

# **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WARFARE**

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## **A SHORT INTRODUCTION IN MEMORY OF BROTHER WATCHMAN NEE**

According to the revelation of the Bible and the confirmation in history, in every age God has had His special work on earth among His created people, and for the accomplishment of this special work, He has raised up special men, chosen and perfected by Him to meet this special need. During this century, as the gospel of God went to the East along with Western culture, hundreds and thousands of Western missionaries responded to God's commission and went to China, a land of ancient culture, and gave everything they had for the gospel of God. Not a few among them excelled in achievements, spiritually as well as literarily, yet not many were able to proclaim the economy of God and the mystery of Christ clearly and fully. Against this background, at the turn of this century, while China was being transformed from a nation under imperialistic control to a democratic nation, from among the young generation infused with Western culture and literature, God suddenly raised up one person by the name of Nee Shu-tsu (called Watchman Nee after his conversion) to fulfill His mission of the age. After Brother Nee was saved, he was cared for and nurtured by the Lord Himself and became, even in his youth, exceptional and outstanding in biblical exposition and spiritual teaching. These teachings were warmly welcomed by the lovers and seekers of the Lord in China and produced a heartfelt response and following among many young believers. Yet at the same time, they startled many Chinese and Western leaders in Chinese Christianity and stirred up some antagonism and opposition.

Brother Nee diligently studied the Bible and received help from the important biblical expositional writings of the past two thousand years. He was acquainted with the letter of the scriptural doctrines, but much more, he was familiar with the principles, the spiritual significances, the very life within the scriptural truths, and the spirit of the Bible. For this reason, his exposition and preaching, whether verbal or written, all conveyed the divine visions and spiritual revelations which he received from the Bible and were full of truth, light, life, and spirit. They were living and vibrant and full of power from God, so that his audiences as well as his readers were easily touched by what he preached and expounded and easily received grace and responded to such words.

Of all that Brother Nee preached and expounded during his lifetime, we can summarize the main points into twelve items:

### **I. CONCERNING GOD**

He pointed out that God is eternal, self-existing, ever-existing, having no beginning or ending, and complete and perfect in every sense. God is triune; in His Godhead, He is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Father is the source, the Son is the expression, and the Spirit is the application. God the Son is the embodiment of God the Father, while God the Spirit is the reality of God the Son, applying the Triune God to those who believe into God the Son. God is also holy and righteous. Holiness refers to God's inward nature, while righteousness refers to God's outward acts. God is love and light. Love is the element of His inward nature, while light is the element of His outward expression. This God possesses extraordinary wisdom and accomplishes superlative works.

### **II. CONCERNING THE ETERNAL PLAN (ECONOMY) OF GOD**

He pointed out that this God who possesses extraordinary wisdom and accomplishes superlative works has a good pleasure according to His heart's desire, which is to gain a group of men who would become

one with Him, sharing the same life, the same living, the same move, and the same work as His, that He may express Himself in glory through them. Therefore, in eternity past He purposed in Himself an eternal plan (economy). In this plan God the Son was to be the centrality and universality that He would have the preeminence in all things. For this reason He also created the universe, with all the myriads of items therein, in order that He might create in it a tripartite man—composed of a spirit, a soul, and a body—as a vessel to receive Him and express Him. God would enter into man's spirit as the Spirit and regenerate man, thus producing His many sons, who share His life and nature, and the many members of Christ the Son, who constitute His organic Body as His corporate expression, so that the Triune God through this expression would have an ultimate expression in fullness for eternity.

### **III. CONCERNING THE INCARNATION OF GOD**

He pointed out that at the time of creation God did not put Himself into man to let man share His life and nature. It was four thousand years later that He in God the Son, through the Spirit entering the flesh of a virgin, was conceived as a man with both the divine nature and the human nature—a God-man who is the complete God as well as the perfect man. Thus, He brought God into man, and within human flesh, He lived a human life on earth, expressing God by living out all of God's attributes through His human virtues.

### **IV. CONCERNING CHRIST**

He pointed out that the Second of the Divine Trinity was made Christ by God in eternity past. This One is God's Anointed. In time, He came to accomplish the eternal plan (economy) which God had purposed for the expression of Himself. God desires that this Christ, His embodiment, be the centrality and universality in His eternal plan and that He would have the preeminence over all things in both creation and redemption, transcending all things. This Christ whom He established emptied Himself, laying aside the form of God and taking the form of a slave, and was found in fashion as a man, living a humble human life on earth. At the end of His human life, this Christ of God went to the cross, accomplished God's eternal redemption for us, the sinners, and released God's eternal life. He also resurrected from the dead and was transformed from God's only begotten Son to God's firstborn Son. Furthermore, in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit to enter into the believers, making them God's new creation and His members, constituting His Body. He became the life, the element, and the Head of the Body. In this way the Triune God has obtained a corporate expression in this universe. In the coming kingdom He will be King and will reign with the overcoming saints over the coming world. Later, in the new heaven and new earth, He will be the centrality and universality of the New Jerusalem and will be the mutual dwelling place of God and man to be the full expression of the Triune God in eternity.

### **V. CONCERNING THE DEATH OF CHRIST**

He pointed out that the death of Christ was not a death of martyrdom, but a vicarious death on behalf of us, the sinners, which bears many significances: (1) to remove our sins, (2) to crucify the flesh for us, thus terminating the old man, (3) to destroy Satan who has the power of death, (4) to judge the world under Satan, (5) to annul the ordinances which separated us, (6) to satisfy all the requirements of righteousness, holiness, and glory which God had placed on us, the sinners, and (7) to release God's eternal life from within Himself for us.

## **VI. CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**

He pointed out that Christ's resurrection was a resurrection of His whole being from the dead, including His body, by God through the divine Spirit within Christ. Such a resurrection made Him, the only begotten Son of God, the firstborn Son of God with both the divine nature and the human nature. His resurrection also transformed Him into a life-giving Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the reality of life, who enters into His believers to regenerate them, to bring their humanity into divinity, to make them God's many sons, His many brothers, and His members who constitute His mysterious Body as His organism for the expression of Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God. The reality of this resurrection, which is the Holy Spirit, the reality of life, has become the overcoming power in the life of His believers and will become the infinite power which will resurrect them from the dead and will transform and redeem their bodies.

## **VII. CONCERNING THE ETERNAL LIFE**

He pointed out that the eternal life described in the Bible is God's uncreated life, which is eternal both in time and in nature, perfect, and without any blemish. This eternal life of God swallows up and overcomes death and is also the indestructible life. This life of God is also the Triune God Himself as life to those who believe into His Son. By this life we become God-men, those who are joined to God and who possess both humanity and divinity.

## **VIII. CONCERNING THE SPIRIT**

He pointed out that the Spirit is the application of the Triune God. The Spirit reaches those who have believed into and received God the Son. The Spirit applies to them God the Father who is in God the Son. He is the Spirit of life and the reality of life; He is also the life-giving Spirit, dispensing life to those who believe into the Son. As such, He is the regenerating Spirit who regenerates the believers with the life of God the Father in God the Son, making them the children of God. He then becomes the indwelling Spirit within them as the reality of all things. He is the renewing Spirit who renews the man of the old creation into God's new creation with God's eternally new and never-aging life. He is also the sanctifying Spirit who separates and sanctifies the believers with God's sanctifying nature. He is the transforming Spirit who transforms them with the life element of Christ into His image. He is the firstfruits, the foretaste, of God as the eternal portion of those who have believed into the Son. He is the Spirit of power poured out on the believers of the Son as the authority for their work. He is the reality of the Triune God, the reality of Christ, the reality of all the truths, and the reality of the resurrection of Christ. Only by receiving Him will a man possess the Triune God, the truths, Christ, and the resurrection of Christ.

## **IX. CONCERNING CHRIST'S REDEMPTION AND GOD'S SALVATION**

He pointed out that the redemption of Christ was accomplished through His vicarious and redemptive death for the sinners. When we the sinners receive this redemption, we are forgiven, cleansed, justified, and reconciled to God. Based on Christ's redemption, God in His salvation forgives, cleanses, justifies, reconciles, and regenerates us through Christ's resurrection and renews, separates, and sanctifies us through His Spirit. Furthermore, the Spirit transforms us through the life-element of the pneumatic Christ, conforming us to the image of God's firstborn Son, Christ, and finally glorifying us with the divine glory into which Christ has entered.

This salvation which God accomplished through Christ's death and resurrection and through the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration, renewing, separation, sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification is different from the reward which God will give to the believers at the time of Christ's coming. God's salvation is based on grace, which is different from the law, and is not based on man's works according to the law. God's reward is based on the overcoming life which believers in Christ live out after they are redeemed and saved, and this reward is through faith, by Christ's resurrection life, and by the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. This reward is also based on the work, in Christ and by the Holy Spirit, of the building up of the church, the Body of Christ, which accomplishes God's eternal plan (economy). God's salvation is eternal; it includes saving us from our past sins, our present bondage of sin, and our temptations and failures into the ultimate enjoyment and full taste of the Triune God with all His riches in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. God's reward is dispensational and is limited to our reigning and obtaining glory together with Christ in the millennial kingdom during the manifestation of the kingdom.

## **X. CONCERNING THE BELIEVERS**

He pointed out that the believers in Christ were created by the Triune God according to His image as tripartite men with a spirit, a soul, and a body to be God's vessel for containing Him, expressing Him, representing Him, and reigning for Him over all creation. At the time of creation, God did not put His life and nature into man; He only created a spirit in man so that man could receive with his spirit the pneumatic God into him as life. But man fell under Satan's temptation. He did not obey God's commandment; rather, he was corrupted by Satan, bearing Satan's evil nature and being constituted a sinner. Because of this, God Himself became a man and put on the flesh of fallen man. This man's name was Jesus Christ, who in His flesh died for man and redeemed man from his sins, thus terminating the sinner himself together with Satan, the world, and the old creation. After His death, His whole being was resurrected, and in resurrection He was transformed into a life-giving Spirit. As such, He enters into the sinners who believe in and receive Him and becomes one with them, thus regenerating them to become God's children and His members, making them one with Himself, and constituting them His organic Body, which is the church, His fullness as His corporate expression.

These sinners who believe into Jesus Christ are called the Christians, the followers of Christ, those related to Christ. They were of God's old creation but have become God's new creation through regeneration by believing into Christ, possessing God's life and nature, walking by God's life and His Spirit, and living and working for God. They are being built up together in spirit to become the church of God, which is God's house, the Body of Christ and the fullness of Christ, and are waiting for Christ's return, at which time He will rapture them, transform them, and receive them into His glory to be with Him forever. Those among them who after their salvation are willing to live an overcoming life by the overcoming life of Christ and by the resurrection power in the Holy Spirit, who will participate in the work of accomplishing God's plan (economy), and who will ripen first before His coming again, will receive His reward to enter into the millennium, to be co-kings with Him, and to rule over the world. Those among them who are not ripened in this way will receive His discipline in the millennial kingdom so that they will ripen. Hence, they will be constituted elements of the New Jerusalem, and after the millennium in the new heaven and new earth, they will participate together with those believers who ripened first in the ultimate blessing and enjoyment of God's salvation in the New Jerusalem for eternity.

## **XI. CONCERNING THE CHURCH**

He pointed out that the church is constituted of all those who believe into Christ and who belong to Christ. On the one hand, this church is universal, and on the other hand, it is local. On the universal side, the church is both God's house and the Body of Christ in the universe. On the local side, the church is the local manifestation of the house of God and the Body of Christ. These local manifestations are the many local churches which together form the one unique church in the universe.

This church as God's house is also God's household and God's habitation, which affords God the satisfaction and joy of a Father with His children; it is also God's dwelling place, which affords Him full and satisfying rest. In this way, He can freely express all that He is, has, and can do in this house.

This church as the Body of Christ is an organism by which Christ moves and walks among mankind and through which He lives out His all-inclusive self. This Body is also the bride of Christ, the counterpart of Christ; it is out of Christ, unto Christ, and for the satisfaction of Christ's love. This Body is also a new man created by Christ in Himself, being constituted with His life and element for the fulfillment of the eternal plan (economy) of God.

In order to exist among mankind, this church is scattered over all the earth to become the many separate local churches. Each one has its elders for administration and its deacons for service. In business affairs the churches are independent and separate, but in life and nature they are still one universal Body, receiving the same apostles' teaching, maintaining the one apostles' fellowship, and bearing the one testimony for Christ for the accomplishment of God's one plan (economy).

Such a church is composed outwardly of the many saints called out by God from the world, but inwardly it is the result of the Triune God working Himself into and growing out of the believers in Christ. Hence, it is a living organism; it is absolutely not a religious organization in the society, much less a lifeless material building.

This church is also the kingdom of God today, in which God reigns and rules over everything.

## **XII. CONCERNING THE NEW JERUSALEM**

Finally, he also pointed out that the ultimate revelation of the Bible, the New Jerusalem, is constituted of all the redeemed ones in the Old and the New Testament. It is the tabernacle of the Triune God, the habitation of God with man in eternity. It is also the bride of Christ who is the embodiment of the Triune God, His beloved spouse in eternity. This holy city is also God's Holy of Holies, with the same one dimension in height, length, and breadth. It is constituted of God and the Lamb to be the serving place and dwelling of all God's redeemed. It is constituted of: (1) God the Father, the source of the Triune God, as its essence, like the transparent pure gold; (2) God the Son, the expression of the Triune God, as its entrance in His redeeming death and His life-dispensing resurrection, like the beautiful pearl; and (3) God the Spirit, the application of the Triune God, as her walls and foundations, through the Spirit's transformation in the believers, like the glorious precious stones. She is thus constituted by the Triune God to be the ultimate consummation of God with the redeemed, regenerated, and transformed tripartite man, in which He and man become one as His corporate expression and manifestation in eternity. In this city the Lamb is the lamp, shining forth God's glory, and in the midst of this city there is the throne of administration of God and the Lamb, from which flows a river of water of life, clear as crystal. This river flows in the middle of a spiral street, which encircles the whole city and reaches the twelve gates at the circumference of the city, nourishing the entire city. On either side of this river grows the tree of life, with new fruits every month, supplying the entire city. In this way, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is the culmination of the union between the Triune God and His redeemed

tripartite man; it is filled with the glory of the Triune God and expresses His fullness in eternity. It is also full of the supply of the Triune God to His redeemed in His redemption, so that they can have a full enjoyment and a full taste of all that the redeeming Triune God is, has done, and has attained. All this is a summary of the divine revelation which Brother Nee saw and conveyed to us.

The things which Brother Nee preached and spoke from the whole Bible are broad, deep, and far-reaching. But the above twelve items are their center, their course, and their goal. During the first thirty years of my Christian life, I read through all of Brother Nee's writings. During the subsequent thirty or more years, I have reviewed and re-read them in the course of my Christian work, referencing and using his writings. The riches of the benefit I have received and the abundance of grace I have inherited can only be expressed thoroughly by the master work of the new creation of the Triune God in endless eternity. I sincerely hope that all the readers will receive grace from the Lord to take Brother Nee's writings as the center, the course, and the goal—the center of their faith, the course of their race, and the goal of their pursuit—that we may all bask together in such abundant grace. Although Brother Nee sleeps, may his word continue, and although the watchman is no longer with us, may his voice be heard, until the morning star arises and the night shadows are dispersed. I hereby respectfully offer this brief introduction in unfading memory to the writer, Brother Watchman Nee.

Respectfully, a beneficiary,  
Witness Lee, Anaheim, California, U.S.A.  
July 24, 1991  
(Translated from Chinese)

## PREFACE

The Collected Works of Watchman Nee is a collection of the messages, sermons, publications, manuscripts, and hymns of Brother Watchman Nee. This publication is divided into three sets. The first set comprises his early writings, covering the years from 1922 through 1934; the second set comprises the second part of his ministry, covering the years from 1935 through 1942; and the third set comprises the last decade of his ministry, from 1943 through 1952.

In editing this publication, we have done our best to present each work in its original format. This means, in some cases, that the versions presented here may differ slightly from some familiar existing editions. Most of these works were originally published in the Chinese language. The present publication is a fresh translation from the Chinese. None of the existing English translations have been consulted, with the exception of those translations previously published by the Living Stream Ministry. Because we have tried to be as faithful to the original meaning as possible, we have not taken too much liberty to make adjustments in style and expression. The difficulty can at times be compounded by the fact that some of the earlier writings are somewhat archaic in their original Chinese form. However, we do not wish to sacrifice accuracy for beauty of style.

Readers who understand the Chinese language will notice that the titles of a few of the English books and articles are slightly different from their Chinese counterparts. In all of these cases, we have adopted the original English title provided by Brother Nee himself. (For example, the literal translation of the magazine title *The Present Testimony is Revival*, but we have adopted the former because it was provided by Brother Nee himself.)

We have tried our best to include only those works which were written or spoken by Brother Nee himself. Some of the articles published in two of his earlier magazines, *The Christian* and *The Present Testimony*, as well as some chapters of his first book, *The Christian Life and Warfare*, were written by other Chinese writers (such as Ruth Lee and others) or were translated from English. We have eliminated all of these articles from this publication. However, in the few cases where the source of an article is unclear, it has been included in this publication.

Wherever possible, Scripture quotations are taken from the Recovery Version published by the Living Stream Ministry. Quotations from those Old Testament books for which no Recovery Version exists are taken from the King James Version.

The Editor  
June 1992

# **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WARFARE**

## **PREFACE**

The contents of this book were published in June 1927. The original Chinese title was, literally translated, The Details of Spiritual Cultivation. The present English title was provided by the author himself on the title page of that book. The original book was composed partly of messages translated from English by Brother Watchman Nee and partly of messages written by him in the years prior to 1927. Some of the chapters first appeared in the early issues of The Present Testimony magazine in 1923. The following is an announcement that appeared in the March 1927 issue (No. 15) of The Christian magazine. It states the nature of the book:

A clear book on guiding man to a pathway of spiritual edification; a required reading for all those who desire to overcome sin, the world, and the devil. The whole book is divided into eighteen chapters, with three hundred pages and over a hundred thousand words. From its beginning to its end, it has the cross of the Lord Jesus as the center. This book pays special attention to the teaching of Romans 6. It details the way to differentiate the spiritual part from the self in our life. There are also clear teachings concerning the way to pray, to overcome the devil, and to engage in spiritual works. This book should not only be read but also studied by all God's children. All those who buy this book will continue to receive fresh light, even if they read it once every month.

The book was published by the Bible Truth Depot, P.O. Box 323, Shanghai (also known as the Shanghai Gospel Bookroom) and sold for forty-five cents paperbound and seventy-five cents clothbound. The following is the table of contents of the original book's nineteen chapters together with the author of each chapter.

- (1) Back to the Cross!—Charles H. Usher
- (2) The Distinction between the Spirit, the Soul, and the Body—Watchman Nee
- (3) The Flesh—Watchman Nee
- (4) The Soul-life—Watchman Nee
- (5) How to Walk by the Spirit—Jessie Penn-Lewis
- (6) Fact, Faith, and Experience—Watchman Nee
- (7) Living by Faith—Anonymous
- (8) How to Seek After God's Will—Watchman Nee
- (9) Walking in the Will of God—Jessie Penn-Lewis
- (10) More than Conquerors—Jessie Penn-Lewis
- (11) Liberty through the Cross --Gordon Watts
- (12) The Cross Destroying the Serpent—Jessie Penn-Lewis
- (13) Translated out of the Power of Darkness—Jessie Penn-Lewis
- (14) The Prayer That Opposes Satan—Watchman Nee
- (15) Prayer A Divine Necessity—Evan Roberts
- (16) The Chief Purpose of Prayer—S.D. Gordon
- (17) The Tempter and the Tempted—Watchman Nee
- (18) How to Bind the Strong Man—Jessie Penn-Lewis
- (19) Four Planes of Spiritual Life—Jessie Penn-Lewis

Some of the topics covered in the book were repeated again in *The Spiritual Man*. As such, this book may be considered the predecessor of *The Spiritual Man*.

In this volume we have included in the text the chapters that were written by Watchman Nee, i.e., chapters two, three, four, six, eight, fourteen, and seventeen. We have also included chapter seven by an anonymous writer and chapter eleven, which is attributed to Gordon Watts but is significantly different from Rev. Watt's article. These chapters occupied over sixty percent of the original book. We have rearranged the original chapter numbers to the order of the present volume. In the Appendices, we have provided the original English articles which Watchman Nee translated and excerpted from.

## FOREWORD

Throughout church history, there has never been a time when messages on the cross are as needed as today. For the present-day Christians, who, being Christians, are obviously redeemed by the blood, the most important thing is to know and to experience the deeper aspects of the fundamental truths of the cross. It is, of course, a glorious thing to know about the substitutional death of the cross, but this will not afford the believers much growth. All the things that Christ has accomplished for us on the cross must be experienced by us one by one before we can mature in life and can become a vessel of God.

We realize that we are already at the end of this age. The activities of Satan have become more fierce than before. God's children have been greatly persecuted, harassed, and beguiled by him, but his most serious work is his deception. Hence, now is truly the time for the saints to rise up and to learn to oppose and attack the enemy with the victory at the cross. This warfare is fierce. How can the saints overcome without putting on the armor? Arise God's saints, and stand on the victory of Golgotha, declaring the victory of Christ! Your King is near! The time for the total defeat of the enemy is also near!

This book contains many articles that have been published before in *The Present Testimony* magazine, but due to awkwardness in expression and mistakes in proofreading, many teachings were buried. Now with the strength and time afforded by God, we are able to revise these articles and add to them a few new ones to make up this book. There are quite a number of translated articles in this book. We have included the names of these writers in the table of contents. We thank God that though the writers may differ in nationality, race, and background, the message we preach is the same. The reader will find this book to be consistent in its theme.

I lift up my heart to thank God for the grace given to me that this book can be published. I also thank a few brothers and sisters for their help in translation and proofreading. If it pleases the Father, may He lead every reader into the abundant life that He has prepared for them in the Lord Jesus.

Watchman Nee  
February 1927, Nanking

## CHAPTER ONE

### **THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SPIRIT, THE SOUL, AND THE BODY**

Most people today consider man as being divided into two parts: the soul and the body. They think that the soul is the invisible part, the psychological part within man, and that the body is the visible part, the outward form of man. Of course, it is true that the body is the outward shell of man. But it is a question whether or not the soul is a substance. Are the soul and the spirit one thing, or are they two things? Is the soul equal to the spirit, or are the two different? Man's answer is that they are the same thing—that other than a difference in terminology, the two are identical in substance.

Man's answer, however, is not trustworthy. We must take a look at the Bible, the trustworthy Word of God, in order to find out the answer to this question. The Word of God does not divide man into two parts, the soul and the body. Rather, it divides man into three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body.

First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "Sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete." This verse clearly shows a distinction between the spirit and the soul. Otherwise, it would not have said, "Your spirit and soul," but rather, "Your spirit-soul." Since God has said this, we can see that there is a distinction between man's spirit and his soul. From this we can conclude that man is divided into three parts—the spirit, the soul, and the body.

What is the significance of distinguishing the spirit from the soul? There is a great significance. It has much to do with the spiritual life of the believers. If believers do not know the boundary of their spirit, how can they understand the spiritual life? If they do not understand the spiritual life, how can they have a spiritual living? It is because believers are negligent or ignorant of the distinction between the spirit and the soul that they never grow in their spiritual life.

Not only has 1 Thessalonians divided man into three parts, other passages in the Scriptures do the same. For example, Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Here again, man is divided into three parts: the soul, the spirit, and the joints and marrow (which refer to the organ related to the mind and the will), that is, the body. Since the soul and the spirit can be divided, the two must not be the same thing.

### **THE CREATED MAN**

Genesis 2:7 says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." "The dust of the ground" refers to man's body. "The breath of life" breathed into man's nostrils is his spirit. "A living soul" is man's soul. Hence, a complete man is composed of three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body.

According to the above verse, the soul came into being when the spirit was joined to the body. When the spirit entered the body, the soul was produced. The body was dead, but when it was contacted by the spirit of life, a third entity was produced—the soul. Without the spirit, the body is dead. Only with the spirit can one live. When the spirit is in the body, something organic is produced. This organic result is called the soul.

God's breath of life is the source of man's life. The Lord Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life" (John 6:63). It is the breath of life that gives life. Hence, this breath is the spirit. When the spirit and the body join together, the result is the soul. The Scripture says, "And man became a living soul." This means that when Adam's spirit and body were joined together, a third part was produced, the soul. His spirit and body were both joined to this third part, to his soul. This is why the Word of God calls it "a living soul" (1 Cor. 15:45). When we believers participate in the resurrection life of the Lord, the spirit begins to rule over our whole being. This is because those who have believed in the Lord are joined to the last Adam, who is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45).

### **THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SPIRIT, THE SOUL, AND THE BODY**

Man is composed of two independent kinds of material: spirit and body. When the spirit entered the body of dust, the soul was produced. It is impossible for the spirit to control the body directly. Hence, it requires a medium. This medium is the soul, which was produced when the spirit touched the body.

The spirit mingled with the body and brought forth the soul. As such, man became a living soul. Hence, the soul is the result of the union between the spirit and the body; it is the personality of a man.

The body is the outer shell of the soul, and the soul is the outer shell of the spirit. Before man fell, it was the spirit that controlled his entire being. When the spirit wants to do something, it communicates this to the soul, and the soul motivates the body to obey the command of the spirit. This is the meaning of the soul as the medium. Luke 1:46-47 says, "My soul magnifies [present tense] the Lord, and my spirit has exulted [perfect tense] in God my Savior." The spirit must first exult, before the soul can magnify the Lord. The spirit first communicates the exultation to the soul, then the soul communicates to the body.

The body is the "world-consciousness," the soul is the "self-consciousness," and the spirit is the "God-consciousness." There are five organs in the body, which afford man the five senses. This physical body enables man to communicate with the physical world. This is why it is called the "world-consciousness." The soul includes that part known as man's intellect, which helps to make man's existence possible. The part of love generates affections toward other human beings or objects. The part that can be aroused is the part that originates from the consciousness. All these are parts of the man himself; they form the personality of man. Hence, they are called the "self-consciousness." The spirit is the part with which man communicates with God. With this part, man worships God, serves Him, and understands his relationship with God. Hence, it is called the "God-consciousness."

The spirit has knowledge, but this knowledge is different from the knowledge of the mind. Because the spirit is different from the mind, only a spiritual man can know himself. First Corinthians 2:11 says, "For who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him?" Although man knows things through the mind, his mind is actually not trustworthy and cannot know "the things of man." The mind may have knowledge, but only by man's spirit can he know the things of man and know himself. Hence, God's Word states the fact: "For who knows the things of man, except the spirit." This spirit is the part with which man fellowships with God. "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Prov. 20:27). The spirit of man is the part with which man fellowships with God.

The soul can be stimulated, and it can be disquieted (Psa. 42:5). It can feel sorrowful (Matt. 26:38). In short, the soul is everything that the personality entails. Hence, we can say that the soul is the personality. Many portions in the Bible do not call man a man, but a soul. For example, when the house of Jacob went down to Egypt, there were seventy people (Gen. 46:27). But the Bible says, "All the souls...were threescore and six" (Gen. 46:26).

The body is like a servant; it is under man's control.

The soul is the meeting point; here the spirit and the body join. Man communicates with the spiritual realm through the spirit. He communicates with the world of senses through the body. The soul is in between. On the one hand, it communicates with the spiritual realm through the spirit, and on the other hand, it communicates with the physical world through the body.

The soul is in between the spirit and the body; it binds the spirit and the body together as one. The spirit rules over the body through the soul and subjects it under God's power. The body can induce the spirit to love the world through the soul.

In conclusion, the soul is the source of the personality; man's judgment, intellect, and love all are of the soul. The spirit is the part with which man communicates with the spiritual realm. The body is the part with which man communicates with the physical realm. The soul is in the middle of these two parts. It exercises its judgment to determine if the spiritual realm is to rule or if the physical realm is to rule. Sometimes the soul rules through its intellect and stimulations; this becomes the rule of the psychological world. Unless the soul yields its rule to the spirit, the spirit cannot rule. Hence, the soul has to authorize the spirit to rule before the latter can rule over the soul and the body. The reason for this is that the soul is the origin of the personality.

### **MAN'S SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY AFTER THE FALL**

The spirit was once the highest part of man's whole being; both the soul and the body were under it. Under normal circumstances, the spirit is like the matriarch, the soul is like the steward, and the body is like the servant. When the matriarch needs something done, she assigns the work to the steward. The steward in turn orders the servants severally to accomplish the task. Unfortunately, man fell, failed, and sinned! As a result, the original, proper order of spirit, soul, and body was upset.

Adam was able to live by the breath of life, which is the spirit. The spirit has the God-consciousness: it knows God's voice, fellowships with God, and is endowed with an extremely keen sense toward God. After Adam fell, his spirit died.

At the beginning God said to Adam, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof [the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). After Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, they still lived for a few hundred years. This shows that the death that God spoke of was not confined to the death of the body. What kind of death was this death? The scientific definition of death is a termination of communication with the environment. Since the death of Adam was not confined to his body only, it must refer also to the death of his spirit. The death of the spirit does not mean that the spirit has disappeared. It means that the spirit has lost its sensitive awareness toward God, that is, it is dead to God. The death of the spirit means that it can no longer fellowship with God. For example, here is a dumb person. It is not that this person has lost his mouth or his throat. He cannot speak because there is something wrong with his mouth. His mouth is dead in respect to the human language. Because of Adam's disobedience, his spirit became dead. He still had the spirit, but it was dead with respect to God. If Adam had exercised his judgment to choose the tree of life, God's eternal life would have entered into his spirit and would have changed his inner man through his soul. His earthen, outer body, which was destined for death and corruption, would also have been changed. However, his inner man became disorderly and fallen. As a result, his outward body had to die and decay.

The fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is the fruit that uplifts man's soul and subdues man's spirit. In this world the knowledge of good and evil is the work of the soul. God forbade man to eat of this tree, not because He wanted to test man, but because He knew that within man there is the soulish life as well as the spiritual life. This is God's love. He knew that if man were to eat of this tree, his soulish life would be developed and his spiritual life would die. This means that man would lose his God-consciousness and would be dead to God. In this world the knowledge of good and evil is always wicked. Knowledge comes from the intellectual part of man's soul. When man ate of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," surely his soulish life was developed and exalted. Once the soulish life became developed and exalted, the spiritual life was suppressed, and man lost his God-consciousness, as if he were dead.

From this point on, his spirit and the spirits of his descendants were suppressed by the soul. Soon, through the soul's suppressing, the spirit was joined to the soul, and the two became closely interwoven. This is why Paul mentioned in Hebrews 4:12 that the word of God is sharp to the dividing of the spirit and the soul. It is because the spirit and the soul have been joined together that there needs to be the dividing. Since the soul and the spirit were so tightly interwoven together, man began to live in his speculative mind. In everything, he began to walk according to his intellect or his feeling. The spirit, having completely lost its power and senses, fell into a lifeless sleep. In Jude 19 it says, "Soulish, having no spirit." The spirit here does not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the human spirit. Since the first part of this expression, "soulish," refers to man's soul, the spirit in the second part of the expression should be the human spirit. This can also be proved from the article in Greek. To be soulish and to not have spirit really mean that the spirit is shut off by the soul and has lost its function. Although it is alive, it is as if it were dead.

From this point, everything went downhill. The flesh of the body began to rule. Hence, by the time of the flood, man had become "flesh" (Gen. 6:3).

When man is soulish, he will often feel that this life is untrustworthy and will seek for eternal life in the coming age. However, the doctrine of life can never be secured by the human mind and theory. None of these things are reliable. Often two very clever people will disagree with each other in their opinions. Theories easily lead men to the place of error; they are the towers in dreams, only leading men to the place of eternal darkness.

When man is of the flesh, he is controlled by the cravings and lusts of his body. He has to satisfy his senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. The vilest of all sins arise from these senses.

Our whole person is divided into three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body. God's intention is that the spirit would remain on top, controlling the soul. After man became soulish, the spirit fell and became subject to the soul. After man became fleshly, the vile flesh became the king. Man fell from being "spirit-ruled" to being "soul-ruled," and from being "soul-ruled," he fell to being "flesh-ruled." This gradual fall ended with the flesh assuming the authority. What a shame this is!

## **REGENERATION**

Concerning unregenerated man, first, his spirit became far from God and dead. The meaning of death is a separation from life. God is the ultimate name for life. Since God is life, to be dead is to be separated from God. When man's spirit became separated from God, it became as if it were dead and could no longer fellowship with Him. Then, his soul began to rule over his entire being, and he began to live in his reasonings or sensations. Finally, the lusts and cravings of his body put the soul under its subjection.

The unregenerated man was born of the flesh and is therefore flesh (John 3:6). This is why he has to be born again. Through regeneration man is born of the spirit; however, John 3:6 does not say that he is spiritual. He is still very soulish. Regeneration is the application by the Holy Spirit of the accomplished work of the cross to man. When man believes in Jesus as his Savior, that He has died for him and is now resurrected, he is regenerated.

When man is regenerated, the Holy Spirit enters into his spirit. After this, there is a step-by-step progression until perfection is reached.

The unregenerated man's spirit is controlled by his soul. His "self" controls his soul, and his flesh controls his body. The soul has become the life of the spirit, the "self" has become the life of the soul, and the flesh has become the life of the body. As a result of regeneration, the Holy Spirit controls his spirit; his spirit controls his soul and, through his soul, the body. The Holy Spirit becomes the life of the spirit, and the spirit becomes the life of the whole person.

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Prov. 20:27). At the time of regeneration, the Holy Spirit enters into man's spirit. When He enters, it is as if a lamp is lit. This is the "new spirit" spoken of in Ezekiel 36:26. Originally the spirit was as if it were dead, but now the Holy Spirit has put God's uncreated life inside the spirit. As a result, the spirit has life, is enlivened, and becomes like new.

Regeneration is the darkened and fallen spirit of man being enlivened by the power of the Holy Spirit. The basis of the Holy Spirit's regeneration is the cross (cf. John 3:14-15). Jesus died for man on the cross; He paid the ransom for sin and gave life to man. All those who believe in Him have eternal life (v. 16). This eternal life is the life of God imparted into man's spirit by the Holy Spirit. Since this life is the life of God, it will never die. Because of this, when a man is regenerated and has received life, he is said to have obtained eternal life. If God's life could die, only then could we say that eternal life can be lost! Regeneration is the first step in the spiritual life. Although the spiritual life received at the time of our regeneration is complete, it is not full-grown. This is similar to fruit. When it first appears, the life within is complete, yet in form it is still green, immature. It is complete only in its organic capacities; however, it is not perfect in each of its organic parts. This is the same with man's regeneration. We must notice that regeneration is not the accomplishment of perfection.

### **THE THREE STAGES OF THE BELIEVERS' LIFE**

When a man believes in Jesus Christ as the Savior who has died for him, he is regenerated. Regeneration is the initial step in the spiritual life. Those who are regenerated have received eternal salvation. After a believer has received the regenerated life, his Christian life can be broadly divided into three stages. The first is the stage of the flesh, the second is the stage of the soul, and the third is the stage of the spirit.

After his regeneration, and for a period of time, a believer may still lose his temper, become proud, become jealous, or commit other sins. Because of this, some may begin to doubt whether or not their regeneration was genuine. They do not realize that, although they have been regenerated, they are still of the flesh. When they advance further, they begin to develop an interest in reading the Bible and in praying and "feel" a new joy in their heart. At this point, the believer may think that he is already a spiritual Christian. However, he does not realize that he is still soulish, still living in the idealistic world of "feeling"! Later, when the Holy Spirit does a deeper work of the cross in him, he will be enabled not to walk according to himself or his feelings (being up or down all the time) but to live quietly in the spirit. Only then can he be considered as being spiritual.

When he is of the flesh, the flesh is his master. When he is soulish, the soul is his master. When he is spiritual, the Holy Spirit becomes his Lord in the spirit.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE FLESH**

The word flesh is used in many different ways in the Bible. Here we will mention only its two most important uses. First, it is used in reference to man's flesh. Second, it is used in reference to the lust of man's flesh. When it refers to the flesh, it means the physical body. When it refers to lust, it means the psychological flesh. What is the lust of man's flesh? The human body has five senses. These five senses have their desires. The eyes desire beauty. The sense of touch desires gratification. The "itching ear" desires sensuous sounds. The mouth desires titillating tastes. The nose desires exotic aromas. There are many other desires. Because these lusts are of the flesh, they are also called the flesh.

### **THE UNREGENERATED MAN AND THE FLESH**

Man was born of the flesh. This means that he was born of the will of man. Hence, man is flesh (John 3:6). To say that man is flesh means that man is filled inwardly with the lusts and the things of the flesh. All day long, his thoughts are filled with evil. Man has nothing besides the flesh. This is why man is called flesh (Gen. 6:3). This means that he is a living composition of lust. Since man is flesh, he behaves "in the lusts of [his] flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts" (Eph. 2:3). Because of the utter filth of the "different flesh" (Jude 7) and the defiled flesh (v. 8), Jude charged the believers to hate "even the inner garment spotted from the flesh" (v. 23).

