behind it? Aren't you? Wouldn't you like to know what the glorious purpose is, that was fulfilled in David's case? Why did he suffer the consequences of his sin in spite of his repentance? Why was it not possible that any repentance could avert the results of sin? There was a glorious purpose to be fulfilled, and if we see this glorious purpose, then we shall praise the Lord for it. But if we find rebellion in our hearts because God allowed this, you see: this man had repented, why God allowed these things to happen? If we feel that God is unjust or hard or cruel, or anything like this, then we are on the false side. We're on the side of the rebel and we should ask for deliverance.

"God intended the history of David's fall to serve as a warning that even those whom He has greatly blessed and favored are not to feel secure and neglect watchfulness and prayer. And thus it has proved to those who in humility have sought to learn the lesson that God designed to teach." So there is a lesson in the very fact that David reaped the result of his sins. There is a lesson in it. Which is the lesson? "From generation to generation thousands have thus been led to realize their own danger from the tempter's power." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 724.1

Now, if the consequences that God allowed in the life of David, if these would avert one person from sinning, then it would be worth while already. Do you believe that? If you were David would you want it to be this way? I don't see yes, enthusiastic yes. What is our attitude? Are we just selfishly thinking of ourselves, or are we really here in order to further God's cause? Do we want to make an end of sin, and bring an everlasting righteousness? Or do we want to save our skin? For what reason are we Christians? We are Christians in order to make an end of sin; and that means regardless what happens to us, the main thing is that God's name is glorified. If I can't participate in this joy, then I'm not a true Christian. We really must realize this. "From generation to generation thousands have thus been led to realize their own danger from the tempter's power." I wonder how many people were kept from sinning because they studied David's life. And they studied the consequences of sin. And that is really a good result. This in itself is glorious enough. This in itself would be worthwhile to suffer everything. Let us very briefly look at the judgments that fell on David after he had fallen. What were these?

The Judgments that Fell on David

Agony

A burning
conscience

Shame

The publicizing
of his sin

Loss

The death of his
four children

The sword did
not depart from
his house

These were the three basic judgments that came upon him. Agony means, there was a burning conscience. We cannot begin to appreciate what agony David went through unless we have been in a similar situation. Burning conscience really ate him up, as David himself said 'when I was trying to be quite, my bones waxed old.' The shame that was connected with this when his sin was publicize, when it became known and when he even himself published it in a song, and everybody knew it. And the lost which was the death of his four children, and as we shall see more clearly as we go on, the sort that never departed from his house, which he constantly expected to come, and which eventually came in his full force. Now, this were the terrible consequences that fell on David. Many wonder how David could fall into such sin, and yet be counted as one of the prophets in the bible, that many of his books are still there, that he still was remaining a king in Israel, and so forth; but we should see also the results of his sin, not just this one side. It was harder for him certainly to remain king, than if he would have stepped down. It would be harder even for him to live on than to simply lay down and go to rest after that what he experienced. "From generation to generation thousands have thus been led to realize their own danger from the tempter's power."

"The fall of David, one so greatly honored by the Lord, has awakened in them distrust of self." And that is exactly what we are looking for here, that is what we need. And mind you self-distrust does not mean to be rebellious against God, it does not mean to be cast down to be discouraged or to accuse God of being unjust. Self-distrust is the opposite of this. Self-distrust means that I distrust myself, but I see justice in all God's dealings.

"They have felt that God alone could keep them by His power through faith. Knowing that in Him was their strength and safety, they have feared to take the first step on Satan's ground." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 724.1

"Even before the divine sentence was pronounced against David he had begun to reap the fruit of transgression. His conscience was not at rest. The agony of spirit which he then endured is brought to view in the thirty-second psalm. He says:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is

covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old

Through my roaring all the day long.

For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me:

My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer."

Psalm 32:1-4, R.V. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 724.2

And the fifty-first psalm is an expression of David's repentance, when the message of reproof came to him from God:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness:

According unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out
my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from
my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before
me. . . .

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I
shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness;

That the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide Thy face from my sins,

And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;

And renew a right spirit within me. "

So this psalm shows very clearly that David understood that his sin was not just incurring guilt, it was changing his whole nature. And what he desired is it not simply deliverance from the condemnation of his sin, but he desired deliverance from the condition of his sin.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God;

And renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from Thy presence;

And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; "

He did not pray once, please deliver me from the consequences of that sin, when he talks of salvation, he means salvation from sin, he means a clean heart. But never salvation from the consequences.

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;

And uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways;

And sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my
salvation:

And my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness."

Psalm 51:1-14. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 724.3

"Thus in a sacred song to be sung in the public assemblies of his people, in the presence of the court--priests and judges, princes and men of war--and which would preserve to the latest generation the knowledge of his fall, the king of Israel recounted his sin, his repentance, and his hope of pardon through the mercy of God." He himself published it in this way, that is really something. It shows that he did not rely on secrecy anymore. But now he wanted it to be published for one reason only, and that is that it works as a deterrent against sin. He wanted salvation not only for himself but for

others. As we shall read down there, "then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted" that means he wouldn't want to be a great preacher afterwards, but what he wanted, he wanted that his experience is a teaching for transgressors, "that sinners shall be converted unto thee." That was all his desire. "Instead of endeavoring to conceal his guilt he desired that others might be instructed by the sad history of his fall." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 725.1

"David's repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgments threatened, inspired his prayer. But he saw the enormity of his transgression against God; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. David did not in despair give over the struggle." And that is the others side which shows true repentance. You see, a person that gives up in despair, has no true repentance. He may have a measure of self-distrust, but it is not coupled with real trust in God, and for that reason it is not the healthy self-distrust. It is not the true self-distrust, that we are studying here.

"David did not in despair give over the struggle. In the promises of God to repentant sinners he saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance.

"For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it:

Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Psalm 51:16, 17.

"Though David had fallen, the Lord lifted him up. He was now more fully in harmony with God and in sympathy with his fellow men than before he fell. In the joy of his release he sang:

"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;

And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. . . .

Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble;

Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

Psalm 32:5-7

"Many have murmured at what they called God's injustice in sparing David, whose guilt was so great, after having rejected Saul for what appear to them to be far less flagrant sins. But David humbled himself and confessed his sin, while Saul despised reproof and hardened his heart in impenitence. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 725.2-726.2

So, it is interesting it's not the amount of sin or the greatness of sin that determines where we stand, but it's our relationship to it, do we really repent of it? Or are we stubborn? It could be a small sin which we cling to it stubbornly, that brings about our down fall.

"This passage in David's history is full of significance to the repenting sinner. It is one of the most forcible illustrations given us of the struggles and temptations of humanity, and of genuine repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Through all the ages it has proved a source of encouragement to souls that, having fallen into sin, were struggling under the burden of their guilt.

Thousands of the children of God, who have been betrayed into sin, when ready to give up to despair have remembered how David's sincere repentance and confession were accepted by God, notwithstanding he suffered for his transgression; and they also have taken courage to repent and try again to walk in the way of God's commandments." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 726.3.

I find it interesting how humbly this is expressed here, "they have taken courage to repent" I mean it's not self-understood, 'of course I repented' as though this is a light thing. You know, it takes courage to go this way. And again 'of course I walk now in the ways of God commandments, of course I don't

fall anymore.' This is self-confidence. But they try "to walk in the way of God's commandments." In other words, with God's help yew, with fear and trembling they walk these ways, not in self-confidence.

Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him. Whoever will in faith accept God's promises, will find pardon. The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul. He has given this promise: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." *Isaiah 27:5*. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." *Isaiah 55:7*. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 726.4}

This is the conclusion of the chapter, and I wish now to go over with you over this last paragraphs of this chapter, that we summarize it. We must have it very clearly before our eyes, as though is burned unto our minds. So we see that the judgments that fell on David were agony, shame, and lost. Now, we need to ask the question, why could repentance not aver judgment? We have read it here. What is the reason, why could repentance not avert judgment? Judgments fell upon David which no repentance could avert.

Why could Repentance not Avert Judgment?

- People point to David's sin to lessen their guilt
 - They learn that the way of transgression is hard
 - The results of sin are hard and bitter to bear even in this life
- Some think that God is not so strict because of mercy
 - They are not to feel secure
 - No one can neglect watchfulness and prayer
- Thousands have been awakened
 - Realize their own danger
 - Are awakened to self-distrust
 - Fear to take the first step on Satan's ground
- God alone can keep us by His power through faith

- People point to David's sin to lessen their guilt: I'm not so bad, because look what he did. I didn't do that what he did. I didn't take another man's wife, and then had him killed. I didn't do that. You see, I sinned, but not so bad; so there's often a reference to the sin of David. I find it interesting, we can refer to David but under two angles, the one angle is to really realize how weak we are, how human nature is, or we can revert to the sin of David to excuse ourselves 'look what he did, look what he did, look what he did.' And we must be careful, how we quote the sins of David. They learn that the way of transgression is hard when they see this. The results of sin are hard and bitter to bear even in this life. It's one thing to quote a sin, it's another thing to quote the consequences that he bore as a result of it.

- Some think that God is not so strict because of mercy. You know, they think that because God is so merciful, he overlooks sin sometimes at least. And surely he overlooks it in my case. He will not be so strict with me. But men are not to feel secure in this. They cannot, neglect watchfulness and prayer. And we cannot neglect to make things right. We cannot play with God's mercy, that impossible. So we have to realize that we cannot feel secure and that we cannot neglect watchfulness in prayer. If we learn this from David's experience, then the purpose of that history in the Bible, is fulfilled for us. That reminds me of a statement that Paul gave in Philippians 2:12: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." If that is the result of David's history for us, then he did not suffer in vain what he suffered. And David would want to be this way.
- The next is thousands (and that's one of the reasons why God could not avert the judgments) realize now their own danger, they are awakened to self-distrust.
- And they realize that God alone can keep them, that is he can keep us by his power through faith. We cannot rely on humanity. We cannot on our human nature. Further more, thousands now fear to take the first step on Satan's ground. That is good, there must be a fear to take the first step on Satan's ground because the first step brings the second step and so forth.

The next that we want to consider together is, what are the signs of true repentance? We can ponder about this a little bit. So what are the signs of true repentance according to this chapter? What did you see? How do you know that David's repentance was true? I mean, we cannot look into the heart of another person, but there are certain signs which show whether the repentance is true or not. In some cases you immediately know that it's not a true repentance. If David for example would have lamented because of the results of sin, if he would have desired to escape the results of sin than rather sin itself, then you would know that his repentance is not really true.

Signs of True Repentance

- No effort to palliate sin
- No desire to escape judgments
- Seeing the enormity of the transgression against God
- Seeing the defilement of the soul
- Loathing sin
- Praying not only for pardon, but for purity of heart
- No despair
- Not giving up the struggle
- Relying on the promises of God
- Being more fully in harmony with God
- Being in sympathy with his fellow men

- So, first of all, a sign true repentance in the case of David was: there was no effort to palliate sin. If for example, I use David's transgression to lessen my guilt, then this is a sign that there is no true repentance, because that is a palliation of sin.
- The next is, there is no desire to escape the judgments, in the case of David.
- He sees the enormity of the transgression against God.

- He sees the defilement of the soul; he doesn't just see the guilt that his action has incurred, but he sees the defilement of the soul.
- He loathes his sin, he has abhorrence of sin, loathing means to really hate it, to shudder when you only think of it. There is a true loathing of this sin. Not because of the consequences, but because of the sin itself. Because of what it did to the Savior, and to the loved ones, and to God's creatures.
- The next is that we pray not for pardon but for purity of heart. We read all of this, I just summarized this here so that we really burn it in our minds.
- The next sign is that there is no despair. That's also very important. If a person gives up, if he despairs, then he has no true repentance. Not giving up of the struggle, many people say: it's no use to continue the struggle, look at me, look at what I did, when we give up the struggle, that is a sure sign that there is no true repentance.
- The next point is that we rely on the promises of God. You know how David after all this relied on the promises of God. He really realized: This is my only stronghold, and he held fast to it with all his might.
- And he was now more fully in harmony with God, and he was in sympathy with his fellow men, as never before. Now, a person who has been forgiven as David did, and who has true sorrow for his sin, who has true repentance, he will never be hard toward his fellow men. He'll never have an accusative spirit or judgmental or legalistic spirit. Or something like this. He will have sympathy with his fellow men.

So, these are some signs of true repentance. Harmony with God it's a very important element as well. Can we see this? Can we measure ourselves in this, whether our repentance is true, or not? Certainly, when we look at this, we can see how deep our own repentance is.

The next question we want to ask is this, why was David's sin revealed? Why wasn't it kept secret? Because, it brought a terrible shame upon himself, it brought terrible shame upon Israel, upon the cause of God, and through many generations, even to the end of time, infidels are always using this as an example of how the people of God are. "Here look are them" and so forth. Why would God reveal such a thing? Why wouldn't he keep it secret? The answer was given in the chapter, you still remember?

Why was David's Sin Revealed?

- To show that sin is not condoned
- Righteousness is confirmed
- The consequences of sin are a warning
- True repentance is revealed
- God's character is justified
- Righteousness and love are revealed
- Reveals that God pardons abundantly
- Encourages others to seek repentance as David did
- Encourages others to try to walk again in God's commandments
- The Church is cleansed
- Hiding is not a solution

- To show that sin is not condoned. God must show very clearly that he cannot excuse sin, that he cannot in any way say: sin is okay. It is not okay, and that becomes very clear in God's dealing with that.
- That means that righteousness is confirmed. And that needs to be confirmed. The righteousness of God.
- It was also given because the consequence of sin is a warning to all of us.
- It was revealed so that true repentance is revealed, that we know what true repentance is.
- It was revealed so that God's character is justified. I mean the way that God dealt with it, really show something about God's character.
- Furthermore we see the combination of righteousness and love. Righteousness that could not excuse sin, but love that could cleanse him from that sin. And this combination of both is very clearly revealed in the case of David.
- It is revealed that God pardons abundantly as we have read in this last sentence. "For he pardons abundantly" In fact Paul even goes so far to say: "Where the sin abounds, grace much more abounds." In other words, God he goes against the sin by giving a revelation of his goodness in even greater turns.
- It is to encourage others to seek repentance as David did. Exactly in the same way. In other words, it is really an incentive, encouragement to do this too, when we have fallen. Because very often then Satan comes and says: You cannot come back, it's hopeless. But when we see that David could come back, we can come back too.
- It's an encouragement to others to try to walk again in God's commandments, as we have read.
- And the church is cleansed, through this experience.
- Finally we see that hiding and concealing is not a solute to a problem, never. We never say when God keeps our secrets that this is a wonderful solution to a problem, it is not. God usually does not keep the secrets, cannot keep them for long anyway because the judgment is the latest when everything will be revealed, and must be revealed to finish the great controversy. We have to really understand that hiding and concealing is not a solution to problems.

So what leads to a true repentance? That is our great question here, and closing I want to ask this. Is it an awareness of the consequence of sin, or is it an awareness of the goodness of God? What is it?

What Leads to True Repentance?

An awareness of the consequences of sin

An awareness of the goodness of God

- The contrast between light and darkness reveals the character of God to the point where the great controversy can be ended.
- It is a keen awareness of the consequences of sin that reveals God's goodness and leads to true repentance.

The contrast between light and darkness reveals the character of God to the point where the great controversy can be ended, so it is keen awareness of the consequences of sin, that reveals God's goodness and leads to repentance. In other words, the goodness of God would be nothing to us if we would not be aware keenly aware of the consequences of sin. Where is the goodness, if there is no consequence of sin, what does the goodness do? We cannot really appreciate it. You see? That's the point; we can appreciate this only when we are keenly aware of the consequences of sin and not only the temporal, but the eternal consequences. Not only the consequences to our own lives but to the lives of others and especially to Jesus Christ. That is what works thorough repentance. So the combination of both: An awareness of the consequences of sin, and awareness of the goodness of God, and both we see in the case of David. And this is why the story is so uplifting and encouraging. Here we have to close, and in our next session we want to continue the subject.

Study 10

The Example of David in GSR

So we want to continue to look at the experience of David, and we would like to understand better in what way David really was delivered and in what way his experience, helps us to gain an experience of self-distrust, which we need so much. We turn now to the chapter 72, "The Rebellion of Absalom." This chapter continues really with David's sin and repentance, it's a continuation, but this time we see also of his weaknesses, even after his repentance; but likewise of his strength. This chapter: "The Rebellion of Absalom," really shows both, it shows the depth to which repentance can lead a man, it shows also the limits and again it's a lesson in self-distrust. So let's read:

"He shall restore fourfold," had been David's unwitting sentence upon himself, on listening to the prophet Nathan's parable; and according to his own sentence he was to be judged. Four of his sons must fall, and the loss of each would be a result of the father's sin." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 727.1-

"The shameful crime of Amnon, the first-born, was permitted by David to pass unpunished and unrebuked. The crime of Amnon, what was it? I think you call it incest, right? It was also in the same area of adultery. It was dishonoring his sister and, since it was in the same area of sensuality, so we can say generally speaking, how would David react on this? What would David think of this when he saw his son committing a sin in the same area in which he had fallen? He would think, "well basically he is doing the same as I did." He felt true repentance, he would not have a judgmental spirit and say "he must not do it," forgetting what he had done himself. He would see his own sin greater than that of his son, surely. But, at the same time, it would have been necessary to severely punish it, as he himself received punishment as well. But David refused that rod, which he accepted for himself. I don't know if punishment would have meant the death of Amnon in this case, but it definitely would have meant that his position would be a different one, than the honored son of the king. Let's read about this:

"The shameful crime of Amnon, the first-born, was permitted by David to pass unpunished and unrebuked."

Not just unpunished, but also unrebuked.

"The law pronounced death upon the adulterer, and the unnatural crime of Amnon made him doubly guilty. But David, self-condemned for his own sin, failed to bring the offender to justice. For two full years Absalom, the natural protector of the sister so foully wronged, concealed his purpose of revenge, but only to strike more surely at the last. At a feast of the king's sons the drunken, incestuous Amnon was slain by his brother's command. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 727.2

"Twofold judgment had been meted out to David. The terrible message was carried to him, "Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

"Then the king arose," like with rumors, they usually get bigger and bigger, so it was here too. "Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent." The king's sons, returning in alarm to Jerusalem, revealed to their father the truth; Amnon alone had been slain; and they "lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore." But Absalom fled to Talmai, the king of Geshur, his mother's father. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 727.3

"Like other sons of David, Amnon had been left to selfish indulgence. He had sought to gratify every thought of his heart, regardless of the requirements of God. Notwithstanding his great sin, God had borne long with him. For two years he had been granted opportunity for repentance; but he continued in sin, and with his guilt upon him, he was cut down by death, to await the awful tribunal of the judgment. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 727.4

"David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, the Lord permitted events to take their natural

course, and did not restrain Absalom. When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 728.1

Now, what is better, to be punished by parents or rulers, or to be punished by God? (In this case) When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, God himself will take the case in his hand. That's worst. Now, what does it mean that God will take the case in its hand? Does not mean that God arbitrarily inflicts some punishment, neither should the parents arbitrarily inflict punishment. The point is that there must be consequences in the life; the law as God gave it, must be strictly applied. And if this is neglected then the school of life will hit the child. We have learned this last year in the school of life, do you remember?

We receive the school of life with children. If we don't receive it there, it will come in life. But it will come much harder, we can't escape this school of life, we can't, it will come. And if parents neglect that, they don't do a favor to the child, but they make it worst for the child. It's like for example, I tell our young people, take a cold shower every morning, that is mild, to have a cold shower at the end. If they one day would become a prisoner, you know what happens? You get a cold shower everyday, to be made humble and submissive. For sure, that's one kind of mild torture, if I may say so. And if you are used to cold showers you will be happy. Well, you don't necessarily have to go into a prison, maybe you have to go as a missionary, let's say to Colombia. They don't have heaters as we do, and when we are up there in the Andes which is very high, it's as cold as it is here; and you just have cold water, nothing more. You can stay dirty, that's an option maybe, but maybe it's not. So, if you are used to cold showers, wonderful, you do it. So, you can neglect this training now, but it will be harder later, that's for sure. I only want to use this as an object lesson.

Or you can really take the lesson and apply it to your children. What does the Bible says? He who spares the rod, what does he? No he does not spoil, he hates his son. He hates him, why does he hate him? Because he makes it harder for him. He seems to make it easier for him, but in fact, he makes it harder. And this we really need to realize.

"When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin."

Now, the worst of all is the fact that Amnon was lost forever. As we read: He died as an impenitent sinner. He will not be in heaven. Now, who knows if David had applied the rod to him, if he couldn't have been saved? But the fact that he did not do, could only limit sin by extinguishing it. In other words, sin destroyed itself, and that was the end of it. So that he would not spread a more baleful influence throughout the country. So the whole situation was really a very sad testimony of the neglect of parents. Parents or rulers it says here. Who are rulers? That could be a king, that could be a minister, a mayor, but it could also be a church ruler, in a way. Kings and rulers have duties, and to neglect them means to really hate the children.

"The evil results of David's unjust indulgence toward Amnon were not ended, for it was here that Absalom's alienation from his father began. After he fled to Geshur, David, feeling that the crime of his son demanded some punishment, refused him permission to return."

Now he at least, he wanted to do something to get this thing done, and while Sister White does not say at this stage whether this was right or wrong, we already feel that David trod a wrong path in punishing. Punishment is good but this kind of punishment was not a real punishment, it was simply separating him from his son. It was more or less running away himself from the school of life. Because to punish his son would be hard for him.

"And this had a tendency to increase rather than to lessen the inextricable evils in which the king had come to be involved. Absalom, energetic, ambitious, and unprincipled, shut out by his exile from participation in the affairs of the kingdom, soon gave himself up to dangerous scheming. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 728.2

"At the close of two years Joab determined to effect a reconciliation between the father and his son. And with this object in view he secured the services of a woman of Tekoah, reputed for wisdom. Instructed by Joab, the woman represented herself to David as a widow whose two sons had been her only comfort and support."

Now, by the way, what kind of punishment would you give to Absalom, who murdered his brother Amnon? It's difficult to determine. I don't think that the death punishment was on this, because what he did was simply revenging his sister. Which was not right, he shouldn't have taken judgment in his own hand. But the very fact that he took judgment into his own hand showed his dangerous tendency. And the tendency was to rule, to become ruler, to become judge of Israel, to exalt himself. Self-exaltation, that was the real problem of this young man. And David should have seen this. He should have immediately worked against it.

"In a quarrel one of these had slain the other, and now all the relatives of the family demanded that the survivor should be given up to the avenger of blood. "And so," said the mother, "they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth." The king's feelings were touched by this appeal, and he assured the woman of the royal protection for her son.

"After drawing from him repeated promises for the young man's safety, she entreated the king's forbearance, declaring that he had spoken as one at fault, in that he did not fetch home again his banished. "For," she said, "we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him." This tender and touching portrayal of the love of God toward the sinner--coming as it did from Joab, the rude soldier--is a striking evidence of the familiarity of the Israelites with the great truths of redemption. The king, feeling his own need of God's mercy, could not resist this appeal. To Joab the command was given, "Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 728.3-728.4

"Absalom was permitted to return to Jerusalem, but not to appear at court or to meet his father. David had begun to see the evil effects of his indulgence toward his children; and tenderly as he loved this beautiful and gifted son, he felt it necessary, as a lesson both to Absalom and to the people, that abhorrence for such a crime should be manifested." So what do you say to this? It was punishment--sure. But it was not the right one. That is the problem, it was not that which really would have helped him back on the right tract.

"Absalom lived two years in his own house, but banished from the court. His sister dwelt with him, and her presence kept alive the memory of the irreparable wrong she had suffered. In the popular estimation the prince was a hero rather than an offender. And having this advantage, he set himself to gain the hearts of the people. His personal appearance was such as to win the admiration of all beholders. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." It was not wise for the king to leave a man of Absalom's character--ambitious, impulsive, and passionate--to brood for two years over supposed grievances. And David's action in permitting him to return to Jerusalem, and yet refusing to admit him to his presence, enlisted in his behalf the sympathies of the people. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 729.1-

"With the memory ever before him of his own transgression of the law of God, David seemed morally paralyzed; he was weak and irresolute, when before his sin he had been courageous and decided. His influence with the people had been weakened. And all this favored the designs of his unnatural son." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 729.1-729.2

When I look at this, I really must say, how important that those who have responsibility are not weak and irresolute, but courageous and decided. I really must see that in my own experience that is where my weak is; I need to be courageous decided. Decided means to make the right decision at the right moment. And not devour. Not linger. Sometimes we fear to hurt somebody and then we devour, we linger and we must not do this. We must be courageous and decided. "His influence with the people had been weakened." Well, did this matter? That his influence with the people had weakened, I mean did it matter, how he educated his children? No, he still would have had to apply justice, even if his influence had weakened. Now, one thing we need to say in favor of David, it is not easy to really apply justice, when you are aware of your own sin, and when you know that the others know of it. It's almost in the room this charge, well how can he judge, have him done the same thing? You know, that's constantly there, unspoken; and that is like a barrier upon which it's very difficult to go. But it's important that we simply close our eyes and forget ourselves and do what God did. That is important to do in this moment. We have to obey the Lord. We have to go against our feelings.

"Through the influence of Joab, Absalom was again admitted to his father's presence; but though there was an outward reconciliation, he continued his ambitious scheming. He now assumed an almost royal state, having chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And while the king was more and more inclined to desire retirement and solitude, Absalom sedulously courted the popular favor. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 729.3

It fitted the king that's another one to go over, he was tired and he leaned back. But this was his lethargy which should not have taken place. He should have pressed forward. Now, this Absalom should never have had, this people to go before him, he should never have had royal honors. He was not worthy of these things.

"The influence of David's listlessness and irresolution extended to his subordinates; negligence and delay characterized the administration of justice. Absalom artfully turned every cause of dissatisfaction to his own advantage. Day by day this man of noble mien might be seen at the gate of the city, where a crowd of suppliants waited to present their wrongs for redress. Absalom mingled with them and listened to their grievances, expressing sympathy with their sufferings and regret at the inefficiency of the government. Having thus listened to the story of a man of Israel, the prince would reply, 'Thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee;' adding, 'O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!' And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 729.4

It was quite right that the king of Israel, because he was irresolute, often the people could not get their rights; but was it right then to put himself in that place? You see, he was acting exactly the role of Lucifer in heaven, when he drew the attention of the angels upon himself, instead to the son. How different, John the Baptist who said 'I must decrease and he must increase,' who really fixed the attention of the people to the Savior. And this would have been the role of Absalom really, he would have said: "you have something to be clarified, let's go to the king. Yes, he is lethargic I know this." But he didn't need to tell the subjects, he would have to shake the king, he would have to say: "Come you must do something, you must wake up." That would have been a faithful friend. In fact what David was missing here was a faithful friend, who would say to him the right thing at the right moment. That is unfortunate.

"Fomented by the artful insinuations of the prince, discontent with the government was fast spreading. The praise of Absalom was on the lips of all."

I think we don't need to follow the whole story here because we don't want to go into Absalom, we know his story, how he revolted, how we went against Jerusalem finally, and how David gave way; we want just to read a little bit of how David felt when he was fleeing from Jerusalem. While he was

going out, the priests were coming with the ark, and you know, the ark of the covenant was the sure sign of victory. In whoever's camp this was, he was victor. So when the ark came, ahhh, everybody rejoiced, that is the guarantee of victory, here is the presence of God, it is with us.

"At sight of the ark joy and hope for a brief moment thrilled the heart of David. But soon other thoughts came to him. As the appointed ruler of God's heritage he was under solemn responsibility. Not personal interests, but the glory of God and the good of his people, were to be uppermost in the mind of Israel's king. God, who dwelt between the cherubim, had said of Jerusalem, 'This is My rest' (*Psalms* 132:14); and without divine authority neither priest nor king had a right to remove therefrom the symbol of His presence. And David knew that his heart and life must be in harmony with the divine precepts,"

He had some experiences in the past, didn't he, with the ark, do you remember? It had taught him a lesson. He wouldn't repeat that mistake, that's for sure.

"...else the ark would be the means of disaster rather than of success."

Which he himself had experienced.

"His great sin was ever before him. He recognized in this conspiracy the just judgment of God."

Can you see, how selfless he was? That shows that his repentance was genuine.

"The sword that was not to depart from his house had been unsheathed. He knew not what the result of the struggle might be. It was not for him to remove from the capital of the nation the sacred statutes which embodied the will of their divine Sovereign, which were the constitution of the realm and the foundation of its prosperity."

"He commanded Zadok, 'Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and His habitation: but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him.'" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 732.3 – 735.1

That is selflessness. He really was not looking for an escape of the consequences of his own sin. Yes, and then he send the priests back as spies, so to speak. There was also a counselor which he sent back. Then we have the story of Shimei, how he accused David. And now we want to continue here.

"Conscience was uttering bitter and humiliating truths to David. While his faithful subjects wondered at his sudden reverse of fortune, it was no mystery to the king. He had often had forebodings of an hour like this. He had wondered that God had so long borne with his sins, and had delayed the merited retribution. And now in his hurried and sorrowful flight, his feet bare, his royal robes changed for sackcloth, the lamentations of his followers awaking the echoes of the hills, he thought of his loved capital--of the place which had been the scene of his sin--and as he remembered the goodness and long-suffering of God, he was not altogether without hope. He felt that the Lord would still deal with him in mercy." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 737.2

How many people would now accuse the Lord? How many people would rebellious against him? But there was not a trace in David. He just saw the long suffering and the goodness of God. That is something--isn't it? That is a sign of true repentance.

"Many a wrongdoer has excused his own sin by pointing to David's fall, but how few there are who manifest David's penitence and humility. How few would bear reproof and retribution with the patience and fortitude that he manifested. He had confessed his sin, and for years had sought to do his duty as a faithful servant of God; he had labored for the upbuilding of his kingdom, and under his rule

it had attained to strength and prosperity never reached before. He had gathered rich stores of material for the building of the house of God, and now was all the labor of his life to be swept away? Must the results of years of consecrated toil, the work of genius and devotion and statesmanship, pass into the hands of his reckless and traitorous son, who regarded not the honor of God nor the prosperity of Israel? How natural it would have seemed for David to murmur against God in this great affliction!" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 737.3

"But he saw in his own sin the cause of his trouble." This is self-distrust. And this is what we need. "The words of the prophet Micah breathe the spirit that inspired David's heart. "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me." *Micah* 7:8, 9. And the Lord did not forsake David. This chapter in his experience, when, under cruelest wrong and insult, he shows himself to be humble, unselfish, generous, and submissive, is one of the noblest in his whole experience. Never was the ruler of Israel more truly great in the sight of heaven than at this hour of his deepest outward humiliation." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 738.1

That is true greatness, and this is the measurement of true greatness. That's how we shall view it. That's how God's views it and that's he want us to view it too.

"Had God permitted David to go on unrebuked in sin, and while transgressing the divine precepts, to remain in peace and prosperity upon his throne, the skeptic and infidel might have had some excuse for citing the history of David as a reproach to the religion of the Bible. But in the experience through which He caused David to pass, the Lord shows that He cannot tolerate or excuse sin. And David's history enables us to see also the great ends which God has in view in His dealings with sin; it enables us to trace, even through darkest judgments, the working out of His purposes of mercy and beneficence. He caused David to pass under the rod, but He did not destroy him; the furnace is to purify, but not to consume. The Lord says, "If they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail." *Psalms* 89:31-33. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 738.2

Can you now see the glorious purpose that God was fulfilling in allowing the judgments to fall upon David? And wouldn't you, if you were David, wish that these things came exactly as they came? God never leads his children otherwise than they would choose to be lead if they could see the end from the beginning. How true this was here. And David understood this, he accepted it, with his whole heart. And therefore he was considered such a great man in the word of God. So, his greatness is not the many victories he won as a army soldier, but it's greatness is the self-distrust that he showed. In other words, am I weak, then I am strong. That is the principle revealed in the life of David.

Now we want to apply this principle to us because we are in a similar situation as the people of God. I need now to come back and describe a little bit the history of our movement, and some events that took place. As we have seen in some of the believers who are here, they understood it much better maybe that others do. But in the last year, there were some very embarrassing confessions to be made. In the area of sensuality, the same area that David also fell. And it was very difficult to even listen to these things, it was humbling, and certainly in those who remain true to the message it creates a sense of self-distrust. Especially with the lessons that we have this year here. But we need to see also, where these things began and how it started and so forth.

Now, for this purpose I want to turn now to the book *Entering into God Sabbath Rest*, I have this here. Especially to the chapter 17, *Undeserved deliverance*, and the next chapter as well. And I want simply read as few things and I want to tell you some of the background history of that what we read here, because you cannot know this, you just read the history and you just read the text here, but there is a history behind it. And it is important that we understand this, as a people of God here.

"Not only is man unwilling to appear before God just as he is; he is also afraid to come. Because of the incorrect views of God's character which Satan has been promoting ever since he rebelled in heaven, men tend to see God as a being of awesome righteousness and strict justice who will exact full punishment for every evil committed. Men are thus led to believe that God will not relieve them of their problems until they have endured all that they deserve. Naturally, those who are deceived by these sophistries will have neither the faith nor the courage to cast their burdens on the great Burden-bearer." *God Sabbath Rest*, 260.01

So, the thought in this chapter is, how important it is to lay out burdens on the burden bearer. And how completely he solves our problems once we have laid them there.

"If God was the Problem-solver only for those who deserved this service, then men would rarely, if at all, receive this blessing." *God Sabbath Rest*, 260.02

Was God the problem solver of David? Certainly, but did he solve his problems in the way that we would expect necessarily? You see, he did not solve his problems in a way that he took away the consequences of his sins, and this is sometimes what we expect. You see, we think when we are forgiven, then we stand before God as though we never sinned, and then that means that there are no consequences. Provided we truly repented. This is the concept that we have and this is the concept also which we will find in here in this book. I don't know if it is fully meant like this, but that's how it is expressed. And coupled with the expectancy that, yes I am forgiven and then it's all over, we need to see that this is not the proper way to express it.

"However, the mercies of God are not bestowed on people because they are deserving, but because of His great love. Provided men fulfill the simple conditions, nothing can prevent the outflow of divine grace to the needy." That's good. "God yearns for every soul to enter into His Sabbath rest, but He knows that they never will until they learn to put away Satan's arguments and come to Him just as they are, with all their problems.

"It is in His mighty and effective capacity and willingness to succor Satan's victims, that God is repeatedly revealed in the Scriptures. No story illustrates this better than David's. Time after time, David resorted to his own devices until a complex, threatening, and seemingly insoluble problem accumulated. What was about to befall him was thoroughly deserved and God would have been completely justified in simply leaving him to suffer the consequences. But, when David finally gave the desperate impasse to God, He solved it for him with the smoothness, simplicity, and perfection that one would expect for a guiltless person. David's escape from danger and recrimination was as total as it was unmerited. *God Sabbath Rest*, 260.02-260.03

Now, Fred is not referring here to the incidents, where David's sin with Bathsheba, but he's referring to the sin where he was in Ziklag, that is the background.

"What Jehovah did for David, He will do for every one of His children if they will but cast their problems on Him and leave them there." So, what do we expect when we read such a thing? We expect that God will solve our problems with smoothness and simplicity and perfection that one would expect from a guiltless person. In other words, that God would take away the consequences, would we? (When we read this) Now, in a way, God did solve the problems of David with such smoothness, simplicity and perfection. But in another way, we would define smoothness, simplicity, and perfection. I guess in a way you can say it like this, but you have to see that it is not so easy as it looks like as Sister White says, 'it was hard for him to bear these things, it was difficult'. And these are the elements that really need to be very clearly seen. I go on a little bit.

"What Jehovah did for David, He will do for every one of His children if they will but cast their problems on Him and leave them there. It is well worth the time and study to acquaint ourselves with

the Almighty's responses to the undeserving David, in order to develop the faith and courage to come to Him when we need Him most. There was an occasion when I really needed to know what God had done for David. Like the errant king-elect, I had engineered myself into a fearful and frightening entanglement for which there seemed no solution. I knew I deserved all that was about to befall me, but I also knew from David's experience how to approach God at such a time and what to expect from Him. It was with calm assurance rather than troubled uncertainty, that I presented my difficulties to the Almighty, and I was not disappointed. In the light of that experience I make the strongest recommendation that every believer become thoroughly acquainted with the way the Lord delivered His people in the past, and be assured that what He did for them, He waits to do for us if we just give Him the opportunity! *God Sabbath Rest*, 260.04

Now, that incident that he describes here, he describes again in the next chapter, which I will read with you, happened in the year 1975 and it was a similar sin as that of David. I think I don't need to tell you here all the details. I will tell you in the next session, how the situation of the sin of Fred came to light. It came to light about nine years later exactly. But, the entanglement of Fred that he describes happened in 1974, and as I said already it was a similar sin as that of David and he escaped seemingly unmarked from that in this time. His sin became known to some, to a few believers here in Germany, those who do not live anymore, they have mean while passed away, so they cannot witnesses, but maybe there are other witnesses, I don't know, but they are not members of the movement now. And it seemed that everything was over after awhile. And nothing bad happened. It didn't come to knowledge and everything went on. So, that seems to be a smooth escape without any problems, without any hindrance. What happened for years later I have to tell you in the next session, because the time for this is not there. I just wanted to tell you, this is the background here of that little experience that he describes. He refers to this again in the same chapter: that is when David fled from Saul, and he finally fled to the enemies of Israel. It says here:

"David now faced a serious problem. He knew that the power of the king would lead all men to betray him, not because they had anything against him, but because they feared the wrath of the monarch if they did not obey him. Therefore David felt he could trust no one, including the high priest. He had no desire to fall into the murderous hands of the jealous, enraged monarch, and was eager to take whatever steps were necessary to avoid such an unpleasant outcome." *God Sabbath Rest*, 261.01

So this was a problem urgently requiring a solution. He had the choice of providing one himself, or of looking to God for it." *God Sabbath Rest*, 263.05. We have to leave it here for the moment, it's an interruption more or less.

Study 11

The Example of David in GSR (continued)

So we turn now back to the book *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest* to the chapter 17 undeserved deliverance. And the reason why we want to study this here is we want to understand a little bit of the background history, and we want to correct a wrong concept that we probably have to agree all that we have held in the past. And this is the concept that once we are forgiven we have pretty much deserved to be absolutely delivered also from the consequences of that for which we have been delivered. Because we have learned that we stand before God as though we have never sinned. We have learned that it is the judged mental person and the legalist who looks down upon the sinners as though they cannot be forgiven. We have learned that it is the Pharisees who said to the sick man: well that is the finger of God and you must suffer it now and so fort. Knowing all this, obviously we do not wish to repeat that spirit, for that reason I had to really emphasize in the last study and we have to emphasize this again and again. It is not with such spirit that we study these events; we want to see God's goodness. We want to see his glory, and when I describe you now the weaknesses of our brother Fred, the former messenger; then I would like us to understand that I don't do this in order to cast ourselves down, but only for two reasons. The first is: that we understand something of the weakness of humanity. And the other, that we understand how God deals with such problems. It is important that we see the goodness of God in this whole matter. That is really essential. So as we have said, he describes the history of David, how David was fleeing from Saul, and fact where he had seemed in a way to have no friend anymore, everybody could betray him, and so he felt it was safest to leave the country.

GSR.263.05

"So this was a problem urgently requiring a solution. He had the choice of providing one himself, or of looking to God for it. Had he chosen the latter, then nothing could have gone wrong, but looking to himself, disaster was sure to follow. At this point, David forgot the procedures he had so faithfully and courageously followed at the slayings of the lion, the bear, and the Philistine giant. Reverting to human methods again, he relied upon his own resources instead of casting the whole burden on the Lord to await His specific orders."

GSR.263.06

"There were only two devices at his command to which he could turn to save himself. One of these was force; the other, deception. " That is in particular with the high priest.

"Force was of no value, for his personal might was minimal compared to Saul's, who had at his disposal tens of thousands of battle-hardened warriors, and David had no illusions of the outcome of any encounter with them."

GSR.263.07

"But he could turn to deception. Unable to trust even the high priest not to report him to the king, he gave a deceptive answer to the embarrassing question this man of God asked him."

That cost the life of this man and of many others as well as we know. The whole life of David is described here and so on.

GSR.265.01

"This incident clearly demonstrates once again the evil consequences to God's cause when men resort to their own problem solving. Every such repeated witness should cause those who search the Scriptures to shun such procedures like the plague. Surely, if David had foreseen the outworking of what he had done, he would never have resorted to such methods. Unfortunately, when the decision has to be made, no one knows just what the consequences will be, so the only safety lies in letting God determine how the problem will be met."

GSR.265.02

"From Nob, David fled to the only place which, in his judgment, could offer him any safety--the land of the Philistines. God was certainly not in command of these movements, for He would never have

sent David to his enemies. David's own logical processes must have been in a confused state for him to imagine that he could go safely among the people whose champion he had humiliated and destroyed. It was not the character or spirit of the Philistines to forget an injury done or miss the opportunity to exact revenge, no matter how long they had to wait.”

GSR.265.03

“Thus David created another problem for himself, for when he arrived in Gath, he found his life endangered.”

GSR.265.04

"David fled to Achishh, the king of Gath; for he felt that there was more safety in the midst of the enemies of his people...”

GSR.265.05

“God did not interfere with David. While he chose to be his own problem-solver, the Lord simply stood by until His servant gave Him back His rightful position. Meanwhile, David was passing from danger to greater danger, busily adding confusion to confusion.” All this is describing another story so, and I think we know this pages as well. And now we read on:

GSR.266.02

“It is extremely comforting to know that even though David brought all this trouble upon himself, God thought of him not in terms of condemnation, but in terms of education.” And that is very true, this is how we must see the matter when we study the root. It is not a means of condemnation, it is a means of education, it is a means of bringing us closer to him, and we must see the love of God in the whole thing. If we don't, if we just think in terms of revenge, or in terms of: Yes this is just this must happen, then we are on the wrong side; definitely.

“The loving Father saw the opportunity to teach him lessons which would prevent the recurrence of these costly mistakes. Consistent with the usual human response to God's educational work, David proved to be a slow but eventual learner.”

GSR.266.03

“A failure to remove the mind from the immediate and demanding witness of sight and circumstances, and focus it instead on God's wonderful promises and His faithful fulfillment of them in the past, is common to all defeats experienced by God's children in testing times. Every believer has some such experience he can recall, and there are also the great revelations of God's works recorded in the Scriptures. We must never forget that what the Lord did for those wonderful men and women, He is eagerly waiting to do for us today.

Because much is repeating itself here, and I don't want to go with you over the whole chapter, it's repeated again and again, we must not take plans into his own hand. God's plan into his own hand. And then finally he was required to march with Achishh towards Israel which was very embarrassing for David, because he would never fight against his own people.

"So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah." Verse 5.

GSR.270.03

“Had David followed these procedures in the encounter with the high priest and in selecting the place to which to flee, he would have enjoyed the same success gained here against the Philistines.”

GSR.270.04

“No fault can be found with the way David went about the Lord's business when he relieved Keilah. It represented a recovery from a period when he had lapsed into his own devisings and had been cursed with evil consequences.”

GSR.270.05

“However, many would find God's response surprising and somewhat perplexing. They feel that before God could again fully trust David and manifest His power on his behalf, David must demonstrate, during a lengthy period of probation, that he was worthy of Jehovah's blessings.

“GSR.270.06

“This is how men treat their fellow men, but it is not how God relates Himself to His children. All David had to do was recognize his sin, make contrite confession of it, restore where possible what he had taken, and follow correct procedures when seeking solutions to his problems. As soon as he took these steps, the Lord immediately worked for him, treating His servant as though he had never sinned. Such is the wonderful love and compassion of our heavenly Father.” We can say yes to this, provided we understand how God expresses his love, either by allowing the rod too.

GSR.270.07

“Before long, an even greater test was to come to David. It was reported to Saul that David was hiding in the wilderness of Engedi.”

Now we come to the chapter 18, "Entangled and Delivered." That's where I want to dwell more heavily on. That is where he marched against the Israelites together with the Philistines. But he did not actually fight, God delivered him from this, and this is the deliverance; so he had entangled himself, but he was delivered again. The Philistine lords, they remonstrated against this, and David still played the hypocrite; but finally the king gave way, and then we read. "What a perfect problem-solver God is!" But that is not the end of the story, He was coming home to his city and it was totally destroyed. And all the wives and children taken away.

GSR.287.03

“Here, in His dealings with the unworthy David, is the revelation of the perfection of our heavenly Father's ways; the demonstration of how He can and will untangle the worst difficulties provided the problem is given into His hands. So total was David's deliverance that even Achishh remained ignorant of the deceptions practiced upon him. One looks in vain for at least some punishment to have been imposed upon David...” Is this right? That is not right, I mean God did not impose on him but it was the consequence “.... but he returned from the battlefield as completely free as if he had never sinned against either God or the king. It must have seemed too good to be true, but it was real enough. With what adoration and praise for His wonderful Deliverer must David have marched back to Ziklag again.

GSR.287.04

“This story provides a contrast between the outworking of human and divine planning and problem-solving. When the differences are seen, they should provide the cure for the persistent problem of men replacing God in this role. If they did, then how swiftly would God's work be finished and Jesus return!”

GSR.287.05

"It is God's intention that David's recorded experiences shall teach us the folly of following our own ways, and the infallible perfection of His procedures. The Lord wants us to know that when, through our own misguided foolishness, we get ourselves into deep waters, the only way of escape is to cast the problem into His hands. Once it is wholly given to Him, He can speedily solve it. By so doing, He will expose Satan's lie that Jehovah turns His back on those who seek His deliverance from troubles brought on themselves by their own devising. Satan would have us believe that God obtains great satisfaction from seeing His children suffer the consequences of their disobedience.”

While we can agree with most of it, I really must say it seems that something is lacking here, of a true description of the ways of God. It is though escaping from a problem unscarred as the most important thing. That is the whole impression a reader must get when you read this. Exactly, there is no school of life.

GSR.287.06

“I am deeply and sincerely grateful to God for the preservation of the records of God's dealing with David in both his sins and his recovery from them” Furthermore, but that is a problem I want to discuss later, the history the short history where he was delivered from Achish is not the whole story of the life of David, there is more to it, much more. Ziklag is only an example, the destruction of Ziklag.

