

The *Everlasting*
GOSPEL in
PETER'S *Ladder*

by Dr. E. O. Douglin



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PETER'S *Ladder*

Dr. Elliot Douglin

Truth for the Final Generation

P.O. Box 725

Bridgetown, Barbados, W.I.

Tel (246) 421-7297

Tel/Fax (246) 421-7790

email: info@tffgbarbados.com

Visit us on the web at <http://www.tffgbarbados.com>

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Cover design, book design and layout by Shammal Jordan.

Email: shammaljordan@hotmail.com Tel: (246)-242-4616

Preface

Our 2016 camp book deals with practical Christian living, working out what the Holy Spirit works in, all by faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to climb each round of the ladder and as we do so we have the assurances that as we add the Holy Spirit multiplies. God guarantees progressive growth to the “ear” by the Early Rain of the Holy Spirit and then to the “full corn in the ear” by the Latter Rain. We are to claim His promises and climb to victory by abiding in Christ.

Another year has passed, another camp meeting has arrived. We are nearing the Final Crisis. By God’s grace let us add to faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly affection and Agape Love!

We wish you all a wonderful 2016 Camp Meeting and the glorious growth experience in climbing Peter’s Ladder.

E. D. Hughes

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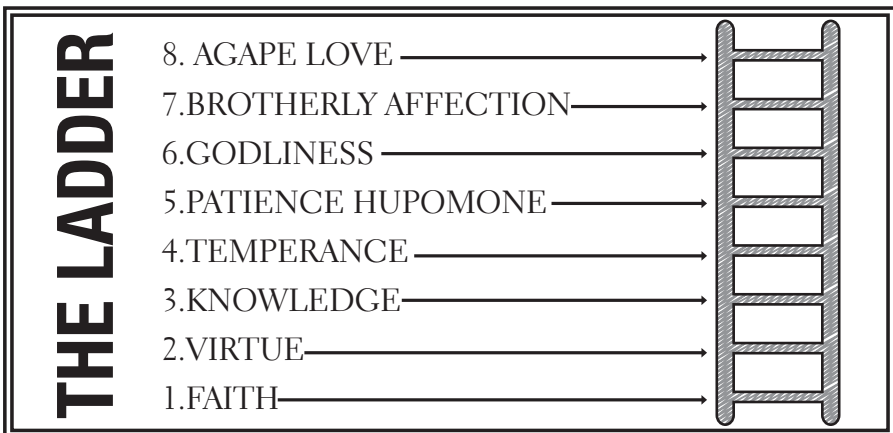
CHAPTER 1

Introducing Peter's Ladder

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. {2 Peter 1: 5- 7} KJV

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge; 6 to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness; 7 to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love. {2 Peter 1: 5- 7} NET



GIFTS

These 8 rounds or steps of the ladder, these 8 components of spiritual growth, are all gifts.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: {2 Peter 1: 3} KJV

What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? {Romans 8: 31- 32} KJV

ALL IN THE WORD OF GOD

- All that God gives us is in His word
- We receive His gifts by receiving His word
- *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. {2 Peter 1: 4} KJV*
- *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life. {John 6: 63} KJV*

ADDING AND BUILDING

Although these 8 components are 8 gifts we are told to diligently add each to our character building.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” {AA 529.3}

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God,

looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. {Jude 20- 21} KJV

FREE MORAL AGENTS, NOT ROBOTS

Someone may ask: why should we build by adding?

The answer is: God made us free intelligences not robots.

Our free choice and our cooperation with the Godhead are necessary for character development and spiritual growth.

MULTIPLYING

Christian character perfection was completely and victoriously worked out for us by the Father in our saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit reproduces Christ's character in the born-again believer. This requires our free choice and cooperation.

As we cooperate by adding, the Holy Spirit multiplies each addition by grace and peace through the knowledge of the Father and the Son until we are filled with all the fullness of God!

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, {2 Peter 1: 2} KJV

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. {Ephesians 3: 19} KJV

HOW TO ADD

Jesus knew that of yourself you could not obey God's law; for you were sold under sin; therefore he came to our world to bring to you moral power, that through faith in his name you might live.

He brings his divine power to combine with your human efforts, that through his righteousness appropriated to yourself, you can keep his law. Our liberty was procured by Christ, by his spotless, meritorious life and death. We receive the righteousness of Christ, and through his merits enjoy liberty, and are identified with him. We have the promise that if we abide in him, and his words abide in us, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. Is it indeed possible that Christ

may abide in us, and we in him? Christ says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Would he tempt us and deceive us?--No, indeed. There is everything to encourage any soul who by faith claims the promises that God has given us, for through his grace we may be overcomers. The law cannot lower the standard or take less than its full demands, therefore it cannot cleanse us from one sin; but God's Son, who is one with the Father, equal in authority with the Father, paid the debt for us. We are to add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. You are not to think that you must wait until you have perfected one grace, before cultivating another. No; they are to grow up together, fed continually from the fountain of charity; every day that you live, you can be perfecting the blessed attributes fully revealed in the character of Christ; and when you do this, you will bring light, love, peace, and joy into your homes. {RH, July 29, 1890 par. 8}

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

The 8 building blocks, also called 8 graces, develop together:

There is simultaneous as well as consecutive development of the 8 graces.

All of this means that there is exponential growth because, as we add the Holy Spirit multiplies!

THE MYSTERY OF GROWTH

Faith is the first grace or first round of the ladder mentioned in 2 Peter 1: 5- 7. Agape love is the 8th or last and yet, faith works by love to ensure the progressive development of character.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. {Galatians 5: 6} KJV

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; {1 Thessalonians 1: 3} KJV

Furthermore, there is a mysterious inter-relationship between faith and knowledge. Faith comes from knowledge of the word and a true knowledge of the word deepens the faith.

So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. {Romans 10: 17} KJV

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. {Hebrews 11: 3} KJV

A MATHEMATICAL ILLUSTRATION OF EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

Adding

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Multiplying

2, 4, 12, 48, 240, 1440, 10080, 80640

ANOTHER MATHEMATICAL ILLUSTRATION

Faith working by love: 1×8

When faith is raised in quantity from 1 to 8, this is how consecutive multiplication would look:

8, 16, 48, 192, 960, 5760, 40320, 322560

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what [is] the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. {Ephesians 3: 17- 21} KJV

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is a progressive work. The successive steps are set before us in the words of Peter:

“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity ;”“for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Here is a course by which we may be assured that we shall never fall. Those who are thus working upon the plan of addition in obtaining the Christian graces, have the assurance that God will work upon the plan of multiplication in granting them the gifts of his Spirit. Peter addresses those who have obtained like precious faith with us: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” By divine grace, all who will may climb the shining steps from earth to Heaven, and at last, “with songs and everlasting joy,” enter through the gates into the city of God. {R.H. May 3rd, 1881}

CONSTANT GROWTH

Our Saviour claims all there is of us; he asks our first and holiest thoughts, our purest and most intense affection. If we are indeed partakers of the divine nature, his praise will be continually in our hearts and upon our lips. Our only safety is to surrender our all to him, and to be constantly growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. {R.H. May 3rd, 1881}

THE KEY NOTE OF VICTORY

In the second letter addressed by Peter to those who had obtained “like precious faith” with himself, the apostle sets forth the divine plan for the development of Christian character. He writes:--

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

These words are full of instruction, and strike the key-note of victory. The apostle presents before the believers the ladder of Christian perfection, every step of which represents continual advancement in the knowledge of God, and in the climbing of which there is to be no standstill. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of the ladder. We are saved by climbing round after round, mounting step after step, to the height of Christ’s ideal for us. Thus he is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. {RH, September 19, 1912 par. 4}

PRACTICAL LESSONS IN GROWTH

The plants and flowers grow not by their own care or anxiety or effort, but by receiving that which God has furnished to minister to their life. The child cannot, by any anxiety or power of its own, add to its stature. No more can you, by anxiety or effort of yourself, secure spiritual growth. The plant, the child, grows by receiving from its surroundings that which ministers to its life --air, sunshine, and food. What these gifts of nature are to animal and plant, such is Christ to those who trust in Him. He is their “everlasting light,” “a sun and shield.” Isaiah 60:19; Psalm 84:11. He shall be as “the dew unto Israel.” “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.” Hosea 14:5; Psalm 72:6. He is the living water, “the Bread of God . . . which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” John 6:33.

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

As the flower turns to the sun, that the bright beams may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that heaven's light may shine upon us, that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ.

Jesus teaches the same thing when He says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. . . . Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:4, 5. You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness. Apart from Him you have no life. You have no power to resist temptation or to grow in grace and holiness. Abiding in Him, you may flourish. Drawing your life from Him, you will not wither nor be fruitless. You will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. {SC 68.3}

Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness,--all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly,--by abiding in Him, --that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. David says, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalm 16:8. {SC 69.1}

CHAPTER 2

Peter's Ladder & the Harvest Principle of Mark 4: 26- 29

THE HARVEST PRINCIPLE

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.
{Mark 4: 26- 29} KJV

THE EAR

The stage of growth called the ear represents that permanence of surrender in which the soul temple is emptied of all defilement, emptied of self, so that only God is manifested.

May the Lord help his people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.
{R.H. July 20th, 1886}

EARLY AND LATTER RAIN

Growth from blade to ear is early growth under the supervision of the early rain of the Holy Spirit.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

Which round of Peter's ladder corresponds to the ear of the harvest parable?

To answer this question let us look at the ladder again.

THE 8 ROUNDS OF THE LADDER IN THE KJV

Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance (the first 4 rounds).

Then comes patience (the fifth).

Then the last 3 rounds of the ladder:

- Godliness
- Brotherly affection
- Charity (love)

The word translated patience is the Greek word HUPOMONE. HUPOMONE is the noun from the verb HUPOMENO which means:

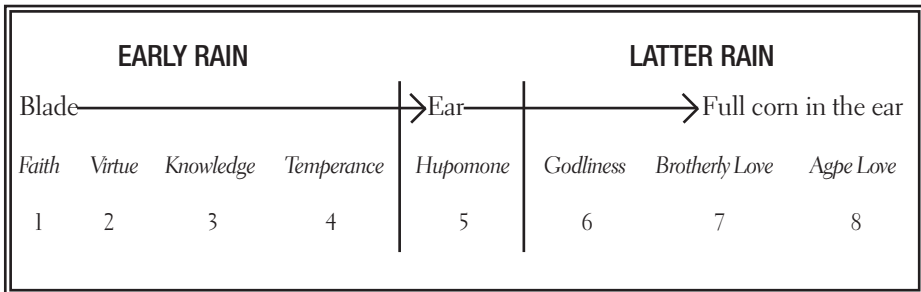
To remain under

Other translations use words like endurance or perseverance.

THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

The fifth round of Peter's ladder (2 Peter 1: 5- 7) equals the "ear" in the harvest parable of Jesus (Mark 4: 26- 29).

Hupomone means staying under, that is, that permanence of surrender in



which the soul is emptied of self and of every defilement!

OTHER USAGES OF HUPOMONE IN SCRIPTURE

Hupomone means literally to remain under, to remain surrendered to God, in the abiding relationship with Christ under all circumstances.

It is absolutely necessary for the production of “harvest ripe fruit”.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep [it], and bring forth fruit with patience(hupomone). {Luke 8: 15} KJV

Hupomone (translated patience in KJV), is necessary for the final crisis.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience(hupomone), that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. {Hebrews 10: 35- 36} KJV

In your patience(hupomone) possess ye your souls. {Luke 21: 19} KJV

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient(hupomone) waiting for Christ. {2 Thessalonians 3: 5} KJV

Hupomone will be a defining characteristic of the end-time remnant people of God in the final crisis.

...Here is the patience(hupomone)and the faith of the saints. {Revelation 13: 10} KJV

Here is the patience(hupomone) of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. {Revelation 14: 12} KJV

Tribulation (adversity) gives a thorough working out for the development of hupomone.

And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience(hupomone); {Romans 5: 3} KJV

And Hupomone provides a tried and tested character experience.

And patience(hupomone), experience; and experience, hope:
{Romans 5: 4} KJV

Let us read Romans 5: 3- 5 from a modern translation.

Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance(hupomone), and endurance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.{Romans 5: 3- 5} NEB.

THE FOUNDATION FOR HUPOMONE IN PETER'S LADDER.

There are 4 character building blocks in the ladder which must be developed (simultaneously and consecutively) to a critical level before hupomone can be experienced.

These are the first four rounds of Peter's Ladder:

- Faith
- Virtue
- Knowledge
- Temperance

These are built in by the Early Rain of the Holy Spirit.

OUR DUTY AS CHRISTIANS

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Do not trust in your own strength. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Do we make the preparation which it is our privilege that we may be able to stand against the enemy? Do we realize the sacred character of God's work and the necessity of watching for souls as they that must give an account? We must be vigilant, "knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.'

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

These promises are the assurance that through the influence of the Holy Spirit we are strengthened to become like God in character. By beholding His purity and holiness, we become partakers of His nature, overcoming the selfishness of the natural heart. There is a power in truth that will always work if the human agent will heartily co-operate, allowing himself to be brought by faith into captivity to Jesus Christ. The Saviour’s virtues and excellencies then become the savor of the whole being.

“And besides this,” the apostle continues, “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”

This is not a surface work. It means a clear understanding of spiritual things, and a genuine sense of the practical working of the Holy Spirit upon mind and heart. “He that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” But “if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Through the application of the truths of the Gospel, men become laborers together with God. But those who while claiming to believe the Bible fail to practise the truth it contains, are blind and can not see afar off. This is why so many men and women live at cross-purposes with God. They do not live and work upon the Gospel plan of addition. Their religious experience is dwarfed.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for

so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

A mere creed, tho every jot and tittle of it may be sound, is not enough to restore in man the moral image of God. An ancestral faith, however tenaciously held, can not correct the evils of the natural heart. It is the willing mind, the earnest spirit, the hearty, self-denying efforts, imbued with love to God and man, which bring results approved by God. The whole heart must be given to God, else we shall fail to love Him supremely, and then, necessarily, we shall fail to love our neighbor as ourselves. We can not obey the law unless it is written on the heart. Only the truth as it is in Jesus can illuminate the soul, enabling us to do good and only good to those with whom we are associated. {S.T. September 12th, 1900}

PRINCIPLES OF GROWTH

Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. {Matthew 5: 6} **KJV**

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord. {2 Corinthians 3: 18} **KJV**

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” The sense of unworthiness will lead the heart to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and this desire will not be disappointed. Those who make room in their hearts for Jesus will realize His love. All who long to bear the likeness of the character of God shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” {D.A. page 302}

PRACTICE PETER'S INSTRUCTION

No man can have a sound, healthful experience unless he shall practice the instruction that Christ has given through the apostle Peter: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

To be converted daily is to renew the soul's life by receiving vital power from Christ, as the branch receives nourishment from the vine. The growth of every Christian is from within, not from without. It is only as the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart by faith that we can grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ. Only through the grace daily drawn from Jesus can the heart be kept. There can be no safety in extolling self; we must hide self in Jesus. Christ abiding within, is the life of the soul. And we are to receive Christ through his word. It is the truth that sanctifies the soul. We should study the Scriptures, even upon our knees, with earnestness and sincerity. The love of Jesus in the heart will create a love for the searching of his word.

The work of every child of God is to impart the knowledge of Christ to those who have it not. We must plant the seeds of truth wherever we can. The words of eternal life, sown in many hearts, will bring forth fruit unto righteousness. The heavenly intelligencies are waiting for God's human agencies to consecrate themselves fully to him, that he may use them as channels of light. We need to realize our responsibility, to co-operate with the heavenly agencies. We belong to God; he has purchased us with the blood of his only begotten Son; we are to represent to the world what Christ is to us. {R.H. February 16th, 1892}

CHAPTER 3

Peter's Ladder & Paul's Lists

The Apostle Paul in his Epistles has written down a number of lists of the components of advanced spiritual character under various topics.

These lists are:

1. The components of Agape Love 1 Corinthians 13: 4- 8
2. The Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5: 22- 23
3. The Christian's armour Ephesians 6: 13- 18
4. The "putting on" or "clothing" list Colossians 3: 12- 16

AGAPE LOVE

Charity suffereth long, [and] is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away. {1 Corinthians 13: 4- 8} KJV

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But if there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be set aside. {1 Corinthians 13: 4- 8} NEV

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: 4- 8 gives a wonderfully inspired analysis of this divine love. Paul describes the divine eternal components of divine eternal love as follows:-

1 Corinthians 13,

Verse 4: Love suffereth long	Patience
And is kind;	Kindness
Love envieth not	Generosity
Love vaunteth not	
Itself, is not puffed up	Humility

Verse 5: Doth not behave itself

Unseemly,	Courtesy & Politeness
Seeketh not her own,	Selflessness (Unselfishness)
Is not easily provoked	Good Tempered (self-control)
Thinketh no evil	Guileless (never assumes that others are bad)

Verse 6: Rejoiceth not in iniquity

But rejoiceth in the truth	Truthfulness
----------------------------	--------------

Verse 7: Beareth all things,	Perseverance
Believeth all things,	Faith
Hopeth all things,	Hope
Endureth all things	Endurance
Verse 8: Love never faileth	Eternal Perfection

Fifteen characteristics are mentioned, $8 + 7 = 15$.

8 = the number of victory

7 = the number of completeness

Love is victoriously complete and completely victorious; all conquering!

All of the above is really a description of the character of God for God is *love*!

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
{Galatians 5: 22- 23} KJV

Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness self-control. (Emphatic Diaglott)

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: {Ephesians 6: 10- 17} KJV

The Armour

1. Truth- Belt
2. Righteousness- Breastplate
3. Gospel of peace- Footwear
4. Faith- Shield
5. Salvation- Helmet
6. Word of God- Sword of the Spirit
7. Prayer and Watching

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive others. And to all these virtues add love, which is the perfect bond. Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart (for you were in fact called as one body to this peace), and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God.
{Colossians 3: 12- 16} NET

THE "PUTTING ON" LIST (KJV) OR THE CHRISTIAN'S CLOTHING (NET)

1. Compassion (Bowels of Mercies)
2. Kindness
3. Humility
4. Gentleness (Meekness)
5. Patience (Longsuffering)
6. Tolerance (Forbearing one another)
7. Forgiveness
8. Agape Love (The bond of perfect unity)
9. Peace (To rule or guide in all decisions)
10. Gratitude (Be thankful)
11. Christ's Message in our Hearts
12. Teach and Instruct and Sing!

OUR SPIRITUAL UNIFORM

To successfully climb the ladder of sanctification (Peter's Ladder), we must be clothed with (or have on) the list of Colossians 3: 12- 16. This is our spiritual uniform. As we climb the ladder, each component of the uniform is strengthened and developed and helps us in our upward climb.

KEEP YOUR GARMENTS

We must keep on our clothing, our spiritual uniform, our garments.

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. {Revelation 16: 15} KJV

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. {Revelation 19: 7- 8} KJV

By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.

The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.

But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18.

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {C.O.L. page 310-1}

COMPLETE ARMOUR ESSENTIAL

As we climb the ladder in our uniform, Satan will attack us and try to make us fall off.

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, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. {1 Peter 5: 8- 9} KJV

That is why we need the whole armour of God in order to withstand Satan's attacks.

We must put on every piece of the armor, and then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as his soldiers. Let us fight bravely for him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, he will help you by his Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life. {Y.I. September 12th, 1901}

Do we have on the heavenly armour?

- Are we wearing the Belt of Truth?
- Do we have on the Breastplate of Righteousness?
- Do we have on the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace?
- Are we carrying the Shield of Faith?
- Do we have the Helmet of Salvation on our heads?
- Do we have the Sword of God's Word?
- Are we Watching and Praying?

Do not think that Satan is not doing anything. Do not think that his army is passive. He and his agencies are on the ground today. We

are to put on the whole armor of God. Having done all, we are to stand, meeting principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. And if we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us. I have the assurance of God that thus it will be. {R.H. May 25th, 1905}

SUCCESSFUL CLIMBING

Successful climbing of Peter's ladder requires:-

1. That we are clothed with the spiritual uniform of Colossians 3: 12- 16.
2. That we have on the whole armour of God Ephesians 6: 11- 18.
3. That we keep our spiritual eyes focused on Jesus 2 Corinthians 3: 18.
4. In other words we must abide in Christ and Christ must abide in us. John 15: 4.

The climbing actually builds up and strengthens both the uniform and the armour. At the same time, the uniform and armour ensure successful climbing and remember it is all in Christ!