Because of the sin of Adam, man's flesh cannot fulfill the requirement of the law (Rom. 8:3). Moreover, man is according to flesh and he minds the things of the flesh. As a result, he ends up in death (vv. 5-6). "Because the mind set on the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither can it be" (v. 7). The minding of the flesh comes from being according to the flesh. Those who are according to the flesh are the unregenerated ones. Those who are regenerated will not walk according to flesh but will walk according to the spirit (v. 4). Furthermore, those who "live according to the flesh..must die" (v. 13). They live according to flesh because they have not accepted the condemnation of sin in the flesh through the Son of God becoming the sin offering in the likeness of the flesh of sin (v. 3). This is why they are "debtors...to the flesh to live according to the flesh" (v. 12). "For when we were in the flesh, the passions for sins, which acted through the law, operated in our members to bear fruit to death" (7:5). Hence, "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (8:8).

### **AFTER REGENERATION**

"For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14), and God "was manifested in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). This One, dying on behalf of men and bearing the judgment on all sins, became a sacrifice for sin. When a sinner believes that the Lord Jesus has died for him and has become his Savior, he is regenerated (John 3:16). The minute he believes, the Holy Spirit enters into his spirit to regenerate him. The eternal life of God is mingled with his spirit, and he has eternal life. Regeneration is a begetting relationship between God and man. This relationship can never be annulled. For example, when a father begets a son, regardless of what he becomes or what his son becomes, the relationship—that his son has been begotten of him—can never be annulled. A believer, who is regenerated, is saved forever. Although he may fall, he still has eternal life. This begetting relationship can never be dissolved. Moreover, God's life has already been mingled with his spirit. He will lose his life only when God's life dies. If God's life can never die, his eternal life can never be lost. Formerly, he was "in the flesh" (Rom. 7:5). Now he is "in the spirit" (8:9). In this way, he is "begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). He is also "born from above" (John 3:3, lit.) and "born of the Spirit" (3:6). He is born of God because God's life is mingled with his spirit. He is born from above because this life comes from heaven. He is born of the Spirit because regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. Now "the Spirit of

God dwells in you [in your spirit]" (Rom. 8:9). Through this Holy Spirit, Christ also dwells in us. Hence, "though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness" (v. 10).

After a believer has believed, although he is spirit (John 3:6) and also is in the spirit (Rom. 8:9), he is not yet spiritual; he is still of the flesh. Paul told the church in Corinth, "And I, brothers [he addressed them by such a title because they had already believed in the Lord and were regenerated], was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshy, as to infants in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1). Although they were already regenerated and "in Christ" (v. 1), "jealousy and strife" were still among them. "For when someone says, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are you not men of flesh?" (v. 4). "For you are still fleshly" (v. 3).

"Infants in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1) means that they were regenerated and had become infants. They were joined with Christ and were in Christ. However, they did not go on but remained in the rudiments of the beginning of their spiritual life (cf. Heb. 5:11-14). They had not grown for a long time. In this stage, they had not been developed through practice and were not able to discriminate between good and evil (5:14). They did many things in the flesh and were truly fleshly! To be fleshly means that one is bound by the desires and lusts of the flesh; it means to make "provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14).

What are the things of the flesh? "And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects, envyings, bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these" (Gal. 5:19-21). Believers should not commit these sins. Yet believers may commit these sins. When the flesh is aroused and the five senses are stirred up, the soul will produce these things. The soul is the strongest part of our being when it comes to the matter of obedience. Infant believers are strong in their flesh. As a result, the soul becomes subject to the flesh. A full understanding concerning the application of the power of the cross is lacking in the personality of such persons. Therefore, the spirit is weak and unable to rule over the whole being. Satan takes this opportunity to come in to stir up the flesh, and the person sins. If a believer has any of the above sins, he is of the flesh.

It is a pitiful thing for believers to be of the flesh. They repeatedly make up their minds to obey the Lord's will, only to find that they cannot do it. They are determined to please and serve the Lord in this and that way, yet there is a power in the flesh which urges them to do the things that please the flesh. "For what I will, this I do not practice; but what I hate, this I do...Now then it is no longer I that work it out, but sin that dwells in me...For to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not" (Rom. 7:15, 17, 18). When the flesh is aroused, a formidable force seems to urge man on until he is forced to unleash the lust of the flesh. Sometimes he may be urged to satisfy only some physical need and not his lust, yet even that is uncontrollable. This was the way the disciples were before Pentecost. On the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, they were with Him in the garden of Gethsemane. The Lord wanted them to be watchful, yet they closed their eyes and went to sleep. This does not mean that they did not love the Lord, nor does it mean that they were not willing to be watchful. It was because "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). Their spirits were too weak and unable to rule over their flesh. They were subdued by the flesh and were not able to be watchful together with the Lord, but all went to sleep. This is usually the case with fleshly believers who do not understand the teaching of the cross.

We should make one point clear: some behave one way when they are fleshly, and others behave another way when they are fleshly. In the church in Corinth, the manifestation of the flesh was in strife and fornication. In the disciples, the manifestation of the flesh was in the inability to subdue the body and be watchful in prayer. Although the results produced by the flesh were different, they were

nevertheless of the flesh. The warfare Paul mentioned in Romans 7 depicts one level in the believers' experience: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells...I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me...But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (vv. 18-25).

### **DELIVERANCE FROM THE FLESH**

The unique way to be delivered from the flesh is the cross. An unregenerated person is regenerated through believing in the substitutional death of the Lord Jesus on the cross; he need no longer be according to the flesh or mind the things of the flesh. However, sometimes he may still mind the things of the flesh and may still commit the sins listed in Galatians 5:19-21. There is a difference between the unregenerated mind and the regenerated mind. Before regeneration, the mind is generally set on the things of the flesh. After regeneration, the mind may stumble temporarily through sudden temptations, but we do not want this to be our usual experience. If a person will take a step forward to the cross, he becomes victorious.

"For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). The Son of God has not only borne our sins on the tree and become our sin offering, but has also "condemned sin in the flesh" so that we who are joined to Him may no longer serve sin in the flesh. Because He is the Son of God, He is able to be the sin offering; this is His substitutional death. Because He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin, He was able to condemn sin in the flesh. This is the "co-death"—when He died in the flesh, He crucified His flesh together with sin. On the cross the Lord Jesus not only bore the judgment of sins for the sinner, but He also brought the sinner and sin along with Him to the cross. When He died, these died with Him.

Those who are infants in Christ should go on one step further to learn the truth of the cross. When one believes in the substitutional death of the Lord Jesus, he is regenerated. But for a believer to be delivered from the flesh, he has to die with the Lord. Paul said, "But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts" (Gal. 5:24). The flesh must be crucified. One cannot cleanse the flesh or educate it. The only way is to crucify the flesh with the Lord on the cross. The passions of the flesh love many things and are extremely powerful. The lust of the flesh has all kinds of desires and will never be satisfied unless they are all gratified. When the passions and the lusts of the flesh break loose, we see the various sins mentioned in verses 19 through 21. To remove sins, one has to remove the root of sin. Since the believers have known the substitutional death of Christ, they should go on to know the co-crucifixion with Christ. Then they will no longer be bound by the flesh but will walk according to the spirit, becoming spiritual believers.

Colossians 2:11 says, "In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ." This circumcision is our crucifixion with the Lord, of which baptism is a figure. The next verse says, "Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with Him." Formerly, we were "dead in [our] offenses and in the uncircumcision of [our] flesh" (v. 13a). God forgave us through the death of the Lord Jesus and made us alive together with Him (v. 13b). Only the death of Christ can sever us from the lust of our flesh. Some think that the keeping of ordinances will deliver a person from the flesh. Actually, these ordinances merely give men "a reputation of wisdom [which is hypocritical] in self-imposed worship [which is of man's regulation instead of God's way] and lowliness [a kind of false humility] and severe

treatment of the body [treating the body harshly in clothing, food, and activity, thinking that in so doing, the lust of the flesh will be subdued], but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (v. 23). God's way, the effective way, is to die with Christ (v. 20). Man is flesh because he is born of flesh (John 3:6). Man inherited his flesh by being begotten. Hence, in order to be delivered from the flesh, one must look for a way that runs opposite to the way of begetting. The opposite of life is death. Man receives his flesh from birth; he must therefore lose his flesh through death. Man receives his physical flesh by birth; he loses his physical flesh through death. The psychological flesh also came by birth. Hence, deliverance from the psychological flesh must also be through death.

"The old man" is the flesh. Sin is the chief motivating power of the flesh, because sin is in the flesh (Rom. 7:17). (In the Bible, sin in the singular always refers to the original sin or the nature of sin. First John 1:8 says, "If we say that we do not have sin..." Then verse 10 says, "If we say that we have not sinned..." "Sin" is the nature and root of sin within us, and to have "sinned" is what "sin" has done as an act.) The old man must be crucified, and sin has to be removed. We do not crucify the old man with our own strength. Rather, we trust in God for the fact that He has accomplished for us. God's fact is, "Our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves" (Rom. 6:6). We are those "who have died to sin" (v. 2) and "have been baptized into His death" (v. 3). The cross of Christ is the cross of the sinner. His cross has become the sinner's cross. The human race under old Adam is fallen and is beyond reparation. It is full of Satan's serpentine poison. God cannot improve, modify, or reform this corrupted human race. His unique way is to crucify this old human race so that it can become a new race under Jesus Christ. This work was accomplished by the Lord Jesus on the cross. There is now no need for us to crucify ourselves. All we have to do is to believe that our old man has been crucified with Him on the cross. We should accept God's word and reckon it as true. Apart from believing, there is no other way for the old man to be crucified. Believers should claim God's grace by faith in a definite way and should apply it in their experience. One should ask himself, "When the Lord Jesus died, we all died with Him; but have I personally died?" This is where faith is applied. If a person believes that we have all been crucified with the Lord, then, based upon the general expression, "we have all been crucified," he should be able to claim that he personally has been crucified. He is dead, but he must still ask himself, "I am dead to all sins, but have I died to every single, minute sin in my life?" This again is where faith is applied. Since we have believed that we have died to all the sins, then, based upon the fact that we have died to all sins, we should have the faith to claim that we have died to every single sin. We have all died with the Lord, and we have died to all sins. These are facts in God. We should believe them and should claim them. Every time the flesh is aroused, we should deal with it by claiming the Lord's death. As an illustration, in North America the white people used to keep the black people as slaves. After the struggle of a great war, the decision was made to emancipate the blacks. In one place, most of the rich men had black slaves. When the proclamation of emancipation of the black slaves reached that place, the proclamation was not announced to the slaves, because these slaves were considered their properties. If the proclamation had been announced, the black slaves would have soon been freed, and the owners would have suffered soon also. When one slave found out about the proclamation, he left his master and walked away free. Later he told the other slaves about the proclamation. Those who believed him left their masters and also walked away free. Man was the slave of sin. But the Lord Jesus came and died for men; He won the battle. Now the Word of God proclaims us free men. Those who believe and who trust in the victory of this proclamation are free; they need not "serve sin" anymore. Those who do not believe may be free legally but are not free experientially. The black slaves had to believe individually before they could be free one by one. In the same way, we have to believe individually and item by item before we can no longer be "slaves of sin." Every time something happens, we have to apply the Lord's

comprehensive death and put to death that particular matter. If we do this for every matter, we will have the experience of victory.

"So also you, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11). To "reckon" is an act of faith. One should reckon himself dead to sin, that is, to be dead to sin in Christ Jesus. To reckon does not mean to see. If one has to see with his own eyes that he is dead to sin, probably he will not see it in his lifetime. To reckon is not the same as to feel. If one has to feel that he is dead to sin, probably he will not be able to do so before he dies. To reckon is to believe. Reckoning is instantaneous; a man can immediately reckon himself dead to sin, believing that he is already dead to sin. There is no need to touch, to feel, or to see anything. All one has to do is to believe what he reckons to be true and factual. If we reckon moment by moment and consider ourselves dead to sin moment by moment, sin will indeed be unable to lord it over us. On the one hand, one has to reckon himself dead to sin. On the other hand, he has to reckon himself alive to God "in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11). Death is negative, while to be alive is positive. When one dies, sin has no more dominion. When one is alive, there will be the power of God. "Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin..in Christ Jesus." This means that we are joined to Christ. As Christ has died to sin, so also we reckon ourselves dead to sin. As Christ is alive to God, in the same way we also reckon ourselves alive to God. This verse does not say that we ourselves are dead. Rather, it says that we ourselves are alive "to God." We are dead to every sin and every fleshly thing, but we are alive to God. If a believer only reckons himself dead to sin once, without reckoning himself alive again unto God, he will not have the power of life but will instead be very weak. When the temptation of the flesh comes, he will fail through the lack of the power of life in his spirit. However, if he remains on the standing of his resurrection with the Lord, his spirit will be full of the resurrection life. Although he will face temptations in his Christian life, he "by the Spirit" will be able to "put to death the practices of the body" (Rom. 8:13). If this is not the case, even after reckoning himself dead to sin once, he may often return to the standing of the flesh, being unable to put to death the practices of the body.

After a believer has once reckoned himself dead to sin, he must unceasingly remain on the standing of having been crucified with the Lord and must put to death the practices of the flesh, through his spirit which is joined to the Lord (Rom. 8:13). Only then will he go on gradually to submit to the Holy Spirit and be a spiritual person.

Although at present, believers are not yet free from the body and still "walk in flesh" (2 Cor. 10:3), they should not walk according to the flesh. Although they still "live in the flesh" (Gal. 2:20), it only means that they are in their bodies; it does not mean that they are walking according to the flesh. The believers' walk should not be "according to flesh"; they should not be entangled by the passions and the lusts of the flesh, but should walk according to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their spirit (Rom. 8:4). The Holy Spirit abiding in the spirit of the believers will work until, in experience, the body of sin is annulled, just as the Lord in the likeness of the flesh of sin was put to death on the cross.

This does not mean that henceforth we will no longer obey the lust of the flesh or walk according to flesh. It merely means that if we maintain the attitude of not allowing sin to reign in our mortal body (Rom. 6:12) while walking according to the Holy Spirit, the flesh will not have any ground, and we will not "fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). By this we will be kept from becoming fleshly.

God's commandment to this kind of Christian is, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14). When at times one is unfortunately defiled by the flesh, he should "cleanse" himself (2 Cor. 7:1). "Beloved, I entreat you as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts" (1 Pet. 2:11).

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SOUL-LIFE

The soul is man's self-consciousness. We are conscious of our own existence. This consciousness is the soul. The soul is the organ of our personality. All of our personality is part of the soul. All of the elements that constitute us as human beings, our intellect, mind, ideas, love, sensations, judgments, will, and so forth, are all part of the soul. Everything that man's personality encompasses belongs to the soul. The Bible often uses the word heart when referring to our true self. It may be that in the Bible the heart and the soul mean the same thing. The soul is our heart, our true self. The Bible often calls man a soul, as if man is nothing but a soul. For example, Genesis 12:5 uses the word "souls," and there are numerous other scriptural passages that use soul for man. This means that the soul is the personality, including all the elements of the personality. To understand a man, we have to understand his personality. The existence, characteristics, and life of a man issue from his soul. This is why the Bible calls a man a soul.

However, in addition to the intellect, love, will, and sensations in the soul, there is also the life of the soul. This life is man's life, the natural life of man. In the Bible, many places use the word soul interchangeably with the word life; many passages translate soul as life. For example, the word translated life in both Leviticus 17:11 and Revelation 12:11 is soul in the corresponding original languages. This is because in the original languages there is no difference between the words soul and soul-life. Hence, the various elements contained in the soul are the elements contained in the soul-life. This soul-life is man's natural life, which includes the intellect, love, sensations, and so forth.

### THE COMBINATION OF THE SOUL AND THE FLESH

Before we go on, we must first understand the relationship between the soul and the flesh. In the Bible, the flesh, as far as the lust of our flesh is concerned, is our sinful nature. The soul is our life. When we speak of our new life and new nature, it is as if life and nature are the same thing, but strictly speaking, there is a difference between life and nature. It seems that life involves something more than nature. Every life has its own nature. The nature is the natural principle of that life; it is the inclination and desire of the life. While we were sinners, our life was the soul and our nature was the flesh. We lived by our soul, and the inclinations and desires of our living were according to the flesh; we walked by the flesh. More simply put, it was the flesh that decided how we walked and the soul that supplied the power to walk according to that decision. The flesh, the sinful nature, gave the suggestions; and the soul, the life, supplied the power. The flesh instigated, and the soul executed. This is the condition of every unbeliever.

At the time a believer receives the grace of the Lord Jesus' substitutional death on the cross, God puts His life within him and resurrects his spirit. This new life brings with it a new nature. From that point on, there are two lives within the believer, the spirit and the soul-life. There are also two natures within him, God's nature and the flesh.

These two natures, one new and one old, are mutually exclusive, contradictory, and incompatible one with the other. Daily the new and the old struggle with one another, vying to rule over the whole being. A Christian who is on this level is an infant in Christ; he is fleshly. His experience at this stage is very unstable and painful, repeatedly alternating between victory and defeat. Later, he begins to realize the salvation of the cross and learns that if he believes that his flesh has been crucified with the Lord on the cross, he will overcome his sinful nature, that is, his flesh will be as silent as if it were dead and will no

longer harm him. Since his flesh, the sinful nature, is crucified, he will have the power to overcome sin and will realize in his experimenting the promise that says, "Sin will not lord it over you" (Rom. 6:14).

Through this, the believer will enter another realm. Sin will be under his feet. Although there will still be the passions and lusts of the flesh, they will not be able to attract him anymore. The believer will now think that he is completely spiritual. When he looks back, he will see many who believed at the same time that he believed, yet they are still bound by sin. He will be self-flattered, thinking that he has reached perfection, the highest plane of the spiritual life, and that he is fully spiritual. Actually, he is not so, but far from it. He unavoidably remains a soulish Christian.

### **A SOULISH CHRISTIAN**

Why is he a soulish Christian? We have seen how the cross works and how the believers' flesh, the sinful nature, has been crucified on it. However, the life of the soul still remains. Although all sins come from the flesh, and the soul is merely directed by it and acts as its puppet, the soul is inherited from Adam, and though not fully defiled, it is unavoidably affected by Adam's fall. It is true that there is a difference between the natural being and God's life. And though the filthy flesh within a believer has died, his soul remains the power behind his living. Although the nature of sin has died, the life of the self remains. Hence, inevitably, the man is still of the soul. Now, although the sinful nature, the flesh, has died, the soul remains the power behind man's conduct. In other words, although the flesh can no longer direct the soul, the soul remains the power behind man's living. Now that God's nature has replaced the flesh, naturally, all the inclinations, desires, and proposals should be righteous and no longer filthy as they once were. However, it is still the former soul-life that is executing the proposals and desires of this new nature.

This soul-life includes the mind, the emotion, the sensations, the will, and so forth. These functions (the mind, the emotion, and so forth) are the common possessions of the natural man. Hence, for one to depend on the soul-life to execute the propositions of the spirit is to accomplish the supernatural divine goodness through natural worldly strength. To put it plainly, it is to meet God's demand with one's self-power. At this point, on the negative side, a believer may have already overcome sin, yet on the positive side, he is still childish in practicing righteousness. There is the danger that he may fail to develop the God-given life of the Spirit which is already within him and to apply the life-power of this Spirit to execute all the dictates of the new nature. Actually, at this time, the spiritual life is still in the infant stage and is not yet mature; it is still incapable of expressing all the virtues in God's nature. This results in a believer trying by his own natural, soulish power to fulfill all the requirements God has placed upon His children. This walk and work is a mixture of the things of God and the things of man. It is to express the heavenly desire with the earthly strength! When a believer walks in such a way, he is not yet spiritual. Instead, he is soulish.

We have to realize that not all soulish experiences are evil or filthy. The flesh, insofar as the sinful nature goes, produces filthy and sinful things, but the soul is not necessarily like this. The soul-life is simply our original life, that is, the life that makes us a living creature. This life, once detached from the sinful nature, the flesh, may not always be evil in its thoughts. Many people have their original, inborn goodness, patience, love, and gentleness. These virtues come by birth. They are part of what the soul-life possesses. However, with some, these virtues are buried under the flesh and are not seen. Still some are not as blatant in the manifestation of their flesh. Their original virtues shine out a little more than others'. After a Christian has crucified his flesh, he is in danger of one thing: executing the new propositions of God's nature by the power of the soul-life. To speak plainly, this is to do good by our own strength. Such a one may be partially successful. This is exactly where he deviates. When believers find

it effective to "exercise their self," they will think that they have reached spiritual maturity. They do not realize that they are doing good by the power of the soul. They may be doing good, but they are still soulish.

### **HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN BEING SPIRITUAL AND BEING SOULISH**

The answer to this question is very long. Here, we can only mention something in brief. We have seen that from the time of our regeneration there are two lives within us. One is the soulish life, and the other is the life of the spirit. With these two lives, there are two natures. One is the flesh, and the other is the nature of God. We have also seen how one of our two natures, the flesh, was crucified, and the other, God's nature, is invested with the full authority to rule over our whole being. The question of the two natures is solved. But the question of the two lives still remains. Both the soulish life and the spiritual life now live within us simultaneously. Although the spiritual life itself is very strong, the deep-rooted operation of the soulish life rules our whole being. Unless a person is willing to give up his soul-life and to allow the spiritual life to live and to operate, there will be little chance for the spiritual life to develop.

A spiritual Christian is one who allows the Holy Spirit to operate within his spirit. He accepts the Holy Spirit as a person dwelling in his own spirit and allows the life given by the Holy Spirit to supply him with all the strength he needs for his walk. All the principles of his living are no longer guided and affected by the mind or the emotion. Instead, he is living dispassionately in the spirit.

The soulish Christian is just the opposite. Although he has the spiritual life, he does not derive vitality from his spiritual life. Instead, his daily living still has the soul as its life, and he continues to be guided and affected by the mind and the sensations.

### **A FULLY SOULISH MAN**

The Bible has many things to say about a soulish man. What it says often coincides with the human experience. First Corinthians 2:14 says, "But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually." The "soulish man" here refers to an unregenerated man. Whatever a soulish man may be, this verse clearly points out to us his deficiency. Although this refers to an unregenerated soulish man, the regenerated soulish believer has the same kind of experience. The soulish man is controlled by the soul and is suppressed in his spirit, just the opposite of the spiritual man. Although such people may be very intelligent and thoughtful and can propose wonderful theories and ideas, they are completely at a loss concerning the things of the Holy Spirit of God. The soulish Christian lacks the spiritual discernment; he is completely ignorant of the Word of God. Even when he knows something, what he knows is but book knowledge, something obtained through his own mental power. He is not able to search all things through the Holy Spirit, nor does he have any power of discernment; he cannot differentiate between right and wrong. His knowledge comes either from his memory of what others have said or from his own conjectures. He is not able to receive direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. How different this assessment is from the concept of the world! The world thinks that man's intelligence and intellect are almighty, that every truth in the world can be grasped with the brain. However, according to the record of the Scriptures, these things are vain. It is regrettable that many Christians have tried to seek after the deep things of God recorded in the Bible using the faculties of their mind. They may understand something in their mind, but God says, "A soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God"!

James 3:15 also speaks of a soulish wisdom. "This wisdom is not that which descends from above, but is earthly, soulish, demonic." This soulish wisdom comes from the soulish believer. It seeks to expound God's truth with the intelligence of the soul. After a believer is regenerated, he will see by his new knowledge his own extreme ignorance concerning the Word of God, the Bible. Yet, most are not willing to wait patiently for God to give to them "a spirit of wisdom and revelation" to guide them into all truths. At such times, believers tend to be hastened by their own foolishness to exercise their own mental power, trying diligently to understand the teachings of God. Even those who have been believers for many years may not be free from this kind of practice. This kind of wisdom is soulish because it is secured through the power of the soul. This soulish wisdom serves mainly as a basis for criticizing and condemning others. Therefore, the apostle said that soulish wisdom causes one's heart to have "bitter jealousy and selfish ambition" (v. 14). On the contrary, spiritual wisdom is "wisdom from above" and is "first pure, then peaceable, forbearing, compliant, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, without hypocrisy" (v. 17). The wisdom given to us by the Holy Spirit in our spirit is pure in motive; it has no improper design. In practice it is peaceable; there is no rivalry. The nature of this kind of wisdom is forbearing, compliant, and merciful. In content, it is impartial and without hypocrisy. In result, it bears much good fruit. How different is this from the soulish wisdom! Yet, the disputes causing many denominations and the divisions causing many sects are advanced in the name of "bearing testimony for the truth"! The soulish Christian often exaggerates differences, creating a disparity of opinions, resulting in divisions in the church of God.

Jude testified of the same thing: "These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit" (v. 19). This word refers to unregenerated people. However, the fact that soulish men cause separations is seen among believers also. The characteristic of a soulish believer is that he is often the instigator of separations and rivalry. We are not saying that everyone has to believe the same thing. But the distinction between a spiritual believer and a soulish one is that while the former realizes his differences with others, he will not separate himself from other children of God just because of these differences. But with the latter, a little incompatibility will cause him to separate himself and to reject others.

### **THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A BELIEVER HAVING HIS SPIRIT AND SOUL MIXED TOGETHER**

Who are the believers who have their spirit and soul mixed together? The soulish men whom we spoke of previously are those who are fully soulish. However, there are believers who are more advanced than these. They have been released from the power of sin. They are no longer minding the flesh and walking according to flesh. They have heard of the excellence of the spiritual life and may even have tasted it once or twice, yet they have not received within themselves a deep work of the cross and of the Holy Spirit. As a result, they are still looking to the natural, original life, that is, the soul, to supply them with the power for their living. They are still soulish, yet believers in this stage are often filled with gifts from God. Because they have so many gifts and so many "third heaven" experiences, they have a high esteem of themselves (however deeply hidden in their heart it may be) and consider themselves matchless spiritual men. They do not realize that they are still soulish men having their spirit mixed together with their soul.

Those believers whose spirit and soul are mixed together are in reality soulish. Yet in their knowledge, they seem to be spiritual. For this kind of believer, the spirit and the soul are combined as one. Although his soul has been separated from his flesh (the sinful nature), his spirit is not yet separated from his soul. Formerly, while he was fleshly, his soul was closely attached to his flesh. One was his life, and the other was the nature of his life. Now, in the same way, his spirit is attached to his soul. One contributes the propositions, and the other, the power. The body is the outer shell of the soul, and the soul is the

outer shell of the spirit. We should remember this: the soul is the shell of the spirit. As such, the spirit is surrounded by the soul and is constantly affected by the soul. The soul includes the mind, the emotion, the sensations, the will, and so forth. Since the spirit is surrounded by the soul, it seems to be buried within the soul. Therefore, it is often affected by the mind and the sensations. A regenerated person should have an unspeakable peace in his spirit, but because his spirit is not yet separated from his soul, a little agitation will disturb the peace and tranquillity in the spirit. Sometimes the soul is filled with joy and influences the spirit, apparently making it joyful as well. Such a believer would think that he is the happiest person on earth! Yet when he is agitated, he would think that he is the most miserable man on earth! This is the constant experience of the soulish believer.

This kind of believer has a fairly, if not extremely, common characteristic: when he hears about the teaching concerning the separation of the soul from the spirit, he is very eager to know where his spirit is. Yet, despite desperate searching, he does not seem to feel the spirit. Because many believers do not have the genuine experience of being in spirit, they naturally do not know what is their spirit and what is their soul. Because their spirit and soul are so tightly interwoven and because they are unable to differentiate between the spirit and the soul, they consider their own soulish experiences, such as joy, vision, a fiery love in their heart, and so forth, as matchless spiritual experiences. Actually, it is better for them to consider that they have no spiritual experiences at all, than to suffer loss through confusing the soul with the spirit.

Because such a believer exercises much of the power of his soul-life in carrying out the suggestions of his new nature, it becomes possible for the soul-life to work and act without passing through any rejection. Since the believer is not aware of the inadequacy of the power of the soul-life in carrying out righteousness, he accepts everything as long as it is not from the flesh, thinking that it is from the spirit. He thinks that, other than the flesh, there is nothing else that needs to be rejected, that besides the flesh, everything is spiritual. For this reason, the soul-life is given the full liberty and opportunity to work. This is why we see so many believers seeking to overcome the flesh and sins, but few believers seeking to overcome their own life, which is the soul-life.

Although the soul includes many things, a soulish believer is controlled mostly by two elements, his mind and his emotion. The will controls him to a certain degree, but not as much as the mind and the emotion do. If one does not know how to control the soul, it becomes possible for the mind and the emotion to work. Those believers in this stage are controlled mainly by their own mind. They love knowledge and love to seek after the truth. They cannot be satisfied until they understand something completely in their mind. They love intriguing thoughts. They like to know more because they think that what they know is what they possess. They are also controlled by their emotion. They seek to feel the Lord's presence and to have feelings of joy. When they feel a burning fire within their heart, they can walk a hundred miles and can go on in leaps and bounds in their spiritual journey (outwardly speaking, of course). If they do not have this feeling or if they feel depressed, they will become sluggish and will not go on at all. They want good feelings. The good and bad feelings in their heart determine the highs and lows of their outward spiritual state. They are also controlled by their will. They have not received the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill in them the promise of Philippians 2:13. They think that determination is the beginning and end of all works. They make many resolutions and set many rules and regulations, only to be brought into more bondage. None of these help them to make a true advance in the spiritual life.

The most pitiful thing is that believers at this stage are usually self-satisfied and very stubborn in holding on to their experience. They think that all their knowledge is spiritual knowledge. They boast of the riches in their ``brain-bank." They think that their occasional ``third heaven" experiences are

spiritual experiences. They indulge themselves in feelings, in fiery sensations, in joy, and in the presence of the Lord; they think that besides this, there is no higher spiritual living. Yet they would not admit humbly that outward matters still distract their hearts and disturb their peace. Their conduct is an outward performance that comes from much scheming and planning and does not match their inward condition.

It is when God opens their eyes and makes them aware of the more abundant life reserved for them that they become willing to seek for the way to annul the soulish part of their being. But it is not an easy work to lead one to such a state, for the heart of man is deceitful above all things. Although many times a believer says with his mouth that he seeks the spiritual life and experience, nine times out of ten he is for himself, for his own fame and glory. It is extremely difficult to find those who are truly seeking to be spiritual. In order to reach this stage, the believer has to pass through much training and scourging from God so that he will come to realize that he has stolen God's glory and has used God's gift for his own self-exaltation. In everything his heart will be shown to have taken the self as the center. Such a believer will feel ashamed of himself; he will feel remorseful and sorrowful about himself. He will realize that such trust in the soul-life will only lead to failure. Since he has passed through a practical judgment before the Lord, he is now willing to ask God's Holy Spirit to annul his soul-life and to fully separate his spirit from his soul. Once the Holy Spirit is given a chance to work, He will surely work. In this way, a believer will be brought out of a state of the spirit and soul in mixture to a state of perfection in the spiritual life.

### **THE DIVIDING OF THE SPIRIT FROM THE SOUL**

Here the teaching of Hebrews 4:12 becomes crucial. It is there that the Holy Spirit teaches us to experientially divide the soul from the spirit. The dividing of the soul and the spirit is not merely a doctrine; it is an experience which all believers can and must have in their lives. In Hebrews 4 the Holy Spirit relates to us the ministry of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest. It also tells us the relationship between the believers and the High Priest. Verse 12 says, "For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Verse 13 goes on to say, "And there is no creature that is not manifest before Him, but all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we are to give our account." The intention of the Holy Spirit here is to show how the Lord Jesus fulfills His work as the High Priest with respect to the believers' soul and spirit. Here the Holy Spirit considers a believer a sacrifice on the altar. In the Old Testament, when a man offered a sacrifice, he tied the sacrifice to the altar. The priest then killed the sacrifice with a knife and cut the sacrifice into two parts with the knife, piercing and dividing even the joints and the marrow. Everything that was inside the sacrifice, that was originally hidden from man's sight and knowledge, then became exposed and laid bare before men. After it was divided, the priest would then burn the sacrifice with fire and offer it to God. The Holy Spirit used this picture to show the Lord Jesus' work in the Christians, and the Christians' experience in the Lord. As the sacrifices of old were divided by the priests so that the joints and marrow were all laid bare and separated into two parts, in the same way the believers are now being divided in their soul and spirit through the word of God by their High Priest, the Lord Jesus. By this, the soul will no longer affect the spirit, and the spirit will no longer be controlled by the soul. Each will be separated from the other, and it will be possible to distinguish what is the soul and what is the spirit. There will not be any confusion or contamination anymore.

The priests of old divided the sacrifices with a knife. The present High Priest, the Lord Jesus, divides the believers' soul and spirit with the word of God. The priest's knife was very quick and sharp and was able to divide the sacrifices into halves; even the joints and marrow (which were so tightly joined together)

were pierced through and divided from one another. The word of God, which the Lord Jesus now applies, is sharper than a two-edged sword. As such, it is able to clearly separate the soul from the spirit, which are so intimate within man.

After we examine this passage carefully, we see that it is by two things that a believer's soul and spirit are divided. The first is the cross, and the second is the word of God. The sacrifices had to be laid on the altar before the priests could cut them in half. We know that the altar of the Old Testament is the cross of the New Testament. Unless the believer is willing to come to the foundation of the cross and is willing to be crucified with the Lord, he cannot expect the High Priest to divide his soul from his spirit with God's sharp sword, His word. The laying on the altar comes first; the dividing by the knife comes afterward. A believer must first come to the cross before he can expect the Lord Jesus to fulfill His priestly ministry of dividing his soul from his spirit with His word. Hence, all those believers who desire to experience the dividing of the soul from the spirit need to take heed to the Lord's call to Golgotha. They should lay themselves down unreservedly on the altar, trusting in their High Priest to exercise His sharp sword to divide their soul from their spirit. As those who desire to offer acceptable sacrifices to God, we have to lay on the altar. It is the priest's work to cut with the knife. We should fulfill the requirement on our side and should entrust the rest of our experience to the hand of our faithful and trustworthy High Priest. At the right time, He will give us the full spiritual experience. Now let us consider how He calls us to the cross.

### **THE DIVIDING OF THE SPIRIT FROM THE SOUL**

Here the teaching of Hebrews 4:12 becomes crucial. It is there that the Holy Spirit teaches us to experientially divide the soul from the spirit. The dividing of the soul and the spirit is not merely a doctrine; it is an experience which all believers can and must have in their lives. In Hebrews 4 the Holy Spirit relates to us the ministry of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest. It also tells us the relationship between the believers and the High Priest. Verse 12 says, "For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Verse 13 goes on to say, "And there is no creature that is not manifest before Him, but all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we are to give our account." The intention of the Holy Spirit here is to show how the Lord Jesus fulfills His work as the High Priest with respect to the believers' soul and spirit. Here the Holy Spirit considers a believer a sacrifice on the altar. In the Old Testament, when a man offered a sacrifice, he tied the sacrifice to the altar. The priest then killed the sacrifice with a knife and cut the sacrifice into two parts with the knife, piercing and dividing even the joints and the marrow. Everything that was inside the sacrifice, that was originally hidden from man's sight and knowledge, then became exposed and laid bare before men. After it was divided, the priest would then burn the sacrifice with fire and offer it to God. The Holy Spirit used this picture to show the Lord Jesus' work in the Christians, and the Christians' experience in the Lord. As the sacrifices of old were divided by the priests so that the joints and marrow were all laid bare and separated into two parts, in the same way the believers are now being divided in their soul and spirit through the word of God by their High Priest, the Lord Jesus. By this, the soul will no longer affect the spirit, and the spirit will no longer be controlled by the soul. Each will be separated from the other, and it will be possible to distinguish what is the soul and what is the spirit. There will not be any confusion or contamination anymore.

The priests of old divided the sacrifices with a knife. The present High Priest, the Lord Jesus, divides the believers' soul and spirit with the word of God. The priest's knife was very quick and sharp and was able to divide the sacrifices into halves; even the joints and marrow (which were so tightly joined together) were pierced through and divided from one another. The word of God, which the Lord Jesus now

applies, is sharper than a two-edged sword. As such, it is able to clearly separate the soul from the spirit, which are so intimate within man.

After we examine this passage carefully, we see that it is by two things that a believer's soul and spirit are divided. The first is the cross, and the second is the word of God. The sacrifices had to be laid on the altar before the priests could cut them in half. We know that the altar of the Old Testament is the cross of the New Testament. Unless the believer is willing to come to the foundation of the cross and is willing to be crucified with the Lord, he cannot expect the High Priest to divide his soul from his spirit with God's sharp sword, His word. The laying on the altar comes first; the dividing by the knife comes afterward. A believer must first come to the cross before he can expect the Lord Jesus to fulfill His priestly ministry of dividing his soul from his spirit with His word. Hence, all those believers who desire to experience the dividing of the soul from the spirit need to take heed to the Lord's call to Golgotha. They should lay themselves down unreservedly on the altar, trusting in their High Priest to exercise His sharp sword to divide their soul from their spirit. As those who desire to offer acceptable sacrifices to God, we have to lay on the altar. It is the priest's work to cut with the knife. We should fulfill the requirement on our side and should entrust the rest of our experience to the hand of our faithful and trustworthy High Priest. At the right time, He will give us the full spiritual experience. Now let us consider how He calls us to the cross.

### **THE CROSS**

In Matthew 10:38 through 39 the Lord Jesus says, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his soul-life shall lose it, and he who loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it." These verses call us to lose our soul-life for the Lord's sake. The soul-life spoken of here is man's original life, that is, the organic life that makes us a living creature. This life is the life commonly shared by all men created by God and is different from the spiritual life. This life is the life that we brought with us when we came out of our mother's womb. It is absolutely different from the spiritual life which we received at the time of regeneration. The spiritual life is the very life of God Himself; it is divine, supernatural, and is not possessed by man before his regeneration. For His sake the Lord Jesus calls us to give up the soul-life and to crucify it on the cross.