"I am deeply and sincerely grateful to God for the preservation of the records of God's dealing with David in both his sins and his recovery from them. The knowledge of God's ways thus gained, literally saved my life. It happened as follows..."

And now Fred describes his own experience as I said already, it was a sin that was basically the same as that of David's sin with Barsheba. It was in the area of sensuality. Now the question that we would have to ask here, why was not this story to describe his own experience? Why the story of Achish? Now the story with Achish, seemed to be the sin was kept secret, that was the main thing. You know it didn't come out, it didn't blow up, he was delivered without it blowing up, but the sin with Barsheba did blow up. You see there's a difference. And we may ask the question, Why didn't it blow up with Achish? And I don't know exactly the reason, but one of the reasons could be that because he was an enemy of Christ. And as such he wouldn't have dealt properly with that knowledge, and God left it this way. But eventually this things will come to light, and Achishh will also in judgment be one of the accusers of David, you can be sure of this. He will say: This man, he has lied to me, how can he deserve heaven? And that will give God a hard time to answer. It won't be easy.

GSR.287.07

"My life, like David's, had been a mixture of divine and human plan-making. Sometimes I looked to God with steady gaze, but at other times I had undertaken this work myself. For a while, I seemed to do quite well working out my own affairs, but the time inevitably arrived when my troubles accumulated and matured."

And this is what happened in 1975 as I said before, it is exactly what he is referring to.

"Then I found that things which I thought had been favorable moves were simply the marshaling of the enemy to battle. Having placed himself on vantage ground, he was ready to spring his well-prepared trap."

"I could see no way out of the dilemma. Ruin faced me. I saw the ending of my career and the precipitation of much sorrow and distress upon my loved ones, friends, and fellow-believers." Can you say the same of David? Certainly.

"It was a time of great stress and terrible apprehension. I looked with regret on my past course and longed to live my life over again with the wisdom gained through experience. I knew, however, that no deliverance could be found in this direction.

GSR.288.02

"I also knew that I thoroughly deserved the punishment about to fall on me as the result of following my own ways, and was quite reconciled to suffering it. I wasted no time in self-justification, for I was fully aware that I could not honestly blame anyone but myself. This candid recognition of the situation removed any disposition to seek deliverance. Instead, I was resigned to my well-deserved fate."

GSR.288.03

"But, what did deeply concern me was the realization that I would not bear that punishment alone. God's cause and many innocent people--members of the family, fellow-believers, and others--would also suffer terribly. When I saw the extent to which the guiltless would be caused to suffer with the guilty, then I was stirred to seek deliverance, not for my sake, but for theirs.

GSR.288.04

"Satan, of course, was determined that the maximum damage be done to all concerned, and he was quick to argue that I could expect no mercy from God and that He certainly would not deliver me. The enemy told me that I had gotten myself into this entanglement and it was up to me to free myself from it first, and then go to God, confess my errors, plead for His forgiveness, and let Him be the plan-maker from then on."

GSR.288.05

"Satan knew perfectly well that if I added more of my own plan-making and problem-solving to what had brought me as much trouble as I then faced, I would only be plunged into a more desperate

situation still, for God cannot save us when we are working to save ourselves. The only problems He can solve are those which are totally given to Him.”

GSR.288.06

“Had I not known the wonderful ways of God as revealed in His dealings with David, when the latter abandoned all attempts to solve the difficulties himself and gave the entire problem to God, I would surely have followed Satan's suggestions. Had this been the case, I would certainly not be writing this testimony today. Ruin for life, such as also faced David, would have been my fate.”

GSR.288.07

“Seeing the utter folly of attempting to solve the dilemma myself, I resolved that, even if I should perish, I would not turn to my own works to obtain deliverance. Either God would save me, or no one would, so total was my committal to the Sabbath rest principles.”

GSR.289.01

“Seeing as never before the evils of human plan-making, I was able to confess with an extraordinary depth of contrition the sins which had marred my past course. I acknowledged that the trouble crushing me was entirely self-afflicted, and that I fully deserved all the loss, sorrow, and suffering which was threatening me. I pleaded with God to defer it, not for my sake but for the sake of the innocent parties who would be caused to suffer because of my sins, and for the sake of God's cause upon which an evil reflection would be cast.”

GSR.289.02

“I prayed with a strong and active memory of what God had done for David, and I argued to myself that what God did for him was the revelation and the promise of what He would do for me. By faith, I threw myself on the mercies of a sin-pardoning Redeemer who delights to solve the problems brought to Him, no matter how undeserving the suppliant might be.”

GSR.289.03

“As I did so, a plan formed in my mind, not as a result of my own devising, but from another and mightier intelligence. It was a beautiful plan, requiring that I adopt a certain course of action, while others, unprompted by myself, would have to simultaneously take steps crucial to the success of the solution without their knowing either the problem they were being used to help solve, or why they were doing what they were doing.”

GSR.289.04

“The counterpart to this in David's experience was the action of the Philistine lords who protested to the king without realizing that they were the major instruments in achieving David's deliverance. It is an incredible experience to watch others carrying out God's will in this way without their knowing the significance of their actions. It breeds a deep appreciation for the Lord's capacities as a problem-solver.”

GSR.289.05

“When God employs individuals, such as the Philistine lords, to enact a vital part in solving a problem, He must work within certain specific limitations. As He never employs force to achieve His purposes, He cannot actually take control of the persons concerned. But He is fully aware of the fears, desires, and needs of different people, and He knows to what extent they will respond to the suggestions carried to them by the Holy Spirit.”

GSR.290.01

“The plan worked so well that we are in danger of thinking that God arbitrarily chose a solution, and then manipulated each participant to play his designated part whether he wanted to or not, but God never works that way. He screened and rejected all the possibilities which could not work, and then selected the one that, under the circumstances, could not fail.”

GSR.290.02

“In my case, when the plan formed in my mind, I realized that either God or Satan was its source, although, for the moment, I could not decide which. I was alert to the danger that Satan has the power to offer solutions that have every appearance of being divine in origin, his purpose being to divert the Christian to his service while keeping him believing that he is serving God.”

In the next paragraphs he describes the difference between when God gives a plan, and when Satan gives a plan, and how we can distinguish these, I think we don't need to go into details on this. Because it would be a little bit distracting. After a while he recognized that it was God's plan anyway that he got. This is the conclusion of out of this. So we continue again:

GSR291.08

"When this has been done, perfect protection from being deceived and misled is assured, for, if the plan came from God, He will successfully implement it, but if not, He will lay it aside and the scheme will come to nothing. This is a simple matter for Him, provided the problem is in His hands."

GSR.291.09

"At perfect peace in the knowledge that the problem is safely in the Lord's hands, do what the day requires.

GSR.292.03

"As the Lord worked on my problem, I saw it dissolve like mist before the morning sun. The way was opened for total disentanglement, with no loose ends left anywhere. My Saviour guarded the secrets of my life as effectively as He kept Achishh in ignorance of the deceptions David had practiced upon him. I escaped the punishments so thoroughly deserved, and this generated within me a loving service which exceeded all that I had previously rendered. It is no use trying to convince me that God is a judgmental, destroying God. I know Him far better than that. It is sin that destroys, not God."

The reason why I read this paragraph with you is for several reasons. What we find here is a one sided picture really. It is not just the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. What is it? It's the goodness of God and also the knowledge of the consequences of sin. It's only in the light of the consequences of sin that we can see the goodness of God. And this leads us to repentance. And when this is missing we have cheap grace in the end. That is the result of it. It's a way out that is not substantiated by the realities of life. Because the consequence of sin is death. And that is something we have to really grasp, and really understand. So, now we understand also why the situation with Achish is explained, and not the situation with Barsheba; because this situation explain that the thing kept secret, that is one of the key points here.

"The secrets of my life were as effectively guarded as in the case of David with Achish." And that is not true. They were not guarded. It happen nine years later, when they were blown out in full blast to the whole world, basically. And how this came about, I need to tell you now, so as I said already in 1975 these sins happened.

I do not know the details of this, but I just know that was the kind of sin that took place, and few more details that I do not need to tell you here. And in 1984 Fred was traveling in North America to the campmeetings, and there he was a guest to a young couple who had come to the message rather recently, he was a former minister in the Adventist church in Canada, and they were very enthusiastic for the message. Very enthusiastic, and maybe even also somewhat ambitious.

The point came when Fred who was there wrote some things in his diary which were you can say a revelation of his problems which still existed at that time. It was as far as I understand a fictitious letter written to another woman, and as the lady of the house, the host, wanted to clean the room, she saw the diary and read it. And then she read everything in the front and in the back as well. That was there, and she got quite shocked, because for her a world caved in, for her Fred was the messenger, he was impeccable, he was perfect, and he was just living out what he taught. But now she saw something different. And she was very, very depressed, that is the result of this.

She didn't know what to do, she showed to her husband, and her husband initially reacted very well, he reminded her of the fact that their anger must not be turned against Fred but against sin. And that it is important, that they don't deal with this wrongly, and so they kept it in their hearts for a while, until

after the camp, that was just taking place, and Fred continued to travel. And then they wrote a letter to Fred in which they reveal what they had read in this diary.

By the way they also had read another letter which was a bit strange, I thought but anyway that's what happened. Margaret had written a letter, that is the wife of Fred, which he received at their house, and he opened it accidentally as he says, and he read it through and then he gave it to his wife to read this well before they gave it to Fred. So they got together some information which was compromising for Fred himself. Anyways they revealed all this, in this letter written to him and then the next was that they met in a campmeeting in Arkansas, and there they talked about it. For the lady, for the sister, former sister because they are not with us anymore, it was very difficult this campmeeting because she could hardly concentrate on the studies, she would always think of this sin, and she couldn't.

They tried to speak with Fred during this time and as they spoke they really received another outlook of the whole matter. Even to the point where they fully forgave Fred for his sins. He confirmed to them that he was struggling with the problem that he wanted to fully lay away. Which they accepted it and left it with this. So after a few further weeks he traveled back to Australia, and unknown to him meanwhile this couple could not keep it to themselves but they shared this information with a person who already had great difficulties with the message. A person who had left the campmeeting because he was so upset with what Fred preached. And he found this as a wonderful opportunity to destroy the influence of Fred as much as he could.

And he immediately went on his work and so the thing now began to blow and to spread in North America, and tidings very soon came to Australia, that is people began to phone Fred, and also his wife. Now, what happened next was that Fred responded, he was showing his disappointment because they had promised him that they would not say anything, that they would keep this secret so to speak.

And then there was a further correspondence, in any case what happened next is that there was a great crisis in North America, of which some the believers who are here are aware, and could testify, many left the message and it was a time also when Fred did not come to the campmeetings 1985 and 1986. Two years, he was very physically and mentally exhausted. Partly because of years of travel, but more so because of that event that took place and the terrible revelations that were now going all over the world.

Those who were so eager to spread the news would not keep it just in North America but they would send it to other places as well. A pack of letter was sent to me, and in 1985 when I knew that Fred wouldn't come, that was quite something. I determined not to speak to the believers about this thing, I determined to keep it for myself, but as I realized that some of our enemies would come to the German campmeeting in 1985 I felt obliged that I had to inform the believers, which I did and generally speaking I must say the German believers reacted very well. There was no wild reaction, it was very well received.

Now it seemed that Fred had gotten the victory over this problem after these revelations in 1985. But I need to tell you that it was not so. He may have gotten a temporary victory but it was a sin he fell in again later. It was a thing that unfortunately lasted until 1989. And in 1992 we had a court case in Australia and again our enemies took advantage out of this information. So this is the situation as it is.

I ask myself and you may ask yourselves too, how can such revelations come through such a channel or vessel? Especially as this problem continued as it was not really overcome. And my personal acquaintance with Fred because he was here for a longer time, and I had to care for him physically and others had to also, is that we all were aware of his weakness, but we knew also that he would struggle against it. We could see it, I mean the older a person becomes, the more obvious his actions become, the more childlike he becomes, and the less he can hide these things, his real intentions and thoughts, I think you have realized this, if you have dealt with elderly people.

So especially with the last stages of his Parkinson disease it was very difficult to contain things and what I watch and what I saw is that he would fight against it but he would become weak again. Now, another thing that I see very clearly is what Fred was lacking was a friend. It was a person who stood by his side it gave him the right encouragement in the right moment. Because there was an honest struggle against this sin and I really believe this. If it was not then he couldn't have done anything in the Lord's cause. He was not a hypocrite who constantly lived in sin and said something else, that was not the case. But he was very weak, and I wish to make very clear that we respected him, or I personally respected him and I loved him in spite of this, and I also believe that God used him as much as he could.

At the same time it is necessary I believe also to see wherein his weakness is our weakness. In other words, when we read Sabbath Rest and we read how God deals with sin, would we not also tend to think that God can be a loving God only when all the consequences are taken away? Did we really see that God is a loving God also when he allows consequences. Can we see the love of God in the rod that he allows to happen? And that is the question we need to ask ourselves. And I certainly believe that we have to learn two things:

1. The weakness of humanity,
2. The blessings in the rod that God allows to happen.

And this is the lessons we need to learn out of this history, and that is the reason I believe that God allowed it to become public. While I am talking with you I am aware that some of you were not aware of this before. For some of you what I tell you is new. But it is not new as such, because it was made public already in 1985 in North America. So basically I feel justified in this matter to share you this alone from this stand point. Our enemies would be busy to tell you anyway somehow.

But the point is also that I see that we have to learn a lesson and this is the deeper reason why I speak with you apart these things. Like with David from whom we have to learn, we have to learn from Fred as well. And we have to draw the right consequences out of this. This is my prayer and my wish for us all. Amen.

Study 12

So, we want now to continue to look at the lesson of self-distrust. After we have considered David's case, now we need to look at other Bible characters. We have looked at David's case and we have seen how he learnt the lesson of self-distrust and never was the king of the Israel greater than in the moment of his deepest humiliation. It is amazing that a person has to learn all his life, and at the end at his life, this can be said of him. But it shows us how difficult it is to go this way. And even though we may not think that we have too much self-confidence, this thing is still there.

Now, God does not put away the material that He can use, in spite of the fact that we have still this self-confidence, He still works with us and that is an amazing thing. And He allows us to stumble and fall, so that we learn this lesson, this important lesson of self mistrust.

Nowhere is this seen better than in the life of Moses, who is really a remarkable character with a remarkable career. Let us quickly turn to *Exodus* chapter 2, and we would like to look first at the Bible account here, and then we come to the statements in the *Spirit of Prophecy*.

Yes, the birth of Moses I think it is well known, how he was delivered from death which the Pharaoh had really commanded, that all children should die, and by God's special providence, he was a candidate to the death to a candidate to the throne. What a difference! That is a very remarkable career. I would say, that is the, what you would call the American dream, from a dishwasher to a millionaire, literally, you know, even greater than this. From a death candidate, to the president. What a change!

He wasn't aware as a child what happened, but this was his whole attitude, his whole surrounding, and that is certainly what must have formed him in some way. Now, we know that the mother of Moses gave him the best education she could, because she knew she had him for a certain limited time, so she put in everything that she could. But, not in terms of spoiling the child, but in terms of directing it towards God. And that was very important. So, religion was really firmly established in his mind and heart, even when he was a child.

But the fact that the religion is in the heart of a person, does not mean that of necessity is self-distrustful. You know, a person can be very religious and yet very self confident. Not that religion as such is teaching us self-confidence, it is not, but often we overlook where self-confidence criss in. And we mistake to recognize it. We can not see it really, and that means that we combine religion with self-confidence.

Now, the story goes on in verse 11: "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, wherefore smites thou thy fellow?

And he said, who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendedst thou to kill me, as thou killed the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well."

So, from being a millionaire, back to a dishwasher. In other words, back to the death candidate, which he was in the beginning. That really shows something, it shows that position is not very significant. Its character which counts, whether we are a fugitive, whether we are at the king's court; that is not so

important. What is important is what our character is, wherever we are, wherever we stand. And now let's look at Moses from the view point of the *Spirit of Prophecy*. I turn to the chapter Moses in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and we would like to follow up his story a little bit here, not right from the beginning, because we don't want to dwell on his birth so much, even though certainly that had an influence on his later career, and the training of the mother also. Let's begin here:

"At the court of Pharaoh, Moses received the highest civil and military training. The monarch had determined to make his adopted grandson his successor on the throne, and the youth was educated for his high station. 'And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.' *Acts*, 7:22. His ability as a military leader made him a favorite with the armies of Egypt, and he was generally regarded as a remarkable character. Satan had been defeated in his purpose. The very decree condemning the Hebrew children to death had been overruled by God for the training and education of the future leader of His people."

What do you think when you read this paragraph in the light of what we have studied so far? When I read this, I thought, didn't God know what He was doing here? I mean, He literally brought him in an environment that would bring out self-confidence in this man. Wouldn't it? Read this again:

"He received the highest civil and military training. He was the adopted grandson, the successor to the throne. And he was educated for his high station."

Not only was this that he had the favor of the king and that he specially was surrounded by honors, and all this kind of things. He also had real abilities. And this made him a favorite to the people, and to the armies, and the army, you know, is the top class so to speak, it was the top class in Egypt. They were the ones who really had the power, the control. So, when he was a favorite with them, what a station did he have among the Egyptians? And he was generally regarded as a remarkable character. So everybody more or less looked up upon him. What does this tempt to? Almost inevitably to self-confidence. Now, not necessarily that it must be so, but it's very few who can resist such an appeal of sight and circumstances. There are a very few who can resist these temptations and still remain self-distrustful. We really must say that is very, very rare. And definitely Moses he was influenced by these things. I want to remind you again of that diagram that we had here.

Which Factors Strengthen Trust in my own Strength?

- Praise (*2 Samuel* 14:25)
- Frequent recognition of my abilities
- Flattery (*Proverbs* 29:5)
- Success in the work (*The Desire of Ages*, 360.3)
- A high position
- The possession of strength
- The possession of power
- An easy life
- A luxurious life
- Familiarity with false habits
- The adoption of wrong habits
- A wrong reaction to disappointments

Again we want to say that these factors are not sinful in themselves. Neither can we avoid them all the time. They are there. But still we must be aware that these factors are a danger, they are a temptation. Let me say this. And for this reason they strengthen my trust in my own strength. That is praise. Did Moses receive praise? Certainly, the frequent expression of recognition of his abilities.

Did he receive that? Very much so, not only for the fact that he was a remarkable character, not only for the fact that he had abilities, but also for the fact of his high station. A person in a high station always gets a lot of flattery. Because, if you flatter him, you expect yourself to get a good influence with him. That is the reason for flatteries. So he would have been subject to this quite a lot.

Had he success in his work? Very. He was very successful as a military leader, as a state's man, and so forth. Did he have a high position? Yes, definitely.

Did he have the possession of strength? Very much so. His personal strength, but also the strength as a military leader.

Did he have position of power? Very much.

Did he have an easy life in Egypt? Much easier than his fellow Israelites, who had to labour and work hard.

Did he have a luxurious life? Definitely. He was surrounded by everything that was necessary or becoming for a coming king.

Did he become familiar with false habits? There were a lot of false habits at the court.

The adoption of wrong habits. Well, we are not so sure about this, but there were certainly some habits which we will soon say. He had to unlearn something. And, a wrong reaction to disappointments.

Well, this we can also see in the case of Moses, and let's turn to this now. Can you really see that all this apply to Moses? We have had this diagram in another connection, namely with David. But the same thing applies to Moses. So let's turn now back to Patriarchs and Prophets.

He was the favourite, he was regarded as a remarkable character and Sister White even says that Satan has been defeated in this purpose. In other words God used this very thing to further His kingdom. And this shows then that this circumstances in themselves were not wrong or sinful as such, but they were a powerful temptation than and we must admit that few, if any can resist such a temptation. Now "The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people."

Have you been aware that angels ever talked with you? I wonder how the angels have revealed these things to him. It could have been through a dream that is the most likely way of communication, it could have been also through angels appearing in the form of man which has happened in the time of Abraham, and yes, basically that's it. Maybe in a vision, like sister White, if he would have had the Spirit of Prophecy in that time, but we are not told that he had. So, in any way, to be personally instructed by angels and to be aware of this, that is another success you can say, it's another thing that shows the person: You are in the right track, you are honoured, you are blessed, and to what does this tend. Again, it tends to a danger of being to trustful in myself, in my accomplishments, in what I do. Even the success in the work of God is in that sense something that we have to be very much in guard of.

You see, when the disciples were successful in the work of God, Jesus warned them, and He said: "Be careful, don't be too happy that devils are cast out, but be more happy that your names are written in the book of life. Be happier that you are dependent on God." Now, you wonder a little bit when you read

this. Why did God do this, that he gave him an instruction about his purpose through angels? It was not the time yet. Well, God had a wonderful purpose to accomplish. And in latter time it would have been important for him to remember this visitation of angels. In a time that was not as happy as it was right here. God knows what He gives us, and even He foresees that we fall under the pressure of temptation, He still blesses us. Because He knows what will be finally the outcome. He is simply wiser than we are. If we would have Moses in our school, we probably would have done something different for him. But we can be glad to say that God had him in His school. And His school is the best. Is simply the best; there is no question about it.

Now, still, there is a lesson in this whole thing, and this lesson we need to learn. And the lesson is that we can not depend on human flesh. And even if we get personal instructions from angels, we still have to be self-distrustful. Anyway they revealed this to him that he was to break the bondage of his people. Another factor which makes you wonder a little bit, why God revealed this to him, is because he misinterpreted this very prophecy. "He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt." That was definitely a wrong expectation. Knowing that a person gets a wrong expectation, do you still give him such a message?

You see, sometimes we have to give the message to people and we know that they will first misunderstand these messages. Because that is what always happens, that is how people always think and how they tend to think. And we try to explain everything right from the beginning, we try to exclude every possible misunderstanding, in this case for example, we would have said to Moses: "Moses, you will be chosen to lead them out, but don't expect it to be by force of arms, don't think that you go as military leader, but expect to go as a shepherd. With nothing, but a shepherd's rod." That's what we would have told Moses, wouldn't we? But God didn't. He just gave him a part of a message, full stop.

And now looking back in our history for a moment, didn't God know that we would misunderstand some of the messages? Didn't He know that we would project them in a wrong direction? Take things to extreme? Yes, He knew. But He let this all happened, so that our weakness would become apparent. And that we would learn the lesson of self-distrust. God allowed this to happen with Moses too, because that was the only way to effectively teach him the lesson of self-distrust.

We really need to realize that words are sometimes not the most efficient ways of teaching a lesson. Even with God who is the best teacher in the world, words sometimes do not suffice. And there needs to be an actual experience. God allows us to fall in to certain experiences that we realize how dependent receivers we are.

"He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt, and having this in view, he guarded his affections, lest in his attachment to his foster mother or to Pharaoh he would not be free to do the will of God. By the laws of Egypt all who occupied the throne of the Pharaohs must become members of the priestly caste; and Moses, as the heir apparent, was to be initiated into the mysteries of the national religion." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 245.2. Now so far that would be a temptation, to be initiated in that things, but for Moses it was not such a big temptation, because he was very, very firm. He had very firm principles, he knew what he believed, and he would not be induced in idol worship as we see later. That was not the problem of the school, the problem of this school was another one. It was the fact that he again had here an opportunity to show his skills, and his skills were wonderful as we shall see.

"This duty was committed to the priests. But while he was an ardent and untiring student, he could not be induced to participate in the worship of the gods. He was threatened with the loss of the crown, and warned that he would be disowned by the princess should he persist in his adherence to the Hebrew faith. But he was unshaken in his determination to render homage to none save the one God, the Maker of heaven and earth. He reasoned with priests and worshipers, showing the folly of their

superstitious veneration of senseless objects. None could refute his arguments or change his purpose, yet for the time his firmness was tolerated on account of his high position and the favour with which he was regarded by both the king and the people." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 245.3

You can really see that the priests were beaten quite often by his arguments, and how other onlookers they would say, they would even admire Moses for this, They could say, "Well, if he can even argue with the priests, and he even can win a debate with them, that is mighty leader." So it would increase his standing really with fellow students probably, who were in the school, it would increase his standing with the people generally. Again, it would tend to foster his pride. That is the problem of that school, not that he was induced to idol worship. Because he was very firm on this. So, in a way, when we are facing a debate in the world and we are looking forward for this debate, because we know we have the better arguments, and then in the end our arguments will win, we must be very careful if these things do not foster a sense of self-sufficiency, self-complacency, or self-confidence in us, in ourselves. We must be careful to see if in all this we are still dependent receivers on God, we are nothing but channels. And if we are not channels as a child or as a king, then we are nothing. If we bring our own wisdom to the people, we really destroy the work of God. And now we come to this point with Moses a little later, let's read first the next paragraph:

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." *Hebrews* 11:24-26. Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer. Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 245.4

Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch's throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts. He looked beyond the gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch's crown, to the high honours that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 246.1

So, when we read this here, we see another Moses. We see a Moses of self-distrust. We see a Moses who does not have self-confidence. In other words there were both in him. As we said already, there are very, very few who can withstand the test that was placed on David when he was on the throne and on Moses when he was sitting there. And of these few who can withstand it, there are even less who will go out of such an ordeal I would almost say, without any scar. Moses really had some scars, in other words he was influenced to some degree by that; even though he did not commit himself over to it. So, there were two aspects in his life. The one was the aspect of self-distrust; the other was the aspect of self-confidence, not known to him. If you would have asked Moses, if you would have met him, I suppose you would have met not a haughty man, but you would have met a man who was quite sociable, friendly, humble, even as a king. He wouldn't want that you would address him with "Your Highness", he would have said, "No, no, I am your brother." Wouldn't he? He would be a very down-to-earth person. Is this the right expression? A very ordinary fellow citizen. A one with whom you could relate, and yet there was pride in his heart. You, know, when a person is not looking after titles,

and after high position, and surrounding himself with forms and glitter and so forth, which Moses definitely didn't do, that doesn't mean necessarily that he has humility in his heart, that he has the self-distrust, the sense of dependence on God which is necessary to accomplish the work. There is something in human nature that really has to be revealed by a lot of test and trial. And so it was in the case of Moses. Let's turn now to the next paragraph.

"Moses remained at court until he was forty years of age. His thoughts often turned upon the abject condition of his people, and he visited his brethren in their servitude, and encouraged them with the assurance that God would work for their deliverance. Often, stung to resentment by the sight of injustice and oppression, he burned to avenge their wrongs. One day, while thus abroad, seeing an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, he sprang forward and slew the Egyptian."

Now, this is a very significant act. It's very significant in the sight of Egyptians, and he knew this, therefore he looked around first that nobody saw him. It should have been very significant also in the sight of the Israelites, because by this he showed on which side his heart was, and it was also very significant in the sight of God. Because it revealed the extent of self-sufficiency that was still there in Moses. And this little act had a tremendous influence. Now, when I look back to my own life I really must say, sometimes little actions have had quite a large effect. The action of one moment, for example, can cause work for years. A wrong action in one moment can cause a great work for years afterwards, literally. And you feel a little bit unjustly treated here. Look, this was just one little thing, only one little thing. But what we need to realize, even though this may have been only one act which may not even have been out of a bad motive, but out of a good motive, still, there is a spirit behind it. And unless that spirit is corrected, we can not finish the work.

In my personal experience, I must say, that few years ago, when I had some quarrels with the authorities here over my mother and my grandmother's situation, it was also such an act which really led to a long and a protected trouble, a lot of head ache, much work and much humiliation too. Now, the real cause of this I see more and more, clearer and clearer, has been the spirit of self-sufficiency, of, how shall I describe it, of not really having this sense of dependence on God, and relying on Him completely. Again let us see very clearly that in the case of Moses, as I can testify of my action too, there was no bad intention of doing it, even though in his case it cost the life of an Egyptian, but anyway, he was a soldier, you know, and as a soldier he was to defend his people, maybe it would have cost the life of the Hebrew, if it hadn't cost the life of the Egyptian, so he may have even save the life by killing another life, that's possible. But the point is that there was another thing in this and Sister White describes this in the coming paragraphs.

"Except the Israelite, there had been no witness to the deed, and Moses immediately buried the body in the sand. He had now shown himself ready to maintain the cause of his people, and he hoped to see them rise to recover their liberty. "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not." *Acts*, 7:25. And in a way is good that they did not understand, because neither did he fully.

"They were not yet prepared for freedom. On the following day Moses saw two Hebrews striving together, one of them evidently at fault. Moses reproved the offender, who at once retaliated upon the reprover, denying his right to interfere, and basely accusing him of crime: "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" he said. "Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 246.2

The whole matter was quickly made known to the Egyptians, and, greatly exaggerated, soon reached the ears of Pharaoh. It was represented to the king that this act meant much; that Moses designed to lead his people against the Egyptians, to overthrow the government, and to seat himself upon the throne; and that there could be no security for the kingdom while he lived. It was at once determined

by the monarch that he should die; but, becoming aware of his danger, he made his escape and fled toward Arabia. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 247.1

The Lord directed his course, and he found a home with Jethro, the priest and prince of Midian, who was also a worshiper of God. After a time Moses married one of the daughters of Jethro; and here, in the service of his father-in-law, as keeper of his flocks, he remained forty years. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 247.2

And now the lesson:

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"The Lord directed his course, and he found a home with Jethro, the priest and prince of Midian, who was also a worshiper of God. After a time Moses married one of the daughters of Jethro; and here, in the service of his father-in-law, as keeper of his flocks, he remained forty years." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 247.1-247.2

And now the lesson: "In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers,..." And so often committed by myself to, and by Christians in our age. And that is of taking into their own hands the work that God has promised to do. Now what does it mean when we take into our own hands the work that God had promised to do? It means self-sufficiency, exactly. It means that we do not have a real sense of dependence on God. Now, this act meant much. It did mean much, but not as the Egyptians thought. It meant much in that sense that is expressed the lack of filing of dependence that Moses still had and the lack of ability to really lead his people out, of taking into their own hands the work that God has promised to do. Now, in all these we must see that God had foreseen this already to happen. He knew what was in the heart of Moses. And he let it happen. He let it happen perfectly the way it did, in order to bring Moses in to another school which was necessary before he could be the leader. Let us read on:

"It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power." You see, we have studied the wars of Israel, in the past, in the book Behold your God we have a whole chapter on this, and we have also seen how it was not God's original will that Israel should ever fight with the sword. Now, we looked at it from the point of view of using force. God is not using force, and that is quite valid. That is quite correct. But that is not the only lesson. That is not the only reason why he did not want to give them the sword. What was the other reason?

A sword in the hand always expresses self-sufficiency. It always expresses self-confidence. It's like being a sport's man, like having competition. You know, when you ... Only that competition and sport is a more harmless exercise than being a soldier, but is the same principle. It teaches a person to be self-sufficient and self-confident, confident in his own strength, in that sense, to take the work in to my own hand, which God had promised to do. And this was the real reason why God did not want to give them the sword in the beginning. To have a sword in the hand was like: "Now, I have security, now I

have something, now I am safe, now I can defend myself." And God wanted to teach His people to depend on Him, to really be so dependent on Him that they didn't need this. This reminds me a little bit of Luther when he was in his situation of being persecuted from all sides; Luther had a real sense on dependence on God, when the war broke out around him. We look upon him as a hero, as a man who defied popes and kings, as a man who with confidence said: "Here I stand, God help me.", and so forth. But you know, he was a very timid person in a way. And when you read the report about him more careful you see he was not just standing there and saying, "Here I am, here I stand." He was at first asking if he could think about this please. Then he was going back, then he was shaking, praying for whole day, until he came back to this meeting again, and when he saw the august assembly he was quite owed by it, and in humility, and just looking on God, and depending on Him completely, he could say: "Here I stand."

And when we look at other instances, maybe we should briefly turn to an event that we remember. Page 247: And that is in the *Great Controversy*, the chapter, let me quickly look, here it is. Page 188 second paragraph:

"And now Wittenberg itself, the very center of the Reformation, was fast falling under the power of fanaticism and lawlessness. This terrible condition had not resulted from the teachings of Luther; but throughout Germany his enemies were charging it upon him. In bitterness of soul he sometimes asked: "Can such, then, be the end of this great work of the Reformation?"--Ibid., b. 9, ch. 7. Again, as he wrestled with God in prayer, peace flowed into his heart. "The work is not mine, but Thine own," he said; "Thou wilt not suffer it to be corrupted by superstition or fanaticism." But the thought of remaining longer from the conflict in such a crisis, became insupportable. He determined to return to Wittenberg. *Great Controversy*, 188.2

Without delay he set out on his perilous journey. He was under the ban of the empire. Enemies were at liberty to take his life; friends were forbidden to aid or shelter him. The imperial government was adopting the most stringent measures against his adherents. But he saw that the work of the gospel was imperilled, and in the name of the Lord he went out fearlessly to battle for the truth. *Great Controversy*, 188.3

In a letter to the elector, after stating his purpose to leave the Wartburg, Luther said: "Be it known to your highness that I am going to Wittenberg under a protection far higher than that of princes and electors. I think not of soliciting your highness's support, and far from desiring your protection, I would rather protect you myself. If I knew that your highness could or would protect me, I would not go to Wittenberg at all. There is no sword that can further this cause. God alone must do everything, without the help or concurrence of man. He who has the greatest faith is he who is most able to protect."--Ibid., b. 9, ch. 8. *Great Controversy*, 188.4

Now these words were not said in pride. He knew in which peril he was, they were said in deep humility. The point is that he realized, that he sensed that to depend on the sword was to lose his sense on dependence on God. And this is really what God wants to teach His people in all ages. "Depend on me", He says.

So let's turn back again to *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

"In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do." This one of the reasons that spoiled the work of the Reformation. Because very soon, the successor of the reformers took into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. That is one of the reasons for the breaking out of the Thirty Years War that savaged Europe really brought a great calamity over Europe.

"It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone. Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes. Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught--not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfilment of His promises. And there were other lessons that, amid the solitude of the mountains, Moses was to receive. In the school of self-denial and hardship he was to learn patience, to temper his passions. Before he could govern wisely, he must be trained to obey. His own heart must be fully in harmony with God before he could teach the knowledge of His will to Israel." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 247.3}

Now we need to test ourselves. Do we have this in our heart? Because we have to do a work similar to that of Moses. So we have to interrupt our lesson here for a moment, take a break, and after this we continue with the lesson of Moses.

Study 13

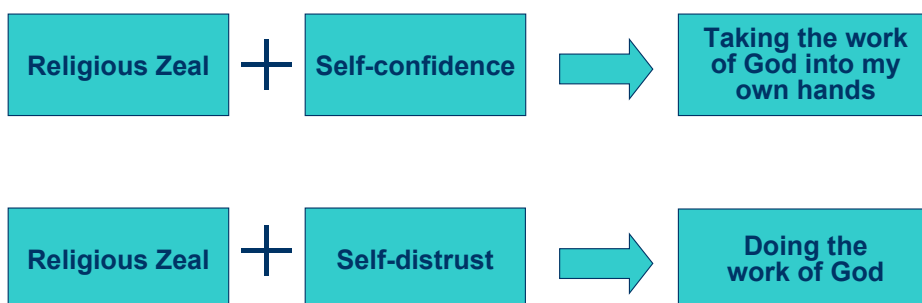
Now turning back to the experience of Moses, we would like to understand better, what contributed to his taking the work that God has promised to do into his own hand. And that was his problem. Let us read this sentence again,

"In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 274.3

And as we have seen right from the beginning, one of the most prominent lessons God tried to teach his people was the lesson of self-distrust. Through the sacrificial system, through the experience of Adam, then through the experience of others as well. We could take the Tower of Babel only as example too. But now, even through the story of Moses here, and well we could first go to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and everywhere we would see the same lesson. Now the question is, how could a thing, that is done with such pure motives, and we can really see that Moses was sighting himself fully with the people of God. He was rather excepting their poverty than the wealth of Egypt. He was not a politician who wanted only to get his position. But he wanted to help his people. And everything he was doing for that purpose. And as he did, he fell into that error.

And the question was asked, in the last study, how can we know, whether our actions are really after God's order or whether we take God's work into our own hands; because in both cases often we often think that we do the work of God. Definitely Moses was thinking, he was doing God's work there is no question about it. And that is different with David. When David sinned with Bathsheba, he knew that was wrong. When he sent his soldier to the front to die there he knew it was wrong. But in the case of Moses he honestly and seriously believed that what he did was the right thing. And that is a greater problem, isn't it. It is quiet easy if we understand that it is wrong what we do, then we know what to avoid but if we don't, how do we avoid this thing? Now I tried to make a diagram that explains under what circumstances we really take God's work into our own hand.

Moses – Taking the Work into my own Hands



We have religious zeal, and when we add this religious zeal with self-confidence, it will lead us of taking the work of God into my own hands, inevitably. If we have religious zeal and we have self-distrust, then we are doing the work of God. I think, that is obvious, that is clear. Now, the question may be asked, how do we know, whether there is self-confidence in our heart or self-distrust? Because we may think, that we may have sufficient self-distrust, but maybe it is not actually there. Well, we have to depend on our divine Leader, to lead us step by step. And very often our divine Leader leads us into such a way which we do not expect. And if we are too blind to see it, then He actually will allow that we fall. And through the fall we learn, that we had been wrong. And this will help us.

Now, there are some people, and we have to think about this carefully, some people who have a lot of problems with a constant sense of self-distrust that is not healthy. They have this self-distrust to the extent, where they do not entrust themselves to the guiding of the divine head. That means, they think they must avoid all mistakes, but in trying to avoid all mistakes themselves they do a lot of mistakes. In the very effort trying to avoid mistakes, they do mistakes. Now what attitude do we need in order to really be in the School of Christ and to learn this self-distrust? What we need is to cast ourselves more completely on our divine Teacher. Even to the point where we say, well if I am so stubborn that I do not see my mistakes, then Lord please let me fall, so that I see where I stand. In other words, let us accept the very fact, that we also fall at times, in order to be taught a lesson.

When I talk of fall, it does not necessary mean falling into sin. Because this we try to avoid, that is clear, but we fall in other ways. We fall in shame, we fall in sickness, we fall in distress, we fall in persecution, maybe unnecessary persecution. We fall in embarrassment, and we fall in loss. Now when this comes, let us be thankful for it. And sometimes, yes we fall also in sin because we do not know that what our weakness is. But when we do instead of now turning around ourselves, and being depressed only, let us say first of all thank you to the Lord. Because He allows these things to happen, in order to show us something. In other words let us rest, really rest in our divine teacher. He is giving us what we need.

And when we study Moses here, we don't do this, so that we from now on will do no mistakes anymore. I can be almost sure, that everybody of us will make mistakes. That sounds a little bit negative what I say here, I know this. You rather wish that I would say from now on we will make no mistakes anymore. And in a way I wished I could say this but human nature and history has shown me that this is not the case. Let us see very clearly, that these mistakes are a part of our school. And as we accept this school we loose our tendency to run away from the school of Christ constantly.

Let me again summarize this point. A healthy self-distrust is really saying to myself, that even if I fall, I have a divine Teacher, who leads me back to the path and who shows me through this my real condition. Now in order to describe this again, so that you do not misunderstand me, I am not saying that we have to sin. But what I say is this: when a sin is in our heart, like the sin of self-confidence, it is just a matter of time till it is expressed in certain actions, which we also call sin. It is just a matter of time. Now, it would be nice and would be good, if these things could be taken away before they are expressed. Because it saves us embarrassment, it saves us loss, it saves the cause of God a lot of embracement and loss. It would be nice. But if it cannot be revealed but by it coming out through actions, then let it come. That is better. Let us fall, so that we see where our true condition stands. And this we have to accept and be thankful for.

Now this is the same as the study on the experience of David. You know when David experienced the consequences of his sin, when his sin became public, when all the shame and embarrassment was there, clear God is not delighted in these things. He doesn't want that we bear our consequences, but let us see the glory of God in it. Let us see the wonderful school in it. And so likewise let us see the school of God in our own weakness. So when Moses fell as he did, by taking the matter of God into his own hand the whole story was foreknown by God. It was foreseen. God knew exactly step by step what would happen. And He allowed it to happen.

On the other hand I do not promote a careless attitude, where we say well we just float along and God will show us in right time. We have to cooperate, and when we fall, then let us learn the right lesson out of it. "It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare" – and this something Moses had to learn.

"He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught--not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises. And there were other lessons that, amid the solitude of the mountains, Moses was to receive. In the school of self-denial and hardship he was to learn patience, to temper his passions. Before he could govern wisely, he must be trained to obey." Now I ask you again, if you were the teacher of Moses, would you have sent him angels to tell him that he was the one to deliver Israel? Knowing quite well the danger he would fall into. Knowing quite well how wrong he would understand such a message. Ye wouldn't, would you? So why did God do this? Let us face the fact. He did do this in order to reveal his own weakness, in order to make him understand, what still was necessary in order to be the leader. And so often God comes to us and brings us certain blessings knowing quite well, that the way that we handle the blessings we will lead to our fall. But He allows these things to happen, so that we learn out of it. He knows what is in our heart and He knows how to bring these things out, how to reveal it in order to help us.

"Before he could govern wisely, he must be trained to obey." He wasn't told this by the angels. Because it would have been useless. It would have been absolutely useless. You could tell a thousand times something to a person, and he doesn't just get the message. He just doesn't get it for some reason. That is our human nature. So what did he need? He needed a demonstration rather than a declaration. He needed to be trained to obey before he could govern wisely.

"His own heart must be fully in harmony with God before he could teach the knowledge of His will to Israel. By his own experience he must be prepared to exercise a fatherly care over all who needed his help.

"Man would have dispensed with that long period of toil and obscurity, deeming it a great loss of time. But Infinite Wisdom called him who was to become the leader of his people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of caretaking, of self-forgetfulness and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, longsuffering shepherd of Israel. No advantage that human training or culture could bestow, could be a substitute for this experience. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 247.3-247.4

"Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt--the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king's grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture--all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character."

Now in the past I saw these points as all different points. We could make a list here. What is it? I didn't make a diagram here. But we could make it now. It was his high position; the love of his foster mother; dissipation on every hand; refinement; the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion; the splendor of idolatrous worship and the grandeur of architecture and sculpture. Where these all different things? No, they all taught one lesson, and that was self-sufficiency – self-confidence. That was the lesson in all this. In what way was the love of the foster mother teaching him self-confidence? Well, the love of his foster mother protected him. It gave him the position of a favorite person in Egypt. It was not that the love in it self was something wrong. But it created a surrounding that would help him to gain self-sufficiency.

His high position as the king's grandson is going in the same direction. The dissipation on every hand – what does dissipation mean? It means the same as throwing away things you know. If I have a car today and I break it, well then I get a new one tomorrow. Why should I take care of the car, I can get a

new one. And I have thousand servants who can do this again, if something goes wrong. I don't need specially watch and care for things. You know when people come from a poorer country and they have one piece of item which they must have for their whole life, they will take real care of it. Where others who can have it ten times – no matter – dissipation. This is the word isn't it? Like the money – it disappears through the fingers. Exactly, it is because we do not value. Unwise spending, misuse, and so forth. We get the idea of the word. Maybe it is not exactly what I said, but it is in this direction.

So the point is that we really can depend on infinite resources. It is again dependence, an assurance in material things rather than in the heavenly things. The refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion we know, that all false religion tends to self-sufficiency, all wrong religion fosters pride and self-sufficiency. "...the splendor of idolatrous worship" – which again fosters pride - "the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture" is the same thing. "All had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character." And now we read that these three things needed to be there in order to get a change,

"Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions." And we need all three. Leave time away, just change the surroundings and give him some communion with God. Would this be sufficient? Now he needed 40 years. Well, give him 40 years but leave him in the same surroundings, would this be sufficient? No. Well, then give him time, give him another surrounding, but no communion with God, would this bring a change? No. You see, all three things were necessary in order to really bring about this tremendous deep change. And when we are called to different surroundings, when God tells us, you need time and you need communion, let us not murmur or think we can do only with two of the three ingredients. It is like a recipe. You know, when you lack one ingredient in the bread – how is it Aris – it doesn't work. You need all three; you need water, flower, and salt or raising agent. If you have one less, it will not be the bread you desire to have. And so it is the same thing with the spiritual world, but often we think and that is the point of our self-sufficiency – you know we don't take the time, we don't give ourselves the time. Or we think, well change of surrounding is not necessary because we keep communion with God. So that compensates for the change of surrounding. Or we say, well we have changed the surrounding and we give us ourselves time, but you know we don't need to commune with God so much, because the circumstances will teach me. Again, it doesn't work. Satan wants to tempt us in these things. We really have to accept everything that God gives us. Let us read on.

"In all who have been chosen to accomplish a work for God the human element is seen. Yet they have not been men of stereotyped habits and character, who were satisfied to remain in that condition. They earnestly desired to obtain wisdom from God and to learn to work for Him. Says the apostle, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.' James 1:5 But God will not impart to men divine light while they are content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God's help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained. Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 248.2

I think we have very little concept of what we still have to go through in order to be prepared to do the Lords work in the last battle. I feel that we have little concept, that is my impression really. Looking back to our history, the history of our movement I must say this. It is good to go back and to think, what did we go through, where did we fail and so forth. And with what attitude did we fail, didn't we have a good motive here and there and here and there? But that was not enough. Good motives are not enough, if self-confidence is mixed in this work, it will be marred. "Shut in by the bulwarks of the

mountains, Moses was alone with God." It is interesting, "the bulwarks of the mountains" here he had something else than the grand architecture. In other words, here was God's creation, these stones were rough, they were not made by hands, they were made by God. And he learned how small he is compared with these things. And how small mans ability is.

I once was in New York amongst the sky scrapers there; maybe you have also been in a big city one time where you have these huge things to your right and to your left. And it is almost depressing to be in these things. And yet you cannot fail to get some awe from these things. But then when you are in the mountains, what are the sky scrapers against them? Absolutely, nothing. They are small like matches. Because the mountains are really big. And you know, Moses must not have failed to see the difference here. Here is God's work and here is mans work. And not only this, he was alone with God. It was quietness here. Not the noise of the music of the gentiles around him. But just the wind and the noise of the insects and whatever there was. Likewise, he really had time to commune with God and he took this time.