CLOSING GEM

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His

righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end. {D.A. page 324}

CHAPTER 4

The Ladder's Foundation

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. {2 Peter 1: 1-4} KJV

THE KEYNOTE OF VICTORY

The Keynote of Victory.--The first chapter of Second Peter is full of instruction, and strikes the keynote of victory. The truth is impressively forced upon the mind by the way it is presented in this chapter. Let us more abundantly recommend the study of these words, and the practicing of these precepts (Letter 43, 1895). {7 B.C.}

NO STANDSTILL IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

What a grand theme this is for contemplation--the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Contemplating Christ and

His righteousness leaves no room for self-righteousness, for the glorifying of self. In this chapter there is no standstill. There is continual advancement in every stage of the knowledge of Christ (Letter 43, 1895). {7 B.C.}

HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN US ALL THINGS

Each person must obtain an experience for himself. No one can depend for salvation on the experience or practice of any other man. We must each become acquainted with Christ in order properly to represent him to the world. "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." None of us need excuse our hasty temper, our misshapen characters, our selfishness, envy, jealousy, or any impurity of soul, body, or spirit. God has called us to glory and virtue. We are to obey the call. {R.H. April 24th, 1900}

GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." How can we escape the power of one who was once an exalted angel in the heavenly courts? He was a being full of beauty and personal charm, blessed with a powerful intellect. Because of his exaltation he thought himself equal with God. He rebelled against his Creator, and by his rebellion he led astray some of the heavenly angels. With these he was cast out of heaven, and then he set up a kingdom of his own, determined that he would allure the world to his apostate banner. How can we discern his false theories and resist his temptations? -Only through the individual experience gained by receiving a knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Without divine aid we could not possibly escape the temptations and snares that Satan has prepared to deceive human minds.

In his prayer to the Father, Christ said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." We must learn of Christ. We must know what he is to those he has ransomed. We must realize that through belief in him it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape

the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. Christ is the sin-bearer; John pointed the people to him, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And Paul declared. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Christ says to us, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." We are ever to learn of Christ. Yoked up with him in perfect restraint, we are to be learners during our whole lifetime. Then we are indeed "laborers together with God." We can be acceptable teachers only as we learn Christ's meekness and lowliness. Constantly we must learn more and more regarding these attributes. As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of his nature, we co-operate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus. The Saviour declares, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." In him there is inexhaustible fullness. As we follow on to know the Lord, we shall lead souls to the living word. With us they will know that his going forth is prepared as the morning. {R.H. April 24th, 1900}

CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE LADDER

Faith, the first round of the ladder, is grounded in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: {Philippians 3: 9} KJV

From Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, have been granted a faith just as precious as ours. {2 Peter 1: 1} NET

Peter also highlights the importance of the knowledge of God. Grace and peace are multiplied unto us through the knowledge of God. God's divine power has given us all things through the knowledge of God revealed by Jesus our Saviour.

In 2 Peter 1: 4, there is also mention of the new covenant promises by which we partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through the lust of selfishness. And all the promises of God are yes in Jesus Christ.

For every one of God's promises are "Yes" in him; therefore also through him the "Amen" is spoken, to the glory we give to God. {2 Corinthians 1: 20} NET

When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate it as ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." The word does not say that we are to count it all joy when we fall under temptation, but when we fall into temptation. It is not necessary to fall under temptation; for temptation comes upon us for the trying of our faith. And the trying of our faith worketh patience, not fretfulness and murmuring. If we put our trust in Jesus, he will keep us at all times, and will be our strength and shield. We are to learn valuable lessons from our trials. Paul says, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

If all could appreciate this great blessing, what an advantage it would be to them! We can obtain like precious faith with Peter and those who were his companions, only through one source,-- the righteousness of Christ, who as a sin-bearer stood at the head of humanity, overcoming in our behalf, that we might overcome in his strength. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

If man could appreciate this great blessing, what an advantage it would be to him! He is given the privilege of being a laborer together with God in the saving of his soul. Receiving and believing is his part of the contract. He is to receive Christ as his personal Saviour, and is to continue to believe in him. This means abiding in Christ, showing in him, at all times and under all circumstances, a faith that is a representation of his character--a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul from all defilement. Christ is the author of this faith, and he demands that it be constantly exercised. Thus we receive a continuous supply of grace.

Each person must obtain an experience for himself. No one can depend for salvation on the experience or practice of any other man. We must each become acquainted with Christ in order properly to represent him to the world. “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” None of us need excuse our hasty temper, our misshapen characters, our selfishness, envy, jealousy, or any impurity of soul, body, or spirit. God has called us to glory and virtue. We are to obey the call.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” How can we escape the power of one who was once an exalted angel in the heavenly courts? He was a being full of beauty and personal charm, blessed with a powerful intellect. Because of his exaltation he thought

himself equal with God. He rebelled against his Creator, and by his rebellion he led astray some of the heavenly angels. With these he was cast out of heaven, and then he set up a kingdom of his own, determined that he would allure the world to his apostate banner. How can we discern his false theories and resist his temptations? -Only through the individual experience gained by receiving a knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Without divine aid we could not possibly escape the temptations and snares that Satan has prepared to deceive human minds.

In his prayer to the Father, Christ said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." We must learn of Christ. We must know what he is to those he has ransomed. We must realize that through belief in him it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. Christ is the sin-bearer; John pointed the people to him, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And Paul declared. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." {R.H. April 24th, 1900}

CHAPTER 5

Faith: the Foundation of the Ladder Part One

Faith is the foundation as well as the first round of Peter's Ladder.

DEFINITIONS:

There are two 2 distinct, though inseparable, meanings of faith:

Firstly: Faith can mean belief in a body or system of doctrines. This is faith as a body of belief.

EXAMPLES:

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. {Acts 16: 5} KJV

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. {Jude 3} KJV

But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. {Galatians 1: 23} KJV

This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; {Titus 1: 13} KJV

Secondly: Faith can mean trust in God and belief in His promises.

EXAMPLES:

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. {Romans 4: 20-21} KJV

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. {Proverbs 3: 5- 6} KJV

Blessed [is] the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. {Jeremiah 17: 7} KJV

THE CLASSICAL DEFINITION

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. {Hebrews 11: 1} KJV

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. {Hebrews 11: 3} KJV

THE PRACTICAL DEFINITION

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this [man], Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth [it]. When Jesus heard [it], he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. {Matthew 8: 5- 10} KJV

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

word of God!

THE SOURCE OF FAITH

First let us consider the history of our fall in (the first) Adam.

Adam was created perfect and sinless in nature and innocent in character. The creator gave Adam the Gift of Faith.

But Adam failed to exercise his faith when faced with the one and only test where he had to exercise his choice for or against God's government. As a result, mankind was sold out to Satan's government and faith in God was lost.

Humanity would have remained devoid or empty of faith in God were it not but for the plan of redemption which was instituted immediately at Adam's fall and ratified at Calvary's Cross.

In and through Jesus Christ, the second Adam, God has again given the gift of faith to corporate humanity, to all mankind.

The gift of faith is received by the individual sinner through the Word of God.

*So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
{Romans 10: 17} KJV*

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. {John 20: 31} KJV

Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. While drawing the sinner to Christ, the Holy Spirit imparts a measure of faith.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. {John 6: 44} KJV

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. {Revelation 22: 17} KJV

FAITH IS BORN OF LOVE

Faith is born of love and is therefore a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Love ...believeth all things... {1 Corinthians 13: 7} KJV

We can only trust God if we love Him and we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4: 19).

The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of sin and convinces the sinner of God's Love as revealed by Christ's sacrifice. In so doing the Holy Spirit creates trust in God and belief in His plan of salvation.

THE FAITH OF JESUS

The first Adam had the gift of faith in a sinless, pre-fall brain (mind structure) and mind- function.

He lost faith in God and mankind became fallen.

The Second Adam the God-man Christ Jesus took on our fallen, sinful flesh and brain.

And with our fallen mind-structure, which He took on, He received, developed, perfected and matured a victorious faith in His Father overcoming all satanic temptations and attacks.

Jesus, by His faith working by love, surrendered absolutely to His Father and produced victorious sinless character in and through His fallen brain and flesh.

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. {John 5: 30} KJV

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. {John 14: 10} KJV

It is this faith of Jesus that is given to humanity by the Holy Spirit through God's word.

The Holy Spirit imparts a measure of the faith of Jesus as the sinner is being drawn to Christ and to the Father through Christ.

As the sinner receives and exercises this measure of faith it reaches its first

critical level of development in providing initial trust in and surrender to Jesus in order for the sinner to be justified by the faith of Christ and to be born again.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. {Galatians 2: 16} KJV

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. {Romans 5: 1- 2} KJV

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. {1 Peter 1: 23} KJV

After initial conversion the faith of the new born babe in Christ is to develop, grow and be perfected and matured!

The bible contains some outstanding examples of individuals who cultivated the gift of the faith of Jesus. Paul gives a long list in Hebrews 11. One outstanding example was Abraham.

He allowed the gift of the faith of Jesus to grow to an exceedingly great level.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten [son]. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. {Hebrews 11: 17- 19} KJV

FAITH IS NOT FEELING

Many Christians confuse faith and feeling.

When they feel good they think their faith is strong.

When they feel depressed they think their faith is weak.

But faith is not feeling.

Nor is it to be based on feeling.

The religion of Christ is not a religion of mere emotion. You cannot depend upon your feelings for an evidence of acceptance with God; for feelings are variable. You must plant your feet on the promises of God's word, you must walk after the example of Jesus, and learn to live by faith.

Satan may pour in his temptations upon you; but you have the promise of God, that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. {R.H. May 5th, 1891}

HOW FAITH GROWS

Since faith comes by hearing the word of God, it is strengthened by studying the word.

Faith grows by exercising it.

Faith is exercised by claiming the promises of God in prayer.

When faith is cultivated and exercised it grows exceedingly.

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; {1 Thessalonians 1: 3} KJV

Faith also grows and is strengthened by trials and testing.

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

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: {1 Peter 1: 7} KJV

FAITH CAN BE OVERTHROWN

Faith: either as a body of belief or as trust in God can be overthrown by error.

Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. {2 Timothy 2: 18} KJV

A FAITHLESS GENERATION

Most people reject the gift of faith or allow it to die.

And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all [men] have not faith. {2 Thessalonians 3: 2} KJV

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? {Luke 18: 8} KJV

A FAITHFUL REMNANT

Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. {Revelation 14: 12} KJV

There will be an end-time remnant who will cultivate and exercise faith until it grows to the maximum quantity and quality. In other words they will possess the victorious faith of Jesus fully matured!

CLOSING GEM

Faith is trusting God--believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness.

Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing. Truth, uprightness, purity, have been pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in possession of these principles.

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

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

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

How often those who trusted the word of God, though in themselves utterly helpless, have withstood the power of the whole world-- Enoch, pure in heart, holy in life, holding fast his faith in the triumph of righteousness against a corrupt and scoffing generation;

David, a shepherd lad, having God's promise of the throne, against Saul, the established monarch, bent on holding fast his power; Shadrach and his companions in the fire, and Nebuchadnezzar on the throne; Daniel among the lions, his enemies in the high places of the kingdom;

Such examples are not found in the Bible only. They abound in every record of human progress. The Vaudois and the Huguenots, Wycliffe and Huss, Jerome and Luther, Tyndale and Knox, Zinzendorf and Wesley, with multitudes of others,

Faith is needed in the smaller no less than in the greater affairs of life. In all our daily interests and occupations the sustaining strength of God becomes real to us through an abiding trust. {Ed 253- 5}

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith. {1 John 5: 4} KJV

CHAPTER 6

Faith: The Foundation of the Ladder Part 2

- The faith of Jesus is the foundation of Peter's Ladder
- We believe in Jesus in order to be justified by the faith of Jesus
- The faith of Jesus has bought back all that the first Adam sold out

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. {Galatians 2: 16} KJV

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. {Galatians 3: 26} KJV

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. {Romans 5: 1- 2} KJV

JESUS HAS BOUGHT ALL MANKIND

All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all

heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day. {C.O.L. page 326}

FAITH SURRENDERS

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works --works of righteousness, obedience.

So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. {S.C. page 62}

GENUINE FAITH

When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that “the devils also believe, and tremble;” but this is not faith. James 2:19. Where there is not only a belief in God’s word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith--faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, “O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97. And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1. {S.C. page 63}

You can only climb Peter’s ladder if you are born again and abiding in Christ.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. {John 15: 4- 5} KJV

- The faith of the babe in Christ must grow or else it will die
- It is of the utmost importance to keep the faith of Jesus and allow it to grow
- Faith grows by exercise
- Faith grows by studying the word of God

KEEPING THE FAITH

Paul kept the faith.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: {2 Timothy 4: 7} KJV

God's end time remnant will keep the faith.

Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. {Revelation 14: 12} KJV

BUILDING UP YOURSELF ON YOUR FAITH

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. {Jude 20- 21} KJV

Faith is built up or grown by three closely interrelated activities:-

- i. By prayer
- ii. By studying the word of God and “rightly dividing” that word
- iii. By exercise

THE SCIENCE OF THE GOSPEL

At nine o'clock I attended a meeting of the students in the school chapel. About eighty were present, and the room was full. An hour was occupied in reading, and in talking to them about the necessity of their understanding how to exercise faith. This is the science of the gospel. The Scripture declares, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired. We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and our ignorance of how to exercise faith. We must break through the clouds of unbelief. We can not have a healthy Christian experience, we can not obey the gospel unto salvation, until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised. There can be no perfection of Christian character without that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. {R.H. October 18th, 1898}

FAITH AND PRAYER

Faith is exercised through prayer! The question is “how?” listen to A.T. Jones.

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

BIBLE PROOF

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. {John 15: 7} KJV

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. {1 John 5: 14- 15} KJV

But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. {Hebrew 11: 6} KJV

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them]. {Mark 11: 24} KJV

DIVINE SCIENCE

“Ye are complete in Him.” Colossians 2:10.

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

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

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

To live thus by the word of God means the surrender to Him of the whole life. There will be felt a continual sense of need and dependence, a drawing out of the heart after God. Prayer is a necessity; for it is the life of the soul. Family prayer, public prayer, have their place; but it is secret communion with God that sustains the soul life.

It was in the mount with God that Moses beheld the pattern of that wonderful building which was to be the abiding place of His glory. It is in the mount with God--in the secret place of communion--that we are to contemplate His glorious ideal for humanity. Thus we shall be enabled so to fashion our character building that to us may be fulfilled His promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Corinthians 6:16. {Ed page 257- 8}

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE

It was in hours of solitary prayer that Jesus in His earthly life received wisdom and power. Let the youth follow His example in finding at dawn and twilight a quiet season for communion with their Father in heaven. And throughout the day let them lift up their hearts to God. At every step of our way He says, "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, . . . Fear not; I will help thee." Isaiah 41:13. Could our children learn these lessons in the morning of their years, what freshness and power, what joy and sweetness, would be brought into their lives! {Ed page 259}

FORMULATING THE SCIENCE

Since understanding how to exercise faith is the science of the gospel and since we cannot have a healthy Christian experience until the science of the gospel is better understood, we should formulate the science!

The formula for exercising faith through prayer is as simple as A, B, C and D! And yet as powerful as the power of God in His word! A, B, C, D: Ask, Believe, Claim and Do! When we ask, believe and claim, then we "can do

all things through Christ who strengthens us” (Philippians 4: 13).

THE FORMULA

The formula of the science of the gospel has 2 basic principles:-

- i. Exercise faith through prayer
- ii. Think and act in harmony with the word of God

ASK

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. {Matthew 7: 7- 8} KJV

BELIEVE

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them]. {Mark 11: 24} KJV

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: {1 John 5: 14} KJV

CLAIM

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. {1 John 5: 15} KJV

DO

Do give thanks with rejoicing and do act upon the promise and word of God.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. {1 Thessalonians 5: 16- 18} KJV

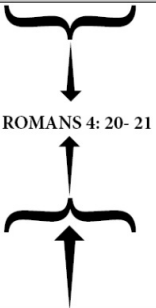
Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus. {Philippians 4: 6- 7} TEV

Always remember that faith works, faith obeys! Faith is an action noun, it is not passive. It works by love to produce obedience to God’s word!

THE POWER OF PRAYER

The prayer of faith is the great strength of the Christian and will

**SUMMARY DIAGRAM
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLE NUMBER ONE
EXERCISING FAITH THROUGH PRAYER
MECHANICS: A, B, C, D**

A=Ask (MATTHEW 7:7)	B= BELIEVE (MARK 11: 24)	C= CLAIM (1 JOHN 5: 15)	D= DO
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL ASKING	CHARACTERISTICS OF PRAYER- EFFECTIVE BELIEF	CLAIM IT BECAUSE IT IS GIVEN IN THE VERY PROMISE (2 PETER 1: 3-4)	1. ACT UPON THE WORD (LUKE 17: 14)
1. ABIDE IN CHRIST JOHN 15: 7	1. A BELIEF THAT IS CONFIDENT IN GOD 1 JOHN 5: 14	IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH FAITH TO CLAIM THE “CRUMBS” YOU WILL RECEIVE BREAD (MATTHEW 15: 21- 28)	2. GIVE THANKS PHILIPPIANS 4: 6- 7
2. ASK ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL 1 JOHN 5: 14	2. A BELIEF THAT WAVERS NOT JAMES 1: 6- 7		
3. NO SELFISH MOTIVE JAMES 4: 3	3. A BELIEF THAT CLAIMS 1 JOHN 5: 15		
4. A CLEANSED HEART PSALMS 66: 18			
5. ASK IN FAITH JAMES 1: 5- 7			
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLE NUMBER TWO		THINK AND ACT IN HARMONY WITH THE WORD OF GOD	

assuredly prevail against Satan. This is why he insinuates that we have no need of prayer. The name of Jesus, our Advocate, he detests; and when we earnestly come to Him for help, Satan’s host is alarmed. It serves his purpose well if we neglect the exercise of prayer, for then his lying wonders are more readily received. {1T page 296}

Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul

be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor. {G.W. page 254}

Beware how you neglect secret prayer and a study of God's word. These are your weapons against him who is striving to hinder your progress heavenward. The first neglect of prayer and Bible study makes easier the second neglect. {M.Y.P. page 96}

Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. {C.O.L. page 250}

CLOSING TEXT

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast [it] to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great [is] thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. {**Matthew 15: 26- 28**}

CHAPTER 7

Faith: The Foundation of the Ladder Part 3

A Deeper Study of the Faith of Jesus

PAUL IN HEBREWS

In Hebrews chapter one, the Apostle Paul presents the Son of God as God in both Divine nature (substance) and form.

In Hebrews chapter two, the Apostle presents the Son of God in His incarnation as man in both human nature substance and human form.

WHAT KIND OF HUMAN NATURE?

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on [him the nature of] angels; but he took on [him] the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. {Hebrews 2: 14- 18} KJV

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; {Romans 1: 3} KJV

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: {Romans 8: 3} KJV

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. {Hebrews 4: 14: 16} KJV

PAUL IS CLEAR

The Apostle Paul is clear that in the incarnation, the Son of God took on out fallen, sinful, human flesh, in order to be the Second Adam and savior of the world and also in order to be our example.

Let us study A.T. Jones analysis of Paul's statement "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren..."

THE CONSECRATED WAY TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION- CHAPTER 8

It should be particularly noted that in the first and second chapters of Hebrews the thought and discussion concerning the person of Christ is especially as to nature and substance. In Phil. 2:5-8 there is presented the thought of Christ's relationship to God and to man, especially as to nature and form. Thus: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:5-8, and R.V.

When Jesus emptied Himself He became man, and God was revealed in the Man. When Jesus emptied Himself, on the one side man appeared, and on the other side God appeared. Thus in Him God and man meet in peace and become one: "for He is our peace,

who hath made both [God and man] one,...having abolished in His flesh the enmity,...to make in Himself of twain [God and man] one new man, so making peace.” (Eph. 2:14, 15).

He who was in the form of God took the form of man.

He who was equal with God became equal with man.

He who was Creator and Lord became creature and servant.

He who was in the likeness of God was made in the likeness of men.

He who was God and Spirit was made man and flesh. John 1:1, 14.

Nor is this true only as to form; it is true as to substance. For Christ was like God in the sense of being of the nature, in very substance, of God. He was made in the likeness of men in the sense of being like men in the nature and very substance of men.

Christ was God. He became man. And when He became man, He was man as really as He was God.

He became man in order that He might redeem man.

He came to man where man is to bring man to Him where He was and is.

And in order to redeem man from what man is, He was made what man is:--

Man is flesh. Gen. 6:3; John 3:6. “And the Word was made flesh.” John 1:14; Heb. 2:14.