We have said that the soul-life includes our love, emotion, mind, will, and so forth. The soul-life that the Lord Jesus mentions here includes all these things, but in Matthew 10 it seems that the Lord Jesus is paying particular attention to the matter of love. In the previous verses the Lord Jesus mentions an enemy being of one's own household. He mentions how the son will be set against the father, and the daughter set against the mother, and the daughter-in-law set against the mother-in-law. When God's will is contrary to the opinion of our own household, we can do nothing except set ourselves against our most loved ones for the Lord's sake. This is a cross. It is a crucifixion. According to our soul-life, we love those whom we want to love. We like to listen to them and act according to their will. When those we love rejoice in their hearts, do not our hearts rejoice with them? But here the Lord Jesus is calling us and charging us not to disobey Him for the sake of man's love. At times, God's will may conflict with man's will. Although a certain person may be our most loved one or may be the one who loves us the most, and although hurting such a one is something that we would normally be most reluctant and unhappy to do, for the sake of the Lord we should take up our cross and crucify our love. We should never forget the meaning of bearing the cross; it is not just a suffering but an advance toward the place of crucifixion. The end of bearing the cross is crucifixion.

The Lord Jesus calls us this way in order to remove from us our natural love for men. Hence, in verse 37 He says, "He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or

daughter above Me is not worthy of Me." In Luke 14:26-27 He says, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." The Lord used the word hate to show the disciples the kind of attitude they should hold toward the love that issues from the soul-life. Strictly speaking, when believers love their kinfolks, their relatives, or their lovers, they should not love them because they are their loved ones. They should not love others just because these are their lovers or their father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, or children. This kind of natural love comes from the soul-life. The Lord Jesus wants to remove all of our direct love toward men. The Lord has no intention that we would not love men. His intention is that we would not exercise our own love to love men, but that we would love with His love. What does this mean? It means that we should not love men because they are the ones we would love or because we have some special relationship with them. We cannot love someone just because he is a parent, wife, child, brother, or sister. This kind of natural love should be stopped. From now on when we love these people, it should be because of a new relationship in the Lord. We should love them only because the Lord loves them. We should not love them because we love them. For the Lord's sake, we should love others only through His love received from His hand. Simply put, the Lord's teaching here is that our love toward others should be under His control. If the Lord wants us to love, we should love even someone who is our enemy. If the Lord has not told us to love, we should not love even if someone is our closest relative.

To experience this, the soul-life must pass through death. This bearing of the cross, obedience to Christ, and rejection of our natural affection will cause the believers' natural love to suffer and to feel pain. This suffering and pain is the way to lose the soul-life with respect to its activities of love. When, on the cross before God, the soul-life loses its own love, it will indeed give room for the love of God to be poured out in our hearts. Subsequently, all of our love will be out of God who is abiding in us.

The Lord Jesus wants us to hate our soul-life. We should hate our own life and should not allow it to have the opportunity to act freely with respect to human love. We were those who simply loved whomever we loved. But the Lord wants us to take up the cross and to hate what we love. The Lord's demand and our own intention are diametrically opposed to each other. Those whom we formerly loved we must now hate. We must not only hate what we loved, but must hate the loving organ, which is our soul-life. This is truly a cross. If we will truly take up the cross in this way, we will afford our High Priest the opportunity to divide our soul from our spirit in the matter of love. Then everything soulish will no longer control or affect the spirit, and we will love others in spirit. This is the same way that the Lord Jesus loved His own household while He was on earth.

In Matthew 16:24 and 25 the Lord Jesus again mentions the relationship between the soul-life and the cross. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it." In these verses, our Lord is calling His saints to come once more beneath the cross and to commit their soul-life to it, so that they would lose their soul-life. Superficially, what is mentioned here is the same as what is mentioned in Matthew 10. But in Matthew 10 the emphasis is on the part of the soul-life which pertains to love, while in chapter sixteen the emphasis is on the part of the soul-life that pertains to man's "self." If we read the previous verses, we will see that the Lord Jesus was telling the disciples of His coming suffering at the cross. Peter, in an earnest love for the Lord, told Him, "God be merciful to You, Lord" (v. 22). He cared for man's will and was not willing to see his teacher suffer in His flesh the pain of the cross. He did not understand that a man must first care for God's will, even at the expense of death on the cross. He did not know that one's love for God's will should far exceed his love for himself. It was as if he were saying, "Lord, if You die on the cross, You

may have kept God's will and accomplished God's goal, and You may have acted according to God's plan, but what will happen to You? Are You not going to consider the suffering that You will face in keeping God's will? Lord, be merciful to Yourself!"

The Lord's answer to him reveals that such a thought of pitying oneself is from Satan. Then He seems to tell the disciples, "Not only will I have to go to the cross. Even you who are following Me and who desire to be My disciples must also go to the cross. As My way is, so shall your ways be. Do not misunderstand that I am the only One who has to keep God's will. You who are My disciples must keep God's will as I do. As I have not cared for Myself but have unconditionally kept God's will even to the place of the cross, in the same way you must not care for your own soul-life but must be willing to give it up and to do what God wants you to do." Peter told the Lord to "be merciful" to Himself. But the Lord's answer to Peter is that he should "deny himself."

There is a price to pay in keeping God's will. The flesh cannot help but tremble at this thought. When the soul-life takes a firm rule in us, we are not able to rejoice in God's will. When we hear God calling us to the cross, calling us to deny ourselves, to sacrifice, and to lose everything for His sake, our soul-life unconsciously responds with self-pity. The soul-life makes us unwilling to pay the price and to submit to God. Every time we consciously choose the narrow way of the cross and choose to suffer for Christ's sake, the soul-life takes a loss. It is through this that we lose our soul-life. Only by this, can we have the spiritual life of Christ reigning in us in a full and pure way. In this way we will be able to perform a work that is acceptable to God and a benefit to the world. If we consider the previous verses, we will understand even further the evil of the work of the soul-life. Peter spoke this word right after he had received God's revelation, understanding the mystery that cannot be understood by man. The Father revealed directly to Peter that the humble Jesus he followed was the Christ of the living God. But after he received such a revelation, he was immediately overcome by his soul-life; he exhorted his teacher to be merciful to Himself! Hence, we must realize that supernatural revelations and wonderful knowledge cannot keep us from being overcome by the soul-life. On the contrary, the higher the knowledge and the more supernatural the experiences, the more hidden is the soul-life and the harder it is to remove it. If it is not dealt with by the cross, the soul-life will continue to remain in man and will never go away.

Self-pity, self-love, the fear of suffering, and shrinking back from the cross are expressions of the soul-life. The greatest goal of the soul-life is to preserve its own existence. It is very reluctant to suffer anything. This is why the Lord calls us to deny ourselves and to take up our cross. In this way we will lose our soul-life. Every time a cross is put before us, it calls us to give up ourselves, to have no more love for ourselves, and to lay down our lives for others through the power of God. Here the Lord says that the cross is ours; we receive it individually from God. When we set ourselves to do God's will, God calls us to take up the cross and bear it. This cross is ours; it is specially prepared for us by God. But it is also joined to the cross of Christ. When we are willing through the spirit of Christ's cross to take up our own cross, the power of Christ's cross will enter into us and enable us to lose our soul-life. Every time we bear the cross, we crucify the soul-life once more. Every time we dodge around the cross, we nourish our soul-life and keep it going.

We should notice that what the Lord speaks of here is not something that is done once for all. In Luke the word daily is added to the expression concerning the bearing of the cross. Hence, this kind of death is a continual one. We know that our death to sin is an accomplished fact, it has been completed. All we have to do is acknowledge and receive it. But the death of our soul-life is another matter. This is not an accomplished fact. Rather, it is an experience which we have to achieve and gain day by day. This does not mean that we will never die nor that we must die slowly. It means that the death of the soul-life is not like the death to sin. Our death to sin was accomplished by Christ on our behalf. When He died, we

died with Him. But the death of the soul-life is not an accomplished fact. We have to bear our own cross daily through the power of the Lord's cross. We must be resolved to deny ourselves and to put the self to death. This kind of work must be done daily by walking according to the Lord's will, by taking up our own cross. By this, the soul-life will lose its power.

Our Lord spoke similar words in Luke 17:32-33. But there it refers to the things of the world: "Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his soul-life will lose it, and whoever will lose it will preserve it alive." Here the Lord tells us again how the soul-life is to be forsaken. But what the Lord is emphasizing here is the attachment of the saints' heart to earthly wealth. The Lord tells us that we should remember Lot's wife. In her danger she still remembered her wealth. She did not return back to Sodom; she did not even walk back an inch. All she did was just turn back her head a little. But how much this one turning reveals. This turning of her head speaks a long story concerning her heart.

A saint may forsake the world and outwardly part with everything, yet within him he may still crave the things that he has given up for the Lord. This is the work of the soul-life. A saint who is consecrated to the Lord may not go back to the way of the world and may not try to gain back what he has given up for the Lord. Yet if his heart still lingers on these things, it shows that he has not seen clearly the place the world occupies on the cross. The work of the soul-life may not necessarily turn men back to the way of the world. All it has to do is cause the saints to privately hold dear in their hearts those things they need to forsake or have already forsaken.

When the soul-life has indeed been lost, nothing in the world will move that saint's heart anymore. The soul-life belongs to the world. This is why it cannot give up the world. Only when a saint is willing to put the soul-life to death will he be able to steadfastly obey the Lord's "sermon on the mount." Although there is no explicit mention of the cross in the sermon on the mount, we know that unless the saints have genuine experience of dying with the Lord—not only to sin, but also with respect to the soul-life being put to death—there will be no seriousness in obeying the sermon on the mount. The reason for this is that unless the cross has worked deeply in the soul-life of the saints, any outward conformation to the sermon on the mount will not have an inward echo in the heart. A saint who has lost his soul-life can spontaneously and sincerely take off his outer garment and give it to him who would take away his inner garment. A saint who has committed his soul to death is one who has been cut off from the things of the world.

The condition for receiving spiritual life is for us to forsake certain things. Only by this will we truly gain. In the spiritual realm, we are not reckoned rich by how much we have gained; the richer we are, the more we have to lose. We should not measure our life by our "gains"; we should measure our life by our "losses." Our true measure is the measure of wine that we pour out, rather than the measure that we have kept. Those who lose the most have the most to offer. The power of love is seen in the sacrifice of love. If our hearts are not yet separated from the craving of worldly wealth, our soul-life is not yet on the cross and has not yet passed through the work of the cross.

Hebrews 10:34 speaks of a group of believers whose possessions had been plundered. Yet they "accepted [it] with joy." Not only did they accept it willingly, but they accepted it with joy. This is the result of the work of the cross. The saints' attitude toward their possessions indicates whether their soul-life is living or being put to death.

If we truly desire to have the soul separated from the spirit, we must allow God to work on us concerning these things. Then our heart will be truly severed from everything of the world, and we will no longer have a heart like Lot's wife. This indifference to the riches of the world is one condition for us

to attain to the perfect spiritual life in Christ. It is only when the Holy Spirit reveals to the saints the reality of heaven and the fullness of the spiritual life that they can despise the things of the world. The reason for this is that there is no comparison between the two. This is the experience of the apostle in Philippians 3. At the beginning he counted "all things to be loss." In the end he "suffered the loss of all things" (v. 8) that he might gain Christ. The end result of this was Paul's knowing the power of Christ's resurrection. This is the perfect life. Many times we do not realize how strong our soul-life is. It is only manifested when we are tried in material things. Many times it seems to require less grace to lose one's life than to lose one's riches! The things of the world are indeed the acid test for the existence or death of the soul-life.

If God's children are too concerned about their food, drink, and dwelling, they need to receive the deeper work of the cross so that their spirit will not be surrounded and affected by their soul. In this way they will be delivered from everything worldly, and their spirit will be able to live before God unhindered. If a person is concerned for the things of the world, it means that his soul-life has not been lost, and he has not yet passed through the work of the cross.

In John 12:24 and 25 the Lord Jesus again mentions the question of the soul-life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life." Later the Lord Jesus expounds the meaning of these two verses: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself. But He said this signifying by what kind of death He was about to die" (vv. 32-33). This chapter records the greatest moment of the Lord's life. Lazarus had been resurrected. Many Jews had believed because of Lazarus. Even some Greeks were coming to see Him. It was also at this time that He entered into Jerusalem and was welcomed by the people. Hence, in man's view, at this time there seemed to be no need of the cross. It seemed as if the Lord Jesus could draw all men to Himself without going to the cross. But He knew that there was no other way to save men except by the cross. Although His work was prosperous outwardly, He knew that unless He died, He could not give His life to others. If He died, He would draw all men to Himself and would dispense life to all men.

Here the Lord presents clearly the lesson of the cross. He likens Himself to a grain of wheat; unless it dies in the ground, it remains one grain. But if He were indeed crucified on the cross, He would give life to many. Here the Lord Jesus presents the qualification for all fruit bearing. Unless one dies, he will not bear fruit. Other than death, there is no other way to bear fruit.

But our purpose is not just to study what the Lord Jesus is in Himself. What we are emphasizing is the relationship this has with our soul-life. The grain of wheat in verse 24 refers to the Lord Jesus Himself. But in verse 25 He points out that the kind of death He was to suffer and the result it was to produce would not be limited to Himself alone. All His disciples had to follow in His footsteps. He then tells us what the meaning of the grain of wheat is to a Christian. He points out that this grain is a symbol of our soul-life. As a grain of wheat will not live unless it dies, in the same way one will not bear fruit unless the soul-life dies. What the Lord emphasizes here is the matter of fruit bearing in our work. Although a believer may be quite powerful in his soul-life, this power will not help him to bear fruit. All the talents, gifts, knowledge, wisdom, and power that issue from the soul-life will not help a believer produce many grains. As the Lord Jesus had to die to bear fruit, in the same way a believer must die before he will bear fruit. To the Lord Jesus, although the soul-life is powerful, this power is useless in helping God bear fruit.

Here we see that the Lord Jesus was making a clear comparison between the soul-life and the eternal life, the spiritual life. He shows us that the soul-life loves itself. This means that the soul-life is self-

centered. Hence, He charges the saints to take the attitude of "hating" their own soul-life. This "hating" is realized in the putting to death of our soul-life on the cross. There is a reason for us to handle the soul-life in this way. If we do not, we will suffer loss, an eternal loss. If the soul-life reigns within us, it will forever control the spirit, and the spirit will not be able to express the pure and divine life of Christ. This mixture of the soul and the spirit will deprive us of our fruit bearing, which can only come from one who is spiritually pure. Self-love is the greatest characteristic of the soul-life. If we do not put our self-love to death through the cross of the Lord, our spiritual life will be affected by it daily and will manifest impurities.

We have seen how the Lord has called us to the cross to put our soul-life to death. Unless we place ourselves on the altar in this way, our High Priest will have no way to apply His sharp knife to divide our spirit from our soul. We must allow the cross to work before we can receive the work of our High Priest. We should follow the example of our Lord Jesus. When He died, He "poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12). At the same time, He committed His spirit to God (Luke 23:46). What He did is what we must do. The soul-life must die. If we truly pour out our soul-life unto death and commit our spirit to God, we will soon experience being resurrected by God and have the fullness of the spiritual life in the glory of resurrection.

If we truly put our soul-life to death through the cross, our High Priest will divide our soul from our spirit with the word of God.

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

What we must do is lie on the altar. It is our High Priest's job to apply the sharp knife to us to divide our soul from our spirit. If we have truly committed ourselves to the cross, our High Priest will surely fulfill His ministry and divide our soul from our spirit. This is His work; we do not have to worry about it. When He sees us fulfilling the condition for His work, He will surely divide our soul from our spirit at the most appropriate time. Now we have to consider the practical steps by which we, in coming to the cross, allow the Lord Jesus to divide our soul from our spirit through the word of God.

## **THE PRACTICAL STEPS**

We have spoken of the working of the High Priest as a result of our accepting the cross. Now we want to consider how, in practice, we can have our soul divided from our spirit by the Lord Jesus.

### **1. Knowing the Necessity of Having the Soul Divided from the Spirit**

Without this knowledge, there will not be the proper seeking. A saint must seek the Lord that He might show him the hatefulness of a life with a mixture of the soul and the spirit. He must know that in God there is a higher and deeper life that is perfect in spirituality and unaffected by the soul. He should know that a life with a mixture of the soul and the spirit is a life of loss.

### **2. Seeking to Be Divided**

Moreover, he must genuinely seek to have this joining of the soul and the spirit divided. He must have the intense intention in his heart to see these two things divided.

### **3. A Specific Submission**

If a saint desires to have the experience of the dividing of the soul from the spirit, he must be very specific and must put himself on the altar of the cross. He must be fully willing in his heart to accept the result of all the working of the cross. He must be willing to be conformed to the Lord's death and must wait until there is a dividing of his soul from his spirit in his experience. Before he has this dividing experience, he should continually place his will on God's side and should actively and aggressively set his preference on this dividing. In his heart he should desire that the High Priest would not stop His hand until the dividing work is complete.

#### **4. Standing on Romans 6:11**

The saints must be careful not to fall into sin while seeking for the experience of the dividing of the soul from the spirit. The basis of the division of the soul from the spirit is our attitude of being dead to sin. Hence, the saints must daily take up the stand of Romans 6:11 and consider themselves "dead to sin." In their will they must specifically choose not to let sin "reign in [their] mortal body" (v. 12). Only then will they be able to stop the soul-life from continuing to sin through the flesh.

#### **5. Praying and Reading the Word**

The saints should study the Bible by prayer and meditation. They should allow the word of God to penetrate deep within them so that their soul will be purified by the word of God. If the saints will truly walk according to God's word, the activities of their soul-life will be stopped. This is what 1 Peter 1:22 means when it says, "Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth."

#### **6. Taking Up the Cross Daily**

If the Lord is to divide our soul from our spirit, He must make us bear the cross according to the needs in the environment. If the saints will bear the cross daily, if they will unceasingly seek to experience victory over sin and the self, not giving room to the flesh for a minute, the Holy Spirit of God will quietly divide their soul from their spirit.

#### **7. Walking according to the Spirit**

All these are the conditions for being preserved. They are also the clear conditions for the soul and the spirit to be fully separated. The saints should seek to walk according to the spirit in everything. They should distinguish what is from the spirit and what is from the soul and should resolve to follow everything that is from the spirit and reject everything that is from the soul. They should learn to know all the workings of their spirit and follow them accordingly.

These are the conditions that the saints have to fulfill. The Holy Spirit needs our cooperation. If we do not fulfill our part, the Lord will not be able to fulfill His part. If we have done what we should on our part, our High Priest will divide our soul from our spirit through the power of the cross and the sword of the Holy Spirit. Then all the things that belong to the emotion, the feelings, the mind, and the natural strength will be separated from the spirit one by one, and there will be no more mixture. When this happens, the spirit of the saints will be able to ascend to the heavenlies and will be joined to the Lord's Spirit as one in their experience. In this way, the saints will be used by the Lord; they will become channels of life and will bear much fruit. The saints themselves will have a peaceful spiritual life, hidden with Christ in God.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **FACT, FAITH, AND EXPERIENCE**

In the present age of grace, everything is "by grace" (Eph. 2:8). Everything being by grace means that everything is done by God. Man does not have to do anything to be saved because "to the one who works, his wages are not accounted according to grace, but according to what is due" (Rom. 4:4). Because God deals with man according to grace, there are certain facts.

### **FACT**

God has accomplished everything for man. Since everything has been accomplished, certain "facts" exist. And since they are existing "facts," man does not have to accomplish what has already been accomplished. All of God's works are complete.

However, God's grace is a righteous grace. This is why, with the "facts," there is still the need for human cooperation. What kind of cooperation is this? It is not to add anything to what He has finished, but to have man acknowledge that what God has done is real. This is faith.

### **FAITH**

Faith is to acknowledge that what God has said and done is true. Faith is to accept the facts, that is, to acknowledge them as facts.

Faith is a "cashing in." I use the words "cashing in" in the sense of one cashing a check at the bank. Suppose someone gives you a check. That the bank has the money is a fact. For you to cash the check for money is to acknowledge the fact that the bank possesses whatever amount is written on the check. It takes faith to "cash in." With faith, one can cash in and thereby have the money to use. Now, to spend the money is the "experience." To have the money in the bank is the "fact," to cash the check is "faith," and to spend the money is "experience." In God's grace, what He has done for man are facts. But man must still experience these facts.

### **EXPERIENCE**

To experience God's grace is to claim by faith the facts that God has accomplished for man. These facts are accomplished by God. What man needs is faith. The facts belong to God, and the experience belongs to man. Thus, faith is God's facts becoming man's experience. What the Bible shows us is simply "fact, faith, and experience."

### **SUMMARY**

We know that the Lord Jesus is the Word become flesh. He is the consummation of all divine virtues and the grand total of all perfections. His living is God's living, for He is God Himself. Christ has accomplished salvation on the cross. All those who sincerely accept the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior, at the moment they believe, God accepts them as He accepted the Lord Jesus. At that time, all the divine virtues and accomplishments of the Lord Jesus come upon the believers. In God's view and before God, they are the same as the Lord Jesus. God sees every Christian as He sees Christ. Christians possess all of Christ's work and accomplishments through their union with Him. This is the "fact" that the Christians have been given by God. This fact was accomplished by Christ for the Christians. This fact is that through the believers' union with the Lord Jesus, everything that belongs to Christ now belongs to His

believers also. This is a fact that has been accomplished by God alone; the believers themselves have no share whatever in its accomplishment.

The Bible points out this fact very clearly. The writer of the book of Hebrews uses a particularly simple illustration to point out God's accomplished fact for us. In 9:15-17 what the Lord Jesus has accomplished for us is illustrated by a person's making of a will. A will is a promise of "inheritance" to those who receive the will. But before the one who makes the will dies, the will is not effective. Once the person dies, the recipients of the will can receive the inheritance left by the one who made the will. The Lord Jesus is the One who made the will. He has died. Hence, all that He has promised goes immediately under our name. This is the fact that we have received from Him. Although we may not take possession of the inheritance all at once or enjoy the benefit and sustenance from the inheritance, yet the inheritance is indeed ours; it belongs to us and is under our name already. This is an immovable fact. To have the inheritance is one thing; to enjoy the inheritance is another. The ownership of the inheritance is the "fact," and the enjoyment of the inheritance is the "experience." We have the fact of owning the inheritance, not because of ourselves, but because of the One who has left the will. The possession of the fact comes first. The enjoyment comes afterward.

The teaching of this illustration is very simple. The Lord Jesus has died and has given to us all His righteousnesses, divine virtues, perfections, victories, beauties, and so forth. By these we become the same as He is before God, and God accepts us in the same way that He accepts the Lord. This is what He has given to us. These things are facts from the moment we become Christians. As far as the fact goes, we are already as perfect as the Lord Jesus. But as far as experience goes, we may not be this way. The meaning of this "fact" is none other than the grace that God has given to us and accomplished for us through the Lord Jesus. This grace has been given to us through our union with the Son of God. It is possible for us to have the fact of inheriting the inheritance without having the experience of enjoying the inheritance. There is a big difference between fact and experience. Many believers are very rich in fact because everything that is God's is theirs. However, in experience they are the poorest because they do not practically use and enjoy their riches. The older son in Luke 15 is a good example of this condition. As far as the fact goes, he was the child who was "always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (v. 31). But as far as experience goes, he never had "a goat that I might be merry with my friends" (v. 29). He was the son of a rich man. This was his position, a fact. Yet it was possible for him not to have enjoyed even a goat. This was his condition, his experience.

We should be very clear concerning the distinction between the fact and the experience. These two things are two different aspects. In the first case, it is what God has accomplished for us; it is the position that God has given to us. In the second case, it is what we practice; it is our enjoyment of what God has given to us. At present, believers tend to go to the extreme. Some (actually the majority) do not know the riches they have in the Lord Jesus. They do not know that everything that the Lord Jesus has accomplished is theirs already. They plan and scheme to secure grace. They try to work out all kinds of righteousnesses by their own strength in order to meet God's demand and satisfy the inclination of their new life. Others (not a few) think that they understand God's grace all too well. They think that the Lord Jesus has already exalted them to a matchless position. They are satisfied already and do not seek to put into practice experientially the grace that they have received from the Lord Jesus. Both kinds of people are wrong. Those who pay attention to experience and forget the facts are bound by the law. Those who pay attention to the facts and despise experience take grace as an excuse for indulgence. On the one hand, a Christian should understand through the Scriptures his lofty position in the Lord Jesus. On the other hand, he should examine under God's light whether or not his walk matches the grace of his calling.

God has placed us in a most lofty position. Through our union with the Lord Jesus, all of the Lord's accomplishments and victories are ours. This is our position in fact. The question now is how we can experience all of the Lord Jesus' accomplishments and victories. Between the fact and the experience, that is, before the fact can be turned into experience, before God's accomplishment can be turned into man's practice, there is still the step of faith.

This step of faith is nothing other than the "utilization" or "management" of the inheritance. The Lord has left us a will. He has died, and the will is now in effect. We should no longer hold an indifferent or unconcerned attitude. Instead we should rise up to "utilize" the inheritance that we have received so that we can enjoy, or experience, the blessing of the inheritance. We are God's children already. All that God has is now ours (1 Cor. 3:21-23). We should not be like the older son who vainly possessed the promises without entering into the enjoyment of them. Due to his foolishness and unbelief, he did not ask nor did he utilize. Hence, he did not have anything. If he would have asked to exercise his right as a son, he would have had not just one goat but thousands upon thousands of them!

What we need now is nothing other than the utilization by faith of what God has promised to us; we should "cash in" by faith what God has prepared for us in the Lord Jesus. For the one who is to inherit a will, there are two things he has to do before he can enjoy and experience the inheritance. First, he has to believe that there is an inheritance. Second, he has to rise wholeheartedly to manage this inheritance. Of course, if one does not believe that there is an inheritance, he will not rise up to manage it. Therefore, we must first acknowledge that God has indeed made the Lord Jesus our "wisdom...righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30), that all of the Lord's accomplishments and victories are our accomplishments and victories. If we do not have this faith, not only can we never expect any spiritual experiences, but we are sinning against God and doubting His work! Second, those in the world manage an inheritance with their physical strength. But for us to manage our spiritual inheritance, we have to use our spiritual strength, which is faith. As this spiritual inheritance is already ours, we must advance one step further by faith to "cash in," to utilize, and to manage our inheritance in the Lord Jesus.

In the Old Testament we see another instance which can adequately show us the relationship between fact, faith, and experience. This is the history of the Israelites entering Canaan. In the old days, God promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites. He mentioned this to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and even to the tens of thousands of people who left Egypt. To God, the land was already given. God promised to fight for them and that they would overcome all their enemies. It was a fact that God had given the land and the peoples of Canaan to the Israelites already. Although the fact was there, they did not yet have the experience. As far as the fact was concerned, the land was theirs already, yet in experience they still did not own an inch of it. This is why they had to "go up at once and possess it," for they were "well able to prevail" (Num. 13:30). However, due to their unbelief, despite the fact that God had given them the land, they were not able to possess it in experience. After one generation, God told Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (Josh. 1:3). They were to inherit the land that God had given them with the soles of their feet. Later when they went up, they inherited the land.

This shows us the secret of substantiating the perfection of Christ. God has already given us what Christ "is," "has," and "has done"; they are all ours already. Now what we have to do is to experience all that He is, has, and has done. There is no other way to experience all this except to acknowledge that Canaan is good; if we will realize every inch of God's land with the soles of our feet, we will indeed find ourselves inheriting the land that God has given to us. God gives; we believe and receive. This is fact, faith, and experience.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Fact**

Facts are God's promises, His redemption, His works, and His free gifts.

### **Faith**

Faith denotes the way man believes in God, trusts in His work and redemption, and claims His promises. It is a kind of working and attitude through which God's facts are transformed into man's experience.

### **Experience**

Experience is the proper living of the believers, which they secure through believing in God. It is the expression of the life of Christ practiced in the believers' living. Experience is the realization of all Christ's accomplishments and victories. It is the practical application, manifestation, and living out of God's facts. The histories of all the saints recorded in the Bible belong to this category.

Not only those who are teachers but all believers should know the interrelationship of these three: fact, faith, and experience. Otherwise, they will be confused in their living and in their teachings. Furthermore, they will find many contradictions and apparent disagreements in their reading of the Bible.

I am afraid that up to this point I have still not presented the scriptural teachings in a clear way. For this reason, I want to present a few great doctrines in the Bible as proofs.

We Christians have believed in the substitutional death of the Lord Jesus and have experienced the effect of His redemption. Redemption is an experience for the sinners; we Christians have already been redeemed. For us, redemption is a past experience. It seems as if we have no need to speak of it anymore. Yet for the sake of illustrating the relationship between these three things—fact, faith, and experience—and in order to show us their continuity and importance, I will first use as an example an experience that we have already had.

## **REDEMPTION**

Redemption is a very great doctrine. It is something that we should understand. The redemption of our Lord Jesus is for the whole world. We have the following verses to prove this point:

The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

He Himself is the propitiation...for those of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

Who gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6).

The Savior of all men (1 Tim. 4:10).

After reading these verses, we can see that the redemption of Jesus is for the whole world. Hence, it is possible for everyone in the world to be saved. The Lord's redemption is an accomplished fact.

However, the Bible tells us that not everyone in the world is saved. If a man does not understand the teaching concerning "faith," he may think that whether or not a man believes in the Lord's vicarious death, he is saved anyway. It seems to him that since Jesus has died for the whole world, the whole world need not die anymore, and there is no need to be concerned if one believes or not. This may seem very reasonable, but actually it is very unreasonable, for this would absolve sinners of all their responsibilities. If this were the case, there would no longer be the need for believers to preach the gospel.

Although the Bible says that Christ has died for the world, it also says that those who believe will be saved. The following Scriptures testify to this:

That every one who believes... (John 3:15).

He who believes into Him...; he who does not believe... (John 3:18).

Believe on the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:31).

Through the faith of Jesus Christ to all those who believe (Rom. 3:22).

Him who is of the faith of Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

Your sins have been forgiven you because of His name (1 John 2:12).

We can quote many more Scriptures, but the above verses are sufficient to prove that a man has to believe. This means that although Christ has died for the world, the world must still apply His death and reckon it their own death. Otherwise, the death of Christ will have nothing to do with them. Although the Scripture says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," the Bible does not stop here. Following this it says, "That every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life." First Timothy 4:10 says, "The living God, who is the Savior of all men." God sent His Son into the world to die for men. Hence, He is able to be the Savior of all men. He is the "Savior..., especially of those who believe." These are the ones who have believed.

After believing, there must be the experience. If one believes in God's fact, there surely must be the experience of the fact. Please consider the following Scriptures:

He who believes into Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe has been condemned already (John 3:18).

He who...believes...has eternal life (John 5:24).

Every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life (John 3:16).

Justified out of faith (Rom. 5:1).

Hence, when man believes that the salvation God has prepared for him is a fact, and when he applies this salvation, he is saved.

## **DYING WITH THE LORD**

Let us now explain the matter of fact, faith, and experience in relation to our dying with the Lord. It is just as important for believers to know the matter of dying with the Lord as it is for sinners to know the matter of redemption.

Fact: When Christ died on the cross, not only did He die for the sinners, but the sinners died in Him as well. He not only died for sins, but He brought death to the sinners as well. It is a fact in God that the sinners have died with Jesus on the cross. The following Scriptures prove this:

One died for all, therefore all died (2 Cor. 5:14).

Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him (Rom. 6:6).

We who have died to sin (Rom. 6:2).

After seeing these few verses, we can realize that in God's view the believers have been crucified with Christ on the cross already. When a believer is not aware of this fact, he will try to crucify himself day after day and will find that no matter how much he tries, he does not die. Little does he realize that we are dead in Christ already. We should not try to crucify ourselves; rather, we should apply His death by faith and reckon His death as our death. Baptism is the demonstration and acknowledgement of faith. It both demonstrates and acknowledges the fact. Romans 6:3 says, "Baptized into His death." "Baptism into His death" (v. 4) is the demonstration and acknowledgement of our application through faith of this death.

We are dead, we have been crucified with Him, and our death and our crucifixion with Him are facts, yet the Word of God goes on to charge us to "reckon [ourselves] to be dead to sin" (Rom. 6:11). Reckoning is an act of faith. We do not consider ourselves dead, because we cannot consider ourselves dead. We may try to consider ourselves dead day and night, but how can one actually consider himself dead? The more we consider in this way, the more we will realize that we are alive and that we are capable of and even prone to sinning. The only way is for us to "reckon" ourselves dead in Christ. Christ's death is our death. If we have this faith, we will have the experience of dying with the Lord. In the Bible, Paul is a good pattern of a person who had the experience of dying with the Lord. He said, "The cross...through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14). He also said, "To know...the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10). Again he said, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). If a believer is to have the experience—the life experience—of dying with the Lord, he cannot do so by his own methods. He must take God's way, the way of fact, faith, and experience.

It is a fact that the believers have been crucified with Christ on the cross. Do you believe this fact? Are you willing to accept this fact and to reckon yourselves dead? If you believe, you will have the same experience of dying with the Lord that Paul had.

All of the teachings in the Bible concerning God's way of dealing with man follow the order of three things: fact, faith, and experience. All that God has done is perfect. The way He deals with the world is to accomplish all the works on behalf of the world, so that they will not need to use any human ways, but rather, receive and claim by faith alone. Since God deals with man in grace at present, He does not need any work from man (Rom. 4:4). The same principle applies to crucial doctrines such as "sanctification" and "victory."

## **SANCTIFICATION**

Sanctification is not a work of our own. Sanctification is accomplished for us by God. The Bible says, "That He might sanctify the people through His own blood" (Heb. 13:12). "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (10:14). Sanctification is an accomplished fact. Since Jesus has died, we are all sanctified. Nevertheless, 1 Peter 1:16 charges us to be "holy." Why does it charge us in this way? The reason is that though believers are sanctified, this sanctification is merely a fact with God; it is not yet an experience in the believers' lives. In order for one to be sanctified, he has to apply the sanctification accomplished through the death of Jesus, taking this as his sanctification. Only then will he live a sanctified life.

## **VICTORY OVER THE WORLD**

Concerning victory over the world, the same thing applies. First, there is the accomplished work of Christ, which is God's fact. Jesus says, "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Second, there is our faith, for "the victory which has overcome the world [is] our faith" (1 John 5:4). When a man claims the victory of Christ as his victory, he overcomes the world. This is an experience in life that comes after we have believed. Facts are works of God; faith is our trust in God's works; while experience is the spiritual encounters in our life. Not only does sanctification follow this principle; many other major doctrines concerning God's way with man also follow this principle.

All of God's facts are God's own works; they do not come from man's struggle. God's facts, such as sanctification and victory, cannot be accomplished by the believers' prayer, work, self-denial, holiness, charitable donations, or planning. God's facts are accomplished by God alone. God has entrusted all His enterprises to Christ. Only by faith can we appropriate these facts; there is no other way.

Let us now consider an example to see the great difference between God's fact and man's experience. According to God's fact, the church in Corinth was sanctified in Christ (1 Cor. 1:2). It was the temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19). It had been washed (v. 11). Yet in experience, it was "altogether a defeat" for them, for they wronged and defrauded (vv. 7-8) and sinned against Christ (8:12). The reason for this is that they did not apply the grace (i.e., the fact) that God had prepared for them. The result was a loss. The high position that we have obtained in fact does not come through our self-effort, diligence, self-buffeting, or pretense. We do not obtain this practical experience by exerting our own effort. In order to experience the reality of the fact that God has prepared for us, all we need to do is exercise our faith to claim what the Lord has accomplished for us and to count it as our own. The perfect and genuine faith is that which daily acknowledges the works (i.e., facts) that the Lord has accomplished. The meaning of claiming is to acknowledge daily all that the Lord has accomplished for us, that is, to acknowledge that all these accomplishments are effective in us. Then, when temptation comes, we will live out these accomplishments as if we have already attained to the position (the fact) that the Lord has placed us in. If we do this, our experience will follow.

A believer who is high in spiritual achievement is not high in himself. Rather, it is his claiming that makes him high. The spiritual experiences of the believers are not isolated matters. This means that there is a basis to these experiences; they do not exist in themselves or evolve around themselves. The experience of the believers' spiritual life is fully based on the facts that God has accomplished for them. The facts are the basis, the experience is the accomplishment, and faith is the process. In other words, the facts are the cause, faith is the way, and experience is the result. The experience of the believers' spiritual life is just the end result, the final achievement. Before there can be any lofty spiritual life in the believers, there first must be the perfect work of the Lord Jesus as its wellspring. It is absolutely

impossible for a believer to try to be sanctified, to overcome, or to die by his own effort. Sanctification, victory, death, and so forth do not come from self-effort. They come from: (1) acknowledging our sanctification, victory, and death to the self in the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) practicing it by believing that one is joined to the Lord Jesus in life and that one will be as sanctified, victorious, and dead to the self as the Lord Jesus is. The Lord Jesus has already encountered every experience that we have and will have. To claim by faith is to reckon as ours all that the Lord Jesus has and to apply through an attitude and a conduct of faith all that we have counted as grace.