"The magnificent temples of Egypt no longer impressed his mind with their superstition and falsehood. In the solemn grandeur of the everlasting hills he beheld the majesty of the Most High, and in contrast realized how powerless and insignificant were the gods of Egypt." Really how powerless and insignificant was he – that is the real point. "Everywhere the Creator's name was written. Moses seemed to stand in His presence and to be over-shadowed by His power. Here his pride and self-sufficiency were swept away. In the stern simplicity of his wilderness life, the results of the ease and luxury of Egypt disappeared. Moses became patient, reverent, and humble, "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3), yet strong in faith in the mighty God of Jacob." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 248.3

"As the years rolled on, and he wandered with his flocks in solitary places, pondering upon the oppressed condition of his people, he recounted the dealings of God with his fathers and the promises that were the heritage of the chosen nation, and his prayers for Israel ascended by day and by night. Heavenly angels shed their light around him. Here, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis. The long years spent amid the desert solitudes were rich in blessing, not alone to Moses and his people, but to the world in all succeeding ages." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 251.1

Why? Because we have several books that he wrote in this time, which were Genesis and the book of Job. And that is quit interesting that he should receive the Spirit of Prophecy while he was there. But he never would see as the deliverer again and evidently God did not repeat the message right there and then to him. So he believed for a while, that God would choose somebody else. I mean that is the conclusion he draw. And God did not take him out of this conclusion for quit some time. Until He called him again.

"The time for Israel's deliverance had come. But God's purpose was to be accomplished in a manner to pour contempt on human pride. The deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd, with only a rod in his hand; but God would make that rod the symbol of His power. Leading his flocks one day near Horeb, "the mountain of God," Moses saw a bush in flames, branches, foliage, and trunk, all burning, yet seeming not to be consumed. He drew near to view the wonderful sight, when a voice from out of the flame called him by name. With trembling lips he answered, "Here am I." He was warned not to approach irreverently: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. . . . I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 251.2

You see, we often ask ourselves why do we have to do this and so forth, when God is our friend. But this exercise of putting of our shoes is helping the human agent to see his dependence upon God. It is helping him to get the right relationship between him and God. So again God doesn't do it for his own sake, but for our sake.

“It was He who, as the Angel of the covenant, had revealed Himself to the fathers in ages past. “And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 251.2

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. There are those who conduct themselves in His house as they would not presume to do in the audience chamber of an earthly ruler. These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces. God is greatly to be revered; all who truly realize His presence will bow in humility before Him, and, like Jacob beholding the vision of God, they will cry out, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 252.1

Now what is contained in this lesson of being reverent before God? What does God want to teach us? Again the same lesson: self-distrust and confidence in Him. We really need to see, God doesn't do it for his own sake - He does it for us. And as the table at home, where the children learn to eat together with the parents is a school for the children, so is the worship room as well. It is a school in which we learn to have self-distrust and trust in God. Which is not an easy thing, but we need to learn it step by step and when we have learned this as children then we shall know how it is when we are an adult. Now such a self-distrust, such a spirit of reverence will help us to really not take the work of God into our own hands as we are so much prompted to do.

“As Moses waited in reverent awe before God the words continued: “I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

“Amazed and terrified at the command, Moses drew back, saying, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

Now what attitude speaks out of these words? The right or the wrong attitude? Definitely the right attitude. Who am I that I shall go? He clearly saw, that he himself had no power. He saw his self-distrust; I mean he revealed his self-distrust when he was saying this.

“The reply was, “Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 252.2-252.3

“Moses thought of the difficulties to be encountered, of the blindness, ignorance, and unbelief of his people, many of whom were almost destitute of a knowledge of God.

“Behold,” he said, “when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is His name? What shall I say unto them?” The answer was-- *Patriarchs and Prophets* 252.4

And so forth. Now when Moses now objected again, thinking of the blindness, ignorance, and unbelief of the people – was this the right attitude of self-sufficiency? Was this an attitude of self-confidence? Well, I would honestly say, that was realism. That was as it was – fullstop. And we have to be realistic. You know, it was a mighty enemy. In fact I believe at that stage it was still self-distrust.

Because he realized how big the hindrances were and he needed assurance of God that he would overcome these hindrances.

You see, if we quickly accept a work, thinking that we can do it, for example, tomorrow we will be invited in a church to present the message there. Oh wonderful, a good opportunity, now we can really give them the truth. I mean the joy is understandable, because we wish to share the Gospel. But what is often contained in that joy? Self-confidence – oh yes, we can do it, we can explain them something. We can give it to them. But Moses was not so rash now. He was much more careful. He was saying: yes but who am I – who am I that you call me. And the next is – yes, but look how difficult the task is.

Now, it is not wrong if we realize ourselves the magnitude of the task. The prejudices, the situation and so forth and so God answered him very clearly, here 'I AM THAT I AM' and so forth and then He gave more instructions to Moses what to do, and what to say. And He told him also that Pharaoh would not listen. And then he would tell him how they should go out of their land and how they should require the gold and silver of the Egyptians and now it goes on:

“Moses saw before him difficulties that seemed insurmountable. What proof could he give his people that God had indeed sent him?” Now what do you say at this stage? I would say, at first it was understandable that he realizes the difficulties. It almost seems to go over to me here to exalting the difficulties too much. You see, there is a healthy estimation or a healthy assessment of a situation which we need to do sometimes. It is not wise to go in a thing blindly, because we need to realize how much strength and grace we need. And it is good, that we take some time before in prayer – in earnest prayer so.

That reminds me, to the first camp meeting I had to give myself in 1985. I was feeling terribly unable to do this in many respects. First of all, I never held a camp meeting. I mean at least not in Germany and in German language and without German translator and so forth – in Kenya I think I had before. And secondly it was a delicate situation; you know the situation we were in 1985. So I realized this and I saw my need in prayer. And this is what definitely Moses saw. But now he came to the point, where he thought so much on the difficulties, that his trust in God was not sufficient to meet it. And that is where the problem came up.

Self-distrust is good, but it was not coupled with true trust in God. So he again saw the difficulties that seemed insurmountable. What proof could be given to the people where God had sent him? Well, ““behold,” he said, “they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice” and so forth – and then God gave him this two signs. The one with the rod, and the other with the hand, that became like leprosy. And He said, if they don't believe you, then, take some water, pour it down and it becomes blood. So He had given him all kinds of securities, and after having given him all this Moses said “But the servant of God was still overwhelmed by the thought of the strange and wonderful work before him. In his distress and fear he now pleaded as an excuse a lack of ready speech: “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.” He had been so long away from the Egyptians that he had not so clear knowledge and ready use of their language as when he was among them. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 254.1

Even this the Lord met by saying: “Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?” To this was added another assurance of divine aid: “Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.” I mean one objection after the other and God always said, but I sent you, but I do this, here I remove this hindrance, I remove that hindrance. So at first we can say, it was really an expression of self-distrust, which he had learned in these 40 years, but now it became somewhat rebellious. It became obstinate. He did not trust himself really to God. So he finally said, sent whom you want. First of all Sister White

says: "But Moses still entreated that a more competent person be selected." In the bible it simply says that Moses simply answered, "sent whom you want" – but not me.

"These excuses at first proceeded from humility and diffidence; but after the Lord had promised to remove all difficulties, and to give him final success, then any further shrinking back and complaining of his unfitness showed distrust of God. It implied a fear that God was unable to qualify him for the great work to which He had called him, or that He had made a mistake in the selection of the man. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 254.2

"Moses was now directed to Aaron, his elder brother, who, having been in daily use of the language of the Egyptians, was able to speak it perfectly. He was told that Aaron was coming to meet him. The next words from the Lord were an unqualified command: *Patriarchs and Prophets* 254.3

"Thou shall speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." He could make no further resistance, for all ground for excuse was removed. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 254.4

It is interesting; Moses took the rod of Aaron in his hands and would do the signs. So it was the rod of Aaron but Moses was doing it. But Aaron was the one who was speaking. It was a interesting cooperation between the two.

"The divine command given to Moses found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouthpiece for God to Israel. But having once accepted the work, he entered upon it with his whole heart, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the character of those who trust Him fully and give themselves unreservedly to His commands. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 255.1

So, the experience of Moses here really shows us the importance of self-distrust I think. When we look at the life of Moses and see how he stood in all this trials, we see how this experience of the wilderness has fitted in for the necessary work. And I wish that our experience will be like that of Moses. We have been also now 40 years in the wilderness haven't we. Maybe not quiet yet – a little bit less. But we need some more in order to do the greatest work ever committed to men. And that is the revelation of His character. Amen.

Study 14

The Example of Moses

So, we come back to the history of Moses, really what study now in the life of Moses is an application of the principles we have considered before. And as well there are many other precious lessons in his life, and we can study his life not enough in order to really get all this lessons. So, let us turn again back to the chapter: Moses, in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* on page 255.

“The divine command given to Moses found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouthpiece for God to Israel. But having once accepted the work, he entered upon it with his whole heart, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the character of those who trust Him fully and give themselves unreservedly to His commands.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 255.1

So what we see in Moses is exactly what we are studying here, it is self-distrust in the one hand, and trust in the God on the other. But let's read on a little bit, because Sister White now applies this to us as well.

“A man will gain power and efficiency as he accepts the responsibilities that God places upon him, and with his whole soul seeks to qualify himself to bear them aright. However humble his position or limited his ability, that man will attain true greatness who, trusting to divine strength, seeks to perform his work with fidelity. Had Moses relied upon his own strength and wisdom, and eagerly accepted the great charge, he would have evinced his entire unfitness for such a work. The fact that a man feels his weakness is at least some evidence that he realizes the magnitude of the work appointed him, and that he will make God his counselor and his strength.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 255.2

So, we see here a direct connection between the feeling of our weakness, the realization of the magnitude of the work, and making God our counselor. Now, our great problem is this that we do not make God our counselor. In theory we do. Yes I think has a problem to say he needs God as a counselor, but in practice, when it comes to the situations where we tend to make mistakes; that is all because we have not made God our counselor. We look back to our mistakes and we tend to say: Well these are little things, that everybody makes mistakes, and so forth. But remember that every time we make a mistake it is because we did not make God our counselor. And if that is a pattern that goes on, then there is something wrong, we should go back, why don't we make God our counselor?

It is because we don't feel our weakness; we don't really feel it, even though we may be terribly cast down, or whatever. And when we don't feel our weakness, it's that we don't realize the magnitude of the work. So, let's look at what it means to make God the counselor, and what it does not mean. In other words, how do we refuse to make God our counselor? For example: if we have no belief in God's power, then we naturally as a result of this fear, loss impossibility and defeat. We see only problems before us, and we move forward only as we can make sure that our steps will guarantee no failure, no impossibility, no loss. This is a lack of faith; obviously it comes from not really believing God's power. That is not self-distrust. In such a case we don't need to make God the counselor, because we know anyway that it doesn't work. Why should we ask God? We know it doesn't work, we have the wisdom. So this is not real self-distrust as you can see.

The next problem is, many people they go forward and so forth, but because they have no feeling of their weakness. So, in other words, if I don't feel my weakness, what does it mean, to feel our weakness? It doesn't mean just to know in theory I am weak. We sing in the song I am weak, but thou are strong. But the feeling of weakness means a real sense and a real awareness of it in every

situation. But if this is not there, then I have no idea of the magnitude of the work of God. You see, I enter upon it thinking I will master it. Very confident. In such a case I do not seek counsel either, because I have no need to see counsel, because I have no sense of my weakness. When I say: Not seeking counsel, maybe I should mention here that I don't mean it so black and white that a person is not seeking counsel at all. Very often we are seeking counsel, but not really to the last steps, and not to the last consequence, and not in every situation. And that is the problem. When I say not seeking counsel I mean not sufficiently seeking counsel. That's the point.

Now with Moses, because he felt his weakness, and when I have a sense of this, when I really feel this, when I really have an awareness of this, it leads me that I see the magnitude of God's work. It's not that I fear lost, impossibility or defeat, because God can do everything. But I see the tremendous work which I cannot do. And I am really a dependant receiver. And in such a case, I will make God the counselor in everything. And it is important for us to really realize that this is the privilege of every one of us, to make God the counselor to the last consequence. To the point where God can really use us as His sharp sickle, as an instrument in everything. And let us be not satisfied before.

You see, Moses needed forty years to feel his weakness. Forty years in the wilderness! And constantly he was faced with a sense of his own weakness. And then he had to get the sense too, when he was told: Put off your shoes, because you are weak, you are dirty, even your shoes are dirty. And he saw this lesson, he saw the magnitude of the work, and he shrank back. But he did not refuse when God told him. Then he made God his counselor, and he went forward. So, there could be several reasons for shrink back as you obviously realize, one is that we simply fear loss, impossibility and defeat; and the other is that we see the magnitude of the work. In the one case we will not seek counsel, and in the other case we will seek counsel. This leads to totally different results.

Moses definitely felt his weakness, and so he had a realization of the magnitude of the work appointed to him, and for this reason he made God his counselor and strength. The rest of the story speaks of a little incident where Moses neglected to circumcise his son. Because of the fear of his wife and he felt God's displeasure in this. And this was a blessing in itself, because he needed to realize that only as he continued to work humbly before God, only as he continued to walk in His counsel, could he have the protection. It was not easy to go to Egypt. There was a good reason why he asked again and again, and what if? That was terribly dangerous for him to go there. And God did not take away this sense of this danger. In fact he had to strengthen it even through this event. But once the circumcision was accomplished then, the wrath of God was taken away, and there was God's protection. That shows that we can go even through fire, that we can go in the midst of danger, once we walk in God's counsel. But we need to really seek his counsel to the last consequence.

We want now to come to another chapter in the life of Moses. And we want to see how important it is that once he has accepted the work he was a channel, and was to be recognized as such. Even though Moses was a very great man as we know him to be after his experience in the wilderness, he still was a human. And that means he was still weak, that wasn't taken away, and he was not perfect; even though his accomplishments were very, very great. Now, the closer we are to a person, the more we are aware of his weakness, as a companion, aren't we? When we look at each other from a distance, we think, well he is a man strong in faith and so forth, but once we are daily with him and see him in everyday life and how he deals in certain situations and so forth, we see: hmmm he is also weak. We tend not to see this because in our mind we have a certain picture of people. And, when we see this weakness then we tend to look a little bit down upon the person; that means we now estimate him according to this weakness, and we also estimate what he says and what he does according to this weakness.

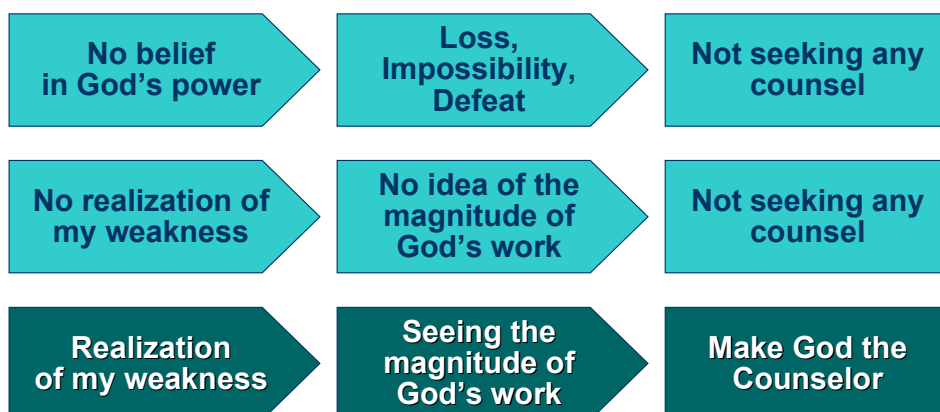
Now, this may not be so problematic, and so wrong in most cases, but when God wants to use this person to help us and to bless us then it becomes problematic. Because we tend to see that what God wants to give us in the light of that weakness of that person. And that is I would say almost inevitable.

We have to be very strong and very spiritual minded not to get confused with the treasure and the vessel. We have studied this and, yes we understand it, but to really apply it when it comes near to us is another question. In other words, what would you do, if you would live next to Moses? What would you do if you were the brother or sister of Moses? How would you feel about him, seeing his weaknesses? Seeing that he was tired in the morning, that he was exhausted, that sometimes he tended maybe to be too stern, or too soft because of the situations he was facing? But going and feeling his weakness he would go to God and he would receive strength again, and he would not make mistakes in his administration. But yet in himself, he would be weak, you see? In himself, he would have made many mistakes, even during the forty years. But because he constantly he make God his counselor, he did not make these mistakes. You see he walked in the ways of God, and yet he was very weak. And Moses and Aaron, they noticed this.

Now, add to this the fact that we do not always have a sense of this weakness in ourselves. So we begin to compare ourselves with our brother or sister. We look at him, or at her, and we say: Hmm he or she doesn't do right here, look at this weakness. I see the weakness, and as soon as I see the weakness, I form a judgment. And then the question comes up, why doesn't he listen to me? Or why doesn't she listen to me? Because I know it! And then the demon of jealousy enters into the heart of man. And when this is the case, then Satan really gets control. And this happened so with Aaron and Marian.

We want to turn to the story, and the reason why we want to study this is, two-fold. Number one to see the weakness of humanity, but number two also to see the danger of judging this weakness of humanity in terms of the treasure that comes through it. Or applying this weakness to the treasure that comes through that vessel. You sere when we realize the weakness of a person, we tend to look with suspicion now on everything that comes through that person. This becomes even more evident in the latter history of Moses, which I will come back to later. And we have to be very, very careful and on guard. You see, suddenly many statements that were made are looked upon in a different light. And this we have to be careful. We don't reject the treasure, nor to reject the message that God gave.

Moses – Making God His Counselor



“At Hazeroth, the next encampment after leaving Taberah, a still more bitter trial awaited Moses. Aaron and Miriam had occupied a position of high honor and leadership in Israel. Both were endowed with the prophetic gift, and both had been divinely associated with Moses in the deliverance of the Hebrews. "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (Micah 6:4), are the words of the Lord by the prophet Micah. Miriam's force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people. Richly endowed with the gifts of poetry and music, Miriam had led the women of Israel in song and dance on the shore of the Red Sea. In the affections of the people and the honor of Heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron. But the same evil that first brought discord in heaven sprang up in the heart of this woman of Israel, and she did not fail to find a sympathizer in her dissatisfaction.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 382.3

“In the appointment of the seventy elders Miriam and Aaron had not been consulted, and their jealousy was excited against Moses.” Now, this is a very common occurrence: We are not consulted. And what does this bring up in the heart, when we are not consulted? It brings up jealousy. Why didn't you inform me, why didn't you tell me, and so forth? Now, we have to guard against this. Especially when we are not made privy of a certain conversation or a certain situation; maybe we don't need to be.

“At the time of Jethro's visit, while the Israelites were on the way to Sinai, the ready acceptance by Moses of the counsel of his father-in-law had aroused in Aaron and Miriam a fear that his influence with the great leader exceeded theirs. In the organization of the council of elders they felt that their position and authority had been ignored. Miriam and Aaron had never known the weight of care and responsibility which had rested upon Moses; yet because they had been chosen to aid him they regarded themselves as sharing equally with him the burden of leadership, and they regarded the appointment of further assistants as uncalled for.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 382.4

Now, what do you see in here? Exactly what Moses did not have, namely this sense of self-confidence, or the lack of a feeling of their weakness. What do we read here? They “had never known the weight of care and responsibility.” And because they never knew that magnitude of the work, and that was because they never realized their weakness. They now, called for further assistance, as uncalled for. In other words there was no seeking for counsel. I don't need counsel, its not necessary. You see, when we are not looking for counsel with God, then neither do we seek counsel with others and when God gives us people on our side with whom we can counsel, we see no need for it, because we don't have a sense of our weakness, feeling of our weakness. So, “they regarded the appointment of further assistants as uncalled for.” But, they brought their dissatisfaction out in different lines, as we shall soon see, but let's further a little bit.

“Moses felt the importance of the great work committed to him as no other man had ever felt it.” So we see here again the attitude and the spirit of Moses. “He realized his own weakness, and he made God his counselor.” It's almost the same wording as we read before. “Aaron esteemed himself more highly, and trusted less in God.” That is always the result when we esteem ourselves more high, we trust less in God. “He had failed when entrusted with responsibility, giving evidence of the weakness of his character by his base compliance in the matter of the idolatrous worship at Sinai. But Miriam and Aaron, blinded by jealousy and ambition, lost sight of this. Aaron had been highly honored by God in the appointment of his family to the sacred office of the priesthood; yet even this now added to the desire for self-exaltation.

"And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?" I find it interesting because it says, “even this now added to the desire for self-exaltation.” Wouldn't the honor given to a man really stimulate him to even have a greater desire for self exaltation? In other words, would you as a parent not be very careful to give honor to your children, because it may faster the desire of self exaltation in them? Well, the honor that God gives will lead to a sense of our own

weakness, provided we will receive it as Moses did. You see when Moses received that honor, he saw his weakness, he saw the magnitude of the work and he had no desire for self exaltation; the opposite was the case with him. But with Aaron there was this desire for self exaltation coming up when he received that honor. So, I really must say, when people are honored to become missionaries or whatever, there is always a danger that this honor is used or is taken as a stimulus for self exaltation. And we have to realize that is a weakness of the human nature. That doesn't mean that they are bad people necessarily, Aaron wasn't a bad person, he simply was weak; but he was weak and he did not admit this, he did not feel it.

"And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?" What a humble expression! Look, equal rights here, as he speaks to you, he speaks to us as well.

"Regarding themselves as equally favored by God, they felt that they were entitled to the same position and authority. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 383.1 Now, they wouldn't say this directly, but this was implied in their whole attitude.

"Yielding to the spirit of dissatisfaction, Miriam found cause of complaint in events that God had especially overruled. The marriage of Moses had been displeasing to her. That he should choose a woman of another nation, instead of taking a wife from among the Hebrews, was an offense to her family and national pride. Zipporah was treated with ill-disguised contempt." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 383.2

So, here it expressed itself. One thing we should realize, when sin comes up in the heart of men, he seldom expresses it in a direct way. It comes out in another way very often. And here in this case it was Zipporah, was the cause for these things.

"Though called a "Cushite woman" (Numbers 12:1, R.V.), the wife of Moses was a Midianite, and thus a descendant of Abraham. In personal appearance she differed from the Hebrews in being of a somewhat darker complexion. Though not an Israelite, Zipporah was a worshiper of the true God. She was of a timid, retiring disposition, gentle and affectionate, and greatly distressed at the sight of suffering; and it was for this reason that Moses, when on the way to Egypt, had consented to her return to Midian. He desired to spare her the pain of witnessing the judgments that were to fall on the Egyptians. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 383.3}

"When Zipporah rejoined her husband in the wilderness, she saw that his burdens were wearing away his strength, and she made known her fears to Jethro, who suggested measures for his relief.

So this woman, she was somewhat timid wasn't she? Not, exactly the woman, who would be courageous and go forward, she was very timid. But she was honest. However, such a timid will also lead a person to make mistakes obviously. When she refused to have her child circumcised, that was a part of it. How can you do such a thing to a little baby? She felt, we can't do this. Her softness hindered her to do it. And she needed to be rebuked here too. But in the case of fearing for a husband and doing something for him through her father, she was not wrong. In fact God bless the whole thing. So, he can use even the weakness of people at times to accomplish something, and that shows us how careful we must be when we judge people from their outward appearance. He can use men as they are.

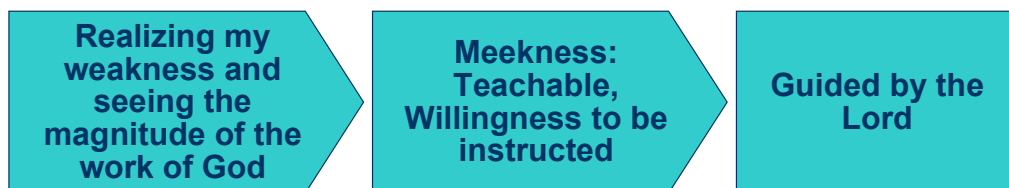
"Here was the chief reason for Miriam's antipathy to Zipporah. " Not admitted but so it was. "Smarting under the supposed neglect shown to herself and Aaron, she regarded the wife of Moses as the cause, concluding that her influence had prevented him from taking them into his counsels as formerly." So what did Aaron and Marian obviously do? They compared Zipporah with themselves. And that was a very unfairable comparison. Zipporah was weak, timid, where they were resolute, strong, they were leader types of people, she was absolutely no leader type of person. She would not

dare to speak up in a assembly but she would keep quite. However, it was still not right to compare themselves with her. And we have to be very careful to compare ourselves with different personalities, whether they be stronger than we are, or whether they be weaker than we are. We have to really look at the treasure that God is using through this people. And especially should we not talk against those things that are specially lead by God and especially should we be on guard against such things as jealousies. This was the real issue here-jealousy-and nothing else.

“Had Aaron stood up firmly for the right, he might have checked the evil; but instead of showing Miriam the sinfulness of her conduct, he sympathized with her, listened to her words of complaint, and thus came to share her jealousy. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 384.1 So evidently, Aaron was not at first jealous, but by listening it found a court in his heart.

“Their accusations were borne by Moses in uncomplaining silence.” This is now a very clear story how we should react, in uncomplaining silence. “It was the experience gained during the years of toil and waiting in Midian--the spirit of humility and long-suffering there developed--that prepared Moses to meet with patience the unbelief and murmuring of the people and the pride and envy of those who should have been his unswerving helpers. Moses "was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," and this is why he was granted divine wisdom and guidance above all others. Says the Scripture, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." *Psalms* 25:9.

Moses – The Meek are Guided by God



Now, in our last diagram here when we look at this again. He said that when we have a feeling of our own weakness, we see the magnitude of the work and then we make God the counselor. But do you understand the connection? Why do we make God the counselor when we feel our weakness? What is the process exactly that makes us making God the counselor? And this is described here. When we feel our own weakness and see the magnitude of the work of God then we have this attitude of meekness in us, and this meekness is described of define as a willingness to be instructed, as to be teachable. And that is the question, which is the important question of everything. Are we willing to be instructed? Are we teachable? We may have our weaknesses, we may have mistakes and so forth,

but I we are not willing to be instructed, if we are not teachable, we will make mistakes, we will not look for counsel. So, then we are guided by the Lord, then we seek counsel. So a sense of our weakness is making us willing to be instructed. It makes us teachable.

“Again: Moses "was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," and this is why he was granted divine wisdom and guidance above all others.” You see, there are even degrees in this. The more teachable we are the more willing to be guided, the more we are guided. And Moses was guided more than everybody else. He had a closer relationship to God than everybody else had, and he was almost living in his presence. You know, he knew exactly what step to take. He wouldn’t ask other people: how do I know the will of God? He would know it, because he was in close communion with his father. And why? Because he was willing to be taught. That is the key.

“Says the Scripture, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." *Psalm 25:9*. The meek are guided by the Lord, because they are teachable, willing to be instructed. They have a sincere desire to know and to do the will of God. The Saviour's promise is, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." *John 7:17*. And He declares by the apostle James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." *James 1:5*. But His promise is only to those who are willing to follow the Lord wholly. God does not force the will of any; hence He cannot lead those who are too proud to be taught, who are bent upon having their own way.”

I want to really stress the fact that those who are too proud to be taught do not look proud. You know, when you speak with them they may have a very humble demeanor, but there is pride in the heart. That is unwilling to really be taught completely, who are bent upon having their own way.

“Of the double-minded man--he who seeks to follow his own will, while professing to do the will of God--it is written, "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." *James 1:7*. *Patriarchs and Prophets 384.2*

“God had chosen Moses, and had put His Spirit upon him; and Miriam and Aaron, by their murmurings, were guilty of disloyalty, not only to their appointed leader, but to God Himself. The seditious whisperers were summoned to the tabernacle, and brought face to face with Moses. "And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam." Their claim to the prophetic gift was not denied; God might have spoken to them in visions and dreams. But to Moses, whom the Lord Himself declared "faithful in all Mine house," a nearer communion had been granted. With him God spoke mouth to mouth.”

Now, we are not reading this just to marvel at it, we are reading it because we can have such a communion too. That is something we shall look for, we shall seek for. “With him God spoke mouth to mouth.”

"Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and He departed." The cloud disappeared from the tabernacle in token of God's displeasure, and Miriam was smitten. She "became leprous, white as snow." Aaron was spared, but he was severely rebuked in Miriam's punishment. Now, their pride humbled in the dust, Aaron confessed their sin, and entreated that his sister might not be left to perish by that loathsome and deadly scourge.”

It is interesting how this humbling of the pride into the dust had led Aaron to confess his sin. He reacted like David did. David was also humbled to the dust, David’s pride. And he confessed his sin. Also Moses prayed for Miriam, and in answer to the prayers of Moses, the leprosy was cleansed. Miriam was, however, shut out of the camp for seven days. In other words, they consequence needed to be carried through. Not as an arbitrary thing, but in order to really give an extra lesson that was

necessary. We shall see this latter again. Let me see again, the point is that this shutting herself out was now not to her disadvantage but it was her advantage. It was not a course, but it was a blessing, and in such it had to be looked upon. Those who look upon the consequences of sin that fall on us as a course do not understand the goodness of God. Neither does this accomplish anything for them unfortunately. Until they have learned to look at the blessings of these things.

“Not until she was banished from the encampment did the symbol of God's favor again rest upon the tabernacle. In respect for her high position, and in grief at the blow that had fallen upon her, the whole company abode in Hazeroth, awaiting her return. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 384.3

“This manifestation of the Lord's displeasure was designed to be a warning to all Israel, to check the growing spirit of discontent and insubordination. If Miriam's envy and dissatisfaction had not been signally rebuked, it would have resulted in great evil. Envy is one of the most satanic traits that can exist in the human heart, and it is one of the most baleful in its effects. Says the wise man, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" *Proverbs* 27:4. It was envy that first caused discord in heaven, and its indulgence has wrought untold evil among men. "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." *James* 3:16. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 385.1

You can say that every problem in the church stands from this in one way or the other. You know, strife for position, it is envy for the other gets, what I don't get. Think for example the Greek and the Jerusalem widows in the early church. It was envy: They get something, I don't get. And immediately this thing comes up it is really destroying the church, this thing. Who can stand before it?

“It should not be regarded as a light thing to speak evil of others or to make ourselves judges of their motives or actions.” In other words, we are sometimes very quick to look at things and we say: this is because of this, this, this. Now, let me say again, we have studied here the weakness of God's messengers, past and present; and because we did this, now there is a danger to judge everything, every word, every deed, every motive, in a certain light. And God forbids us to do this. It is not to be regarded as a light thing to speak evil of others, of to make ourselves judges of their motives or actions.

"He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." *James* 4:11. There is but one judge--He "who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." *1 Corinthians* 4:5. And whoever takes it upon himself to judge and condemn his fellow men is usurping the prerogative of the Creator. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 385.2 Gossiping for example, they are nothing but judging. Putting my self on the place of God.

“The Bible specially teaches us to beware of lightly bringing accusation against those whom God has called to act as His ambassadors. The apostle Peter, describing a class who are abandoned sinners, says, "Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." *2 Peter* 2:10, 11. And Paul, in his instruction for those who are placed over the church, says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." *1 Timothy* 5:19. He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders and teachers of His people will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored. The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His work.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 386.1

Now, looking at Moses reaction, it also very interesting in this context. But this we will do in the next study as we continue to look upon his character.

Study 15

In our last study we have seen how Moses bore these accusations with uncomplaining silence, and we want to investigate a little bit further the reaction of Moses on this matter. We can study this history from the viewpoint of Aaron and Miriam, which we have done mainly in our last study. We saw that it is really important not to judge motives and actions, and not to take accusations lightly. This speaks against all gossiping and rumors, and so forth. But we also want to see the story from the viewpoint of Moses. He was the meekest man. We have done so partly by seeing that because he was so meek, he had a close connection with God, and he could be guided. God could guide him in every respect.

But what do you think about his being absolutely quiet to the accusations? We would tend to think, "If I am quiet when the people say wrong things, don't I then strengthen them in that?" And we tend to say, "Not for my sake, but for their sake I have to say something to this matter." Sister White did so, at times, when she was accused. Sometimes she really defended herself. Not in the sense of explaining her weaknesses, or whatever, simply to set the record straight. Also her husband was very often accused of all kinds of things which were absolutely wrong, which had no ground whatsoever. And there was to be an explanation.

There is one story, I don't know who is more acquainted with this story. James White had these bottles, can you remember that story. He sold these bottles, and he was told that he was so greedy that he would sell these things. The rumor went around and around. When he heard about this the story was completely different. He actually wanted to help his child with this. His child was actually the one who collected the bottles, to do his portion.

So we need to ask ourselves the question, "What shall we do?" How shall we react when things come up. I would say uncomplaining silence is warranted when it is simply for my honor, when my honor is at stake. We have to really realize this. On the other hand, we must not be silent when God's honor is at stake. It's not always easy to distinguish, I know. These things are mixed sometimes, or seem to be mixed. But we have to make this difference. And we have to very, very closely analyze the situation: in what way do I, when I am not keeping quiet, defend my own honor here.

Moses – Uncomplaining Silence

**Uncomplaining
Silence**

**When my honor
is at stake**

- Self-defense
- Explanation
- Acceptance

No Silence

**When God's
honor is at stake**

- Escapism
- Cowardice
- Acceptance

Some cases are very clear. In some cases when, for example, somebody blasphemes God and I rebuke him for this, I don't do this in self-defense. Obviously, that is God's honor that is at stake. And we must not be silent. Because silence in that case would be cowardice. You see, the opposite of this would be when my honor is at stake, that I am defending myself, that I explain the situation, or that I even accept the accusations, or at least partially in order to relieve myself of the pressure that is put against me. You know, it's like being tortured, and when people are tortured they admit sometimes what they have not done in order to get relief from this torture. This torture could also be mental. It can be so terrible to be constantly accused, that we say, "Okay, yes, I was it, so that you stop your rumors," and hoping by this to get things silenced...but you don't. All this is not the uncomplaining silence of Moses.

Uncomplaining silence means there is no need to defend myself, God defends me. We find this in the life of Jesus as well. When Jesus as a child was often accused of things, he had not done, he bore these things also in uncomplaining silence. And in *The Desire of Ages* we read, that even as a child he had to learn the bitter lesson of not complaining and being silent when accused wrongly.

"Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently." *The Desire of Ages*, 89.4

It is not easy for the human nature. We want to set our record straight, don't we? And when such things go round and round and round. But we need to learn that this safely rests in the hand of God. Now in the hand of God, when it rests there, it may be that we have to say something. I want to make it very clear that when the time for us to speak comes, and in this context we also must see the explanations that Sister White gave. It was not complaining. She bore accusations in uncomplaining silence, but sometimes she had to speak up, for the sake and honor of God's cause, because she and her husband were the messengers of the Lord. Through them the message came to the people, and so it was God's honor that was at stake.

But it was done without complaining, and it was done calmly, and in the assurance that God was their defender. And that is the difference to those who take matters into their own hands. They can't bear things with uncomplaining silence, they have to defend themselves, they have to make an explanation...or they even accept the accusations. Yesterday we have seen that there is a tremendous danger when black balls are thrown, that we look away from the crown. To look at the crown, what does this mean really? It means that we rest our case completely in God's hands. So completely that we don't have any desire anymore to defend ourselves. Paul expressed it in this way, "my life is hid with Christ in God." When it's hid, it is out of sight, it can't be touched anymore, it can't be hurt. Let the people try to destroy our influence, they can't find us, because we are hid, we are safely tucked away in Christ. If this is our attitude, then God can use us also to speak at times, and to speak frankly because His honor is at stake.

Now let's look back in our situation, and see how often did we not bear things in uncomplaining silence. And this is because we yet have to learn the lesson of meekness. Meekness is to have self completely hidden in Christ, so it is not there anymore, it's not visible, it can't be touched. It's absolutely out of reach of the people. And we continue our work as though nothing happened. That is the attitude that we need. Again, we must not be silent, and we don't need to wait for a special instruction to say something when God's honor is at stake. We should really be immediately ready to then take a stand, a clear stand, like Joshua. "I and my house have determined to serve the Lord, you decide where you will go. This we have to do when God's honor is at stake. The opposite would be to escape, "Oh, I have nothing to do with it, I'm not responsible." Or if in cowardice we run away, or also even if we accept these accusations and play the hypocrite with the sinner.

I'm reminded here of Peter's weakness one time, when Paul had to rebuke him sharply because he accepted the distinction that was made by some Jews between the Jews and Gentiles. He did not nobly stand for God's honor when it was required to do so, and Paul did. And he rebuked him, and Peter accepted it. So, we see very clearly that there is a time to be quiet, and there is a time to speak. And we must know the difference. This we will know, when we have the meekness of Moses, for sure.

With these thoughts, I want to leave that part of the story of Moses. We want now to come to another of his experiences. I'm sure we could study many more things, like Korah's rebellion and so forth. We skip all these for the moment and leave it for your own homework. We desire to understand now also his weak sides. As I said before, even though Moses was the meekest man on earth, even though he was a very great man, he was not yet perfect. He was not yet ready for translation. The last maturity, or perfection, came during his last years. And this came about in a sad way, namely, in a fall of Moses. He himself fell into sin, even at the end of his ministry, where you would least expect it. You would think that he almost made it, he almost is there, but then he fell. And this again is a lesson of the weakness of humanity. It's again a lesson to us to be very, very distrusting of ourselves and to never think, even though we have gone a far way, that we have accomplished it, and that we will never fall.

Let us turn to this story as it is described in Patriarchs and Prophets, "The Smitten Rock," chapter 37. We leave away the first paragraphs of that chapter and turn to page 417.

"The leaders went to the door of the tabernacle and fell upon their faces. Again 'the glory of the Lord appeared,' and Moses was directed, 'Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock.'"

"The two brothers went on before the multitude, Moses with the rod of God in his hand. They were now aged men. Long had they borne with the rebellion and obstinacy of Israel; but now, at last, even the patience of Moses gave way. 'Hear now, ye rebels,' he cried; 'must we fetch you water out of this rock?' and instead of speaking to the rock, as God had commanded him, he smote it twice with the rod. {PP 417.2}

I find it interesting. Before, Moses bore these things with uncomplaining silence, but can you see uncomplaining silence here? It seemed to be for the honor of God's cause. It's very difficult to really lay the finger sometimes on the situation, and it requires a very spiritual perception to understand that this was indeed self-defence, but the Spirit of Prophecy makes it very clear, it makes it obvious.

"The water gushed forth in abundance to satisfy the host. But a great wrong had been done. Moses had spoken from irritated feeling; his words were an expression of human passion rather than of holy indignation because God had been dishonored. 'Hear now, ye rebels,' he said. This accusation was true, but even truth is not to be spoken in passion or impatience. When God had bidden Moses to charge upon Israel their rebellion, the words had been painful to him, and hard for them to bear, yet God had sustained him in delivering the message. But when he took it upon himself to accuse them, he grieved the Spirit of God and wrought only harm to the people. His lack of patience and self-control was evident." PP 417.3

That is quite a statement. I wouldn't dare to do this. When I look back to the experience of Moses, I would rather tend to excuse him for these things, but that's what it was. Lack of patience and self-control.

"Thus the people were given occasion to question whether his past course had been under the direction of God, and to excuse their own sins." {PP 417.3}

And that is always the danger when we see the sins of others and when we have to see the sins of others because they become obvious and apparent. We tend to two things:

1. To question their whole course, and
2. To excuse our own sins.

We then take the treasure together with the vessel and reject both, and when we have rejected both, we even find justification in this. And of this danger we have to be very much aware. That is one of the lessons of this story. Let us read on a bit.

"Moses, as well as they, had offended God. His course, they said, had from the first been open to criticism and censure." {PP 417.3}

So now, his whole course became open to criticism and censure.

"They had now found the pretext which they desired for rejecting all the reproofs that God had sent them through His servant."

"Moses manifested distrust of God." {PP 417.3}

You see, we are talking of two sins here, and we have to consider them separately, and not mix them up together, or weigh them against each other. And that is what our human nature also tends to do. We say, "we have made a mistake, okay, but you have made a mistake too."

I once was in discussion with a brother a few years ago, and whenever I tried to tell him something he said, "But you...but you...but you..." and then I found myself trying to explain why I did what I did. And as soon as I did, I noticed the attention was drawn away again from his mistake. Then I turned it back again and I tried to help him, I really tried to help him, that was my motive. And immediately again, "But you..." It was a very hard conversation. After a while I had to interrupt it because I noticed that we were not making any headway. This "But you..." argument was conclusive for him. There was a constant weighing of the sins of another with his own sins. He would not deny his own sins, he would say, "we are all sinners, yes." That was his main motto, "we are all sinners." But he would palliate it, he would soften it down, he would make it easier by looking at the sins of others. And this is one of the greatest evils, which we have to really come away from.

Look at this point here. We have the people, and their sins are their sins, full stop. And we have Moses: his sin is his sin, full stop. And the sin of Moses does not make the sins of the people lighter in any degree. And the sins of the people does not make Moses' sin lighter in any degree. Yet how often we think this, how often do we excuse Moses' sins with the sins of the people. Moses did not do it in the end, but how many people do this. For example, I could say, "well, you don't know my pressure, you don't know what pressure you put me under," and so forth, and that is the reason why I sinned. This is not a valid statement. "Moses manifested distrust of God," full stop.

"Shall we bring water?"

Now we come to the point of self-confidence. We have learned that Moses was the meekest man on earth. We have learned that Moses was full of self-distrust, and yet even in him there was still a strain of self-confidence. Shall we bring you water? That is self-confidence. Even though his self-confidence was much, much smaller than ours, I'm sure of this...than mine at least I must say. He had a much deeper experience than I ever had, but which I aspire to have. And yet, this man said, "Shall we bring you water?"

"...he questioned, as if the Lord would not do what He promised. 'Ye 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." {PP 417.4}

Well, didn't they do this? Didn't they do everything, didn't they act promptly, didn't they exercise authority? Didn't they put forth every effort in their power to bring about a better state of things? What do you say? It seems that they did. They acted promptly and quickly. It seems that they did what was right. They went before God, which we always must do. We must pray. And they went before the people. But the point is that the spirit with which they did this made it as though they did not do it. It was not the defence of God's honor and glory, as we see here, it was more the defence of their own.

"Had the murmuring at Kadesh been promptly checked, what a train of evil might have been prevented! {PP 417.4}

"By his rash act Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach. The rock, being a symbol of Christ, had been once smitten, as Christ was to be once offered. The second time it was needful only to speak to the rock, as we have only to ask for blessings in the name of Jesus. By the second smiting of the rock the significance of this beautiful figure of Christ was destroyed. {PP 418.1}

"More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God."

And here comes out self-confidence. To assume power is an act of self-confidence. If I was absolutely complete in my sense of dependance I would never assume power. To assume means to illegally or wrongfully lay hold of a power that does not belong to me, or claim a power that does not belong to me, which I should not take. It's like assuming the position of someone else because I think that I can do it better than he. That is self-confidence. More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs to God.

"The necessity for divine interposition made the occasion one of great solemnity,"

Divine interposition, that is God gave water in spite of their beating the rock that is an amazing story that God did this. If you were God, what would you have done? We would not have done anything. I would have let them beat against the rock as much as they wished. And thus bring out their embarrassment to the full, and that would have been quite a bit of fun, wouldn't it? That is legalism. That is the spirit of legalism which really does not understand the love of God and why He allows consequences to happen. We need to realize very clearly that when God allows consequences to happen, He does so with sadness. And it is hard for Him. That is the right spirit, and that alone.

"More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God. The necessity for divine interposition made the occasion one of great solemnity, and the leaders of Israel should have improved it to impress the people with reverence for God and to strengthen their faith in His power and goodness. When they angrily cried, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" they put themselves in God's place, as though the power lay with themselves..." {PP 418.2}

That is not self-distrust.

"...men possessing human frailties and passions. Wearied with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, Moses had lost sight of his Almighty Helper, and without the divine strength he had been left to mar his record by an exhibition of human weakness." {PP 418.2}

It's like looking away from the crown, looking to the black balls, trying to defend myself, clean off the dirt. And by doing this, I make my clothes dirtier and dirtier.

"Moses had lost sight of his Almighty Helper, and without the divine strength he had been left to mar his record by an exhibition of human weakness. The man who might have stood pure, firm, and unselfish to the close of his work had been overcome at last. God had been dishonored before the congregation of Israel, when He should have been magnified and exalted. {PP 418.2}

"God did not on this occasion pronounce judgments upon those whose wicked course had so provoked Moses and Aaron. All the reproof fell upon the leaders."

That is unjust! The people also deserved punishment! That could have been their attitude, couldn't it? But here we see that Moses and Aaron through the long years, not only of Moses' wilderness experience in the forty years before, but now the forty years with the people, he had learned something. And this test, even though he fell, or failed the test, was a lesson to Moses which brought the last maturity to him. It was very precious to him.

"All the reproof fell upon the leaders. Those who stood as God's representatives had not honored Him. Moses and Aaron had felt themselves aggrieved, losing sight of the fact that the murmuring of the people was not against them but against God. It was by looking to themselves, appealing to their own sympathies, that they unconsciously fell into sin, and failed to set before the people their great guilt before God. {PP 418.3}

"Bitter and deeply humiliating was the judgment immediately pronounced. "The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." With rebellious Israel they must die before the crossing of the Jordan. Had Moses and Aaron been cherishing self-esteem or indulging a passionate spirit in the face of divine warning and reproof, their guilt would have been far greater. But they were not chargeable with willful or deliberate sin; they had been overcome by a sudden temptation, and their contrition was immediate and heartfelt. The Lord accepted their repentance, though because of the harm their sin might do among the people, He could not remit its punishment. {PP 419.1}

Now again, when we read this, "He could not remit its punishment," we could make long faces and say, "why does it have to be like this? Can't the consequences be taken away?" Or we can say "wonderful! God allowed this because He had a purpose of love to accomplish. Wonderful, because Moses bore this punishment patiently, uncomplaining, and in silence. Because he thereby could be a blessing to others." He himself wouldn't need that punishment, because he had learned his lesson, definitely. And he was ready to soon be resurrected and come into heavenly Canaan, in contrast to the other people who were not ready. He was definitely ready for it, but the punishment he must bear for the sake of the people, which he himself saw very clearly because he said, "For your sakes, the Lord punished me." And that he bore willingly. Can we accept this if such a thing happens to us? If we have to bear the consequences of our sin for the sake of other people, we can bear it if we have that attitude of love that Moses had.