Man is under the law. Rom. 3:19. Christ was “made under the law.” Gal. 4:4.

Man is under the curse. Gal. 3:10; Zech. 5:1-4, “Christ was made a curse.” Gal. 3:13.

Man is sold under sin (Rom. 7:14) and laden with iniquity. Isa. 1:4. And “the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isa. 53:6.

Man is “a body of sin.” Rom. 6:6. And God “hath made Him to be sin.” 2 Cor. 5:21.

Thus, literally, “in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.”

Yet it must never be forgotten, it must be borne in mind and heart constantly and forever, that in none of this as to man, the flesh, sin, and the curse was Christ ever of Himself or of His own original nature or fault. All this He “was made.” “He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”

And in all this Christ was “made” what, before, He was not in order that the man might be made now and forever what he is not.

Christ was the Son of God. He became the Son of man that the sons of men might become the sons of God. Gal. 4:4; 1 John 3:1.

Christ was Spirit. 1 Cor. 15:45. He became flesh in order that man, who is flesh, might become spirit. John 3:6; Rom. 8:8-10.

Christ, who was altogether of the divine nature, was made partaker of human nature in order that we who are altogether of the human nature “might be partakers of the divine nature.” 2 Peter 1:4.

Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin, even the sinfulness of man, in order that we, who knew no righteousness, might be made righteousness, even the righteousness of God.

And as the righteousness of God, which, in Christ, the man is made, is real righteousness, so the sin of men, which Christ was made in the flesh, was real sin.

As certainly as our sins, when upon us, are real sins to us, so certainly, when these sins were laid upon Him, they became real sins to Him. As certainly as guilt attaches to these sins and to us because of them, when they are upon us so certainly this guilt attached to these same sins of ours and to Him because of them, when they were laid upon Him.

As the sense of condemnation and discouragement of our sins was real to us when these sins of ours were upon us, so certainly this same sense of condemnation and discouragement because of the guilt of these sins was realized by Him when these sins of ours were laid upon Him.

Thus the guilt, the condemnation, the discouragement of the knowledge of sin were His-- were a fact in His conscious experience--as really as they were ever such in the life of any sinner that was ever on earth. And this awful truth brings to every sinful soul in the world the glorious truth that "the righteousness of God," and the rest, the peace, and the joy, of that righteousness, are a fact in the conscious experience of the believer in Jesus in this world, as really as they are in the life of any saint who was ever in heaven.

He who knew the height of the righteousness of God, acquired also the knowledge of the depth of the sins of men. He knows the awfulness of the depths of the sins of men, as well as He knows the glory of the heights of the righteousness of God. And by this "His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many." Isa. 53:11. By this His knowledge He is able to deliver every sinner from the lowest depths of sin and lift him to the highest height of righteousness, even the very righteousness of God.

Made "in all things" like unto us, He was in all points like as we are. So fully was this so that He could say, even as we must say the same truth, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5:30.

Of Him this was so entirely true that, in the weakness and infirmity of the flesh,--ours which He took--He was as is the man who is without God and without Christ. For it is only without Him that men can do nothing. With Him and through Him, it is written: "I can do all things." But of those who are without Him it is written: "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5.

Therefore, when of Himself He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing," this makes it certain forever that in the flesh,--because of our infirmities which He took; because of our sinfulness, hereditary and actual, which was laid upon Him and imparted to Him--He was of Himself in that flesh exactly as is the man who, in the infirmity of

the flesh, is laden with sins, actual and hereditary, and who is without God. And standing thus weak, laden with sins and helpless as we are, in divine faith He exclaimed, "I will put My trust in Him." Heb. 2:13.

He came to "seek and to save that which was lost." And in saving the lost, He came to the lost where we are. He put Himself among the lost. "He was numbered with the transgressors." He was "made to be sin." And from the standpoint of the weakness and infirmity of the lost, He trusted in God, that He would deliver Him and save Him. Laden with the sins of the world; and tempted in all points like as we are, He hoped in God and trusted in God to save Him from all those sins and to keep Him from sinning. Ps. 69:1- 21; 71:1-20; 22:1-22; 31:1-5.

And this is the faith of Jesus: this is the point where the faith of Jesus reaches lost, sinful man to help him. For thus it has been demonstrated to the very fulness of perfection, that there is no man in the wide world for whom there is not hope in God, no one so lost that he can not be saved by trusting God in this faith of Jesus. And this faith of Jesus, by which in the place of the lost, He hoped in God and trusted God for salvation from sin and power to keep from sinning--this victory of His it is that has brought to every man in the world divine faith by which every man can hope in God and trust in God and can find the power of God to deliver him from sin and to keep him from sinning. That faith which He exercised and by which He obtained the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil--that faith is His free gift to every lost man in the world. And thus "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" and this is the faith of which He is the Author and Finisher.

This is the faith of Jesus that is given to men. This is the faith of Jesus that must be received by men in order for them to be saved. This is the faith of Jesus which, now in this time of the Third Angel's Message, must be received and kept by those who will be saved from the worship of the "beast and his image," and enabled to keep the commandments of God. This is the faith of Jesus referred to in the closing words of the Third Angel's Message: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

And now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: “We have SUCH an High Priest.” All that we have thus found in the first and second chapters of Hebrews is the essential foundation and preliminary of His high priesthood. For “in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that [so that, in order that] He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Heb. 2:17, 18.

CHAPTER 8

Virtue: The Second Round of the Ladder or First Addition- Part One

2 Peter 1: 5 reads thus:

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge.

In this verse, the Greek word translated virtue (in the KJV) is ARETÉ.

THE Greek word ARETÉ means moral excellence, integrity, goodness, virtue, excellence, spiritual strength. In Philippians 4: 8 the word Excellency is translated from the Greek word ARETÉ.

Furthermore, a better translation of 2 Peter 1: 5 is:

“...in your faith supply virtue...”

The word “add” in the KJV is translated from the Greek verb EPICHOREGEO which properly means “to lead us to”.

WORK OUT WHAT GOD WORKS IN

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure. {Philippians 2: 12- 13} KJV

God has given us all that we spiritually need in Christ. The Holy Spirit reproduces or “works in to us” all that God has given in Christ. And we are to “work out” our own salvation.

As we “work out” in “supplying” or “leading up” or “adding”, the Holy Spirit multiplies the “in-working”!

In other words, since God is powerfully at work in the believer, the believer should make every effort (diligence) to make progress in climbing the ladder and this effort should be a willing, joyful, enthusiastic effort.

THE EXERCISE OF FAITH

We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot obey the gospel unto salvation, until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised. {R.H. October 18th, 1898}

No man can have a sound, healthful experience unless he shall practice the instruction that Christ has given through the apostle Peter: (in 2 Peter 1) {R.H. February 16th, 1892}

By putting these two statements together we can safely conclude that the practice of the instruction in 2 Peter 1 i.e. climbing Peter’s ladder, is the practical experience of the science of faith.

ADDING DILIGENTLY

The faith of Jesus won the victory over all satanic temptations for us. Our faith in Him receives the victory. Remember that all that Christ has done for us is in His word, we receive the victory by receiving His word. We add virtue to faith by faith!

CHRIST’S VICTORY IS OURS

In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us

intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. “Be of good cheer,” He says; “I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, “I thirst.” He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours.

Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, “The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: . . . and I know that I shall not be ashamed. . . . Behold, the Lord God will help Me.” Pointing to His own example, He says to us, “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” Isaiah 50:7-10.

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

PROMISES OF VICTORY

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. {2 Corinthians 7: 1} KJV

Now thanks [be] unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. {2 Corinthians 2: 14} KJV

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]. {1 Corinthians 2: 14} KJV

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: {2 Peter 2: 9} KJV

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God. {Romans 6: 6- 13} KJV

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

“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23. It is faith that connects us with heaven and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every evil trait and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is still the same mighty Redeemer. Then grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this--never. {M.H. page 65}

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” He repeated the words that, more than fourteen hundred years before, He had spoken to Israel: “The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness. . . . And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” Deuteronomy 8:2, 3. In the wilderness, when all means of sustenance failed, God sent His people manna from heaven; and a sufficient and constant supply was given. This provision was to teach them that while they trusted in God and walked in His ways He would not forsake them. The Saviour now practiced the lesson He had taught to Israel. By the word of God succor had been given to the Hebrew host, and by the same word it would be given to Jesus. He awaited God’s time to bring relief. He was in the wilderness in obedience to God, and He would not obtain food by following the suggestions of Satan. In the presence of the witnessing universe, He testified that it is a less calamity to suffer whatever may befall than to depart in any manner from the will of God. {DA 121.1}

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that

obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other. {D.A. page 121}

OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS

The equivalent Hebrew word for virtue in the Old Testament means strength, power.

For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me. {2 Samuel 22: 40} KJV

As David prayed for strength to defeat Israel's enemies, so we must pray for spiritual strength to overcome every defect of character, every enemy of righteousness!

Spiritual moral strength is ours in Christ. He, by faith in His Father, won the victory over every temptation and His faith and victory are ours to claim!

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. {Philippians 4: 13} KJV

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you]. {1 Peter 5: 10} KJV

Now thanks [be] unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. {2 Corinthians 2: 14} KJV

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. {John 16: 33} KJV

But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. {1 Corinthians 15: 57- 58} KJV

The path of sincerity and integrity is not a path free from obstruction, but in every difficulty we are to see a call to prayer. There is no one living who has any power that he has not received from God, and the source whence it comes is open to the weakest human being. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name," said Jesus, "that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."

"In My name," Christ bade His disciples pray. In Christ's name His followers are to stand before God. Through the value of the sacrifice made for them, they are of value in the Lord's sight. Because of the imputed righteousness of Christ they are accounted precious. For Christ's sake the Lord pardons those that fear Him. He does not see in them the vileness of the sinner. He recognizes in them the likeness of His Son, in whom they believe.

The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect large things if they have faith in His promises.

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that

when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised. Whatever was given to Christ--the "all things" to supply the need of fallen men--was given to Him as the head and representative of humanity. And "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22. {D.A. page 667-8}

CLOSING TEXTS

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. {Galatians 5: 24- 25} KJV

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. {Romans 6: 11} KJV

CLOSING GEM

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. James 1:12.

When trials come into our lives, when clouds darken the horizon, how ready we are to forget that Jesus is our Saviour, that behind the

clouds the Sun of Righteousness is shining, that angels are close beside us, preserving us from harm. I would say to the despairing, Look and live. Hope thou in God, for on Calvary's cross a complete sacrifice was offered for you. Jesus is the sinner's Friend, the sinner's Redeemer. Eternal joy--a life of undimmed happiness--awaits the one who surrenders all to Christ. Look away from yourself to Jesus, who is pleading before the throne of God in your behalf. Listen to His words, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (Matthew 11:28; John 6:37). With the hand of faith grasp the promises of God. Appropriate these blessings to yourself, not at some future time, but today.

The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weakest points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the attack, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. In the hour of greatest need, when discouragement overwhelms the soul, then it is that Jesus comes very near. The hour of man's necessity is God's opportunity. He sees our danger and provides help for us. . . .

Do not think that when you walk with Jesus you must walk in the shadow. The happiest people in the world are those who trust in Jesus and gladly do His bidding. He is the light of life. From the lives of those who follow Him unrest and discontent are banished. With a full heart they echo the words of the wise man, Wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17). Though they meet with trials and difficulties, their lives are full of joy; for Christ walks beside them, and His presence makes the pathway bright. {H.P. chapter 256}

CHAPTER 9

Virtue: the Second Round of the Ladder or First Addition Part Two

Growth in virtue progressively produces experiential victory over every defect of character.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work. {2 Timothy 2: 19- 21} KJV

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13. If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would make haste to confess their sins and to put them away. Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome. But Jesus pleads in their behalf His wounded hands, His bruised body; and

He declares to all who would follow Him: "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:29, 30. Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them. {G.C. page 489}

GROWTH IN VIRTUE IS CHARACTER BUILDING

Let church-members bear in mind that the fact that their names are registered on the church books will not save them. They must show themselves approved of God, workmen that need not to be ashamed. Day by day they are to build their characters in accordance with Christ's directions. They are to abide in him, constantly exercising faith in him. Thus they will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ,--wholesome, cheerful, grateful Christians, led by God, step by step, into clearer and still clearer light.

Those who do not gain this experience will be among the ones whose voices will one day be raised in the bitter lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved. Why did I not flee to the stronghold for refuge? Why have I trifled with my soul's salvation, and done despite to the Spirit of grace?"

Among those to whom fearful disappointment will come at the day of final reckoning will be those who have been outwardly religious, who have apparently lived Christian lives, but who have woven self into all that they do. They have prided themselves on their morality, their influence, their ability to stand in a higher position than others, their knowledge of the truth. They think that these will win for them the commendation of Christ. "Lord," they say, "we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." "Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

But the Saviour says, "I never knew you: depart from me." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

There is no discussion; the time for that is past. The irrevocable sentence has been pronounced. They are shut out from heaven by their own unfitness for its companionship.

Those who have bowed to the idols of the world will gain no comfort from them in that great day when every one will be rewarded or punished according to his works. But Omnipotence will deal justly. Those who have made Christ their refuge will find that he lives, and that he is conqueror. He will be their defense. {R.H. November 24th, 1904}

DON'T LET SATAN GET AN ADVANTAGE

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. {2 Corinthians 2: 11} KJV

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [ye] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded. {James 4: 7- 8} KJV

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

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. {Galatians 5: 17} KJV

“There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery” {G.C. page 490}

God in Christ has given us the spiritual weapons for successful warfare.

But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. {1 Corinthians 15: 57} KJV

Now thanks [be] unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. {2 Corinthians 2: 14} KJV

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; {2 Corinthians 10: 3-5} KJV

The truth is that, although of course we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level. The very weapons we use are not those of human warfare but powerful in God's warfare for the destruction of the enemy's strongholds. Our battle is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defence that men erect against the true knowledge of God. We even fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ. {2 Corinthians 10: 3- 5} JB Phillips

WHAT IS SATANIC STRONGHOLD?

A satanic stronghold is a particular **way of thinking** which holds us in **bondage**. We can go a little further and say that a satanic stronghold is a **defect of character** which is **deep-seated** and which **produces** negative or **unChristlike** behaviour under **provocation** i.e. under temptation; trial or adversity.

We have learnt already that Satan works through such defects, such strongholds, to gain control of the whole mind. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance for us to understand how these defects or strongholds are built and how Satan works through them. In other words we must understand the structure (anatomy) and function of the satanic strongholds or defects of character.

STRUCTURE OF SATANIC STRONGHOLDS IN THE MIND

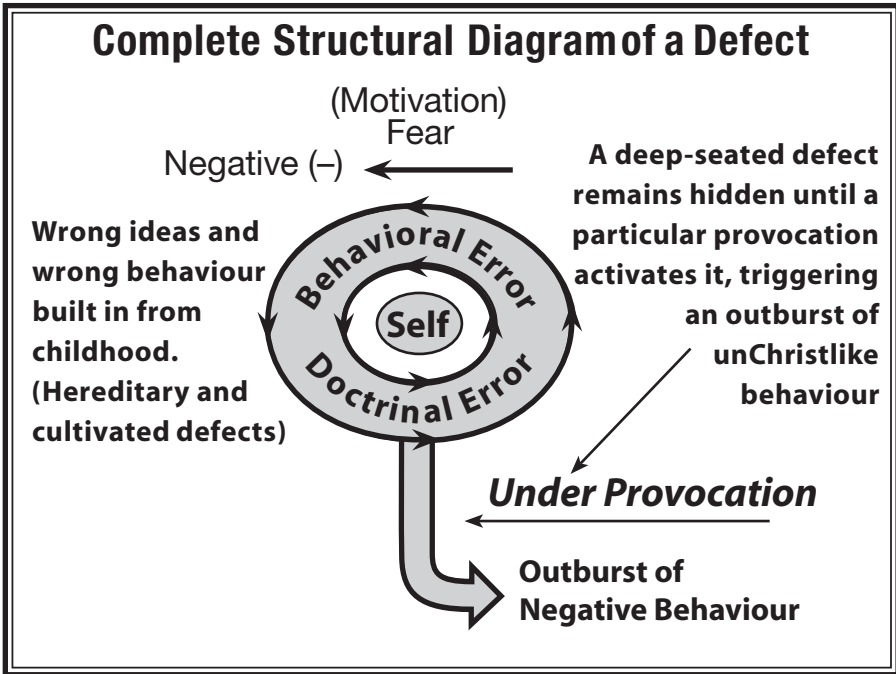
Satanic strongholds or defects of character are **wrong ways of thinking, systems of thought, thought patterns, thought circuits** which have been built-in deep-down in the mind. There are some things we must know about them.

1. The **first** fact to grasp about any defect of character is that it is **SELF-CENTRED, not** Christ centred.
2. The **second** fact to know is that a defect of character, a satanic

stronghold in the mind, is made up of **error**. There are two distinct **types** of error, one type is **doctrinal** error, the other type is **behavioural** or character error. By **doctrinal error** we mean that the person **believes** a **false** doctrine. By **behavioural error** we mean that the person has a **wrong way** of behaving built into the mind, into the thinking mechanism. As we should know, these two types of error, though interrelated, involve different areas of the brain.

3. The **third** fact to understand is that a defect of character, a satanic stronghold in the mind, is a way of thinking which is **negative**. By **negative** we mean that it is **not** in harmony with the principles of Agape love as enunciated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 and by Jesus in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5 through 7. Or to put it simply, a satanic stronghold **opposes** the word of God and the love of God.
4. The **fourth** fact to know is that defects of character are **motivated** by **fear**.
5. The **fifth** fact to understand is that such defects are usually hidden deep down in the mind. They are not usually observed when things are going smoothly or to the person's liking.
6. The **sixth** and last fact to discern is that sooner or later such defects are **exposed** when they **trigger** sinful, **unChristlike** behaviour under some provocation which may be real or imagined!

Let us summarize the aforementioned 6 facts by drawing a circuit diagram of a satanic stronghold in the mind, a character defect:



Circuit Diagram of a Defect of Character

Having examined the structure of a defect, a satanic stronghold, let us look now at the weapons of our warfare.

THE WEAPONS OF OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; {2 Corinthians 10: 3-5} KJV

1. The Principle of the Cross is the Weapon against Self-Centeredness, the spiritual weapon of self-denial.

The principle of self-sacrificing love is the foundation principle of God's government. It is in fact the **law of life** for the universe and it was fully revealed at the cross.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ

liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
{Galatians 2: 20} KJV

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

2. The Truth is the Weapon Against Error.

Doctrinal truth is received by studying Bible truth, allowing scripture to interpret scripture.

Behavioural truth is learnt by studying the life, the character, of Christ and therefore of God.

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

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” **1 John 1:7**

Behavioural errors, wrong ways of behaving or reacting under provocation, are learnt from early childhood and are the most deeply embedded of all character defects. They include some of the most difficult to overcome. Here are some examples: **anger; impatience; retaliation; an unforgiving spirit; envy; jealousy; being unduly sensitive; pride; misery; fretfulness; discontent; inability to express love; inability to admit wrong; strife for the supremacy; lust; covetousness.** These defects usually require the application of all the weapons of our warfare in order to conquer them. But especially do they require the deeper death to self by the deeper, daily experience of the principle of the cross and diligently studying the **true** message of God’s character.

3. Thinking Positively is the Weapon Against Negative Direction of Thoughts.

It was Solomon who said that as a man thinks in his heart so is he (Proverbs 23:7). Let us not dwell on the negative. God wants us to be

positive, happy, overcoming people.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Gal 6:9

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” Psalm 42:5

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Isa 43:2

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Phil 4:6-8

This is how it reads in the JB Phillips translation:

“Delight yourselves in God, yes, find your joy in Him at all times. Have a reputation for gentleness, and never forget the nearness of your Lord. Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus. Here is a last piece of advice. If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on the things which are holy and right and pure and beautiful and good.” Phil 4:6-8

4. The Love of God is the Weapon Against Fear.

Fear is the motivation which drives the negative thinking in satanic strongholds.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. {1 John 4: 16- 19} KJV

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. {Hebrews 2: 14- 15} KJV

5. Adversity is Used By God to Uncover Our Hidden Defects.

God allows difficulty, trial, provocation, interpersonal friction, church problems, family life challenges etc. to show us what defects are hidden deep down.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:2-4

VICTORIOUS MIND-SETS

When a defective mind-set, a satanic stronghold, is conquered it is replaced by a victory circuit. In contrast to a satanic stronghold, a victory circuit or divine stronghold has the following characteristics:

1. It is **Christ-Centred**
2. It is built upon **doctrinal truth** and the **behavioural truth** of God’s character as revealed in Christ.
3. It is **positive** in direction, i.e. it is in harmony with the **positive principles** of the **self-sacrificing Agape love** of God
4. It is motivated by love and not by fear.
5. It is built deep and solidly into the mind by the Holy Spirit.