Here we must never forget the Holy Spirit. Why does God's fact become man's experience through his faith? It is because of the work of the Holy Spirit. When we believe in God's facts shown in the Bible and when we claim these facts, the Holy Spirit will apply to us all the graces that God has accomplished for us in Christ, making them real to us in our lives. In this way, they become our personal experiences. An acknowledging and claiming faith opens the door for the Holy Spirit to work and to apply in our lives all that the Lord Jesus has accomplished so that we will have the practical experience. The work of the Holy Spirit is based upon the facts of God. The Holy Spirit does not accomplish any fact for us; He only makes the things that have been accomplished real and living in our lives. God has accomplished all the facts in Christ. What we must do is acknowledge and claim these facts, trusting in the Holy Spirit to apply in our lives what God has accomplished so that we will have the spiritual experiences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LIVING BY FAITH

"But the righteous shall have life and live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). This is the normal rule for the believers' living. We are prone to live by the excitement of the visible joys and the obvious blessings. But the Word of God says that "the righteous shall have life and live by faith." Many believers desire to have the revelation of God; they aspire to noble transformation and "third heaven" experiences. Some may encounter these at times, but the righteous must live by faith. The union in life that Madame Guyon experienced is seldom found in the present age. She said that her experience was such that she found it impossible for her to live apart from His life. She was able to attain to this state only through faith and self-denial.

Many believers are deeply grieved because they do not have a conscious feeling of God's presence. As a result, they cry out to God with their whole being, seeking for God as the deer seeks for a stream of water. Faith is not to touch God's presence. It is not to love Him in excitement or to express oneself in exuberance. The righteous shall live by faith—by faith alone.

Faith is like an anchor; it establishes a person. Faith is real; it is a "substantiating." Faith is also a "conviction of things not seen." Hence, it is touchable.

Those who walk by faith may have outward joy. But this is not what they are looking for; this is not their goal. A feeling of joy is merely the flowers that shine atop the dark green leaves along the path of faith.

Faith can do what nothing else can do. First, it can please God: "But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him" (Heb. 11:6). This is the life of our Lord Jesus, for He said, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29).

Second, it bears fruit: "Who through faith overcame kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were

made strong in weakness, became mighty in war, routed the armies of foreigners. Women received their dead by resurrection..." (Heb. 11:31-35). However, even though some results are obtained, one must continue to go on steadfastly by faith. He must believe in God and have faith whether in light or in darkness. He must fulfill his duty, moving forward to do whatever is next to do. He should advance in the way of faith even though it is an ordinary path. While he gropes in darkness and walks in darkness, he should live—living and unceasingly working—by faith.

If he would do this, glory will be all around him. However, those who live by faith will not see this glory themselves. Many lessons of faith are very deep and essential. Moses did not realize that his face shone, but the ones who saw this glory were blessed.

Once a missionary returned to her country wearing a very drab dress. When a young lady there saw her dress, she felt sorry for her. The missionary turned and looked at her, but she did not say a word. However, when the young lady saw her face, she was reminded of God. That young lady never forgot that day. She was very bright and intended to study for a certain degree, but eventually, she changed her mind and became a worker of Christ. The Lord is the Victor! She is now saving many in Africa. Although that returning missionary did not see her own face, others saw it, and the Lord worked.

An unchangeable fact is that those who live by faith must look away unto the Lord Jesus. God says that we should look away unto the Lord Jesus as the Author and Perfector of our faith. If one does this, he will reflect in word, countenance, and attitude the One he looks away to. This life is far beyond description—the righteous shall live by faith.

## CHAPTER SIX

### HOW TO SEEK AFTER GOD'S WILL

The one question that troubles Christians the most is how to seek after God's will. We know that all works which are done apart from God are vanity and futile labor; they do not count before God. We are not here to do a great work, but to do God's work. Many works are great, wonderful, and beneficial, but they may not be God's work for us. We should not think that whatever is good is of God's will. If our work is apart from the will of God, the Lord whom we serve will not be happy. Although we may be busy from morning till evening, we may not reap much benefit in the spiritual realm nor receive God's praise and reward as a result of this work. We must seek after God's will in each step of our life and work. We should not work senselessly, loosely, and foolishly. Many times, in our studying of the Bible, in our prayer, and even in our preaching of the gospel, we forget to seek after the Lord's will. We may preach to others for some time without realizing why we are preaching. We have not sought after the Lord's will, yet the whole time we continue preaching! This kind of work is of little value in the eyes of God; it is worthless. Hence, it is a great matter to know how to seek after God's will. It is something all Christians must know.

The first step in seeking after God's will is to cast aside our own opinions. Our prejudices often hinder God from revealing His will to us. Once a man has some prejudice, even if God were to show him His will, he probably would not be able to hear it or even be aware of it. Furthermore, even if he were to be aware of God's will, he would probably not do it.

In my own experience, every time I do not understand God's will, it is because I already have my own will. Sometimes my own intention is hidden in the deepest part of my heart. If I do not remove my own

self-will, there will be many difficulties in seeking after the Lord's will. As soon as our self-will is removed, God will show us His will.

I cannot overemphasize the fact that self-will must be removed before God's will can be known. This point is most crucial and deserves our full attention.

Our heart is very wicked. Sometimes we seek after God's will superficially, but within we are full of self-will and prejudice. Our one great goal is to please ourselves. Sometimes when we kneel down, we say with our mouth, "Lord, show me Your will. I am willing to obey Your will." But in our heart we are not willing and would not agree. Sometimes we pray with our mouth, "Father, Your will be done. I want only to seek after Your will." Apparently the heart sympathizes with the mouth and is willing to do God's will, but in the deepest part of our heart there is another intent which seeks for our own will. If this is the case, I am afraid that we cannot find God's will. This is a false seeking; it will not find. The promise of "seek and you shall find" is not given to those who are not honest. If we are not genuine in seeking after God's will, we will not receive the revelation of God's will. We may console ourselves by saying, "I have obtained God's will," but what we have probably obtained is a product of our mind and a counterfeit of His will!

If due to some desire in our heart we have already made up our mind concerning a certain matter, it would be vain for us to seek after the Lord's will. When one already has his own will and his own desire, his prayers will be in vain. Even if he prays and begs every day, it will be of no use. Hence, every time we want to seek after the Lord's will, we must ask ourselves in the Lord if there is self-will or prejudice or any hidden desire in the deepest part of our being. We must seek after the Lord's will with a clean and undefiled heart. Otherwise, what we do will have no effect.

For this reason, when two or more ways are placed before you, and you prefer one over the other, you should ask yourself if you are willing to take the way that you do not prefer, should the Lord so choose. If you are not willing to take the way that you do not prefer, what is the use for you to seek after the Lord's will?

Whenever you come to a crossroads, the best way is to have a heart free of preference. This is to have an unbiased heart, neither preferring one way nor being afraid of another way but considering either way to be the same. Then, whichever way the Lord may point to, you will be able to take that way. If there is no preference in our heart, the Lord can easily show us His will. Inward preferences and our unwillingness to obey are the main hindrances to the Lord's will.

To have no preference in one's heart does not mean that one is passive. To be without preference means that one exercises his own judgment, resolving to do God's will. To be free from preference does not mean that one no longer has "wants" or "don't wants." It means that before one is clear concerning God's will, though the heart may not prefer any way, he is determined to do God's will and is willing to carry it out once he is clear about it. We should not have the choice between "I want" and "I don't want" when it comes to our own will deciding the way we are to take. However, when it comes to deciding between God's will and our will, we must choose between the "I want" and "I don't want," which is, we should "want" to do God's will and should "not want" to do our own will. We should choose God's will and reject our own will. It is not that we do not have a will or a choice. We do, but our will and our choice is to do God's will and take His choice. We are not void of choice. We have our choice. However, we choose to want what God wants.

Simply put, the first step in seeking after the Lord's will is to have no inclination or rejection in our heart toward the ways ahead of us, assuming that we do not know which one is God's will. Yet at the same time, our heart should hold to the attitude that we want to do God's will. We should be willing to submit our will to the Lord's will. The reason that we do not know God's will is because we fail in this one point. The Lord is happy to reveal His will to those who are willing to do His will. For those who are not willing to do God's will, their seeking after His will is false. Hence, it cannot be found by them. Therefore, if there is prejudice in the heart, it is better not even to talk about seeking after God's will. One should first trust in the Lord's power to deal thoroughly with the inclinations in the heart before he can expect the Lord to reveal His will to him. Otherwise, even if he knows all means and exhausts all means, they will be useless to him.

What we have said so far concerns our side. If we have fulfilled God's requirements, how will He then show us His will? He will show us His will by the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and the environment. When the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and the environment all line up together, we can affirm that such is indeed the will of God.

We should seek after the Lord's will in this way in everything that comes upon us in our daily life. In the many small things in our daily life we act carelessly, according to our own will. It is not until the big things come that we try to seek after the Lord's will, but then He seems to be far away from us. This seems to be the Lord's will, and that also seems to be the Lord's will. Every way seems to be the right way. We may spend a lot of time seeking for the Lord's will without finding it. Therefore, we should seek after the Lord's will in small things as well as big things. If we are in the habit of seeking after the Lord's will in our daily life, it will not be difficult to know His will when special events happen. We should be experienced in seeking after the Lord's will and have a habit of seeking after His will. If we do, then whenever something happens we will know what the will of the Lord is.

Sometimes God does not reveal His will to us immediately. The Father is never wrong. If He sees that it is more profitable to reveal His will to us at a later time, He will do so. At such times we should hold the attitude that as long as we do not know, we will not act. The danger lies in our desire to move. We want to move before we know the Lord's will. The Lord wants us to wait for Him, to move on slowly together with Him, and to take our steps only when we are certain of His will. Unfortunately, we are often hurried by the circumstances; we love to act quickly. As a result, we often move away from the track of the Lord's will. I can say one thing for sure: eight out of ten things done in a hurry are not of the Lord's will. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, we do not see Him do one thing in a hurry. We should learn of Him. We should not act rashly, that is, before we are certain of the Lord's will. We should make up our mind not to initiate anything until we have found out what the will of the Lord is. It is not too slow to walk with the Lord. The quickest way to go on is to go forward on our knees with the Lord. May the Lord give us much strength to be quiet before Him and to wait for and seek after His will. May the Lord deliver us from times when we have to confess before Him the sin of acting too quickly. From this time forth, may we stop our self, leave our self, and solely seek after the Lord's will.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **THE FREEDOM OF THE CROSS**

(Watchman Nee attributed this chapter to an article by Rev. Gordon Watt. However, Watchman Nee's article is quite different from the original article entitled "Liberty Through the Cross" by Rev. Gordon Watt. We have therefore chosen to translate his chapter from the Chinese. Readers

interested in the original article by Rev. Watts should consult The Christian magazine, September 20, 1923, published by Morgan & Scot, London, England, edited by James W. Thirtle.)

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not be entangled with a yoke of slavery again" (Gal. 5:1).

Three words are used in the New Testament to describe the "freedom" for which Christ has set us free:

- (1) A word for forgiveness, which refers to God's pardon.
- (2) A word often translated authority. This word refers to the privilege and authority purchased by the Lord Jesus through His precious blood for our freedom.
- (3) A word that pictures one who was formerly in prison, but has now been liberated (1 Cor. 7:22).

A bound life cannot deliver another bound life. Many Christians are bound; they cannot follow the Lord freely, and they are subdued by their environment. They fear men and the world. Satan does not wish to see a Christian living the liberated life. Yet all the power of darkness has been defeated by the power of Golgotha. The victory at Golgotha has secured for us our victory. God's Word (the Bible) clearly points out the way that Satan exercises his great power to frustrate God's children from experiencing the freedom they deserve.

### **THE POWER OF SIN AND OF OUR OLD LIVING**

The power of sin and of our old living have been clearly dealt with on the cross. We should have faith concerning this fact. The reckoning in Romans 6:11 describes the attitude of our will concerning a certain matter. It is not a power in our flesh but the power in the Holy Spirit that reckons what God sees as true. We should adopt this attitude towards our old enemy.

### **SUFFERING**

One power is continually used by Satan for his own end: suffering. In reading Romans 8:18, we see that suffering in God's will is often the pathway to light; through suffering one receives life and fruit. Many of God's children are pitiful and poor because they lack God-given trials. But here is a question: do we view all sufferings and adverse conditions to be from the Lord? Many Christians consider that they ought to submit to all adverse circumstances. They do not realize that sufferings sometimes come from the enemy. These include things such as distractions, depressions, numbness, and things that hinder our spiritual progress. As God's children, we should reject all these things. We should not accept anything that oppresses us and should not consider them to be God's will. We should differentiate between God's will and Satan's will. We should know what is from love and what is from sin. We should test all things by the spirit of the cross and by the will of God. We should identify what kind of suffering we are facing in various circumstances by the teaching of the cross. We should accept what is from God and reject what is from Satan.

### **GOD'S WILL**

Romans 8:37 says that we can "more than conquer." This means a victory among victories, the highest form of victory. To conquer means to be on top. We have to ask if the experiences of temptations, circumstances, emotions, frustrations, and depressions belong to our old man or our new man. If they belong to the old man, we have overcome them on the cross already, and they are under our feet. This does not mean that we can avoid the things mentioned above; however, it does mean that we can take

control of them. The way to victory is not to develop the old man but to trust in the Holy Spirit for power to resist temptations. God's children are often unaware of the fact that spiritual depressions come from the enemy and not from God! At the needed moment, we must resist through the power of the cross. Every step of the Christian life is a wrestling. Every time that we die to the things that oppress us and hold the devil at bay by obeying the Spirit, we allow the Spirit to take a firmer hold of us, and we shake ourselves further away from the devil's grip.

### **CRUSHING SATAN**

If we obey God's will, He will crush Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20). The Holy Spirit will guide us to greater fellowship with God and make the victory of Golgotha real to us. The Lord has given us the authority to tread over the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Victory is a necessary experience of the Christian life. A defeated Christian cannot bear fruit. Depressions, wavering of faith, dullness of the will, darkness in the mind, suppression in the spirit, inability to pray or control the forces that come from outside, and subjection to these forces have not been ordained by God for a Christian. Many believers fail because they do not know or realize the absolute victory that is reserved for them in Christ.

### **THE MIGHT OF DEATH**

The devil is the one who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14). He murders God's children and runs rampant everywhere. Many of God's children die because of weakness. All those who are faithful to Christ are objects of the devil's attack. How should we deal with him? All believers who are joined to the Lord are able to withstand death. Unless it is God's will for a person to die, he should always seek for life through the perfect work of Christ. We are God's children, and we should not accept anything that is not God's will. We should not accept anything from the hand of the devil.

### **THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL**

The Son of God was manifested for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). We should be careful not to take the concept of leaving everything up to fate or leaving the condition of the world and the church today to fate. We should not brush aside our responsibility just because the prophecies are already recorded in the Bible. The Bible predicts that there will be apostasies at the end time. Some Christians think that since the Scriptures have prophesied these things, they do not need to rebuke or warn others of them anymore. Sin has been restricted in this age for the purpose of paving the way for God to reach His goal. Christians are obstacles in Satan's way. We should exercise the power at Golgotha to destroy the works of the devil in the churches, the fields, and the homes. As soon as we detect the work of the devil, we should adopt the attitude that we will not stop until we see the devil's work destroyed.

Any opposing force that runs contrary to God's will can be trampled immediately under our feet because it has been trampled under the Lord's feet already. When we are in the Lord, this force is under our feet also.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE PRAYER THAT OPPOSES SATAN**

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1-8

## **THE THREE ASPECTS OF PRAYER**

There are three aspects to our prayer: (1) concerning ourselves, (2) concerning God to whom we pray, and (3) concerning our enemy Satan. Every genuine prayer must be related to these three aspects. When we pray concerning ourselves, we are, of course, doing it for our own interest; we pray because we have needs, lacks, and expectations. Prayer is for gaining what we seek, yet genuine prayer should not seek after one's own interest alone, but should seek for God's glory and His governmental authority on earth. Of course, when our prayers are answered, the ones who receive the direct benefit are ourselves. However, the fact in the spiritual realm is that not only do the praying ones receive the benefit, but God receives His glory, and His will is done. An answer to prayer is a great glory to God because it shows God's love, power, sincerity, and greatness in accomplishing what His children ask for. An answer to prayer also shows that God's will is being accomplished because He never answers a prayer that is not according to His will.

We are the supplicating ones, and the One being supplicated is God. In a successful prayer, both the supplicants and the One being supplicated gain something. The supplicants get their intentions fulfilled, and the One being supplicated gets His will accomplished. We do not have to say too much concerning this point, for all God's faithful children who are experienced in prayer know the relationship between these two aspects of prayer. What we must now bring to the attention of God's children is that if our prayers take care only of these two aspects of God and man, though they may be effective at times, they are deficient; there is failure even in the success, and the real meaning of prayer has not yet been fully realized. Of course, the spiritual saints realize that prayer is not only for their own benefit but is intimately related to God's glory and God's will, yet this is not enough. We still have to pay attention to the third aspect. When we pray to God, not only should our prayer be related to God, but if we ask something from God, what we ask for and what God promises must be something that will cause some loss to God's enemy. We know that in the universe God is the sovereign Ruler, yet Satan is the ruler of this world (John 14:30); the whole world lies in his hand (1 John 5:19). Hence, we see two diametrically opposed forces competing against one another in this world. Of course, God has the final victory, but before the end of the millennium, Satan will continue to exercise authority in this world and will continue to oppose God's work, God's will, and God's interest. We the children of God belong to God. If we gain something from the hand of God, this means that God's enemy suffers some loss. The measure of the benefit which we who belong to God receive is equal to the measure of God's will that is fulfilled, and the measure of God's will that is fulfilled is equal to the measure of loss which Satan incurs. Since we belong to God, Satan's goal is to shatter us, persecute us, suppress us, and knock us off our feet. This is Satan's goal, but his goal will not necessarily succeed, because we can come to the throne of grace by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus and ask Him for protection and care. If God hears our prayer, Satan's plan will be defeated. For God to hear our prayer means that Satan's will is thwarted and that he is no longer able to persecute us according to his plan. Hence, the degree to which our prayers are answered is the degree to which Satan incurs loss. Our benefit together with God's glory is inversely proportional to Satan's loss. The increase of one means the loss of the other, and the loss of one means the increase of the other. Hence, in our prayers we should care not only for our benefit and God's glory and will, but should pay attention to the third aspect, which is the enemy, Satan. If a prayer does not take care of or affect all three aspects, this prayer is only superficial; it is worth very little and will accomplish very little.

We need not mention the senseless prayers, for they will have no effect on any of these three aspects. Yet even a sensible prayer by a fleshly Christian is one which addresses only his own interest. Its goal is to secure his own interest through prayer. All he has in mind are his own needs and lacks. If God answers his prayer and fulfills his desires, he is satisfied. He does not consider God's will or God's glory,

much less think of Satan's loss. But not all of God's children are fleshly. We thank and praise the Lord that there are many among His children who are spiritual. When they pray, they do not care only for their own interest and then content themselves only with God's answer to their prayer while ignoring everything else. They pay much attention to God's glory and God's will. They ask God to answer their prayer, not for their own gain, but so that God may gain glory in the matter through the answering of their prayer. They do not insist on what they pray, but rather, take care of God's will. This care for God's will does not refer to a concern for God's being willing or unwilling to grant them what they ask for. It refers to their concern that, if God were to answer their prayer, would it run contrary to His work, His government, and the will that is according to His plan. This is not merely a consideration of the thing itself but of its relationship to the principle work of God. Such prayers take care of two aspects: God and man. However, very few Christians take care of the third aspect, which is Satan. The goal of a genuine prayer is not just for one's own interest; sometimes such prayer will even be ignored. One must pay attention to God's glory and Satan's loss, not considering his own gain or loss to be consequential. Such ones consider their prayer most successful if it causes loss to Satan and glory to God. Their concern is to inflict loss upon Satan through their prayer. Their eyes are looking not merely at the present environment but at God's work and will on the whole earth. Of course, this does not mean that they are merely concerned with God and Satan and forget themselves. What it means is that, practically speaking, when God's will is fulfilled and Satan has incurred loss, they will surely reap a benefit. The spiritual condition of a saint can be seen from the aspect of prayer that he emphasizes.

### **THE PARABLE IN LUKE 18**

In the parable in Luke 18, our Lord Jesus points out these three aspects of prayer and their relationship to prayer. In this parable there are three parties: (1) the judge, (2) the widow, and (3) the opponent. The judge represents God, though in a negative sense. The widow represents the present church or individual faithful Christians. The opponent represents our enemy, the devil. In expounding this parable, we often pay attention only to the relationship between the judge and the widow. We see how the judge did not fear God and did not respect man, yet due to the widow's persistent cry, he eventually avenged her. Our God, not being heartless like this judge, will surely avenge us because of our crying! This is all that we say and all that we pay attention to, yet there is one most important figure whom we miss and neglect. Without the opponent, there would be no need for the widow to cry to the judge. It is because of the persecution of the opponent that the widow cries to the judge. If we consider the words which the widow speaks to the judge, we cannot help but consider the opponent. For the sake of brevity the Bible only records, "Avenge me of my opponent." How much is contained in this word! Does it not include a sorrowful tale? Those who cry out for avenging must have grievances, but where do the grievances come from? Surely they come from the oppression of the opponent, the one being accused. The Bible calls this one the opponent, which shows us the intensity of his hatred toward the widow. The Bible says that the widow asked to be avenged of her opponent. This shows the severity of the persecution suffered by the widow at the hand of the opponent. Hence, the widow was relating to the judge the history and the present threat of the opponent toward her. She asked the judge to punish the opponent and to avenge her for her grievances. Hence, strictly speaking, the opponent is the most crucial figure in this parable. Without him, no damage would have occurred under the judge's rule, and the widow could have lived and worked happily without being disturbed. Without him, there would not have been such a parable; nothing like this would have happened. The one who stirs up the wind and the waves is this opponent. He is the creator of all confusion and persecution. Hence, he deserves the most attention.

#### **The Judge**

This judge was the unique ruler in a certain city. He ruled over the entire city. This speaks of God's power and authority. Although the world is ruled temporarily by Satan, yet this position is a rebellious usurpation. When the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, He cast out the prince of this world. In His death He stripped off "the rulers and the authorities" and "made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). Although the world is now under the hand of the evil one, this is not a legitimate arrangement. God has set the time when He will take back the kingdom and put His Son on the throne for a thousand years, even for eternity. Before this time comes, God is merely allowing Satan's activities; the world still remains under the rule of God. Satan can rule over everything that belongs to him and can also persecute everyone who belongs to God, but this is only temporary. During this temporary period, even Satan is strictly limited by God. He can persecute the saints, but this can be done only within certain limits. Beyond the limit allowed by God, Satan has no authority. We can see this clearly from the story of Job. The judge ruled over the whole city; God rules over the whole world. It was not normal for a person under the judge's rule to be someone's opponent. In the same way, it is abnormal for Satan, under God's rule, to persecute the saints.

The disposition of this judge was that he "did not fear God and did not regard man." What sort of person does not care for either man or God? However, because of the persistent coming of the widow and her cry to be avenged, and because he was bothered and feared her persistence, he avenged her. The Lord Jesus used this judge as a negative representation of God. God is not virtueless like this judge. He is our loving Father, the One who protects us. He desires to give us the best. Also, He is not unrelated to us like the judge was to the widow. If such a judge would avenge the widow because of her unceasing accusing, will not God, who is more virtuous and loving and is intimately related to His children, avenge them because of their constant prayer? If an unvirtuous judge will avenge a person because of her incessant asking, at the least our God will work for His children because of their prayers. The widow secured her avenging by the judge simply by her unceasing crying. She could not have had any hope in the judge himself, for this judge did not have any virtues. However, our answer to prayer comes not merely because of our unceasing asking, though it is sufficient in itself to gain what we want; our prayer is also based on the goodness of God. This is why the Lord Jesus uses the words "will not God." The words "will not God" imply a comparison. If the widow who trusted only in unceasing asking received what she wanted, will not we, who trust in our unceasing prayer and who pray on the basis of God's goodness, receive what we ask for?

### **The Widow**

This widow was helpless. The word widow shows her isolated situation. The husband on whom she depended for her living was gone, and she had become a widow. This is a good representation of a Christian on earth. Our Lord Jesus has ascended to the heavens. As far as the flesh goes, Christians are helpless and are like widows. The teaching of Matthew 5 tells us of the sufferings that Christians face on earth. They are the weak and have no power to resist anyone; everywhere they go they are taken advantage of and ridiculed by others. Neither the Lord Jesus nor the apostles taught the believers to have great power or high position in the world. Instead, they should be humble, despised, and persecuted everywhere by others. They cannot base their reasoning with others on justice or the law. This is the portion of the Christians; it is the way that the Lord has prepared for them. If the Son of God was crucified without opposing or murmuring, why should His disciples expect to receive better treatment? Hence, this widow is a true representation of the Christians in this age.

### **The Opponent**

The widow had an opponent. We Christians also have our opponent. This opponent is Satan. The meaning of the word Satan is adversary. An adversary is an opponent. First Peter 5:8 says, "Your adversary, the devil." The devil is our adversary. We must clearly identify who our adversary is before we can know how to come to our Judge, God, to accuse him. How the devil became our adversary is a long story. Simply put, this hatred began from the garden of Eden. God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). It is because of the devil's deceiving of the world that God put a hatred in his heart and also a hatred in our heart. We know that the seed of the woman in Genesis refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is forever at enmity with the devil. This is what God has ordained. We who have believed in the Lord Jesus belong to His side. As such, we cannot help but take His adversary as our adversary. At the same time, the enemy of the Lord Jesus, Satan, will not let us go easily, with no opposition. He took the Lord Jesus as his enemy; hence, he has to take the disciples of the Lord Jesus as his enemies as well. Those who have not yet believed in the Lord Jesus are children of the devil (John 8:44), and naturally, he loves those who belong to him. But we have believed in the Lord Jesus and are joined to Him. Because he hates the Lord Jesus, he hates us also.

This hatred grows deeper as the days go by. Satan is strong and forceful, while we are isolated and helpless like the widow. He oppresses us with his power, suppressing us and bringing great havoc upon us. In the end, we are even wrongly accused by him. The word *avenge* speaks of much suffering which we must endure under him. We have to pay close attention to this point. Even now, Christians are being wrongly accused by the devil. Unless this wrong is avenged, we will continually suffer loss. What a pity that many children of God are not even aware of their being wronged by Satan!

### **SATAN AND THE SAINTS**

As the opponent persecuted the widow, so the devil now persecutes the believers. We do not know how much we have suffered under him. Of course, Satan does not appear personally when he persecutes us; rather, he does all his works through men or things; he will never expose himself. He pushes the world to the foreground, while behind the scenes he is secretly directing everything. As he worked the first time in the form of a serpent, in the same way, in all of his subsequent work he comes in a disguised form. It is because he hides himself in this way that God's children misjudge the enemy, not realizing that he is their real opponent. He causes the believers to be physically weak or to suffer pain and sickness (Acts 10:38). The believers may think that they have violated some law of hygiene or that they are exhausted, without realizing that it has been the devil's manipulation all the while! Alas, countless numbers of believers have suffered at the hand of the devil in this way. Sometimes he will persecute the believers through the world (Rev. 2:10), attacking them through their immediate family, relatives, or the society. The believers may think that it is man who is hating the Lord, without realizing that it is the devil who is stirring up everything behind the scenes. Sometimes he works through the environment, causing the believers to encounter dangers. Sometimes he spreads misunderstandings among believers, separating the dearest of friends from one another and bringing them to tears. Sometimes he cuts off the supply to the believers, bringing upon them all kinds of deprivation, even starvation. Sometimes he will cause the believers to be depressed, restless, and aimless. Sometimes he causes the believers to become lost and indecisive, losing control of themselves. Sometimes he puts an inexplicable fear within the heart of the believers. Sometimes he exhausts the believers through their affairs and work. Sometimes he takes away the believers' sleep, causing them to be tired physically and mentally. Sometimes he puts unclean thoughts in the believers' minds or injects confused thoughts into their brains, stripping them of any defense. Sometimes he disguises himself in the form of an angel of light, deceiving the believers and leading them into the wrong way. To exhaust his workings is beyond the scope of what we can do here. In conclusion, everything that causes the believers to suffer, whether

physically or spiritually, and everything that causes the believers to sin or suffer loss is a wile of the devil. But although many children of God are taken advantage of by Satan, most do not realize that it is the working of Satan. Sometimes they think that what happens is natural and accidental or that it is something done by man. Little do they know that behind many natural phenomena, there exist many supernatural things. Behind many so-called accidents, there is much scheming. Within many dealings from men, we can see the plots of Satan.

### **IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY**

Hence, the most important thing to do now is to clearly identify our enemy. We have to know definitely who our enemy is, who it is that causes us to suffer. Many times, we think that we have been taken advantage of by men. But the Bible tells us that "our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12). Hence, every time we suffer at the hands of men, we have to remember that behind the men of flesh Satan and his dark powers are there directing. We should have the spiritual sight to discern between God's work and Satan's hidden schemes. We should differentiate between the natural and the supernatural. We should be mature and acquire spiritual knowledge so that nothing of Satan's work in the dark will escape our observation.

If this is so, should we not see that every natural or accidental occurrence which we encounter in our daily life is the work of the enemy? Then we will see that Satan is hounding us and persecuting us in everything. The pitiful thing is that in the past we were taken advantage of by Satan so much, yet without any realization that it was he who was taking advantage of us. The most important thing now is for every one of us to have a hatred of Satan for his harassment of us. Our hatred against Satan can never go too deep. Before there can be the possibility of victory, we must maintain an opposing attitude in our heart and refuse to come under his oppression. We must realize that our sufferings which come from Satan are unjust and that these injustices must be avenged. This malice must be avenged. He has no right to afflict us, yet he inflicts such pain upon us. What an enmity! What an injustice! We must seek for vengeance.

### **THE CRY FOR VINDICATION**

After the widow suffered, she came to the judge for vindication. We should learn from this. We should not come before earthly judges for anything. We should cry out to our Judge who is our Father God. The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly (2 Cor. 10:4); hence, we should not deal with the fleshly men, who are utilized by Satan, by any fleshly means. Instead, we should pity them because they have become Satan's tools. In spiritual warfare, fleshly weapons are completely useless. Not only are they useless, but all those who use them will be overcome by Satan! We should use spiritual weapons to fight spiritual warfare. There are, of course, many spiritual weapons, which are all recorded in Ephesians 6. The most important of these is the prayer of verse 18. We are powerless in ourselves and cannot seek to avenge ourselves, but we can pray to God and ask Him to avenge us. Prayer is the best offensive weapon against the enemy. In prayer we maintain our ground, and through prayer we can attack the enemy and damage his plan, his work, and his power. The widow knew that for her to fight or argue with the opponent was futile, for a weak widow can never prevail against an evil rogue. In the same way, if God's children will not trust in God's power, if they will not have prayer as their shield, if they will not accuse the enemy in the midst of his accusations, crying for God's avenging, but rather, go to war alone against Satan, they will surely be hurt by his flaming darts. In this parable, the Lord Jesus tells us the best way to overcome

our opponent—by crying to God day and night, calling for His vindication of us and His judgment and punishment on Satan.

### **THE PRAYER THAT OPPOSES SATAN**

The Bible gives us much help with respect to the prayer that accuses Satan. Now we want to briefly consider a few passages in the Scriptures that show us the prayer that opposes Satan.

We recall that in Genesis 3 the devil worked for the first time. Later, God judged him and cursed him. From this we know that Satan is cursed by God. In this curse, God clearly foretold that the head of the devil would be crushed by the Lord Jesus on the cross. Hence, when we suffer in his hands, we can apply this judgment. We can pray, "God, curse Satan once more so that he cannot work at will. You cursed him in the garden of Eden already; I pray that You will curse him afresh. Put him under the power of the cross again so that he cannot move." The thing that the devil is the most afraid of is God's curse. Once God curses him, he will not dare to harm us anymore.

Mark 1 records that when the Lord Jesus was casting out the demons, He forbade them to speak. Hence, when Satan utilizes men to speak many words of confusion or violence, we can pray to the Lord to stop the mouth of the devil and to shut him up. Sometimes while we are preaching the gospel or teaching others the truth, we can pray to the Lord to stop the devil from opening his mouth to our listeners or saying anything that would cause the listeners to doubt or oppose the Lord's word. We recall the story of Daniel in the lion's den. One prayer which is always very effective is, "Lord, shut the mouths of the lions so that they will not harm Your people."

There is another wonderful prayer revealed in Matthew 12. The Lord tells us that in order to enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, one must first bind the strong man. We know that the strong man the Lord speaks of here is Satan. Before we can overcome Satan, we have to bind him and stop him from his work. Of course, we ourselves cannot bind him and strip him of his freedom to oppose our work, but we can pray. In our prayer, we can ask God to bind Satan and strip him of the strength to fight against us. Whenever we are to work, if we first truly bind Satan with our prayer, our victory will be sure. Hence, we should always pray, "Lord, bind the strong man."

First John 3:8 says, "The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." Hence, whenever we see the works of the devil, we can pray, "O God, Your Son was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. I thank You because on the cross He has annulled the works of the devil. But the devil is still working. Annul his work in me, and annul his intention of working through my work. Annul his work in my environment; annul all of his works." When we pray, we can pray according to the condition at the time. If we see Satan working in us, our family, our office, our school, or our nation, we can ask God to annul his work in that place.

Jude 9 mentions one sentence which Michael the archangel spoke to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you." After this word, Satan was not able to oppose him anymore. Hence, this sentence can also be used in our prayer to the Lord as our opposition against Satan. We can ask the Lord to rebuke Satan. We should know that the Lord hears our prayer. If we ask Him to rebuke, He will surely rebuke. We should also believe that when the Lord rebukes Satan, he will not be able to withstand it. Satan is afraid of the Lord's rebuke. We see that when the Lord rebuked the winds and the waves on the sea, they immediately obeyed Him and became calm. Hence, when the Lord rebukes Satan, it must be equally effective. If we read the Psalms we will see the effectiveness of the Lord's rebuke. Psalm 18:15 says, "The river beds were seen,/And the foundations of the habitable land were laid bare,/At Your rebuke, O

Jehovah." Psalm 76:6 says, "At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,/Both chariot and horse fall into deep sleep." Psalm 80:16 says, "They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance." Psalm 104:7 says, "At thy rebuke they [the waters] fled." Psalm 106:9 says, "He rebuked the Red sea also,/and it was dried up." These verses show us the power of the Lord's rebuke. Hence, if the Lord rebukes Satan, surely Satan will not be able to withstand it. Whenever Satan harasses us, we can ask the Lord to rebuke him.

Matthew 16 records Peter through his natural affection holding back the Lord Jesus from going to the cross. The Lord rebuked him, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (v. 23). Every time Satan uses our relatives or natural affections to stop us from doing God's will, we can pray to God to put Satan behind us.

In Matthew 6 the Lord Jesus teaches us to pray: "Deliver us from the evil one" (v. 13). We do not know when the evil one will come to oppress us, but we can always apply this expression in our prayer.

Colossians 2:15 says of the Lord Jesus, "Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it." When we see the power of Satan on the rampage, we can stand on the foundation of the cross and ask the Lord to once again shame the devil. He was shamed on the cross already. Therefore, based on his first shaming, we can ask the Lord to shame him once more. If he is shamed, he will not be able to lift up his head or harm us anymore. Hence, we should pray to the Lord, "Lord, we are now standing on the foundation of the cross and are asking You to shame the devil once more."

### **The Duration of Such Prayer**

How long should this kind of prayer last? We know that for some prayers we need only pray once. But there can never be too much of the prayer that opposes Satan. The purpose of the Lord's parable in Luke 18 is to teach men "to pray and not lose heart" (v. 1). The judge avenged the widow, not because of justice or any other reason, but because he could not tolerate her wearing him out. He said to himself, "I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out." Hence, this kind of prayer should be unceasing. We should have this kind of Satan-opposing prayer not only when special circumstances befall us. Rather, in our daily life, even while there is nothing happening, we should maintain in our spirit an attitude of unceasing opposition to Satan and should utter unceasing prayer against him. After the Lord Jesus spoke this parable, He said that if God's people would cry to Him day and night, He would surely avenge them quickly. Hence, this kind of prayer must go on day and night without ceasing. We must accuse our enemy before God day and night unceasingly, because Revelation 12 tells us that Satan accuses us before God day and night unceasingly. Since he accuses us day and night without ceasing, should we not accuse him also day and night without ceasing?

This is vengeance. As he deals with us, so we deal with him. This cry of the widow did not stop until the opponent was judged and punished and she was vindicated. Hence, as long as Satan is still reigning, as long as he is not shut up in the abyss, as long as he is not cast into the lake of fire, and as long as God has not yet avenged us, we must not cease our opposing prayer. It is when Satan falls like lightning out of heaven that our prayer can stop, for by then, God will have begun our avenging. Alas, how God desires that we have a deeper hatred of the devil. We have suffered enough under his hand! He has set himself against us step by step, and at every turn he has persecuted us physically and spiritually. Why then are we still silent and tolerant of his persecution? Why do we not rise up to accuse him before God with our words of prayer? We should seek revenge and require vengeance. Why do we not come often before God to accuse him and thus air our grievances? The Lord Jesus is calling us particularly to oppose Satan with our prayer.