"Moses did not conceal his sentence, but told the people that since he had failed to ascribe glory to God, he could not lead them into the Promised Land. He bade them mark the severe punishment visited upon him, and then consider how God must regard their murmurings in charging upon a mere man the judgments which they had by their sins brought upon themselves. He told them how he had pleaded with God for a remission of the sentence, and had been refused. "The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes," he said, "and would not hear me." Deuteronomy 3:26. {PP 419.2}

How do you read this statement? You can read it in two ways. The Lord has not a very good character, and because you are so wicked we have incurred the anger of God. Or he could have said, "the Lord's love is so great for you that He allowed me to bear this. And I can be a fellow sufferer with Christ's sufferings." You see, there are two ways in which you can read this statement. In what spirit would Moses have said this? In the first or in the second spirit? Certainly in the second spirit because he was a mature Christian. And so we have to read it. "The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes." Wroth in this case means love. The Lord allowed this to happen, the Lord's love was exercised for your sakes. What did Jesus say, "The Father loves me because I lay down my life for you. He loves me even more because I lay down my life for you." In other words, the whole plan of salvation is full of love, and it needs to be seen very clearly.

"On every occasion of difficulty or trial the Israelites had been ready to charge Moses with having led them from Egypt, as though God had had no agency in the matter. Throughout their journeyings, as they had complained of the difficulties in the way, and murmured against their leaders, Moses had told them, "Your murmurings are against God. It is not I, but God, who has wrought in your deliverance." But his hasty words before the rock, "shall we bring water?" were a virtual admission of their charge, and would thus confirm them in their unbelief and justify their murmurings. The Lord would remove this impression forever from their minds, by forbidding Moses to enter the Promised Land. Here was unmistakable evidence that their leader was not Moses, but the mighty Angel of whom the Lord had said, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice: . . . for My name is in Him." Exodus 23:20, 21. {PP 419.3}

You see, God turned something good out of this, and that is the important point.

"The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes," said Moses. The eyes of all Israel were upon Moses, and his sin cast a reflection upon God, who had chosen him as the leader of His people." {PP 420.1}

The same was with David, as you remember.

"The transgression was known to the whole congregation; and had it been passed by lightly, the impression would have been given that unbelief and impatience under great provocation might be excused in those in responsible positions. But when it was declared that because of that one sin Moses and Aaron were not to enter Canaan, the people knew that God is no respecter of persons, and that He will surely punish the transgressor. {PP 420.1}

The history of Israel was to be placed on record for the instruction and warning of coming generations. Men of all future time must see the God of heaven as an impartial ruler, in no case justifying sin. But few realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin." {PP 420.2}

Self-distrust means to realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It means not to take these things lightly. Even though it might be considered a light sin, only for a moment he lost his patience, but we have to see how heavy this weighs in God's eyes.

"Men flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the transgressor. But in the light of Bible history it is evident that God's goodness and His love engage Him to deal with sin as an evil fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe. {PP 420.2}

When I look back, I really must say that whenever I lose my patience, even to some degree only, and I say something which I should not have said, I feel a terrible burden, and I don't know why, but it's hard to become happy again because you think of the influence that you have put on others. And here I see that there is good reason for this, because we must see that God cannot justify sin in any degree. If He allowed Moses to be punished as he did, then certainly he shows by this how He views sin. "Men flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the transgressor." So we go quickly over a

certain sin. "But in the light of Bible history it is evident that God's goodness and His love engage Him to deal with sin as an evil fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe."

"Not even the integrity and faithfulness of Moses could avert the retribution of his fault." {PP 420.3}

So again, there is a human tendency to weigh our good deeds and our evil deeds, and we say, but look at the good deeds done. There is no argument of this that counts.

"God had forgiven the people greater transgressions, but He could not deal with sin in the leaders as in those who were led. He had honored Moses above every other man upon the earth. He had revealed to him His glory, and through him He had communicated His statutes to Israel. The fact that Moses had enjoyed so great light and knowledge made his sin more grievous. Past faithfulness will not atone for one wrong act. The greater the light and privileges granted to man, the greater is his responsibility, the more aggravated his failure, and the heavier his punishment. {PP 420.3}

"Moses was not guilty of a great crime, as men would view the matter; his sin was one of common occurrence. The psalmist says that "he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Psalm 106:33. To human judgment this may seem a light thing; but if God dealt so severely with this sin in His most faithful and honored servant, He will not excuse it in others. The spirit of self-exaltation, the disposition to censure our brethren, is displeasing to God. Those who indulge in these evils cast doubt upon the work of God, and give the skeptical an excuse for their unbelief. The more important one's position, and the greater his influence, the greater is the necessity that he should cultivate patience and humility. {PP 420.4}

"If the children of God, especially those who stand in positions of responsibility, can be led to take to themselves the glory that is due to God, Satan exults. He has gained a victory. It was thus that he fell. Thus he is most successful in tempting others to ruin. It is to place us on our guard against his devices that God has given in His word so many lessons teaching the danger of self-exaltation. There is not an impulse of our nature, not a faculty of the mind or an inclination of the heart, but needs to be, moment by moment, under the control of the Spirit of God. There is not a blessing which God bestows upon man, nor a trial which He permits to befall him, but Satan both can and will seize upon it to tempt, to harass and destroy the soul, if we give him the least advantage. Therefore however great one's spiritual light, however much he may enjoy of the divine favor and blessing, he should ever walk humbly before the Lord, pleading in faith that God will direct every thought and control every impulse. {PP 421.1}

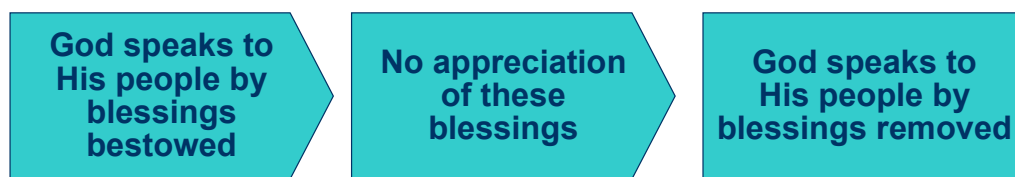
That this is said about Moses, who is the humblest man on the earth, is quite amazing, I find, quite amazing.

"All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard the spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he was; yet this was not allowed to excuse his sin. God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. {PP 421.2}

This chapter is very interesting, and confirms our study very, very strongly. It shows how much as a people of God we need self-distrust. Looking at the people of Israel, that was the lesson they were to draw out of it. Did they? Later we will study the experience of Isaiah, and we will see a similar experience in his life, but let me come to one more point: Moses was a blessing to them, and God spoke to the people by the very fact that He gave them a man like Moses. But they did not appreciate these blessings. So God spoke to His people by blessings removed. This principle confirms again

very clearly, that consequences of sin are not always taken completely away. Because God speaks. And if He would take them all away, He would not speak anymore. God speaks, and that is a great comfort. This I wish we could draw out of these stories. Amen.

Moses – Blessings Bestowed and Blessings Removed



Study 16

We are studying self-distrust, healthy self-distrust. That's what we studied all week, and our examples were mainly, or let's say so, not examples. We asked ourselves what is self-distrust, and how do we receive this. How does God teach His people self-distrust. We looked at the beginning of the great controversy on earth, we looked how Adam was taught self-distrust, even in the Garden of Eden, and then after his sin, through the sacrificial system, to the system of tithes and offerings as well. We saw this in the life of Moses, and others. Now, we want to summarise this a little bit as well as carrying the study further, during this study this morning. So, again, the question we want to ask, what creates healthy self-distrust?

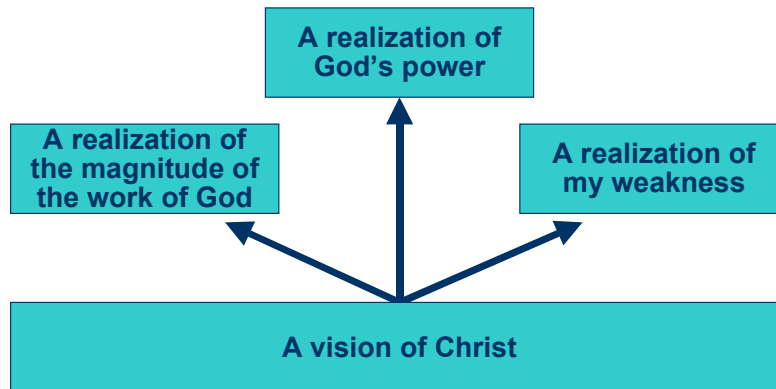
Because that is our main quest. How can we gain this Christian virtue, which is so necessary as sister White says, is the first lesson that everybody who works in the cause of God, must learn. Well, think of examples like Jacob, like Moses whom we studied, but also Jacob, the Jewish noble man, Peter, Isaiah, Job, and so forth. We can't study them all, but at least we will get an insight. What did they need? What factors contributed to them having healthy self-distrust? Think about it a little bit. Shall I pick you out and ask you? What do you say, what do you say, what do you say?

Yes, Daniel. Peter had to fall at the rock. Well, that's a good point. Well, let's put it in very simple terms. The first thing that I need, is a revelation of my weakness, obviously. We saw this very clearly in the case of Moses. He had no idea of his weakness when he was in Egypt and having all these privileges and this fantastic training as the future leader of Israel, he first had to make a very bad mistake in killing the Egyptian before he realised how weak he really was, and how unable to make plans himself. And then during the forty years he continued to learn that lesson until he finally received his final test when God met him at the burning bush.

But seeing his own weakness was only one thing, he also needed a better concept of the magnitude of the work of God. So that then would be the second point. The first is the revelation of my own weakness, and the second the revelation of the magnitude of the work of God. The revelation of my weakness opens my vision, opens my eyes to the magnitude of the work of God. You see, Moses thought that they would be delivered by warfare, and by simple military training and discipline and exercise. But this he was very mistaken in. It was much grander this work, and while he was in the wilderness, he received a revelation of the magnitude of the work, but even through his mistake he received this, and so, when he was there, and he received the vision of the book of Job, and Genesis, and so forth, he saw something of the great work of God. He saw the power and the process of creation and he saw that what we still will study in the book of Job.

And there is a third point, necessary, which I indicated already, and that is a vision of Christ. These things, all three are necessary in order to create healthy self-distrust.

What Creates Healthy Self-Distrust?



Examples: Moses, Jacob, the Jewish nobleman, Peter, Isaiah, Job, etc.

Let us repeat this again: a revelation of my own weakness, a revelation of the magnitude of the work of God and a vision of Christ. Leave one of these things away, and it doesn't work properly. A vision of Christ would not be complete, it would not be really a vision of Christ fully, if it does not create a sense of my own weakness. It will always lead to this. You can say, these three elements, they help each other. A vision of Christ is necessary to not despair, when I see my weakness. It is absolutely necessary to obey in spite of the fact that I see the magnitude of the work. On the other hand, if I do not see my weakness, and have no concept of the magnitude of the work, again, I will be too self-confident. And this we want to see now, in other cases than Moses, which we have studied in the past.

So the first person that we want to look at is Job. You now the book of Job, do you? I don't need to say much, maybe we go over the whole book in our memory for a moment, even though would be too much. It's 42 chapters. Each chapter having in the average 30 verses, so that we would spend a few ours just reading the books, this book. But we can summarise it.

In the beginning, the background of the story is told, and the background of the book begins in heaven. In heaven, Satan made the claim that is impossible to obey the law. And God said, "It is possible to obey the law." God has given to mankind a law that can be obeyed, but Satan says: "No, impossible." Than God says: "But have you seen, he is an example, Job, my servant." "No!" says Satan, "he is not obeying you from his free heart, but only because he receives certain privileges. The privilege, for example, of health, of children, of happy children, of money, he doesn't need to care, because he has enough money, you know. Pff, these neighbours who sin more than he does, they don't have all these good things. So no wonder that he is as he is." Than God says, "Okay, let's face it. He will be obedient also when these things are taken away. You can take it away if you wish", he said to Satan, and Satan immediately grasped the opportunity, took away his material possessions. But Job did not sin. He did not rebel against God, but he simply said: "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken, blessed be the name of the Lord." He absolutely acknowledged the privilege of God to do whatever He pleased. And he still would trust in Him. Than, God argued with Satan and said, "Have you seen this, how it works?" And Satan said: "No, no, no, you have not really tested him. Take his health, and then I will

have it." So God allowed this to happen, or rather He allowed Satan to inflict him with ill health. And then Job still was faithful and trusting in God.

Now, the second phase is described longer, because something came in between while Job was suffering terribly, of certain sicknesses, the sadness of having lost his children, his possessions, he was really a miserable creature as far as physical well being, and wealth was concerned.

While he was doing this, his three friends came. And their concept was very, very firm and very strong: "You are a sinner." And then began a discussion between them and Job, and this takes most of the chapters, till chapter 34. And then comes a new figure that we will study in a minute.

I called this the art of counselling, because these were counsellors, these friends of Job, they meant to help him, that was their intent, the attitude. So, the argument was, "your fate is a punishment for your sin, you must repent of your sin to stop this punishment." "You see, sin always brings punishment. This is a law, and that is an explanation of your situation. Your situation is merely punishment." This was the concept held by the people in the time of Job. That was the concept held also by the people in the time of Christ. For that reason they asked, "Who has sinned, he, or his parents, that he suffers like this?" This concept is very firm in the mind. You could also headline this whole thing: The Philosophy of Suffering, in other words, we need an explanation why do people suffer.

You know, you can talk with any person almost in the world today, you will always end up with one topic, and that is, "Why this suffering for innocent people in this world? Why all this?" That's a hot topic. You can always find communication over that topic. And so, there was a clear explanation from these three friends, religionists, or religion specialists who understood religious laws supposedly very clearly, "Your fate is a punishment of your sin."

Now, Job, he lived in the time in which he lived. He lived in this surrounding, so he grew up in that believe, but his experience contradicted that believe, because he could not see any sin in his life. So, he was perplexed, to say the least. On the one hand it was this believe, which he shared to some extent, on the other hand it was his experience which contradicted that believe. So he began to argue. "I don't know why I am sick. I don't know why I lost everything, but it is not because of my sin, this is what I know." So they were discussing to and fro about this topic. Until there was an impasse, and the friends didn't know what are the arguments to put forth, because Job was too stubborn in their eyes, neither did Job convince them, because they were too stubborn. So there was quietness for the moment, and now was the time for Elihu, the younger one, and he could hardly contain himself all the time, he wanted to burst out.

Now, when they were quite, he jumped to the forefront and he first of all rebuked the three friends. You did not have the right arguments. Then he rebuked Job. "You do not have the right argument either. Both you are wrong. I am right." Now, his philosophy about suffering was this: "It is not punishment, which you suffer. Because God does not arbitrarily punish people, it is a disciplinary measure of God. He wants to discipline you, He wants to help you, through this sufferings. He wants to make you better, He wants to purify you, you know? That's the purpose. But, He would not do this if you had no sin." In other words, "you have sin in your life, and this suffering helps you get rid of it. It burns the sin out of you." Well, I don't know if Job would have answer something, probably he tried, but Elihu was a very fluent talker and as soon as Job wanted to start, he said: "Wait, wait for a moment, let me finish."

And so, he talked, and talked and talked. Over three or four chapters. Yes, in *Job*, without end. He was very wise in his own eyes, this Elihu, and then he was interrupted by somebody else than Job, by somebody whom nobody else can answer, and that is God Himself.

And what did God say? His first statement this was: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" That made everybody quiet, everybody. The three friends, Job and Elihu. Nobody had to say anything anymore after that statement. Now, when you look at them neither of them, I mean, we know the background story of Job, we are told this in the first chapter, and for that reason we know that neither of them had a knowledge. They gave counsel without having knowledge.

It's...how shall I describe it, a person has described it like this: That is like, I am not playing chess, therefore I don't know how this exactly works, but he said, a chess player said, "it's like seeing to figures in a chess game and there are still 20 figures on the board, but you just see two, and by seeing only two figures you make a judgment of the whole game, and say how it will end, and who will win." You know, who gives counsel without knowledge? That's the point. In other words, we see only a little fraction of reality, and yet we stand up and give an explanation.

A Lesson of Healthy Self-Distrust in Job's Experience – The Art of Counseling

"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" *Job 38:2*

God

Your fate is a disciplinary measure for your sin

Elihu

Your fate is a punishment for your sin

Job's three friends

I don't know why, but it is not because of my sin

Job

Now, true, this question was a real question and it required an answer. Why this suffering, what is the cause, what is going on here? It is true that it was a very difficult question too, and it is true also that the answers given by everybody were a real effort to a real struggle of the mind, to grasp the truth of the matter. They were all three, you can say, philosophers who put their best mind in to this matter. And they were not primitive at all. And yet they did not have the answer.

So God says, "Who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Now this statement, and I want to stress this again, applied to all three parties. It applies to the friends of Job, it applied to Job and it applies to Elihu as well. Then God gave a revelation of Himself, to Job. Maybe we should turn now to *Job* chapter 38 first.

"The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." That was, mind you, immediately after Elihu spoke, "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" And then he speaks to Job himself, especially to Job, because that revelation which now follows is given to Job, and He leads him to certain manifestations of nature and ask him certain questions, which really show something of the omniscience of God which Job theoretically certainly knew, but he never realised this fully. See, it's

one thing to know theoretically that God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. It's one thing to know this, you know, theoretically, but to really realise this in a moment of need is another matter altogether. And that requires a lot of revelations. It requires an extraordinary revelation, which Job here really received.

We looked at other examples of this, in the case of the Jewish noble man, when he suddenly realised he stood in the presence of Him who could read thoughts. What a revelation! Suddenly he knew that his inward heart was like an open book, which His counterpart could read perfectly well, every detail of it. What a revelation in this moment! Or think of other examples, like Peter, who also realised in the presence of Jesus that here he who was standing before Him who even knew where the fish were at which moment, who could see through the sea evidently and could see where the fish were and could know exactly where to throw out the net. That is omniscience and such a revelation just overwhelmed the human element. And this was a revelation that Job received here, in that moment.

So, we won't read everything here because it would be too long. We go to chapter 40 for a moment, and here we have a very brief response of Job. But before we do so, maybe I should show this in a diagram.



First of all, we must realise that Job had imperfect self-distrust, at the beginning, in spite of the fact that he was walking in the ways of the Lord, but his self-distrust was not complete yet. He also talked with counsel without knowledge, not only Elihu, even though his situation was not as bad as that of his friends, because he was under much harder circumstances. Satan tempted him, and his friends tempted him. And so, Job was really discouraged and he was desponded, really cast down. God answered him and as a result of the answer, Job got self-distrust. And this we read now in *Job* 40,4-5 and then in *Job* 42.

"Then Job answered the Lord and said:
'Behold, I am vile;
What shall I answer You?"

I lay my hand over my mouth.
Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

In other words, he realised that everything that he could say was nothing. He did not know anything. God now was everything, and he was nothing, after that revelation. After this short response, God continues to talk with him and when God is finished, then, again, Job speaks, and what he says is very interesting in chapter 42.

"Then Job answered the Lord and said:
'I know that You can do everything,

When he said this he meant it. It was not just theoretical knowledge for him it was very practical knowledge.

"I know that You can do everything
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.
You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'

Who is this one? Job said, "This is me." It is true, the response was first given to Elihu, so Job could have said, "Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?, that is Elihu." He could have said, "this were my friends." But he applies it to himself.

"Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'
'I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
Therefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes."

That is self-distrust. And this he gained by a vision of Christ. When he saw this tremendous power of Christ, he abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. Now, how often do we think that our counsel is absolutely important and necessary? We also have to say something, and we must say this. If we don't say this to the person, then he can't be helped. It may be that our counsel is not bad in itself. it maybe that is quite wise because it grows out of experience, and so forth. But what is this in sight of God's presence? It's nothing, absolutely nothing. Regardless of how good our counsel is. Regardless of how wise it is. It's nothing in the presence of God. "Who is it who hides counsel, without knowledge?" And this was said to the wisest men of Job's time, to the wise Job even was said. And how much more this would be said of us? You know, looking back now, I think I am sometimes like a child, I am like Elihu who I want to burst out, and I want to say something. You know, something needs to be said here, and maybe I should tell him what my experience was so that now he can get help. But what is this in the presence of God? It's counsel without knowledge.

Now, that does not mean that we have to be quite, but we must see our counsel compared with the Word of God. And we must see very clearly that our counsel is without knowledge, and this is what the friends of Job needed to realise, in fact God was very angry with them, as it says here:

"And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me

what is right, as My servant Job has.' So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them; for the Lord had accepted Job. And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold." *Patriarchs and Prophets*,

So, then it says how the Lord blessed the latter days more than his early days. Can we see how much we need really that vision of Christ, in order to be wise counsellors? We need this lesson of self-distrust that Job received. But that is only part of the story, the other part of the story is that through this revelation, he received trust in God. Now we have a very interesting statement in this connection, in *Prophets and Kings* page 163,-second paragraph. Sorry, it's too small, I will make it bigger in a minute. It talks here about Job, page 163 the last paragraph:

"From the depths of discouragement and despondency Job rose to the heights of implicit trust in the mercy and the saving power of God." Now, sister White applies some of the statements by Job even before to his victory he had after, which I find quite interesting, because that what he said before was more in a faith that was, I would say more theoretical for the moment, but once he had seen God, with his own eyes, it was a very practical faith.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him ..." That is the height of implicit trust. Think about this. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." If I would do you any harm, by words, or by actions, would you still trust me? If I would level hard accusations against you, would you still trust me? I guess nobody would. I would want to see the person who still trusts when he is treated no nicely by another person.

It's sometimes happens so that children still trusts they parents even though the parents at times beat them. That happens. They still trust them. Children have a tremendous amount of ability to overcome such disappointments. Not, I don't want to encourage you by this to be negligent or in any way hard or cruel to your children, but the point is, you sometimes find it there, because the childish faith is different, it works different. Mind works different. But when an adult is disappointed, then he usually loses his trust. Now, in our relationship to God how close is it? How do we react when seemingly God does not answer our prayers? When he treats us as we think we have not deserved. I mean, Job definitely did not think that he deserved to be treated as he was. And yet, he said after he has received a vision of God, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." In other words he did not make his trust in God dependent on a good treatment. He said: "I trust Him unconditionally. Absolutely unconditionally."

Can we do this? We can, if we have a vision of Christ. You see, that's one of the dangers of studying the character of God in a way. It's a wonderful study, and it is really also very powerful, but the danger is this, that we tend to look at God's character, that He is not a destroyer, as something that means we can trust God only if He is very soft with us. And as soon we see a little bit hardship coming upon us, then we can't trust Him anymore. And that is a great error. We have to see that God is the same loving God even though sight and circumstances say something else.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." This trust is not, let me say this: It is not blind trust in that sense that we trust Him in spite of the fact that He is a cruel God, no. I trust Him that He is a good God, even though He slay me. That means, even though sight and circumstances in everything tells me the opposite, I still trust Him. That is the height of implicit trust to which God wants to lead you and me.

"He also shall be my salvation."

"I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
And though after my skin worms destroy this body,
Yet in my flesh shall I see God:
Whom I shall see for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Job 13:15, 16; 19:25-27.

Now with this statement Job said, "I shall personally see Him, not through the medium of another person. I will touch Him myself, I will see Him myself, I will not just hear from Him, and I will see Him." Exactly what he said in faith here later happened, when he said: "I have heard of You before, now I've seen You." It was fulfilled to him when God gave this revelation to him, you know this? We normally tend to apply this to the resurrection only, but it was applied when Job saw God.

"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." *Prophets and kings* 164.1

So, let us see very clearly that such a situation as upon Job can come upon others as well, and the answer is a revelation of God. That leads to a true self-distrust, and that leads to trust in God, which is healthy self-distrust. So what Job learned we can learn as well.

And now let's turn to another character which is very similar to that of Job, and that is Isaiah. Isaiah was also in discouragement and despondency like Job. And we want to ask the question, "Why?". What was the situation of Isaiah, and for this I want to turn with you to the book *Prophets and Kings*, page 303. And the chapter is "The call of Isaiah", chapter 25. First of all the historical background:

"The long reign of Uzziah [also known as Azariah] in the land of Judah and Benjamin was characterised by a prosperity greater than that of any other ruler since the death of Solomon, nearly two centuries before. For many years the king ruled with discretion." In other words, he was a good ruler. "Under the blessing of Heaven his armies regained some of the territory that had been lost in former years. Cities were rebuilt and fortified, and the position of the nation among the surrounding peoples was greatly strengthened. Commerce revived, and the riches of the nations flowed into Jerusalem. Uzziah's name 'spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong'. *2Chronicles* 26:15." *Prophets and Kings*, 303.1

Now, what have we learned, what happens when we have success? What happens very often, I mean. Not always, but what happens very often? Exactly, we become self-confident. And that leads to mistakes. The next step is that we make mistakes.

"This outward prosperity, however, was not accompanied by a corresponding revival of spiritual power. The temple services were continued as in former years, and multitudes assembled to worship the living God; but pride and formality gradually took the place of humility and sincerity. Of Uzziah himself it is written: "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God. Verse 16.

The sin that resulted so disastrously to Uzziah was one of presumption. In violation of a plain command of Jehovah, that none but the descendants of Aaron should officiate as priests, the king entered the sanctuary "to burn incense upon the altar." Azariah the high priest and his associates remonstrated, and pleaded with him to turn from his purpose. "Thou hast trespassed," they urged; "neither shall it be for thine honor." Verses 16, 18.

"Uzziah was filled with wrath that he, the king, should be thus rebuked. But he was not permitted to profane the sanctuary against the united protest of those in authority. While standing there, in wrathful rebellion, he was suddenly smitten with a divine judgment. Leprosy appeared on his forehead. In

dismay he fled, never again to enter the temple courts. Unto the day of his death, some years later, Uzziah remained a leper--a living example of the folly of departing from a plain 'Thus saith the Lord.' Neither his exalted position nor his long life of service could be pleaded as an excuse for the presumptuous sin by which he marred the closing years of his reign, and brought upon himself the judgment of Heaven." {PK 304.2}

"God is no respecter of persons. "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." *Numbers* 15:30. {PK 304.3}

"The judgment that befell Uzziah seemed to have a restraining influence on his son. Jotham bore heavy responsibilities during the later years of his father's reign and succeeded to the throne after Uzziah's death. Of Jotham it is written: 'He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places.' *2Kings* 15:34, 35." {PK 305.1}
Now that means that they still worshiped idols, because the high places, that was the places where they had the idols.

"The reign of Uzziah was drawing to a close, and Jotham was already bearing many of the burdens of state, when Isaiah, of the royal line, was called, while yet a young man, to the prophetic mission. The times in which Isaiah was to labour were fraught with peculiar peril to the people of God. The prophet was to witness the invasion of Judah by the combined armies of northern Israel and of Syria; he was to behold the Assyrian hosts encamped before the chief cities of the kingdom. During his lifetime, Samaria was to fall, and the ten tribes of Israel were to be scattered among the nations. Judah was again and again to be invaded by the Assyrian armies, and Jerusalem was to suffer a siege that would have resulted in her downfall had not God miraculously interposed. Already grave perils were threatening the peace of the southern kingdom. The divine protection was being removed, and the Assyrian forces were about to overspread the land of Judah. {PK 305.2}

"But the dangers from without, overwhelming though they seemed, were not so serious as the dangers from within. It was the perversity of his people that brought to the Lord's servant the greatest perplexity and the deepest depression. By their apostasy and rebellion those who should have been standing as light bearers among the nations were inviting the judgments of God. Many of the evils which were hastening the swift destruction of the northern kingdom, and which had recently been denounced in unmistakable terms by Hosea and Amos, were fast corrupting the kingdom of Judah." *Prophets and Kings*, 304.1-305.3

Can you see how the situation of Isaiah was similar? But in all this situation he was still self-confident. And this we will see more clearly in our next study. But for the moment let us contemplate about the reasons for his depression and his perplexity. We can do this while we go to break and afterwards we continue the study.

Study 17

The Example of Isaiah

We have mainly studied the character of Job, as our lesson in self-distrust. In our last study we have begun to look at Isaiah. And after our study was over some questions came up, and some statements were given, which are of a very interesting nature, that leads us to go back to back again to Job. And we want to really understand better the situation of Job, before and after he had his vision of God and of the power of God.

Now, as you have put forth some statements concerning the defense that Job did himself: 'I will maintain my righteousness; I am not aware of any sin and so forth'. These statements sounded very much like self-confidence, but they are less self confident than they look like. You know it is one thing to say: 'I am a hero; I will sing songs even when I go through the fire, even if they would torture me I will still sing songs.' That is one thing; it's another thing to actually do it when we are in the situation.

You see that is two different things. So likewise its one thing to say: I maintain my righteousness when everything is going very smoothly, but when we are pressed on every side, then to say this with a pure, honest heart is another matter. You see when people pound this all the time and some circumstances tell us that something must be wrong with us, to say it then it's much harder. I really want to stress the fact again that Job was living in the time in which he did. Which means that was a normal matter to view like this, that when you are sick this I the result of somehow of a wrong doing. And when you loose your children, and when you loose your possessions there must be something wrong with you. Because God would, otherwise protect you.

Don't people think this today too? For example when it so happened that the car was stolen from us in Ukraine, immediately some voices jumped up, I mean not in the Ukraine, but in the world field: There must something be wrong. Or when somebody of us gets sick, immediately the thought comes up: Ah-who knows what he or she has done wrong! That comes up and there is something wrong in it. Now, when I ask myself, why is this happening to me? That is quite a valid question; I don't want to discourage that. But if I point with the finger to my brother and my sister that shows that these believe is simply in this world, it's simply there.

And not only that we look upon calamity as a result of some wrong doing of some kind, it's more so, we even tend to look of the measure of the calamity, and measure it with the wrong doing. So the more somebody suffers, the more he must have done. So if somebody doesn't suffer so much, then he must be quite a good guy. That is the thinking of the human mind, and this has been the philosophy of many generation of religionist.

Now, since Job lived in this to maintain under that circumstances: But my experience tells me that there is nothing wrong; was a quite valid and courageous stand. Look at it from this point and you don't see so much self sufficiency. You see rather braveness in it, to not circum to that pressure in which he was. And Sister White describes it like this in the following:

"Some shortsighted, short-experienced friends cannot, with their narrow vision, appreciate the feelings of one who has been in close harmony with the soul of Christ in connection with the salvation of others. His motives are misunderstood and his actions misconstrued by those who would be his friends, until, like Job, he sends forth the earnest prayer: Save me from my friends God takes the case of Job in hand Himself. His patience has been severely taxed; but when God speaks, all his pettish feelings are changed. The self-justification which he felt was necessary to withstand the condemnation of his friends is not necessary toward God. He never misjudges; He never errs. Says the Lord to Job, "Gird up now thy loins like a man;" and Job no sooner hears the divine voice than his soul is bowed

down with a sense of his sinfulness, and he says before God, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." *Testimonies for the Church* 3:509.2

Now, how can we differentiate between that self justification which is necessary towards accusers of brethren I would call them now. And of self justification which is really very sinful. I don't say that it was hundred percent right, how Job should have reacted, we come back in a minute to this, but let's think about this for a moment. Job needed to maintain his innocence before this people, which he did.

Now, can we differentiate between such a righteous defense, and an unrighteous defense? In other words, very often there are people who need to be severely rebuke because of an obvious sin, and that is necessary, I mean Paul did this, the servants of God needed to do this. Sometimes sin needs to be called by its name and yet they maintain a stand as though they have never sinned. They either play the hypocrite or something like this; and they look as great sufferers, and they even get a lot of sympathy from fellow believers, because seemingly they are attacked so much. Look at this poor people, how bad they are treated, and so forth.

Now, what is the difference between that and Job? It is sometimes not easy to see it, especially for the inexperience and those who are not spiritually minded. But there are some indications that could have help us. In the case of Job for example, he made it very clear to his friends that if he was in their situation he would treat them differently, he said: If you were in my situation, I would be friendly to you, I would encourage you, I would sympathize with you. Now, if a person has another spirit, if he is really wicked in his heart, what would he do if he was in a reverse situation? He would be a severe persecutor. He would make it even worse, you know the way that he thinks that he is treated wrongly he would treat other wrongly and even worse. And by this you see that his spirit is not right. Can you see this point? Did I make this clear, this explanation?

Let's suppose a person is innocently accused of doing something and he defends himself, he says: That is not what I did. Then his spirit will be a good one because he is innocent, and he will not have a spirit of revenge and retaliation. That means in the case that he would face another sinner, he would treat him very kindly. But not as he himself is treated. Now, on the other hand, if a person is rightly accused of a sin because he is a sinner, he will be much more retaliative. When he would be in the position of accusing somebody else he would make it much harder to them, than he even himself is treated. Is this clear now? In other words, what is the spirit of the one who receives a rebuke? That is the question and the spirit of Job was a good one without question.

However, still God had to come to him and he had to say him: Be careful, that you don't think too much of yourself. Now, why it was necessary to withstand his friends? Because they did not read the heart; because they gave counsel without knowledge. It was absolutely necessary that he humbled himself before God. And this is what he did. Again this is the difference between those who are innocent and those who are not innocent. Those who are not innocent they will never humble themselves before God. They will be very proud and they will stumble from one mistake into the other. Because they don't humble themselves before God, that is the important point.

So, now let us come back to Job, and ask ourselves now, what could have Job done in that situation? He did not know all the facts; he was accused of something he did not do. Yet he was not to be self-sufficient and self-sure, and self-confident, so how could he have taken that situation in which he was, if he had this true spirit of self-distrust already? How would it have look like in other words?

We would like to see him absolutely perfect and impeccable, now we have look in the past maybe through our studies to Job as though he was having the status of perfection already, and we must admit that he had not. But he had the status of perfection maybe to a degree that was a conscious sinlessness. In other words, he was not aware of any sin in his life. He was not having bearing any sin in his life, which he was aware. But there was still a need of further cleansing from self-confidence in his life. I

think that is clear- isn't it? So if he had had this cleansing already, what would he have done, how would he have reacted? Would he have said to his friends: yes, you are right. But had he said this, he would have been wrong; he would have strengthened the wrong course. Would he have said: No, you are not right, then it would have been self defense. He was in a dilemma- wasn't he? Let us turn to a statement in the New Testament that makes this matter clear. Paul exactly in the same situation as Job, he was also accused by some jealous brethren who were striving for position of things Paul had never done. Not only in Corinth but also in Jerusalem by the way, and how did Paul treat these things? He gives an inside in to his thoughts in: *1Corinthians* 4:1-5:

"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God."

That is very clear-isn't it? You can never go wrong if you have this attitude, because that is really what God did. He came personally and judge; and he made very clear that everybody understood, and that is when Job says: "I abhor myself" and I am sure that is exactly what Paul would have said. In fact when he came before God, he felt himself being a sinner, again and again. He realized his weakness, when he came before God, and he would say: I am the least of all apostles; I am unworthy, and so forth. That was his attitude. But when it came to the false accusation of the false brethren who were striving for position, he would give them no hope that they would gain anything by their false accusations. And this we need to do too. Can you see this point? I think the example of Paul helps us here. The next quotation is a very interesting statement because it throws even more light on how he reacted, and how he should have reacted.

"The Scriptures plainly show that the work of sanctification is progressive. When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to "go on unto perfection;" to grow up "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Says the apostle Paul: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." *Philippians* 3:13, 14. And Peter sets before us the steps by which Bible sanctification is to be attained: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. . . . If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." *2Peter* 1:5-10."

"Those who experience the sanctification of the Bible will manifest a spirit of humility." This is the spirit of self-distrust.

"Like Moses, they have had a view of the awful majesty of holiness, and they see their own unworthiness in contrast with the purity and exalted perfection of the Infinite One." Paul had such a vision, at the gate of Damascus. He saw the majesty of holiness, and he was nothing. John the Baptist also, he saw the majesty of holiness and he was nothing himself.

"The prophet Daniel was an example of true sanctification. His long life was filled up with noble service for his Master. He was a man "greatly beloved" (*Daniel* 10:11) of Heaven. Yet instead of claiming to be pure and holy, this honored prophet identified himself with the really sinful of Israel as he pleaded before God in behalf of his people: "We do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies." "We have sinned, we have done wickedly." He declares: "I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people." And when at a later

time the Son of God appeared, to give him instruction, Daniel says: "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." *Daniel* 9:18, 15,20; 10:8. *Great Controversy* 470.1-470.3

So that was the attitude of that noble prophet Daniel. Of whom we read of no sin in the Bible, and his attitude was: I don't consider myself as holy as sinless, but he constantly had this self-distrust before God, in which he could identify completely with his people.

"When Job heard the voice of the Lord out of the whirlwind, he exclaimed: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." *Job* 42:6.

Now, we really have to gain such an experience and I can see very clearly we cannot properly do our job unless we gain such an experience as Job another or Daniel.

"It was when Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, and heard the cherubim crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," that he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone." *Isaiah* 6:3, 5. Paul, after he was caught up into the third heaven and heard things which it was not possible for a man to utter, speaks of himself as "less than the least of all saints." *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4, margin; *Ephesians* 3:8. It was the beloved John, who leaned on Jesus' breast and beheld His glory, that fell as one dead before the feet of the angel. *Revelation* 1:17. *Great Controversy* 471.1

"There can be no self-exaltation, no boastful claim to freedom from sin, on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross. They feel that it was their sin which caused the agony that broke the heart of the Son of God, and this thought will lead them to self-abasement. Those who live nearest to Jesus discern most clearly the frailty and sinfulness of humanity, and their only hope is in the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour." *Great Controversy* 471.2

The sanctification now gaining prominence in the religious world, carried within a spirit of self exaltation and in disregard for the law of God that marked as foreign to the religion of the Bible.

It's quite impotent that we study this theme. Sister White looks into the future and she describes more on revivals, it's interesting, I would like to read a little bit more about this, but in the time when Sister White wrote this book here in 1911, I mean it was published in 1911 she wrote before. But in the term of the sanctuary, there were in North America the so called holiness movements, which taught instantaneous sanctification. They grew up from the Methodist church as I understand, but they had their roots on other churches, and part of the outflows of these came to the Pentecostal movement, which today is as you know a very big movement in North America. And it's interesting, these things began during that time when Sister White wrote things, and I never looked at it like this that we have here the spirit of self exaltation. You know, on the one hand, when looks at the own holiness, on the other hand, there is a disregard for the law. And looking down upon the law. I do not know how this will out still in the future, I also want to understand the history a little bit better, how it came about and so forth, and then in another time I can tell you more, but definitely we are learning something here as a people of God, which will be severely tested by the so called Christian world. We will have to learn to something that stands in contrast to that which is popular, in the evangelical world today.

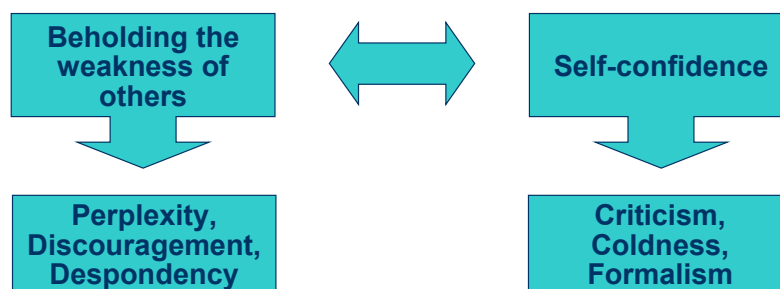
So let us now come back to Isaiah., and we want to understand better in what way Isaiah learnt self-distrust. First of all we see him in that situation where he was greatly perplexed and deeply depressed. Now, why was Isaiah greatly perplexed and deeply depressed? What was the reason? It was the condition of the people. It was the perversity of his people that brought to the Lord's servant the greatest perplexity and the deepest depression. Now, I want to ask you, what speaks out of this condition? Do you see here self-distrust, or do you see self-confidence? Is a bit hard question-isn't it? When you read this, self-distrust or self-confidence? Well, let me turn to another statement and then it maybe gets a little bit clearer. Let's turn now to *Bible Commentary* 4:39, and that talks about Isaiah experience.

“As the prophet Isaiah beheld the glory of the Lord, he was amazed, and, overwhelmed with a sense of his own weakness and unworthiness, he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." *Bible Commentary* 4:1138.6

“Isaiah had denounced the sin of others;...” He was a prophet-was his office-wasn’t he? “...but now he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation he had pronounced upon them. He had been satisfied with a cold, lifeless ceremony in his worship of God. He had not known this until the vision was given him of the Lord. How little now appeared his wisdom and talents as he looked upon the sacredness and majesty of the sanctuary! How unworthy he was! How unfitted for sacred service! His view of himself might be expressed in the language of the apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Bible commentary* 4:1139.1

Let me ask the question again. When Isaiah was perplexed and depressed, what do you see in there? Self-distrust or Self-confidence?

Isaiah – The Law of Self-Confidence



**See *Prophets and Kings*, 303-310
S.D.A. Bible Commentary 4:1139.1**

First of all Isaiah definitely needed to learn Self-distrust, otherwise this vision wouldn’t have given him what it gave him. The problem starts with beholding the weakness of others. Let me read this again: “Isaiah had denounced the sin of others” Now when I denounce the sins of others, but do this in a lifeless way as it says here, “he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation.” “He had been satisfied with a cold, lifeless ceremony in his worship of God.”

When you denounce others, and at the same time be satisfied with a cold, lifeless ceremony in the worship of God, what is this? That is nothing but being judgmental. The point is that he beheld the weakness of others, and this led him to be perplexed, discouraged and despairing. Now, when I behold the weakness of others, there is another effect too; it leads to self-confidence, because I compare myself with others. I see their mistakes, I see that I don’t have their mistakes, so if I dwell on this, if my mind studies constantly mistakes of other people, naturally I will get better and better. Because they get lower and lower. So, self-confidence now, let to a critical cold and formalistic

worship. Critical towards others, cold towards others, and formalistic which means lifeless. So this was his condition, I don't that he was completely a Pharisee, unteachable, harden Pharisee. That was not his condition but the general condition of this people was formalistic. You know, they still came all to the worship in Jerusalem, everybody, but lacked the life and again Isaiah was a child of his time, even though he was chosen to condemn their sins. Now, how did he learn self-distrust? How did he learn it? He learnt it after he received a glimpse of the glory of God, and this we want to read together now in *Isaiah 6:1-7*

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple." In fact Isaiah was standing there in temple and he was meditating about the impossibility of bringing about a reform in Israel, he was absolutely depressed and he was even tempted to leave the work. He saw himself unable you can say, he saw himself weak, but he did not see the ability and the power of God to do the job. So, he wanted to leave, he actually was on the way of living his office. As he was meditating there in the temple suddenly he was carried away by that vision. As I said: ", I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple." That means his glory filled the temple.

"Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!"

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said:

"Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts." "

Now he sees himself in a very different way than before.

"Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

"Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged." " *Isaiah 6:1-7*

Now, he had a very different outlook. Now, he had self-distrust. It was necessary that he had this vision of Christ. Remember what is necessary in order to have a healthy distrust? Three elements:

1. Realization of our weakness.
2. A revelation of the magnitude of the work
3. A vision of Christ.

You see, he had a sense of his weakness, true. But what was lacking was a vision of Christ. And as he got this he really went forward. Let's read this again.

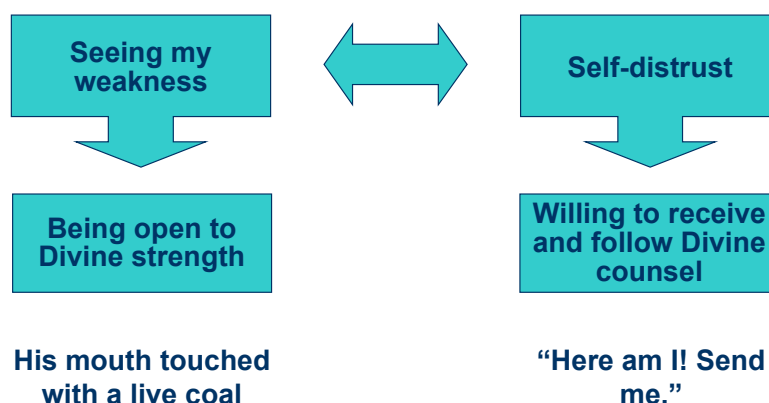
Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

"Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?"

Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." *Isaiah 6:8*

You see, he now was absolutely willing to follow the Lord. Let's look at it in a Diagram.

Isaiah – Self-Distrust after Receiving a Glimpse of God's Glory



That means instead of seeing the weakness of others and beholding the weakness of others, he now saw his own weakness. In other words, his concentration was not anymore to study the weakness of others but now suddenly he saw himself a sinner. And this means he now was open for divine strength. You see, as long as we don't see our weakness, our heart it's simply not open for divine strength. And now the angel could come with a live coal touch his mouth and purged him. It would not have been possible as long as Isaiah did not feel his weakness in the way he did after he saw the glory of the Lord.

Now, seeing my own weakness has another effect, it means that I have true self-distrust, and true self-distrust means that I am willing to receive and follow divine counsel as we have seen in our past studies. And that means that Isaiah could say: "Here am I; send me." Now, this was not said in self-confidence, not in boastful, self-assurance, "all the Lord had say, I will do." Not because I am strong; he saw his weakness, but because of his self-distrust he was willing to follow the counsel of God explicitly so when God would send him, he would go. We sing this in the song: I go where you want me to go. Exactly. That was his message, that was the language of his soul. "Here am I; send me"

Now, this resolve was tested, because afterwards God said: well then go, you will preach to them but they won't hear. You will tell them, but they won't understand, and so you will preach, and preach and preach and you will accomplish nothing. Go. Would you go? You see, it was not a matter of him getting success now in his own strength, he didn't care about this. His self-distrust was so great that he would say: I do what the Lord tells me, I'll go where ever you want me to go. Whether this is in the mountain top, or in the valley. I'll go, Here am I; send me. And he would stick to this, even after God told him, you will preach to them and they won't listen, and they won't understand, they are hard hearted. They are stiffed. He only had one question though. He said: How long? And God said: Well that will be a long time, until everything is pretty much lost, and only a remnant will remain, your work will not be in vain. But it will be only for a remnant. Go. And he went. And once he took

his hand into the plow, he would not look back, like Moses did. So the point is that we really need to have three things:

1. Self-distrust (a sense of our weakness)
2. To see the magnitude of the work of God.
3. A vision of Christ as Isaiah had it.