6. Under provocation it produces Christ-like behaviour.
7. It produces rest.

Here now is the diagram of a victory circuit:

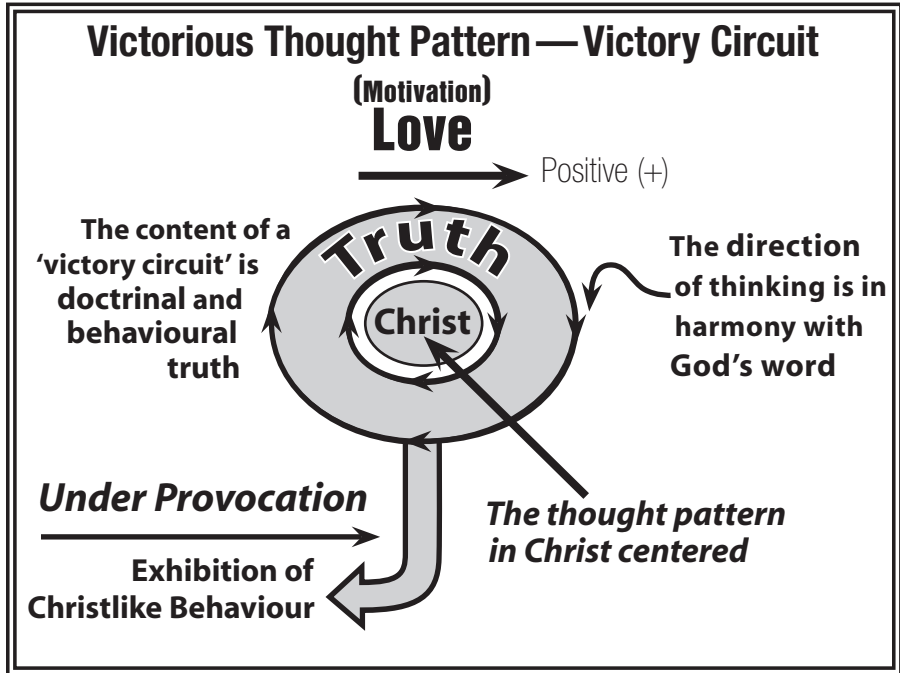


Diagram of a Victory Circuit

CLOSING GEM

Henceforward Christ’s followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own. “Behold,” He said, “I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy’s power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations

and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper.

There are Christians who think and speak altogether too much about the power of Satan. They think of their adversary, they pray about him, they talk about him, and he looms up greater and greater in their imagination. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. Satan is pleased when we magnify his power. Why not talk of Jesus? Why not magnify His power and His love?

The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high is an everlasting testimony that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. It testifies to the universe that God will never forsake His people in their struggle with evil. It is an assurance to us of strength and protection as long as the throne itself shall endure. {DA page 492-3}

CHAPTER 10

Peter's Ladder: The Third Round: Knowledge Part One

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the third round or second addition in Peter's ladder.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; {2 Peter 1: 5} KJV

Here in 2 Peter 1: 5 the word knowledge is translated from the Greek word GNOSIS. There are other Greek words also translated into our English word knowledge; here is a list:-

- EPIGNOSIS: which means full knowledge, e.g.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and [in] all judgment; {Philippians 1: 9} KJV

- SUNESIS: which means understanding, e.g.

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) {Ephesians 3: 4} KJV

- OIDA: to see or know, to be acquainted with, e.g.

And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of [that] way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. {Acts 24: 22} KJV

Three other Related Words

We should be mindful too of three other Greek words:

- i. SOPHIA meaning wisdom, skill
- ii. SOPHOS meaning wise, skillful
- iii. PHRONIMOS meaning thoughtful, prudent

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Knowledge and wisdom are closely interrelated. Wisdom is the use or application of knowledge for a particular end-result. Wisdom works through knowledge and knowledge manifests itself by wisdom.

TWO KINDS OF WISDOM OR KNOWLEDGE

When it comes to spiritual matters, the Bible speaks of two (2) kinds of wisdom and knowledge.

Let us read James 3: 13- 18.

Who [is] a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife [is], there [is] confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, [and] easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. {James 3: 13- 18} KJV

We understand therefore, that there are two kinds of wisdom:-

1. The wisdom that is from above which is pure and carries with it the knowledge, righteousness and truth of God. This wisdom is

peaceable, gentle and merciful. This is the wisdom of God's Agape Love.

2. A wisdom that is earthly (from below). Such wisdom is sensual, devilish and productive of every species of evil. This is the wisdom of self-exaltation and selfishness and was invented by Satan.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 2 calls these two kinds of wisdom:-

1. The wisdom of God
2. The wisdom of this world

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory: {1 Corinthians 2: 6- 7} KJV

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Before we take a deeper look at the wisdom and knowledge of God let us consider Bible knowledge in general. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: 8 informs us that Agape Love never fails , i.e. never declines, never stops (Greek: EKPIPTO).

Charity(agape love) never faileth: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away. {1 Corinthians 13: 8} KJV

Notice that in contrast to Agape Love which never ceases, prophecies will fail i.e. be made useless (Greek: KATARGEO); tongues will cease or stop (Greek: PAVOMAI) and knowledge will vanish away or be made inactive or useless (Greek: KATAR).

Bible Knowledge – A Classification

Bible knowledge contains first and foremost, the absolute knowledge of God which includes:-

3. The knowledge of the Godhead's infinite being, or nature, or substance and which is infinitely beyond the comprehension of His intelligent creatures.

Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? {Job 11: 7} KJV

The absolute knowledge of God first and foremost also includes:-

4. The knowledge of God's character, the character of infinite Agape Love, which is summarised in His law and has been fully revealed by the incarnation, earthly life, death and resurrection of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though enough knowledge of God's character has been revealed to vindicate God's government and win the great controversy, yet that knowledge is also infinite and will never be exhausted!

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out! {Romans 11: 33} KJV

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. {Colossians 2: 2- 3} KJV

In addition to the absolute knowledge of God, which can never be inactive or useless and which can never vanish away, there are other categories of Bible knowledge such as Bible doctrine; Bible history; Bible prophecy; gifts of the Spirit e.g. tongues.

These other categories of Bible knowledge serve the very important purpose of bearing witness to or testifying of Christ so that we may come and keep going to Him to receive the absolute knowledge of God, salvation from sin and eternal life.

For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him]. {John 1: 17- 18} KJV

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. {John 5: 39- 40} KJV

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

But when these other categories of Bible knowledge will have completely accomplished their functions, there will be no further use for them. This is the knowledge that will cease its function according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: 8.

Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away. {1 Corinthians 13: 8} KJV

SECULAR KNOWLEDGE

Furthermore there are the various branches of secular knowledge such as mathematics, natural sciences, behavioural sciences, etc. such secular knowledge is fallen and therefore partial. Take for example chemistry which is a study of the structure and interactions of matter (elements and compounds). Such a science describes matter in a fallen world and is fallen and partial.

Love never ends. But if there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be set aside. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when what is perfect comes, the partial will be set aside. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became an adult, I set aside childish ways. For now we see in a mirror indirectly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. {1 Corinthians 13: 8- 13} NET

TRUE AND FALSE DOCTRINES

Every true doctrine teaches us some aspect of God's character and helps to bring us to Christ to receive even greater fullness and clarity of the knowledge of God and of salvation. Every doctrinal and prophetic truth is essential to prepare us for the final crisis!

Every false doctrine obscures some aspect of God's character and hinders our coming to Him. Every error is dangerous!

In order to arrive at Biblical truth, i.e. true Bible knowledge, the student of the word must rightly divide the word.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. {2 Timothy 2: 15} KJV

Rightly dividing the word requires careful study, comparing scripture with scripture thereby allowing scripture to interpret scripture. This can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit through the word can open the “eyes of our understanding”.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. {John 16: 13} KJV

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned. {1 Corinthians 2: 12- 14} KJV

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life. {John 6: 63} KJV

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, {Ephesians 1: 17- 18} KJV

JESUS: THE ULTIMATE KEY

Christ Jesus is the ultimate revealer of the knowledge of God. In order to be rightly understood all scripture must be interpreted by the incarnation, earthly life and especially the sacrifice of Christ on the cross!

For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him]. {John 1: 17- 18} KJV

[That] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. {John 1: 9} KJV

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; {Hebrews 1: 1- 3} KJV

The Holy Spirit enables us to understand what Christ revealed concerning the truth about God.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. {John 16: 13- 14} NET

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

DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES OF THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE.

There are certain fundamental and distinctive doctrines of the Third Angel's message which we should be thoroughly grounded in, these are : the true gospel; the truth of God's character; the Sabbath truth; the non-immortality of man's soul ; man's condition in death; the investigative judgement; the deeper issues involved in the great controversy between GOD and Satan; the resurrections; the millennial reign in heaven; the final white throne judgement; the destruction of Satan; his angels and

the unsaved; eternal life for the redeemed; the earth made new; the eternal vindication of God's Government.

Strengthen the Intellect

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

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

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

Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip

called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” John 1:47, 48. And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer if we will seek Him for light that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance.

The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is His office to present Christ, the purity of His righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through Him. Jesus says, “He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” John 16:14. The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God esteem the human race, since He gave His Son to die for them and appoints His Spirit to be man’s teacher and continual guide! {S.C. page 90-1}

FORTIFY THE MIND WITH BIBLE TRUTH

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

CHAPTER 11

Knowledge Part Two The Knowledge of God

The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction. {Proverbs 1: 7} KJV

The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [is] understanding. {Proverbs 9: 10} KJV

The Hebrew word for fear in these texts is YIRAH which means reverence. It means the admiration, respect and reverence born of the knowledge of how good God is!

It is important to understand that YIRAH does not mean to be afraid of God, it means to reverence God!

Jehovah invites us to know and understand Him and He tells us that the only thing we should boast about is our knowledge of Him.

The Lord says, "Wise people should not boast that they are wise. Powerful people should not boast that they are powerful. Rich people should not boast that they are rich. If people want to boast, they should boast about this: They should boast that they understand and know me. They should boast that they know and understand that I, the Lord, act out of faithfulness, fairness, and justice in the earth and that I desire people to do these things," says the Lord. {Jeremiah 9: 23- 24} NET

Moreover, Jesus declares that eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent to save us.

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

GOD IS LOVE

The Holy Scriptures affirm that God is Love!

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. {1 John 4: 8} KJV

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. {1 John 4: 16} KJV

MISAPPREHENSION OF GOD

Yet notwithstanding the New Testament declaration that God is Love, the world was in darkness through misapprehension of God. The average, ordinary human knowledge of God's character has been skewed and perverted by a number of factors:

- i. Satan's lies about God
- ii. 6000 years of estrangement from God by sin
- iii. Tradition (both religious and cultural)
- iv. Misinterpretation of the Bible

BIBLE PROOF OF THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE OF GOD

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: {Ephesians 4: 18} KJV

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, {Romans 1 : 21- 22} KJV

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. {1 Corinthians 1: 21} KJV

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known [it], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. {1 Corinthians 2: 7- 8} KJV

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. {Romans 3: 10- 12} KJV

THE ONLY PERFECT REVELATION OF GOD'S CHARACTER

The incarnation, earthly life and especially the death on the cross of the Son of God gives us the only perfect and ultimate understanding of God's character!

For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him]. {John 1: 17- 18} KJV

No one has ever seen God. The only one, himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known. {John 1: 18} NET

After God spoke long ago in various portions and in various ways to our ancestors through the prophets, in these last days he has spoken to us in a son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he created the world. The Son is the radiance of his glory and the representation of his essence, and he sustains all things by his powerful word, and so when he had accomplished cleansing for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. {Hebrews 1: 1-3} NET

THE CROSS REVEALS THAT GOD IS LOVE

Jesus the Christ dying on the cross fully revealed God's Agape Love to be

an “**ALL-FOR-THE-OTHER, NONE-FOR-SELF**” UNCONDITIONAL, SELF-SACRIFICING, ABSOLUTELY UNSELFISH, NEVER FAILING LOVE!

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. {Romans 5: 6- 8} KJV

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. {1 Corinthians 13: 4- 8} NET

SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE IS FOOLISHNESS TO THE WORLD

Traditional religion (including Judeo Christian religion) and culture, see self-sacrificing love as foolishness, weakness and incapable of managing the world or universe.

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will thwart the cleverness of the intelligent.” Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Mosaic law? Where is the debater of this age? Has God not made the wisdom of the world foolish? For since in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased to save those who believe by the foolishness of preaching. For Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks ask for wisdom, but we preach about a crucified Christ, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. {1 Corinthians 1: 18- 25} NET

SATAN EXPOSED, GOD REVEALED

The Cross exposed and destroyed the works of the devil.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. {1 John 3: 8} KJV

The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil. {1 John 3: 8} NET

DEATH IS ONE OF SATAN'S WORKS

Religious tradition and misinterpretation have taught the world that God has the power of death and that death is the work of God.

Bible truth teaches the very opposite. It is Satan who has the power of death.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. {Hebrews 2: 14- 15} KJV

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil), and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death. {Hebrews 2: 14- 15} NEB

DEATH ABOLISHED

Since, as we have shown, Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3: 8) and in so doing He abolished death. It must be absolutely clear that death is one of the devil's works.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: {2 Timothy 1: 10} KJV

But is now made visible through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel! {2 Timothy 1: 10} NET

SIN THE CAUSE, JESUS THE CURE

The Bible makes it clear that sin is the cause of death and Jesus is therefore the cure for both sin and death!

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

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. {James 1: 13- 15} NIV

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: {2 Timothy 1: 10} KJV

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; {Hebrews 2: 14} KJV

DEATH IS NO PART OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT

In the way of righteousness [is] life; and [in] the pathway [thereof there is] no death. {Proverbs 12: 28} KJV

The LORD [is] righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. {Psalms 145: 17} KJV

Since there is no death in the pathway of righteousness and God is righteous in all His works, THEN THE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION IS THAT THERE IS NO DEATH IN GOD OR HIS WAYS OR HIS GOVERNMENT!

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh

down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. {James 1: 17} KJV

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. {Proverbs 8: 35- 36} KJV

SATAN: THE KILLER

Jesus told the Pharisees who wanted to kill Him that they were acting out the attributes of their father the devil. Jesus then plainly told them that Satan was a murderer and liar from the beginning!

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, [even] God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. {John 8: 40- 44} KJV.

Satan's government of sin is the source or cause of sickness, destruction, chaos, calamities, plagues, physical death and the second death.

God's government of other-centred agape love is the source of perfect life, health, beauty, order, eternal life.

PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENTS

We have established principles of truth from the scriptures to prove that death is no part of God's government. Rather, it is both a method and end-result of Satan's government of sin. Yet there are statements in scripture which on surface reading seem to say that God is a killer.

Jesus tells us that Satan is a murderer and liar from the beginning, yet throughout the Bible we hardly see any acts of killing ascribed to Satan. On

the contrary, we see very many acts of killing attributed to God.

A MURDERER IN HIDING

Satan has been a murderer in hiding and his disguise has been the traditional misinterpretation of the Bible. That is why Jesus had to come to our world to expose Satan as the one who possessed the power of death and falsehood.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. {Hebrews 2: 14- 15} KJV

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. {John 10: 10- 11} KJV

Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. {John 8: 44} KJV

The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control. {G.C. page 35 paragraph 3}

EXAMPLES OF READING BLINDLY

Jesus gave examples of religious people, who were at the time, the professed true people of God, who read scripture and could not see the truth.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. {John 5: 39- 40} KJV

In this example they could not see the character of the promised Messiah and therefore rejected Christ while quoting scripture to support their rejection!

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. {Matthew 22: 29} KJV

Here the Sadducees revealed that in their study of scripture they could not see the doctrine of the resurrection!

YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE (MARK 10)

The Pharisees were sure that a man writing a bill of divorce to put away his wife was God's way since that is what God told Moses to say. (Deuteronomy 24: 1).

Listen to Jesus!

And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. {Mark 10: 5- 9} KJV

Here Jesus explained that one has to understand the difference between a command of God given to meet people where there are on one hand and God's perfect will or way on the other hand.

YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE

In the parable of Matthew 22 at verse 7, Jesus described the destruction of Jerusalem in typical punitive language.

But when the king heard [thereof], he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. {Matthew 22: 7} KJV

The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus they rejected the last offer of mercy. Then God withdrew His protection from them and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen. Her children had spurned the grace of Christ, which would have enabled them to subdue their evil impulses, and now these became the conquerors. Satan aroused the fiercest and most debased passions of the soul. Men did not reason; they were beyond reason--controlled by impulse and blind rage. They became satanic in their cruelty. In the family and in the nation, among the highest and the lowest classes alike, there was suspicion, envy, hatred, strife, rebellion, murder. There was no safety anywhere. Friends and kindred betrayed one another. Parents slew their children, and children their parents. The rulers of the people had no power to rule themselves. Uncontrolled passions made them tyrants. The Jews had accepted false testimony to condemn the innocent Son of God. Now false accusations made their own lives uncertain. By their actions they had long been saying: "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Isaiah 30:11. Now their desire was granted. The fear of God no longer disturbed them. Satan was at the head of the nation, and the highest civil and religious authorities were under his sway. {G.C. page 28 paragraph 1}

WRONG UNDERSTANDING

For generations people have read the words "God destroyed", "God's wrath", "God smote", "God sent...evil" and understood these words in the same way they would understand them if used in reference to human behavior. In so doing, they overlook two fundamentally important truths:-

- i. God's ways are not man's ways
- ii. God's wrath and man's wrath are two totally different things.

Let us get the Bible proof:-

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. {Isaiah 55: 8- 9} KJV

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. {James 1: 20} KJV

THE APOSTLE PAUL EXPLAINS GOD'S WRATH

In Romans chapter 1: 18, Paul declares that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; {Romans 1: 18} KJV

Then in verses 24, 26 and 28, Paul explains that God exercises His wrath when He “GAVE THEM UP” to the consequences of their choices!

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: {Romans 1: 24}

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: {Romans 1: 26}

And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; {Romans 1: 28}

THE DEATH OF JESUS EXPLAINS IT FULLY

The wages of sin is death (Romans 6: 23), in fact, sin itself produces death (James 1: 15). Jesus tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2: 9). He suffered the full “penalty” of sin for us as our substitute and surety. Therefore, He suffered the full wrath of God for us.

The apostle Paul explains how Jesus died by using the same explanation of wrath he uses in Romans 1, listen to Paul:-

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? {Romans 8: 32} KJV

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. {Romans 4: 25} KJV

Jesus was given up, delivered up by the Father in other words, the Father withdrew or forsook His Son.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? {Matthew 27: 46} KJV

THE TESTIMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The mechanism of wrath can also be understood by careful study of Old Testament scriptures. In Deuteronomy chapter 28, there is the record of the long list of curses, smitings and punishments for disobedience. The language is strikingly punitive. But in Deuteronomy 31: 16- 18, God clearly spells out the mechanism of wrath again showing that the mechanism is separation from God!

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God [is] not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. {Deuteronomy 31: 17- 18} KJV

Isaiah bears witness to this same truth.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. {Isaiah 54: 7- 8} KJV

DOES GOD HARDEN HEARTS?

And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. {Exodus 4: 21} KJV

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. {Exodus 7: 3} KJV

For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, [and] that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. {Joshua 11: 20} KJV

HOW DOES GOD HARDEN HEARTS?

Is this to be understood in the same way as how we would “harden” someone’s heart? We need to find out how God deals with all human hearts (minds).

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: [and] not that he should return from his ways, and live? {Ezekiel 18: 23} KJV

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live ye. {Ezekiel 18: 32} KJV

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. {2 Peter 3: 9} KJV

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. {1 Timothy 2: 1- 4} KJV

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? {Romans 2: 4} KJV

If God is not willing that anyone should perish, he cannot harden anyone’s heart in the way we humanly understand the expression “harden someone’s heart”.

SCRIPTURE EXPLAINS

But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. {Exodus 8: 15} KJV

Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? {1 Samuel 6: 6} KJV

So Pharaoh hardened his own heart!

God tries His utmost to soften the heart by revealing His love and truth and by drawing the heart to Christ. If the man or woman keeps on resisting God's Love, he or she hardens his or her own heart, and the Spirit's convicting work ceases.