## **The Effect of Such Prayer**

What is the effect of this kind of prayer? The effect occurs in two instances. First, there is the present effect. Every time we accuse the enemy, he is limited by God from harming us. Although he will come to us again later, while we are accusing him, he is afraid and will not exercise his violence recklessly. Every time we invoke the victory of the cross, this victory becomes real to us once again. Every time we pray to oppose Satan, his work is once again annulled, and he is once again rebuked by the Lord. If we pray one more time, Satan suffers loss one more time. When God hears our prayer one more time, Satan's interest is stripped away one more time.

However, this effect is not limited to the present time. The Lord Jesus mentions a final vindication here. Every time we pray, the Lord rebukes and annuls the devil. But this is not accomplished once for all. He is restricted only for a while and has not yet met his final and complete destruction. The Lord says, "And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night?" (Luke 18:7). This speaks of the final annihilation of Satan. We know that in the millennium Satan will be shut up in the abyss and that after the millennium the Lord Jesus will cast him into the eternal lake of fire. This is to avenge the believers. For this reason, the believers should pray more prayers that oppose Satan now, so that they can be fully avenged. Now is the time when God is patiently enduring. Although He hears the believers' prayer and limits the devil's work, He has not yet removed him completely nor stopped his menacing permanently. Now is the time for the believers to pray so that that day may come soon. It seems that our prayer can hasten God's work. The widow cried continually, for she did not know when the judge would avenge her. Her crying hastened the day of his avenging. It is the same with us. The Lord says, "I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly" (v. 8). The Lord seems to be saying that the speed of God's work depends on our prayer. Our constant Satan-accusing prayers will hasten God's avenging of us. Satan will lose his authority when he is cast out of heaven at the coming of the Lord Jesus. The prayer that accuses Satan will hasten the day of the Lord's coming.

Many times we think that God works according to His will. This is true, but this is only one side of the truth. It is not the complete truth. God works according to His will; this is His principle. However, God cannot actually set out to work until His children have responded to His will. God wants man to work with Him.

## **CO-LABORING WITH GOD**

God has a will. Yet He wants man to pray according to His will. When man does this, He will immediately accomplish the work that His will has ordained. If there is no prayer from His children expressing their oneness with Him in His work, no matter what His will may be, He will not execute it independently. God's goal is to remove the work of the devil, and surely His will is to avenge the believers. But God is waiting for His children to pray. As the judge would not have avenged the widow without her crying out to him, in the same way, without the Satan-accusing prayer of the believers, God will not avenge them. We do not know why, but we do know that God is pleased to see His people working with Him. However, there must be a basis to our accusing. The ones who are persecuted by Satan are the believers. Hence, the believers can accuse him before God based on Satan's treatment of them. In this way, he will receive his deathblow.

## **THE END TIME**

After the Lord finished this parable, He concluded with this word: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (v. 8). It seems as if the Lord was saying that at the time when

He is about to come, this kind of prayer will be greatly lacking. Believers do not pray because they do not have faith. They think that it is too great and too difficult a thing to cast Satan out of heaven and into the abyss and, eventually, into the lake of fire. "Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). Concerning this verse, they may think, "If this promise has passed through twenty centuries and has still not yet been fulfilled, how could we hope to see Satan punished by God merely by our prayer?" The Lord's word implies that when He is about to come, man will not have the faith to pray for this matter. Yet, the end time is exactly the time that we need this kind of prayer. Can we be the faithful minority that offers up prayers to oppose and attack Satan at this unprecedented hour, prayers to hasten his abdication of his position and his authority? We know that the end time is the time when Satan and his evil spirits are particularly active in their work. For this reason, we should all the more oppose him and overturn his government by prayer. Strictly speaking, at the present time, there is no greater work for God's children than this. Who is willing to pray the prayer that opposes Satan, for his own sake and for God's sake?

Strive, O Jehovah, with those who strive with me;  
Battle against those who battle against me.  
Take hold of shield and buckler,  
And rise up as my help.  
Draw out also the spear, and close up the way  
Against those who pursue me;  
Say to my soul,  
I am your salvation.  
Let those who seek my life  
Be put to shame and humiliated;  
Let those who devise evil for me  
Be turned back and confounded.  
Let them be like chaff before the wind,  
With the angel of Jehovah driving them on.  
Let their way be darkness and slipperiness itself,  
With the angel of Jehovah pursuing them.  
For without cause they hid their net for me in a pit;  
Without cause they dug a hole for me...  
Awake, and stir Yourself for my cause,  
For my contention, O my God and my Lord.  
(Psa. 35:1-7, 23).

## CHAPTER NINE

### **THE TEMPTER AND THE TEMPTED**

#### **I. THE ORIGIN OF THE TEMPTER AND HIS KINGDOM**

The tempter is a creature. He was beautiful and full of wisdom, complete and powerful. However, through aspiring to be equal with God, he sinned and fell. "But you, you said in your heart: I..." (Isa. 14:13). He uplifted the "I," and as a result he was delivered to gloomy pits, having been cast down to Tartarus, and is being kept for judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). This tempter sinned and fell as a result of trying to be equal with God; hence, his way of tempting people is to bait them with "ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5). We have to be careful lest through pride we "fall into the judgment suffered by the devil" (1 Tim.

3:6). Here, two parties are together, the devil and us. If we are separated from him, then he will be left to himself and we to ourselves. We Christians should voluntarily take Christ as the "I." In other words, we should exercise our will to join ourselves to Christ. If we still take the old "I" as our self, we will be separated from Christ, becoming two. However, the more we are in Christ, the more we will understand the things concerning the tempter. For this reason, we must study this subject.

### **A. His Names**

Revelation 12:9 records four of his names. The great dragon speaks of his cruelty; the ancient serpent speaks of his deception; the Devil speaks of his temptations; and Satan speaks of his hatred. The god of this age in 2 Corinthians 4:4 speaks of him as the leader of the worldly religion. The ruler of the world in John 14:30 speaks of him as the head of the great world powers. The ruler of the authority of the air (Eph. 2:2) speaks of him as the king of the evil spirits. Revelation 12:10 speaks of him as the accuser of our brothers. Revelation 9:11 speaks of him as the angel of the abyss. To those who are not sober and watchful, he is a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). To the watchful believers, he transfigures himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

### **B. His Kingdom**

"The whole world lies in the evil one" (1 John 5:19). From this we can see that when the devil tempted Jesus and said that all the authority and glory of all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth had been delivered to him (Luke 4:5-6), he was not lying. In reading Luke 11:14-18 and 20-24, we see that even man is in the realm of Satan's kingdom.

### **C. His Government and Ministers**

In reading Revelation 2:13, we find where his dwelling is. In reading Ephesians 6:12, we see who his armies are. In reading Daniel 10:13 and 20, we see who his ministers are. In reading 2 Corinthians 12:7, we see what his messengers are like.

### **D. His Religion**

Satan has his religion also, which is to worship God with a confused spirit. Revelation 2:9 says, "The slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." From this we can see that what was spoken in the synagogue of Satan were words of blasphemy and a confusing of right with wrong. How numerous are the synagogues of Satan today! They are full of criticisms, doubts, mockeries, and blasphemies. This then is the religion of Satan. First Corinthians 10:20-21 mentions the sacrifice to demons and the demons' cup. This shows us that with Satan's religion there are sacrifices and fellowship. First Timothy 4:1-4 mentions "teachings of demons." In reading these four verses carefully, we realize that the present state of apostasy is similar to that spoken of in the Scriptures, and from this we see that our present age is indeed the end time. Those who have taken in the teachings of the demons are not even aware that, in fact, they are teachings of the demons. On the contrary, they publicize them. Is this not a very pitiful situation?

### **E. His People**

(1) Satan works within man's heart, yet man is not aware of it. "The spirit which is now operating in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2).

(2) He blinds man's eyes. "The god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers" (2 Cor. 4:4).

(3) He gives a false peace. "When the strong man, fully armed, guards his own homestead, his possessions are in peace" (Luke 11:21). Those who are under the authority of Satan think that they have great peace. Little do they realize that this peace is merely the peace of being free from trouble; it is not the true peace and blessing of a Christian.

(4) He secretly causes men to oppose the truth. "In meekness correcting those who oppose [the truth], if perhaps...they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, having been caught alive by him, unto His will" (2 Tim. 2:25-26). There are numerous people who rebel against and oppose the truth. Actually, they are deceived by the devil and are in his snare!

## **II. THE TEMPTER AND THOSE WHO OVERCOME THE TEMPTER**

### **A. The Overcomers**

Other than our Lord Jesus Christ, no one is an overcomer. "The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). "It [the seed of the woman] shall bruise thy [the serpent's, Satan's] head" (Gen. 3:15). Christ is the Victor. He is the One who has destroyed the works of the devil and the One who has bruised the serpent's head. Christ has overcome. If we acknowledge this fact continually and join ourselves to Christ, we will overcome continually. Satan is the most afraid of our continually speaking this word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11), acknowledging Christ as the Overcomer. Such a word of testimony will drive Satan away. Christ has overcome. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! (See Mark 1:24, 27; 3:11.)

### **B. The Place of Overcoming**

Other than Golgotha, is there another place where Satan is overcome? The cross at Golgotha is the place where Satan and his power is defeated. The victory at Golgotha is still effective today. "Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross]" (Col. 2:15). "Through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Man may consider the Lord Jesus' crucifixion as His failure, yet that was the very place of His victory. In the world, there is no way to determine the victor before the two armies have engaged one another and fought the battle. The Lord was crucified on the cross, and He resurrected from the dead. He went into death, fought with death, overcame the power of death, and then emerged victorious over everything. It would be impossible to say that the Lord has overcome Satan if He had not died and resurrected. This is why the Lord had to die—to fight with Satan, he who has the might of death, and overcome him. The Lord's resurrection is the proof of His victory. When Christ was advancing toward Golgotha, He said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). Satan was defeated at Golgotha. All those who want to fight against Satan elsewhere are destined to fail. Other than at Golgotha, Satan is always victorious. He was defeated only at Golgotha, and he was defeated at Golgotha forever. Hence, all those who are joined to the Lamb of Golgotha, who stand on the basis of His victory at Golgotha, not attempting to gain another new victory but expressing the one unique victory in the present battle, will overcome. Defeat comes when one trusts in the self, but victory comes when one stands on the ground of Golgotha. Golgotha is the place of victory! Golgotha is our home! What can cause us to fear?

### **C. The Warfare Announced by the Messengers**

We are the Lord's messengers declaring the victory at Golgotha and Christ as the Victor. "To whom I send you,...to turn them...from the authority of Satan to God" (Acts 26:17-18). The victory at Golgotha is still effective today; Jesus the Savior is still the Victor. Satan is still the defeated one; he is powerless toward us. Hence, we all must turn away from the authority of Satan to God.

#### **D. The Release of the Captives**

"Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). Christ has overcome, and He is still overcoming. We are now in His kingdom, having been transferred out of the authority of darkness. If we firmly remember this fact and fully believe in it, the authority of darkness will not be able to come to us. The best way to maintain ourselves in this position is to periodically declare our position by faith and by our will.

#### **E. The Victory of the Christians**

Christ is the Overcomer. When we are in Christ and are joined to Him, we will also be the overcomers. We can overcome every day because the Lord has said, "Behold, I have given you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy...The spirits are subject to you" (Luke 10:19-20). "In My name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17; cf. Acts 16:18; 19:15). Apart from the Lord, we can do nothing. We should abide in the Lord all the time. If we do everything in the Lord's name, Satan will be defeated continually.

### **III. THE DECEPTIONS OF THE TEMPTER**

Although Satan has numerous deceptions, "we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11). If so, what do his deceptions accomplish? Unfortunately, though some of us know his deceptions, our intention is not to guard against him! We can know all things in the Lord through the Holy Spirit; hence, none of Satan's deceptions can escape our eyes. Furthermore, when we trust in the Lord's strength, Satan's deceptions will become useless.

#### **A. His Plot against the Unsaved Ones**

Some unsaved ones love to listen to the Word, but Satan will rob them by stealing away the word. "Those beside the way are those who heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they would not believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12). The devil is afraid of the Word, but he is not afraid of talk concerning the Word. When we preach, we must not speak rashly and lose our spiritual power, for the devil will snatch away the word once he sees it. Those who are unsaved, those who are about to believe and be saved, and those who are not interested in the Word at all, have their minds deceived by the devil already. "In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them" (2 Cor. 4:4). We should pray that the eyes of the unsaved ones would be opened to receive the Lord's word and that this word would grow and bear fruit.

#### **B. His Deceptions against the Saved Ones**

##### ***1. Keeping Them from Being Absolute in Their Consecration to God (Acts 5:3)***

God is a jealous God. He demands man's total consecration, and He charges man to love Him with all his heart, all his mind, all his strength, and all his soul. He expects man to be selfless and to keep nothing back for himself. However, Satan is the most afraid of man's absolute consecration. For man to do this causes Satan to lose his field of work. "Why has Satan filled your heart...to put aside for yourself some of the proceeds of the land?" (Acts 5:3). This couple was filled in their hearts with Satan; they kept something for themselves, yet they said that they were fully consecrated. Most believers today consider it wrong not to consecrate at all, yet they consider that the price of consecration is too high. As a result, they often deceive themselves and others by keeping back a portion for their own use. The rest they consecrate to God in the hope that they will gain for themselves the appearance of total consecration. Little do they know that Satan has filled their hearts already! Those who read this should ask themselves whether or not they have fully consecrated themselves.

## ***2. Holding Them Back from Taking Off Their Filthy Garments (Zechariah 3:1-3)***

When the prodigal son came home, the father gave him the best robe. The prodigal son could not wear the clothes of a pauper in his father's house. The robe denotes righteousness. The devil is afraid that man will take off his old righteousness. This is why he always tries to set up another righteousness apart from the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). We should put on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus and cast off the righteousness of self-renouncing service which most moralists hold today. "Then He showed me Joshua...and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him....Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments" (Zech. 3:1, 3). Satan dislikes for us to take off any "former" things. Believers are saved through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, yet they are not willing to remove their "former" righteousness. The clothes may be naturally filthy, yet they are still clothes. Although the righteousness one holds is filthy, it is still a kind of righteousness. Satan causes the believers to have a righteousness which is based upon their own strength, that is, to develop their natural righteousness, hoping that by so doing they will obtain God's favor and earn man's praise. Little do they know that old garments are extremely filthy before God; our natural righteousness is unacceptable to God. Satan encourages us to execute the demands of the spirit by the soul. We should beware of this.

## ***3. Working in Fleshly Jealousy and Rivalry (James 3:14-15)***

Satan is not willing to see Christians become one. When two disciples come together, he will try to divide them. When three disciples come together, he will try to isolate them from one another. The more linkages there are, the more he will try to break them into pieces. He will try to stir up jealousy and rivalry among the believers, causing them to become reluctant to work together. This is true not only concerning physical things; even in spiritual work, he causes the believers to become jealous of and compete against each other: "You are more spiritual than I am." "Your preaching is more welcomed by others than mine is." "Your doctrinal views are different from mine." From this, jealousy and rivalry arise. This rivalry is bitter and comes from the heart of man. Outwardly, it is not easy to detect, yet how very dangerous it is!

## ***4. Keeping Them from the Cross by Means of Other Men (Matthew 16:22-23)***

"And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, God be merciful to You, Lord!...But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan!" (Matt. 16:22-23). The devil found his defeat on the

cross; therefore, he is the most afraid of a man going to the cross and securing the victory of Golgotha. Here, Satan was so bold as to tempt the Lord Jesus Himself. He tried to make Him set His mind on the things of men rather than on the things of God (v. 23). The devil is good at using natural affection to turn man away from the way of the cross. He will cause man to think that this way is too hard, too difficult, and that for one to take it would be too harsh on the self. If we set our mind on the things of men, we will not be able to set it on the things of God. Hence, whether through self-pity or a natural concern for others, we will inevitably cause God's will to suffer loss. Once a man becomes prosperous, it becomes easy for Satan to put his own things inside him; self-love, self-esteem, and self-pity are all contrary to the way of the cross. To avoid something, to pity the self, to fear, and to compromise, are to Golgotha as north is to south. Satan's way is to encourage man to hold on to the self and to cling to natural affections. Satan is afraid that man will go to the cross to be crucified and then resurrected from the dead (v. 21). For this reason, he tries his best to prevent man from going to the cross, for apart from the cross, there is no other way ordained by the Lord (1 Thes. 3:3). Which way are you taking today? It is a pity that many Christians try to sidestep the cross whenever they see it and are unwilling to be crucified! Although they are spared from suffering, the ease and comfort which they gain cannot be compared with the will of God which they miss! If they actually die, they will actually resurrect, and Satan will have no ground to stand. This is what Satan hates the most. Since Satan is afraid of our dying on the cross and resurrecting from the dead, we should all the more die to our self through trusting in the Lord and then resurrect from the dead.

#### ***5. Threatening Them as a Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8)***

The devil not only deceives men in secret, but seeks to devour those who are not sober and watchful. Before Martin Luther died, Satan related his sins to him in detail, threatening him, that he might doubt his salvation. However, in the end Luther overcame Satan by the grace of the Lord. From this we see that Satan always threatens and seeks to devour men when they seem to be at their weakest hour. This is one among the many great works of Satan. Satan's plan is to intimidate man by taking the offensive. As a lion roars to intimidate the beasts and then seeks to devour them, in the same way Satan threatens the believers, causing them to fail through fear. Many times he has nothing besides his threatening! Those who see that all that he has are mere threats will no longer fear his threatenings. However, those who take in his threats will experience much of what he threatens them with. Do we not constantly have the experience of his empty threats? Then why should we be afraid of him?

#### ***6. Making Them Proud (1 Timothy 3:6)***

"Lest being blinded with pride he fall into the judgment suffered by the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6). Immediately after believing, many Christians advance quite well spiritually and have some results in their work. At this point Satan would take the opportunity to come in and cause such ones to become proud and fall. We often see that great war heroes and even great revivalists can fall through sin because of the common wiles of Satan. He often induces men to take God's grace for themselves. Then when grace works in their hearts, he causes them to have a high esteem of themselves, to think that they are different from other people, and even that they are something special! Satan is most pleased to see men proud of themselves because this is his nature.

#### ***7. Causing Them to Do Things beyond God's Will (2 Samuel 24:1)***

"It incited David against them to say, `Go, number Israel and Judah'" (2 Sam 24:1, NASB). "It" here should refer to Satan. God did not order David to number the people. But because Satan likes to see men suffering God's wrath as he also suffers, he incited David to do something beyond God's will. He will either hold men back from advancing or push them to do too much. Christians today often carelessly think that all promptings are from the Holy Spirit. Little do they know that Satan can prompt men also. The numbering of Israel and Judah did not seem to be so great a sin, but whenever men act apart from God's will, Satan's plot is carried out. Believers are often lacking in "spiritual discernment"; when they are stirred up to do something which they do not perceive as evil, they deem that it is of the spirit. However, we should not judge the source of such promptings by considering whether the thing is good or evil; we must judge these promptings by considering whether or not it is God's will. There are many good things which are outside of God's will!

### ***8. Causing Them to Doubt God's Word (Genesis 3:1)***

God clearly charged man in Genesis 2:17 not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Nevertheless, the devil said, "Hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1). Every Scripture is God's Word and can be used to attack Satan. Satan is afraid of this; therefore, he causes man to doubt the Bible as the Word of God. The alarming thing is that most of the doubters of the Bible are believers rather than outsiders! The devil causes men first to doubt God's word, then to believe in his own word, and finally to fall into sin (Gen. 3). His working in this way has never ceased since the time of the garden of Eden.

### ***9. Oppressing Them and Making Them Sick (Acts 10:38)***

The devil is full of deceptions. If he cannot cause men to rebel in their spirit, he will work on their bodies, oppressing them with sickness. Because of this, men are not able to enjoy the blessing of the resurrection life and lose both their peace in the body and their steadfastness and watchfulness in the spirit, thus fulfilling Satan's wish. We often see active Christian workers in this world becoming sick through a little carelessness. The devil likes to see Christians become sick, so that they will stop working for the Lord.

## **C. His Deceptions against Those in God's Hand**

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job,...a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8).

### ***1. Throwing His Darts (Ephesians 6:16)***

Toward the strong Christians, those who are the Lord's best soldiers, Satan cannot easily apply his temptations in the dark or his threats in the open. These believers are quite strong and tenacious in fighting against Satan. As a result, Satan unleashes his utterly evil murderous nature (John 8:44) and attacks with flaming darts, hoping that by so doing he will put the believers to death and cripple them so much that they will not be able to rise again. However, we have the way to annihilate him; it is by God's faithfulness. "Having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16). Faith is a shield for quenching, not a pair of pliers for removing the flaming darts after they have already struck the body. We should place faith between us and the devil in the same way that we would place a shield between ourselves and the enemy in a battle. If the enemy wants to hurt the holder of the shield, he first must pass through the shield. If the shield is strong, the

weapons of the enemy will not be able to come close to the body. Hence, in fighting with Satan we have to take faith in God as our shield. When Satan's flaming darts come close to this shield, they will be quenched by our faith and will not hurt us. Those who are holding this shield will detect the devil's assault from every direction. If they trust in God as their protection and do not slacken one bit, the devil will not be able to carry out his scheme.

## ***2. Setting Up His Snare (1 Timothy 3:7)***

The believers should advance by running quickly (Phil. 3:14); they should not linger on the wayside. The devil hates the speed of the believers' advance; hence, he secretly sets up snares to trap them. It is very easy for a runner to fall when he comes upon something. Such a fall usually inflicts severe injuries. Satan's crafty snares are everywhere. Their intention is to cause the believers to plummet in their spiritual condition and to remain low forever. The way of victory is seen in Psalm 25:15: "My eyes are continually turned to Jehovah, / For He will bring my feet out of the net." When one first comes across this verse, it seems odd. If the ground is covered with nets, while one is running he should look for the nets in order to avoid them. But here the eyes are turned to Jehovah in the heavens. If, while there are nets on the ground, the face is turned to the heavens and the feet are running forward, will not such a person fall and die? We know that the devil's nets do not have to be physical. It is not easy for us to find out where they are. Then, even if we know where they are, when we set our eyes on the nets and try to avoid them, we can no longer run a straight course. This is why we have to look to God. God knows where the nets are. He will hold our feet and keep us from falling into the nets, caring for us step by step until we reach the goal.

## ***3. Exercising His Stratagems (Ephesians 6:11)***

If a man chooses Christ and remains in Him all the time, the devil will not be able to inflict his harm. But as soon as he has opportunity, he will first draw men to leave their position in Christ and then lead them away from Christ. Here we can apply Ephesians 6:13: "Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day."

## ***4. Accusing the Believers (Revelation 12:10)***

Satan pays much attention to our every move. He is always looking for an opportunity to accuse us and to draw us into his punishment. However, we should overcome him "because of the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin" (1 John 1:7). The blood of Jesus is still cleansing us today. The Lord's blood is our ransom; even if Satan accuses us, what effect can it have? Hence, if believers have sinned accidentally and have already asked that the Lord's blood cleanse them afresh, they should no longer condemn themselves for this sin. Otherwise, they will inevitably be taken advantage of by Satan.

## ***5. Corrupting Their Faith (2 Corinthians 11:3)***

We should be pure and chaste toward Christ, as a virgin is toward her fiancé. The devil tries to defile men, causing them to become unfaithful to Christ and to fall into sin. But we can overcome him with 1 John 2:14: "The word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one." God's word is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:17). If we counter Satan's deceptions with the sword of the Holy Spirit,

he will be wounded. When the Lord Jesus was tempted, He overcame Satan with the words of the Scriptures. For this reason, we should always keep the word of God richly in our hearts, so that we can overcome the evil one. Then whenever a temptation or attack comes, we can immediately remember the appropriate Scriptures, and if we exercise full faith to believe that the Scriptures must be fulfilled, the enemy will be defeated. This is the meaning of overcoming the enemy by the word of God.

***6. Transfiguring Himself  
into an Angel of Light  
(2 Corinthians 11:14)***

If Satan were to unveil his evil form before the watchful believers, they would know for sure that this was Satan and would not follow him. For this reason, to deceive the believers, Satan has to transfigure himself into an angel of light so that they will unknowingly fall into a way of deception. He feigns God's voice and the Holy Spirit's leading, causing the believers who are zealous for the Lord's will to think that these are the Lord's leading and to hasten to obey. He also feigns many truths, making them to appear true and leading men to accept them. This point seems to be the hardest for one to prevail against, but the Scripture says, "Prove the spirits...You are of God, little children; and you have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:1, 4). If we trust in the Holy Spirit within us, we can overcome the false spirits. If we cannot decide whether or not a leading is from God, we should first take a neutral attitude and pray, "O God, whatever is of You I will keep. Whatever is of Satan I will reject. Please reveal to me the source of this leading." If we will do this, surely the Lord will show us clearly. If we do this all the time, we will have a strong and healthy spiritual life.

***7. Trying His Best to Persecute  
(Revelation 2:10)***

The devil's deceptions are exhaustless. He uses all kinds of ways to hinder the believers from advancing. However, when he finds that he can no longer prevent the saints from advancing spiritually, he will put them into prison, persecute them, and stop their work, hoping to make them fall. All those who love and pity themselves are no match for Satan; the minute he coerces them with a life-threatening persecution, they will stop resisting him! But the Lord's faithful ones have long put their own life aside. Therefore, although there may be chains and tribulations, although they may be brought to the verge of death and even to death itself, "they [love] not their soul-life even unto death" (Rev. 12:11). In the end, they overcome Satan! "This is the victory which has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). How then can chains shake our heart!

***8. Preventing the Saints' Prayers  
from Being Answered  
(Daniel 10:12-13)***

"Daniel,...at the beginning of your supplications the command went forth" (Dan. 9:22-23). Before Daniel had finished his prayer, the answer had already been sent. "For from the first day that you set your heart to understand this matter,...your words were heard...But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days" (10:12-13). From this we can see how Satan prevents the saints' prayers from being answered. Daniel prayed and fasted for twenty-one days before he was answered. Was not that too burdensome for him? Today, Satan is doing the same thing in order to prevent the believers' prayers from being answered and to cause them to be disappointed. We can overcome him with the words in Luke 18:1: "They ought always to pray and not lose heart." If we insist on what we have asked until the end, we will overcome. Some think that if we have faith in our prayer, one prayer is enough. Of course, this is right, but a persistent prayer requires great faith also. We should know that

while we pray the answer is already coming from God's throne. At such times, a great spiritual battle is aroused, and we should all the more not lose heart in the matter of prayer. Rather, we should ask God to destroy the works of the devil. If we do this, our prayer will hit the mark. If we persist in our prayer, refusing to give up until we are answered, even if the enemy tries to stop us, the messengers in heaven will fight for us.

#### **IV. HOW TO OVERCOME THE TEMPTER**

"He who overcomes will inherit these things" (Rev. 21:7).

##### **A. Knowing That It Is Not We Who Are Fighting against the Devil, but God**

The devil is in the supernatural realm, while we are in the natural realm. Furthermore, we are not warring against flesh and blood but against him who holds the authorities of darkness. For a person in the natural realm to war against spiritual forces in the supernatural realm means certain defeat. Hence, our warfare must be one in which we ask God to fight for us. We must take God's almighty strength as our strength. Every time there is a battle, we must acknowledge that this is a battle between God and the devil. We are merely choosing with our will God's victory and opposing Satan's interest. If we do this, God's supernatural, almighty strength will storm Satan, and Satan's defeat will be sure. Romans 16:20 says, "Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." Satan is under the Lord Jesus' feet. If we are joined to the Lord, Satan will be under our feet also. It is not we who are crushing Satan under our feet; it is the God of peace who will crush Satan under our feet.

##### **B. Always Hiding under the Precious Blood of Jesus to Be Saved from Condemnation**

What the devil is afraid of the most is the Lord's blood. By shedding His blood, the Lord crushed the head of the devil. The word "crushed" is the proper meaning of the word "bruised" in Genesis 3:15. If the saints continually trust in the precious blood of the Lord and take the stand of Romans 6:11, the devil will be defeated. "And they overcame him [Satan] because of the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). All of our victories come because of the Lord's blood. Believers are often attacked and accused by Satan because they have given ground to sin, and this has afforded the enemy the opportunity to accuse them. The basis of Satan's attack on us is our sin. We should always take the attitude that sin has no dominion over us. But this alone will not stop the enemy's accusations nor his attacks after the accusations, for subconsciously we continue to leave ground for him. We must continuously hide under the precious blood so that we will not be attacked. It is true that we have sinned, but the blood has redeemed us from sins! Thank the Lord; His blood not only saves us but enables us to be forever victorious in our Christian life.

##### **C. If We Have the Digested Word of God, We Will Overcome**

"The word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). God's Word is His word in the Bible. If we keep God's word in our hearts, when accidents occur or dangers come, the Holy Spirit will cause us to remember one or a few verses of Scripture. These words of Scripture will then become our hiding place. If we hide behind these words and believe in the power of these words, the enemy will not be able to do anything. The Scriptures which the Holy Spirit brings to mind will increase

our strength and boldness. Every word of God is powerful, living, and operative. If we have God's word dwelling in and filling our hearts, Satan will suffer loss and be defeated.

#### **D. We Must Withstand Him by Exercising Our Will**

We have a will within us. This will is like our rudder. If we exercise our will to tell Satan, "I will not allow you to come into my heart; I will not give you this right," surely Satan will retreat from us. However, we must insure that our will is indeed set in this way! If not, the result will be the opposite. On the one hand, we have to obey God, and on the other hand, we have to withstand the devil; then the devil will flee from us (James 4:7). For example, if a hawker comes to sell you merchandise and you are determined in your will that you will not buy, your resistance will naturally cause him to go away. But if you bargain with him, you will surely end up buying his merchandise. Many Christians today do not have a resolute will in resisting the devil. They bargain with him, and of course, the devil ends up selling his cargo. When we withstand the devil, we must exercise our faith (1 Pet. 5:9) and speak to Satan with God's power: "In the name of the Lord Jesus who has overcome you, I resist you." After doing this, we must exercise our faith; reckon that since we have resisted the devil, God, based on His word, will drive him away; and praise God for it. Satan has fled, and we should be more than conquerors through the Lord who loves us. When Satan tempted the Lord, He did not leave him any ground; He resisted and rebuked him immediately (Matt. 16:23). We should be as alive in our awareness as the Lord was, and our word of resistance should be as firm as His.

#### **E. Calling On God Immediately without Consulting the Devil**

"Michael,...when he contended with the devil,...said, The Lord rebuke you" (Jude 9). Many believers are not able to call on God to rebuke Satan the moment he acts. On the contrary, they listen to the devil concerning his designs. By then it is too difficult to resist him any further. The moment Satan opens his mouth, we must call on God to rebuke him, so that he cannot even finish his sentence. We must also believe that God will rebuke him immediately and that Satan will no longer trouble us, despite his putting up a fierce front when he is rebuked. A certain believer once said, "To me, we should allow Satan to finish what he has to say, so that we will know what to answer him." Wrong! We do not have to answer Satan. We should stop him from speaking to us. Otherwise, we will be like Eve, who listened to Satan's words and answered him, with the result being many vexations and sin. Do not worry that you may lose your friendship with Satan. Do not worry that you may be too cruel to him. When he comes, ask the Lord to rebuke him. In this way, we will always be victorious in the Lord.

#### **F. Not Giving Ground to Satan Even in the Smallest Things**

Many times we are careful to guard against Satan's stratagems in the great things, yet we are often not watchful in the small things. As a result, we often fail and fall into the devil's deception through one thought or one word. Those who are faithful in small things are faithful in great things. We must be careful not to "give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). "Give no opportunity to the opposer for reproach" (1 Tim. 5:14). If Satan does not have a "factory," he will not be able to manufacture sin. If we leave some ground for him in our heart, even if only a small patch, he will use it to create sin. We should not neglect the small things just because they are small. We must realize that Satan is able to invade our whole being through these small things. What is it to give place to the devil? It is to have (1) unrighteousness, (2) sin, and (3) the fear of him in our hearts. It means that we do not have an active will to resist him. On the contrary, we are afraid of provoking him through our resistance. If this ground is not taken from

him, the enemy will never be driven away. This reminds me of a story. A certain traveler set up his tent in the desert. A mule, which was outside freezing, asked the man to allow its head to come inside the tent. After a while, it asked him to allow its neck to come inside the tent. After a while, it asked him to allow its two feet to come in as well. Soon, its whole body was inside the tent, and the traveler had no place to stand. Now the mule would not leave, and eventually, the traveler had to leave the tent with the mule inside. Today's Christians are careless about the little things. As a result, this little leaven leavens the whole lump. The devil will try to gain an inch in order to gain a foot. We must trust in the Lord's power to destroy the devil's "factory" within us.

### **G. Maintaining a Love for Men**

"But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive;...that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan" (2 Cor. 2:10-11). A heart that does not love men nor forgive men will give place to the devil. An unforgiving spirit opens the door to the work of the devil. If the believers were more aware of the things in the spiritual realm, they would stop being unloving and unforgiving. All the opposition and persecution seems to come from men, but actually, every heartbreaking word, every misunderstanding, and every humiliation is motivated by the evil spirits behind the scenes. We are not warring against flesh and blood but against the evil spirits. Hence, no matter what comes our way, we should ask the Lord to rebuke Satan and to destroy his work. If we love others and forgive them, we will be more than conquerors.

### **H. Being Particularly Careful with Our Words**

"But let your word be, Yes, yes; No, no; for anything more than these is of the evil one" (Matt. 5:37). The devil does not want man's word to be "Yes, yes" or "No, no." He wants man's yes to appear as no and his no to appear as yes. I heard one zealous believer once say, "I do not seem to be able to control my mind. Sometimes unconsciously, I make yes as no and no as yes. Even when I make up my mind, I cannot free myself of this." Before a person believes in the Lord, his mind is blinded by the devil (2 Cor. 4:4), but after he believes, the Holy Spirit enters into his spirit and enlightens him. Then gradually (for no man can understand all the truth the moment he believes) He removes the veils from his mind, causing such a one to submit to the Holy Spirit and to consecrate himself. In this way, his mind is renewed and transformed (Rom. 12:2). After the old man is put off, the spirit of his mind is renewed (Eph. 4:22-23). As a result, he can speak what he intends to speak; his yes will be yes, and his no will be no. Although the believers possess a wonderful life, in their minds there are always unclean thoughts and rebellious intentions against the truth. This is due to the evil spirits, who inject evil thoughts into the believers' minds and cause them to lodge there. Sometimes, they try to confuse the believers' minds and disable their reasonings. As a result, the believers do not say what they intend to say; their yes becomes a no, and their no becomes a yes. This sickness can only be removed by prayer and by the Holy Spirit taking over the whole being. We know that if anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man.

### **I. Being Especially Watchful When Contacting Others**

"Looking to yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). It is easy to lead others to the right path. But it is difficult to lead others to the right path without deviating in one's own thoughts, words, and conduct. Many believers desire to lead others, only to find that they are being led by others. Although they may be leading others, they themselves are led into others' sins. Hence, the workers should carefully look everywhere for Satan's deceptions, for there is not a day when we can say that we are in a position free from danger.

## **J. Always Declaring That the Enemy Is under Us**

"I have given you the authority to tread...over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). All the enemy has is "power," but what we have is "authority." Although our individual "power" is not that great, we have received "authority" from the Lord to suppress the enemy. We do not have to compete with him in "power"; we need only to give him the command with our "authority." "Power" cannot prevail against "authority"! Therefore, we should first join ourselves to the Lord's death and secure this authority. We should then exercise our faith to use this authority moment by moment to overcome and subdue all the powers of darkness. If we do this, we will overcome regardless of the circumstances.

## **V. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE TEMPTER**

### **A. If a Temptation Falls outside of God's Promise, It Cannot Do Anything to the Believers**

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only..." (Job 1:12). "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have..." (Luke 22:31). Every time temptations come upon us, we should be reminded that all temptations are allowed by the Father. Behind every temptation, there is the hand of God. We should have an attitude of faith and should trust that nothing can come upon us directly from Satan unless the Father permits it. Satan cannot put anything upon us by himself.

### **B. The Reason God Allows Satan to Tempt Us**

Without temptations, we would be proud. Before the devil sifted Peter as wheat, his pride was strong. After he was sifted, he realized the inadequacy of his own strength and was able to receive power from on high to fulfill a great work. Consider the example of a small child going out with his father. He does not want to follow his father and walks away from him on his own. But when he meets a snake and comes close to being hurt, he hurries back to his father to come under his protection. If saints have no temptations, they will not be willing to draw near to the heavenly Father in this way. This is the case with believers who are immature in life. If we realize that the evil spirits in the spiritual realm are everywhere trying to tempt us and hurt us, we will surely trust in God and not be proud in ourselves. Paul said, "There was given to me...a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up" (2 Cor. 12:7). There is no goodness in our flesh, yet how many people are there who will consciously acknowledge this fact? For this reason, God allows the enemy to tempt us. Sometimes He may even allow us to fail so that we will know ourselves and not be proud. This was the experience of Job. Moreover, unless we are tempted in this way, we will not be willing to apply the victory of Golgotha in our experience. It is because of these temptations that there is the opportunity for victory and, consequently, the need for and possibility of the application of Golgotha. Since we realize the true meaning of these temptations and see that they are unavoidable, we should ask God to cause us to overcome in Christ. God allows us to meet with temptations. If we read 1 Corinthians 5:5 and Job 2:3, we can see the reason for these temptations. Temptations are not sins in themselves. It is only when we succumb to temptations that there is sin (Heb. 4:15).