And then we shall do the work as he did it. Let us come into Peter now, let's turn to the chapter "The call by the sea" in Luke chapter 5.

"So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" *Luke 5:1-8*

Can you see this is almost the same language as that of Isaiah. "I am a sinful man, and I dwell in the midst of the people with sinfulness." And that is the language also of Job. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

"For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." It is interesting again a parallel to Isaiah. "From now on you go and preach, and from now on you will catch men."

"So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him." *Luke 5:9-11*

It's very interesting this story. What made him suddenly feel like this? You can say: Peter would have told us if he would be here, he would say: Up to this point I knew the Lord only by hearsay; but now I have seen him myself. Up to now, yes, I have witnessed the miracles, but only from a distance, now I experienced a miracle myself. The fact is in this moment the Holy Spirit had somehow in connection with the work of Christ really gave him a revelation of the ability of Christ. It's wonderfully described in *Desire of Ages*, how Peter in that moment had a tremendous sense of the ability of Christ. And he needed it for his work. Because very often he would go out and fish and seemingly there would be nothing. That is the fate of every worker of Christ, but then if he would follow Christ, he would know that it would never be in vain, because Christ knows exactly where the fish are. "Go and be fishers of man"

So likewise in the case of the Jewish noble man when he wanted that his son is healed, when he got such a glimpse of the power of God, he suddenly had a faith that could nothing drawn. He knew that he was standing in the presence of one who would heal his son, or could heal his son. And he just needed a word from him, and when Jesus said: Go thy son is healed, he needed nothing further. He needed nor hurry home, he absolutely knew it, because he had received the vision of Christ. And I wish that we do have such a vision too, in order to really be able to do the same work as these people. In fact, we need it. Without it we shall not see our weakness, without we shall not see the magnitude of the work and have no healthy self-distrust, which it's absolutely essential, it's the first lesson we need to learn as workers with Christ. Amen.

Study 18

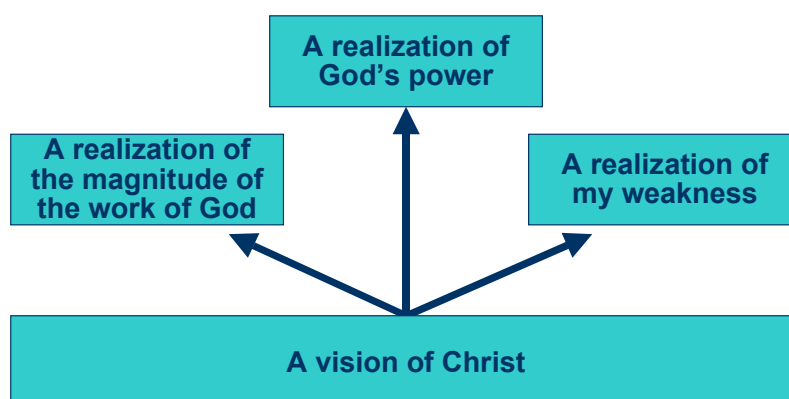
The Example of Peter

We want to continue a little bit with our lessons on self-distrust, healthy self-distrust. And maybe you remember the diagram we showed yesterday about the question What creates healthy self-distrust? Do you still remember this? There were three elements which we named, that was:

1. A sense of our own weakness
2. A realization of the greatness of God's work
3. A vision of Christ.

I changed this diagram a little bit, and show it to you again this morning, because the vision of Christ is fundamental, it is the cause for everything else, really.

What Creates Healthy Self-Distrust?



Examples: Moses, Jacob, the Jewish nobleman, Peter, Isaiah, Job, etc.

I see a greater importance in having the vision of Christ than I saw before. So, to have a vision of Christ is the important point of creating healthy self-distrust. Because without it we cannot have healthy self-distrust; maybe unhealthy self-distrust, yes, but not healthy self-distrust. The vision of Christ then produces a really realization of my weakness, and we will read this today. The vision of Christ produces a realization of the magnitude of the work of God. And it produces a realization of God's power.

Now, let us apply this to Moses, for a moment, because we have study his life very particularly. When God called him at the burning bush, we see in Moses a realization of his own weakness. We see that he was aware of the magnitude of the work of God. We also see that he had a realization of God's power, which immediately had to grow still. But he had a sense. Where did he get it from? Where was the source? Why did he have a realization of his own weakness? We tend to think it was merely because he failed badly in Egypt, because he killed the Egyptian and had to flee because he spoiled God's plan. That is only a part of the truth. It is true as we have seen, our failure brings us to this

realization maybe at first. But to have a really deep sense of the weakness of ourselves, we need to see the glory of God. And this is what Moses saw there in the wilderness. He saw it in the nature that surrounded him, in the mountains, and so forth. But he saw it also in the visions that God gave him because he received Genesis, which is the record of creation, he must have been awed when he saw this vision about creation. Could you imagine this? God showing you how he created the world, that it's tremendous.

Then likewise the book of Job, he got in the wilderness, which we have seen yesterday as a very important revelation of the power of God. So, all this gave him a more vivid sense of his own weakness, and inability. And it created a deeper distrust of himself. And at the same time he saw the magnitude of the work of God which really led him to think he could never do the work; then when God called him, he was slow of speech, timid, and full of self-distrust. But God showed him also his power. He showed him his power in many respects, least in the last instance by the miracle of the Rod and the healing of leprosy. And when God showed him his power then Moses had no excuse anymore as we see. But he refused to fully see was the power of God against his own weakness, and the magnitude of the work. But, he eventually saw this too, because he took the plow into his hand, and he never let go. So, Moses is a very good example, to show that a vision of Christ is fundamental.

We see this also in Jacob, when Jacob had a vision of Christ, when did he have one? When he saw the ladder, but more so, when he fought with the angel. And what did he see there? First when he fought, he saw nothing. Why did he fight against this angel? Because there was still too much self-confidence in him. He thought he could do the work. He thought he could win this battle. Now, it is true that in cooperation with God it is our duty to do everything that lies in our power, but how easily do we lose sight of the fact that we are very limited, that we can do really nothing. And now quickly are we fighting against God.

Now, when you look at Jacob's behavior, you see nothing unreasonable in this- do you? I mean he took every precaution, so that the armies of his brother wouldn't destroy him; he also was very careful to split his own company, so that if one was attacked, that the others could flee. He also saw that natural boundaries where there like a river, the river Javak. So, he did everything to really give protection, and then he was praying, and then an enemy was coming, and again if an enemy would come, what would you do? Naturally, you would fight; you would protect your family. Who said this, the other day? "But you should fight for your family, you should not run away when the enemy is coming" True, so it's very reasonable what he did-isn't it? When you look at it, from that point of view. And yet in fighting against this supposed enemy, he was fighting against God, how often do we do this? Let's think about it, how great is the danger of us fighting against Christ, when we think we just cooperate with him.

Well, the revelation was given to him in that moment, when this stranger, this mysterious stranger, who proved to be absolutely strong and powerful, he could do nothing against him. When he simply pointed to his thigh, and in this moment he became a cripple. But he did not become a cripple because of that stranger pointing to his thigh; he became a cripple because he was fighting so madly against this person. But, the stranger pointed out to him exactly what would happen, where would happen, and when it would happen. And in this Jacob had a vision of Christ. In this moment he saw the magnitude of this Antagonist. And this vision of Christ helped him, to really realize his own weakness. Now he saw it for the first time, really. He also saw something of the magnitude of the work, and he had the realization of God's power.

So when he had this vision of Christ in that moment, then he was weak, and when he was weak he was strong; because that's what it is. When I am weak, then I am strong. The Jewish noble man is another example, in that moment when he realized that Jesus could read his thoughts, he felt the sense of being in the presence of one to whom nothing was impossible. And that sense showed him, his own weakness. And now, he could pray as he never prayed before: Lord save my son. And now, he could

grasp also the healing power of Christ, because when Christ said: Go thy son lives, he had it, and he knew that he had it. He could thank the Lord for it. So, likewise with Peter when he was catching the fish which we will shall look at now, a little bit more detailed. Isaiah we had studied, and Job we had studied, everybody received a vision of Christ. And we need such a vision of Christ in order to really have this healthy self-distrust. That it is absolutely important, and essential.

Yesterday when we were in nature, didn't we pray for such a vision? Did you pray, I definitely have this desire to receive such a vision, and nature is the natural surrounding where we see the handy work of God, and his almighty power. Let us now turn a little bit more to Peter in the chapter "The call by the sea". I would like to read the whole chapter with you, but we don't have the time so much, because we have still other things to consider, and must leave it up to you. But, some paragraphs we need to read.

First of all, the chapter begins by describing the disciple's mood or the disciples' attitude when they were un the lake. Now, their problem was that Jesus was basically just rejected by the leaders in Jerusalem. It so happened that two events accumulated, the one event was the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and the other was the hearing before the son he dreamed. He hearing before the son he dreamed was a public event, the leaders in Jerusalem, they tried to make a public example of Jesus and to really put him down, to really intimidate him and his followers. It signaled the rejection by the Jews establishment, by the Jews leaders, and that was disappointing. If the future Messiah would be rejected by the leaders, what would become out of his mission? And was he really the leader? That was put into question, through such an action.

Not that Jesus was rejected by the people at that point of time; that happened latter. He was popular, pretty much popular, but the leaders were envious, and they rejected him. And at the same time the imprisonment of John the Baptist also showed that something was going wrong here in this movement. It was not going so smoothly as they expected. So, was it the movement of God? That was the question. And so they were again catching some fish, or trying to catch some fish, but they were not very successful. Even their own profession failed them, and so their mood was even further down. It was a gloomy night.

The next morning Jesus was giving some sermons. The sermons of Christ were interesting, and so they listened, but there was not too great excitement in their hearts this day because the disappointment of the night was simply too great. Then, when the discourse of Jesus was ended he spoke to Peter and said: Go, and cast out your net. Peter was not really in the mood to do this right now, especially since it was day time and that was not the time to catch fish, he didn't want to face another disappointment; but he overcame his feelings, because he loved Jesus and he wanted to obey him. Even though himself, he did not believe much. But when the net was absolutely full, he was totally ashamed about his attitude. Not only in questioning the command of Jesus, but of his whole attitude in the whole night. He now saw himself as what he really was, an unbeliever.

He saw his own weakness, and he saw the strength of Jesus. He saw that to Jesus nothing was impossible. Let's read about this and here we see a clear vision somebody got of Christ. Let's turn to page 246, for the context let's begin here:

"Night was the only favorable time for fishing with nets in the clear waters of the lake. After toiling all night without success, it seemed hopeless to cast the net by day; but Jesus had given the command, and love for their Master moved the disciples to obey. Simon and his brother together let down the net. As they attempted to draw it in, so great was the quantity of fish enclosed that it began to break. They were obliged to summon James and John to their aid. When the catch was secured, both the boats were so heavily laden that they were in danger of sinking."

“But Peter was unmindful now of boats or lading. This miracle, above any other he had ever witnessed, was to him a manifestation of divine power. In Jesus he saw One who held all nature under His control.” Can you see how ashamed he was, in being so doubting? Could this be the Messiah? Could this be the right mission? You know, when John was put in prison and when the leaders rejected him, could this be right? He was absolutely ashamed, because he saw now somebody whom all nature obeyed. Even the fish of the sea.

“In Jesus he saw One who held all nature under His control. The presence of divinity revealed his own unholiness.” And now we see the vision of Christ now brought forth certain fruits, certain results, which lead to healthy self-distrust. So, in Jesus he now saw the one who had held all nature under control, the presence of divinity revealed his own unholiness.

“Love for his Master, shame for his own unbelief, gratitude for the condescension of Christ, above all, the sense of his uncleanness in the presence of infinite purity, overwhelmed him.” So here we have infinite purity and now he saw his own uncleanness. He had a sense of his own uncleanness.

“While his companions were securing the contents of the net, Peter fell at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." *Desire of Ages* 246.1-246.2

This is the language of somebody who is full of self-distrust. I find it interesting, we have in Romans 7 a very similar statement. What does it say?

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! *Romans* 7:24-25

Now, when you read this statement you see also self-distrust in here, but we have learned that we don't apply this to ourselves. Have we? We feel ashamed of applying this to ourselves; maybe we have to bear this shame one time, and that was in the beginning, in the very beginning of our Christian experience. Yes we had to admit that this is our condition, but now that we are born again, No, this statement doesn't apply to us anymore. You see, and in this way we tend to not see our real weakness.

Now, it is true that *Romans* 7 speaks of the person who is not born again, I don't want to change this point, but what we need to realize is this, that even though it talks of the person who is not born again, it talks also of the weakness of humanity. It talks what we are apart from Christ; it makes very clear in what condition we find ourselves in when we lose sight of the crown. In a condition of terrible wretchedness. Now we are born again, yes, we are saved; but what we need to realize is: this has to be maintained, it has to be maintained by constantly having Christ before us; on constantly being connected with him. It is not something which makes you super humans, so that we don't need to fear our own weakness anymore. But this is almost the kind of thinking that has developed in our minds. So, let us now see very clearly that this statement is so. When we come to *Romans* 7 and look at the summary of the whole thing; maybe we should do this very briefly. *Romans* 7 verse 25, I always wondered about this text but I understand this now much clearly, let's begin on verse 24 and then 25.

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!” So here expect *Romans* 7 to end and to have no further command about this anymore. Because we have a very miserable and desperate outcry and we have the answer, because the answer is “I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” In other words it says it's deliverance from that. But now, why this addition? Another addition:

“So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”_That's somehow disturbing-isn't it? And this very sentence has put some doubts into the minds of people if

Romans 7 is really the person the unconverted men. I think that is very appropriate, this statement. And the long I think about it, the more I see how appropriate this is. Because read about it very carefully: "So then I myself.." What does it mean? That is my natural condition without the grace of Christ. That is my weakness, this is when I don't look on the crown. This is when I depart from Christ I myself, and in that wretched condition still; but by faith and by the grace of Christ I am not. Let's read this again: "So then I myself" That means: I in my own power, I in my own strength. We must read the whole context:"

"I am myself, I am my own strength, I in my own power serve on that with the mind in the law of God, but the flesh in the law of sin." That means, Yes, I want to do the right thing, but I don't do it. I am a miserable person because, the good I want, but the bad I do. He puts in a nutshell *Romans 7* here, in this one sentence. You know *Romans 7*- do you. I don't need to tell you this again. I mean that is the point, the nutshell of it. "I myself, I am my own strength." And we must not loose the sense of it, Paul had the sense. You know, we must not think for a moment: Once we are born again, we don't need to care about this anymore, we don't need to think even that we are weak. We are weak, and it is only by the grace of God that we are strong. So let us come back to Peter, and here we have this statement: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Let's read on next paragraph.

"It was the same presence of divine holiness that had caused the prophet Daniel to fall as one dead before the angel of God. He said, "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." So when Isaiah beheld the glory of the Lord, he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Dan. 10:8; Isa. 6:5. Humanity, with its weakness and sin, was brought in contrast with the perfection of divinity, and he felt altogether deficient and unholy. Thus it has been with all who have been granted a view of God's greatness and majesty. *The Desire of Ages* 246.3

So, can you see again what was the cause of seeing his weakness and his sins? It was seeing first of all the perfection and divinity of Christ. In other words, the contrast between the two. And then he felt altogether deficient and unholy. "Thus it has been with all who have been granted a view of God's greatness and majesty."

"Peter exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man;" yet he clung to the feet of Jesus, feeling that he could not be parted from Him. The Saviour answered, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." It was after Isaiah had beheld the holiness of God and his own unworthiness that he was entrusted with the divine message. It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and dependence upon divine power that he received the call to his work for Christ. *The Desire of Ages*, 246.4

You see, when we do not have a sense of our own weakness, we do not take full use out the grace that God offers us, we neglect really a part of it, because we think we have it already. "No, we don't need everything" So for example, "I don't need the Sabbath school lesson, that is maybe for the weak ones who do not know what to study, but don't need it."

Or, "I don't need to restudy the campmeeting, or I don't need to study the campmeeting at all; I don't need to be in every study because I know it anyway already. Now, this will be our attitude when we don't have a sense of our own weakness, but when we have a sense of our own weakness, we don't want to miss one word- do we? And our missionaries, when there are send out, they will be truly received when people have a sense of their own weakness. So, what we need to do is to pray that we receive such a vision of Christ. That we have that sense of our weakness.

"Until this time none of the disciples had fully united as colaborers with Jesus. They had witnessed many of His miracles, and had listened to His teaching; but they had not entirely forsaken their former employment. The imprisonment of John the Baptist had been to them all a bitter disappointment. If such were to be the outcome of John's mission, they could have little hope for their Master, with all the religious leaders combined against Him. Under the circumstances it was a relief to them to return for a

short time to their fishing. But now Jesus called them to forsake their former life, and unite their interests with His.” You see, they were in danger of making their profession, their own world. Can you see it here? I was a relieve, it would become their own world, to which they would flee when the work of God would not be so successful anymore; anytime they were disappointed they would flee to that. But Peter and his companions were called away from that own world, very clearly. Jesus knew the danger, he would not leave them there, he would say: Come and follow me now completely, leave it.

“ Peter had accepted the call. Upon reaching the shore, Jesus bade the three other disciples, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left all, and followed Him.” *The Desire of Ages*, 246.5

Now, it was the right moment to call them, because they had this sense of their own unworthiness. And of the power and glory of God, and for that moment it was a good time for them to leave their own world. It’s much harder when we have no vision of Christ, because then our own world is our own vision. It’s our own security, our only security.

“Before asking them to leave their nets and fishing boats, Jesus had given them the assurance that God would supply their needs. The use of Peter's boat for the work of the gospel had been richly repaid. He who is "rich unto all that call upon Him," has said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." *Romans* 10:12; *Luke* 6:38. In this measure He had rewarded the disciple's service. And every sacrifice that is made in His ministry will be recompensed according to "the exceeding riches of His grace." *Ephesians* 3:20; 2:7

“During that sad night on the lake, when they were separated from Christ, the disciples were pressed hard by unbelief, and weary with fruitless toil. But His presence kindled their faith, and brought them joy and success. So it is with us; apart from Christ, our work is fruitless, and it is easy to distrust and murmur. But when He is near, and we labor under His direction, we rejoice in the evidence of His power. It is Satan's work to discourage the soul; it is Christ's work to inspire with faith and hope. You see, this exclamation: “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Does not mean that there is to be discouragement or lack of faith, quite the opposite, distrust of self if it is healthy will be in correspondence with faith in Jesus. We rejoice in the evidence of his power.

“The deeper lesson which the miracle conveyed for the disciples is a lesson for us also,--that He whose word could gather the fishes from the sea could also impress human hearts, and draw them by the cords of His love, so that His servants might become "fishers of men." *The Desire of Ages*, 249.1-249.3

They were humble and unlearned men, those fishers of Galilee; but Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify them for the position for which He had chosen them.” Now we read something about education, and the kind of education that Jesus was giving, was not just theoretical education were he made them sit down, and he preached something to them; this was certainly a part, sermon on the mount was such a thing;but it was more by associating them with him. You remember how the disciples of John came to Jesus and asked him: Tell us something for our master, because we need some message from you. That was basically what they said, even though the exact words were: “Are you the one whom we should wait, or shall we wait for another?” And Jesus said nothing much, he simply asked them to watch and stay with him for the whole day. And this they in within them really rapt off it inspired them. It gave them strength, and this strength they convey to John the Baptist, and he immediately accepted it like a dry sponge he took these things in and he was ready to die, for the cause of God.

“But He passed by the wise men of His time, because they were so self-confident that they could not sympathize with suffering humanity, and become colaborers with the Man of Nazareth. In their

bigotry they scorned to be taught by Christ. The Lord Jesus seeks the co-operation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communication of His grace. The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust;" That is our motto text here for the camp meeting. "then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ. This is not to be gained through education in the most scientific schools. It is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone. *The Desire of Ages*, 249.4

So association with him making experiences in his presence, this is what we need. For this reason when you are sent out and you may not have much experience yet, this is not the only criteria; what you need is this willingness of being taught. And then you will flee to Christ when you come to a difficult situations, and this will fill you with divine wisdom. Through communion with him, through actual contact with him, in that battle, you will become wise, and that is where God will fill you with his strength.

"Jesus chose unlearned fishermen" and why? Because they were humble, they were teachable, like Moses, like Isaiah, like Job; unconscious may be unconscious that they possess powers. They think they cannot accomplish much, but there is a lot in their hearts, which needs just to be called into action, but it needs to be under divine guidance, under divine wisdom in order not to make them proud. Sister White here says that skilful men can find out this talents. Skilful I would say are those who have a vision of Christ.

"He gave them the advantage of association with Himself. Never had the world's great men such a teacher. When the disciples came forth from the Saviour's training, they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. *The Desire of Ages*, 250.1

"It is not the highest work of education to communicate knowledge merely, but to impart that vitalizing energy which is received through the contact of mind with mind, and soul with soul." You know the little things here and there, when we walk together, even when we go for a walk, when we sit together at the table; when we have our little worships together, when we cook together, when we work together in the Bee-keeping or in cleaning up or something like this, we have to communicate and that is contact of mind with mind and soul with soul. That's how we become friends. But, this is also how we can become friends with Jesus, when we have him with us in all these activities.

"It is only life that can beget life. What privilege, then, was theirs who for three years were in daily contact with that divine life from which has flowed every life-giving impulse that has blessed the world! Above all his companions, John the beloved disciple yielded himself to the power of that wondrous life. He says, "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." *1 John 1:2; John 1:16. The Desire of Ages*, 250.2

Job had the same experience. When he saw a vision of God, he had that experience which John had and the other disciples.

"In the apostles of our Lord there was nothing to bring glory to themselves. It was evident that the success of their labors was due only to God. The lives of these men, the characters they developed, and the mighty work that God wrought through them, are a testimony to what He will do for all who are teachable and obedient." *The Desire of Ages*, 250.3

"He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to

reveal His grace. If His people will remove the obstructions,” and what is the obstacle? How would he name it? Self-confidence.

“He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels. If men in humble life were encouraged to do all the good they could do, if restraining hands were not laid upon them to repress their zeal, there would be a hundred workers for Christ where now there is one. *The Desire of Ages*, 250.4 Only one, but they are hundred, I’m sure, very soon.

“The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views.” He will be balanced, as we read in the next: “His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced.” You know in church work that is what we really need. A quick discerning, what is the situation? What is the problem? Where does it lie? We need to be penetrative, we must see what is the real issue, not just what they talk about, but the real issue is often more deeply and the judgment better balanced. How often is it that with unbalanced judgment we destroy God’s work? These are absolutely essentials for church work.

“He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God *The Desire of Ages*, 251.1

“Men of the highest education in the arts and sciences have learned precious lessons from Christians in humble life who were designated by the world as unlearned. But these obscure disciples had obtained an education in the highest of all schools. They had sat at the feet of Him who spoke as “never man spake.” *The Desire of Ages*, 251.2

Is this our experience? Certainly, when we hear the word of God, and when we hear him speaking personally to our heart, then this is our experience. And I wish that we become that workers. There are hundreds, there will be hundreds where there is now only one.

How do we get Self-Distrust?

Seeing Christ
with our own
eyes

Wisdom from
Christ

Self-distrust

Not I but
Christ

Self-distrust “... is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone.” *The Desire of Ages*, 249.4

“It is not the highest work of education to communicate knowledge merely, but to impart that vitalizing energy which is received through the contact of mind with mind, and soul with soul.” *The Desire of Ages*, 250.2

Now, when we continue to look at Peter, let's pass his life in review before our minds. We see that this was not the only time Jesus met him at the lake. The lake in Peter seemed to be some very interesting associations because it was in another time when they asked for the temple tax for his master and he said: Yes, yes my master pays the temple tax. And put Jesus in embarrassment. Then Jesus asked him: Go and catch a fish and then take the money out of his mouth, again this miracle revealed to Peter the tremendous power of Christ, his omnipotence. And again he was ashamed about his own conduct. But, again his self sufficiency of his self-confidence came back again and again and it was manifested in the fact that he couldly talk, he would not stop and think, but he would talk, he would talk it out very quickly.

Some people they formulate their thoughts by talking, that is how their mind works, in some cases. In other words the thought is not clear in the head, but while they talk it becomes clear. The listener has to carry it through though he must be very patient at times, before it gets clear. But this is how it works. And this is how Peter's mind worked. And this is sign of self-confidence, because he should be more quire, he should more wait until Christ would make a command. He should keep more in the background with him. But Jesus was very patience with him you know? And he did not give him up, he saw the tremendous potentials that were in Peter.

And when he was walking on the lake, well, how did it come about? Peter again immediately speaking, and by speaking thinking, said: Lord if you want I come and walk to you. And to the surprise to everybody Jesus said: Come and walk. And he walked, well knowing that he would sink, very soon. But this was a part of the school, you know? He needed that experience, and when Peter sank, he saw again his own weakness, and self-distrust came back to him, and now a very humble Peter went back with Jesus into the boat. I was a very, very important lesson for his work. Now, that was not the end of the story, because very soon he was again self confident; even after the Lord's Supper he felt that he needed to fight for his master, he drew his sort and began to fight. Not waiting for his master to say come on its time to fight. No, he knew what to do.

And again he was humbled, when Jesus said: Put the sword away, I don't need it, I can call my angels. But he accepted it, however the great problem came when he denied his Lord, that is when he really has humbled to the bones. And Jesus saved him out of this as well, and then he met at the lake, and again he told him to be fishers of men. Again he repeated the miracle of the net, and in this way Jesus really taught him step by step this lesson of self-distrust which we also need to learn. Here we have to close, we are well over the time, I hope our tapes can bear it.

Study 19

We want to conclude our study of self-distrust, because our time is advanced, and I would like to very briefly look with you at another study as well. Looking at this chapter of Peter, we see that the vision of Christ, seeing Christ with my own eyes is that which is lying at the foundation of everything else, really. That makes my heart open to receive wisdom from Christ, because I see my own weakness, and I am ready to accept the wisdom of Christ. And this has something to do with self-distrust as well. The wisdom of Christ will show me how much I need to distrust myself. And then I will cry out, "Not I, but Christ."

"Self-distrust is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine teacher alone." I find it interesting that it is described like this. I would have thought the other way around. The wisdom of Christ is the fruit of self-distrust. But it says here, "self-distrust is the fruit of the wisdom that is obtained from the divine teacher alone." It seems to me that in the school of Christ, if we have to learn one thing, it is self-distrust. So important is this matter. If we have learned this, then we have passed the test, then we are students. In other words, if we have gone through a certain school, and at the end of the school there stands true self-distrust, then I have graduated. That's something, isn't it! How important that subject is. Of course, we must say, "healthy" self-distrust.

Let's turn to this other statement, "it is not the highest work of education to communicate knowledge merely, but to impart that vitalizing energy that is received through the contact of mind with mind, and soul with soul." And as we have passed review before our eyes the history of Peter and we have seen how he learned the lesson of self-distrust, we have seen very clearly how he learned the truth of that statement. Communication of mind with mind. And don't think that his lessons were over the moment that he was called again by the lake, when Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love me?", "Do you love me more than these?", "Do you love me?" And each time Peter answered but at the end he was somewhat sad that Jesus would ask the same question again. And each time Jesus called upon Peter to feed the lambs. In other words, He called him again to that work which He had called him to at the lake at first. Then when Peter entered into this service, he never forgot that he had denied his Lord. Self-distrust was every accompanying him. He had graduated in that school. That does not mean that he could not fall, and he did fall. But he was so ready to be corrected when Paul told him that he should not play the hypocrite together with the Jews, but should bravely stand for the gospel, which Peter then did.

Remember also how bravely he stood before the assembly of the apostles when he said, "The Lord has answered this question already, because He has given me that and that lesson." That was not natural for him to do this because he was more inclined to make compromises with the Judaizers, but no, his self-distrust kept him. It kept him pure and true to the cause of God, and even made him a champion together with Paul for the ministry to the heathen. So eventually Peter came to Rome as well as Paul, and there was executed at about the same time that Paul was, under the severe persecution of Nero. You know the story, how he brought this rumor up that the Christians had burned Rome after the fire. And when Peter was crucified, he was not beheaded like Paul because he was not a Roman citizen, he found it too great an honor to be crucified like Christ and he asked for a favor if he could be crucified in a different manner, namely, with his feet up, which certainly was not more pleasant. But it was an expression of his self-distrust. He ever had before him that denial of his Lord. And it kept him safe.

You wonder what will keep us safe in heaven, and there is one thing. That is the marks in the body of Christ, when He is in heaven. These marks are shameful to us because we have put them there. It's what we have done. It's not His suffering which we see so much, it's more the fact that we can never trust in ourselves. That we are always and will always remain dependant receivers, regardless of what honor God ascribes to us. So with these thoughts I want to conclude this, even though we could study

much more, and I'm sure you can go into these studies. I'm sure that in two days we could begin again to go over this subject, because there is so much to be learned in this field.

There is no Fear in Love

We have had some studies here before the camp-meeting really started and I want to share with you some of these things. One was a study about fear, and let me go to the subject now. Maybe the question what is true fear? And is fear good or not? We have had this study because we noticed that fear is more common among God's people than we previously thought, and that fear is more often the reason of problems in other areas than we thought before. When we act in a way that is not according to the gospel, when we don't press forward in faith, when we don't have true fellowship with one another, when we cannot have true confessions, when we have problems in churches, very often these things are there because there is fear. And the Bible says there is no fear in love.

There is no Fear in Love

Fear – the Great Sin of God's People (Matthew 8:26)

Now Jesus very severely rebuked fear. We call it here for the moment, the greatest sin of God's people, because of all things that cause troubles in the church, fear is one of the main reasons. We could say now after our studies, "self-confidence" is the greatest, but it's interesting that fear and self-confidence must have a relationship with one another too, but let's look at it at the end.

First of all let's turn to Matthew 8:26. What did Jesus say here? He rebuked his disciples, He said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Now we would say that in that storm it would be more than understandable that the disciples had fear.

Have you ever been in a situation where the powers of nature seemed to destroy you? Have you been in a hurricane once, for example? Some of you have made this experience, being in the midst of such a storm, or being there when an earthquake takes place, and suddenly the earth around you shakes very severely, and everything in the house shakes. That is a time when we normally do fear, isn't it? Or when we are in a ship and the waves are very high, or in an airplane and suddenly there's a very severe

turbulence. Most of us have come by an airplane here, and we know what it means when there is a turbulence and it goes up and down and doesn't seem to stop, and it gets worse and worse. Such situations are unpleasant. How do you feel? Isn't it natural to fear then? Don't you get wet hands when such a thing happens? But Jesus rebuked his disciples. He said, "Oh you of little faith." That means there must be some deficiency.

I was reminded also of the Wesley brothers when they went with a ship over the Atlantic and saw the Moravians without fear. And that made them think, there is something wrong here with us. You see, it is not normal to fear, there is something lacking. And what the Bible tells us is lacking is love. So, why do humans fear? Let's summarize this a little bit. What are the situations that make us fear?

Why do Humans Fear?

- Adam and Eve feared God
 - Fear came to humans for the first time. (Genesis 3:10)
 - The coming of Christ was usually a joy. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 57.4)
 - Why did the priests flee from Christ? (*The Desire of Ages*, 162.2, .3)
 - A bad conscience. The knowledge of sin leads to fear.

The first time man feared was in the garden of Eden. Before this, fear was unknown to man. You may say there were no reasons for fear. True. But as soon as they fell, there came fear upon them. The Bible says they were afraid. But to be afraid and to fear is the same thing isn't it? As Adam said to God so he said, I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid myself. In the German translation it even says, "and I feared, because I was naked, and I hid myself." What did he fear? A revelation of his weakness. Of being discovered. In other words he feared questions. He feared being investigated. He imagined that God would now expose his weakness and punish him for it. He had all kinds of concepts in his mind about what God would do, and these led him to fear. They led him to run away from God. That was the first time such a thing happened, and how often has this been repeated.

You know, Sister White describes that when God came in the evening and the Bible says "when God came in the cool of the day" which was the evening, usually that was a time of great joy. Adam would have waited for that time every evening. But suddenly there was fear. It's like looking forward to your husband coming home from work, it's a happy time. And if there is suddenly fear, what is the reason for that? A bad conscience, you have to hide something, isn't it? That must be so. And so it was with Adam and Eve.

Likewise, now we come to another incident when Jesus cleansed the temple. You find that the people fled from Him, and Sister White asks the question, "Why did the priests flee from Christ?" And the reason for her question she adds to this by saying, "He who commanded them to take these things away was a humble carpenter. He was an ordinary man. Why did they fear Him? Why did they flee?" What is the answer? The same. They feared to be discovered. They had evil intentions in their heart. Their conscience was torturing them in the presence of Christ. So, we can say, maybe bad conscience is not a good word here, we can say the sense of their evilness, the knowledge of the sin in them, this led them to fear.

Now we can say that basically everybody fears when he has a vision of Christ at first. Isaiah feared, Peter had a sense of fear too. It really commands respect and fear in a sense because of the sin that is in us. But when we do not have bad intentions, in spite of the fact that there is still self-confidence living in us, but if we have no bad intentions, like Isaiah and Peter, then it will not lead us to run away from Him, even though we fear, but to flee to Him in spite of our fear. And in the cleansing of the temple you have such examples. There were some people who did not run out, but who came to Him. I do not want to say that they had no fear whatsoever, because even His disciples trembled when Jesus spoke in the way that He did, but they did not run away. This is something we do not need to do. The fear, how do we handle it, how far shall we let it carry us?

Now what to humans fear?

What do Humans Fear?

- Judgment (Hebrews 10:27)
- Punishment (1 John 4:18)
- Death (Hebrews 2:15)
- Sickness
- Openness
- Being abused by others

The first question was "why do humans fear?," now we come to "what do humans fear?" The judgment, first of all. Are you fearing the judgment. When Paul was preaching before Felix and Agrippa, he was describing the judgment so lively, that these two powerful men trembled. And they made Paul stop preaching to them. They said, please continue another time. They couldn't bear to listen to this any longer. It was like a horror film to them. Some people like to look at horror films it seems, but in this case, it was something they did not wish to see because it concerned them. It's quite

easy to look upon something that concerns others, and some people even revel in this, and rejoice in seeing other people suffer, but when it comes home to them, it's a different matter. If someone would show me a film about what would happen to me in the next moment, I'm here a prisoner with some terrorists and they would show me the torture of another prisoner in a film and they would say "this is what we will do with you next." How would you feel? I think nobody would like to look on such a horror film. I just want to compare it a bit.

That is how Felix and Agrippa felt in that moment. They saw themselves standing before the bar of God, and they said please stop. The Bible says, let's begin in verse 26 and 27, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and of fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries." A fearful expectation of judgment.

What stands in connection with the judgment is punishment. Some people understand judgment to mean punishment but judgment can also simply mean that a thing is investigated, that it's searched through and through, and the punishment then is the execution of that investigation. The apostle John says, "There is no fear in love." And he adds to this, "But perfect love casts out all fear, because fear involves torment." Or "because fear involves punishment" as another translation puts it. "But he who fears, has not been made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us."

What else do we fear? Death. Is this so? Some people do, some people don't. It depends also on how young or old we are. I remember when I was a child and I saw the first funeral, or attended the first funeral, I somehow had a fear of death. I was not too small, I was already in an age where I could think, and I saw this there. I think I once saw a dead body, and it really made me fear if that will happen to me. It was only later when I really could rest myself fully in God that I lost this fear.

Many people drown this fear with a lot of activity or with indulgence in unhealthful practices or loud music, or whatever, or with sarcasm, or with horror films. But the deeper inmost fear, only Christ can take away, when we find rest in Him. Then we can completely rest in Him and have no fear whatsoever. When death comes home to us by a disease or whatever, then we are tested again. And I will not say that I have mastered every fear in this regard, but definitely we will receive strength according to our situation. This I trust to the Lord.

However, what does the world have? It has tremendous fear of death. We should read this text in Hebrews 2 verse 14 and 15, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Through fear of death they were all their lifetime subject to bondage. I wonder how much still is there with many people, the fear of death.

The next human's fear is sickness. We fear openness, because we could be discovered. We fear being abused by others. If I tell them what my situation is they may take advantage out of it, and so forth. These are the things, and many other things that we fear that I did not mention here. These are only some examples. We fear sometimes church meetings, we fear if somebody calls us, "Can I have a talk with you please?" "Uhh! What does he want with me?!" And so forth.

So what is the fruit of fear?

What is the Fruit of Fear?

- Mistrust
- Being reserved
- Building walls
- Aggression
- Discord
- Self-pity
- Hatred

We have now looked at the causes more, now we look at the fruit. Yes? Distrust of God. Um, yes. The fruit of fear is mistrust, for example, in God, as you said, but also in our fellow men. It is being reserved. That means I don't speak with my fellow beings, because it could be that I say something wrong, and so I better not say anything. It means that we build walls between us and them. It's always safer to be behind a wall. It means sometimes to be aggressive. Yes, fear sometimes leads to aggression. Why did America attack Iraq? Because they feared the atom bomb, didn't they? Yes, that's the reason. They feared to be attacked. So fear leads to aggression. Also in the personal life of man. It leads to discord among believers. When we fear, we have no peace with one another. It leads to self-pity, it leads to hatred even. So these are the fruits of fear. If there would be no fear whatsoever, if we had total rest in God, these fruits would not exist. What a wonderful fellowship we would have. There would be no problems between human beings. This is the fruit of fear.

Let us now ask what is the cause of fear?

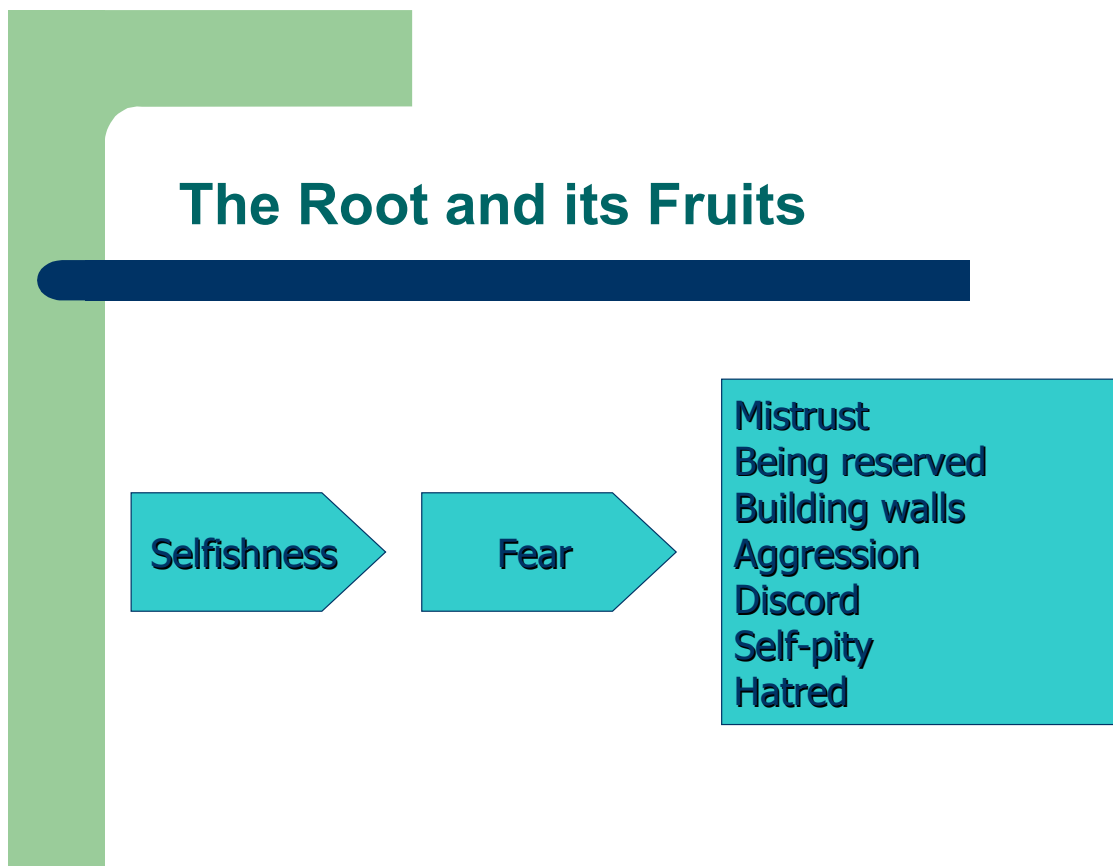
What is the Cause of Fear?

- Lack of Love (1 John 4:18)
- Selfishness
 - Headline over all sins (*Testimonies for the Church* 4:384.3)
 - The root must be seen
 - The real enemy is not fear, but that which causes fear
 - Clinging to my own world

Think about it. When Sister White described the sins that are recorded in heaven, she saw several books, and there was a ledger, and there was a headline over the sins of the people, and what was the headline? Selfishness. John describes it as a lack of love, as we have just read, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear involves torment, but He who fears is not made perfect in love." *1 John 4:18* So, the cause is a lack of love according to this text. But according to the statement in Testimonies, we could also say selfishness. And that is quite in harmony with one another, because what is a lack of love? It's selfishness. We either have selfishness in our heart or love, these are the two antipoles. The one on the one side and the other on the other side. And we must see the root of that problem when we have fear.

Fear itself is not the problem as such, there is a root in this. So, that is why Wesley was so earnest about this matter. He could have said, "well these Moravians they were a bit careless about their lives. You know, that is their nature, maybe because they are Germans, but I'm British. So, maybe it's a different culture here." But he was not so superficial. He said, "They had no fear and I want to know why." And it was not because he wanted to know simply because it's better to be a hero. No, he felt that he was lacking in his spiritual experience. He felt that he needed something that they had. He wanted to go to the root of the problem, to find it. And it is good if we also go to the root of the problem when we find fear in our hearts. The real enemy is not fear, but what causes fear. And very often what causes fear is clinging to my own world, because I fear that I will lose it one day or the other.

So in summary, let us look at the root and the fruits.



The root is selfishness. Selfishness produces fear, and fear produces mistrust, being reserved, building walls, aggression, discord, self-pity, hatred. That is only a summary of what we had discussed before.

Let us look at some statements in the Bible concerning fear. Where is fear described, and in what context is it described.

Fear and the Light of God

- Jesus appears to the disciples ([Matthew 14:26, 27](#))
- The man with one talent ([Matthew 25:25](#))
- The guards at the tomb of Jesus ([Matthew 28:4](#))
- When Jesus stilled the storm ([Mark 4:41](#))
- Herod feared John ([Mark 6:20](#))
- The priests and the high priest feared Jesus ([Mark 11:18](#))
- When Zachariah saw the Angel ([Luke 1:14](#))
- When the shepherds saw the angels ([Luke 2:9, 10](#))
- Fear of Jesus' miracles ([Luke 4:36](#); [5:26](#); [7:16](#); [8:25](#))
- When Jesus was in the temple (*The Desire of Ages*, 157.4-158.3; 590.4-591.1; [Mark 11:18](#))
- At Mt. Sinai ([Exodus 19:16](#))
- The disciples on the mount of transfiguration ([Matthew 17:6, 7](#); [Luke 9:34](#))

I can't read with you all these statements, even though I would like to, but you would know them.

- When Jesus appeared to his disciples on the lake, can you remember how they feared because they thought it was a ghost. That reminds me very much of Jacob when Christ came to him. He feared Jesus.
- The man with the one talent, what did he say? I feared you because you are a hard master. When we look at it from a distance we think how unreasonable, especially in view of the fact that in his response to the other servants he had shown that he was no hard master.
- The guardians at the tomb of Jesus, they trembled and shook for fear, and then they fell down like dead men.
- When Jesus stilled the storm, and there were some boats around him, they all feared and wondered, "what manner of man is this that he has such a power?"
- Herod, when he heard about the miracles of Jesus, he had fear. And we understand why he had this fear, because after he had beheaded John, he feared that John would come back from the dead. And when he heard about Christ, he feared that this was John resurrected.
- "And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his teaching." [Mark 11:18](#) In this case they feared his influence.
- When Zachariah was standing before the angel he feared him, and the angel had to tell him, "Fear not Zachariah, because I bring you a good message." And also the manner in which the angel appeared to him, namely on the right side of the altar, was an indication of favor, rather than judgment, but still he feared.
- Even the shepherds when they heard the message in the fields, they feared the angels. And the angels had to say to them, "Fear not, for we have come to bring you good news today."
- When Jesus worked miracles, the people constantly feared Him. That is a bit strange, how can you fear someone who works miracles, but that's what the Bible says. It says "and they were afraid and marvelled, saying to one another, who can this be, for he commands even the winds and the water

and they obey him." That's only one example. They were afraid and marveled. In Luke 7:16, "Then fear came upon all and they glorified God saying A great prophet has risen among us, and God has visited His people." And that is after Christ had raised the widow's son. And so forth. So, when Jesus worked miracles, often that created fear in the people.

- When Jesus was in the temple, I think we have pretty much this incident in heart, how people feared him, how they ran out in terror even, as it says.
- On Mount Sinai, we know that story very well, how the people feared and trembled because of the glory of God.
- The disciples on the mount of transfiguration, when they saw the glory of Jesus, they also feared. They fell down on their faces and they couldn't behold this anymore.