LISTEN TO JESUS

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. {John 3: 14- 15} KJV

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. {John 12: 32} KJV

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. {John 3: 16- 21} KJV

THE CLEAR MEANING

All this means that God “exercises” His wrath, God “destroys”, “smites” or “sends” calamity by withdrawing and giving up the particular individuals or nations to the consequences of sin!

AN ABSOLUTE PRINCIPLE

God governs His universe by unselfish agape love and by freedom. He has given His creatures genuine freedom of choice. God is love (1 John 4: 8).

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty. {2 Corinthians 3: 17} KJV

Since God runs the universe by Agape Love and freedom, He cannot use force or coercion against those who chose to reject Him.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. {Zechariah 4: 6} KJV

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

God loves all of His creatures whether friend or enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. {Matthew 5: 44- 45} KJV

Those who accept him, he gives himself fully to them in christ by his spirit, this is eternal life.

Those who finally reject Him, He will withdraw further and give them up to the government of their choice. This is eternal death because no other

government can give and sustain life than God's government. This is God's justice!

The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. The Lord is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. {Psalms 9: 15,16}

He gives His intelligent creatures the government of their choice! NO NEED TO BE AFRAID OF GOD. God hurts no one, kills no one. Sin, which separates from God, is the cause of all death.

By this love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love. We love because he loved us first. {1 John 4: 17- 19} NET

Oh praise the Lord, there is no fear in Love. Love hurts no one. God is Love!

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law. {Romans 13: 10} KJV

CLOSING GEM

CHRIST'S REVELATION OF GOD

All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” John 1:18.

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men, and yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth--in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin.

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.” Verse 14. {8T 286.5}

“Unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world,” He said, “I manifested Thy name,” “that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.” John 17:6, A. R. V., 26.

“Love your enemies,” He bade them; “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;” “for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36. {8.T. page 286}

CHAPTER 12

Peter's Ladder Knowledge Part Three

THE ORIGINAL LIAR

Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. {John 8: 44} KJV

You people are from your father the devil, and you want to do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not uphold the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies. {John 8: 44} NET

Satan is the father of lies, the original liar. This must mean that he was the first one to tell lies about God. Those original lies deceived one third of the angelic host and later on deceived our first parents and the whole world!

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. {Revelation 12: 9} KJV

THE WHOLE WORLD DECEIVED

The whole world has been deceived by Satan's lies about God's character; therefore we can be sure that the prevailing, popular, global understanding of God's character is part of that satanic deception. What is the traditional global understanding of God's character? Every religionist knows it because we all received the same religious indoctrination that God kills those who choose to go against Him, He kills His enemies and He is responsible for all the terrible destructions of history. That is the traditional view. Since the whole world has been deceived by Satan, that traditional view of God's behavior must be false!

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: {Ephesians 4: 18} KJV

Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator, and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love; his endeavors to set aside the divine law, leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements; and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers.

In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan's deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined. If it were possible, he would lead astray the elect. Mark 13:22, R.V. {GC- Introduction}

GOD ON TRIAL

It must be clear then that there is a great controversy between God and Satan and by extension between their respective followers. And if there is a great debate or controversy between God and Satan, one or the other has to be proved to be right and true or wrong and false. Therefore there must be, as it were, a trial, a "court case", a judgement, to determine the outcome.

Let us get the Bible proof.

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. {Romans 3: 4} KJV

Absolutely not! Let God be proven true, and every human being shown up as a liar, just as it is written: “so that you will be justified in your words and will prevail when you are judged. {Romans 3: 4} NET

WITNESSES

In every court trial or case of judgement there must be examination of evidence and the evidence is obtained from witnesses. Now, witnesses must tell the truth or rather should tell the truth. But we just read in Romans 3: 4 and we can read in Romans 3: 10- 19, that all mankind, all men in themselves, are liars. This excludes humans from being witnesses. Moreover, a witness must have a clear knowledge of the facts. This excludes angels because they need to fully learn the facts, for we are told that the angels desire to look into or study these issues.

They were shown that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things now announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things angels long to catch a glimpse of. {1 Peter 1: 12} NET

And to enlighten everyone about God’s secret plan – a secret that has been hidden for ages in God who has created all things. The purpose of this enlightenment is that through the church the multifaceted wisdom of God should now be disclosed to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms. {Ephesians 3: 9- 10} NET

THE ONLY ONE TRUE AND FAITHFUL WITNESS

The Bible is emphatically clear that there is only one true and faithful witness who knows God fully.

For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him]. {John 1: 17- 18} KJV

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These

things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; {Revelation 3: 14} KJV

Yes! Jesus the Christ, the Eternal Son of God is the true and faithful witness!

Moreover, Jesus is not only the true and faithful witness for God, He is also the true and faithful witness against Satan. This is true because by taking on our fallen flesh, He was tempted and harassed by Satan and then He tasted the death that sin causes. He therefore proved that Satan's government of sin is nothing but darkness and death!

But we see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God's grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone. For it was fitting for him, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. {Hebrews 2: 9- 10} NET

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil), and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death. For surely his concern is not for angels, but he is concerned for Abraham's descendants. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. For since he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. {Hebrews 2: 14- 18} NET

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; {Heberews 5: 8} KJV

ONLY ONE BEING IN ALL THE UNIVERSE

Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he

deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world.

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA page 21- 22}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA page 19}

THE MESSAGE OF THE TRUE WITNESS

The message Jesus gave (and gives) is clearly written down in Scripture!

Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him and announce to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. {1 John 1: 5} NET

Oh yes! In the court of universal judgement, Jesus gave a decisive testimony for God. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all!

NO MIXTURE IN GOD

Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet [water] and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so [can] no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who [is] a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. {James 3: 11- 13} KJV

Tradition has taught us that in God there is light and darkness, good and evil, a hybrid. Jesus dispels all such falsehoods. There is no hybrid of good and evil, or light and darkness in God. He is pure light and only pure light with no darkness at all!

Light means good, it means life, happiness, joy, truth, righteousness, love and all that is excellent and perfect.

Darkness means sin and its resultant evils; it means unhappiness, destruction, chaos, ruin and death. It means all that is inimical to God. The Bible calls death the enemy of God and God is not the source of His enemies!

God is not, in fact, cannot be, the source of darkness. Therefore God is not, in fact, cannot be, the source of death.

JESUS UNVEILED THE DECEPTION

The idea that God is the author, or cause, or source of death, is traditional deception.

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon

the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. "In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are." Hebrews 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God. {DA page 24}

A CLOSER LOOK AT SATAN'S LIE

We read earlier that one of Satan's key strategies in his original falsification of God's character was to make angels and men believe that God possessed the same evil characteristics that Satan possesses; "with his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator" DA page 22.

So successful has Satan been in deceiving the world to believe that God has a dark side, an evil side, that all religions, including traditional Christianity, believe in a God who uses force and who kills and causes destruction and chaos when He gets angry. This was one reason the Jews rejected Christ; they could not square Christ's character with their picture of God.

[That] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. {John 1: 9- 11} KJV

A WRONG VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

Satan's false education of the world and especially the religious world has deceived mankind into believing in a God of a hybrid character of good and evil, light and darkness. This has led most religionists to see such a hybrid

or dichotomy in the Bible. They see the dark side of God, the side of God's anger, force and destructiveness. This they call His justice! And they see the New Testament as revealing the side of God that is LIGHT, the side that is sweet, loving, gentle, meek, mild and non-destructive. This they call His mercy! Some even go as far as to see God, the Father, as the personification of destructive force and Jesus as the personification of harmless love!

TWO EXAMPLES

Two examples from scripture show that even the disciples of Jesus held such a view.

One example is found in John 14. Jesus had just finished telling Thomas the following words:

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. {John 14: 5- 7} KJV

But Philip, listening, wasn't sure "that knowing Jesus meant knowing the Father" and so he asked Jesus to show him the Father so he could be satisfied that the Father and the Son had the same character. The answer Jesus gave Philip was instructive.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. {John 14: 9- 10} KJV

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to

conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,-one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.

The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matthew 11:27. When one of the disciples made the request, "Show us the Father," Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" John 14:8, 9. {SC page 10- 11}

The second example is found in Luke 9: 51- 56. When the Samaritans in a certain village rejected Jesus, the disciples asked Jesus to call down fire from heaven to destroy them. They were confident in their request because they had the Old Testament account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel. But Jesus told them that the spirit that would destroy those who reject you is not the spirit of Christ and therefore not the spirit of God which means it is the spirit of Satan!

And when his disciples James and John saw [this], they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save [them]. And they went to another village. {Luke 9: 54- 56} KJV

JESUS GAVE A COMPLETE REVELATION OF GOD

Some religionists argue that Jesus came only to reveal one side of God but the words of Jesus prove such an argument to be false.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. {John 5: 19- 20} KJV

All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son. {8T page 286}

Therefore, all that men need to know or can know of God's character has been fully revealed by Jesus!

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and [he] to whomsoever the Son will reveal [him]. {Matthew 11: 27} KJV

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. {John 8: 12} KJV

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. {1 John 2: 8} KJV

No man, without divine aid, can attain to this knowledge of God. The apostle says that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Christ "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Jesus declared to His disciples: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." In that last prayer for His followers, before entering the shadows of Gethsemane, the Saviour lifted His eyes to heaven, and in pity for the ignorance of fallen men He said: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee." "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world."

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,-

-as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,--that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will.

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness. And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God," they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

At times Satan's contest for the control of the human family appeared to be crowned with success. During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he ruled with a terrible power as though through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. Even the covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself, had so far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character.

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as

the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.
{5T page 737- 739}

THE CALL FOR MORE WITNESSES

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. {1 John 1: 5} KJV

Jesus revealed that God is light and there is no darkness at all in God! This is the testimony of the true and faithful witness. But in order for God to win His case in court, He must have other witnesses and these witnesses must come from our world where the great conflict between Light and Darkness is playing out.

Remember earlier we saw that all men in themselves have been deceived by Satan's lies. Therefore, in order to be true witnesses, we need to believe Jesus' revelation of His Father and be transformed by that Light into true witnesses for God.

Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. {Isaiah 43: 10} KJV

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. {Acts 1: 8} KJV

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. {John 8: 32} KJV

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed {John 8: 36} KJV

Moreover in the end of time God will have a remnant who will possess the testimony or witness of Jesus. Jesus will again fully reveal God's character through His end-time remnant.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. {Revelation 12: 17} KJV

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth. {COL page 415}

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE GOSPEL

The knowledge of God's character has been revealed by how He treated mankind after Adam's fall.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. {Romans 5: 8} KJV

In an amazing act of absolutely unselfish love, God did not reckon our sins or Adam's fall against us. Rather, He put those sins on His Son who suffered the full consequences of our sin and guilt by being separated from His Father and by experiencing the suffering of that first eternal death which Adam's fall produced. That was the first condemnation and Jesus paid that debt in full by exhausting the "penalty" i.e. He suffered the full consequences of that first condemnation for all mankind.

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. {2 Corinthians 5: 19} KJV

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {John 3: 17} KJV

The second condemnation is incurred by rejecting Christ and His salvation. The second condemnation will produce the second eternal death.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. {Mark 16: 15- 16} KJV

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. {1 John 5: 11- 12} KJV

And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. {John 12: 47- 50} KJV

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. {Revelation 20: 14- 15} KJV

All who end up in the second death will do so because they have, with final choice, rejected the Son of God.

But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. {Proverbs 8: 36} KJV

God loves us unconditionally. God hates sin because sin separates and destroys. God loves His Son even more for having redeemed the lost race from sin. But each individual has freedom of choice. God has given eternal life to mankind. This life is in His Son. He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son does not have eternal life. And if you don't have eternal life, you have the second eternal death.

EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, [if] we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter [and] former rain unto the earth. {Hosea 3: 1- 6} KJV

God invites us to follow or to know Him. Such knowledge of God is described as:-

- i. Refreshing as morning
- ii. Early and latter rain of the Holy Spirit

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come.

“The knowledge of the Holy is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10.

Through a knowledge of Him are given unto us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” 2 Peter 1:3. {MH page 409}

THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WORKS TRANSFORMATION

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

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Of His own life the Saviour said, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” John 15:10. “The Father hath not left Me alone; for

I do always those things that please Him.” John 8:29. As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Saviour lived.

“For this cause,” Paul says, “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19.

We “do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” Colossians 1:9-11.

This is the knowledge which God is inviting us to receive, and beside which all else is vanity and nothingness. {MH page 425}

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE LAW OF GOD

The moral law of God is a transcript of His character; it is a minimum summary of the righteousness of God given to fallen mankind. The moral law defines sin and points out sin. The moral law shuts us up to a guilty conscience, giving us no ease. Thirdly, the moral law brings us to Christ to receive individual justification by faith. Lastly, the moral law of Ten Commandments bears witness that the righteousness we have received by faith in Christ is the very same righteousness described in the moral law. Therefore, in Christ the free gift of righteousness is manifested by obedience to the moral law of God. We are not saved by law, we are saved by faith in Christ and when we are saved by faith in Christ, our lives will be lives of obedience called the obedience of faith.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. {1 John 3: 4} KJV

What shall we say then? [is] the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. {Romans 7: 7} KJV

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. {Galatians 3: 22- 24} KJV

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: {Romans 3: 20- 22} KJV

[There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. {Romans 8: 1- 4} KJV

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. {Revelation 12: 17} KJV

The moral law is the law of Agape Love, when received in Christ it is manifested in obedience to the righteous principles revealed in the character of God. And God is love.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not

knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. {1 John 4: 7- 12} KJV

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law. {Romans 13: 10} KJV

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith. {1 John 5: 2- 4} KJV

TWO ANTAGONISTIC PRINCIPLES

In the Garden of Eden, the two contending governments were clearly represented. The Tree of Life represented the kingdom, the Government of God. Notice that it was not the tree of life and death; it was the Tree of Life. It indicated that there is no mixture, no hybridization in God's character. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1: 5). God is life and in Him is no death at all!

In contrast, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented Satan's government and in Satan's government, the good and evil is calculated to deceive and destroy. It is a hybrid that is all sinful.

The Tree of Life, God's pure Agape Love is absolutely unselfish, self-sacrificing, "all-for-the-other, none-for-self" love. Whereas the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is satanic self-exaltation, self-centeredness, selfishness, self-love.

Agape Love is the foundation and source of life. Selfishness is the foundation and source of every species of evil, chaos, destruction and death.

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name.

It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. And all who accept this principle are to be workers together with Him in demonstrating it in practical life. To choose the right because it is right; to stand for truth at the cost of suffering and sacrifice--"this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:17. {ED page 154}

The principle of the Baptist's own life of self-abnegation was the principle of the Messiah's kingdom. John well knew how foreign all this was to the principles and hopes of the leaders in Israel. That which was to him convincing evidence of Christ's divinity would be no evidence to them. They were looking for a Messiah who had not been promised. John saw that the Saviour's mission could win from them only hatred and condemnation. He, the forerunner, was but drinking of the cup which Christ Himself must drain to its dregs. {DA page 218}

To many minds a deep mystery surrounds the fate of John the Baptist. They question why he should have been left to languish and die in prison. The mystery of this dark providence our human vision cannot penetrate; but it can never shake our confidence in God when we remember that John was but a sharer in the sufferings of Christ. All who follow Christ will wear the crown of sacrifice. They will surely be misunderstood by selfish men, and will be made a mark for the fierce assaults of Satan. It is this principle of self-sacrifice that his kingdom is established to destroy, and he will war against it wherever manifested. {DA page 223}

CLOSING GEM

In viewing the holiness and glory of the God of the universe, we are terrified, for we know that His justice will not permit Him to clear the

guilty. But we need not remain in terror; for Christ came to the world to reveal the character of God, to make plain to us His paternal love toward His adopted children. We are not to estimate the character of God by the stupendous works of nature alone, but by the simple, lovely life of Jesus, who presented Jehovah as more merciful, more compassionate, more tender, than our earthly parents.

Jesus presented the Father as one to whom we could give our confidence and present our wants. When we are in terror of God, and overwhelmed with the thought of His glory and majesty, the Father points us to Christ as His representative. What you see revealed in Jesus, of tenderness, compassion, and love, is the reflection of the attributes of the Father. The cross of Calvary reveals to man the love of God. Christ represents the Sovereign of the universe as a God of love. By the mouth of the prophet He said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3).

We have access to God through the merits of the name of Christ, and God invites us to bring to Him our trials and temptations; for He understands them all. He would not have us pour out our woes to human ears. Through the blood of Christ we may come to the throne of grace and find grace to help in time of need. We may come with assurance, saying, "My acceptance is in the Beloved." "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Ephesians 2:18; 3:12).

As an earthly parent encourages his child to come to him at all times, so the Lord encourages us to lay before Him our wants and perplexities, our gratitude and love. Every promise is sure. Jesus is our Surety and Mediator, and has placed at our command every resource, that we may have a perfect character. {HP 18.5}

CHAPTER 13

Temperance

Temperance is the fourth round or third addition of Peter's Ladder. The word temperance in the KJV is translated from the Greek word EGKRATEIA which means self-restraint, self-control. Temperance or self-control is also listed by the apostle Paul as a component of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. {Galatians 5: 22- 23} NET

Moreover, the apostle Paul also states the basis and source of self-control in the next two verses of Galatians 5.

Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. {Galatians 5: 24- 25} NET

Our sinful SELF is our greatest enemy. It is the Ego, the big capital "I". What "I" want, what "I" feel, what pleases the "I" or the self. And if the self-centered human ego, the "I", the sinful SELF is not pleased, it can implode (suicide) or self-explode producing anger, violence, war, strife, destruction, misery, fretfulness, murmuring, complaining and every species of evil.

JESUS HAS CONQUERED THE HUMAN EGO

In the incarnation, the Son of God took on our sinful fallen human flesh, (including brain) with its human self-will. He absolutely submitted our fallen human self-will to the Divine principle of self-sacrificing agape LOVE. Therefore only the Father through the Holy Spirit in self-sacrificing, selfless love was manifested through our corporate human mind which He took on. He therefore emptied humanity's mind of its sinful self by surrendering it fully to God's self-sacrificing agape love. In Gethsemane our human self-will, which He took on, exerted its ultimate and most severe effort to have its own way but He kept it under (hupomeno) the Father's will. Then to crown it all off, He crucified our "I", our ego, our "self", our "flesh" (which He had taken on and conquered).

Here is the Bible proof:

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. {John 5: 30} KJV

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. {John 6: 38} KJV

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. {John 14: 10} KJV

Let every one of us please [his] neighbour for [his] good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. {Romans 15: 2- 3} KJV

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt]. {Matthew 26: 38- 39} KJV

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. {Matthew 26: 42} KJV

For the love of Christ controls us, since we have concluded this, that Christ died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised. So then from now on we acknowledge no one from an outward human point of view. Even though we have known Christ from such a human point of view, now we do not know him in that way any longer. So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away— look, what is new has come! {2 Corinthians 5: 14- 17} NET

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. {Galatians 2: 20} KJV

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. {Galatians 5: 24- 26} KJV

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. {Romans 6: 6} KJV

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. {Romans 6: 11} KJV

DRINKING THE CUP

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. {Matthew 26: 42} KJV

What is the “cup”?

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but [it shall be given to them] for whom it is prepared of my Father. {Matthew 20: 22- 23} KJV

The cup is the cup of God's SELF-SACRIFICING, SELFLESS, UNCONDITIONAL, OTHER-CENTERED AGAPE LOVE! This cup seems bitter and hard for the fallen human self-will to swallow. Jesus as our Second Adam, our Representative Man, drank that cup to the full for all mankind! Therefore only in Him are we emptied of self and filled with God's self-sacrificing other-centered agape love!

This cup in Christ we must drink every day, in fact every moment if we are to keep self "crucified" and allow only God's love to be manifested. So now we can move on to study temperance or self-control. And not only to study it but to experience the victory in Christ!

ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN SELF-CONTROL

1. Ruling one's Spirit

[He that is] slow to anger [is] better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. {Proverbs 16: 32} KJV

He that [hath] no rule over his own spirit [is like] a city [that is] broken down, [and] without walls. {Proverbs 25- 28} KJV

2. Controlling the Tongue in Speech

The north wind driveth away rain: so [doth] an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. [It is] better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. {Proverbs 25: 23- 24} KJV

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though [they be] so great, and [are] driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue [is] a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; [it is] an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of

God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. {James 3: 3- 10} KJV

Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. {Matthew 5: 5} KJV

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience. Those who have felt their need of Christ, those who have mourned because of sin and have sat with Christ in the school of affliction, will learn meekness from the divine Teacher.