### **C. The Limit of Temptations**

"No temptation has taken you except that which is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow that you be tempted beyond what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way out, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). There are seven points that we should learn from this verse:

(1) Temptations are common to man. Some people think that their environment and position are unique and that their temptations are special. Little do they know that temptations are common to man. "Except that which is common to man."

(2) We should remember that "God is faithful." If God can fail, then we can fail. But if He is faithful, we should trust Him and should not fail.

(3) All temptations are within what we are able to bear. "Not...tempted beyond what you are able." The temptations that God permits cannot be too great. Hence, when temptations come, we should not take a passive stand, allowing the devil to do whatever he wants.

(4) With every temptation, there is "the way out." Hence, we can overcome every time.

(5) Even if there is no way out, God will "also make the way out."

(6) Sometimes, to endure is the very way out. "That you may be able to endure it."

(7) Temptation is not sin, but to succumb to temptation is sin. "That you may be able to..."

#### **D. God's Almighty Protection**

"Everyone who is begotten of God does not sin, but he who has been begotten of God keeps himself, and the evil one does not touch him" (1 John 5:18). "But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one" (2 Thes. 3:3). We should be strong in the Lord and believe that the Lord can protect us. We should commit our whole spirit, our whole soul, and our whole body to the Lord and should trust in the Lord. The Lord will accomplish everything. We should believe in Him and should act as if we are already protected by Him. Our act of faith will secure the protection of God.

#### **E. Prayer**

"Our Father,...deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:9, 13). When we pray, we must not only think of ourselves and of God; we must always remember Satan, the evil one. We should pray for God to deliver us from the deceptions, trickeries, control, influence, attacks, and evil plots of the evil one. If we pray in this way, our prayer will be answered. "Deliver us from the evil one." Why? "For Yours is [1] the kingdom and [2] the power and [3] the glory [they are His, not Satan's] forever." This prayer for deliverance is based upon God's kingdom, power, and glory. As such, there must be an answer. If God does not deliver us from the evil one, His kingdom, power, and glory will suffer loss. As the kingdom, the power, and the glory are not the enemy's, why should we still be under his attacks, suppressions, and afflictions?

#### **F. The Intercession of the High Priest in Heaven**

"I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one" (John 17:15). If our High Priest is right now interceding for us, what do we have to fear? We should believe that the intercession of our Lord Jesus is always effective. We should believe that the Father is keeping us from the evil one through the secret prayer of Christ. We should not take the evil one's suggestion that we are facing immediate peril. We should trust in the intercession of our High Priest and realize that the Father will surely keep us from suffering the afflictions of the evil one.

## **G. The End of the Enemy**

The enemy, Satan, will be cast down out of heaven to the earth (Rev. 12:7-9). He will be bound by an angel with a chain and cast into the abyss (20:1-3). After Christ reigns for a thousand years, Satan will be temporarily released and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth and instigate a war against God. Finally, he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (vv. 7-10). Since the enemy will eventually be defeated anyway, why do we not rise up and march on? Since it is his final destiny to fail, should we not feel more courageous?

For now, we should stand on the ground of Romans 6:11, reckoning ourselves dead sin, but living to God. We should put on the whole armor of God to overcome the world, the lusts, and the devil. We should be God's soldiers, fighting the good fight, overthrowing the devil's strongholds and taking captive man's thought unto the obedience of Christ. We should not only be able to preserve ourselves whole, but should challenge the devil. We must be strong warriors in prayer, so that the myriads of evil spirits will not be able to have their way and we will be able to walk and work with Christ, overcoming in this age and reigning in the coming age. Amen.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX ONE**

#### **BACK TO THE CROSS!**

(The following is an excerpt from *Spiritual Equipment for the Last Days*, a book by Charles Usher. It was originally published by Marshall Brothers, LTD., London, England, July 1920.)

We are in the last hours of this dispensation. The hand of the clock is approaching the hour of twelve. It is the dark hour of midnight, but the darkest hour is just before the dawn.

The Church is rapidly drifting into a state of apostasy, further and further away from God.

The War has left the world chaotic and the Church paralysed.

Dark forces have been liberated which are producing as evil an effect upon the Church as upon the world.

The late conflict has left problems for the Church to face, as difficult to handle as those with which the world is battling.

The Cross of Christ is the light that will illuminate the present darkness.

We need a fresh revelation of sin, for it is through sin that we have lost our way, and it is through Christ's death on the Cross that we are won back and restored to God.

See I Peter iii. 18—"Christ...hath once suffered for sins...that He might bring us to God."

The reason why many lose the sense of the sinfulness of sin is that they get away from the reality of Christ's atoning death, for it is only at the Cross that we get a vision of the depths and misery of sin.

Calvary is a revelation of man's hatred to God's authority—a hatred which manifested itself in the blackest, darkest deed ever committed.

We are told that the Cross is the "Touchstone of Faith"; that is blessedly true! but it is also true that it is the criterion of the human heart. It reveals man in his true character.

The Church has lost sight of the Cross, and has therefore lost sight of the awfulness of sin. She has wandered from the place where sin is seen in God's light, and where the soul is led to cry out, "I have crucified my Lord."

What astonishes one in these days is the sin in the Church. How awful it is that Christians can sin and be unmoved by it!

God's people are sinning—sinning in the heart, sinning in the mind, sinning in the pulpit, sinning in the pew,—sinning in spite of Calvary and of all that the Bible reveals of the horror and degradation of sin!

Child of God! go back to Calvary and take the sinner's place. Let the Cross melt the hardness and cause the tears to flow!

## **BACK TO THE CROSS!**

### **The Place of our Reconciliation with God.**

Sin brings separation.

This is a Divine law which we need to know, not only theoretically but experimentally, and the Cross is the only place where we learn that lesson thoroughly.

Listen to the words of Christ as He hangs on Calvary's tree, — "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark xv. 34).

This is not the expression of One suffering physical death merely, but of One passing through spiritual separation from God. The sinless Christ had never been separated from His Father. Throughout the countless ages of Eternity they were One.

This blessed oneness was seen throughout His earthly life, and it was that which sustained Him and enabled Him to bear the contradiction of sinners against Himself.

But on the Cross, Christ lifted the load of our sin upon Himself and went into the awful darkness of separation in order to reconcile us to God.

It is this spiritual separation which Christ endured instead of us, which constitutes the meaning of the reconciliation and makes the death of Jesus unique.

Christ was forsaken in that dark hour FOR ME. Oh! child of God, if you forget this, you lose the spirit of that which makes the Cross the power of God unto salvation!

We need to come back to this aspect of the death of Jesus until its spirit takes possession of us, and the very principle of Calvary becomes established in our lives.

How reluctant we are to own that not only was it necessary for us to come to the Cross for reconciliation when we were in sin, but that after we become Christians we need the atoning death of Jesus to keep us from departing from God.

We often talk of "grace" in cold, theological terms, but as we come into personal relationship to the death of Jesus, grace is revealed in all its loveliness, and we are fired with a passionate love for Christ.

## **BACK TO THE CROSS!**

### **The only way into union with Christ.**

"Do we leave the Cross to go on to union with the risen Christ?" is the question that many of God's people are asking; and when one tells them of the need of a continual application of the death of Christ to the life, they say, "But I am in the risen Christ, and it is a living Christ we need, not a dead Christ." Much of this misunderstanding is due to dealing with this blessed truth in the letter rather than in the spirit; "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Calvary. Christ's death on the Cross was the highest expression of the life of Christ, and as you partake of His life, the spirit of Christ's crucifixion becomes the principle of your life.

Paul had not gone beyond the Cross when he sought for a deeper union with the risen Lord, but he saw that the deeper the union with the living Christ the deeper must he sink into His death (see Phil. iii. 10).

To be risen with Christ and to abide in Him by a living faith means that you share the death of Christ.

The condition for a triumphant Christian life is UNION WITH CHRIST.

The only way of overcoming sin is by a life of union with Jesus Christ.

Our blessed Lord teaches us this very clearly in John xv. He says, "Without ME ye can do nothing," and one of the early lessons of the believer is that he is absolutely dependent upon his Lord for everything. He learns the helplessness of being without Christ.

The message of Christ to the sinner is "Come unto Me"; His message to the believer is "Abide in Me."

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. vi. 17). But how does that joining take place?

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ implies a belief into Christ. The faith moves Christward and finds its anchorage in Christ Himself, and thus the believer is brought into vital contact with HIM.

Let us go to God's Word in the third chapter of John's Gospel. Here we get clearly the Lord's teaching of regeneration or the new birth.

First we are told our need of it (see verse 3); then we are told its nature—that it is a spiritual nature or birth (see verses 5 and 6); but in verses 14 and 15 we see the way into it—by believing in Christ; that word "in" should be translated "into." See verse 14—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

Calvary was necessary before the sinner could believe in Christ; the crucified Saviour draws all men unto Him. See John xii. 32, 33—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die."

Satan's desire is to get the believer away from the Cross, and he is often most successful when he offers an inducement to seek a life of union with the Risen Lord. But the devil knows that there is no real union apart and away from the Cross, and so he gives a counterfeit experience instead.

Paul teaches us clearly in Romans vi. that to be joined to the Risen Christ and to abide in Him by a living faith means that we must share His death. "Know ye not that so many of us [as, sic] were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Rom. vi. 3).

He also teaches us that a deeper union with Christ is only possible as we have an ever deeper acquaintance of the Cross. See Philippians iii. 10—"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." This is what we need to know, not in theory or sentiment, but in actual experience, and the result will be a life of power, of victory over sin, Satan, sickness and death, and the world, and this is only possible as we get back to the Cross.

To say that there is no need for a continual application of the blood of Christ to the life shows a superficial knowledge of the meaning of His death. It is blessedly true that the blood that has been shed on the Cross avails for all time for our complete atonement, but that does not exhaust the work of Christ's death. There is the need of continual cleansing from sin.

A saint of God once asked me a very startling question—"When did you have a bout of confession of sin last?" I was arrested by the question and could not answer. I therefore went to God about it, and discovered that I had been making the common mistake of relying upon the blood to automatically cleanse my sin; also I had lost sight of my sinnership. May I apply that question to you? When did you have a bout of confession last? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John i. 9).

One of the things which hinders God from working in us is the activity of the evil natural life, which is continually getting us out of the Spirit and accounts for the failure to walk in the Spirit. Our spirits are being continually affected by this evil influence, and try as we may we cannot control our spirits and walk in the calm of God. This uncrucified evil nature is also the material which Satan and his evil spirits play upon and are able to fan into a flame, and is therefore the cause of much of the conflict which we have with the powers of darkness, and is "ground" for their continual attacks.

We may have learned how to overcome them by the application of the blood, but they will return again and again to the conflict as long as there is "ground."

The Cross is the REMEDY. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). But how? by an absolute surrender of the evil natural life to the death of Christ, and by a perpetual attitude of abiding in Christ, and thus sharing the benefits of His death, the result being liberation from the power of sin and evil nature in order that we may walk in newness of life.

In Romans viii. we have one of the clearest descriptions of the life in the Spirit in the whole Bible; but we observe that on the very threshold of the chapter we have these words—"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." There is no possibility of entering into the spiritual life except through union with

Christ—that union is one of death and life. Any attempt to obtain spiritual life apart from the Cross ends in failure or in counterfeit.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Cross; the Cross is the highest expression of the Spirit; it was "through the Eternal Spirit" Christ offered Himself to God (see Heb. ix. 14).

### **The Cross of Christ and Cleansing.**

There is a great danger of the soul who knows death union with Christ failing to see the value of cleansing.

Cleansing has to do with our walk with God.

Sin is not only a ruling principle but it is a defilement.

We must first be clear upon our basis of identification with Christ in death, or the evil nature will continually defile the soul in spite of our continual claiming of cleansing. Some souls know the blessing of cleansing, but are not able to maintain it, because they rest upon their experience rather than upon the Divine basis of union with Jesus Christ in death and resurrection. It is Christ's death that causes the evil nature to cease its activity. As the believer abides by faith in Christ, the death of Christ cuts him off from bondage to sin as a master.

But the question arises,— "Is there need for cleansing if I abide in Christ and reckon myself dead indeed to sin?" Yes, because it is a faith attitude which you may fail to keep. Through lack of watchfulness you may yield to your evil nature and thus become defiled, hence the need for cleansing. Any sense of defilement will keep you away from the presence of God. It is not enough to say, "I am abiding in Christ's death and therefore I am free."

Sin committed must be confessed to God and cleansed away by the application of the blood of Christ. The death of Christ was once for all, but the blood is for perpetual application.

This is typically shown in the Old Testament type of the red heifer (see Num. xix. 2-22). The heifer was slain; the ashes were kept for application in cases of defilement. There was one atoning sacrifice made for the sinner, but yet necessitating the application of the "ashes" when needed. So with the sacrifice of Christ.

No one ever gets to the place where he does not need to confess his sins, and claim the blood to cleanse.

Defilement may come from without as well as from within. Our contact with the world defiles us. The very moral atmosphere that we breathe is contaminating.

Cleanliness of heart and life is essential to communion and fellowship with God.

We learn this very clearly from Psalm xxiv. 3, 4—"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

"CLEAN HANDS" refer to the things we touch.

In Numbers xix., we see that if a man "touched" any dead thing—whether intentionally, through neglect, or unconsciously—he became at once ceremonially unclean, and was cut off from the privilege of the redeemed worshipper.

This is a type of something far deeper than the physical. It points to God's jealousy over His people's lives, and shows how souls lose communion with God through touching that which is sinful in thought or deed.

Which of us can say that we never touch that which defiles us either consciously or unconsciously? Therefore there is need of a continual application of the blood of sprinkling.

"A PURE HEART." This has reference to the fountain whence spring the issues of life (see Prov. iv. 23 and Matt. xv. 18, 19).

Exceeding great and precious promises are given to us, "that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4).

It is only in the divine nature that we can approach God; this divine nature should rule, and it can only rule as the old is kept on the cross by faith.

The cleansing of the Blood does not deal with our evil nature, but crucifixion does;—"knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6, R.V.); "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (Gal. v. 24).

But cleansing removes the defilement due to any activity of the evil nature, which severs communion and makes it impossible to "stand" before God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8).

"WHO HATH NOT LIFTED UP HIS SOUL TO VANITY."

The soul is the seat of self-love—pride—the "I" in us that wants to be seen and known and heard; also, the religious pride that says in effect "I thank God that I am not as other men are." This religious pride creeps into the most spiritual souls and they are defiled.

It manifests itself in an attitude of isolation from others, in a censorious spirit that seeks to put others right and in sitting in judgment on the saints.

But if these souls learn to walk in the light, as He is in the light, they will have fellowship one with another, that is, with all the saints, and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse them from all sin.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (I John i. 8); a disposition of self-justification condemns us.

"If we confess our sins" is an acknowledgement of our inherent sinnership and of our need of cleansing.

No one who is living consciously in the presence of God will say "I have not sinned," but the expression of a saved sinner before Him is "I confess my sins."

Then faith in the blood is the plea, and fellowship with the saints the result...

## **BACK TO THE CROSS!**

### **The Place of Victory over Satan.**

When Jesus Christ went to the Cross, He not only atoned for our sins but He defeated our spiritual enemy Satan. This was a most important part of Christ's work at Calvary, for not only is man in bondage to sin within but to Satan without. To lose sight of this aspect of Jesus Christ's work is to greatly weaken the position in the conflict with evil. It is only in the victory of Calvary that the child of God can successfully face the present activity of Satanic power that is abroad to-day.

Satan has flung his forces right across the path of the Church in her advance heavenward, and is thus delaying the return of Christ to reign as King upon the earth. These forces are spiritual and evil, and can only be antagonized by spiritual weapons.

But some one will ask, "How can the devil delay the return of Christ?"

By keeping the Church in defeat.

When Christ comes, the overcomers are to reign with Him over the earth—but they must have learnt to overcome and to rule in spirit here and now through their union with Jesus Christ.

Many of God's people are so taken up with earthly things that the realm of the spiritual is absolutely foreign to them.

Others, who are more spiritually minded, are being continually defeated because they are poorly equipped to face the conflict with these evil powers. The devil is able to make perpetual inroads into their work, harassing them in their labours, and they, not knowing the source from which the attack comes, submit, and thus are defeated. Not only does the foe interfere with their work, but their personal life is made the object of his malignant hatred,—trouble in the home, divisions, misunderstandings, follow one upon another until an atmosphere is created, which becomes a continual drainage upon them.

Doubtless all God's children know something of this in their experience.

Are these things sent into our lives for us to submit passively to? or is it intended that we should overcome them?

The reason why we do not resist them is that we fail to recognize the true cause of the attacks. We have left Satan, who is the silent, subtle source of our trouble, out of our reckoning, but as our eyes are opened to detect the enemy, we realize that we are called into a personal spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness. We also get a wider vision and a divine interpretation of the evil agencies which are opposing the Church and ruling the world, and we realize that they are super-natural and Satanic, and must be resisted by the child of God in union with the risen Lord.

But how can the devil and his host be conquered by the child of God?

Only through vital union with Jesus Christ and a spiritual knowledge of Calvary as the place of Satan's complete overthrow. How carefully the foe has sought to hide this! how subtly he has contrived to get the believer away from the place of his ignominy and defeat!

How clearly we are taught in John xii. 31, 32, that the lifting up of Christ is the casting down of Satan,— "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Lifted up—where? on a Throne? No! on a Cross, as verse 33 plainly tells us—"This, He said, signifying what death He should die."

In Colossians ii. 15, we read, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it," and the whole argument of Paul in the Colossian Epistle is—"why should we be subject to their power when Christ has so gloriously conquered?" Why?

Christ's death is the complete overthrow of Satan and his hosts, but in order for us to have the victory wrought into us, we must get back to the Cross and learn to wield it against the powers of darkness, which are feverishly labouring for the enthronement of Satan in this world.

While the child of God stands in triumph they are hindered in the accomplishment of their desire.

As the saint sees this, he will understand that his own personal conflict is only part of the general warfare that is raging.

The Devil is approaching his Waterloo! Child of God, put on your heavenly armour: learn to wear it now.

Be a veteran in the army of the Lord, and not a raw recruit!

Surely the days of sham fighting are over; a real war is raging.

Thy foes are strong, but thou art stronger in thy risen Lord. Be not afraid of their faces, for thou hast looked upon the marred face of Jesus! and soon, ah! soon, thou shalt see His face shining as the sun when He shall come in His glory to reign over this poor distracted world.

## APPENDIX TWO

### HOW TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT

(The following is an article by Jessie Penn-Lewis, "Spiritual Things to the Spiritual." It originally appeared in *The Overcomer*, Vol. 3, published by The "Overcomer" Office, Leicester, England, September 1911. The editor of *The Overcomer* was Jessie Penn-Lewis. The title, "How to Walk by the Spirit," was provided by Watchman Nee.)

The aggressive warfare against the powers of darkness is essentially a spirit conflict, and the "natural man" knows nothing about it. It is to be understood only by spiritual men and women, hence the importance of knowing what is the meaning of the term "spiritual," and how to walk in the spirit. We have put a capital S on the word spirit in the New Testament, where often it reads with a small s, or we have done that in the mind, by reading in the large S—referring to the Holy Spirit—in places where there should be a small s. The large S so read in by the majority of us, has hidden the fact that we have a human spirit, which is the organ for the Holy Spirit, and the place where the Holy Spirit dwells. (See "The Place of the Indwelling Spirit," in *May Overcomer*.) In the shrine of that spirit comes all His divine light, and leading. Not having understood clearly about the human spirit, we have not known how to co-operate with the Holy Spirit, and when He has come into our spirits, we have thought everything He had to say to us, must be given to the mind, with the result that we have mainly walked "after the soul," and not "after the spirit."

It will help you if I show you clearly from the Word of God what the spirit life is, and how to walk in it. First of all let us turn to 1 Cor. ii. 11, where Paul says, "Who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the SPIRIT of the man, which is in him?" Here we have the statement that the "spirit of the man" alone has knowledge of the man; and "even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God." None can know about God, only as the Spirit which is of God comes from God to reveal Him and His mind, to the believer, through the medium of his human spirit. The human spirit is the organ for the reception of the Spirit of God, and through which He reveals truth to the mind, and gives the knowledge of God. Hence, continues Paul, "We received not the spirit of the world." There is a "spirit of the world." People forget that. They ticket the world as "things," but there is a "spirit" of the world, and some "spirit" must work in us—either the Spirit which is of God, or "spirits" instigated by Satan, i.e., the "spirit of the world," the "spirit of error," etc. How can you know the way to shut your spirit against all these spirits outside in the world, unless you understand how to co-operate WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD in the things of God?

You must shut your spirit to the influence of the world-spirit, as well as shut your mind to world thoughts and ways. You may have the "spirit of the world" in you without outwardly appearing to be worldly, hence the importance of understanding the teaching given by Paul in 1 Cor. ii. and iii. "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the THINGS that are freely given to us of God. Which THINGS we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth." Here is Paul speaking of "THINGS" i.e., substantial facts in the spiritual realm, not of theories, opinions, visions, illusions, but "things," and the Holy Spirit actually giving words to describe these things, to "spiritual" men, able to apprehend them—"interpreting SPIRITUAL things to SPIRITUAL men...for the natural man (lit. "man of soul") receiveth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Now you see the place of the spirit in man, in regard to the things of God, and the necessity of our becoming spiritual men—men of spirit—not men of "soul," i.e., "the natural man," the man who seeks to apprehend spiritual things with his natural mind, which the Apostle emphatically declares he cannot do.

From various expressions used by Paul it also appears that the spirit of man is a distinct entity, or organism, if I may use that word. (Gall has a chapter on "The physiology of the spirit" in "Primeval Man Unveiled.") See 1 Cor. v. 3-4, "Ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus." He does not refer there to the Holy Spirit, but to his own spirit. In ch. xiv. 14, he adds a distinct action of the human spirit: "my spirit prayeth." In Rom. xii. 11, there is described both a characteristic of, and action of the spirit—"Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"—and in 1 Peter iii. 4, you read of a "meek and quiet spirit"—again descriptive characteristics.

We also read of a "cool spirit" in Proverbs, the "heat of spirit" in Ezekiel, while it is said of John the Baptist that as a result of his wilderness time of fellowship with God, he got a "strong spirit," strong enough to go and face Herod, and to proclaim a message which was objectional to Jew and Gentile. We are needing for this spiritual warfare with principalities and powers, just such a strong spirit; a cool spirit, a fervent spirit, a spirit ruled, for "he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city" in co-action with the Spirit of God.

The trouble to-day is the lack of knowledge of the spirit. Men are so "soulish," and even Christians walk as 'natural' men, viewing everything from the natural standpoint—"of the earth, earthy"—with only the natural vision. Or, on the other hand, "spiritual" men do not understand how to "rule the spirit"; how to keep it "cool," as well as "fervent"; nor do they realize the danger of the power of darkness interfering with their spirits; nor the temptations of the spiritual sphere from forces of evil working upon, or

driving their spirit out of steady co-operation with the Holy Spirit. If you get this light from God's Book, you will be able to read everything to-day without perplexity. You will see that the "spirit of the age"—Ephes. ii. 2—is a driving spirit, and that the forces of the spiritual realm have come upon us, demanding an understanding of what these forces are, and how we are to meet them.

Next, notice the powers of the human spirit. The spirit is capable of feeling. Paul said his "spirit" was refreshed. He did not say that his heart was refreshed, but his spirit. In one of his missionary journeys he says he was "pressed in spirit," showing that there is a pressure of spirit, which requires an understanding of what it means, so as to know thereby the leading of God. A great deal of our supposed "spiritual experiences" are soulish, that is to say they take place in the realm of feeling. Our demand is for something we can "feel" in the soulish realm, and not for something we may KNOW in the inner shrine of the Spirit.

Paul knew he was "bound" in the spirit, and that indicated, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him. He knew, too, when his spirit was released, and the pressure and difficulties had passed away. As clearly as you understand the senses of the body, he understood the actions of his spirit, and of the Holy Spirit in and through his spirit as His channel. Through eyes and ears you understand the physical realm, and through the spirit you know the spiritual realm, and read the communications of God's will made known by the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 16), which are always in harmony with the Word of God.

Again, Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," and that magnifying came into the soul-realm; but she added "my SPIRIT hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." In Acts xix. 21, "Paul PURPOSED IN SPIRIT to go to Jerusalem." That is a very different thing from purposing in the mind, for it includes a knowledge of God's will in the spirit, and a purpose to do it. Our Lord Jesus Christ was "troubled IN SPIRIT," and when He went to the grave of Lazarus, we read in the margin that "He groaned in Himself with INDIGNATION IN HIS SPIRIT." Such an indignation in the spirit precedes an outbursting of victory over the powers of darkness. He stood by the grave of Lazarus, and with a loud voice, said, "Lazarus, come forth!" He went to that grave with His Spirit groaning with indignation against the prince of death, and in the outflashing of that indignation, Lazarus was loosed from the captivity of death, and raised to life.

In this story of Lazarus we have a glimpse of the source of spiritual authority over the powers of darkness. It is not the authority of words, nor the authority of Christ given to the natural man; but the authority of Christ communicated through the Spirit of God in action through the spiritual man. Those who take the aggressive against the Prince of this world in their own soul power, will find their words empty of spiritual force (see 1 Cor. iv. 20).

Now notice further that the spirit of the man is under the control of the will: The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets"—subject to the control of the will. Again note the words of Solomon, "He that ruleth his spirit." You, as a new creation in Christ, joined to Him in spirit, must rule the mind (1 Pet. i. 13), rule the body (1 Cor. ix. 27), rule the spirit. If you fail to rule the spirit, the spirit can carry you beyond God's measure, as much as the soul can carry you out of control. In many things we hear of to-day about ecstatic experiences, there is an element of great danger, lest the spirits of these believers are carried beyond the control of the will. It is almost a new danger in the Church of Jesus Christ which we have now to face. The Church has been so carnal in the past, that now when numbers are becoming "spiritual," the danger lies in not knowing the laws of the spirit, and the forces in the spiritual realm able to affect the spirit, as the thought-world affects the soul.

In the life of the spiritual man, the first thing is the new birth: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." In the new birth we get a renewed spirit. Again it is written, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit." Apparently there is a constant cleansing of the spirit needed. Our Lord "poured out His SOUL unto death," but He "committed" His SPIRIT to His Father. The soulish part of us must likewise be poured out to death, if the spirit is to be brought into essential union with God.

This separation of the spirit, from, what an old writer calls "the entanglements of the soul," is set forth in Heb. iv. 12, "The word of God is quick and powerful...dividing soul and spirit." How often we are conscious of so much mixture in even consecrated believers, and how rarely you can meet a pure spirit; how often there comes a word, or action, first from the spirit, and then from the soul part, the emotions, the intellect, or the mind. As the spirit is brought into pure union with God, it becomes sensitive to the touch of "soul," either in yourself, or in others. You will meet the "soul" element as if it were some little bit of hard substance which checks the flow of your spirit. Or you will discover it in the varying states of your own life: at one time there will be communion with God, when the spirit is open to Him, and thus full of light; then without any apparent cause a veil falls over it, and it is dark. That is just the action of the soul, you have gone back into the soul life, out of the light into the dark. Hence the importance of learning that position in Christ where the spirit is continually dominant. Let us look at this for a moment.

Paul says "The God of peace sanctify you...spirit, soul and body." God in the spirit sanctifying the soul, controlling and dominating the body. Fausset—a Commentator of authority—says, that "In the three fold division of man's being, body, soul and spirit, the due state in God's design is, that the spirit which is the recipient of the Holy Spirit, uniting man to God, should be first and rule the soul, which stands intermediate between body and spirit. In the natural man the spirit is sunk into subserviency to the animal soul, which is earthly in motives and aims. The carnal sinks still lower, for in this the flesh, the lowest element rules. Not having the Spirit means that in the natural man, the spirit which is the highest part, and ought to be the reservoir of the Holy Spirit, is not so, and therefore the spirit is not in the state that God wants it to be."

From this clear statement you will understand that the spirit must be first, and dominate the soul, and through the soul control the body. The "spirit man" is he who has the spirit in its due order, ruling soul and body. To become "spiritual"—i.e., under the rule of the spirit, the word of God needs to divide the soul, and spirit. For at first—when the man is a "natural man"—the spirit is sunk into the soul, netted round as it were, and all bound up in the soul. Sometimes the spirit gets a little light, and breaks into freedom, then the soul again predominates, and becomes like a thick film covering the light of the spirit. These phases affect the countenance—when the spirit sinks down into the soul the face becomes shadowed from within, and when the spirit rises to the place of control, the face is full of light. In truth the outer man is, what John describes as a "lampstand," to hold the light that comes from the spirit, which is meant to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and filled with the light of God.

Now the devil knows all about this, for he has studied man for a long time. He has observed, that when in meetings you have sung a spiritual song, you have broken into victory, and the spirit has ruled, then you have gone away to look upon a world that seemed different because all the dark shadows have disappeared in the light of God. With this knowledge, he comes a long to the children of God who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and he brings all the weights he can bring, stirs up all the troubles he can, and puts them on the spirit, and as these heavy weights press upon the spirit and presses it down into the soul, you lose your testimony, and the ringing song of victory; all because you do not understand what he is doing.

To keep the spirit in real victory in union with Christ, you must understand the approach of the enemy, and know what he brings. This leads us to the spirit-warfare, we have in mind—expressed in crude language doubtless, but expressing something that is real. We want to get at this: what is victory, where is victory, how can we walk in victory?

The spirit is the place where the Holy Spirit dwells, and everything that God does in you comes from the spirit. It is through our spirit He works out to soul and body, not from outside in! The devil knows this, though we do not, and he brings things from the outside life to burden the spirit within. From the outside he also gives supernatural power, working upon the emotions and the senses, and gets hold of the bodies even of the children of God. It will help you to detect and to discern for yourself, to know that everything that the Spirit of God does, is through the organ of your spirit. It is in your spirit that you learn to know God for the spirit is the sanctuary, the shrine, the organ of the Holy Spirit, and it is there that He bears His witness—"The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." We have seen that the first thing the Holy Spirit does in regeneration is to give a renewed spirit, when you are "born of the Spirit," and you receive the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of sonship, when from your spirit comes the cry, "Father!" Then you know God as your Father. Then you next receive the Holy Spirit as a Person, as the Sanctifier, and He fills your spirit and makes it the shrine where He dwells, and the centre from which He works, and in that shrine He brings you into union with Christ when you become "joined to the Lord, one spirit." From the centre of the spirit He wields the Word of God, and cuts away the soul's entanglements with the knife of the Word; and as you obey that Word and submit to its requirements, the spirit becomes clarified, and drawn away from the soul-envelope into a deeper, closer, essential, perfect union with Christ the risen and ascended Lord. It is only in this real union of one spirit with Christ, that He is able to exercise His authority through you over spiritual foes.

In the light of these facts about the spirit of man, and the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the eighth of Romans is simply wonderful: "If we walk in the spirit," "if ye live in the spirit," "the mind of the spirit is life," "ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit." "The mind of the flesh is death." "The minding of the spirit is life and peace. At the back of all these words can be seen the PERSONAL VOLITION of the man, as the helm of the ship, so to speak, at the centre. The ACTIVE EXERCISE OF THE WILL, moment by moment, determining his obedience to the mind of God through the Spirit, or his walk "after the flesh."

It is not a state you are brought into, but a position, where you have to choose every moment what you will do. Therefore it is important that you understand what is flesh, and what is spirit, since you have to hourly decide which you will obey.

In 1 Cor. xv. [45] we read, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the second Adam a life-giving spirit." All the life you get from the first Adam is soul, and all the life you get from the new Adam is spirit. First that which is natural, or soulish, and then "that which is spiritual," for there is a "natural body," and there is a "spiritual body." So that the Church will be prepared for translation by being brought to know this spirit life, where the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT QUICKENS THE MORTAL BODY. Through all the tossing and the tumult and the suffering, God is preparing His Church for the coming of Jesus Christ; and through travail and often bitter tears, God's children are pressing on to know all that He can do for them.

When the spirit gets to its right place of predominance, united to Christ, and filled with the Spirit of God, and joined to the Lord, one spirit, "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, will quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." The devil just now is contending for the bodies, and for the mind of God's children. Did Christ not say to Peter "Satan hath obtained you by asking, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not?" He did not say "I

have prayed that you should not go into it;" but "I have let you go into it; you are so self-confident, Peter; you boasted that if all would forsake Me you would not, and I had to let Satan have you to sift you, and to break that self-confidence from you." That was souliness in Peter, it was not of the spirit; and so he was sifted and prepared for his Pentecost in the judgment hall of Pilate.

How could God have used Peter if he had not got rid of his self-confidence first. All Peter's impulses, that wild devotion, that something about Peter that made him go headlong out of the ship towards his Master—God had to get it out of him. You would not say that Satan cannot touch a child of God, if you carefully read the Bible. Paul was a child of God, and yet he said he had a "messenger of Satan" to beat him, to keep him from being exalted above measure through the abundance of God's revelations to his spirit. Through Satan's buffetings and siftings, the children of God will advance into the knowledge of union with Christ, and victory over sin and Satan, which will prepare them for the Lord's coming.

What is the basis of this walk after the spirit? CALVARY. We must take our position with Christ in death, according to the sixth of Romans, crucified with Christ, we must know victory over sin, before we can talk about victory over Satan. Because Satan holds through sin, and it is only on the ground of the cross, standing there crucified with Christ, that you can dare take your position of victory over Satan. Romans vi. is the basis of victory.

In its practical outworkings you will see the need of avoiding a clouded spirit, because if you get a shadow, you will lose that keen spirit light which illuminates the mind, and shows you what to do. If the spirit is kept in clear unbroken victory, dominant over soul and body, the mind is given clear perception to detect the Spirit's leading; for "they that are led of the Spirit are the sons of God."

You know how to avoid sin, but do you know how to avoid weights? The devil knows that a shadow on your spirit will suit his purpose as well as anything else, so he does all he can to bring troublesome things to you in order to shadow your spirit. There is no outflow from a compressed spirit. It is absolutely essential for revival that the spirit shall be free, for thus only is the outflow continual. The law for keeping the spirit in victory is that it must be always going out; it must never turn back upon itself. Because these powers of darkness are outside, and they are always seeking to press you in. The enemy tries to accuse you, and get you occupied with yourself, and thus to lose all aggressive power against him; but you have to go out against him all the time.

But you say, "They won't let me pray in the prayer meeting; how can I always go out against him?" But you have a world-wide sphere in the prayer life, your spirit can go out in victorious prayer against all the powers of darkness, persistently, steadily for the whole church of Christ. ("Quiet Talks on Prayer", by S. D. Gordon, gives much light on this.) That will keep your spirit going out. The truth is you either must go out against what is outside, or else what is outside will come in, and crush you down.

Some of you have no flow now in testimony. In the Revival days your spirit was free. How easy it was then to speak; but, alas! the attacks, the conflict, the opposition, and the difficulties, have come like a great thick wall of clay, and the poor spirit has gone back into prison to be locked up and bound and compressed, so that it cannot move; and you have lost the power to perceive the will of God, and you don't know what to do. Let us ask God for liberation from all the accumulated weights that crush you down in spirit, so that you may enter into a sphere of mightier work in the unseen realm. Though you cannot pray in the prayer meetings, God calls you into a spirit union with Himself, that in prayer you may drive these forces of darkness back. It is a mightier work than anything else, and that field is open to any of you. The closing of the prayer meeting door against you can drive you to pray for Wales as you

never prayed before. If you understood how to walk in the spirit, if you knew how to detect God's will in the spirit, that is possible for you.

Though absent in the body from them, Paul told the Corinthians that he was "present in spirit." Again he said to the believers, "Stand fast in one spirit, striving with one soul for the truth of the gospel." "Ye are all made to drink of one Spirit," ye are a "habitation of God through the Spirit." Endeavouring to keep the "unity of the spirit" in the bond of peace, "praying in the spirit," "fellowship in the spirit." It is "all in the spirit," and if the church of Jesus Christ was united in the spirit, there is no power of darkness that could stand before her. She would be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

Do you see in the light of this what is the matter with the prayer meetings? This great thick cloud of the powers of darkness comes down on the prayer meeting, and because you do not know how to fight in spirit through that wall, you are defeated. Satan tells you that God is not listening to you. Oh! if you knew how to penetrate through. Someone has said, "The Lord Jesus Christ has gone through the plane of the prince of the power of the air, and sat down on God's right hand, praying and keeping the way open for His people. The only way through is a blood-marked way; He is keeping open the way through the hosts of darkness." "Having boldness to enter by the blood"—a blood-marked way. If you have once known that life with Christ in God (for "ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God"), cease to walk after the natural man, the man of flesh. Learn to live in spirit with Christ on the Throne, and live the will of God as you learn it there. Your spirit must remain there, for that is the ascension place—"joined to the Lord, one spirit," and from that place you must understand how to resist everything that comes to you from the powers of darkness, direct, and indirect through men. Be determined that the one thing that you will do is to keep your spirit clear with God, so that you know the will of God. God must work out His own plans in His own way; and your one thing is to know Him, to live and walk in the spirit with Him, to obey His word, to refuse to have clouds that will shadow your spirit-fellowship with God, who is Spirit. That is the place of authority, and power over all the power of the enemy.