Fear and the Judgment

- Felix (Acts 24:25; *Acts of the Apostles*, 425.3)
- Boldness in the day of judgment (1 John 4:17)
- In contrast to Adam and Eve

In connection with the judgment, we really need to see that judgment is one of the main reasons that causes people fear, and as we have seen with Felix, who had to say stop, tell us another time more. Let's read this briefly: "Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control..." Self-control is another word for temperance. So Paul was preaching temperance to Felix. We read that this morning in the Sabbath School, because Sister White describes in *Education*, if we have a true love for our race, then we will work towards temperance with them. Because mankind is destroying themselves because of intemperance. And this is exactly what Paul did before Felix. "Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, Go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you." *Acts 24:25* In *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 425, third paragraph:

"The Jewish princess well understood the sacred character of that law which she had so shamelessly transgressed, but her prejudice against the Man of Calvary steeled her heart against the word of life. But Felix had never before listened to the truth, and as the Spirit of God sent conviction to his soul, he became deeply agitated. Conscience, now aroused, made her voice heard, and Felix felt that Paul's words were true. Memory went back over the guilty past. With terrible distinctness there came up before him the secrets of his early life of profligacy and bloodshed, and the black record of his later

years. He saw himself licentious, cruel, rapacious. Never before had the truth been thus brought home to his heart. Never before had his soul been so filled with terror. The thought that all the secrets of his career of crime were open before the eye of God, and that he must be judged according to his deeds, caused him to tremble with dread. {AA 425.3}

"But instead of permitting his convictions to lead him to repentance, he sought to dismiss these unwelcome reflections. The interview with Paul was cut short. "Go thy way for this time," he said; "when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." {AA 426.1}

What a sad thing, thereby he closed the door. Maybe you remember when Sister White had a vision of the judgment, she also trembled and she said "I'm so happy that we still have a time of probation." On the other hand, there is a possibility of boldness in the day of judgment, but it is not human boldness, it's not self-confident boldness, but it's boldness that is born out of love. "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world." *1 John 4:17*

In contrast to Adam and Eve, we can have this boldness in the day of judgment. Let's not look at this because that would take us too long now, we don't have so much time.

We want to ask now, how do we become free from fear?

How can we become Free from Fear?

- We must realize how much fear is in us (Wesley's journey to America)
- We must realize and recognize that selfishness is the cause of fear
 - The root has to be removed
- The antidote to selfishness is love (*1 John 4:16-20*)
 - To know and believe the love that God has for us
 - To become a partaker of the self-sacrificing love of Christ

With this we must really conclude, but before we conclude we have to answer this question. First of all, we must realize how much fear is in us before we can come free. We must realize how fear is often the basis of many of our actions, and so forth. The next is, we must realize and recognize, that selfishness is the cause of fear. We must look at the root of fear definitely, and the antidote against selfishness is love. It is when we open our hearts towards the love of Christ and really let ourselves fall into it, that fear will go out of our hearts. So, we know and believe the love that God has for us and we become partakers of the self-sacrificing love of Christ. In *1 John 4:16-20* we read this:

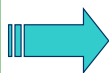
"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loves us."

So I wish that we really lay hold of this love of Christ in order to be made free from fear.

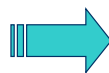
There is only one more thought I wish to share with you and this is: obviously there are two kinds of fear, because Paul talks about working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Different Kinds of Fear

- Fear of God's presence
- Fear of God's glory
- Fear to fully trust God
- Distrust of God's ability
- Fear of separation from God
- Respect for that which is holy
- Fear of my own works
- Distrust of my own ability



This fear separates us from God. It leads to death.



This fear drives us to God. It leads to life.

When we were young people, many years ago, I was about as old as Alina is now, we studied the Bible together and we thought to ourselves, "well sometimes the Bible talks about fear as a bad thing, and sometimes it talks about fear as a good thing." So we looked up in the concordance where fear is mentioned. We made a list where it is called a good thing and where it is called a bad thing. And we realized that there are two kinds of fear. And this, I think you realize too in your study of the Bible.

For example there's fear of God's presence, there's fear of God's glory, there's fear to fully trust God, there's mistrust in God's ability. And on the other hand there's fear of separation from God, and now we come to distrust. And now we need to connect this study with distrust. You see, fear of being separated from God, that is true, healthy distrust. It is respect of the Holy Spirit, it is fear of my own works, it is mistrust in my own ability.

So, I think you immediately realize what is the good fear and what is the bad fear. The bad fear is the fear of God's presence, the fear of God's glory, the fear of fully trusting Him, and so forth. This fear separates us from God, it leads to death. And the fear of my own works, and the distrust which we need to have, is the fear that drives us to God. It leads us to life.

Let us not mistake the wrong kind of fear for true self-distrust because that is not the case. If we are timid and fearful, if we shrink from responsibility, if we have fear to open ourselves up, if we build walls and so forth, then this is not a sign of self-distrust. Definitely not. It's the sign of a wrong kind of fear, and this we can be healed of only by plunging into the love of Christ, by allowing Him to cleanse us from it, and to completely rest in Him. And then, let us develop this true fear which is fear of separation from Him, fear of taking His work into our own hands. Amen.

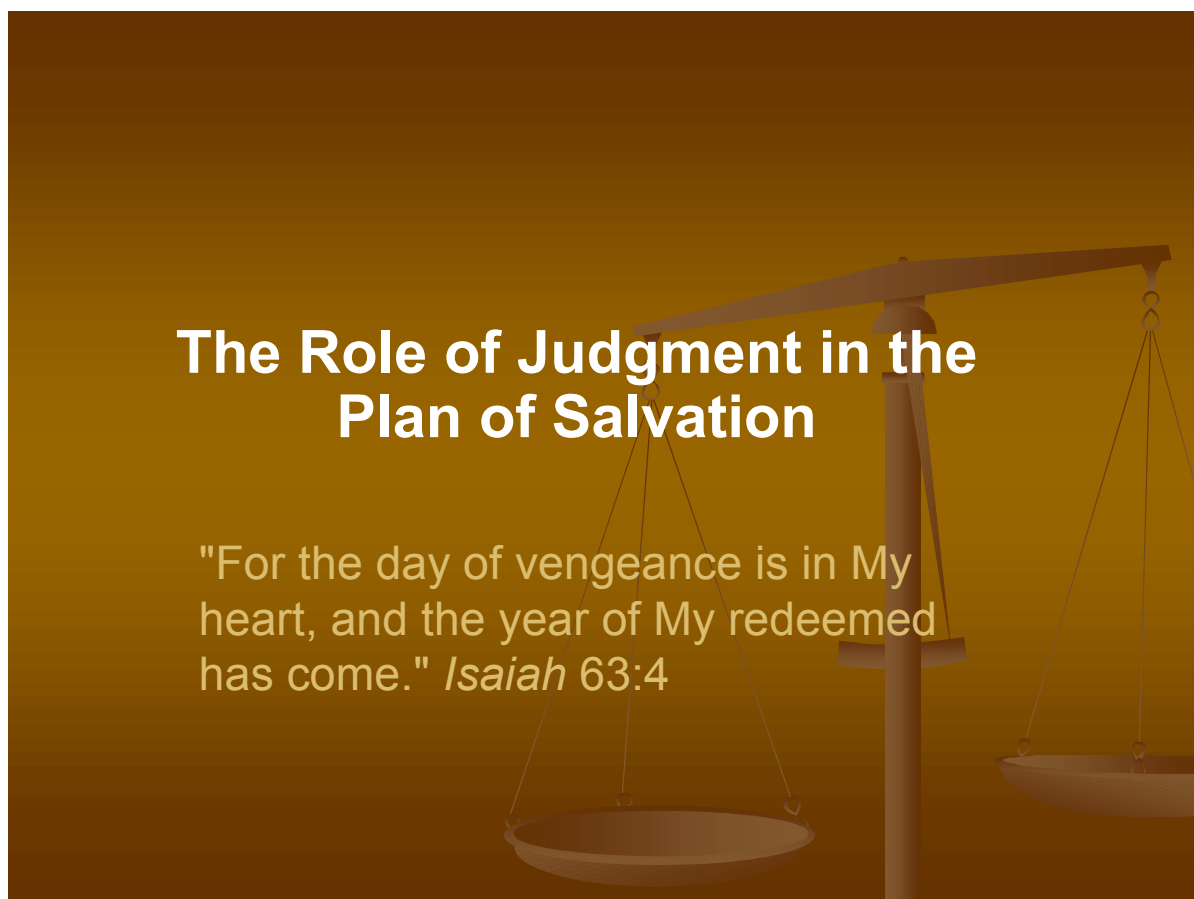
Study 20

The Role of the Judgment in the Plan of Salvation

Now after we have worked on the confession and our confession in this last week, we want to continue with a few studies to conclude the camp meeting.

In the last camp meeting we have very briefly, in connection with giving up our own world have considered together the Day of Atonement. May be you remember, we looked through all the days, ceremonial feasts in the Old Testament and each feast was designed to separate God's people from the spirit of selfishness, or the spirit of clinging to our own world. This becomes very evident when looking at these different feasts. And when we looked closer at the Day of Atonement. The question of the investigative judgment come up and what this means, and then we come to the question "what judgment generally means" and I wish to share with you of the thoughts that we have studied here in the past.

So welcome to this. We call this study "The role of judgment in the plan of salvation".



You know that one of the main themes of Adventists is the judgment. That is the first angel's message: the hour of His judgment is come. For this reason we must be very acquainted with that topic. We must understand the philosophy of judgment. That's very important. And we must understand for what reason there is a judgment and when the judgment takes place, and what our position in that judgment will be and how we prepare ourselves for that judgment. That is basic Adventist truth as you know.

William Miller when he preached the first angel message that was his great burden to prepare the people for the judgment. When you look back to the history of the reformers, beginning with Martin Luther you see that he had a great burden for his people. He wanted to make them ready for heaven. He was so upset about the indulgences because they were separating his own people from heaven. He

was a patriot but, more than that. He was a lover of people and so like wise William Miller, because he had such a desire to save his fellow man, he was so earnest in preaching the message. And when we shall understand the judgment and the nearness of judgment, we shall have the same earnestness and this is really my desire. For this reason let us study this a little bit and we connect this topic with the Gospel. That must be connected with the Gospel. The Role of the Judgment in the Plan of the Salvation. And as a theme text I chose Isaiah 63 verse 4. We will come back to this text later in another context.


"For the day of vengeance is in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come." *Isaiah 63:4*

The day of vengeance is the Day of Judgment. That is the day, even in the Old Testament the people of God expected Jesus or God to come and judge. And so they looked forward to it and partly feared it. And God says "Yes the day of vengeance is in my heart. That's the Day of Judgment and the year of My redeemed has come". So you see there is a close connection even in Old Testament thought between judgment and redemption. These two are not two different topics, as theology often wants to make two different topics. So theology and what is the other eschatology, it's not two subjects it's one. It's the judgment and the redeemed belong together.

So, let us then look a little bit, what is the meaning of the word judgment?

What is the Meaning of the Word "Judgment"?

- In the OT
 - shafat
- In the NT
 - krisis
- Crisis
- Decision
- Separation
- Atonement
- Rule (Govern)



Well I looked at it a little bit and maybe we will not dwell on this too long. There are some Old Testament words for it and there is a New Testament word to it. The New Testament word may sound a little bit familiar, the Old Testament does not say as much here as English or German speaking people, but the Greek word means "KRISIS" and we have heard this somewhere, haven't we? Crisis. You know what a crisis is. What is a crisis? It is a point of decision where we must make a decision for the one or for the other. So therefore we can translate it "a decision", a judgment is a decision.

It is also or can be translated as separation. And I think you understand that these two words are related with one another. Where I make a decision, I separate. It's like walking on the wall and I have to make a decision whether I go in or whether I go out. I can't endlessly walk on the wall, it gets smaller and smaller. And at some time I have to make a decision, I have to separate between the one and the other. It means atonement also. The Day of Atonement was the Day of Judgment.

And there is another meaning of that word which is to rule or to govern. So, that basically are the meanings from original words, but now we want to look really what it means according to the context of Scripture, what does the Bible tell us what the word judgment means.

What does “Judgment” Mean?

- Separation (between right and wrong)
 - *Deuteronomy 25:1*: “If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.”
- Separation (between good and evil)
 - *Matthew 25:32*: “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.”
- Restore a relationship
 - Between God and man
 - *Isaiah 1:18*: “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’”
 - Between man and man
 - *Isaiah 2:4*: “He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

First of all we find that it means separation, in the sense separation between right and wrong, very clearly. So we have for example this text in *Deuteronomy 25* only as an example now we could quote many texts in this regard:

“If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked”

So on the one hand there is the righteous, on the other hand there is the wicked and they judge between them, they judge according to right and wrong. This, what you did was right and what you did was wrong. They have to make a decision whether it's right or wrong. For that reason we also come before the bar. The judge must decide if that we did was right or wrong. Good. It also means separation between the good and the evil, which is basically the same thing, right is good and wrong is evil. But what I mean here is also separation not just between right and wrong for a person but between the good people and the evil people. Its a separation of people not just a separation of what is right and what is wrong, to judge a certain case, but it separates and this is made very clear in *Matthew 25:32*: “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.”

So on the left and on the right He separate them. We will read this text later again. But this one example show us that this is clearly judgment, is described here, it's a separation. But it is more than simply a separation. I think that in many cases in our minds we limit the word judgment to separation. Separate between right and wrong, separate between good and evil. Yes, this is clear, this is what we understand but is more than this. Judgment is a deeper meaning then often is thought. It means to restore a relationship. It's very important to understand this meaning of judgment. It's not just to exclude wickedness from the kingdom of God, or exclude the sinner, it's also to restore. That is another purpose why the judgment takes place. And unless we understand this we don't understand the whole message "the hour of His judgment is come". It's to restore the relationship between God and Man, first of all and to this let us just read one text again, *Isaiah 1:18*:

"Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the Lord,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool."

In other words I want to become one with you again. That sin that separate us will be removed. "Come now, let us reason together" is a statement of judgment. That is really what God does in judgment. He reasons with us together. So we can read this text like this: "Come now to judgment says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; Though they shall be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And another relationship that needs to be restored is the relationship between man and man. You know that we are all in enmity with man. That's another purpose of judgment, as we read for example in *Isaiah 2:4*: "He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people."

For example He shall judge between Germany and America and rebuke many people. He shall judge between Africa and Europe, He shall judge between Africa and America and so forth... He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people.

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore."

In other words through the judgment God will create true unity between different nations. And that is a unity that you cannot find in the world. That's not a unity just simply for the purpose of defending your nation against an enemy, its not a unity that is just an outward thing, its a unity with Christ and that is a very deep unity that cannot be broken. And this is described here and again its accomplish by the judgment. So, this is a very brief overlook over judgment means but we want to look deeper into this matter.

Let us very briefly look at the reasons and the purpose of God's judgments. This is an overview now of what we will study in the coming lessons. What are the reasons and what is the purpose of God's judgments?

The Reason and Purpose of God's Judgments

- The reason for God's judgments (*1 Corinthians 2:2; The Great Controversy, 652*)
 - Because He loves us
 - Because He wants to save us (*John 5:22, 27; 2 Timothy 4:1; Romans 2:16; Acts 17:31; Romans 5:8, 9* without judgment there is no justification; *Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 63:4; Psalms 76:9*)
 - Because He is righteousness
 - Because He must explain righteousness (*2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 15:4; 19:2; Ecclesiastes 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Psalms 58:12; Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 5:16; Matthew 5:17*)
- The purpose of God's judgments
 - Cleansing (*Daniel 8:14*)
 - To restore harmony (*Revelation 20 & 21*)
 - To end suffering, which means to deliver us (*Revelation 21:4; Psalms 76:10; Isaiah 25:8*)
 - To seal the universe against sin (*Revelation 20:13-21:4; Revelation 12:9-11*)
 - To justify the righteous (*Zechariah 3:2; Romans 5:18; John 5:27; Romans 4:25; Acts 17:31*)
 - To inculcate self-distrust and trust in God (*Revelation 14:6, 7*)

The reasons, first of all must be in connection with the cross, because simply the Cross explains all mysteries. This is what we read in *Great Controversy* page 652. May we can briefly read this together. It says here: *Great Controversy* page 652.1-2:

"The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, "Our Father."

"It will be seen that He who is infinite in wisdom could devise no plan for our salvation except the sacrifice of His Son. The compensation for this sacrifice is the joy of peopling the earth with ransomed beings, holy, happy, and immortal. The result of the Saviour's conflict with the powers of darkness is joy to the redeemed, redounding to the glory of God throughout eternity. And such is the value of the soul that the Father is satisfied with the price paid; and Christ Himself, beholding the fruits of His great sacrifice, is satisfied." *Great Controversy, 652.2*

So if we want to understand God's character if we want to understand His judgments, naturally we must look to the cross. As Paul says in *1 Corinthians 2* verse 2: "I new nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified".

So what are the reasons then according to the cross? I mean, the cross tells us that He loves us, that's what we just read. So what is than the reason for judgment? It must be that He loves us. Because He wants to save us. There are many texts which I quoted here but I do not want to read all of them. Just the texts which are in big letters which probably you can read. I hope you can't read the other texts. You can read them if you get the diagrams. So in *John 5:22* and also in *27*, I mean the whole context here is where Jesus talks before the Sanhedrin and He explains His role in the judgment. He says "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son".

Now why has He committed all judgment to the Son? What is the purpose, what is the reason? Why He is not judging Himself? Think about this a little bit. Verse 27: "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."

So what is the reason? Because He is the Son of Man. So why is He judging as the Son of Man? What does it mean that He is the Son of Man? What is the purpose of being a Son of Man? To save us, to be one with us. So why is He judging? Because He wants to help us. That's the purpose. And that's a tremendous comfort to understand this. Also because of His righteousness. We need to see is not just the love of God but it's also His righteousness that demands that He would judge. First of all He must explain righteousness. And it is a court session that explains what is right and what is wrong. So God, holding a court session, so to speak or presiding the court session, judging, He explains what righteousness is.

Let's read to this *2 Corinthians* 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." So, in other words everybody needs to appear before Him, and everything needs to be explain, whether is good or whether is bad.

It need to be laid open, and this, obviously God's righteousness is explained. There are other texts that confirm this for example *Revelation* 15:4, we read that in the end all people will see the righteousness of God because they understand His judgments. May be we should read this very briefly, just this one text in *Revelation* 15 verse 4:

"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested."

So the judgments of God, explain His righteousness. The purpose of God's judgments is twofold. First of all, they cleanse. It's like washing. You go through a judgment in order to be cleansed. And different things can be cleansed. A human being can be cleansed from sin, the heaven can be cleansed, an area can be cleansed, a church can be cleansed also from sin and likewise the Sanctuary can be cleansed. And this is, as you know the text in *Daniel* 8:14, Until 2300 years than the Sanctuary shall be cleansed. So, this we understand is a day of atonement or the Day of Judgment which cleanses the Sanctuary. I do not need to say more, do I? That means, cleansing really means to restore harmony.

You see, when something is dirty, its disharmonious. Nobody really fills comfortable when he is dirty, does he? Nobody fills comfortable when his house is dirty, so we clean it from time to time, so that we restore harmony again. When a person likes disorder, when he like dirt around him, is usually a person who is very disharmonious. He is in conflict with himself and with his neighbor. That I think we have observed already, but when the house is clean, we feel peace in our heart. Have you noticed this? Have you notice the difference between a clean environment and an unclean environment and the condition of your heart, you definitely have peace. That's the reason why it is good when we have everything ready on Friday evening for Sabbath, that we have peace in our heart and that we can go with peace into the Sabbath.

Now this Sabbath day will be celebrated in heaven after there was such a dirt and disorder on this earth. This wonderful transition from dirt to cleanliness, or this cleansing is described in *Revelation* 20 and 21. First of all the great battle is described, the last battle of Armageddon with the powers of evil gather together, even after the thousand years to fight against God. And then they will be cast in the lake of fire that this dirt will be disposed off literally and then is a tremendous scenery of peace in *Revelation* 21 and 22 also where the new Jerusalem is described. So this is another purpose of the

judgment. We came back to *Revelation* 20 a little later because the judgment is described there. Then, comes the end of suffering which means that we are delivered as God says: "I will wipe away every tear from their eyes." And this is accomplished by the judgment, mind you. If was no judgment there was no wiping away of tears. So in a way it is a thing to be looked forward to. And it is necessary, absolutely necessary to seal the universe against sin, as we also read in *Revelation* 20. I think we don't need to read everything here, maybe we look briefly into it. *Revelation* 20: 13 to 21: 4

"The sea gave up the dead".... May be a little bit up... we have here the judgments seen verse 11 "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them." and so forth, and then verse 13,

"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."
Chapter 21:1

In other words its disposed off, its cleans now.

"Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

So that is the purpose of the judgment as we see from *Revelation* 20. In this context it's also important to see how God wipes away the tears and what He is actually doing. I mean, why are there tears? Tears are because of sin, separation between God and man, and also because of the accusations that are levelled against God's people by Satan. So, one of the purposes of the judgment is to justify the saints.

As you know in *Zachariah* chapter 3, this is described how Satan, he accuses God's people and he says, they are not worthy to be in His presence and then Christ says "The Lord rebuke you". This is judgment, real judgment and that clearly shows that the purpose of judgment is to justify the righteous. Good.

Now, let us look at the first judgment that comes upon the earth.

The First Judgment on Earth

- "... Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Together these made up one day. *Genesis* 1:4, 5 NLT (First Day)
- "God made this space to separate the waters above from the waters below." *Genesis* 1:7 NLT (Second Day)
- Separation between water and dry ground. Separation between ground and plants (Third Day)
- Further separation from light and darkness (Fourth Day)
- Separation between inanimate and animate objects (Fifth Day)
- Separation between animal and intelligent nature (Sixth Day)
- Separation between work and rest (Seventh Day)

**The Judgment
(Separation)**

=

**Creation
(Organization)**

Can you remember what the definition of judgment is? What does judgment mean? Two things: first separation and second restoration, exactly. And it's very interesting, we will see this exactly in the first judgment that took place on earth. When did it take place? In the Garden of Eden? When the first judgment takes place? The creation, exactly, the creation was the first judgment that took place on earth. And let's see this: The first day, that He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night. Together this made up one day.

What did He do in the first day? He separated.... the light from the darkness. So if the meaning of judgment is separation, then He did something here. He separated darkness from light. And isn't exactly what He does in judgment? He separates two things, good and evil, righteous and unrighteousness, one symbolized by darkness, the other symbolized by light. So when God did this on the first day He really pronounced a judgment, and it was necessary to because, what was the purpose of the creation of the earth? Why did He create it? Because sin came up in universe.

Satan has rebelled against the government of God and in order to give an explanation, a clear demonstration of His character, He created this world. In other words, it was a judgment enacted a judgment that should justify the character of God. And in the first day He made it very clear, separation, I separate darkness from light, I separate sin from righteousness, I separate Satan's rebellion from the righteous angels. Satan still remained in heaven for a while after he sinned, but eventually he had to leave heaven, separation had to take place. And in order to explain the separation the earth was created. Let us turn to *Genesis* chapter 1. We read it now in the Bible, we follow the second day and now I want to ask you if you can see separation in the second day, which begins in verse 6. *Genesis* 1:6

"Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. "Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day."

Can you see a separation here? I think it's easy to see. It's a separation between waters above from the waters below. Again there is this thing. But it goes on. What did God do in the third day? What did He do? He separated the land from the waters, exactly and that was not all. There was another separation. He separated the plants from the land. He separated the plants from the earth, so to speak. From the earth He created them. And there by separated these two things. First it was one. Earth and plants were one mass. And when He separated them. You had plants on one hand and you had earth on the other hand. Is this clear? Understandable? Good. So, separation between water and dry ground and separation between ground and plants. Now, what did He do in the forth day? He made the stars, and the moon and the sun and He did one for the day and the other for the night. And in the New Living Translation again is nicely translated, in the New King James Version, I'm not sure of its translations.

Let me quickly read verse 14 and onwards: "Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide" - That's how is written here, but it's the same as separate. I think that's clear. To separate "the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. " Or to separate light from darkness. So there was a further separation from light and darkness on the forth day.

What did He make on the fifth day? He made the fish and the birds. And, where did He take them from? Again He took them from the material that was there. So, again He separated the material. I mean, there was earth and from this earth He took these things and made them. I thought it also in another direction, what God did, was He separated inanimate and living nature. Because that what He created so far was basically not living. May be some people would say, plants are living things too... In a way they are but yet I think they belong to the realm of inanimate nature, don't they? That's how you classify them. And as soon as He created birds, and fish He created living nature, created living things. Things that could move by their own will, and fly and swim and so forth. But again you can look at it also; He created these things from the existing material and separated from there.

Then on the sixth day He created human beings. He created first of all other animals. You call them, how you call them in English again? Mammals and He created finally man. And so when He created man, He made a separation between animal and intelligent nature. He made this very clear by saying that man should rule over the animals. There was a clear distinction, a clear separation and that needs to be understood. Very clearly needs to be understood and some people, you know, they don't understand this. You know, they think that man eventually evolved out of animals, which, makes no distinction between them, as God did it. He separated the two right from the beginning.

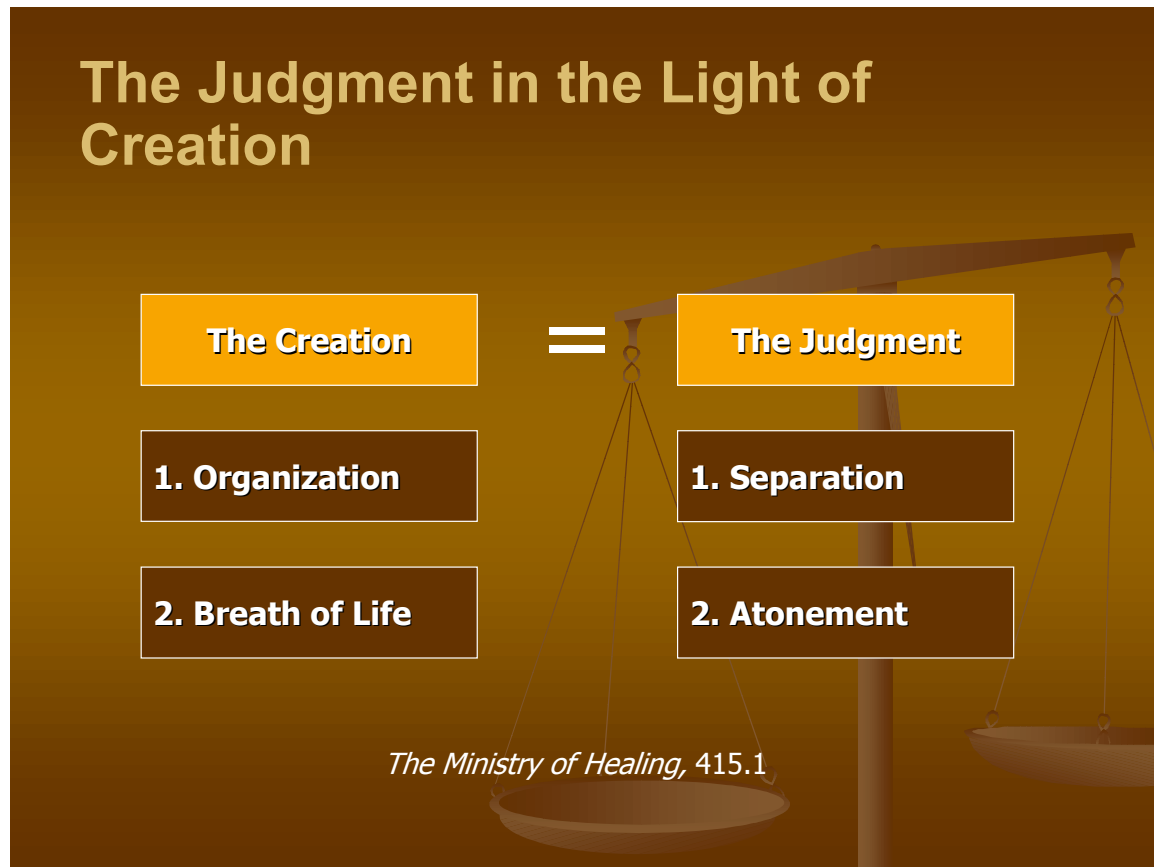
And also, how God created man is very interesting, because He actually made them out of earth. That is very detailed described in the Bible. He formed him from earth and Sister White describes that His artwork of this lump, if I may call it, was so perfect, that there was everything in it. Muscles, nerves, blood vessels, brain cells, nose, eyes, tongue, digestion tract, everything was there in that lump but didn't live. It was just lying there like a dead person. And that He breathes His life into it. And then man was a living being. That's how He created man. So He took him literally from this earth.

Separation between work and rest was in the seventh day. So we can see in the whole creation of this earth, big judgments seen. So, judgment mean separation and creation means organization. And these two things can be equalled.

And think about this a little bit. When you clean up your room, you separate the dirty from the clean things, you separate, let's say, the bed sheet from the shoes. You put them in different places. You separate your books from your cooking utensils. You separate the chairs from the carpet, putting each

one in its place and in this way you organize your room, don't you? By separation you organize your room and so in creation we see both things and we see that judgment basically is an organization, an organization of things. But let me say again, to organize something is only one thing, there needs to be life also in this things. In other words, to simply organize a lump of clay is one thing is one thing but to breathe His life into it is another thing.

So judgment in the light of creation means that the creation is the judgment.



And creation means first there is organization of things, and so in judgment first there is a separation of things. Then in creation secondly, there's a breath of life into that what is organized, and in judgment after the separation there follows an atonement, making one or restore harmony again between two parties. So that is the parallel here. And in this context I would like to read with you may be now Ministry of Healing, I described it to you in words, in my own words, but will be good if we read it, page 415 the first paragraph.

"In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work"

So they all existed before, you see? And now they began to work. That must have been an exiting moment.

"And all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power."

So in this we can see judgment. Judgment first of all organizes things, separates the good and the evil, the right and the wrong, puts each thing in its appropriate place. But then it does more than this. It

breathes life into that organization. And then man become a living being. And this is exactly what the hour of judgment is doing. I mean, what the judgment is doing the hour of which are we proclaiming. Fear God for the hour of judgment is come. May be you remember that text in *Revelation 14*, we will read this in a minute.

Now first of all, in the Old Testament there was an announcement of judgments with trumpets as you see here.

The Announcement of the Judgment Day



Blowing of Trumpets (*Leviticus 23:23-25*)

- Preparation for a day when there will be a separation (*Leviticus 16:29 f*)
- Preparation for the atonement (*Leviticus 23:28*)

The First Angel's Message (*Revelation 14:6, 7*)

- The connection between judgment and creation
- Preparation for the separation from sin and for the atonement
- Fear = Self-distrust (*Philippians 2:12, 13*; *Christ's Object Lessons*, 161.1)

That is a picture that shows how they looked about. The Levites who blow the trumpets everywhere in Israel, to call the people together for that Day of Atonement or for that Day of Judgment. On the first months, on the first day of the tenth month they did this. They blew the trumpets. Because on the (when was it?) On the first day of the seventh month they call them together, that's right. And on the tenth day of the seven months, that was when the Day of Atonement took place. So are ten days warning. In *Leviticus 23* verse 23 to 25 we read about this.

So, the people were called to prepare for the day in which there will be a separation. A separation obviously between good and evil, between right and wrong, righteousness and wrong. And the people needed to make themselves ready. So as they were cleansed from sin as the sanctuary was cleansed from sin, they were to cleanse their hearts also and they were to prepare themselves for the journey and cleanse their cloth and come ready before the Lord. All this you will read in *Leviticus 16*, this chapter of the Day of Atonement. So second point was that they were not only to prepare for the separation that would take place but also for at-one-ment. At-one-ment means become one again with God, to come in harmony with Him. They have been separated and now they were to come into harmony with Him again. *Leviticus 23* verse 28.

The First Angel Message. Let's turn to this for a moment, *Revelation 14* verse 6 to 7:

"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice,

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

So, you see that here again the creation and the judgment are closely connected in the First Angel Message which is another proof that we were right in the supposition that creation is judgment really. It's a judgment in session. “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who has made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” -because He'll make it again. So it's a connection and also its call for preparation to be separated from sin and preparation for the atonement, of becoming one with God again. And as we said before its not only that we have to separate from sin which only the Gospel can do, but we have to become one with God also which alone only the Gospel can do. The Gospel does two things, it separate us from sin but it also puts new life in its stead. It makes us one with God, at-one-ment.

So this is what the announcement of the Day of Judgment was and the judgment day and type, the Day of Atonement, here you see the High Priest in this picture as He was in the Most Holy.

The Judgment Day in Type: Day of Atonement



Leviticus 16

- On this day sin was removed from the sanctuary (Separation).
- This resulted in atonement for Israel.
- Atonement means deliverance, restoration of a relationship.
 - See [*Leviticus 25:8-10*](#)
 - See [*Isaiah 63:4; 61:2*](#)

The only objection, little objection I would have to this picture is, there was probably more smoke, because we are told that there was so much smoke that this Ark was covered, it was veiled with the smoke, because he couldn't behold it, it was too glorious, too bright. But He has the right clothes. There is another picture which is often, we often see in which He wears the high priestly robes, which was not right. He wore these kind of robes, simple white robes, when He was in the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement. And that was the only time when He went in the Most Holy. He never, on another day went there.

So in Leviticus 16 we read that on this day sin was removed from the Sanctuary, there was a separation and Israel was atoned. Atonement. And Atonement means deliverance, it means restoration of a relationship and you read this in these texts here... But our time is over. I don't have time to read with you so tomorrow will continue this study and then we will continue to see what the judgment

really involves. What it means and how we are to prepare for it. Here we have to close for the moment.

Study 21

The Role of the Judgment in the Plan of Salvation (continued)

Yes, we want to now come back to the subject of the judgment, and we have already started on Friday, we looked at what judgment really means. And we have basically seen that it has two fundamental meanings. What is the judgment? It's first of all, separation. It's separation between good and evil; between right and wrong. And secondly it is restoration of a relationship between God and man, and man and man. And we want to understand a little bit better how this works. So we have to go deeper into this study, what is the judgment really meaning?

Let us go back to this judgment day in the Old Testament which is the Day of Atonement. Atonement means restoration of a relationship. Make one out of two or bring them together as the word atonement says at-one-ment, which means bringing together two elements or two parties again. And God makes here at-one-ment with man. This was announced when the trumpets were blown on the first day of the seventh month. And as we have seen, it prepares the people for the separation that would take place between them and sin, and also between the people and a sinner if he chose to stay with that sin. Also it prepared the people for becoming one with God again, at-one-ment. And this we compared with the first angels message, and the first angels' message does exactly the same thing. It first of all brings a connection between the judgment and creation as we have seen. Creation is in principle a judgment because it separates darkness and light, earth and sea, plants and earth and so forth. Judgment or Creation is an organization of matter and breathing life into it. This is exactly what judgment also is. It organizes things that are disorderly and finally breaths life into it. So there is also a preparation for that separation from sin and the atonement because the people are told that the hour of His judgment is come: 'make yourselves ready.' But there is another element in it which we have not mentioned in our last study, which I want to add now. And that is the element of fear. You remember the text in Revelation 14. Maybe we should read it again.

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come;” *Revelation 14:6-7*

Now, if the judgment is such a good thing, if it really helps us to be organized and then breathes life into this organization, if it really shows the character and love of God, why should we fear it then? "Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment has come."

Now, when you look to the word judgment in the Old and in the New Testament it is often connected with fear. This is only one example here; when Paul was preaching before Felix about the judgment to come, Felix trembled and feared. So much, that he said to Paul, “Please tell me another time because it's too much now. I don't want to hear more.” So what is the reason for fear? It is to create self-distrust.

There's this wonderful text in *Philippians 2:12 and 13*, which we read this morning. “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.”

Maybe you recall what we read this morning in *Christ's Object Lessons* as a commentary to this. “Fear lest your will shall not be held in subjection to Christ's will, lest your hereditary and cultivated traits of character shall control your life... Fear, lest self shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker. Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose that through you God desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk life's pathway without His abiding presence.” *Christ's Object Lessons, 161.1*

This we need to fear, not that Christ leaves us alone, but that you leave the hand of Christ. Do we have this fear? But that's what will be created through the first angels' message. Fear God for and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come.

So, that is the blowing of the trumpets and the judgment actually began in 1844. Now in the type of that event which is described in *Leviticus* 16, we find the description how the sin was removed from the sanctuary, how there was a separation between the people and sin, and how Israel was atoned. And we see from the history of Israel very clearly that atonement means deliverance, restoration of a relationship. The people were at peace after this. It was a joyful event and then they went into the feast of harvests, which is the tabernacle feast. A joyful event after that was over after they were at one with God, after they were with peace with God again. And as we said our camp meetings is like such a time of atonement where we become one with God.

Yes, there are two texts in the Old Testament, which I would like to briefly read with you which talks about this wonderful deliverance which this atonement means. Turning to *Leviticus* 25, by the way, what you find here is the description of the Jubilee year, but this is the same as the Day of Atonement, it's the same principle. So let's read this verses 8-10

“And you shall count seven Sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. ‘Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. ‘And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.” *Leviticus* 25:8-10

So it is a time of freedom, of liberty, of becoming free from the bonds of Satan, and this is what atonement really means. And in the beginning may be you recall, we quoted this text in *Isaiah* 63:4

“For the day of vengeance” –which is the day of judgment-“*is* in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come.”

It is the time when God redeems His children and makes them one with Him. And the same we read in *Isaiah* 61:2 which really talks about the Jubilee year again.

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; “
-which is again the judgment-
“To comfort all who mourn,”

Now we want to make a very brief survey of *Daniel* 7, I hope you all know by heart what is in *Daniel* 7. Do you? It talks about the four beasts that come out of the water, first the lion, then bear, then the leopard then the terrible beast which is not named maybe it's a dragon or something like this. So it's a beast that has seven heads and ten horns. So this description of the four beasts is first of all frightening to some extent. Then suddenly the scene changes. Now in *Daniel* 7 we have not only the picture of these things but we also have an explanation of it.

Deliverance because of the Judgment Day: *Daniel 7*



So first there's a vision in symbolic form given and there's an explanation. After the explanation, that is rather brief I must say, Daniel desires to know more and he repeats the vision, gives more detail even of the vision its self and then he says please explain me this, this and this. Then there is the second explanation, which goes into the details. So we have four times a repetition of the same sequence; two times in forms of visions, and two times in form of explanations. So let us run through the vision. You read it for yourselves, we do not have the time to read it all here. The visions says they are four terrible beasts, I describe them, just they devour they eat up and they are beasts of prey as we say, you don't want to meet them in nature unarmed. The judgment comes next and it says the books where opened and judgment were held.

Next comes another scene and that is that we are told that the beasts are limited for some time and then are destroyed. And finally there is a description of the kingdom that is given to the son of man, who comes to the ancient of days and the kingdom was given unto Him. So these are the four scenes described in the vision.

Now what is the explanation of all that? The first explanation is the four terrible beasts are four kingdoms. Then it goes on to talk of the kingdom that is given to the Son of Man. The saints receive the kingdom that would fit best to the kingdom given to the Son of Man but nothing else is explained. That's it. The four beasts mean four kingdoms and the kingdoms are given to the saints. Daniel is not quite satisfied and says, 'I would like to know more about the fourth beast especially because the fourth beast prevails against the saints. Three and a half times it has power over them and I'd like to know more of it. Also of the judgment that was held in favour of the saints and also I would like to know more about the saints possessing the kingdom.' It's very natural for Daniel should want to know more about these things.

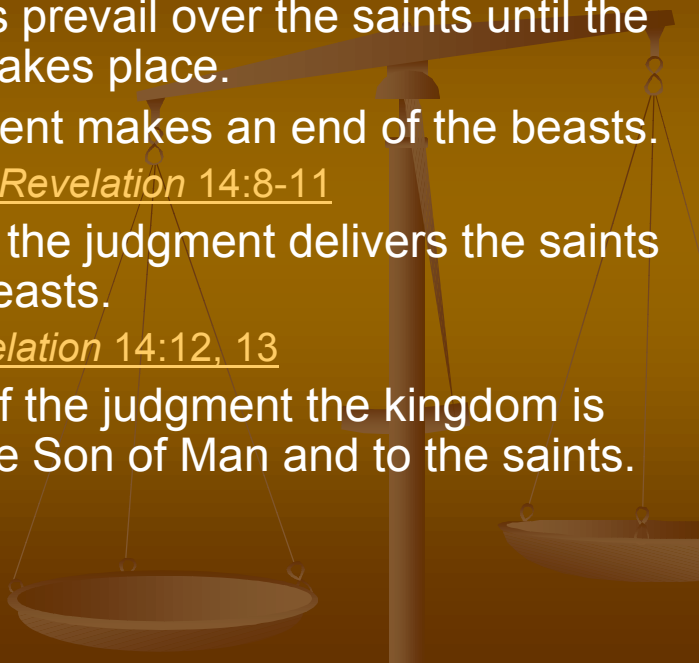
So, an explanation is given by the Angel Gabriel. He says, the four beast and the fourth beast especially, yes it is a beast that utters blasphemy, that means it speaks against the most high, its cruel and it will "14:11 **definitely ...ier**"- that now its told that it will rule three and a half times. And it will

really destroy everything that will come in its way and especially the saints. But then judgment is seated and the beast will be destroyed completely and so the kingdom is given to the saints.

So this is the sequence. Can we remember these four steps? First, the power of four beasts, then a judgment that takes place, then the end of the beasts and then the kingdom is given to the saints. This in a nutshell is Daniel seven. Now what conclusion do we draw out of this sequence of events? What is the lesson in here? What do we learn from this? That the judgment is quite important, without the judgment there would not be an end of the beast.

Let us summarize this. The conclusion we draw out of *Daniel 7*.

Conclusion Drawn from *Daniel 7*

- 
- The beasts prevail over the saints until the judgment takes place.
 - The judgment makes an end of the beasts.
 - See also *Revelation 14:8-11*
 - Therefore, the judgment delivers the saints from the beasts.
 - See *Revelation 14:12, 13*
 - Because of the judgment the kingdom is given to the Son of Man and to the saints.

First of all, the beasts prevail over the saints until judgment is held and only as long as judgment is held. Secondly the judgment makes an end to the beasts; we will read in a minute *Revelation 14* to this. Next therefore the judgment delivers the saints from the beasts. And finally through the judgment the kingdom is given to the Son of Man and to the saints. So the whole idea of *Daniel 7* is to explain to us the judgment. What is the judgment about. When Paul spoke before Felix about the judgment to come, I'm sure he must have referred to *Daniel 7* some how, because that is the chapter about judgment. It shows us the purpose of judgment, what it accomplishes and so forth. And it shows us that the judgment makes a separation between right and wrong, between good and evil. It makes an end of the evil beasts. And it also shows that judgment creates a new life because it delivers the saints from the beasts and gives the kingdom to them, which means a new life is given to them.

I think we are acquainted with *Revelation 14:8-11*, that is the third angels' message. It really shows what terrible judgments come to the beasts, in other words than *Daniel 7*, but it describes that they will suffer terribly away from the presence of God. Then in *Revelation 14:12-13* we read this wonderful text, "they who have the faith of Jesus, and who have the patience of the saints and who keep the commandments." And this combination of the three, the faith of Jesus, the keeping of the commandments, and the patience of the saints will really mean deliverance from the beasts. In fact, it

also says there, blessed are those that die in the Lord from henceforth for their works shall follow them. So you can really see that the judgment plays a very important role. And now we would like to understand better what kind of judgments are there and when do they take place. We look at it in the light of the New Testament but when we study it in the light of the New Testament we see and can apply this also to the Old Testament because they are in harmony with one another.

The Judgment in the Light of the New Testament

- **The Light Judgment**
(John 3:19; John 1:4)
 - Separation of light and darkness through the truth
 - Infusion of life
- **The Investigative Judgment**
(1 Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 25:31-44; Ecclesiastes 12:14)
 - Separation between good and evil, righteous and unrighteous
 - Sealing of the righteous
- **The Final Judgment**
(2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:14, 15)
 - Separation from sin and death
 - Eternal salvation of the saints

So the first judgment described is the judgment of light. We call it the light judgment. And let us see briefly what the light judgment is, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” *John 3:19*

What is the judgment, or condemnation? (it says here) In another translation is this; 'and this is the judgment that the light has come into the world.' I think that's a little bit more correct. Let us take the KJV, it also talks of condemnation.

“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.” NRSV- *John 3:19*

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” *John 1:4-5*

So, the first judgment, that is the judgment of light, it separates already good and evil, because evil will naturally reject the light and the good will receive the light. It also will show what is right and what is wrong. When we don't understand what is right and what is wrong, the light will make it apparent. So it is in itself a judgment, the light judgment. Separation of light and darkness through the truth and infusion of life, that's another thing, which light gives.