Patience and gentleness under wrong were not characteristics prized by the heathen or by the Jews. The statement made by Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that he was the meekest man upon the earth, would not have been regarded by the people of his time as a commendation; it would rather have excited pity or contempt. But Jesus places meekness among the first qualifications for His kingdom. In His own life and character the divine beauty of this precious grace is revealed.

Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, thought "it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin. Through all the lowly experiences of life He consented to pass, walking among the children of men, not as a king, to demand homage, but as one whose mission it was to serve others. There was in His manner no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity. The world's Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature, yet united with His divine majesty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself.

Jesus emptied Himself, and in all that He did, self did not appear. He subordinated all things to the will of His Father. When His mission on earth was about to close, He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4. And He bids us, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself" (Matthew 11:29; 16:24); let self be dethroned and no longer hold the supremacy of the soul. {MB page 13- 16}

3. Controlling the Appetite

[It is] not good to eat much honey: so [for men] to search their own glory [is not] glory. {Proverbs 25: 27} KJV

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what [is] before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou [be] a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they [are] deceitful meat. {Proverbs 23: 1- 3} KJV

Blessed [art] thou, O land, when thy king [is] the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! {Ecclesiastes: 10 -17} KJV

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. {1 Corinthians 10- 31} KJV

The ideal diet is a plant-based diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts. Animal flesh and animal fat are not as conducive to good health as is a plant based diet.

Eating irregularly is not good, regular times should be set for meals and in-between-meal snacking should be avoided. Nor is it good to drink cold liquids while eating a hot meal. We should drink plenty of pure water in between our set meal times. High temperature methods of cooking such as the barbecue, the grill and frying are harmful, whereas boiling or steaming are the best ways to cook. Those food that can be eaten raw should be thoroughly washed before eating, those that must be cooked should be boiled or steamed.

Our bodies are built up from the food we eat. There is a constant breaking down of the tissues of the body; every movement of every organ involves waste, and this waste is repaired from our food. Each organ of the body requires its share of nutrition. The brain must be supplied with its portion; the bones, muscles, and nerves demand theirs. It is a wonderful process that transforms the food into blood and uses this blood to build up the varied parts of the body; but this process is going on continually, supplying with life and strength each nerve, muscle, and tissue.

Those foods should be chosen that best supply the elements needed for building up the body. In this choice, appetite is not a safe guide. Through wrong habits of eating, the appetite has become perverted. Often it demands food that impairs health and causes weakness instead of strength. We cannot safely be guided by the customs of society. The disease and suffering that everywhere prevail are largely due to popular errors in regard to diet.

In order to know what are the best foods, we must study God's original plan for man's diet. He who created man and who understands his needs appointed Adam his food. "Behold," He said, "I have given you every herb yielding seed, . . . and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food." Genesis 1:29, A.R.V. Upon leaving Eden to gain his livelihood by tilling the earth under the curse of sin, man received permission to eat also "the herb of the field." Genesis 3:18.

Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.

But not all foods wholesome in themselves are equally suited to our needs under all circumstances. Care should be taken in the selection of food. Our diet should be suited to the season, to the climate in which we live, and to the occupation we follow. Some foods that are adapted for use at one season or in one climate are not suited to another. So there are different foods best suited for persons in different occupations. Often food that can be used with benefit by those engaged in hard physical labor is unsuitable for persons of sedentary pursuits or intense mental application. God has given us an ample variety of healthful foods, and each person should choose from it the things that experience and sound judgment prove to be best suited to his own necessities. {MH page 295-6}

4. Avoiding that which is Injurious

True temperance can also be defined as totally avoiding all injurious substances and carefully using all that is wholesome and good.

Alcohol, tobacco and caffeine should be completely avoided. All substances that are addictive or habit-forming and toxic to the brain should be completely avoided e.g. marijuana, cocaine and the whole range of illegal narcotics and stimulants and hallucinogens.

Overindulgence is harmful. We should eat less calories and more protective, antioxidant foods. Overeating is a sin.

Regular open air exercise and adequate sleep at night are essential to good health. Regular exercise may be a minimum of 20 minutes at least 3- 4 days a week but one hour a day, five days a week would be even better. Adequate sleep means 7 to 8 hours of sleep at night with at least 2 hours being before midnight.

Refined sugars should be avoided and we should consume less salt. Our diet should be as natural and simple as possible.

5. Temperance in Dress

Well-covered modesty is the basic principle of dress-reform. The Christian should not dress to draw attention to self but to give glory to God! (1 Peter 3: 1- 4)

6. Temperance in what we Watch and Listen to

Watching or listening to evil is wrong and is destructive to right thinking. Watching TV shows in which sexual immorality and killing are the norm is a sinful practice. Listening to music with sinful lyrics or disorderly rhythm also corrupts morals and disrupts peaceful thinking.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things. {Philippians 4: 8} KJV

Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. {1 John 2: 15- 17} KJV

CLOSING GEM

Temperance in All Things.--In order to preserve health, temperance in all things is necessary,--temperance in labor, temperance in eating and drinking. Our heavenly Father sent the light of health reform to guard against the evils resulting from a debased appetite, that those who love purity and holiness may know how to use with discretion the good things He has provided for them, and that by exercising temperance in daily life, they may be sanctified through the truth. --Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, page 52. {Te page 141}

CHAPTER 14

Patience or Perseverance: The Fifth Round

Patience or perseverance is the fifth round or fourth addition in Peter's Ladder. In 2 Peter 1: 6, the word patience (KJV) is translated from the Greek word HUPOMONE which is a noun derived from the Greek verb HUPOMENO which means: to remain under. HUPOMONE, then, means remaining or staying under. It includes all that is meant by the English word patience but it goes beyond mere patience to mean remaining under the control of God's agape love in Christ by the Holy Spirit, under any pressure exerted to the contrary. The apostle James employs the word hupomone in James 5: 10- 11.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. {James 5: 10- 11} KJV

Hupomone means consistency of surrender and of course the supreme example of such absolute surrender was, and is, our Saviour the Lord Jesus in His earthly life.

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that

is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. {Revelaton 1: 9} KJV

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

In these texts the word translated patience is also hupomone.

GROWTH IN CONSTANCY OF SURRENDER (JOHN 15: 1- 4)

The early growth in the Christian experience is primarily growth in constancy of surrender. We are speaking here of growth between the blade and the ear of Mark 4: 26- 29, that is, growth between initial conversion and permanence of surrender. When the believer is surrendered, there is victory; when the believer is not surrendered there is defeat. Progressive early growth means progressive constancy of surrender with fewer and fewer episodes of being not surrendered. It is important to understand that such growth requires an aggressively progressive deepening of the believer's intimate relationship with Christ. Such deepening of intimacy with Christ includes prayer, study of the word and love motivated obedience to the word. All of this is made a successful reality by the Holy Spirit who unites the believer to Christ and who reproduces Christ's faith, love, submission, sacrifice and victory in the believer's character, but not without the believer's cooperation!

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges.

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air.

So the Christian is to grow by co-operating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. The work is to be done “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6. If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us “as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. We shall “grow as the lily.” We shall “revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.” Hosea 14:5, 7. By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head. {COL page 65-7}

OBSTACLES IN THE EARLY GROWTH

In the parable of ‘The Sower’ of Matthew 13, Jesus described the spiritual maladies which hinder or destroy early growth.

A “wayside” mind-set neither understands nor retains truth, there is therefore no growth at all in such a mind-set.

A “stony ground” mind-set hears and receives the word with joy but remains at the superficial level. Such a mind-set does not pursue deeper studies or deeper experience and therefore does not become intellectually or experientially anchored in the truth and becomes easily offended by trial or persecution occurring because of the word. Therefore growth is hindered.

In the “thorny ground” mind-set, a more advanced growth is reached, but, lo and behold, when it appears that the stage of the “ear” is about to be reached, two of Satan’s most successful strategies prevent any further growth. These strategies are

- i. The cares of life
- ii. The deceitfulness of riches

The “good soil” mind-set hears, understands and submits to the word of God. Growth to the “ear” and full corn in the ear proceed to the glory of God!

Both the stony ground and thorny ground mind-sets, if not remedied, produce spiritual death after initial conversion. These mind-sets are major contributors to the lukewarm Laodicean condition. The reason for this is that rather than accept the only genuine cure for the spiritual maladies most of us try the old covenant approach of attempting to cure these conditions by self-effort apart from Christ.

LAODICEAN LUKEWARMNESS

Lukewarmness is the major obstacle to spiritual growth in the end-time church. In order to reach the stage of growth called the ear by Jesus in Mark 4: 26- 29 (KJV), or the fifth round of Peter's ladder, the last day believer must overcome Laodicean lukewarmness.

It is important to understand that the basic spiritual pathology in the lukewarm condition is old covenant righteousness by works experience in which there is no growth and no victory. Lukewarmness produces spiritual death and there is therefore the need for reconversion. Yet, in all this, the lukewarm professed believer is totally ignorant of his/her spiritual condition.

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.
{Revelation 3: 14- 21} NIV

The only way to overcome lukewarmness is by understanding and experiencing the true doctrine of the covenants and the true gospel.

EARLY RAIN PREPARATION

The early rain of the Holy Spirit produces initial conversion (also reconversion and daily conversion) and produces early growth from the “blade” (initial conversion) to the “ear” (permanence of surrender). When the stage of the “ear” is reached, the soul temple is cleansed of every defilement and locked in permanent surrender to God in the abiding relationship with Christ.

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. {Mark 4: 26- 29} KJV

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. {James 5: 7- 8} KJV

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, [if] we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter [and] former rain unto the earth. {Hosea 6: 1- 3} KJV

It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. {5T page 214}

May the Lord help his people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out. {RH July 20th, 1886}

The third angel's message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that he may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for his service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil-surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord--fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. {RH March 22, 1892}

...if God's people make no efforts on their part, but wait for the refreshing to come upon them and remove their wrongs and correct their errors; if they depend upon that to cleanse them from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, they will be found wanting. The refreshing or power of God comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. {1T page 619}

Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving his light and knowledge, must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human

agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and he will finish his work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have, will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. {RH March 2nd, 1897}

THE NEED FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? {2 Corinthians 13: 5} KJV

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. {Galatians 6: 3- 4} KJV

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Closely criticize the temper, the disposition, the thoughts, words, inclinations, purposes, and deeds. How can we ask intelligently for the things we need unless we prove by the Scriptures the condition of our spiritual health?

Many in their religious life are making crooked paths for their feet. Their prayers are offered in a loose, haphazard manner. He who is placed in a position of responsibility should remember that of himself he is not able to do that which is required of him. Every day he should remember that he is a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. {1SM page 89}

The apostle Paul states clearly that we must build our character and our work upon the foundation of Christ Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by

fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. {1 Corinthians 3: 11- 15} KJV

In order to be prepared for translation, the end-time remnant must reach the gold-standard faith and character. That is the whole purpose of Jesus in giving us the “gold” to cure our lukewarmness.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. {Revelation 3: 18} KJV

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: {1 Peter 1: 7} KJV

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. {1 John 3: 1- 3} KJV

We should now make diligent inquiry of ourselves, Can I, with my present attainments, stand before the face of the holy God? If in the great day of judgment, we come short, we shall have no excuse; for we have access to the Word of God. Take the Bible for your lesson book; for it is by obedience to its truths that we shall be sanctified. To ensure the work of our salvation, God gave to our world the gift of his only begotten Son. Shall we accept the blessing that Christ has bought for us at such infinite sacrifice? He has made it possible for us to be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. {RH, August 15, 1907 par. 5}

Let us not give the impression that our religion consists principally in coming to the church on Sabbath, and numbering one among a

number who listen to a sermon, and then go back to their homes to continue in sinful practises. Christ said to his disciples, “Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Christ has given us the pattern to which we are to work, but unless we make diligent effort with the help of God, we shall miss the mark. We must be sanctified to God, soul, body, and spirit. {RH August 15th, 1907}

God says to his people today, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Will they heed the reproof? Will they dare to trifle with so direct and decided a statement, and keep their commended excellencies blasted as with a mildew because they allow Satan to steal in among them. “Thou hast left thy first love,” and therefore there is no steadfastness of purpose. Without this love, all knowledge, all capabilities, all outward zeal and service, are worthless. You do not receive from Christ grace to impart to others. And while you do not reveal the love that Christ has commanded you to reveal, your light is not shining forth to the world.

Leaving the first love is represented as a spiritual fall. Many have fallen thus. In every church in our land, there is needed confession, repentance, and reconversion. The disappointment of Christ is beyond description. Unless those who have sinned speedily repent, the deceptions of the last days will overtake them. Some, though they do not realize it, are preparing to be overtaken. God calls for repentance without delay. So long have many trifled with salvation that their spiritual eyesight is dimmed, and they can not discern between light and darkness. Christ is humiliated in his people. The first love is gone, the faith is weak, there is need of a thorough transformation.

My brethren and sisters, humble your hearts before the Lord. Seek him earnestly. I have an intense desire to see you walking in the light as Christ is in the light. I pray most earnestly for you. But I can not fail to see that the light which God has given me is not favorable

to our ministers or our churches. You have left your first love. Self-righteousness is not the wedding-garment. A failure to follow the clear light of truth is our fearful danger. The message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people. RH December 15th, 1904
Revival and Reformation

In order to reach the “ear” of Mark 4: 26- 29 (KJV) or the fifth round of Peter’s Ladder “hupomone” (2 Peter 1: 5- 7) the end-time people of God must be delivered from lukewarmness. There must be revival and reformation. There must be a true gospel experience in righteousness by faith and the character of God.

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow his blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our Heavenly Father is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us his blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God’s Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the word; but when the Spirit’s power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God’s word, with the manifestation of his Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home will be prepared to exert a healthful influence.

The old standard-bearers knew what it was to wrestle with God in prayer, and to enjoy the out-pouring of his Spirit. But these are passing off from the stage of action; and who are coming up to fill their places? How is it with the rising generation? are they converted to God? Are we awake to the work that is going on in the heavenly Sanctuary, or are we waiting for some compelling power to come upon the church before we shall arouse? Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? That time will never come.

There are persons in the church who are not converted, and who will not unite in earnest, prevailing prayer. We must enter upon the work individually. We must pray more, and talk less. Iniquity abounds, and the people must be taught not to be satisfied with a form of godliness without the spirit and power. If we are intent upon searching our own hearts, putting away our sins, and correcting our evil tendencies, our souls will not be lifted up unto vanity; we shall be distrustful of ourselves, having an abiding sense that our sufficiency is of God.

We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world. Unbelievers have a right to expect that those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will do more than any other class to promote and honor, by their consistent lives, by their godly example and their active influence, the cause which they represent. But how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement! The unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encourage the presence of evil angels, and open the way for the accomplishment of Satan's devices. {RH March 22nd, 1887}

In many hearts there seems to be scarcely a breath of spiritual life. This makes me very sad. I fear that aggressive warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil has not been maintained. Shall we cheer on, by a half-dead Christianity, the selfish, covetous spirit of the world, sharing its ungodliness and smiling on its falsehood?-- Nay! By the grace of God let us be steadfast to the principles of truth, holding firm to the end the beginning of our confidence. We are to be "not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." One is our Master, even Christ. To Him we are to look. From Him we are to receive our wisdom. By His grace we are to preserve our integrity, standing before God in meekness and contrition, and representing Him to the world. {RH February 25th, 1902}

A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation

signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.

“Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Christ gave His life for a fallen race, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. To him who does this will be spoken the words of approval, “Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

The word of the Lord never represses activity. It increases man’s usefulness by guiding his activities in the right direction. The Lord does not leave man without an object of pursuit. He places before him an immortal inheritance, and gives him ennobling truth, that he may advance in a safe and sure path, in pursuit of that which is worth the consecration of his highest capabilities,--a crown of everlasting life.

Man will increase in power as he follows on to know the Lord. As he endeavors to reach the highest standard, the Bible is as a light to guide his footsteps homeward. In that word he finds that he is a joint heir with Christ to an eternal treasure. The Guidebook points him to the unsearchable riches of heaven. By following on to know the Lord, he is securing never-ending happiness. Day by day the peace of God is his reward, and by faith he sees a home of everlasting sunshine, free from all sorrow and disappointment. God directs his footsteps, and keeps him from falling.

God loves His Church. There are tares mingled with the wheat, but the Lord knows His own. “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Shall not the counsel of Christ have an effect on the churches? Why halt, ye who know the truth, between two opinions? “If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” Christ’s followers have no right to stand on the ground of neutrality. There is more hope of an open enemy than of one who is neutral.

Let the Church respond to the words of the prophet, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.”

God’s people have lost their first love. They must now repent and make steady advancement in the path of holiness. God’s purposes reach to every phase of life. They are immutable, eternal; and at the time appointed they will be executed. For a time it may seem that Satan has all the power in his hands; but our trust is in God. When we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us, and will work with mighty power to accomplish His gracious purposes. {RH February 25th, 1902}

CONCLUSION

What a blessed experience it will be to reach the “ear” of Mark 4: 26- 29 or the “hupomone” of 2 Peter 1: 5- 7! A.T. Jones calls it “that point”! We close with this gem from the great reformer.

Now “Let this mind be in you.” It is not enough for a Christian to become all stirred up and say a few spiteful words, or raise the hand in resentment, and then say to himself, “O, I am a Christian. I must not say this, or do that.” No. We are to be so submitted to the power of God and to the influence of the Spirit of God, that our thoughts shall be so completely controlled, that the victory shall be won already and not even the impulse be allowed. Then we shall be Christians everywhere and all the time, under all circumstances and against all influences. But until we do reach **that point**, we are not sure that we shall show a Christian spirit under all circumstances and at all times, and against all insults. {A.T. Jones Sermon 18, 1895}

CHAPTER 15

Peter's Ladder Godliness: The Sixth Round

INTRODUCTION

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. {2 Peter 1: 5- 7} KJV

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: {2 Peter 1: 3} KJV

The English word godliness (KJV) is translated from the Greek word eusebeia which means piety, reverence, holy affections, respect for God that issues forth into a life style of solemn humility and holiness and peace. The word also means Godly fear and solemnity of worship i.e. an attitude and demeanor of a true worshipper of the true and holy God.

FORM WITHOUT POWER

The apostle Paul warns against an end-time counterfeit of true godliness, this end-time counterfeit is a form of godliness without the power.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. {2 Timothy 3: 5} KJV

This is similar to Old Covenant external form, lukewarmness or ceremonialism.

TRUE GODLINESS

The power of the true godliness is CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY (Colossians 1: 27), but for Christ to be in the believer, the believer must be in Christ! (John 15: 4). Godliness means the manifestation of God in the life of the believer. This can only occur when the believer is emptied of self and this can only be accomplished by receiving the mind of Christ.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross! {Philippians 2: 5- 8} NIV

By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. {John 5: 30} NIV

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. {John 14: 10} NIV

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. {2 Corinthians 5: 14- 15} NIV

Christ emptied Himself in order that God might be manifest in the flesh, in sinful flesh, and when He comes to us and dwells in us, upon our choice, bringing to us that divine mind of His which is the mind that empties self wherever it goes, wherever it can find an entrance, wherever it can find any place to act, the mind of Christ is the emptying of self, is the abolishing of self, the destruction of self, the annihilation of self. Therefore, when by our choice that divine mind comes to us,

the result is as certain that ourselves will be emptied as that the mind dwells in us. And as soon as that is done, God works fully and manifests Himself, in sinful flesh though it be. And that is victory. That is triumph.

And thus with the mind we serve the law of God. The law is manifested, it is fulfilled, its principles shine in the life, because the life is the character of God manifest in human flesh, sinful flesh, through Jesus Christ. It seems to me that that thought ought to raise every one of us above all the power of Satan and of sin. It will do that as certainly as we surrender to that divine mind and let it abide in us as it abode in Him. It will do it. {A.T. Jones 1895 Sermons #18}

In Peter's ladder godliness comes after "hupomone". Hupomone means that permanence of surrender which allows the believer to be emptied of self by the indwelling mind of Christ. When the believer is emptied of self, God in Christ by the Holy Spirit will be manifested in the believer's character at all times. We know of course, that in Peter's ladder there is both simultaneous and consecutive addition. The full and consistent manifestation of godliness requires all the previous rounds of the ladder: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance and patience (KJV) = hupomone. In order to live a consistently godly life there must be the constant receiving and assimilation of God's grace! Through grace, God's divine power has given us all that we need to live truly consistent godly lives!

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: {2 Peter 1: 2- 3} KJV

ACCESS TO GRACE

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. {Romans 5: 1- 5} KJV

In this beautiful passage of scripture the apostle Paul informs us that when we are justified by faith we

- i. Have peace with God,
- ii. stand in the grace of God
- iii. and have access to the grace of God.