### APPENDIX THREE

#### **WALKING IN THE WILL OF GOD**

(The following is an article by Jessie Penn-Lewis, "Walking in the Will of God." It originally appeared in *The Overcomer*, Vol. 6, published by The "Overcomer" Office, Leicester, England, June 1914.)

It is most important for the Lord's children to recognise that they have, and must use, their individual personal will. That the Lord Jesus had His own separate will is clearly set forth in John vi. 38. "I am come down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

In John v. 30, the Lord Jesus said "I can of Mine own self do nothing"—this means that He never acted apart from His Father—"As I hear I judge: and My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." Although He had a separate will, the principle of His life was not independent action, but a co-action in harmony with the will of God. His was not a passive will, but an active one, deliberately set to do the will of His Father.

It is important to know that God does not desire us to have a passive will for the Father to impress His will upon it, and move us apart from our own volition. The words of the Lord Jesus show that He used His will in distinct action. He said: "I SEEK NOT Mine own will," which shows that He was free to will and act in another direction to that which He deliberately sought and chose to follow.

Here we see the negative aspect of the Lord's walk with God the Father—He did not seek to do His own will.

### ***Christ's meat the will of God.***

In John iv. 34, we find described the positive aspect—that is how He did the Father's will. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Here is the active choice to do. There was the choice not to seek His own will, and the choice to do the will of God. There is no trace of passivity here. Moreover, He found Divine sustenance in doing God's will; not in talking about it, but in doing it. "My meat is TO DO..." There must be the doing of God's will as well as the seeking of it, and until you have done the will of God as you know it, you cannot expect to be taken a step further in God's plan for you.

In the life of Christ you will see the exercise of His own separate will. But His will was set. We need to understand the setting of the will like the helm of a ship. As you set your will to do God's will, God can work. Your part is continually to make God's will the principle of your life. You say: "I choose God's will in this." You do not put your will aside, but on God's side, asking God to reveal His will to you. Christ's will was so set that it never lost co-operation with God's will for a moment. He perfectly and entirely did the will of God. "Lo, I come to do Thy will..." Not only was there the setting of His will to God's will, but the active use of it in that setting.

In Matt. viii. 3: "I will, be thou clean"—is an example of His vital co-operation in will with the Father's will. When the man came to Christ the Lord knew God's will, and said: "I WILL, be thou clean." God bore witness, and the man was cleansed. It was God's will manifested toward the man, through the exercise of Christ's will saying "I will, be thou..."

When the will is brought into complete co-operation with God as the principle of life, every moment the one question concerning everything is: "What is God's will?" You have no other question. Not "What do I like? What do I want?" but "God's will." Then there will come a time, when, in the enduement of the power of the Holy Spirit, you may turn to an evil spirit in another, and say, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out." Under such circumstances, the Spirit of God will bear witness to what is done in faith, and it will be God's will manifested through you. This shows what the devil has to gain by making you believe you are to have no "will of your own." Understand that God works His works through you, by bringing your will into co-action with His, and enabling you to speak the word of authority over the enemy in His Name.

### ***God's will in suffering.***

GOD'S WILL IN SUFFERING. In Luke xxii. 42, we read: "Not My will, but Thine be done." These words, spoken in Gethsemane, indicate that Christ put His will on God's side, in the awful anguish He was going through. The pressure was so strong that His sweat became as great drops of blood. "Not My will, but Thine," was the declaration of His attitude as He set His will. He had come to the same choice just before—"Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?"

"Shall I say, `Father, save Me'?" "No," but "Father, glorify Thy Name." Christ put His will for God's glory. And as He put His will on God's side against this awful pressure, He was heard, He was sustained. Then an angel came and ministered to Him.

If you too will make this the central principle of the spiritual life, and set the helm of your will unvaryingly to choose God's will because it is God's will, then He will apply to your life Christ's victory

on Calvary in such a way, as to endue you with power, for the deliverance of others from the power of evil spirits.

**HOW THE LORD KNEW THE WILL OF GOD.** The Lord Jesus knew the will of God in His spirit. See John iv. 4: "He must needs go through Samaria." The literal rendering is that "It was binding upon Him." It was God's will that He should go, and He knew it, because His spirit was pliable. If you are to know the will of God you must not have a hard or unbending spirit. You need a spirit so flexible that it can move whichever way God wants, and I do not see how we are going to know and walk in the will of God, in harmony with God's Word, unless we consent to this walk in the spirit. If you insist that such and such a course must be taken to-morrow, you have not left yourself open to the will of God to effect any change. The Lord does not seem to have had inflexibly fixed plans. "But are we to make no plans?" you ask. Yes, but they should be made in such a way that you can drop them, if necessary, in a minute. You will not walk continuously in the will of God until you have learnt how to be pliable to His will.

### ***A flexible spirit to know God's will.***

You must have a flexible spirit. That is one of the first principles of revival. A meeting that cannot become elastic and subject to the movements of God, becomes a dead block in the way of the Spirit. The human spirit must be so sensitive to the Holy Spirit that just as He spoke to Philip, and said "Join yourself to this chariot," so He may make known His will to you, and get as ready a response.

An adaptable spirit is essential to fulfil the will of God. Christ's spirit was adaptable enough to respond to the needs and questions of Nicodemus. The will of God will be known in your spirit according to the attitude of the person who comes to you. If your spirit is closed, you can pass on no living truth to that person, probably because they are not ready.

If you traced and followed the delicate sense of your spirit it would become acute, and God could then make His will known to you—all in harmony with the written Word, for the Holy Spirit revealing in your spirit God's mind cannot contradict Himself in God's Word. It would mean a great deal if we all walked in the spirit and knew when we were speaking from the spirit and when merely from the mind, and therefore empty of spiritual power.

The spirit should illuminate the mind, but when the spirit drops out of co-operation with the Holy Spirit, the mind is left without the needed assistance, and its product is very poor. When you are in the spiritual plane and know the Holy Spirit in your spirit, you recognise there are grave consequences attached to all you do. You cannot go back from the spirit life without stepping into a pathway of failure. The moment you drop from the plane that you have reached you begin to lose spirit strength, and if you do not recover your place quickly you will ultimately sink into deeper failure. The loss not only affects yourself but everyone with whom you have to deal. You may wrongly interpret or reject the words of a servant of God, and that would cause you to go back without knowing it. This hindrance to your spirit life will be maintained while that wrong thought or attitude is held.

If the Holy Spirit has once had the quickening of your mind so that your mind becomes capable of doing what it could not accomplish naturally, then in order to maintain that you will be obliged to live up to the highest point you have attained, and be satisfied with nothing below.

If, after reaching an altitude in the spirit life, you descend, even without knowing it, you will find yourself in the realm where the powers of darkness can buffet you almost as they like. God only

manifests His Divine power when you are living and acting at the point to which you have already attained (see Phil. iii. 16).

### ***Shrinking from doing God's will.***

When you find yourself defeated, you may ask what is the meaning of the interference of the enemy? Why cannot the stream of the power of God go on? You think it is this and that, and deal with it, but there is no change. Then, after asking God for light, you discover that you were shrinking from what you know you ought to do. How can the Holy Spirit work when you thus cease from co-operation? A little hesitation will push you below the point. Then you say, "Lord, I am going to do what Thou dost desire!" Then the power of God comes in, and all goes well.

The enemy will endeavour to hide from you the fact that you are in a lower plane, by dulling the conscience and giving all sorts of excuses to account for what is going on, until you are in such a state as to be almost powerless. Then he inflicts his suffering, and you have the greatest difficulty in getting on your feet again. Live up to the hilt of the spirit life to which God has brought you, then you will have the power of God to do the will of God at the highest point God seeks from you.

See a few more examples of how Christ walked in the will of God:

John iv. 34 shows the Spirit of God guiding the Lord at the well, when, in answer to the disciples who were anxiously inquiring about His food, He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me..." In John vii. 3, 6, His brethren said to Him, "Depart from hence...Jesus saith to them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready." Here is the restraining power of the Spirit, so that He is not moved by His brethren.

Again in John xi. 5, 6, we read, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick He abode two days still in the same place where he was." His were spiritual bonds. It was God's will first. Though misjudged by those He loved, He did not move. How did He know God's will? He was never moved from outside; never moved by a family taunt, by sarcasm and unbelief; never moved even by the calls of love. He was in spiritual bonds to do God's will.

### ***The consent of the will.***

It is important to remember that both GOD AND SATAN REQUIRE THE CONSENT OF THE WILL. The will of the unsaved, even though it be enslaved by Satan is capable of choice. "Whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely." So man must put his will on God's side for Him to work. "If any man will to do..." God's part in giving you power to "will" is referred to in Phil. ii. 13. "It is God that worketh in you to will..." i.e., He works in you up to the point of your "willing"—He does not "will" instead of you. Man's will needs God's power to energize it. Apart from it, it is mere will-worship (Col. ii. 23). Paul said, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I know not." Man may also set his will against God's will"—This they willingly are ignorant of" (2 Peter iii. 5). The servant that knew His will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke xii. 47).

Now as to the danger of THE WILL OUT OF ACTION.

Passivity of will arises through a wrong conception of surrender. Romans xii. 1, gives the true meaning of surrender. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service...that ye may prove what is...[the] will of God." To walk after the will of God the spirit requires a

voluntary act of the will. Your will must guide or CONTROL your spirit. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (1 Cor. xiv. 32). For instance, your spirit may go out into an ecstasy, or a strain, beyond the volitional control of your will. Then it goes too far.

**YOUR SPIRIT MUST ALWAYS BE KEPT WITHIN THE CONTROL OF YOUR VOLITION.** Reference has been made to the spirit being lifted, but when the spirit is liberated and buoyant, then the new plan of the powers of darkness is to drive your spirit, and drive your body. Some people are simply being driven on by the enemy—they are always in a strain, always on the stretch, running after something. It means that the spirit is being drawn out by the powers of darkness.

The Lord Jesus knew the will of God in His spirit because it was always in perfect poise—never strained, never crushed, never elated, never driven, never slow. When He was going to raise the girl from the dead, He was stopped on the way, and He had time to stay and attend to the needs before Him. The ideal is a spirit in perfect poise. It is in that condition you learn how to watch and resist the powers of darkness coming against your spirit, and forcing you on, or, more often, forcing you down.

The relationship of the will to the spirit may be illustrated by that of the string to the kite. The string of a kite, which holds it steady, is its power. The moment it is let go it is lost, and drops. The Lord Jesus walked in the will of God, by knowing it in His spirit and in His intelligence.

The reverse to the action of the will is passivity. When you find your will passive and slow in action you can bring it into action by saying "I have a will." Then having a will of your own, the principle to safeguard its action, is the Lord's own attitude and choice, "I seek not Mine own will."

May the Spirit of God teach us how to follow the steps of our Pattern, and like the Son of God so walk with God in seeking and doing His will, that we stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col. iv. 12).

## APPENDIX FOUR

### **MORE THAN CONQUERORS**

(The following is a booklet by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *More Than Conquerors*. The material in the addendum, "The Foundation of the Victorious Life," was excerpted from a book by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Cross: The Touchstone of Faith*, pp. 18-19. Both were originally published by The Overcomer Literature Trust, Parkston, Poole, Dorset, England.)

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Romans 8. 37.)

Calvary means that Christ not only bore on that Tree your sins, but that He carried to the Tree the sinner—carried you there. When you come to the point of recognising that God does not patch up the old life, but calls upon you to reckon it crucified, and to take from Him a new one, you will find that the new life has in it all the characteristics which belong to it. The old Adam-life has its own characteristics, and the new Adam-life has its own characteristics.

It is necessary to repeat this message of the Cross again and again, for the truth only lays hold of us "line upon line" until at last it grips us and effectually works in us who believe.

Moreover, to that Cross of Calvary, Christ, as the Representative Man, not only carried the sinner, but on that Cross and through the death of the Cross He utterly conquered Satan (Colossians 2. 15). There is therefore no need on the part of a Christian for a trace of fear of Satan. Satan is an absolutely conquered foe to the soul who knows:

### **THE VICTORY OF CALVARY.**

"Fear hath torment." The finished work of Calvary ends the fear of death (Hebrews 2. 14, 5), and fear of the prince of death.

On the Cross Christ took away your sins, so that you might have the blotting out of them through His blood, when all the wicked spirits of Satan cannot bring them up to you, and throw them at you. God Himself has blotted them out saying, "I will remember them no more" (Hebrews 8. 12). That is salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin. But it is vitally important you understand that when God blots out sin, He blots out on the condition that you part with sin. God cannot blot out what you will not part with.

When you know that your sins are blotted out, and you are really begotten of God by the impartation of a new life, there are three aspects of the life of victory through the Cross that you need to understand.

#### **1. VICTORY OVER SIN.**

The sinner saved through the death of Christ has a right to break with sin. He can say, in the Name of the Conquering Jesus, "No sin has a right to master me"—e.g., you may say, as you stand on Romans 6. 6, "No doubtful habit has a right to me. I absolutely refuse, in the Name of the One Who died for me, to be in bondage to it." As a redeemed soul you have a right to say this, because on the Cross the work has been done for you, and you are to lay hold of all that Christ has obtained for you and appropriate it (Romans 6. 13). Victory over sin in this way is not any glory to you, for it is not gained through your human will, nor your human power, but through the finished work of Christ on the Cross. He obtained the forgiveness of sins for you; He obtained the victory for you over sin and death.

The lonely Cross, think of it! See there the Lamb! As Moody said, "God conquered the lion of hell with a slain Lamb!" And there it was done. Oh that the Church of Christ would rise up in the Name of Jesus Christ her Redeemer, and refuse to be in bondage to sin, or to Satan. The Church should rise up in the name of Christ, declaring that all the works of the devil against her (1 John 3. 8) can be destroyed, because Christ was manifested to destroy them.

Let us get hold of the fact of the Calvary victory, and of the truth that Satan is a conquered foe. Christ conquered him at Calvary. When you stand on Romans 6, reckoning the old life crucified, your spirit becomes joined to Christ—"Joined to the Lord, one spirit!" You are not going out against a great and terrible spirit-foe alone. Your spirit "joined to the Lord" is "one spirit" with Him. Christ is the Conqueror, and you are joined in one Spirit with the Conqueror.

It is not that God gives you victory by yourself. He gives you victory by your being joined in spirit to the Victor. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4). Then are we going to cower and tremble before the enemy, when we are joined to the Conqueror, joined to the Victor—joined in one spirit? But you do not know that "joining" until you come to Calvary, and stand steadily on the fact of the old Adam-life crucified with Christ, because the "old life" gets in the way, and is liable to do some "fighting" which is of no avail against the foe, but rather gives him ground and power over you. Therefore, the old Adam-life must be reckoned crucified, because it is material for Satan, and if the old

life is not kept in the position of death every moment, it is the material Satan puts his "fiery darts" in. Satan has full rights over all the old creation. He knows that part of the old life in you which is not "crucified," and he directs all his fiery darts to that spot. These darts have a bit of fire from the pit (James 3. 6) at their tip, and when they get into you they burn and blaze, and make you "blaze."

Whenever you see a "blaze" in a Christian you may know where it comes from. It is from the old life

*"set on fire of hell."*

Child of God, do you "fire up," and say things which you ought not to say? Do you flash out unkind things, "set on fire" by Satan? This is not the "fight" that wins, but the fight that fails every time. Do you see the importance of Romans 6? Suppose without standing on Romans 6 you set out to take the aggressive against Satan, how he would laugh! He would say, "Why the `stuff' that belongs to me is there; they have so much of my `goods'." You cannot bind the "strong man," because his goods are in and about you. Therefore you must take your stand at Calvary, reckoning the old life crucified moment by moment, so that the fire from the pit may not fasten upon you, and set on fire the "wheel of nature"—that nature which already has the poison of the serpent in it through his victory over man in Eden.

There must be for this battle with the lion of hell the spirit of the Lamb—the Lion-Lamb—the very Spirit of Jesus. It must be, when the fiery darts come, that they find in you the Lamb-spirit, however much people may tread on you, ill-treat you and put upon you—there must not be any blaze in you, which you call "righteous indignation!" The Calvary deliverance is needed, and the Lamb-spirit of Calvary.

## **2. VICTORY IN SUFFERING.**

This aspect of the victorious life is to be found in Romans 8. 35-39. The Apostle says, "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter....In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!" "More than conquerors" when you are ill-treated, and when for Christ's sake you are counted, like Christ, a lamb only fit for slaughter. "For Thy sake...killed!" It is not nice to be considered a sheep fit for slaughter; it is not "dignified"! There is no room for pride here. There was not much room for "dignity" in the Lord Christ's Calvary death. When He was led along the road with a crown of thorns upon His brow, with the blood upon His face, after walking seven miles during the night, as He was moved from place to place—there was not much "dignity"—there was "no beauty that we should desire Him." It was not a "dignified" death! He was put to open shame!

With God's children, the thing which hurts them most is the thing that touches their dignity. They do not mind being put to shame before God, but they do mind being put to shame before men. How they blush over anything that humiliates! But that all dies when the believer feels that he is really

*suffering with Christ.*

It does not say "killed" for "your own sake," but "for Christ's sake." It does not say beaten and whipped because you have been wrong, but beaten and whipped because you have been right! If ye do well and suffer for it, and take it patiently, this is grace; but if ye do wrong and suffer for it, and bear it patiently, what thanks have ye (see 1 Peter 2). This is victory and being a conqueror in suffering for Christ. If you do wrong, and "suffer for it," you must not call that "suffering with Christ." "For Thy sake...killed...in all these things more than conquerors!" This is the triumph of the spirit of the Lamb, in suffering "for Jesus' sake," and this is victory over the world.

### 3. VICTORY OVER SATAN.

In having victory over Satan you conquer in quite another way. Enduring grief, suffering wrongfully, with patience and a loving spirit is the true spirit-life of one who is joined to Christ, in the attitude to the human beings who are the visible and immediate cause of his suffering, but this is not to be the attitude to the devil. You have not to be a "lamb" to the devil. Be a "lamb" to the people, be patient with them, love them, be "more than conqueror" by showing the Spirit of the Lamb to them, but at the same time you must take an attitude of resistance against the devil according to 1 Peter 5. 8, 9 and James 4. 7.

There are therefore three aspects of the victorious life—(1) The aspect towards sin, Romans 6, "dead indeed unto sin"; (2) the aspect towards the people, "more than conquerors" when they "kill" you; and (3) the aspect to the devil, "Resist the devil" in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Ephesians 6 depicts this last aspect of the victorious life in resistance to the foe. When the Lord Jesus was the "Lamb" towards men, He was a "Lion" to the devil. We are told that He shook off from Himself the principalities and powers and put them to open shame, and what was defeat in the eyes of men was victory in the eyes of God. What was "shame" in the eyes of men was glory in the eyes of God. Towards Satan and all his wicked hosts Christ was a LION—the Lion of Judah.

In Ephesians 6 we see something of the spirit-warfare—the Lion-life—against the powers of darkness. Here we see the soldier, with the spirit of the soldier—"Henceforth be strong." On the human side Christ was "crucified through weakness," but He was "strong"—stronger than the "strong man." His name is called Strong—"When the Stronger than he shall come upon him." So Christ's name is the "Stronger than he." He is stronger than the "Strong man." So to the believer standing "in Christ" and facing Satanwards, the message is "Be strong." You must not now talk of "weakness." You may be weak in your humanity and in yourself, but you must be

*"strong in the Lord."*

One of the devices of the devil is to get the children of God to accept weakness, because of the "weakness of the Cross" (2 Corinthians 13. 3, 4), but that is the human side towards men. In the spiritual sphere the rousing word is "BE STRONG!" On the earthly side, "I will boast of my weakness." said Paul. But in facing the foe "Be strong!" "From henceforth be STRONG!" It does not say "Try to be strong," it says "BE strong." When God says BE, He gives the power to be. He said, "Let there BE light," and there was light! So whenever God says to you "BE so-and-so," say "Amen, I AM so-and-so"—i.e. IT IS SO! God speaks the word, you appropriate it, and it becomes fact as you act it. GOD does it. So God says "Be strong!" "Let the weak say, I AM STRONG!" Why have you to say it? Because in the spiritual realm, words create. Christ said, "He shall have whatever he saith." In the spiritual realm there are no empty words; what you say is what comes about. Thus you need to be careful of your words. When you walk as a "natural man" in the earthly sphere you may say words that have little effect, but if you walk in the spiritual sphere you will need to watch that you do not contradict your faith by your words.

If you say "God tells me to 'BE strong,' and therefore

*I am strong*

by His strength," then strength comes in. The devil knows the laws of the spiritual sphere, and he whispers, "Oh, you do feel bad today!" and you say, "I am bad!" But God says, "Be strong," then you say, "By faith in God I am strong!" Satan whispers, "You are going to break down," and you say, "I believe I

shall break down!" and you find yourself really going "down." This is the law in the spiritual sphere, yet few of us understand the power of words in that sphere. "Let the weak SAY, I am strong!"

BE STRONG! In yourself? No; "IN THE LORD." That is a position. It is not outside the Lord, but is "In the Lord." Stand "in the Lord." Take care you never stand anywhere else. Keep your faith set on the fact:

*"I am in Christ"*

and Christ is in me. I am not meeting things alone—I am personally weak, but Christ is strong. I am powerless, but Christ is mighty. I am strong in Christ; I have His strength, His power. "I stand in the Lord!" Not remembering their place in Christ, and "with Christ in God," many children of God are so "weak." You place them in an exposed position in the battle, and they run away. You hardly dare tell them some things you have to conquer by prayer, because they get so frightened. It is appalling that God has such a weak Church, weak in the conflict with sin and Satan, weak in its attitude to the world, all because it has not learnt the inner message of the Cross.

"HIS MIGHT." Let us meet the lion of hell with this verse. God says, "Be strong," and "stand" in the "strength of His might." It will take every bit of fear away. It is "MIGHT." Exactly the same word that Paul uses in Ephesians 1 that Christ was "raised from the dead" by the "might" of God—by the "strength of HIS MIGHT." Let us therefore go forward with God in steady hourly Victory, until the Lord comes, and we are gathered together unto Him.

*(Addendum)*

### **THE FOUNDATION OF THE VICTORIOUS LIFE**

The sixth of Romans is not an aspect of the truth, but the FOUNDATION TRUTH upon which every believer must stand, to know anything about victory. It not only reveals the very heart of Calvary, but the very heart of the resurrection. Calvary means the death-identification of the believer with Christ, so that he lives and moves in a spiritual sphere in resurrection life. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. LIKEWISE RECKON YE also..." writes the Apostle to the Romans.

But we need to see too that there is a life side to the sixth of Romans, the resurrection side. On the resurrection side of the Cross, "death" hath no more dominion. The negative side of "death" should not be dwelt upon to the exclusion of the positive LIFE SIDE of union with Christ. The death is to be reckoned an accomplished fact, every moment. But "Christ being raised, dieth no more." He is ALIVE, and the believer identified by faith with Him in death, is united to Him in His life on the life-side of the Cross.

The believer must reckon to everything that he HAS died—not that he is going to die. If he again and again asks God to "put to death" some one point over and over again, he will never realize the positive life power. Reader are you saying, "I have not `died' to this and that." Take your position now on Romans 6. 6, and then "reckon" yourself "ALIVE UNTO GOD," and as you are alive unto God, you will surely come into the conflict with the spiritual foes in the spiritual sphere, described in Ephesians 6. 10-18, and standing on the foundation fact of Romans 6, go on to victory.

### **APPENDIX FIVE**

## **THE CROSS DESTROYING THE SERPENT**

(The following is an article by Jessie Penn-Lewis. It originally appeared in *The Overcomer*, No. 41, published by The "Overcomer" Office, Leicester, England, May 1918.)

"That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14).

The Cross means not only the destruction of the fallen creation poisoned by the serpent, and the birthplace of a new race, but it eventually brings about the actual destruction of the serpent who was the original cause of the Fall. On the Cross the Victor of Calvary destroyed the destroyer. This is wonderfully depicted in the foreshadowing of Calvary given in the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, and referred to by the Lord as the picture of His Cross, and His death at Calvary.

As one has said "The serpent is not the type of Christ. The serpent had poisoned the people; Christ had not. The type consists in this, that the death of the serpent was the triumph of the Saviour." The fallen race put to death in the Person of the Representative Man; the curse of God on the fallen Adam carried out; and the serpent himself destroyed through the very death he had brought into the world, is a brief and concentrated description of the Cross. Hence Paul writes that on the Cross the Lord Jesus Christ stripped Himself of principalities and powers, and put them to open shame, triumphing over them by the Cross.

An old writer has a very suggestive note on this passage, which opens out its meaning. He says: "The fallen flesh has been taken possession of by the powers and principalities of evil—it is the 'armour' in which they have made themselves strong;" and therefore when Jesus overcame them, He put off "the likeness of sinful flesh," and having unclothed Himself, He made an open show of the powers and principalities.

How wonderfully divine the plan! "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19). The Creator in the Person of His Son, taking upon Himself the sins of the whole world—came in the likeness of sinful flesh, or "flesh of sin" (Rom. viii. 8), yet without SIN—and partaking of flesh and blood, formed a bond of union with the fallen race, that He in His divine personality should carry that fallen Adam-life to the Cross, and there suffer the penalty of death, which was its inevitable due and end; so that for the fallen creature He might break a way back to God, and become the Head of a new race, built up and formed out of His very nature and substance.

This is the meaning of the Cross in its divine purpose, and the way of victory for fallen man to triumph over the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the meaning of the Fall—the fallen flesh taken possession of by the spirit of Satan. This is the answer of Calvary to Satan, and to sin: the fallen creation crucified on the Cross, that every man may have the option of leaving the old race, and breaking away from its federal head, the first Adam, begin again "in Christ" a new creation.

The Cross is God's destroying weapon, to destroy the old creation (Rom. vi. 6), to destroy the fallen wisdom which set up itself against the wisdom of God (1 Cor. ii. 8), to destroy Satan (Heb. ii. 14), and eventually to destroy death itself (1 Cor. xv. 54, Rev. xx. 14). Through that Cross where (potentially) sin, Satan and fallen man were destroyed, then when the full results of the redemptive scheme will reach their full fruition, there shall come about a "new heavens," cleansed from every trace of the revolt of the fallen angels; and a "new earth" freed from every mark of the curse of the fall; inhabited by a new race, with every trace of the old fallen creation eliminated.

The Son of God will then see accomplished in its entirety, that which He was manifested on earth to do. The fruit of His lonely death on the Cross will have its full outworking, when "He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. xv. 24), having taken back both in the seen and unseen worlds, from the revolting Archangel Satan, who is at last finally be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 10), "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). The Cross destroys the serpent. Hallelujah.

"THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE DESTROYED IS DEATH" (1 Cor. xv. 26). The Christ will reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. By the Cross the one who has the power of death is destroyed, and finally death itself abolished, "death shall be no more" (Rev. xxi. 4), and "there shall be no curse anymore" (Rev. xxii. 3).

Oh! wondrous Cross, and wondrous Saviour! The fallen race of Adam DESTROYED for the creation of a new race! The wisdom of fallen man DESTROYED in its exaltation against the Creator! The "Serpent" who fell from heaven, and drew down part of the host of heaven, and the whole race of man in his Fall, DESTROYED, and finally death, the result of the Fall, DESTROYED. The cross destroys the Serpent, and all that came into the world through the Serpent. Hallelujah.

## APPENDIX SIX

### **TRANSLATED OUT OF THE POWER OF DARKNESS**

(The following is an excerpt from an article by Jessie Penn-Lewis, "Translated Out of the Power of Darkness." It appeared in *The Overcomer*, Vol. 3, published by The "Overcomer" Office, Leicester, England, September 1911. It was later revised and reprinted in booklet form. Watchman Nee's translated excerpt was based on portions of both versions.)

"It is God who has delivered us out of the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of His dearly-loved Son." (Col. i:13; Weymouth).

What is God's purpose concerning the believer in Christ, and the powers of darkness? To see this we must turn to the work of Christ at Calvary, and understand Calvary's victory. On the Cross of Calvary He flung off from Himself the principalities and powers of evil, and put them to open shame. The soul identified with Christ in His death is translated with Him, and in Him, "out of the kingdom of darkness" into the "reigning life" of the Ascended Lord. Through Calvary's victory you have been in God's purpose translated out of that Kingdom of darkness, not to be walking in its sphere, not to take its view point, nor its standards, its ways, its wickedness.

But before this becomes actual experience you need first to apprehend God's full ideal for you, and that He has translated you out of the power of darkness, so that the prince of darkness HAS NO FURTHER CLAIM ON YOU, NO RIGHT to you; for God "hath raised us up together (with Christ) and made us to sit with Him" in His reigning life. However much you may come short of it in experience, remember you must never lower God's ideal for you; but ever keep in sight His intention, and ask Him to lead you on to the life He purposes for you. Your position is that you are "TRANSLATED OUT OF THE POWER OF DARKNESS." Then how much hold will you practically give the enemy in yourself, and your life? What is your WILL in the matter? What is your attitude towards Him? Is your will what God's will is—"translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son;" raised, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus?"

## **THE PRACTICAL WAY OF VICTORY.**

Now as to the practical outworkings of this position. First of all there must be simplicity of faith in Christ and purity of thought toward Him. Paul said, "I fear lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, your MIND should be corrupted from the simplicity of faith that is in Christ." Paul would hardly be afraid of what could not take place, or be anxious about the impossible. So you cannot say it is "not possible" for a Christian to be beguiled. Eve was innocent, yet she was beguiled; and the knowledge of this fact led Paul to be anxious about this for the Corinthians. We must walk in simplicity of faith and purity of thought, as those who are delivered, and translated, and raised together with Christ.

Next, there is the need of care in speech (Matt. v. 37) and after that forgiveness—"lest Satan should get an advantage" (2 Cor. ii, 11). The unforgiving spirit always gives Satan an advantage. Paul appears to have been keenly on the alert against the Adversary, taking care that he did not gain any advantage in his actions. In 1 Tim. iii, 6, we read, "Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the judgment of the devil." Apparently the devil has a right to judge any who are "puffed" up. The Apostle is speaking about a Christian—albeit a young one—and of the possibility of this believer falling under the "judgment of the devil" directly he gives him ground. The enemy seems to have certain rights which even God respects, and that right includes the power to "judge," or have some power over any believer who gives him occasion. What force this gives to Ephes. iv, 27, "GIVE NO PLACE to the devil!" In all these passages you have warnings to the children of God.

### **SATAN AS A ROARING LION.**

Satan also goes about in various disguises. Peter writes, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as A ROARING LION, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith" (1 Peter, v. 8, 9). Are you quite sure you must be a special exception, and that he will not "devour you, nor touch you? If not, then "be sober," never be off guard one minute. Be watchful, for your adversary "walketh about." He is your adversary as well as Christ's, and he goes about roaring as a lion, making a noise which deafens and frightens so many. The adversary "roars" by stirring up "flesh and blood." He as a spirit must find channels for his working. If he "roars" he must find a human voice to roar through. Therefore the children of God should be on guard, and never act under the pressure of others, nor come to decisions in a time of storm. When there is clamour and strife of tongues, they should wait and be still. The adversary's "roar" is to drive them into a false step, and out of the calm, clear knowledge of the will of God. Always recognise the adversary behind flesh and blood when there is a clamour of voices, and stand still in the position of victory. When your eyes are opened to see and understand the devices of the enemy, you will lose sight of "flesh and blood," and realise that you must never act under the clamour of men. Alas, alas, the roaring lion can hide behind the greatest saint! Not with the saint's conscious co-operation, of course, but none the less true on that account. This is one of the solemn things we have to learn to-day, as we discover how the enemy can use some of God's best children unconsciously to themselves, simply because they are not awake to his power and his devices.

The reason for this is that Satan works on the "natural" man. He makes the "natural man" come to you with his viewpoint (see Matt. xvi, 22, 23), and his alarming pictures but you do not see the "roaring lion" in that; so you get frightened and wonder whether you are in the will of God; you get confused and lose your guidance, and the devil accomplishes his purpose.

### **SATAN AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.**

Then you will find in 2 Cor. xi, 14, that the prince of the air also goes about as an ANGEL OF LIGHT. As a lion he seeks to DEVOUR, as an angel of light he seeks to deceive. Satan is a deceiver. If he can appear clothed in light—the very nature of God—then your "vision" can be no protection to you. When Satan makes a roar behind the voices of men your ears are no protection to you, and when he comes as an angel of light, vision is not enough to detect him. You say "it was ALL LIGHT" so it must be "of God;" yet the prince of darkness can appear as "light" i.e., as God. You must therefore have more ways of detecting and testing him than by vision, i.e., eyesight (even spiritual eyesight) and hearing. The safest detecting test is "fruit" (Matt. vii, 20), and KNOWLEDGE OF BASIC PRINCIPLES WHICH ETERNALLY DIVIDE BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN. Between Him who is truth itself, and Satan, the "father of lies."

In 2 Cor. xii, 7, we see how the adversary goes about as A TORMENTOR of the most godly and saintly servants of God. He "buffeted" Paul—and he did it with God's permission—"A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME." Paul's resource was prayer, "I besought the Lord," he said, and then came strength to "glory in his weakness." In Luke xxii, 31, we see also he goes about as a sifter of the children of God. He attacks them in all these varied ways, "as a roaring lion," an "angel of light," a buffeter and a sifter.

### **"YES" TO GOD, AND "NO" TO THE DEVIL.**

In relation to all these four aspects of the adversary's workings, there is one strong central position which the believer must hold toward them all. We have it tersely described in James iv, 7. "SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO GOD, RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE;" which briefly means, say "Yes" to God, and "No" to the devil. "Joined to the Lord one spirit" your place is with Christ on the throne "far above all principality and power," and this position of victory you must hold persistently by the power of the Holy Ghost, whilst in regard to the approaches and attacks of Satan, you will, as the deciding factor, persistently assert your choice to walk with God. From the POSITION OF VICTORY you are to be awake to what Satan seeks to do to your circumference in all his various disguises, and from your centre-position to say in your will just "Yes" or "No"—i.e., "Yes" to God, "No" to the devil.

Granted your spirit in union with Christ, how can you be free from the bondage of the enemy in your circumference; that is to say, in mind or body? The spirit is in union with Christ in victory, but the enemy can attack the MIND with depression, and with dullness, or inflame the imagination, and the body, with its nerves and muscles, in fact, all that is in the circumference.

If the believer understands his true position in Christ, and maintains a simple attitude, of (1) submission to all that is of God, and (2) resistance to all that comes from the adversary, these attacks do cease. The "fight" is to maintain the attitude of victory in Christ; and to keep the helm of the ship set towards God; the "resistance" is a refusal to yield to Satan at all costs—THEN HE DOES FLEE.

But suppose the adversary appears as "light," and gets the "Yes" of the will under disguise? Alas, it is Yes, even though the believer gave the "yes" under deception, and it gives the adversary power over the believer TO THE EXTENT OF THE "YES" WHICH THE DECEIVER OBTAINED BY FRAUD.

### **THE EXPOSING OF THE ENEMY'S WILES**

This is the reason why believers need light on the devices of the enemy. If the Lord Jesus is a reality to you, surely you can bear some light on the foe who is always seeking to trap your feet. How are you going to resist the foe if you do not know when he attacks you? If you do not know that he can take hold of your imagination, and torture you with his pictures, or your mind, and fill it with all kinds of

thoughts, how are you going to resist him at these points. But immediately you RECOGNIZE that it is the adversary, he cannot stand the light, he will FLEE from you.

The Lord gave much light upon the characteristics and aims of the powers of darkness, which enable us to understand their workings, for they are the same now as then. For instance, the Lord said about the wicked spirit, that when it goes out of a man it goes "through waterless places seeking rest," then because it can find no relief, and no sustenance, it says it will go back to "MY HOUSE." This shows that a human being is looked upon by them as a "house" wherein they can find REST. This throws great light upon their condition and their desires. They want relief and nourishment, and outside the human "house," this is to them a world of waterless places.

We see therefore why Satan's emissaries seek so actively to gain entrance to human bodies, and why when they can get a footing they seem to feed upon the vital power of the life, and dry up the sensibilities and even sympathies, withering up what has been expressively described as "the milk of human kindness." This explains the inhuman actions of fanaticism, and the cruelties performed under the name of religion, which is "not after Christ"; and how even "supernatural experiences" to-day act upon the man in such a way, as to rob him of all tenderness and kindness, for every touch of the Satanic power hardens, and blinds men to the needs and feelings of others.

We must speak plainly about these things, because of the paralysis that has come upon the spiritual section of the church, from these subtle workings of the enemy. Strife and division may be the fruit of the carnal life; but when there is lack of sympathy and tenderness amongst the fully-surrendered souls, we know it is not from the "carnal" life, but from the unrecognized workings of the enemy, causing the drying up of sympathy and love to others, joined to the same Lord. Whenever you find that "supernatural" experiences harden you, you may gravely question the source, for everything that comes from God makes you tender and sensitive. Note that metallic sound in the voice which tells of the adversary's interference, and see how he brings the believer into bondage, and makes him hard, unreasonable, powerless and stony; whereas everything that comes from the Holy Spirit liberates, and quickens; increases tenderness, sympathy, acuteness of conscience, and power of discernment of right and wrong.

The reason also why many Christians do not get into full liberty in the life, lies in the fact that the Holy Spirit in the centre of them, is not relied upon to liberate the circumference. Many receive the fulness of the Spirit, but lose all the power of it, because there is a working of the enemy on their circumference which they are not aware of.