The next judgment we want to look for, is the investigative judgment. Investigative means after the light has been received or rejected, and after men have made their decision there is to be an

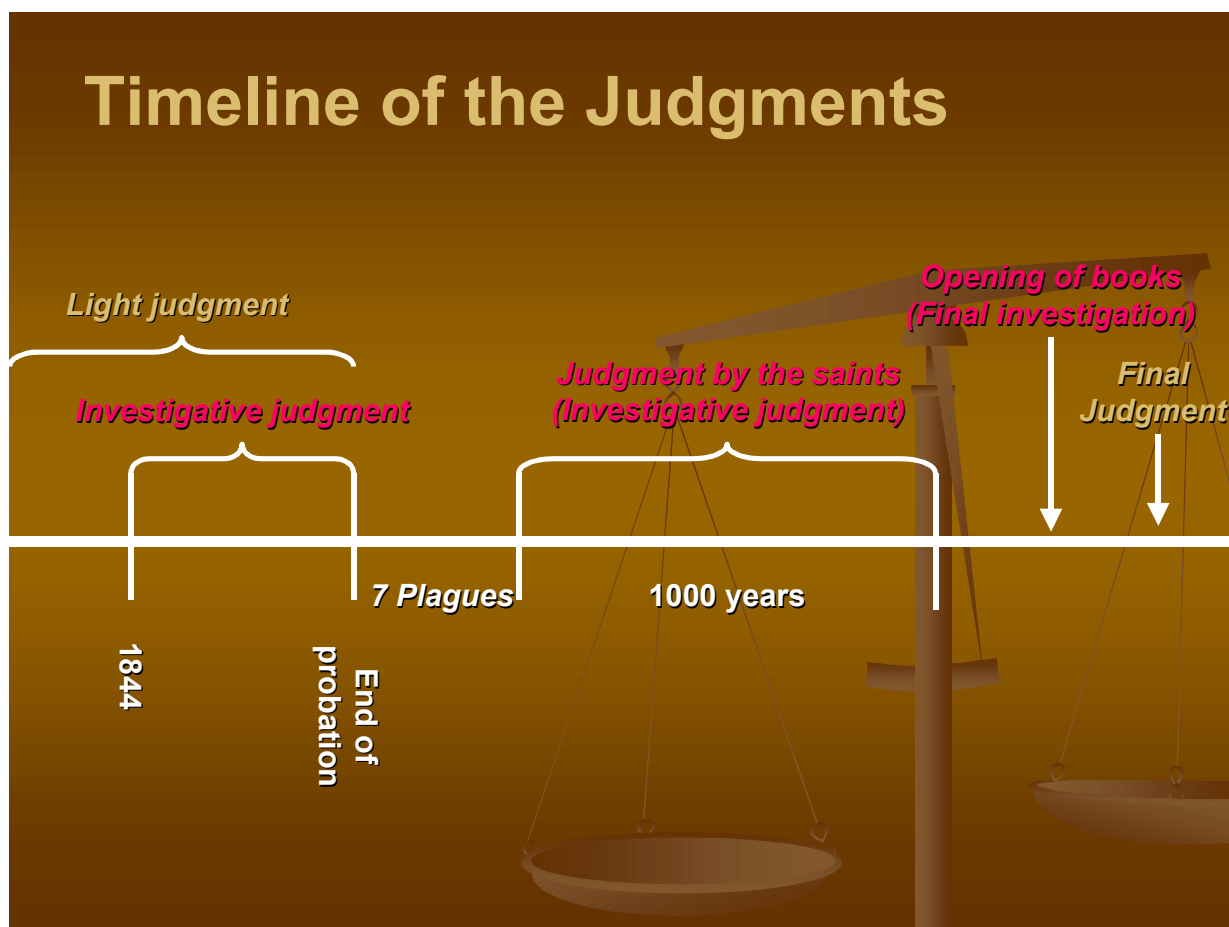
investigation of why they have rejected it and an explanation of why God sent it to them and what kind of chance God gave to them. Such an investigation is described in many places in the Bible; I think we don't need to read them all. Maybe just *Ecclesiastes* 12:14, even though that's not New Testament, "For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

Now this investigative judgment means also the separation between good and evil, between righteous and unrighteous, between the righteous and the unrighteous. And such an investigative judgment seals the righteous. In other words it protects them against the accusations of the enemy, as we shall see. And in this way gives them life. So we have these two elements again, number one the separation and number two the giving of life.

So the third kind of judgment is the final judgment which really is no investigation anymore but it's just simply carrying out the verdict that was given in the investigation. Just as an example let us look at *2Thessalonians* 1:9 - "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." That means separated from Him.

And in *Revelation* 20: 14-15: "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." That is the final judgment.

So can we remember these three judgments? Light judgment, investigative judgment, and final judgment. And now when do they take place? That's the next question. Oh wait, the final judgment also means separation from sin and death and it means eternal salvation for the saints not of the saints. We have here a time line. We want to see now when the different judgments take place.



When does the light judgment take place? The camp meeting for example, when we hear about the message about self-distrust, we can either receive it or we can reject it in our hearts. It's a judgment where separation takes place. So today we live in the time of the light judgment. As God sends light to His people, we are judged.

At the same time we live since 1844 in the time of the investigative judgment, but it is a time when the life of the dead are investigated, but at the end of probation, when the light judgment will come to an end, then comes the investigative judgment over the living. It's at the end of the probation.

Then follow the seven plagues which really is an execution of judgment in a way, but in the (during) the thousand years, another judgment takes place, which is called the judgment of the saints. The Bible simply says they shall rule with Him, but further information is given also in Great Controversy and we see there that it is an investigation of the lives of those who lived on earth. It is an investigative judgment. You see the investigative judgment before and the investigative judgment during the thousand years, are two different events.

Now after this judgment has taken place, there is another investigation after the thousand years when the wicked will be resurrected, when they will march against the city with all the hosts in order to concur it. Then as you know the sign of the Son of Man will appear and they will be like paralyzed. They won't advance any further. And this is the time when books are opened again, as we read in *Revelation 20*, books are opened. And whenever books are opened, there is an investigation. The people will be judged according to the things written in the book. This is another investigation. So we have three investigative judgments. Today till the end of probation, during the thousand years and one after the thousand years. And after the final investigation, which takes place at the place of Jerusalem, there's the final judgment, which is in fact the destruction of the wicked.

So looking at this, we want to ask now for the meaning of these judgments, for who is this judgment? Or maybe we should ask first another question. Why is there a need for an investigation at all? Why is this necessary because God knows already, I mean an earthly judge he needs to make an investigation in order to be able to judge fairly. If he would sentence people without a fair trial, what would this mean? He would be unjust and he would make many wrong decisions.

You know, under dictatorships we have such a thing. One mark for democracies is or for free societies is that you always can get a fair trial. That's one of the fundamental rights. We sometimes people think they can't afford any more, but dictatorships don't think they can't afford it, because at that moment you give them this possibility of defending them selves it maybe they find some reasons. And you know it's very difficult sometimes to find out the truth. But there is a principle that says in the case of doubt it must be for the accused. It is better to let one run who is guilty then to condemn one to death who is not guilty. To kill a person who is not guilty is the worse thing that can happen. So for that reason it is absolutely necessary on this earth to have a fair trial, to have an investigation into this matter.

But does God need that? Can't He see immediately what is right and what is wrong? Can we hide anything from Him? Couldn't He execute on the spot? He could if it was according to His omnipotence, omniscience and so forth, but this would not bring a solution to the problem. Now Sister White says this, God's authority rests upon goodness, mercy and love. And the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

Why an Investigative Judgment?

"His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power." *The Desire of Ages*, 759.1



Not the power of God, but His character is the prevailing power in the battle against sin.



The judgment reveals God's righteous character in dealing with sin.

"Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed." *Revelation 15:4*

Now, one of the reasons why modern states today who call themselves democratic are not granting that liberty anymore of fair trial, one of the reasons is they say, we all know that these are criminals, they are terrorists therefore we all know this and for that reason, its obvious isn't it? But the point is as soon as you go this way you leave a certain kind of a battle and you enter another kind of a battle. In other words one thing that it's a weakness, you can say, of a powerful state, but it's also its strength that it can grant a fair trial even to its worst enemies. It's a weakness but it's also its strength. That is the strength of Gods government. That He can lay everything on a very, very solid foundation.

Now this solid foundation takes time, true. And it takes losses, true, but there is no other way. And that is something that men today often do not understand. It takes time, it requires losses but it's the only way to finally overcome evil. There is no other way. Only by these means unrighteousness can be overcome. As soon as we use the same means as unrighteousness we've lost all ready. So it is not the power of God, but His character that is the prevailing power in the battle against sin. God has power. He could wipe out Satan as easily as you can throw a pebble to the ground without any problem, but He has determined that the great controversy is not ended like this. It is to be ended by truth and love, by a presentation of His principles. So in a way you can say that six thousand years a judgment is going on, a trial and during this time Satan gets quite some inroads. He has destroyed quite a lot of people and he has won over also quite a number of people but God knows what He can afford. He knows that this is the only way to make the end of sin, finally. The judgment therefore has one purpose and this is to reveal Gods righteous character in dealing with sin. And it is to be placed on a solid foundation that means it has to be absolutely open.

In *Revelation 15:4* we read this wonderful text

"Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship before you,

for your righteous deeds have been revealed." (New Living Translation)

And that is the ultimate victory of God's cause. Think about this. God does not gain the victory before all the nations come and worship before Him. Who are all nations?

Who are "All Nations"?

"Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. **All nations** will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed." *Revelation 15:4*

- The angels
- The unfallen worlds
- The redeemed of this earth
- The fallen angels
- The sinners of this earth

See *The Desire of Ages*, 58.1, *The Great Controversy*, 668.4; 670.3

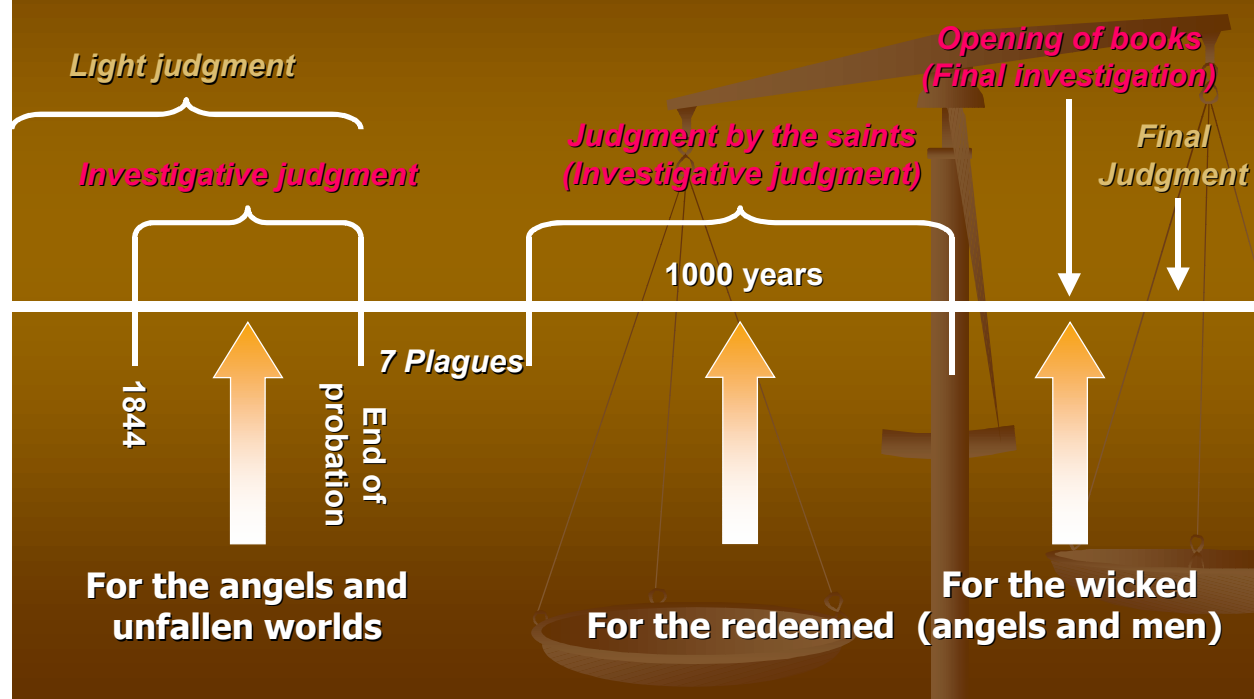
Who are all people? All nations or all people, who are they? The angels? Are these the unfallen worlds? Are these the redeemed of this earth? Are this the fallen angels? Are these the sinners of this earth? Yes all of them. That means the controversy is ended only when the greatest sinner of God acknowledges His righteousness, and this solid is the foundation built of His kingdom.

There are many texts we can read to this now, in *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy* may be we should just turn to one *The Desire of Ages* 58:

"In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of his own rejection of truth. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection. When the thoughts of all hearts shall be revealed, both the loyal and the rebellious will unite in declaring, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? . . . for Thy judgments are made manifest." *Revelations. 15:3, 4.*" *Desire of Ages* 58

What a victory this is? So for what purpose then are the investigative judgments? Let's look at this again, this time line here.

For Whom are the Investigative Judgments?



The investigative judgment taking place today, for whom is this meant? Who needs a revelation of Gods character today? Primarily, the angels and the unfallen worlds. They need to have a deeper understanding of what is going on here, and this judgment will lay it very open. Every seat of thought will lay very open and the way God dealt with it, in every detail. And angels are studying it. So for them this investigative judgment is necessary.

For whom will the judgment of the saints be during the thousand years? Yes, I think the words say here already, for the redeemed. And for whom will the investigative judgment be at the gates of Jerusalem when the books are opened again according to *Revelation 20*? For the wicked, angels and men. They will all see this very clearly. So you see, every investigative judgment is absolutely necessary, the first, second and the third, and only then can the final judgment come. Is this understandable? Now let us very briefly look at the books of heaven. As we have mentioned *Revelation 20* already we will read this again, and *Revelation 7*, we have also quoted this here.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.” *Revelation 20:12*

That is the time when they stand in front Jerusalem. And in *Daniel 7*. I watched till thrones were put in place, the court was seated and the books were opened. The same scene here written in the Old Testament.

So what kind of books where opened?

The Books of Heaven

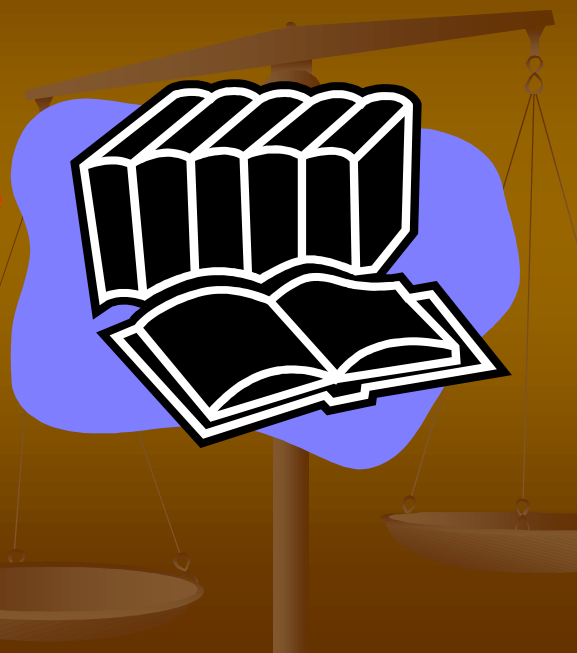


- "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and **books were opened**. And **another book** was opened, which is the **Book of Life**. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were **written in the books**." *Revelation 20:12*
- "I watched till thrones were put in place, ... The court was seated, and the **books were opened**." *Daniel 7:9, 10*

We read here of books, and another book which is the book of life and the people where judged out of the things written in these books. So what kind of books do we find in the Bible.

Different Books Mentioned

- **The Book of Life**
(*Revelation 20:12; Daniel 12:1; Philippians 4:3; etc.*)
- **The Book of Death**
(*Isaiah 65:6, 7; Early Writings, 52.2; etc.*)
- **The Book of Remembrance**
(*Malachi 3:16; Psalms 56:8; etc.*)
- **The Book of Records**
(*Ecclesiastes 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:5; etc.*)
- **The Law of God**
(*Deuteronomy 31:26; Nehemiah 9:3; Hebrews 9:19; etc.*)
- **The Books of the Bible**
(*John 5:45; Early Writings, 52.2; etc.*)

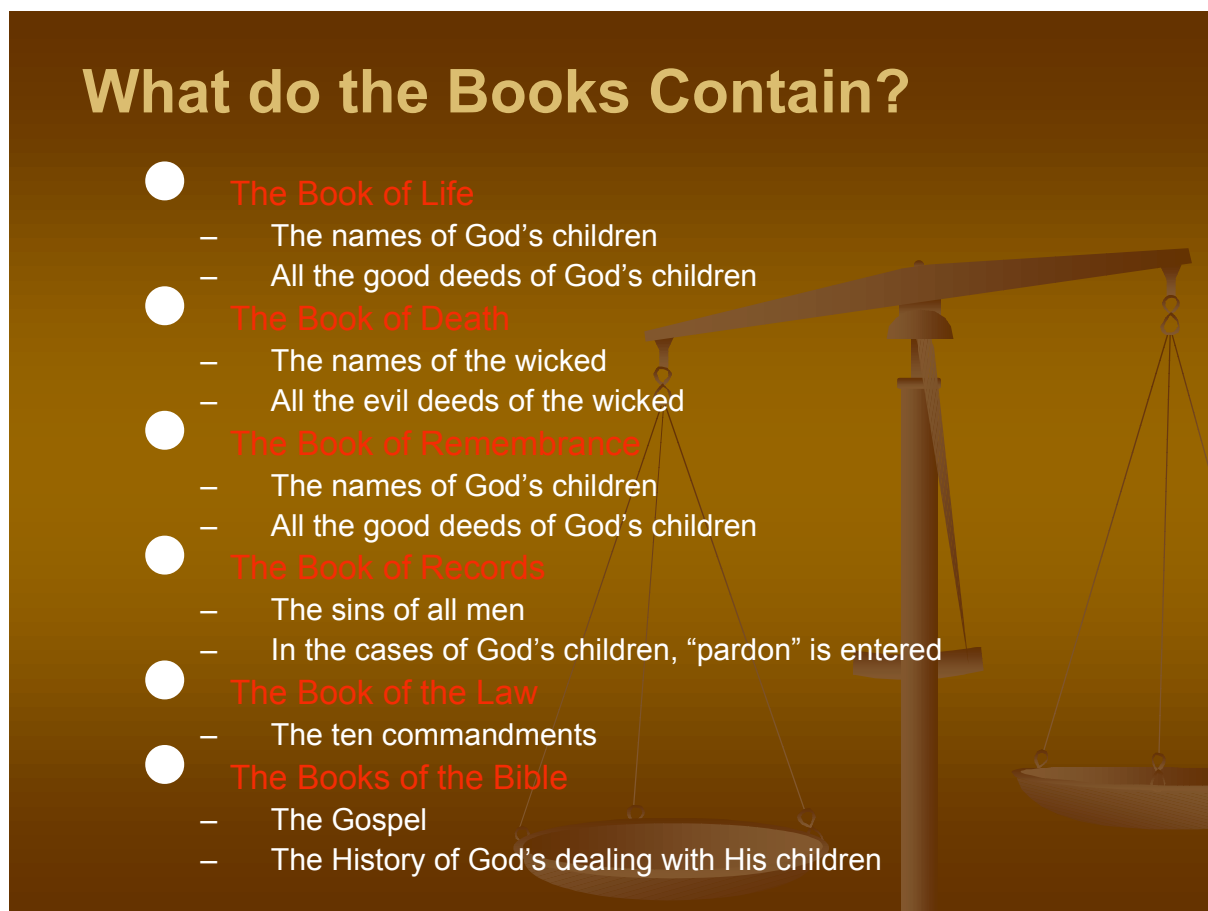


The different books that we find is first of all the books of life, described as the book of life in many scriptures like *Revelation* 20 and *Daniel* 12, *Philippians* 4:3. Then we have the book of death described in *Isaiah* 65 but also in *Early Writings*. Maybe we should turn to *Early Writings* 52 for a moment,

“After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened--the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead.” *Early Writings* 52

So this is the investigative judgment during the thousand years described here, but it is a very interesting insight into the kind of books that exist in heaven. So we have a book of life and a book of death. We also have a book of remembrance described in the Great Controversy, where the good deeds of the saints are written. We have a book of records described in many other places. We have the law of God, which is also a book, described as a book that plays an important role in the judgment and we have the books of the Bible, obviously as we read just now. So these are the different books that are mentioned in the word of God, in summary.

What do the books contain?



What do the Books Contain?

- **The Book of Life**
 - The names of God's children
 - All the good deeds of God's children
- **The Book of Death**
 - The names of the wicked
 - All the evil deeds of the wicked
- **The Book of Remembrance**
 - The names of God's children
 - All the good deeds of God's children
- **The Book of Records**
 - The sins of all men
 - In the cases of God's children, "pardon" is entered
- **The Book of the Law**
 - The ten commandments
- **The Books of the Bible**
 - The Gospel
 - The History of God's dealing with His children

- What does the book of life contain? We just read it. First of all the names of God's children, and secondly the good deeds of God's children.
- What does the book of death contain? It contains the names of the wicked and the evil deeds of the wicked.

- What does the book of remembrance contain? We don't have the time to read all here because time is virtually over. It contains the names of Gods children.
- What does the book of remembrance contain? It contains all the good deeds of Gods children.
- The book of records, what does this contain? It contains the sins of all men. Sister White saw this in the vision when she describes this where the books were opened and so forth, and in the case of Gods children "pardoned" is entered next to this.
- The book of the law, what does this contain? I think that's clear, the Ten Commandments.
- The books of the Bible, what do they contain? They contain the gospel, in short.

So these are the different books and what do they have? They have all the history of God dealing with His children. So the Bible is an extract of the heavenly books. This you find when you look exactly what the Bible contains and what the other books contain.

The Bible is an Extract of the Heavenly Books

- It contains the records of the sins of men (Book of records)
- It contains the records of the good deeds of the faithful (Book of Remembrance)
- It contains life for the believers (Book of life)
- It condemns the wicked (Book of death)
- It contains the law which is found in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary

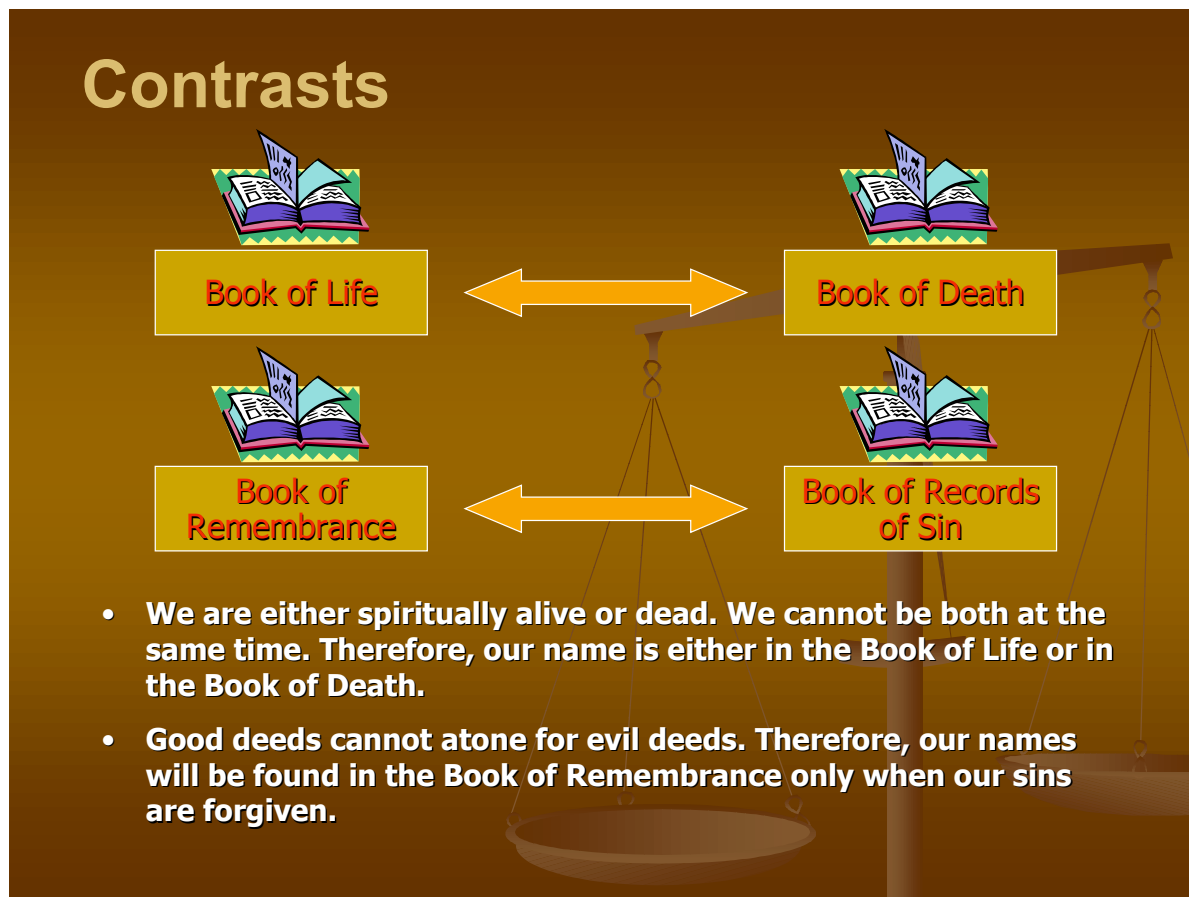
"... the priests joined with the ignorant mob in declaring passionately, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' Matt. 27:24, 25. Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 293.3-294.1

The books of the Bible, for example, contain the record of the sin of man, which is in the book of records. The Bible also contains the records of the good deeds of the faithful, which is contained in the book of remembrance. The Bible also contains life for the believers, which is in the book of life. The Bible condemns the wicked, which is to be found in the book of death. The Bible contains the law, which is found in the Most Holy apartment in the heavenly sanctuary. So the Bible contains all this, therefore it must be an excerpt of all the books in heaven.

This is confirmed by this statement in Christ's Object Lessons where Sister White really describes the book in the hand of the Lamb of the line of Judah in Revelation 5. And she says, the priest joined with the ignorant mob, declaring passionately, "His blood be upon us and our children". Do you remember when they cried this concerning Christ? Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book, which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne. The book which no man could open and all its vindictiveness, this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe Judah.

So it talks here of a heavenly book in which these deeds are entered but it's also entered in the Bible the same thing, we read it in the Bible. Therefore the Bible is a copy, you can say or an excerpt of what we find in heaven basically.

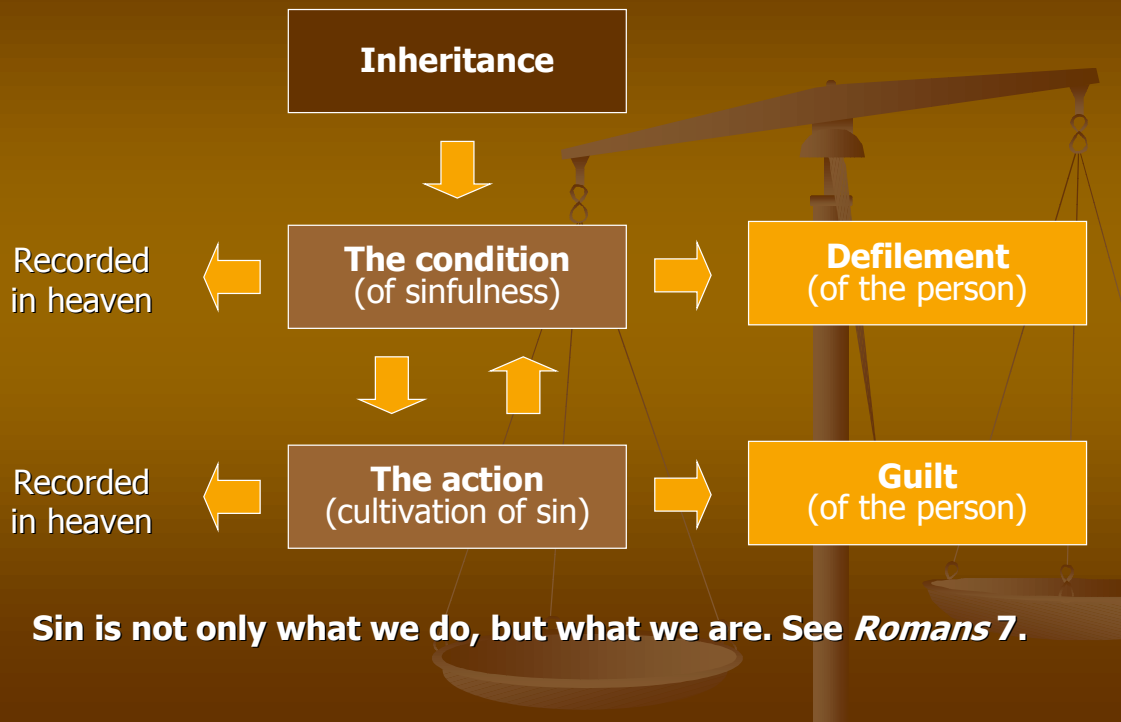
Now there are contrasts and the contrasts tell us something. There is a contrast for example, between the book of life and the book of death obviously. There is a contrast also between the books of remembrance and the book of records of sin. What is the message of these contrasts?



First of all we are either spiritually alive or dead. We cannot be both at the same time. Therefore our life is either in the book of life or in the book of death. So everybody must ask himself the question where is my name? Is it in the book of life or is it in the book of death? Now the book of remembrance and the book of record of sin have this message that good deeds can not atone for evil deeds therefore our names will be found in the book of remembrance only when our sins are forgiven. Only when forgiveness is next to the sin. Otherwise there's no place for our names and our deeds in the book of remembrance. God does not say well he has so many evil deeds and so many good deeds, so because of the good deeds I will not reckon his evil deeds. God is never doing this. There is no good deed that can atone for an evil deed. Only the blood of Christ can do this. For that reason we really need to realize that there is a mournful blank in the book of remembrance when we are not forgiven of our sins. That really needs to be understood very clearly.

Let us look at the problem that exists in the universe.

The Problem, Part 1

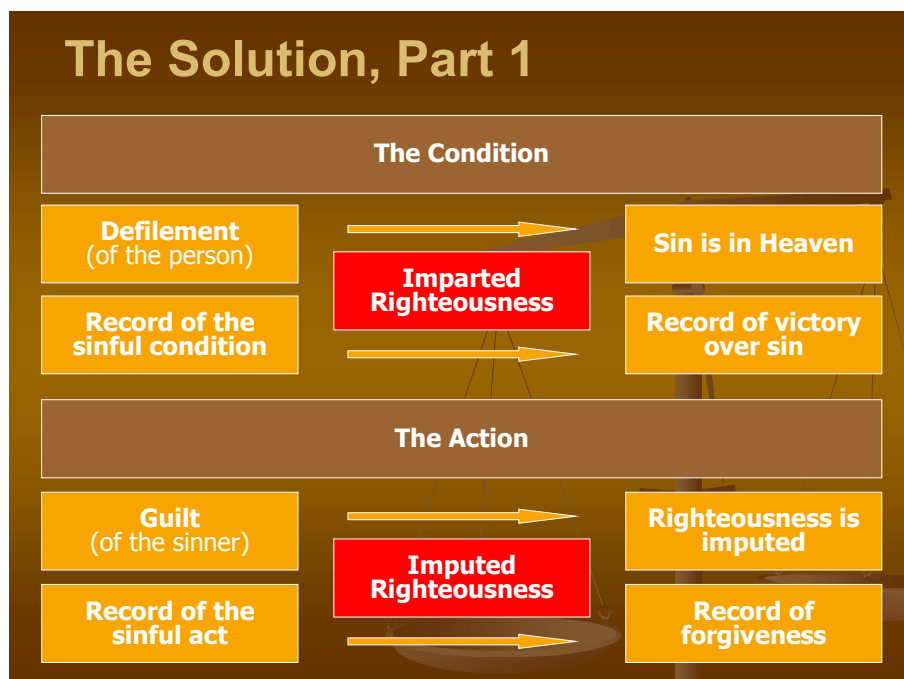


Through inheritance we have received a sinful condition. It's not only through inheritance, we have also cherished sin, the action and the action also created more sinfulness in our hearts. So by inheritance and also by cherished sin or cultivating it, we are sinful that is our condition. And both the condition of sin and the action of sin are two different problems, as we have learned in the past. The condition defiles us, it makes us dirty and this defilement is recorded in heaven. And the action places guilt upon us and this is also recorded in heaven. So we really have a record of our defilement and we have a record of our guilt both.

And more than this when our sins are forgiven there is also a defilement of the sanctuary but this we will see in a minute. First of all, let us see this is a problem on this earth there is defilement and guilt and in heaven there is simply a record of both these things in the book of records. That is the problem. Sin is not what we are but what we do. I think we understand this. So we have two things, the condition and the action. Now we must understand what the solution is for each concerning the judgment and the books in heaven.

The defilement of the person, the fact that he is dirty, and the record of the sinful condition are two different things but they both need to be dealt with. Likewise the action incurs guilt in the sinner himself, but also there is a record of that sinful act in heaven. How does God deal with these things?

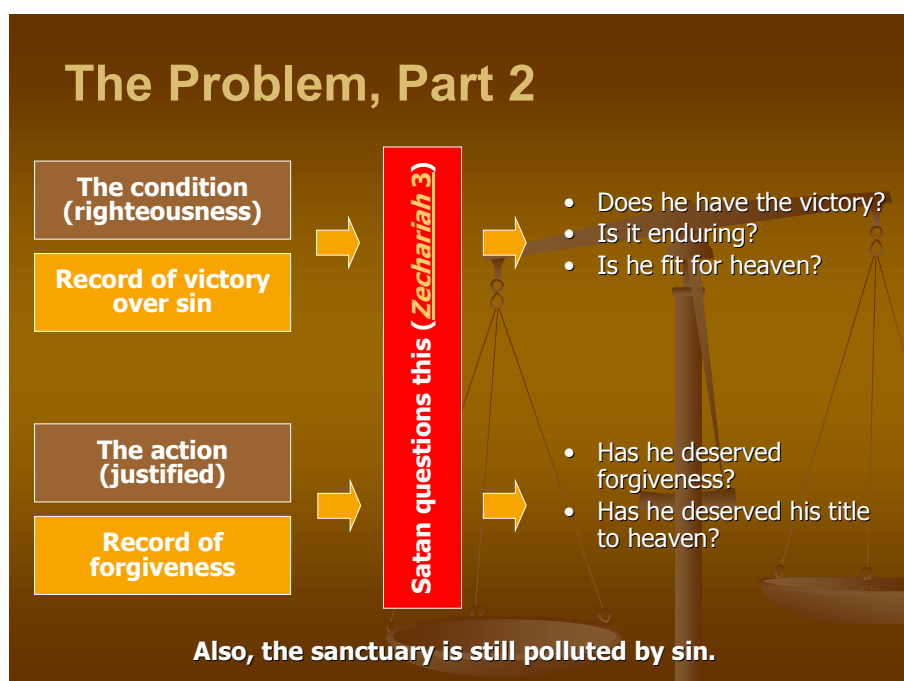
The Solution, Part 1



Now, in the case of the defilement God needs to impart His righteousness to cleanse us from this dirt. In the case of the guilt, He imputes His righteousness. He reckons us righteous, when He delivers us from that condition. So through the imparted righteous which delivers us from the defilement our sins come into heaven. Now sin is in heaven as an actual defilement of the heavenly sanctuary and the record is now also changed in heaven. That means behind the defilement there is now instead of the record of the defilement, there is a record of victory. In the case of the action instead of the guilt, our righteous is imputed and instead of the record of sinful act there is a record of forgiveness in heaven. So on this earth the sinner is cleansed but in heaven the sin is defiling the heavenly sanctuary. In heaven there is a record of victory and there is also a record also of forgiveness but it is also polluted, both things.

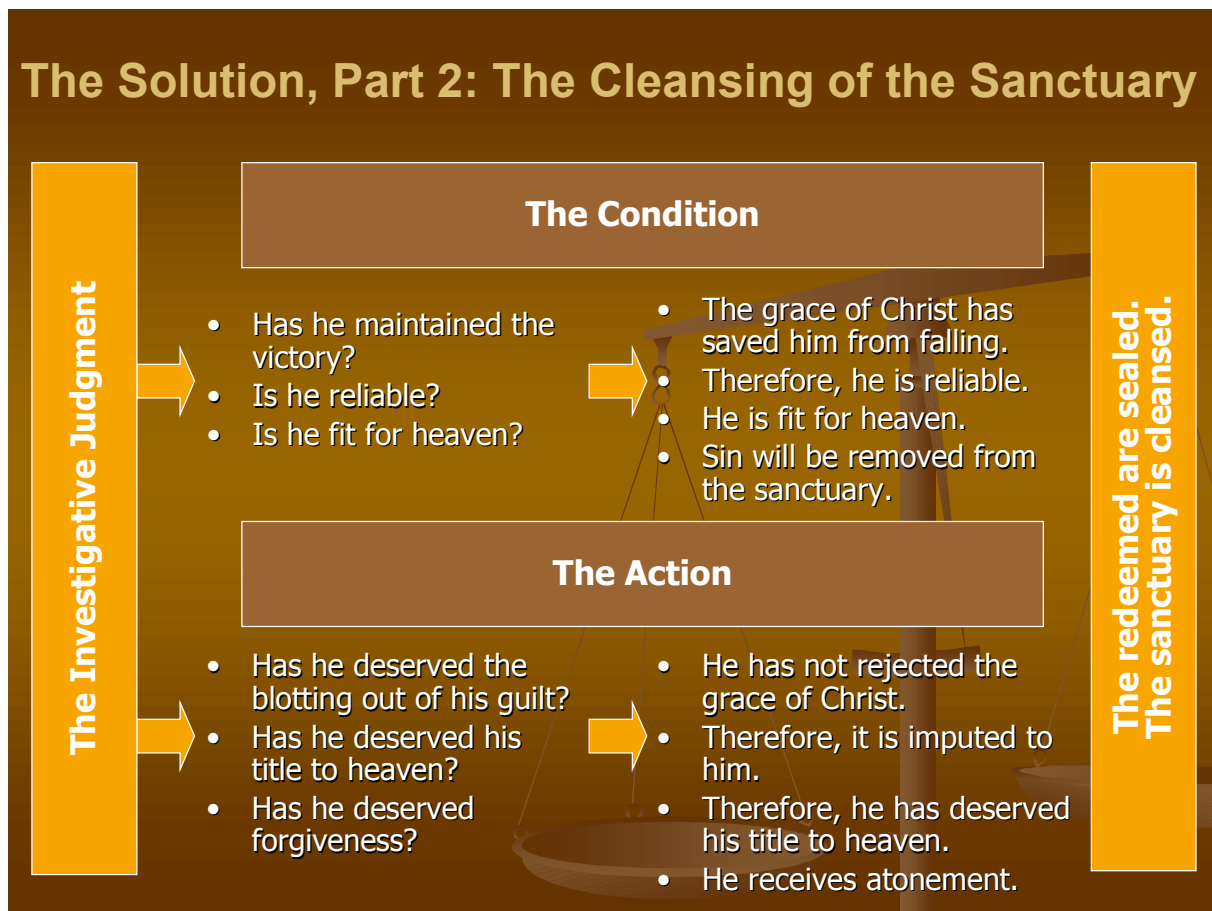
Now the problem is even going a little bit further, because even though our condition is now righteousness and we are recovered, our lives speak of victory, and God has justified us, even there is a record of forgiveness, there is still somebody who does not like this.

The Problem, Part 2



Who puts us into question? And that is Satan. We read this in *Zechariah 3* as you know. Satan he says well, but no, no he's not. Does he really have the victory? I don't believe that. Is he really living it out? Is he enduring? No I don't think so. Is he fit for heaven? Certainly not, I mean you have thrown me out so you must throw him out. And concerning the action, has he deserved this forgiveness? Has he deserved the title for heaven? So and likewise the sanctuary is still polluted by our sin. So these are the problems still existing even though we are free from sin on this earth.

You see we can't for a moment say every thing now is beyond question, beyond doubt. There is a tremendous struggle still going on. Everything has to be placed on a very solid foundation. Don't forget this. So we need to have patience. We need to see that God in delivering us needs more than simply delivering us here on this earth. There is a controversy waging and going on. So what is the solution then concerning the condition and the action?



The solution is the investigative judgment. The question is asked by Satan has he maintained the victory? Is he reliable? Is he fit for heaven? And God says okay ask these questions and I'll answer them. He will say the grace of Christ has saved him from falling. He will say so he is reliable, he has really lived on this earth without sin. He is fit for heaven, I can show this like with Job, he proves this, and therefore his sin will be removed from the sanctuary.

Concerning the action, the question is asked, has he deserved the blotting out of his guilt? Has he deserved the title of heaven? Has he deserved forgiveness? And the answer is he has not rejected the grace of Christ, therefore it is imputed to him. Therefore he has deserved the title for heaven. He is atoned not because of his righteousness but because of Christ's righteousness and for this reason the redeemed are sealed and the sanctuary is cleansed.

This is the result of that investigative judgment and you know now the saints are really delivered from the beasts, from the powers of evil. That is the message of Daniel 7 really, and that is the message of the judgment.

So in short, in summary, what are the reasons and the purposes of God's judgments?

The Reason and Purpose of God's Judgments



- The reason for God's judgments (*1 Corinthians 2:2; The Great Controversy, 652*)
 - Because He loves us
 - Because He wants to save us (*John 5:22, 27; 2 Timothy 4:1; Romans 2:16; Acts 17:31; Romans 5:8, 9* without judgment there is no justification; *Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 63:4; Psalms 76:9*)
 - Because He is righteousness
 - Because He must explain righteousness (*2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 15:4; 19:2; Ecclesiastes 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Psalms 58:12; Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 5:16; Matthew 5:17*)
- The purpose of God's judgments
 - Cleansing (*Daniel 8:14*)
 - To restore harmony (*Revelation 20 & 21*)
 - To end suffering, which means to deliver us (*Revelation 21:4; Psalms 76:10; Isaiah 25:8*)
 - To seal the universe against sin (*Revelation 20:13-21:4; Revelation 12:9-11*)
 - To justify the righteous (*Zechariah 3:2; Romans 5:18; John 5:27; Romans 4:25; Acts 17:31*)
 - To inculcate self-distrust and trust in God (*Revelation 14:6, 7*)

The reason is, because He loves us, because He wants to save us and because of His righteousness also. Because He must explain righteousness, what is right and what is wrong. The purpose of God's judgments is: cleansing, to restore harmony: to end suffering, which means to deliver us and to seal the universe against sin.

I added another point, it is to inculcate self-distrust and trust in God. That is another purpose of the judgments of God. You know when we stand before the judgments we really will understand very, very clearly that nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing we have deserved. It is by Christ's righteousness that we stand here. That does not mean that we stand there not being delivered. We have been delivered on this earth prior to the judgment, but we will cast our crown to the feet of Jesus acknowledging that it is through Him that we are delivered. So the real purpose is to create the proper fear of God. To inculcate self-distrust and trust of God. And that is the tenor of the whole Bible, isn't it?

So I hope we can understand now the judgments also in the lights of what we have studied here during the camp meeting. And with this thoughts I want to close praying that we shall, in our mind we often dwell on the judgments of God as Paul did and than be able, as able as he was to present it to the people. I want to remind you that even the powerful Felix trembled and shook when he heard these words of the Gospel. And I believe, the same will be repeated again when God give the Holy Spirit. But in order for Him to give the Holy Spirit, we must cooperate with Him in putting our mind into these matters, to truly understand the judgments. I want to invite you now to read all the Bible texts given here and to study them and find even more. And I am sure you do. Amen.

The Lord's Supper

The theme of our campmeeting was self-distrust, and the key text for this was to be found in the chapter in *Desire of Ages* "The call by the sea."

"The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust." *Desire of Ages*, 249.4

This is text we should really learn by heart. "The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust."

I will choose another text as well in this context. It's from David's sin and Repentance, chapter 71 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. It's the first paragraph here and it says: The Bible has little to say in the praise of men, little spaces ever given to what good things they did and so forth. And this is an important lesson. And in this context we read:

"The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 717.1

So, everything that we learn from the Bible, from the begging page to the last page is to inculcate trust. It's designed to inculcate distrust, first of all in human power and to encourage trust in divine power. So, what we did really is to understand or begin to understand the tenor of the Bible. What is the Bible about? What does it want to teach us? It wants to teach us distrust but not just as a theory but inculcate, that means to implant it into us. Distrust in human power, and encourage trust in divine power. And whether we believe it or not, this campmeeting is not sufficient. We have not yet fully inculcated distrust of human power, neither have we been truly been encouraged to trust in divine power, this will come after. God will teach us through lessons, that he will certainly give us that this is truly so. But we shall remember back, what we have experienced here. We shall remember back what we have experienced and we shall certainly not forget this lessons, and also we shall turn back to the word of God, when ever is necessary. Let us now turn to John chapter 13 'The Foot washing' And we want to read the chapter beginning in verse 1. The purpose for this is we desire to really understand in what way this is connected with our theme this week.

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" *John*, 13:1-9

Yesterday we have studied a little bit about the judgment, and we have a judgment scene here before us. What is judgment? Separation and Restoration. And both things happened here. A separation was necessary, a separation of the sin that lingered in the disciples, and their sin was alienation from one another. They could not stand one another, because everybody felt that the other was in his way for getting a higher position. They were almost strangers to one another, even though they were brothers, very close. And yet that was their feeling at the moment, so this feeling had to be washed

out from them, it had to be separated from them. That was what the judgment needed to do. And in its stead, love to Christ and love to the brethren had to be implanted in their hearts.

Another separation that needed to take place was the separation from Judas, which we read a little bit latter about. Judas, he was not really converted to the cause of Christ; He only used it as a means to get himself into position. He wanted to rule himself, he would not want to submit. So, that was his spirit, but nobody realized it, nobody saw what Judas really was. For that reason it was quite an operative task to separate this cancer from the people. It was not directed primarily against the person Judas, it was directed against the spirit of Judas. The church needed to be cleansed from that spirit.

Restoration – we can see this also in the fact that a new trust had to be restored in them to Jesus and to one another. And obviously if you take it one step further, if Judas was separated, then his place needed to be restored as well. All this would have been necessary to do, and Jesus saw it before him.

But he saw more. He saw that even though the judgment on this scene could accomplish a new spirit in them in which they would now concede to one another the highest place, they still would have self-trust to a great extend. And this we read when we read on in this chapter.

First of all, Peters attitude: you shall never wash my feet, speaks of a lot of self-confidence. ‘I am clean, I don’t know this, I don’t need this.’ It was just before that Peter had said: ‘I will never deny you.’ That was very much in harmony with this. ‘I am clean, I don’t need you.’ ‘Well, if I do not wash you, you have no part with me.’ I’m not sure if he said this before of after, maybe it was after. If it was before then it was twice because we will soon read it here too in John chapter 13, when Peter really said: ‘I will never deny you.’ In other words, he was so confident in himself, he did not need the services of Jesus, only sometimes, only when he said: ‘now it’s time that you can give me something, now you can serve me, now I need something.’ But Jesus said: ‘No, no, you shall always come and ask; and I am the one who guides you.’

When Jesus really told him: ‘If I don’t wash you feet, you have no part with me, Peter now wanted to have everything washed. Which on the one hand expresses his love to his master, on the other hand again he is in control, he is in the steering wheel. ‘Here, do it this way, do it this way Master, this way, this way. He always had something to tell his Master, how to do the job. Well, Jesus explains him, ‘let it happen this way, you don’t understand everything now, you will understand later.’ When would he understand? Only after he had betrayed his Lord. Only after he had fallen. Until this point he did not understand, even though he thought he understood.