What is grace? God's grace is all that He has done and accomplished for us in our Saviour Jesus the Christ. The resurrected and ascended Saviour, as our High Priest, intercedes for us before His Father in the Heavenly Sanctuary. As a result of Christ's intercession the Holy Spirit draws all to Christ and imparts faith. Those who believe are justified by faith and the Holy Spirit reproduces in the believer's character all that Christ has already accomplished for us.

God's grace is His agape love in the Holy Spirit bringing to us the full victory which that agape love accomplished in Christ for us. In the application of general grace to our world and specific grace to believers, the Holy Spirit works through angels and believers!

HOW TO ACCESS GRACE

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. {Hebrews 4: 14- 16} KJV

But this [man], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. {Hebrews 7: 24- 25} KJV

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And [having] an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart

in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. {Hebrews 10: 19- 22} KJV

We have access to this grace and we obtain mercy and receive grace by coming boldly to the throne of grace. How do we come boldly? The answer is: by prayer! Remember, we can only ask for what God has promised. Therefore intelligent prayer depends upon and even deepening study of God's word! God's word imparts faith: prayer and faith work together in plugging into the access to receive all that God has given us in Christ!

And he spake a parable unto them [to this end], that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; {Luke 18: 1} KJV

Pray without ceasing. {1 Thessalonians 5: 17} KJV

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. {Philippians 4: 6- 7} NIV

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. {Philippians 4: 19} KJV

We arrive at the inescapable conclusion that godliness requires an even deepening consistent prayer and devotional life. No one can live a godly life without much prayer and progressively advancing study of God's truth!

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. {Psalms 91: 1} KJV

What is this secret place of the Most High? The answer is stated clearly in scripture.

FIRSTLY:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. {Colossians 3: 1- 3} KJV

Here we are told that the true believer's life is hid with Christ in God and is therefore with Christ where Christ sits on the right hand of God which is in the Heavenly Sanctuary! (Hebrews 8: 1- 2; 9: 1- 12).

SECONDLY:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: {Colossians 2: 8- 10} KJV

Here we are told that the true believer is complete in Christ!

THIRDLY:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. {John 15: 4- 7} KJV

The believer is in Christ and Christ is in the believer. This is spiritual intimacy.

FOURTHLY:

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

Here we have the beautiful truth that the believer is in Christ and Christ is in the Father; at the same time Christ is in the believer and the Father is in Christ!

The secret place of the Most High is in Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary! Ever since the end of the 2300 days (years) of Daniel 8: 14, Christ our High Priest has been in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. There is where the Judgement Seat of Christ is situated as He performs the pre-advent judgement while continuing His work of intercession. At the same time He is working to perfect the character of His remnant church for the last battle in the Great Controversy.

Access to God's grace in this end-time therefore means dwelling in the secret place of the Most High by abiding in Christ and cooperating with Him in His work in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary.

Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth. {GC page 488}

If we are to develop the godliness necessary for the final crisis we must not allow our minds to be diverted from Jesus and His truth!

Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel,

every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days. {GC page 488}

THE VERY CENTRE OF CHRIST'S WORK

All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God. {GC page 488-9}

FAITH AND GRACE TO OVERCOME

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would make haste to confess their sins and to put them away. Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome. But Jesus pleads in their behalf His wounded hands, His bruised body; and

He declares to all who would follow Him: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” 2 Corinthians 12:9. “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:29, 30. Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them. {GC page 489}

CHAPTER 16

Peter's Ladder The Sixth Round - Godliness Part Two

INTRODUCTION

A life of godliness or piety is a life of holiness. It is a life lived in harmony with, or obedience to Biblical principles of holy conduct through the abiding relationship of you in Christ and Christ in you in John 15: 1- 4.

Principles of Practical Godliness

Principles of piety or practical godliness are found throughout the Bible. Some of the most comprehensive expositions are found in certain key New Testament passages which are worth reading and rereading, e.g. Ephesians 5; Colossians 3; Titus chapters 2 and 3.

In Ephesians 5 Paul gives a list of the following key points of practical piety for believers.

1. Be followers of God (vs. 1)
2. Walk in love (vs. 2)
3. Shun sexual immorality and all uncleanness (vs. 3)

The Greek word translated uncleanness is AKATHARSIA which means physical or moral impurity or filthiness, hence the old adage: cleanliness is next to godliness.

Godliness therefore includes home and environmental cleanliness and tidiness. Christians should be exemplary in caring for the environment and in maintaining cleanliness of person, home and surroundings.

4. Do not be covetous (vs. 3)
5. Filthy speech, foolish talking and jesting are absolutely forbidden. They have no place in a godly life. (vs. 4)
6. Walk circumspectly or with perfect precision in the word of God (vs. 15)
7. Use your time wisely (vs. 16)
8. Be temperate (vs. 18)

Here is some added light on the use of our time.

Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.

The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment.

The human family have scarcely begun to live when they begin to die, and the world's incessant labor ends in nothingness unless a true knowledge in regard to eternal life is gained. The man who appreciates time as his working day will fit himself for a mansion and for a life that is immortal. It is well that he was born.

We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being co-workers with God in His great plan of redemption.

In him who does this, a transformation of character takes place. He becomes a son of God, a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. He is fitted to be the companion of the angels.

Now is our time to labor for the salvation of our fellow men. There are some who think that if they give money to the cause of Christ, this is all they are required to do; the precious time in which they might do personal service for Him passes unimproved. But it is the privilege and duty of all who have health and strength to render to God active service. All are to labor in winning souls to Christ. Donations of money cannot take the place of this.

Every moment is freighted with eternal consequences. We are to stand as minute men, ready for service at a moment's notice. The opportunity that is now ours to speak to some needy soul the word of life may never offer again. God may say to that one, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," and through our neglect he may not be ready. (Luke 12:20.) In the great judgment day, how shall we render our account to God?

Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal and earthly matters, in a treadmill of care and anxiety for the things that are but an atom in comparison with the things of eternal interest. Yet God has called us to serve Him in the temporal affairs of life. Diligence in this work is as much a part of true religion as is devotion. The Bible gives no indorsement to idleness. It is the greatest curse that afflicts our world. Every man and woman who is truly converted will be a diligent worker.

Upon the right improvement of our time depends our success in acquiring knowledge and mental culture. The cultivation of the intellect need not be prevented by poverty, humble origin, or unfavorable surroundings. Only let the moments be treasured. A few moments here and a few there, that might be frittered away in aimless talk; the morning hours so often wasted in bed; the time spent in traveling on trams or railway cars, or waiting at the station; the moments of waiting for meals, waiting for those who are tardy in keeping an appointment--if a book were kept at hand, and these fragments of time were improved in study, reading, or careful thought, what might not be accomplished. A resolute purpose, persistent industry, and careful economy of time, will enable men to acquire knowledge and mental discipline which will qualify them for almost any position of influence and usefulness.

It is the duty of every Christian to acquire habits of order, thoroughness, and dispatch. There is no excuse for slow bungling at work of any character. When one is always at work and the work is never done, it is because mind and heart are not put into the labor. The one who is slow and who works at a disadvantage should realize that these are faults to be corrected. He needs to exercise his mind in planning how to use the time so as to secure the best results. By tact and method, some will accomplish as much in five hours as others do in ten. {COL page 342-4}

ORDER AND HARMONY IN WORSHIP

For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. {1 Corinthians 14: 33} KJV

Let all things be done decently and in order. {1 Corinthians 14: 40} KJV

True godliness includes humanity, respect and reverence for God and His worship and for the presence of God in the place of worship.

When the worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. If there is a stove in the room, it is not proper to crowd about it in an indolent, careless attitude. Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshipers.

If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness, by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer. The spiritual condition needs to be often reviewed and the mind and heart drawn toward the Sun of Righteousness. If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence. The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find

no sanction in the house where God is worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the word of God, that it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart.

When the minister enters, it should be with dignified, solemn mien. He should bow down in silent prayer as soon as he steps into the pulpit, and earnestly ask help of God. What an impression this will make! There will be solemnity and awe upon the people. Their minister is communing with God; he is committing himself to God before he dares to stand before the people. Solemnity rests upon all, and angels of God are brought very near. Every one of the congregation, also, who fears God should with bowed head unite in silent prayer with him that God may grace the meeting with His presence and give power to His truth proclaimed from human lips. When the meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in the presence of the Holy One, and every heart should ascend to God in silent devotion. The prayers of faithful worshipers will be heard, and the ministry of the word will prove effectual. The lifeless attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one great reason why the ministry is not more productive of good. The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies. {5T page 492}

UNGODLINESS SHOULD BE DENIED

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; {Titus 2: 12- 13} KJV

Paul gave Titus a synopsis of Christian godliness.

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that [they be] in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, [To be] discreet,

chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine [showing] uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. {Titus 2: 1- 8} KJV

CHAPTER 17

Peter's Ladder The Seventh Round: Brotherly Kindness – Part One

INTRODUCTION

Brotherly kindness is the seventh round (or sixth addition) of Peter's Ladder. 2 Peter 1: 7 (first part) reads thus: "And to godliness brotherly kindness;"

It should be clear from all the previous studies in this series that the climbing of Peter's Ladder is spiritual growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. It can be likened to a character construction assignment or project given us by Jesus our High Priest! Although it is the Holy Spirit who reproduces the character of Christ in the believer yet the believer's free choice and active participation are required at each step. Therefore the believer is commanded to add! And as we add the Holy Spirit multiplies!

THE DEFINITION OF BROTHERLY KINDNESS

Brotherly kindness is translated from the GREEK word PHILADELPHIA. PHILADELPHIA is a compound word involving two Greek words: PHILEO (love) and ADELPHOS (brother). It literally means "the love of brothers".

In the New Testament the word PHILADELPHIA describes the love which Christians should have and cherish for each other as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

THE BASIS OF BROTHERLY KINDNESS

[Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; {Romans 12: 10} KJV

Brotherly love is the basis of our being kindly affectioned one to another and honourably preferring one another. The basis of brotherly love is God's Agape Love which is other-centered and not self-centered! This love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit when we abide in Christ.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. {Romans 5: 5- 8} KJV

The Agape Love of God as revealed in the infinite sacrifice of His Son is the basis of Christian brotherly love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. {1 John 4: 9- 11} KJV

THE NECESSITY OF BROTHERLY KINDNESS

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. {John 13: 34- 35} KJV

Genuine Christian brotherly love is the necessary evidence to prove to the world that professed believers are truly disciples of Christ! Jesus made love for brethren an identifying mark by which the world can know that we are His disciples.

Any claim to love God or to know Him is proven to be false if there is no love for the brethren.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. {1 John 4: 7- 8} KJV

Even before people pay attention to doctrine they are positively influenced by brotherly love especially when such love is seen among believers who come from different social, economic, educational or racial backgrounds. Showing brotherly love to unbelievers will make it easier to convince them of doctrinal truth.

THE GROWTH OF BROTHERLY KINDNESS

Brotherly kindness must be developed, it must grow. Its development begins at conversion when believers first obey gospel and their souls are purified to enable a sincere love of the brethren.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. {1 Peter 1: 22- 23} KJV

As we grow in the knowledge of God through a study of His word we are taught by God Himself to love each other.

But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; {1 Thessalonians 4: 9- 10} KJV

Of course the Father teaches us how to love by the giving of His Son who freely chose to die as a propitiation for our sins.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. {1 John 4: 9- 11} KJV

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. {John 13: 34} KJV

Growth in brotherly kindness is in direct proportion to our reception of the mind-set of Jesus.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! {Philippians 2: 1- 8} NIV

THE MANIFESTATION OF BROTHERLY KINDNESS

Brotherly kindness manifests itself in many ways in the Body of Christ. Here is a list of some of these manifestations of brotherly love.

1. Those members of the Body who are spiritually strong should be willing to help those members who are spiritually weak.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. {Romans 15: 1} KJV

2. Although we have liberty in Christ we must be willing to limit that freedom if our liberty might make a brother fall or disrupt unity. (Of course we are not talking here of matters of faith and conscience).

Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. {1 Corinthians 8: 13} KJV

3. Brotherly kindness will prevent us from judging our brothers or speaking badly about them.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of [his] brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? {James 4: 11- 12} KJV

4. Brotherly kindness leads us to care for each other to warn the unruly, to comfort the faint-hearted, to strengthen the weak, to be patient toward all, not to retaliate when wronged.

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all [men]. See that none render evil for evil unto any [man]; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all [men]. {1 Thessalonians 5: 14- 15} KJV

5. Brotherly love motivates us to edify one another and to seek for peace among the brethren.

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. {Romans 14: 9} KJV

CONCLUSION

The proof of love for God is love for each other. Believer's show their love for God by manifesting genuine love for each other and indeed for all mankind. (Matthew 5: 43- 48)

Here is some counsel given by the Spirit of Prophecy in the 1888- 1895 era. It is worth our careful consideration today.

Satan has gained many victories over the professed followers of Jesus through their unchristlike spirit and behavior toward their brethren who do not agree with them, and toward unbelievers. The discussion of doctrines has not resulted in bringing union, but variance. A bitter spirit has been cherished, bitter words have been spoken. The words of the True Witness should be carefully studied by all: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love,"--grown cold, unsympathetic; hardness of heart has taken the place of brotherly, Christlike love. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place,

except thou repent.” This warning should be heeded by every church in our ranks. New elements of Christian life must be brought into the church. Love for Christ means a broad, extended love for one another, that love which is now so sadly wanting. The lack of love leads to the lack of respect for each other, and the neglect of true courtesy. There is criticising, fault-finding, reporting words spoken in confidence, and using these to second the accusations of Satan, who is ever busy in sowing distrust, jealousy, and bitterness. Why do the members of the church run so readily into this evil work, overlooking the precious things? Why do they not speak words of approval and encouragement to one another, and thus water the precious plant of love, that it may not die out of the heart?

We must awake; we must consider humbly and attentively the words of the True Witness. Shall these words, which present such solemn consequences, have their designed effect? Are they to be lost upon the church? If we do not manifest toward one another the tender, pitying love of Christ, we show that we do not appreciate the wealth of love that Jesus has manifested to us at such an infinite cost to himself. We show that we do not love Jesus, when we do not love those whom he has given his life to save. Shall we who profess to be Christians, engage in the work of weakening and discouraging those whom we should strengthen? God has united us in a sacred brotherhood, and if we understand and appreciate this, we shall move with great carefulness toward all who are seeking to follow Jesus.

All who have the Saviour dwelling in their hearts will feel a yearning for fellowship and communion with one another. There will be no drawing apart. The Spirit of Christ abiding in our hearts will be attracted to the same Spirit in the hearts of our brethren; and there cannot but be oneness. The heart where Christ is a cherished guest will flow out in love to all the objects of his love and compassion. But this love does not grow of itself; we must cultivate it by daily receiving of the grace of Christ. The Lord Jesus accepted his disciples, not because they were defective in character, but notwithstanding their defects. We must draw near to our erring brethren and help them. {RH February 9th, 1892}

Let brotherly love continue! (Hebrews 13: 1)

CHAPTER 18

Peter's Ladder The Seventh round Brotherly Kindness Part Two

INTRODUCTION

In our last chapter, Brotherly Kindness Part One, we discussed the basic principles of brotherly love and kindness. In this chapter we want to go deeper into this study of brotherly kindness. We begin with that wonderful Psalm of David, Psalms 133.

Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is] for brethren to dwell together in unity! [It is] like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, [even] Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, [and as the dew] that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, [even] life for evermore. {Psalms 133} KJV

PHILADELPHIA IS BASED ON AGAPE

Brotherly kindness has its foundation in God's Agape Love. In fact, Agape Love is the source of brotherly love.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I

am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. {1 Corinthians 13: 1- 7} NIV

When the unity of the Corinthian church was being threatened by how the members were reacting to the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul admonished them.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. {1 Corinthians 12: 27- 31} NIV

He then wrote his wonderful treatise on Agape Love (1 Corinthians 13).

PHILADELPHIA AND TRUST

Faith working by love is the basis of relationships. Brotherly love works through faith in building interrelationships between members of the body as it does in building our relationship with Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

We must never forget that both love and trust are vulnerable, yet this vulnerability is not a sign of weakness but of power since love never fails and is not afraid of the risks involved in the exercise of brotherly kindness and in building relationships.

STAGES OF RELATIONSHIP

Those who study the function of the mind in human relationships tell us that there are seven stages of relationship. As we move from stage one through stage seven, the relationship deepens and at the same time vulnerability increases.

Here now is the list of the seven stages:-

1. Stage one is the stage of acquaintance where greetings are politely exchanged e.g. “Good morning” or “good evening” or “how are you doing?”
2. Stage two is the stage of acceptance, of exchanging facts and reports, reaching out and listening.
3. Stage three is the stage of trust, of exchanging opinions and judgement, being transparent.
4. Stage four is the stage of deepening, of sharing or exchanging feelings, revealing emotions, working through conflict, forgiving.
5. Stage five is the stage of companionship, of sharing failures and mistakes, spending quality time together, cooperating.
6. Stage six is the stage of commitment, being able to have the others point out your faults without offence and vice versa, it includes serving, sharing, sacrificing.
7. Stage seven is the stage of total intimacy (non-physical) in the friendship of brotherly love.

In building our relationship with Jesus we also go through these seven stages. As the Holy Spirit reveals to us more and more of the Agape Love of the Father and Son, our fears are progressively removed and our intimacy with our Lord deepens. Between stage three and stage five, we are able to repent of and confess our sins and trust God to remove (aphiemi) these sins.

Jesus actually yearns for the deepest intimacy of relationship with us. Listen to His words and appreciate His longing for the deepest levels of spiritual intimacy with us.

Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if any hear my voice and open the door, I will come into their house and eat with them, and they will eat with me. {Revelations 3: 20} TEV

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. {John 14: 23} KJV

Since vulnerability increases in direct proportion to the deepening of intimacy, we need to be progressively delivered from all our fears. Self and

fear are obstacles to building brotherly love and friendship but God's love, revealed in the Gospel sets us free from both.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. {Hebrews 2: 14- 15} KJV

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. {2 Corinthians 5: 14- 15} NIV

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. {1 John 4: 18- 19} NIV

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THE SEVEN STAGES

1. David and Jonathan

This is the most striking Old Testament example of brotherly love. David never had a deeper friendship with anyone; it was a beautiful example of stage seven friendship and intimacy of brotherly love. Let us read again David's expression of heart felt grief over Jonathan's death.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. {2 Samuel 1: 26} KJV

2. Ruth and Naomi (Read the book of Ruth)

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, [or] to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God: {Ruth 1: 16} KJV

3. Jesus and Mary

Jesus in His earthly life had a wonderful friendship with the Lazarus, Martha and Mary family, particularly Mary. The ever deepening friendship with

Mary in which she experienced complete deliverance from sin and despair is also a classic example of stage seven spiritual intimacy.

4. Jesus and His Disciples

The disciples of Jesus did not reach a stage seven friendship among themselves until after His death and resurrection. Earlier on they were each at the acquaintance level with the others. Gradually, their friendship with each other and with Jesus grew. But there was a lot of self. Remember when they were disputing among themselves who should be greatest? (Mark 9: 33-37) it was the revelation of Divine Love at the Cross that melted their hearts. It brought them into a deeper, closer relationship with Jesus and each other until “they were all with one accord in one place” Acts 2: 1.

The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this they realized what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them. These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised. {AA page 37}

5. Paul and the Thessalonians

Another wonderful example of stage seven brotherly love and spiritual intimacy is the deep relationship the Apostle Paul had with the Thessalonians. Take time to read 1 Thessalonians chapters 1 to 3 and learn of this wonderful brotherly love.

When Paul was separated from the Thessalonians, he missed them so much that it was unbearable. He longed to see them but could not visit them and

so he sent Timothy to visit them and to encourage them in the faith. When Timothy brought back the good news of their faithfulness even amidst persecution, Paul was overjoyed.

6. The End-Time Remnant

The work of the Holy Spirit (Early Rain) in bringing the remnant believers to the stage of growth called the “ear” (Mark 4: 26- 29) also brings them to maturity in brotherly love and unity in faith and truth and gospel order. This is a prerequisite for the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit which will ripen the remnant to the “full grain in the ear”.

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. {Ephesians 4: 11- 16} NIV

Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. {1 Peter 3: 8- 9} KJV

[Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. {Philippians 2: 3- 4} KJV

God has a special work for the men of experience to do. They are to guard the cause of God. They are to see that the work of God is not committed to men who feel it their privilege to move out on their own

independent judgment, to preach whatever they please, and to be responsible to no one for their instructions or work. Let this spirit of self-sufficiency once rule in our midst, and there will be no harmony of action, no unity of spirit, no safety for the work, and no healthful growth in the cause. There will be false teachers, evil workers who will, by insinuating error, draw away souls from the truth. Christ prayed that his followers might be one as he and the Father were one. Those who desire to see this prayer answered, should seek to discourage the slightest tendency to division, and try to keep the spirit of unity and love among brethren.