### **THE CONDITION FOR GOD'S PROTECTION**

Full deliverance depends upon the recognition of the possibility of these things. But, you may say, "If I trust God to keep me, how can the adversary thus attack my body, or mind?" We need to understand that all God's promises are conditional. If we trust God to keep us, and the conditions are not fulfilled, then our "faith is vain," i.e. if you trust God to keep you, and at the same moment FULFIL THE CONDITIONS for the enemy's working, God does not stop him working. We must earnestly seek to know the conditions upon which God can do what we ask Him to do, otherwise we may be terribly deceived.

This explains why, when we trust God to keep us on a certain thing, we have yet made mistakes and blunders in relation to it. These facts have perplexed logical minds, but they can be explained. God's children are not careful to examine the ground upon which they may expect God to keep them. Again,

God will not "keep" you without your watching. You must watch, and ask Him for vision and power and knowledge to recognise the attacks of the enemy on you, so that you may work with God in the keeping, i.e. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, that the wicked one toucheth him not" (I John v.). He "keeps himself" by watching, by resisting the adversary, by giving him no "advantage" by admitting an unforgiving spirit; by knowing his devices, so as not to yield to them unawares. As he does his part, God does His, and keeps him by giving him the power of the Holy Spirit for all he has to do.

If you as a "spiritual" man, will recognize the existence of the powers of darkness always round about you, because you are in a spiritual realm, then in much that comes to you in ordinary life you will recognize one degree to be "natural" causes, and possibly ninety-nine degrees supernatural. Take, for instance, that "tired feeling" which comes upon you unaccountably, and when you "rest" you are no better for it, for you find you become heavier, and you say, "I did not know how tired I was." You need to test this, and not yield to it. You were "tired" it is true, but you let your spirit go down, too, into passivity, with the result that the adversary gained his aim to stop the work, or sidetrack you out of some vital service which he feared. You will quickly grow suspicious of everything when you discover the devices of the foe, and you will reason this way: "I do not know what the enemy has to do with this, but I resist him in any plan he has, and refuse to let him have anything from me." And thus you watch, watch, and watch, and all the time maintain an attitude of "watching" and resisting [refusing], praying continually to the Lord for light upon your path, and upon the foe, and throwing things off you which once you yielded to so quickly, so that there comes increasingly into your spirit buoyant victory.

What joy now comes into the life, as you see the way of victory over everything touching you, in your circumference of mind and body. Calm in the central union with Christ, you quietly say "I refuse all ground to evil spirits in mind and body, and I take back from them all I ever gave them by mistake, or through ignorance, and give it all to the Lord Jesus Christ." Then will come a quickening of your memory, and every faculty of mind, or body, liberated for God's use.

It is growing upon me, that this light upon the way the powers of darkness have fettered and dulled the minds, and bodies of God's children, will be a mighty factor in the preparation of the Body of Christ for translation. The "earnest of the spirit" is certainly for mind and body (2 Cor. v. 4, 5), but if the adversary is holding much ground unknowingly, how can God's people receive it? It is easy to see now why we have a paralyzed and feeble church, for it has been gripped by the powers of darkness.

### **THE WAY TO BE VICTORIOUS ALL THE TIME**

Now finally, as to the keeping of the position in the spirit where these things can become true, and where you will have your spirit perpetually in victory. As you walk in victory resisting the devil in his attacks on soul and body, you will find the "wrestling" in spirit, which Paul speaks of in Ephes. vi. 12, become your experience. The enemy will attack your spirit, so that you may lose your centre position of victory, where you detect, and resist his onslaughts on your circumference. For instance, you must understand that if a weight comes on your spirit you lose all buoyancy, and when the weight goes off it there is spring. The first "weight" on the spirit should be dealt with in a moment. Pray that you may be able to recognise quickly, and take the victory at once, so that you may get free quickly. Practise taking "weights" to the Lord immediately. When the spirit is in triumph, the work looks so easy, but once there comes the weight, then the spirit goes down, and how dark everything looks, the work is heavy, the "bogies" are many, and at times, like Elijah, you feel you are going to die! It is when your spirit is in victory, that you have "authority" and "power over all the power of the enemy." The Holy Spirit is the "dunamis" that conquers him, but the Holy Spirit can only manifest this power through a LIBERATED SPIRIT. A "weight" on the spirit crushes it, and prevents the heavenly dunamis going out against the

enemy. He knows this, so he attacks your spirit. There follows a tussle; and he says "you must go under," and you say "No, I will not go under, I stand in Christ." He says "You shall go in to yourself," and you say "I won't go in." So the "wrestle" goes on, until at last he flees—put to flight by the Spirit of God, and your co-operation with Him in your attitude of will. When your spirit is thus triumphant, you possess clear vision and perception; but when your spirit is shadowed, the mind is dull, and then the deceiving spirits can decoy you out of the path of God's will. The spirit must be kept pure, and clear, and full of light; and then you see so simply the path the Lord would have you walk in.

## APPENDIX SEVEN

### **PRAYER A DIVINE NECESSITY**

(The following is an excerpt from an article by Evan Roberts. It originally appeared in *The Overcomer*, Vol. 4, published by The "Overcomer" Office, Leicester, England, February 1912. The paragraphs below reflect the order in Watchman Nee's publication.)

If God can do things without prayer in the church, why does He not carry them out in His own time instead of delays and hindrances?...And why does God lay a complaint against the church that she does not pray?...Why did Christ say, "Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest to send forth labourers?" Why did He not send them apart from prayer?

...There is value in the expression of prayer. What is the meaning of "Ye have not because ye ask not"? Is it God's unwillingness—i.e., you shall not "get" if you do not ask? Or is it that God sees the need, and He cannot meet the need, until the prayer is made?

The cycle of prayer moves in this wise: (1) God wants a thing done; (2) He moves the believer to pray that that thing might be done; (3) God does it in answer to that prayer....There is a thought abroad in the church: "Oh! God works so slowly." He does not. HE WORKS ACCORDING TO THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH, and according as there is co-operation with Him. Did God work very slowly in Egypt in delivering the bound nation? He did not. He worked for a prolonged season in getting the instrument ready in the wilderness—forty years....God's work is rapidly done when the instruments see to it that the divine conditions are fulfilled. There must be conformity to the laws of God before God can work; and according to the absolute conformity to God's will and laws there is a fulness of operation.

## APPENDIX EIGHT

### **THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF PRAYER**

(The following is an article by S.D. Gordon. It originally appeared in *The Overcomer*, published by The "Overcomer" Office Leicester, England, August 1910.)

"Be earnest and unwearied in prayer, being on the alert in it, and in your giving of thanks..." Col. iv. 2. Weymouth.

The great thing that makes the difference is not the service, not the life, but God's touch upon them. God always needs human agency. He must have someone to use always.

He mostly talks to men through men, and He will use us if we will let Him, but the great thing in all the using is not the agency but Himself.



2. Man—who prays.
3. Evil One—against whom we pray.

In our prayer we men down on earth join hands with God, with Jesus Christ, in utterly turning back, and utterly defeating all the power of the Evil One. See Daniel x. and companion chapter Ephesians vi.

We never wrestle against man, "flesh and blood," but against powers, principalities, &c. Paul tells us how to overcome, "withal praying with all supplications," etc., etc. Luke xviii.1-10 (Parable). Three in parable (1) Judge. (2) Widow. (3) Adversary.

A prayer picture. The whole drive of the parable story is to get the judge to join with the widow, to foist the attacks of the adversary against her!

We never will pray up to the full limit of our power, and to the possibility of prayer, until we realize this, that the whole drive of prayer is to foist the power of the Evil One. "Thy will be done," i.e., "The other will be undone."

God needs in His great plan for the world more people who will stay where they have been put. Stay where you have been put with a whole heart and life in full conscious touch with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Evil One is to be defeated. The victory of the Lord Jesus Christ is here. The enemy fears most, next to God, the man who will put his whole life in full touch with the Lord Jesus, and stay where he has been put, and right there keep in prayer.

Victory in Jesus' Name is ours. We want to say "Get thee hence Satan, in my master's Name," and claim for the Lord Jesus.

The Evil One must turn back before the Lord Jesus. Always keep two in mind when praying:—

(1)The Satan of the Book—of great power and of great dignity.

His whole concern is regarding this earth, and regarding the race of man—that is his chief concern—not with the outer crowd but in the inner crowd—within the Church. He is subtle, powerful, but not all powerful.

(2)The Lord Jesus the Victor.

Had a running fight for 33 years from cradle to Calvary, and then Satan thought that he had won, but the third morning came, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave His life for us, was Victor, and through Him only can we be ever raised up out of death. While Satan is great, the Lord Jesus is infinitely greater.

With a whole life in touch with Jesus Christ, with a heart beating with full witnessing in His power, then we can pray "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done. Deliver us from the Evil One."

The greatest need to-day—God's greatest need—is a people who will stay where they have been placed, and keep the whole life in touch with Himself.

May there be more of these Victors.

## APPENDIX NINE

### HOW TO BIND THE STRONG MAN

(The following is a booklet by Jessie Penn-Lewis. It was published by The "Overcomer" Office, Leicester, England.)

*(Matt. xii. 29.)*

"And He was casting out a demon which was dumb. And it came to pass, when the demon was gone out, the dumb man spake; and the multitudes marvelled." (Luke xi. 14, R.V.m.)

It was upon this occasion that the Lord Jesus in answer to the charges of the Pharisees, said: "How can one enter into the house of the strong man...except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." This is not the only place where the Lord plainly described a man as a "house" or habitation of the evil one. In the same chapter He speaks of the unclean spirit cast out, and, finding no other habitation, saying, "I will return into my house," and because no other had taken his place, he is able to "enter in and dwell there" with seven others more evil than himself.

The "strong man" is Satan who possesses, or works in human beings by means of his wicked spirits. Satan is as clearly a person as the Lord Jesus Christ is a Person! The Lord Jesus Christ dwells in those He redeems by His Spirit, Who imparts to them the very life of the Son of God, thus making them children of God. In the same way the prince of darkness possesses or controls the fallen race of Adam (1 John v. 19, R.V.) The Apostle says he is "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Ephes. ii. 2), and the Apostle John emphatically says, "He that doeth sin is of the devil" (1 John iii. 8)—is a partaker of his nature; whilst James writes, "jealousy and faction...is earthly, natural, DEVILISH" (James iii. 14, 15 R.V.m.)

Satan is a prince—the head of an hierarchy of evil—ruling countries by means of his dignitaries (Dan. x), and entering into, or controlling, the fallen race of Adam by means of multitudes of wicked spirits. The margin of the R.V. gives the right word—demons.

We must clearly distinguish between Satan as "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience," and the actual inhabiting of men by spirits of evil. In the one it is the prince of the power of the air influencing and working in men through the lusts of the flesh, and of the thoughts, and in the other it is a wicked spirit—or it can be many (Matt. xii. 45)—entering in, and manifesting direct Satanic control of the man.

The Lord describes the strong man's attitude when in possession of the man. "FULLY ARMED" HE GUARDS HIS COURTS, and keeps his goods in peace (Luke xi. 21)! How true this is of all who are in the kingdom of darkness! Paul the Apostle describes one way in which the strong man guards his house, when he writes: "The god of this world hath blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel should not dawn upon them" (2 Cor. iv. 4, R.V.m.)

Until we recognize the strong man "fully armed" at the back of all darkness of thought, and blindness to the Gospel, we shall not do much toward bringing men out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And until we know how to take heed to the Lord's warning and "FIRST bind the strong man," the attempts we make to "spoil his goods" will only enrage him, and enable him to strengthen his armour, and guard his palace in peace.

But there is a "STRONGER THAN HE!" The Lord says, "When a `Stronger than he shall come upon him,' then `He taketh from him his whole armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils'" (Luke xi. 22).

There is no difficulty in recognizing the "Stronger than he!" The prophet Isaiah described Him as one with a face more marred than any man's—a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He depicts Him as a "lamb led to the slaughter," and says that "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb...He opened not His mouth." This One—a Lamb—would "divide the spoil with the `strong'..." (Isa. liii.) The "Stronger" than the strong man is the God Man manifested as the Lamb of Calvary. The Lord Christ was the "Stronger than he" before He went to Calvary! He cast out the spirits with His word. Unclean spirits fell down before Him, crying out, "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. viii. 29). But not until He went to Calvary's Cross did He make it possible to take away the "armour" whereby the strong man keeps his goods in peace. These "goods," in human beings held by the "strong man," consist among other things of a man's love of sin (John iii. 19); his enmity against the God Who loves him (Rom. viii. 7); the lusts of the flesh and of the mind (Ephes. ii. 3); the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life (1 John ii. 16).

At Calvary the Lamb laid down His life to ransom the captives of the "strong man," and through death bring to nought the works of the devil (Heb. ii. 14). He carried the sins of the sinner—the "goods"—and the sinner himself, to the Cross, so as to take away the "armour" wherein the strong man trusted. On the Cross He provides a way whereby a man's love of sin and his enmity to the God he has rebelled against can be removed through the substitutionary death of his Redeemer. There, as he moment by moment appropriates the death of Christ as the death-blow to his old man (Rom. vi. 6) the desires of the flesh and of the mind are experimentally crucified, and the love of the world, with the vainglory of earth, swept away. Yea, in His own Person the Saviour carried the sinner to the Cross with Him (Rom. vi. 6), redeeming the captive from the "strong man" and taking the "goods" out of the strong man's power!

All who thus know the way of victory through the Cross are then sent forth by the Conquering Lord to deliver other captives from their bonds; to "BIND the strong man," and then "spoil his goods"! Breathing into them the very same Spirit of the Lamb which led Him to Calvary, He says: "Behold I send you forth as lambs...I have given you AUTHORITY TO TREAD upon serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall in any wise hurt you" (Luke x. 3, 19).

Servant of the King, thou art sent forth by the Deliverer to do His works! (John xiv. 12). He bids you do what He did! "First bind the strong man" ere you point the captives to Calvary, where the strong man's armour wherein he trusts shall be taken from him.

But how? We must first see that the "strong man" has no "armour" covering us wherein he may trust, and for this we need to lay hold of the utmost deliverance from sin and Satan which the Lord wrought out on Calvary for us. Crucified with Christ we have died to sin (See Rom. vi. 1 to 13 for the fullest light on this.)—for sin is the strongest armour wherein the strong man trusts, for all sin is of the devil. "How can Satan cast out Satan?" (Mark iii. 23) said the Lord. If Satan has any hold of you, servant of Christ, you cannot deliver others from his power. Crucified with Christ we have died to sin, and died to the world lying in the evil one (1 John v. 19). But this blessed fact of faith needs carrying out in the keenest practice by constant action of the will in refusing to "let sin reign" in our "mortal bodies." To tamper with sin of any kind will quench the power of the Holy Spirit in us, by which alone we can "bind" the operations of the "strong man" around us. The believer must, therefore, make an entire cleavage with sin on the ground of Calvary (Rom. vi. 6-11), and set his choice to serve God at all costs.

As we account ourselves crucified with Christ, and constantly refuse to let sin reign, the whole armour wherein the strong man trusts is withdrawn from him. The all-conquering life of the Risen Lord can then enable us to triumph over the Adversary. Joined to Him in spirit, we are brought into vital union with the

***"STRONGER THAN HE."***

The "Stronger than he"—the Lord Christ—is then, by His Spirit, the Overcomer Who is greater in us than he that is in the world (1 John iv. 4).

It is necessary to emphasize here that the Stronger than the strong man can only manifest His power through us, as by definite faith we MAINTAIN OUR POSITION as crucified with Christ, and thus dead indeed unto sin in Him. Never is there a stage in the spiritual life where there is not the deepest need of the severing power of the Cross. We must learn how to walk in personal victory over sin and Satan at every point if we are to have the fullest victory over the powers of darkness. Any uncrucified or weak spot is a target for the enemy, and all the devices of Satan will be at work to keep us in ignorance of our true condition. Consequently, we must always be open to all truth about God, ourselves, and the powers of darkness, and then honestly face the truth made known by the Spirit of God.

Ourselves delivered out of the power of the strong man, we become liberated into real resurrection LIFE—"alive unto God" (Rom. vi. 11)—in steadfast aggressive intelligent warfare against Satan, his hosts, and his goods. To do this we must understand some foundation principles.

Firstly, it is a spirit fight, pure and simple. The powers of darkness must be met on their own ground. We may reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin," and yet give the strong man much advantage by walking after the life of nature, i.e., our own thoughts, our own interpretations, our own plans, our own energy. The natural cannot contend with the supernatural (see 2 Cor. x. 4). It may appear to do much, and the enemy will go so far as to cause apparent "fruit" if by such means he can keep us striving on a plane where the results are only exterior and bereft of spirit life.

In addition to cleavage from sin, we need also to consent to the constant separation of soul from spirit (Heb. iv. 12) in order that we may not live and act in the realm of the soul, instead of the realm of the spirit, in co-operation with the Holy Spirit—the life described as "walking after the spirit." In order to do this we should deal with God concerning our own spirit, so that we may (1) know our spirit; (2) understand the laws of the spirit—its characteristics and activities; (3) discern its delicate senses; and (4) know how to control and use it in co-working with the Holy Spirit of God.

Secondly, to carry on a perpetual warfare in the spirit, by the power of the Holy Spirit, against a spirit foe, we must set ourselves to know our enemy and discern his workings. Power to discern comes (1) by knowledge that Satan can hinder; (2) by observing the objective of the hindrances; and (3) by close observation of his methods (wiles, see Ephes. vi. 11) along this line. The devil is practical, and we must be practical. If need be, we must be willing to unlearn, and to withdraw the stakes of limitation and unworkable theory driven into the edifice of our lives, and willing to learn, through fire, the real schemes and workings of Satan and how to contest them. This is an education in the spirit, and must be as patiently mastered as any other subject. We must be content to go one step at a time, to have our minds open to all truth, and closed to all error, and use the light we have, in prayer, testimony and other aggressive service against the Powers of Darkness, otherwise the ignorance that binds us will never be dispersed (John viii. 32).

The believer should pray, "I choose, by His grace, to be open to all Truth, and to honestly face it; and I choose and I will to be closed to all error. May God unmask the wiles and deceptions of Satan, and teach me at all costs all that I need to know for effectually waging war against the powers of darkness." By so doing we place our choice and will on God's side against Satan, and the Holy Spirit never fails to make it real in experience.

"Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through Thy Name" (Luke x. 17), said the seventy when they returned to Him after being sent forth whither He Himself would come. Rapidly the Spirit-taught worker will learn to recognize the power of the enemy holding a soul in bonds (2 Tim. ii. 26). There is an indefinable something wrapped around the person, like an invisible casing, and until this is penetrated there is no live contact with conscience, affections, choice or will. Nothing but the recognition of this stern fact, that the "strong man" is by such means contesting the release of the person, gives the clue to deliverance.

Alas, it is a terrible fact that spirits of evil can fasten upon and take possession of the minds and bodies of the children of God, for there is no stage of the spiritual life where they have not their subtle devices ready for gaining a footing. The strong man's emissaries fasten on some natural weakness characteristic of the person, so that they may not be detected. A "dumb spirit" can hold one who is naturally reticent; a spirit of helplessness (Luke xiii. 15, 16) one who is weak in will or character; a spirit of oppression one who is naturally pessimistic; a spirit of bondage one who is in character scrupulous and conscientious. A spirit of murmuring can hold one who is naturally fretful, and a hasty or obstinate spirit a passionate and strong character. The command comes to the Lord's servants to "first bind the strong man" in leading children of God into full deliverance and victory over sin, as well as in dealing with those who are held in blindness and sin outside the Kingdom of God.

We need to know also HOW to "bind the strong man" as "prince of the power of the air," filling the atmosphere where the people gather to hear the gospel, or the children of God meet to pray. "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask" (Matt. xviii. 18, 19), said the Lord to His disciples. The prayer of two fused into one desire, will "bind the strong man." "One shall chase a thousand" of the hosts of evil, but two put ten thousand to flight! (Deut. xxxii. 30) Hence the "strong man's" attempts to divide the children of God, or keep them from united prayer. The spirit of division, not necessarily openly manifested, stifles aggressive prayer and blocks victory. The gospel should not be proclaimed to the unsaved—thus attacking the "house" of the "strong man"—without first by united and believing prayer binding the strong man. The evil one is present at every seed-sowing of the Word of Life so as to "snatch away" the seed immediately! (Matt. xiii. 19.) Prayer against him protects the message.

In prayer, the "binding" is done by those who pray pleading the blood of the Lamb, for it is written, "They overcame him—the cast down dragon—because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death" (Rev. xii. 9, 10, 11). The life laid down is an essential condition for all who would prove the power of the precious blood over all the power of the enemy, "binding" the operations of the "strong man," and delivering captives from his power.

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#### **Brief Hints on the**

#### **PRINCIPLES OF WARFARE.**

The whole armour on. (Ephes. vi. 10-18.)

Knowing how to watch. (Matt. xxvi. 41.)

Knowing how to DEFEND, as well as how to ATTACK: to (1) stand, (2) withstand, and (3) resist.

Fight (or pray) from principle—in cold blood, and irrespective of an apparent flow, because opposition of Powers of Darkness may account for lack of flow.

A need seen is a call to prayer; we must not wait for burdens or feelings, or we may get spurious ones.

KNOWLEDGE GOVERNS PRAYER (1 Cor. xiv. 15). Lack of knowledge means unintelligent and less effectual warfare. If there is no knowledge prayer must be made for knowledge, (or more knowledge, as the case may be).

As the warfare means great strains at times, these must be protective prayer, asking for (1) strength, (2) vision (not visions), and (3) knowledge; all for prayer.

Recognize that there is a difference between Satan and his works, temptations and wiles, the strong man and his goods, and deal with each as such.

Guard against indirect attacks of Satan—often the most violent, and often through your nearest and dearest.

Guard against (1) wrong motives, (2) indefinite prayer, (3) spasmodic prayer, (4) anxiety in prayer, (5) impatience in prayer, (6) being over-burdened in prayer (gauge your capacity), (7) fainting by the way, (8) false fighting (evil burdens, wasting strength), (9) wrong use of weapons, (10) misjudging by appearances.

We must be willing to pay the price of victory in the deliverance of others; have no preconceptions as to how God will work; watch every opportunity to co-operate with God as a means of answering our prayers; and walk softly, for great victory is a time of great danger, as the devil is then scheming to rob you of your victory.

\* Neither time, place nor season are exempt from the attacks of Satan and his host—which, in itself, is a call to arms.

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## **METHODS OF WARFARE.**

### **"First bind...then spoil..."**

Briefly: "BINDING" THE ENEMY SIMPLY MEANS STOPPING HIM FROM ACTING, THEN DESTROYING HIS WORKS.

Prayer must, therefore, be (1) destructive, (2) constructive.

Wield (1) the AUTHORITY of the NAME (Mark xvi. 17); (2) the BLOOD of the Lamb; and (3) the TESTIMONY against Satan (Rev. xii. 11), that he is conquered and must withdraw.

God's WORD must be stored in the heart. The WORD is the sword (Ephes. vi. 17), and we must become skilled to know which Scripture to use in meeting the particular assaults of the enemy, and in attacking his strongholds.

Joined to the Risen Lord we may bring into operation through prayer, the curse pronounced upon the serpent in Eden. —All on the ground of Calvary where Christ "flung off principalities and powers...triumphing over them" (Col. ii. 15).

There is the prayer of asking (John xiv. 13); interceding (Rom. viii. 26); saying (Matt. xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23-25).

Pray progressively as from the centre of a circle. Thus: 1, personal; 2, family; 3, circumstances; 4, business; 5, local; 6, world-wide (church, and the world).—All the time in each sphere against ALL the powers of darkness.

PRAY against Satan as: Liar (John viii. 44); Counterfeiter (2 Cor. xi. 14); Hinderer (1 Thes. ii. 18); Murderer (John viii. 44).

PRAY against (1) the plans of Satan, (2) the schemes of Satan and evil spirits, to prevent those in formation from materialising, and to destroy the effect of those in operation.

Stand, joined to the Risen Christ, and say: "I stand against all the wiles of the devil. I stand in every avenue of the enemy's approach—known or unknown." Then watch and what you do as an act of faith in bulk you will do in detail.

Pray against Satan holding the mind, affections, and will; and on the ground of Calvary, in the Spirit, claim the binding of the strong man; e.g., Pray: "I now claim that the strong man shall be bound on the ground of the precious BLOOD, and in the NAME of JESUS; I refuse all his plans, and may they all be destroyed."

AUDIBLE prayer is often an effectual weapon to victory.

Preaching the word with AUTHORITY, in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, is also a mighty factor in the binding of the strong man and the spoiling of his goods—co-operative with prayer.

\* There are degrees of victory. All prayer counts in the fight. To whatever measure these principles and methods are applied, according to the capacity of the believer, TO THAT DEGREE THERE WILL BE VICTORY.

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## APPENDIX TEN

### **FOUR PLANES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE**

(The following is an excerpt from Life Out of Death, a book by Jessie Penn-Lewis. It was originally published by The Overcomer Literature Trust, Parkston, Poole, Dorset, England.)

There are four planes—broadly speaking—in the spiritual life of the believer, and of the Christian worker: The first plane we may call the "evangelistic" plane; that is, the plane where the soul knows the new birth; knows that he has eternal life in Christ; where he becomes a soul winner, preaches salvation

from the penalty of sin, and is used to lead others to Christ; where the entire objective is winning souls for Christ; where he is faithful in proclaiming the gospel of salvation in Christ.

Then there is the second plane, which may be called the "revival" plane; or the stage in personal experience where the believer receives the fulness of the Holy Spirit, learns to know Him and to obey Him; to rely upon Him and to look to Him to work as he co-operates with Him, and is used to lead others into the experience of the fulness of the Spirit.

Then there is the third plane, which we may call the plane of the "path of the cross", where the believer experimentally apprehends his position in Romans 6 in fellowship with Christ's death; is brought into "conformity" to His death (Philippians 3:10); he learns the fellowship of His sufferings, and is led to walk in the path of the Cross in every detail of practical life. Here the believer is able to interpret to others the way of the Cross, and to lead others to know Romans 6 and 2 Corinthians 4:10-12 in experience.

The fourth plane is the plane of spiritual warfare. It is really the "ascension" plane, where the believer knows his union with Christ, seated with Him "far above all principality and power"; and where, in service, he is in aggressive warfare against the powers of darkness; learns to have spiritual discernment to detect the working of the devil; and learns the authority of Christ over all the power of the enemy. (Luke 10:19.)

Or to put it concisely—the first is the plane of salvation, or the new life; the second is the plane of the Spirit; the third is the plane of victory over sin; the fourth is the plane of victory over the powers of darkness.

The individual believer, if he goes forward in the Christian life with God, is generally—not always—led just in this order also. First, he receives salvation; second, he receives the Holy Ghost; third he is led along the path of the Cross; fourth, he walks in the path of conflict and victory, resulting in "power" over all the power of the enemy. The individual worker, also, finds he is used in these four planes of service. First, he is used to lead others to Christ; second, he is used to lead them into the fulness of the Spirit; third, he is used to interpret to them the path of the Cross; and fourth, to discern the devices and workings of the devil, and to have power over "all the power of the enemy", through union with Christ on the throne.

Madame Guyon truly says that in every plane of the spiritual life there is a beginning, working out, and a consummation of the life in that degree, followed by a passage into the next plane, where there is again a beginning, a working out, a consummation. In each plane you appear to learn the very same lessons over again, but they are all being learned in a deeper degree. For instance, in the first plane you learn the way of faith in Christ as Saviour, and then you have to learn to exercise faith again in the next plane, and again in the next. It is just as hard to learn the lesson of bare faith in the fourth plane as in the first, and yet, as you look back, you can see the hard lessons of the first plane are now quite simple and easy.

Further, it is true that, speaking generally, it often takes years to get through each plane! When you pass into a new plane of the spiritual life, it is often with some great conscious "blessing". A God-given experience of fulness in Christ, which may be described as a "taste" of what God has for you in that plane in its consummation. For instance, you get a revelation of the ascension life, seated with Christ in the heavenly places, and the joy and light of it is so real, that you think you will never come down again to the lower planes you now leave behind you, but in a brief while of weeks, or months, the "conscious" blessing—lasting according to the extent of the revelation and its power—apparently disappears, and

you perhaps struggle to regain what you think you have lost. Now you have to fight by bare faith, to hold the ground you have taken. Then follows what may be called a "tunnel" experience, when you go through test upon test; in which, perhaps, you may think you fail, but through all you find there is advancement, and final emergence into the full consummation of that specific plane of the spiritual life, where you understand the way of abiding; for in the working into you of that life by the "tunnel" experience, God has removed what stands in the way of the permanent abiding in that stage of the knowledge of Him. (See Romans 5:2-5, A.V. and R.V.)

But let us remember, if God gives you a message which He means you to take hold of, He holds you, even when you appear to lose it. His Word given to you lays hold of you. That word has divine life and energy in it, and it can grip you, and hold you to it. God requires your co-operation, of course, and you must actively take the word by faith; but the power is in the Word itself when God has spoken it to you. If the Lord has given you the word "power over the power of the enemy", you have to co-operate by saying in response, "I choose and accept it, Lord, but I have no power to hold it; the Word must hold me."

And in truth you often apparently lose it, so that it goes right away from you, but if you go on steadily in bare faith, you come at last through the tunnel working of God, to the consummation point, and then what looked like a literal impossibility to you when God gave you the light, you find has been wrought into you as part of your very life; assimilated and incorporated into your spiritual being.

When a believer has pressed on with God faithfully from plane to plane, and has reached the sphere of warfare and victory over the powers of the air, then he should be able to lead others into any of the degrees of blessing they need; but, usually, when the soul is in a certain stage, and not arrived at its full consummation, he can only help others in the same stage, speaking out of his present light and experience. It is not until the consummation point is reached that the believer has liberty and facility in dealing with others in planes which he himself has left behind. In the transitional stage of each plane, you can only give the vision you have, so that your ministry seems limited to those who are at the same stage. You interpret to them what you, and they, are experiencing. But when you are through that plane, it seems as if you are able to minister to souls at any degree as they may need it.

Therefore you must never be disturbed if any one says that your "message" did not help them at all, or possibly your message was "above their heads". The fact is, you were obliged to give it, for you were not free enough for anything else, and you ministered only to a certain number of souls who could be helped by that message.

What about others, you ask? Remember you cannot meet the needs of all until you have passed through the stages of all. A worker needs to be very matured in the spiritual life to have light and truth for "all saints", just as Paul had, and the other apostles.

When the believer has passed through these "planes"—a matter of years, more or less—and he reaches the plane of power over the forces of darkness, in its fullest degree, then he is in the "apostolic" stage, with sufficient facility, and equipment, and knowledge, and liberty, from his own experience of the Word of Righteousness (Hebrews 5:13), to be able to handle the Word of God as a steward, and to minister it to others at their various degrees. When you become matured and ripened, then you do not speak from what you yourself are at the moment experiencing, but you are able to use the Scripture of truth as an armoury, and be "furnished completely" for every good work, able to wield, or apply the Word of God to each soul. This is real equipment, and ripeness of maturity, and fitness for service in the power of the Holy Ghost.

What is also needed is that Christians should know that the victory of Calvary over the powers of darkness is required to be apprehended by them in every stage of the spiritual life, and every plane of experience. (1) The evangelist needs to know it, because to win souls to Christ, he must learn how to bind the devil holding souls, and therefore the truth of victory over the powers of darkness as declared in the Word of God, is part of the evangelist's armour and equipment. (2) Those who receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit need to know the victory over the powers of darkness, so as to be able to detect the counterfeits, and to refuse them. (3) Those who go on in the path of the Cross equally need to know the devices of the deceiving spirits, because they will interfere with them at every step onward in their knowledge of the Cross, and try to mix their workings with the work of God in every degree. In fact, the truths about the powers of darkness need to be known in every plane, and at each stage of the spiritual life, according to the measure and need.

But the urgent work to be done now is to meet the need of the advanced ranks of the Church of Christ. Those who can, "by reason of use", exercise their spiritual senses, and are able to "eat" and assimilate the "solid food" which is for those of full age; as well as to give the same spiritual food in "milk" form to the babes, so that they may grow.

In helping others, if you find that believers do not understand the meaning of the prayer-warfare, you should ask them if they know anything about the Cross, and the position of death with Christ, according to Romans 6; for they must know the death to sin, and to the world, before they can understand the spiritual warfare. If they do not know the power of the Cross, you must go further back, and ask them if they know the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, for the power to know experimentally the fellowship of Christ's death is given by the Holy Spirit. If they do not know the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you must go further back still, and ask them if they possess the new life in Christ at all. How can a soul receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit, if it does not know Christ as a Saviour, and is not born from above into the kingdom of Christ? We must as workers be able to lead souls back from point to point to the place of need, and recognize the four grades, or planes, of growth in dealing with them.

For these who already know the Baptism of the Spirit, and the path of the Cross, the pressing need is light on the warfare with Satan; but another need on a wider scale is the experimental knowledge of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, for a vast number of believers do not know this, and the two-fold aspect of the Cross: therefore they cannot understand what we mean by "warfare" and the need of the discerning of spirits. It is not enough to proclaim victory over the powers of darkness, you must lead the children of God to know the Cross in its relation to believers. The warfare of Ephesians 6 is a spiritual warfare, and only through the death of the Cross is the believer brought into the spiritual realm, and the conflict there.

Many Christians are perplexed over receiving the Holy Spirit because they think they only have the proof of having done so, if they have manifestations of His presence: so on this subject many questions arise. The Scriptures make it clear that you receive Him by faith (Galatians 3:2, 3), but there is a succeeding work to be done in real surrender to obey Him, and the putting of all obstacles out of the way of His fullest working; the hindrances must be removed to His working through the believer, and the wrong things in the life put away, as revealed progressively by Him.

When does the special need of light on the powers of darkness and their workings now come in? All over the world there are large numbers of believers definitely and clearly preaching full assurance of salvation in Christ. Then there are an increasing number of believers who really know the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and are in the "Revival" plane, or the plane of knowing the Holy Spirit, and co-working

with Him. Again there are others—a smaller company—knowing the Holy Spirit, who have really pressed on in the power of the Spirit to follow the Lamb of Calvary in the path of the Cross.

Now speaking generally, these last-named believers are blocked, because they have no glimmer of anything beyond this. They have thought that they have simply to go on to the end in the path of the Cross—in the Spirit of the Lamb. Meanwhile the powers of darkness have been coming in like a flood to the Church of Christ, blocking and hindering the work of God on every side. The message needed by these souls who know the fellowship of the Cross—or the crucified life—is the knowledge of the aggressive war upon the powers of darkness. The call to these is, "Arise, in the new life of Christ, and in the equipment of the Holy Ghost—whom you have already known to lead you unto death—and lay hold of the Victory of Christ, and take the aggressive against the foe." Having died to the old fleshly life of activity—the soulish life energy—having died to the world, and become separated unto Christ; these are the souls who need to see their union with Christ in the ascension life, and His authority over all the power of the enemy.

Here we must point out a cause of danger in the life of many who know the path of the Cross. They have learned the power of the Holy Ghost, and the path of the Cross; they have understood that they were to "follow the Lamb"; to submit to the will of God; and they have followed on in that path faithfully, until now they may have unknowingly gone on a point too far. Their "surrender" may have become "passivity"—i.e., a passive condition of mind, and sometimes of all their faculties—which is not according to God. Having ceased to "resist" in the "flesh" they have sunk into a passive submission to all things around them, not only to the "will of God", but to the will of Satan, and failed in their attitude of resistance "in the spirit" to the spiritual foe. Their surrender to "the will of God" became, or has become unconsciously, a passive-submission to Satan. There has undoubtedly come upon the Church a heavy pressure of the powers of darkness, and many souls who know the Cross are failing to detect between the "will of God" and the "will of Satan"; and they are presenting no resistance, and no solid front against the adversary and his hosts. Surrender to God has lapsed into "passivity", or passive endurance of everything. They have only the view of the Lamb, and not the LION-LAMB—the Lamb who submits to death, but not the LION-LAMB who triumphs over the devil.

These souls must arise out of their passive condition, and in the power of the Spirit go forward into aggressive warfare against the powers of darkness. They must use their renewed will in active co-operation with God. They must take the aggressive with victory-prayer against every hindrance that the devil puts in their way. They should march forward claiming the victory of the Cross over all the power of the enemy. These are the souls who, because of their baptism into death, and consequent cessation of fleshly and soulish energy, may receive, or "take", and exercise the "gifts of the Spirit". Whatever gift is necessary for their service in this warfare, they may take as part of the provided equipment of the Spirit for this hour of need. Note also that souls in each plane can help and lead others in the plane behind them, but they cannot push any one forward into the plane before them, nor fully understand or "judge" others in the plane ahead of them. In the path ahead there are conditions, realms of knowledge, points of danger, only known to those in that degree, and unseen and not understood by souls in earlier degrees. The enemy knows this, and oft-times pushes a "babe" in the second plane to resist truths only understood further on. Yet the truths suited to planes three and four must be spoken for those who need them. Lastly, let it be distinctly stated that the description of these degrees in the spiritual life of a believer is given from the experimental, or "subjective" aspect, and not from the judicial or positional side of truth, wherein a "babe in Christ" may be said to be as "complete in Him" from the moment of conversion, as at the end of life. A child grows from the baby-stage, degree after degree, into manhood. (Philippians 3:13, 14.)