“So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." *John*, 13:12-20

Then Christ announces Judas the betrayer. We don’t need to read this step by step now, they wanted to know who is it who betrays you?

“Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.”

They probably even then did not fully understand, but at least Judas went out and finally it was clear that Judas was separated from that body. From now on he would just expose himself even further and further.

“Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. *John*, 13:25-30

So, we clearly see a judgment scene here: separation between light and darkness, day and night. Then Jesus announces his departure, in verse 31-35. And then He foretells Peter's denial, and this we want to read now in verse 36-38.

“Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." It's amazing, just received the foot washing, and how full was he still of self-confidence. I find this, quite amazing. You know, Jesus told him plainly: ‘wait, you will understand, you will understand.’ Now could not have saved Peter from the ordeal, from the trial which was before him, but he wanted to save him from falling. And one thing that Jesus wanted to show Peter in the whole foot washing ceremony was: ‘Peter, Peter, distrust your self, don't have so much self-confidence; you think have it, you don't have it yet.’ ‘Well, why, why? Of course I have it, of course I can follow you.’ ‘No, no, wait, you will understand after.’ ‘Well, of course I will lay down my life for You, why do you distrust me like this? ‘Peter wait, I will tell you later.’

“Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.” *John* 13:36-38

So, this story again is a very, very strong lesson; how important it is that we learn self-distrust, and how difficult also it is to learn this lesson. Now when we look at this story a little bit closer, there is another one in the Bible, a parable, an object lesson which Jesus uses, which is very similar to this one. But first let us look at the other texts which speak of His denial.

“Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise. *Mark*, 14:29-31

And one more Bible text I wish to share with you:

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” *I Cor*, 10:12

This Bible text really shows the situation of Peter. He thought that he stood, but he should have taken heed lest he fall. Now let's look at another parable in *Luke* 18:

“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:”

Can we see here our theme? In this Bible verse? He spoke to some who trusted in themselves. They had no self-distrust. That was the situation of Peter. And the result is they despised others, because of this.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." *Luke 18:9-14*

Now, this parable we want to trace in the chapter "The Two Worshippers" in *Christ's Object Lessons*. After quoting this text, Sister White goes a little bit in detail about the character of these two people.

"God, I thank thee," he says, "that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." He judges his character, not by the holy character of God, but by the character of other men. His mind is turned away from God to humanity. This is the secret of his self-satisfaction." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 150.3

And then we read the lesson out of this: "Whoever trusts in himself that he is righteous, will despise others. As the Pharisee judges himself by other men, so he judges other men by himself. His righteousness is estimated by theirs, and the worse they are the more righteous by contrast he appears. His self-righteousness leads to accusing. "Other men" he condemns as transgressors of God's law. Thus he is making manifest the very spirit of Satan, the accuser of the brethren. With this spirit it is impossible for him to enter into communion with God. He goes down to his house destitute of the divine blessing." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 151.2

We need to see that Peter needed to be washed to some extent from that spirit, in order to be able to have communion with God. Sister White now turns to Cain, who had no sense of his need, and now we turn to page 152.

"For each of the classes represented by the Pharisee and the publican there is a lesson in the history of the apostle Peter. In his early discipleship Peter thought himself strong. Like the Pharisee, in his own estimation he was "not as other men are." When Christ on the eve of His betrayal forewarned His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night," Peter confidently declared, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." Mark 14:27, 29. Peter did not know his own danger. Self-confidence misled him."

So, self-confidence is really our worst enemy when we think about this, because it is like a deception that is in our hearts. It constantly misleads us. It leads us in the wrong direction, where we should not go. "He thought himself able to withstand temptation;" remember of Adam and Eve? What was with Eve? She thought she was strong enough to withstand temptation, and wise enough to discern it.

"He thought himself able to withstand temptation; but in a few short hours the test came, and with cursing and swearing he denied his Lord." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 152.2

"When the crowing of the cock reminded him of the words of Christ, surprised and shocked at what he had just done he turned and looked at his Master. At that moment Christ looked at Peter, and beneath that grieved look, in which compassion and love for him were blended, Peter understood himself." In that look Peter understood himself, that is the key sentence here. Again, what is freedom from self-confidence? What is healthy self-distrust? One of the first definitions of healthy self-distrust is to understand ourselves. But we can't understand ourselves, by ourselves. It was in the look of the Master that he understood himself. "He went out and wept bitterly. That look of Christ's broke his heart. Peter had come to the turning point, and bitterly did he repent his sin. He was like the publican in his contrition and repentance, and like the publican he found mercy. The look of Christ assured him of pardon." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 152.2- 152.3

“Now his self-confidence was gone. Never again were the old boastful assertions repeated.” *Christ's Object Lessons*, 154.1

That was also a judgment. Certainly, when he went out into the darkness, in outer self despair, it separated this terrible sin of self-confidence from him. Now, the foot washing was doing one part, but it could not do everything. Jesus had to say to Peter: ‘you do not understand it now, but let it happen, you will fully understand it later.’ Peter didn’t see it like this; ‘of course I understand what Jesus is doing, I see what he is doing, and when he tells me, I even submit to him, so I don’t understand what he wants, I don’t understand.’ It was a little bit a rebellious ‘I don’t understand.’ You see this? It was somehow, ‘explain me!’ ‘you make it too hard, nobody can understand you. If I don’t understand you, being intelligent, what with my neighbours, they won’t understand you at all.’

“Christ after His resurrection thrice tested Peter. "Simon, son of Jonas," He said, "lovest thou Me more than these?" Self-confidence would have answered: Yes I love you more than these. “Peter did not now exalt himself above his brethren. He appealed to the One who could read His heart. "Lord," he said, "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." John 21:15, 17. *Christ's Object Lessons* 154.2

In other words, ‘you tell me that my love is not deep enough, I will accept it; I do not know myself, I have seen this.’

"Then he received his commission. A work broader and more delicate than had heretofore been his was appointed him. Christ bade him feed the sheep and the lambs. In thus committing to his stewardship the souls for whom the Saviour had laid down his own life, Christ gave to Peter the strongest proof of confidence in his restoration.” *Christ's Object Lessons* 154.

Now, was this self-confidence? That was Christ's confidence. What a difference! Changed from self-confidence to Christ's confidence. When Christ says, "well done my servant," that is a testimony. But when I say that I am perfect, that is totally different.

“The once restless, boastful, self-confident disciple had become subdued and contrite. Henceforth he followed his Lord in self-denial and self-sacrifice. He was a partaker of Christ's sufferings; and when Christ shall sit upon the throne of His glory, Peter will be a partaker in His glory. The evil that led to Peter's fall and that shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency.”

That is the enemy we really have to fear.

“Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable. Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved.”

Now, think about this, you know, I am born again, I'm saved; and it's not so easy to lose the rebirth experience. That was our conviction. So, we can afford a few sins, and we still are saved. That is not the case, we should never feel that we are saved. “This is misleading. Every one should be taught to cherish hope and faith;” it's not wrong to hope this, and to have faith in this, but to have this assurance in myself, "I'm saved," that is wrong.

What's the difference between the two? The difference is: one is dependence on self, and the other is dependence on what Christ can do. And we have to really understand in our personal life what that difference is; we have to understand this. That is the science of salvation. And when we talk to other people who come out of temptation, and we tend to recommend their faith, and so forth, that could really prove their downfall.

"This is misleading. Every one should be taught to cherish hope and faith; but even when we give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us, we are not beyond the reach of temptation. God's word declares, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." Dan. 12:10. Only he who endures the trial will receive the crown of life. (James 1:12.) Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan's devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. We are admonished, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12. Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ."

"It was necessary for Peter to learn his own defects of character, and his need of the power and grace of Christ. The Lord could not save him from trial, but He could have saved him from defeat. Had Peter been willing to receive Christ's warning, he would have been watching unto prayer. He would have walked with fear and trembling lest his feet should stumble. And he would have received divine help so that Satan could not have gained the victory."

"It was through self-sufficiency that Peter fell; and it was through repentance and humiliation that his feet were again established. In the record of his experience every repenting sinner may find encouragement. Though Peter had grievously sinned, he was not forsaken. The words of Christ were written upon his soul, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:32. In his bitter agony of remorse, this prayer, and the memory of Christ's look of love and pity, gave him hope. Christ after His resurrection remembered Peter, and gave the angel the message for the women, "Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him." Mark 16:7. Peter's repentance was accepted by the sin-pardoning Saviour."

"And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isa. 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ."

"Christ offered up His broken body to purchase back God's heritage, to give man another trial. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. By His spotless life, His obedience, His death on the cross of Calvary, Christ interceded for the lost race. And now, not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a Conqueror claiming His victory. His offering is complete, and as our Intercessor He executes His self-appointed work..." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 154.3-156.2

"He will look upon no trembling suppliant without raising him up. He who through His own atonement provided for man an infinite fund of moral power, will not fail to employ this power in our behalf. We may take our sins and sorrows to His feet; for He loves us. His every look and word invites our confidence. He will shape and mold our characters according to His own will."

That is when we catch a glance of His look as Peter did.

"In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Isa. 40:29. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The Lord says, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all

your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." 1 John 1:9; Jer. 3:13; Eze. 36:25." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 157.2-157.3}

"But we must have a knowledge of ourselves,"

That is healthy self-distrust. To have a knowledge of ourselves. Do you think we have this? I fear we don't have it yet. But that is what Jesus wants to give us, in the foot washing, in the communions service, he wants to take his one step further. The purpose of this services is to get a knowledge of ourselves. But we must have a knowledge of ourselves,

"a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. The Pharisee felt no conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armor which the arrows of God, barbed and true-aimed by angel hands, failed to penetrate. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save. He came "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. But "they that are whole need not a physician." Luke 5:31. We must know our real condition, or we shall not feel our need of Christ's help. We must understand our danger, or we shall not flee to the refuge. We must feel the pain of our wounds, or we should not desire healing."

"The Lord says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire..."

And so forth, you know this as the Laodicean message.

"The gold tried in the fire is faith that works by love. Only this can bring us into harmony with God. We may be active, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 158.1-158.2

"No man can of himself understand his errors. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. 17:9. The lips may express a poverty of soul that the heart does not acknowledge. While speaking to God of poverty of spirit, the heart may be swelling with the conceit of its own superior humility and exalted righteousness. In one way only can a true knowledge of self be obtained. We must behold Christ. It is ignorance of Him that makes men so uplifted in their own righteousness. When we contemplate His purity and excellence, we shall see our own weakness and poverty and defects as they really are. We shall see ourselves lost and hopeless, clad in garments of self-righteousness, like every other sinner. We shall see that if we are ever saved, it will not be through our own goodness, but through God's infinite grace."

"The prayer of the publican was heard because it showed dependence reaching forth to lay hold upon Omnipotence. Self to the publican appeared nothing but shame. Thus it must be seen by all who seek God. By faith--faith that renounces all self-trust--the needy suppliant is to lay hold upon infinite power." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 159.1-159.2

Now, how shall we pray? How shall such a prayer look like, when we come not boasting in our own humility? And this we read in the next paragraph. That's a model prayer, we can also learn by heart.

"No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be,"

That is how we should pray here in our fellowship prayers in our personal prayers also:

“Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 159.3

Let's not come to God and say: here I will keep my heart pure for you, I will change from now on, I will do this, I will do that. Let's say to the lord: I cannot do it, but I give it to you, that you do it. It is thy property, I cannot keep it pure, you keep it pure. This is true self-distrust.

“It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 159.4

Peter never forgot that he had denied his Lord, and made him sure, whenever he was tempted to trust himself again, he remembered ‘but this is what I am, this is my real condition, I am a wretched man, I must be delivered. Who will deliver me from the body of this death?’ That was his constant language.

“The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves. Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness. The apostle Peter became a faithful minister of Christ, and he was greatly honored with divine light and power; he had an active part in the up-building of Christ's church; but Peter never forgot the fearful experience of his humiliation; his sin was forgiven; yet well he knew that for the weakness of character which had caused his fall only the grace of Christ could avail. He found in himself nothing in which to glory. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 160.1

How quickly do we go over our mistakes, put them behind us and don't want to even think about them anymore. Less though another person speaks about it. But that was not Peter's experience, he was constantly having it before him, and when Paul one time rebuked him, he very readily accepted it. He said: yes you are right, I cannot depend on myself. He did not defend himself, he was not combative anymore. He was really submissive.

“None of the apostles or prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God had honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their own nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ. So will it be with all who behold Christ.”

“At every advance step in Christian experience our repentance will deepen. It is to those whom the Lord has forgiven, to those whom He acknowledges as His people, that He says, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight." Eze. 36:31. Again He says, "I will establish My covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Eze. 16:62, 63. Then our lips will not be opened in self-glorification. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone. We shall make the apostle's confession our own. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Rom. 7:18.

It's a new study of Romans 7 really. It's not in contradiction to what we learned before, but when you have only the one part of the story, if you concentrate only on the one side, and do not see how much self-distrust speaks out of this chapter, you fail to get the message. "In me" that means apart from Christ, that is my condition, there dwelleth no good thing.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Galatians 6:14." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 160.2-160.3

"In harmony with this experience is the command, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 2:12, 13." And this is the proper fear which is described here. "God does not bid you fear that He will fail to fulfil His promises, that His patience will weary, or His compassion be found wanting. Fear lest your will shall not be held in subjection to Christ's will, lest your hereditary and cultivated traits of character shall control your life. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Fear lest self shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker." That is self-distrust, in other words, it's a call to self-distrust. "Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose that through you God desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk life's pathway without His abiding presence." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 161.1

"We need to shun everything that would encourage pride and self-sufficiency; therefore we should beware of giving or receiving flattery or praise."

How quickly is this done? But shouldn't we encourage our children when they have done well? Shouldn't we encourage our brethren when they have gone in the right direction? When they have overcome sin? when they have true repentance and so forth? What we can do is to encourage them to fix their hope in Christ. We can encourage them in the way that we praise Christ for having delivered them and that when they continue in this way Christ will continue to deliver them.

But we must be aware of one grain of praise in the human agent. For example: What you did was genial, what you did was fantastic! What you did was special! That is something nobody could understand so easily! You are better than the other! Fantastic! So, this is the kind of language which we should be aware of, especially when we give it to others, and we often will hear it from others, because the world has another standard. When God blesses us, you will hear this and we must be aware of this flattery and praise. "It is Satan's work to flatter. He deals in flattery as well as in accusing and condemnation. Thus he seeks to work the ruin of the soul. Those who give praise to men are used by Satan as his agents." But they don't know it. "Let the workers for Christ direct every word of praise away from themselves. Let self be put out of sight. Christ alone is to be exalted. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood," let every eye be directed, and praise from every heart ascend. (Rev. 1:5.)" *Christ's Object Lessons*, 161.2

So far I want to read it with you now, I would like that we contemplate about this in the foot washing, because let us see this as a step of deliverance from self-trust, self-confidence. Let us come to the foot washing with a sense of our real need. We need to be washed, and we need to listen to what God tells us, through every agent, through our fellow believers. Also when he speaks to us through other means.

But, let us not think that we can afford to close our eyes even to the least, to the word of God, however it may come to us. I really desire that we shall have a similar experience as that of the disciples when they became truly unified. You know, the self-assurance, the self-confidence separates us from Christ in some degree, I think we noticed this in our studies, and whatever separates us from him, separates us from one another.

But once these barriers are broken down, then there will be a true unity. And as we experienced it, we shall carry it to the world field. Let us have this self-distrust in our heart, we cannot create it ourselves, but we can pray to the Lord: Lord I cannot do it, but here is my heart, please do it for me. And shall we do this now, kneeling down together, praying for this? And then we shall go apart.

Part 2

The life in which the fear of the Lord is cherished will not be a life of sadness and gloom. It is the absence of Christ that makes the countenance sad, and the life a pilgrimage of sighs. Those who are filled with self-esteem and self-love do not feel the need of a living, personal union with Christ. The heart that has not fallen on the Rock is proud of its wholeness. Men want a dignified religion. They desire to walk in a path wide enough to take in their own attributes. Their self-love, their love of popularity and love of praise, exclude the Saviour from their hearts, and without Him there is gloom and sadness. But Christ dwelling in the soul is a wellspring of joy. For all who receive Him, the very keynote of the word of God is rejoicing. {COL 162.1}

We can come to the table rejoicing, not because of our goodness but because of the Lord's goodness

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57:15. {COL 162.2}

It was when Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock that he beheld the glory of God. It is when we hide in the riven Rock that Christ will cover us with His own pierced hand, and we shall hear what the Lord saith unto His servants. To us as to Moses, God will reveal Himself as "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Ex. 34:6, 7. {COL 162.3}

Our prayer is that this will be our experience at the Communion supper—that we get a fresh view of the mercy and grace of God

The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Cor. 2:9. As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God Himself is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. And "whom He justified, them He also glorified." Rom. 8:30. Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {COL 162.4}

"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, . . . Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose thee." Isa. 49:7. {COL 163.1}

"For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." {COL 163.2}

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you

drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." *1 Corinthians* 11:23-26

Marriage Study

The question is about the marriage and weddings, and how we should conduct ourselves in this regard. And the question is coming up because there are different habits in different countries.

Some countries do have weddings ceremonies very officially and so forth, and others don't have them at all. There are some countries who do not have this because it's simply not a habit. And my suggestion was in this one case of the brother, if that's not a habit in your country, then you must establish such a thing.

You would ask me and a believer will ask him for a biblical reason. And we must give a reason for everything that we do. That is clear; we don't want to just bring up a costume here that it's not founded in the word of God.

It is true that weddings ceremony it's not commanding like the Lord's Supper, or like Baptism, that are definitely commanded by God. But what the Bible makes clear and what I think in common sense also tells us is that marriage is a public contract; it's not a private thing. Some people believe this, even in our culture. They think that, why should I declare it to other? We have agreed with one another to be husband and wife and it's a personal matter between us, so why should we tell anybody else? For the simple reason, if it is not really officially declared you don't have the protection of society.

The protection of society is that what God has given to the marriage, and for that reason it must be publicly declared. And, an example is found with Boaz and Ruth, whom you find, described in Ruth 4:1-11. And again I want to say we don't want to read everything here, you know the story very well, the question for Ruth was, who is the nearest of kinsman who would marry her. And there was one, but he did not want to take her, so Boaz came in and took this role. And it is says here in verse 6. "And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem [it] for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem [it]." *Ruth 4:6*

You see, he made it very public, very clear, no question: This is my wife. And there are many other examples of this, of wedding ceremonies, of public declarations and so forth, which we could here quote. Like Isaac's marriage, in the time of Christ there was a marriage too, it is described again and again as a public matter, and not as a private matter.

Now, it is important for us to really see that in order for a marriage to be a successful one it is necessary that a right order is kept. And the right order is that first of all: it is based on a spiritual unity, and there must be also a mental compatibility, that they think alike in some degree; and finally there is a physical unity but before the physical unity takes place and before even the mental unity takes places too much, there should be an involvement of the public, for the sake of protection.

For example we have Marcus and Judith who had this thought in their minds, and they first went to their spiritual parents, to speak with them concerning the thought, I mean Marcus, he came to us even before he talked to Judith, and then finally they talked about the intention before the whole church, and they said: Look if anybody has anything, sees anything against our friendship and eventual marriage, please let us know, because that is our intention. Now the whole church is involved, it has the burden and we all pray for them. And as you see, they are friends with one another, but they still keep so separated from one another physically speaking, that everything can be reversed again, without regret, if it should turn out for some reason that it is not God's will. And this is the proper conduct in which we believe. It gives a time of test, a time of trial in which we as the church can also ask the Lord to really put them through such test which will prove their worth and their value.

Very often this order is turned around, very often the couple, they first start a friendship, become very close with one another, and then they ask the parents and the church. And when this happens, then usually it's very difficult to say no. Because they are so close already. When you say no, then it's pretty much breaking up something. It's almost destroying something. You see, that's the problem. For that reason, it's important that before you start closer friendship, you involve those who are responsible, and those who are wiser and those who can make a better choice than you yourself.

That's a part of self mistrust. And unfortunately it is self-confidence that man have today, especially young people. This questioning attitude is not their, they just say, we know better and we just have to get the permission of the old ones. And that is why so many marriages fail, because young people do not have the experience. So, in order to be an example to the younger ones, and others, let us really go back to this.

Now, where do we need the public declaration? Basically there are two societies we live in, the one is the world, the society of the world, and the other is the society of the church. And both societies need to be clearly informed. The society of the world which is represented by the state needs to get clear information that we are husband and wife, and so likewise the society of the church in which we live, needs to be clearly informed. And when this protection is made, the house is built, you can say. And then I can move in, then I can really start the marriage. But if you move in before into the house, you will get troubles; that's our experience in the past.

So, let us in those countries where wedding ceremonies is not customary, let us establish one. Let us say very clearly, here we will declare, I mean there is no specific formality that needs to be fulfill in that sense; that they have to wear special dress; that the ceremony has to look in a special form; that is not the case. The main point is that it is properly declare before the church, that a prayer of dedication is spoken, and a prayer of blessing, and that the church can say a fully Amen to matter. But when this takes place the church has long before being informed already, they have been prepared, and they can in such an assemble give their Amen to this union. And when this is the case then it shall have the blessing of God.

The same they have to do before the state as far as it is possible in the different countries. I don't know where you come from, especially in Africa, how do you do it there, but make sure that the world knows it. Make it as clear as you can. And the church, I recommend that you have such a simple ceremony. It doesn't have to be a big one, but it must have this character that the church is assembled, that the elder or minister is there, that he prays in behalf of the church for the couple, and dedicates them to God. So, with this I want to close.

History of the Health Message

We have repeated this morning some history of our health message in order to really find what exactly we have to repent of. Because we want to make a confession, this we wanted to publish, and we wanted to add a point about our past attitudes, or our past concepts about God our Doctor as well. In order to understand this a little bit better, I reviewed this history this morning and this I promised to do again this evening, so this is what we want to do right now. I headlined this consideration, in the following way: The message of "God is my Doctor," what do we believe today? Maybe I should have headlined it: What shall we repent of? What is the sin we want to confess? Maybe that would be another subheading to this. But we are dealing here with the message of "God is my Doctor."

The Message of "God is my Doctor"

What do we Believe Today?

So, the first question in this what do we believe today, is where shall we look? And I would like to begin with a quote in Early Writings page 14.1.

Where shall we Look?

"While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. I turned to look for the Advent people (Sabbath Rest Advent people) in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, 'Look again, and look a little higher.' At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people (Sabbath Rest Advent people) were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry (the message of "God is my Doctor", 1978). This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe." *Early Writings*, 14.1

“While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. I turned to look for the Advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, “Look again, and look a little higher.” At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe.” *Early Writings*, 14.1

Now, the Adventist people here where at first not seen and Sister White said: Look a little bit up” and then they were walking on this path, and this path was perfectly lead by a little, and were did it come from? It came from behind, it’s interesting, it’s came from the midnight cry. Now, we want to compare this instead of Advent people put here Sabbath Rest Advent People. That is our movement. We are traveling on a path and how do we find this path? What kind of light do we have, that lightens the path? It’s the light that has shown in the beginning. It shines brighter and brighter as we go on; that’s the purpose of Jesus, but we must not forget where it started because that light will lead us to the city and which was the light? It was the light on God is my Doctor, which was preached in 1978. So, let us apply this in this way here.

The Sabbath Rest Advent People are in the world but they are traveling in the path. Now, they were traveling to the city at the further end of the path, they had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path which the angel told me was the message of God is my Doctor in 1987. The light shown all along the path and so forth, and gave light for their feet, so that they might not stumbled; “If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe.” And this really applies to us. Well, we have to think about this statement for a while maybe, but let’s first of all look which was the message of 1978. And I give you some points now which we seem to think was the message.

What was the Message of 1978?

- That we should only use natural medicine?
- That we should not go to doctors or hospitals, nor undergo operations?
- That we will always be healed, provided we have faith?



No

You see, I don’t say that these points are wrong, but this was not the message. That we should only use natural medicine, that is nothing new, that’s basically what Adventist believed all the time. That

we shall not go to doctors, hospitals, and shall not go under operations was not the message, read it. You can read it in our camp report, or listen to tapes of that time. Actually I scanned through it this morning and I would like to read it through again because I really believe that if we understand this, it becomes clear. Was the message that we would always be healed provided we had faith? No, that was not the message. In fact, it was even mentioned that Sister White for example and Paul were not healed. So which was in the message of 1978, if these points were not the case?

What was the Message of 1978?

- We studied the law in Galatians
- The message of 1888: Righteousness (life) does not come by the law
- The message of 1978: Health does not come by the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ
- *Acts 4:12*

The message began with a study on the law in Galatians. Maybe you remember that the message on the law of Galatians referred to 1888, and the basic point was that righteousness or life does not come by the law. Adventist believed that they had the truth because they were keeping the Sabbath, and they were pointing their friends from the other churches to the law of God. They said, "Look here, you must keep the Sabbath, in order to be God's people, because that is what it says in the fourth commandment." And then the others would say, "We are not standing under the law anymore, because that is what we read in Galatians chapter 3."

So there was a controversy over this question whether to keep the Sabbath or not. Adventist argued, "That is not right, you have a wrong interpretation of Galatians 3, because it talks here about the ceremonial law; and not of the moral law. We still stand under the moral law, but not under the ceremonial law." And then Waggoner and Jones came along and they preached that the law in Galatians is the moral law. And that seemed to destroy the Adventist argument altogether, so that was the problem. But, their real message was not that we shall not keep the law anymore, the message was that we are fulfilling the law when do not stand under the law. That means the law on stony tables. They were preaching the law written into the heart, which is righteousness, which is life, which does not come by the law. It's an important point.

And so the message of 1978 was: health does not come by the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. And everybody who really could grasp this message, he developed a personal relationship to Christ, and that is important. If that personal relationship with Christ is not there, then this message is valueless. It is not a message that can be just received as an intellectual entity. It's impossible, we cannot just

have it as a doctrine written on our door posts. It's either written in the heart or is not there. And if that message is not written in the heart, if Jesus is not our personal Doctor, then we don't have it. And then we draw all kinds of personal conclusions which may be quite wrong. So, let me emphasize again, the message of 1978 in a nutshell is: health does not come by the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. In this connection, maybe let us briefly turn to *Acts 4:12*. That is where Peter spoke before the Sanhedrin and he said: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

And you know that the word salvation can also be translated healing. "Nor is there healing in any other." And that is quite a valid translation, because that was the context. They asked him, "How did you heal this man?" And he said, "This shall be known to you that there is no healing except by Jesus Christ." So, let's read this again, "Nor is there healing in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be healed." And this basically was the message of 1978. Well, now let us look a little bit at the history and how it went.

The History after 1978

- There was enthusiasm and excitement.
- We expected that the miracles of the time of Jesus' ministry would be immediately repeated.
- It was considered merely a matter of faith.
- The question of treatments and doctors would not need to be dealt with because Jesus would always heal.
- We thought that it was always the will of God to heal (even though this was not the message).

The history after 1978 went like this: There was enthusiasm and there was excitement at first when the message was received. It seemed to be a wonderful message for us and I would almost speak with *Revelation 10*, it was sweet in our mouths, but it was a bitter in our stomach, when we swallowed it. Because our expectations were not fulfilled as we saw them.

What were our expectations? What was our enthusiasm and excitement based upon? We expected that the miracles of the times of Jesus Ministry would be immediately repeated. We really thought that from now on God would work miracles amongst us; miracles of healing. That was definitively our belief. And it was considered merely a matter of faith, that this would actually happen. So the only hindrance between now and us seeing actual miracles was just faith. If that faith was there, we would definitely see these miracles, that was our believe. The question of treatments and doctors would not need to be dealt with. There was no need to discuss about these points, because Jesus would always heal. That's an unimportant question in that context, in that enthusiasm, in that excitement.

We would not look to these things, neither would we ask many questions concerning this. And we thought that it is always the will of God to heal, even though that was not the message.

As I said already, that was more or less the expectation, we did not even look at the exceptions. In fact, in one case, if I am not mistaken, the statement was even made, "When we pray for healing we don't pray 'if it is your will,' because we know it is always God's will to heal us. After all didn't God say that He will heal all your diseases? And He will forgive you all your iniquities?" There are no exceptions, so therefore that means, He will always heal. Except when we don't have faith. That is clear, he will not heal those cases. That was more or less the expectancy.

Changes in our Understanding of the Message

The accident of Wolfgang Meyer in the Autumn of 1978

The fanatical ideas of Ron Parsons and his followers

Healing is not only dependent on faith. There are also other reasons why God does not heal (Job, John the Baptist, martyrs). Studies on the principle of self-sacrificing love.

But then the history went on. It was in the autumn of 1978, when the American Camp meetings were still on, that something happened, and that was the tragic accident of Wolfgang Meyer. On a trip to Rumania where he did not get entrance, he came back and he had a car accident, where he and two other believers died. Another event that was quite important for us was, the fanatical ideas of Ron Parsons and his followers. That took shape a little later, but we can almost say their roots began in this time.

In addition to this we should add that this tragic accident was just one thing, but we believed that God would resurrect him. Here was the opportunity for a miracle. But, he was not resurrected. Two times we prayed for him, and each time nothing happened. So, what we learned through these things, through the fanatical ideas and also through the experience that we had, that healing is not only dependant of faith, there are also other reasons why God does not heal. I want to say that this was not really something new, because it was contained in the message of 1978 already. But, now it became more prominent, now it was really a matter of also our clear understanding. We studied Job, we studied John the Baptist, we studied the martyrs, and these were the studies on the principle of self-sacrificing love, which gave quite a balance, especially to the fanatical ideas which happened.

Questions that Came Up

- What is the place of treatments in the work of healing?
- What is the place of doctors (believing and unbelieving)?
- What is natural medicine?
- Are operations a denial of our faith?

The next questions that came up, I mean years went by and eventually there were questions that were coming up; for example what is the place of treatments in the work of healing? What is the place of doctors, believers and non-believers? In Germany at that time, we had one doctor and others who soon became doctors as you know, and the question was, should the believers now all go to them, or should they not? And how is it with unbelieving doctors? Would it be a denial of faith to go to them? And anyway, shall we even use treatments, and what kind of treatments? And another question is, what is natural medicine? The one would say, this is natural, the other would say that is natural. And, are operations a denial of faith? It was vehemently denied, or it was vehemently supported. So, these were the questions that caused quite some friction, and tension among us, and uncertainty, I would say. So, what were the different positions on these questions? I repeat these questions here:

Questions that Came Up

- What is the place of treatments in the work of healing?
- What is the place of doctors (believing and unbelieving)?
- What is natural medicine?
- Are operations a denial of our faith?

- What is the place of treatment in the work of healing? One position would be: They are a denial of faith, another position: they are only a token of faith without any other value, and another position would say: they are life saving essence. Without treatments you die, so you must have treatments.
- What is the place of doctors? That is of believers and unbelievers? Some say: "there is no place for doctors, you don't need a doctor when Christ is your doctor" and other would say "well if the doctor is a believer you can go to him, but only if he is a believer" and others would say "well you can go to any doctor, they are all equal, and anyway, the doctors of the world are often wiser than our doctors." Those were the positions, I just repeat here the different ideas.
- What is natural medicine? Some would say "to do nothing is natural, natural is if the body helps himself, as soon as you do something, that is unnatural already." Others would say "only water" and other would say "well herbs need to be taken as well." They would make big science of certain herbs; others said "everything is natural, when used wisely."
- Are operations a denial of faith? In this connection you can say "is it a denial of faith to go in the hospital and so forth?" Some would say yes, some would say no; and the question is also, what is real cooperation with God here?

So these were the different positions taken at that time. I want to say very clearly, this is nothing to do with the light of 1978. You see, these questions are raised later, they are raised by different circumstances, let me say so, to express it mildly. Maybe they are raised also because we are self-confident, or because we have no real trust in God. So these questions, or the answer to these questions are not the message. We must look back to the message. What was the message in 1978?

Is Treatment a Denial of Faith?

- *Romans 14* – Medical treatment is a personal decision based upon your faith.
- The key is a personal relationship with the Physician – Christ.

The question also was, what is a denial of faith, and we looked then at Romans 14 when this question especially with operation came up, when the sister who was sitting here was asking: was it a denial of faith that I had a liver operation? And that is when we read Romans 14 together, where we saw that individual guidance in personal matters is important, and that medical treatment is a personal matter. When God is my personal doctor I must know exactly what to accept, and what not to accept. And if a person sees that an operation is the will of God for him, then let him do this, that's his faith. And if

somebody thinks that he should have no operation because he believes that this is where God led him, then he shall have no operation.

It was a great relief when we studied this; on the other hand I see the possibility that we are so indefinite in the end that, like we have studied this afternoon you see, we can believe almost everything and it still fits so to speak. But that's not the point here. The point is really that we have a message that God is our doctor but exactly how to apply this in the individual case must be a personal matter. Everything else would be limiting the freedom of conscience. So that, we certainly believe, is a very important issue in this matter. But let us go a little bit further. We want to make a comparison here and for this we take Romans 13. Do you know what we read in Romans 13? It is about the state and the authorities. Maybe we should very briefly look at it.

A Comparison

Romans 13

Worldly Government

- Uses the sword
- Protects the citizens
- Is God's servant
- Is not what we depend on

"The loving missionary can do more." *The Ministry of Healing*, 106.2

Conventional Medicine

- Uses drugs
- Protects life
- Is God's servant
- Is not what we depend on

Jesus can do more

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." *Romans 13:1-7*

And then it talks about love to your neighbor and it says: If you do this, then you have nothing to fear of the authorities, because God has not given the authorities power to punish those who keep the law. So, if you keep the law you have nothing to fear basically. Now, coming to this, we make a comparison between the worldly governments and the school medicine. In what way can we make a comparison between these two things? First of all the government uses the sword. What does the

school medicine use? Drugs exactly. The world government uses the sword. Secondly the world government protects the citizens and that is the task given to it of God; now when we say it protects it's citizens, are we included in this? Definitely yes, even Christ himself was included in this, as we have seen in our study on the Romans and Christ. You probably still can remember how the Romans protected Christ when the Jews wanted to tear him apart, when he was before Herod. They wanted to tear him apart, and in that moment, the Roman soldiers stepped in and hindered them. And that was essential, it was necessary so that Christ could die on the cross. Because to die here was not right. God had to protect him, and he protected him in this case through the Romans.

Another example would be Paul, who very frequently was protected by the sword of the Romans against his enemies. So, that is the purpose of the worldly government—to protect the citizens. In this way, he is God's servant. God uses him to protect the citizens, generally, and to protect even the people of God specifically. The next point is that even though God uses the government as His servants, we must not depend on that protection. In other words, we depend not on the protection of the sword of the state, but we do depend on Christ, on the angels. If I don't depend on the angels, if the sword of the state is my protection, if I have dependence on this, where would I end? I would definitely come into great troubles. But, at the same time, while I'm not depending on it, I'm accepting that protection because God is using it. So, when I stand under the protection of Caesar I stand under his protection for the belief that I have in God that He uses him. You see this point?

But it may be, that God leads me so that I don't need his protection all. You remember the story "Angel over her tent," where Sister White was once threatened by some juveniles who wanted to harm Sister White, and it was somehow known by some Adventist, and they said: Sister White you have to have some protection, because they will come tonight, they will destroy your tent and so forth. And she said: I don't need a protection. But they said: But you must have. Okay, well if it is your choice, but I don't need it. Well then finally a policeman was placed there, because the brethren insisted, and that night he saw an angel over her tent, and he was deeply impressed, and he said: This lady does not need me, because she has a greater protection.

So that is the real issue, why God is at times using Caesar. We must not depend on him, because very often we cannot. Because the state even though he is God's servant, does not always fulfill his job properly as you know. So the next point is that we need to realize in worldly governments that there is another way also to help the evil doer. And that is through the loving missionaries. I want to read this statement with you in *Minister of Healing* 106.2

"The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice. These are necessary to strike terror to the lawbreaker, but the loving missionary can do more than this. Often the heart that hardens under reproof will melt under the love of Christ."

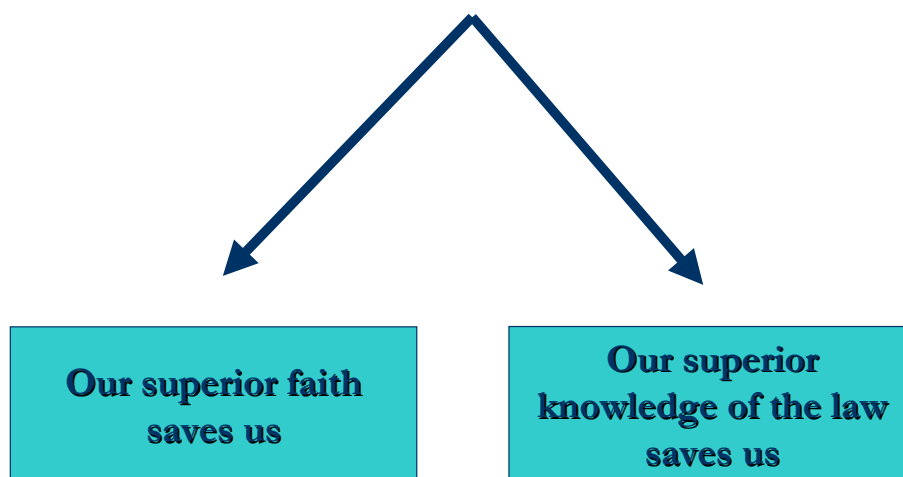
So what does this mean? Does it mean that we disregard Caesar? No, does it mean that we do not cooperate with him when necessary? No. Does it mean that we despise him? No. Does it mean that we do not recognize him as God's servant? No, of course not. Sister White says "They are necessary, but the loving missionary can do more." God has also another way. So while He uses this way, He has also another way, that's important to see.

Now, I really see a parallel here to the school medicine, because the sword would be the drugs, I think that's clear. The one is using force, the other is using force. The one is used to save lives, the other is used to save lives as well. The purpose of the government is to protect it's citizens, the school medicine, it's purpose is to protect life. The worldly government is used as God's servant, so the school medicine is also used as God's servant for the general health of her population. The worldly government must not be depended upon, and so likewise we must not depend on the skill of the school medicine. That means we must not put our trust in these things, we must not really cling to this, as

though our life depended on it, you see? It depends on God, that is the message. And finally, there is also another way, and we know Jesus can do more.

This comparison gives some place to the work of the school medicine which we have not seen in the past really. It gives it some place, which does not mean that this is the way to be used in the last work. But, it is a place and we must recognize it. Otherwise, we get into trouble. Now, our problem is that in our self-confidence we did not give these things any place. And because of this we came to the border of getting difficulties with even state authorities. I mean God protected us to this point of time so that we had no real troubles, but we could have got into troubles very easily and I really must say it's God's mercy, that I in spite of our self-confidence, he protected us. Now we want to come to this point of self-confidence. In what way does self-confidence express itself?

The Expression of Self-Confidence



There are two ways, first of all in our supposed superior knowledge of the law. You see, we expected that we would get such a knowledge of the law that would be superior to anything that the world has, with all the laboratories and so forth. And because of this, we would definitely know how to treat the sick and would heal them. But you know? The world is quite diligent. For example, they study how to combat cancer, and when you read the medical reports and so forth, you see that for example they are trying to put a gene into the cells whereby the cancer cells kill themselves, and that's quite sophisticated. You know it requires a lot of knowledge and skill to do this.

Now, would you expect that we are superior in knowledge? But we are tempted to think this, because God has blessed us. He has blessed our students in school, he has blessed us maybe in our studies in University, or wherever so that we got extraordinary grades, that we were even better than others often. And because of this, we thought: "look God is blessing us here, and that means He will give us a knowledge of the law that nobody knows, that the world does not know. He will show us the right herb that the others don't know, so we will get the superior knowledge." This is self-confidence. It is not really speaking of self-distrust is it?

We must realize that this is not the message of 1978. It's quite the opposite, isn't it? The message is this: that we do not get health by the law, so we must not look to a superior knowledge of the law, we must acknowledge that the world knows more about the law than we do. And I think we should not for a moment think that our knowledge is better, even though I must say through the Spirit of Prophecy we have a very simple knowledge that often is more effective than complicated mechanisms that are developed in the world.

But, it's not really something we can be very proud of, it's not our superior knowledge of the law and we must not even expect something in this direction. But, again looking to Christ and seeing how He was blessed by God, he was the head and not the tail, we thought we would be the head and not the tail. That means that we would get knowledge that the world does not have. Forget about this. That is not the health message, even though I wish that our physicians would get very good knowledge and apply it, and I really support them in this. But we will not through this really see the fulfillment of the message.

The other expression of self-confidence in this field is that our superior faith saves us. Of course, we have more faith than the others, for that reason it saves us. Our faith is the correct one, we believe that God is our doctor, so therefore God will help us. But again, it's self-confidence. This self-confidence has often brought us into very difficult positions, very difficult situations. For this reason we need to see that what God gives this year is quite important. Now, let me say again, it is not our knowledge of the law of God that saves us, on the other hand we must not be proud of our ignorance either. We must not go round and say: well, we know nothing, and because we know nothing we just have faith, and because of that faith we are saved. That is self-confidence just in another guise.

So, our position or our acceptance of the message of God being our Doctor, really depends on one thing. And that is that we have a personal relationship with that Doctor. Let me say this again, the issue is not whether we go to a earthly doctor or not, the issue is not whether we are operated on or not; the issue is, how is our personal connection with our heavenly Doctor? That is the real issue, and everything else is secondary, because when this is right, when we really have this experience, then it is a matter of personal leading what we shall do exactly. And we expect according to the Spirit of Prophecy that God will show us ways and means where we do not need to use drugs; where we do not need to use the sword, which is in the end a curse, because he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword.

Sister White makes it very clear that God will give His people wisdom to apply treatments where the use of drugs is not necessary. At the same time we must realize that because we are in the world we have to cooperate with the school medicine to some degree, and we have experienced this to the extent to where we actually had to accept even a treatment that we would not think was according to our faith. We believed certainly that there is only one way of practicing the healing art and we could not see any room for the drugs, and felt therefore a very bad conscience.

Now, I want to say that we still do believe that the sword is not the way of God, neither in the state nor in the school of medicine. But, at the same time we must acknowledge that God has given these people a certain task and their task is to, if possible, save lives. If they misuse this task, I know we know the politicians are corrupt and so medical people are corrupt, that's clear, you find this in the world. But at the same time, they have received a certain authority from God, which we must recognize it.

Now, our self-confidence, that led us to think that our faith is superior, that led us to think that our knowledge is superior has made us fools at times, in the world, and that is good because it has taught us to be more distrustful.

And now we couldn't take it two ways. It either can lead us to dependence on Christ. Or it can lead us to turn away from the message. And may the Lord give that we do not turn away from the message, but really to see how dependent we are upon Him, and how much we need Him and how much closer we must come to Him in order to really experience Him as our Doctor.

So what we need, is a radical reform. What does Radical mean?

A Radical Reform

- Coming back to the roots
- The message of 1978
- Health is from Christ – a personal relationship

It means going back to the roots. We have to go back to the roots of the message of 1978, and what is the message? The message is that health is from Christ. That we need a personal relationship with Him. So with these thoughts I want to close.

Our Confession

Dickendorf, Friday, June 25, 2004

1. We confess the spirit of self-confidence which we often mistook for faith. This spirit has hindered us from receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We ask the Lord for a clearer revelation of Christ which will lead us to a healthy self-distrust and dependence on His power alone. *John 15:5*
2. We confess that we have not been thorough enough in co-operating with God in the testing of candidates for baptism, marriage, ordination, and church work. We shunned confrontation, were concerned about our reputation, and did not strictly apply the Word of God. We recognize the need to say "no" where it is necessary, and we will do so by God's grace.
3. We confess that we did not clearly understand that every calling is conditional. This includes the calling of a messenger, an elder, a Church member, a worker, or a Movement. (For an example of a misconception in this regard, see *Child Salvation*, 218.4, June, 1987 edition, where the impression is given that a messengership continues regardless of how sinful the messenger may become.) This led to a dangerous sense of security which has harmed the Church.
4. We confess that sensuality has grown among us through our failure to be a real brother and friend to our brethren who are weak in this area. *Proverbs 27:5*
5. We confess a wrong concept about re-marriage which has brought many evils into the Church. According to the Word of God there are only two reasons that free a person to re-marry. The first one is physical death (*Romans 7:1,2*). The second is physical adultery (*Matthew 5:32*; *The Adventist Home*, 341.3). The wrong concept existed among us that there was a third reason for re-marriage, namely, spiritual adultery (spiritual death). (For an example of this misconception see *The Living and the Dead*, 41.2, July, 1981 edition.) This wrong concept resulted in some wrong counselling which led to marriages that the Word of God does not support.
6. We confess a lack of co-operation with God in the area of confessing our sins. It is our duty to confess our sins, but in some cases we have, with a wrong understanding of Sabbath Rest, expected the Lord to hide the secrets of our lives. (For an example of this misconception see *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest*, 292.3, July 1983 edition.) We have misunderstood the goodness of God by not seeing His abhorrence of sin and by believing that we could escape the consequences once we repented of our sins. (For an example of this misconception see *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest*, 301.6, July 1983 edition.) While sins of a purely private nature should not be made public, we will not seek solutions to problems by keeping sins secret that have an effect on others.
7. We confess the spirit of self-confidence in the realm of healing. We thought that we had a knowledge of the law which was superior to the world and that we could rely on this knowledge for healing. On the other hand, we thought we had a superior faith which we believed could save us from sickness and death. At the same time, sins, especially sins of sensuality, existed among us which made it impossible for God to work for us in a greater measure. We are dependent on Christ for the healing of soul and body. *Acts 4:12*. We ask Him humbly to make each one of us willing to accept any way He wants to individually lead us in this realm.
8. Our misconceptions and self-confidence have brought suffering, harm, and sadness to Christ and our fellow humans. We are sorry for this and ask for forgiveness and cleansing. We dedicate ourselves to humble service to Christ and all humankind.

International Seminar 2004

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