God calls for laborers; but he wants those who are willing to submit their wills to his, and who will teach the truth as it is in Jesus. One worker who has been trained and educated for the work, who is controlled by the Spirit of Christ, will accomplish far more than ten laborers who go out deficient in knowledge, and weak in the faith. One who works in harmony with the counsel of God, and in unity with the brethren, will be more efficient to do good, than ten will be who do not realize the necessity of depending upon God, and of acting in harmony with the general plan of the work. {RH May 29th, 1888}

If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them in favor of the Christian religion. Dissensions, unhappy differences, and petty church-trials dishonor our Redeemer. All these may be avoided, if self is surrendered to God, and the followers of Jesus obey the voice of the church. Unbelief suggests that individual independence increases our importance, that it is weak to yield to the verdict of the church our own ideas of what is right and proper. But to cherish such feelings and views will only bring anarchy into the church and confusion to ourselves. Christ saw that unity and Christian fellowship were necessary to the cause of God, therefore he enjoins it upon his disciples. And the history of Christianity from that time until now proves conclusively that in union only there is strength. Let individual judgment submit to the authority of the church.

The apostles felt the necessity of strict unity, and they labored earnestly to this end. Paul exhorted his brethren in these words: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that

ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

He also writes to his Philippian brethren: “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

To the Romans he writes, “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” “Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.”

Peter wrote to the churches scattered abroad: “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”

And Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians says: “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” {RH February 19th, 1880}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within--when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL page 384}

CHAPTER 19

Peter's Ladder Agape Love (Charity in KJV) Round Number 8 – Part One

INTRODUCTION

The biblical accounts of killings, wars, destruction of ethnic groups and nations, have caused and continue to cause people to believe that God is a vengeful, unpleasant, tyrannical deity who rules by force and fear and who killed people by the millions in the past. When such a picture of God is coupled with the popular doctrine of eternal torment of the unsaved, there is little wonder that millions refuse to believe in such a deity.

The honest searcher for truth must ask a very important question: how do we harmonize statements of God killing His opponents in the Old Testament with the doctrine that God is a God of love and freedom who has given His creatures genuine freedom of choice?

LOVE AND FREEDOM

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. {1 John 4: 8} KJV

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. {1 John 4: 18} NIV

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless

them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. {Matthew 5: 43- 48} KJV

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law. {Romans 13: 9- 10} KJV

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. {Revelation 22: 17} NIV

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. {2 Corinthians 3: 17} NIV

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. {Zechariah 4: 6} KJV

The meaning and intent of the above scriptures is summarized in the following statement.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love--service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP Page 34}

It should be abundantly clear then, that God cannot use force or “fear of punishment” against His opponents.

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA page 759}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan’s deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world’s dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. {DA page 22}

In our earlier studies on the KNOWLEDGE, we saw that the unselfish, self-sacrificing, non-violent, harmless, unconditional, eternal love of God, has been fully revealed by Jesus Christ through His earthly life and death. Therefore, any Old Testament killing or destruction attributed to God that does not square with Jesus’ revelation of Him must have been caused by sin and not by God!

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave a comprehensive outline of the foundational principles of God’s government. Tradition and misinterpretation had caused the Jews to have a false picture of God’s character. They hated their Roman oppressors and wanted to take out revenge on them by military conquest. And of course they had the Old Testament accounts of the military campaigns of Joshua and David which

killed thousands in military conquest. They were sure that military warfare was part of God's government and character.

Christ disappointed the hope of worldly greatness. In the Sermon on the Mount He sought to undo the work that had been wrought by false education, and to give His hearers a right conception of His kingdom and of His own character. Yet He did not make a direct attack on the errors of the people. He saw the misery of the world on account of sin, yet He did not present before them a vivid delineation of their wretchedness. He taught them of something infinitely better than they had known. Without combating their ideas of the kingdom of God, He told them the conditions of entrance therein, leaving them to draw their own conclusions as to its nature. The truths He taught are no less important to us than to the multitude that followed Him. We no less than they need to learn the foundation principles of the kingdom of God. {DA page 299}

The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15.

His example is for us. When we are brought in conflict with the enemies of Christ, we should say nothing in a spirit of retaliation or that would bear even the appearance of a railing accusation. He who stands as a mouthpiece for God should not utter words which even the Majesty of heaven would not use when contending with Satan. We are to leave with God the work of judging and condemning.

The love of God is something more than a mere negation; it is a positive and active principle, a living spring, ever flowing to bless others. If the love of Christ dwells in us, we shall not only cherish no hatred toward our fellows, but we shall seek in every way to manifest love toward them. {MB page 58}

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. {Matthew 5: 39} KJV

Occasions of irritation to the Jews were constantly arising from their contact with the Roman soldiery. Detachments of troops were stationed at different points throughout Judea and Galilee, and their presence reminded the people of their own degradation as a nation. With bitterness of soul they heard the loud blast of the trumpet and saw the troops forming around the standard of Rome and bowing in homage to this symbol of her power. Collisions between the people and the soldiers were frequent, and these inflamed the popular hatred. Often as some Roman official with his guard of soldiers hastened from point to point, he would seize upon the Jewish peasants who were laboring in the field and compel them to carry burdens up the mountainside or render any other service that might be needed. This was in accordance with the Roman law and custom, and resistance to such demands only called forth taunts and cruelty. Every day deepened in the hearts of the people the longing to cast off the Roman yoke. Especially among the bold, rough-handed Galileans the spirit of insurrection was rife. Capernaum, being a border town, was the seat of a Roman garrison, and even while Jesus was teaching, the sight of a company of soldiers recalled to His hearers the bitter thought of Israel's humiliation. The people looked eagerly to Christ, hoping that He was the One who was to humble the pride of Rome.

With sadness Jesus looks into the upturned faces before Him. He notes the spirit of revenge that has stamped its evil imprint upon them, and knows how bitterly the people long for power to crush their oppressors. Mournfully He bids them, "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

These words were but a reiteration of the teaching of the Old Testament. It is true that the rule, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Leviticus 24:20), was a provision in the laws given through Moses; but it was a civil statute. None were justified in avenging themselves, for they had the words of the Lord: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil." "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me." "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth." "If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." Proverbs 20:22; 24:29, 17; Proverbs 25:21, 22, R.V., margin.

The whole earthly life of Jesus was a manifestation of this principle. It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Saviour left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Isaiah 50:6; 53:7. And from the cross of Calvary there come down through the ages His prayer for His murderers and the message of hope to the dying thief. {MB page 69 - 71}

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; {Matthew 5: 44} KJV

The Saviour's lesson, "Resist not him that is evil," was a hard saying for the revengeful Jews, and they murmured against it among themselves. But Jesus now made a still stronger declaration:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

Such was the spirit of the law which the rabbis had misinterpreted as a cold and rigid code of exactions. They regarded themselves as better than other men, and as entitled to the special favor of God by virtue of their birth as Israelites; but Jesus pointed to the spirit of forgiving love as that which would give evidence that they were actuated by any higher motives than even the publicans and sinners, whom they despised.

He pointed His hearers to the Ruler of the universe, under the new name, "Our Father." He would have them understand how tenderly the heart of God yearned over them. He teaches that God cares for every lost soul; that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the

Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” Psalm 103:13. Such a conception of God was never given to the world by any religion but that of the Bible. Heathenism teaches men to look upon the Supreme Being as an object of fear rather than of love--a malign deity to be appeased by sacrifices, rather than a Father pouring upon His children the gift of His love. Even the people of Israel had become so blinded to the precious teaching of the prophets concerning God that this revelation of His paternal love was as an original subject, a new gift to the world.

The Jews held that God loved those who served Him,--according to their view, those who fulfilled the requirements of the rabbis,--and that all the rest of the world lay under His frown and curse. Not so, said Jesus; the whole world, the evil and the good, lies in the sunshine of His love. This truth you should have learned from nature itself; for God “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion round the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love.

While we were yet unloving and unlovely in character, “hateful, and hating one another,” our heavenly Father had mercy on us. “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:3-5. His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.

The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love,

a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit, will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate. {MB 75.1}

THE CHARACTER OF GOD'S LOVE

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. {Matthew 5: 48} KJV

The word "therefore" implies a conclusion, an inference from what has gone before. Jesus has been describing to His hearers the unfailing mercy and love of God, and He bids them therefore to be perfect. Because your heavenly Father "is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35), because He has stooped to lift you up, therefore, said Jesus, you may become like Him in character, and stand without fault in the presence of men and angels.

The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden--perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith.

The Jews had been wearily toiling to reach perfection by their own efforts, and they had failed. Christ had already told them that their righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven. Now He points out to them the character of the righteousness that all who enter heaven will possess. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount He describes its fruits, and now in one sentence He points out its source and its nature: Be perfect as God is perfect. The law is but a transcript of the character of God. Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government.

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love.

“His glory is His children’s good;

His joy, His tender Fatherhood.”

He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. “In His borrowed goodness good,” we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His.

Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God’s children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest “in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for “the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.” Psalm 19:7, margin. Through love “the righteousness of the law” will be “fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4. {MB page 76 - 77}

The dealings of God with peoples in the Old Testament times reveal other dimensions of His love.

“God is love.” 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. “The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” whose “ways are everlasting,” changeth not. With Him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17.

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings.

...The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love. {PP chapter 1}

During the centuries following the Flood and especially following the Tower of Babel, there developed cultures and traditions of spiritual darkness among the nations. These included idolatry, military warfare, killings, polygamy, slavery, monarchial systems, suppression of women and retaliative violence.

Satanic deception caused the invention of a multiplicity of false gods and these false gods were all cruel and destructive in their portrayed characters. The dominance of any god was believed to be directly proportional to the destructive power of that god. When one nation utterly wiped out another it was believed that the god of the conqueror was superior to the god of the vanquished.

Furthermore, it was also believed that these gods needed to be appeased and that their favour had he earned. This was achieved by animal and human sacrifices and rigorous rituals of works. When the gods were appeased, celebrations followed and included music, dance, sexual orgies and alcoholic debauchery.

The true God had made man in His own image. Now after the Fall, men were making gods in their own depraved image. Through all this, Satan sought to so blacken man's picture of God's character and moral law that any revelation of the true God would be rejected with contempt! Amidst

the spiritual and moral darkness only a very few retained any knowledge of the true God and His principles of righteousness. Abram was one such man and was chosen by God to be father of a people who would worship the true God. Abraham's grandson Jacob, whose name became Israel, went into Egypt where the Israelites spent four centuries and were enslaved for a considerable portion of that time.

When the Israelites were eventually delivered from Egyptian bondage, they came out of Egypt with much spiritual and cultural darkness. They had, to a large extent, lost their knowledge of God's righteousness and His character; moreover, they had forgotten the promised Saviour of the covenant He had made with Abraham. On arrival at Mount Sinai the Israelites formed the Old Covenant which was a rejection of the Abrahamic or New Covenant and was based entirely on the pagan idea of salvation by works. Their relationship with God was based on the operational principle of obey and live or disobey and die and was devoid of a Saviour.

Since God is the God of freedom, He respects freedom of choice and He does not violate the freedom of choice given to His intelligent creatures. Those who chose God's government received the benefits of that government. Those who rejected His government were left to the government of their choice. But since only God's government is the government of life, to reject God's government is to reject life.

THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. {Galatians 6: 7- 8} NIV

Since all mankind would have sown to the flesh, we all should have reaped destruction but thank God there is a Saviour. Upon our Saviour has been laid all our iniquities.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every

one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. {Isaiah 53: 4- 6} KJV

We have already learned that since our Saviour took care of the Adamic or first condemnation, to reject Him is to incur a second condemnation. Therefore in God's dealing with the Old Covenant Israelites and with their idolatrous national-neighbours in the Old Testament Era, He had to allow the principle of sowing and reaping to work itself out according to their individual and national choices. According to Galatians 6: 7- 8 all destructions were reaped from the flesh, all blessings were reaped from the Holy Spirit.

ANOTHER CULTURAL PROBLEM

In ancient times, even among the Israelites, there was no clear understanding of a great controversy between God and Satan; between good and evil; between light and darkness. Pagan nations ascribed and attributed everything whether good or evil to their pagan deities. Their gods were believed to do both good and evil. This concept (of attributing to one's god both good and evil) was also held by the Israelites. Old Testament language reflected that cultural tradition. (Compare 2 Samuel 24: 1 with 1 Chronicles 21: 1 and compare 1 Samuel 16: 14 with 1 Samuel 19: 9).

But God had made it clear that evil occurred when they rejected Him. See Deuteronomy 31: 16- 18.

The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. {GC page 35}

It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing,

either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner.

Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who “hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” was looked upon by the Jews as “stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;” and they hid their faces from Him. Isaiah 53:4, 3.

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy. But Israel did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ. {DA page 471}

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. {GC page 36}

LANGUAGE ISSUES

In Hebrew idiom God was described as doing what He did not prevent. Any destructive event ascribed to God really means that God allowed it, He did not cause it. And He allows such events only in harmony with the principles of love and freedom. When He withdraws, the forces of evil cause destruction.

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost,

is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.-- Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM page 21}

PERMISSIVE WILL VERSUS PERFECT WILL

In the Old Testament, we see the God of love and freedom doing His best to work along with His chosen people. Their minds were enshrouded in darkness and ignorance and they were intent on being like their pagan neighbours in many respects. The Israelites were stubborn and disobedient and worse yet, they had little trust in or love for God. Yet God worked along with them to the extent that they worked long with Him. This reveals how wonderfully kind and patient God was toward them. Their choices of practicing slavery, polygamy and military warfare did not reflect God's ways. Yet God chose to give them the best advice in their wrong choices while patiently trying to teach them and bring them back to His perfect will.

All this is perhaps best illustrated in their choice of the monarchical system of government and God's dealing with them in their wrong choice of having a king to reign over them like the other nations. (Read 1 Samuel: 8). God warned them of the dire consequences of the monarchical system but notwithstanding this, they persisted with their choice of a monarchy. Thereafter, God commanded Samuel to anoint Saul as the first king and later on David as the second king. But God's command to anoint the various kings did not mean that the monarchical system was his way.

Similarly we know that military warfare is not and was never God's way.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. {Zechariah 4: 6} KJV

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. {John 18: 36} KJV

In John 18: 36, Jesus declared that warfare and fighting are part of the world system but not God's way. So when we read of God commanding the

Israelites to fight, that was similar to His commanding them to anoint a king. He was giving them the best advice in their wrong choices. God similarly gave counsel about how to deal with slaves and wives and concubines but this did not mean that any of these cultural practices was His perfect will. So Old Testament killings and wars were all the results of sin and sinful human choices and ways.

The only warfare God is engaged in is spiritual warfare against sin and evil in the great controversy and His weapons are not the carnal weapons of military warfare but rather truth, righteousness and love are to be the prevailing power.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. {2 Corinthians 10: 3- 5} NIV

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. {Matthew 5: 44- 48} KJV

God loves His enemies and does them good. If they reject all His goodness and salvation, He will judge that they do not want Him and give them up to reap the consequences of their choice.

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's

government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all.

When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him. From the time when He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem, the usurper worked to bring about His destruction. In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from a work He had come on earth to do. From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character. {DA page 759}

CHAPTER 20

Peter's Ladder Agape Love (Charity in KJV) Round Number 8 – Part Two

In Revelation chapter 14, verses 6 to 12, there is a description of God's final threefold appeal and warning to all mankind before the end of this present sinful world-system. The threefold message grows until it culminates in the mighty cry and strong voice (KJV) of Revelation 18: 1- 4.

In Revelation 14:6 - 12, three angels are presented, each carrying a distinct message; the second joins the first and the third joins them so that the three fly together! They symbolize the people of God, moving under angelic supervision in carrying forward to its glorious climax God's final work in the world.

THE FIRST ANGEL'S MESSAGE

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. {Revelation 14: 6- 7} KJV

The First angel's message presents the eternal Good News, the everlasting Gospel which must be preached to the entire world. Through this gospel, all people are invited to "fear God and give Him glory", that is, to respect,

reverence and adore God and give Him honour because the hour of His judgment has arrived. It should be clear then that this judgment vindicates God and His true followers and reveals God's character to be worthy only of praise, admiration and adoration! The First Angel's message ends with the invitation to worship Him who made the universe!

The three essential elements of the FIRST Angel's message are:-

1. The everlasting Gospel and this must mean that true gospel (Galatians 1: 6- 9)
2. The arrival of a judgment which vindicates God's character and government and His true followers.
3. The invitation to the true worship of the One who created all created things; indicating that true worship is predicated on the fact that the Creator is worthy of the worship of His creatures because He is Creator and because of His character! This brings to light the Creator's *memorial* of the fact that He is Creator. This memorial is the seventh day Sabbath. (Gen.2: 1-3)

Before we examine these three essentials of the First Angel's message let us look concisely at the other two angels' messages.

THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. {Revelation 14: 8} KJV

The Second Angel's message announces the fall of Babylon. In Revelation Babylon means false religion, in particular, false Christianity with false gospels and false understandings of God's character. The judgment hour message presents the true gospel and God's true character and therefore and thereby exposes Babylon to have fallen from truth!

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of

his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. {Revelation 14: 9- 12} KJV

The Third Angel's message gives a forecast, an announcement of the end-time consequences of either acceptance or rejection of the First and Second Angel's messages. In the Third Angel's message, all three are combined. Therefore the core of the Third Angel's message is the true gospel of the First Angel along with the judgment's vindication of God's character. Furthermore, the third Angel announces that a world system of false worship will be enforced in the end-time, called the worship of the Beast and his image and the reception of the mark of the beast. In contrast, the true gospel, revealing the true character of God, will produce an end-time remnant of true worshippers who will keep the ten commandments of God, the law of love, and hold unwaveringly to the true faith of Jesus!

The Three Angel's messages therefore call for a correct understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and even more importantly, a correct understanding of the gospel and the character of God! The true gospel gives a correct understanding of what God has accomplished in and through His Son for all mankind. Moreover, in that accomplishment, the Lord Jesus has given a full revelation of God's true character. The true gospel and the revelation of God's true character go hand in hand; both were the work of Christ in His incarnation, earthly life, teachings and supremely in His atoning sacrificial death on Calvary's Cross. Old Testament language can only be correctly interpreted by the earthly life and sacrifice of the Son of God.

Revelation 18: 1- 4 indicates that the light of the gospel and the character of God will continue to increase until the earth is lightened with God's glory. God's glory is His goodness, His character (Exodus 33: 18- 19). And God is Love! The true gospel reveals God's character by revealing His Love and by showing His Love to be beyond our greatest imaginations or expectations!

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This

is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. {1 John 4: 8- 21} NIV

THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY: GOD'S HEADQUARTERS

That there is a Sanctuary in Heaven, where our High Priest ministers, is an indisputable Biblical truth! (Hebrews 8: 1- 2; 9: 11- 24).

The Psalmist declared that God's way is in the Sanctuary (Psalm 77: 13). Moreover, the Psalmist also exclaimed that the difficulties of life that painfully perplexed him only became clear through an understanding of the Sanctuary (Psalm 73:16,17)

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? {Psalm 77: 13} KJV

The Heavenly Sanctuary is the Headquarters of God's government in the universe. In the great controversy between God and Satan, certain changes have been laid against God's character and government. Therefore it became necessary for God's Sanctuary to be cleared of all the charges leveled against God's character and government.

AN ANCIENT PROPHECY FORETOLD THE SANCTUARY'S CLEARANCE OF BLAME

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. {Daniel 8: 14} KJV

Other translations read:

“...then shall the sanctuary be vindicated” {DARBY}

“...then shall the sanctuary be restored to its rightful state” {CJB}

THE CHARGES

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. “In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” Hebrews 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was “in all points tempted like as we are.” Hebrews 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God. {DA page 24}

All the woe that has resulted from the fall, all sin, suffering and death, Satan charges upon God and His government but more so when God's people commit sin. There is a record of all the sins of God's professed people in the Heavenly Sanctuary. It must be shown that God is in no way to be blamed for any sin at all. It must also be shown that God's character is pure unadulterated Agape Love! The judgment must also show that God's true followers are

victorious over sin, have completely renounced Satan's government and are absolutely loyal and obedient to God through the faith of Jesus!

THE PROPHECY ITSELF

The 2300 day prophecy was in fact 2300 years in fulfillment (according to the day-year principle Ezekiel 4: 6, Numbers 14: 34). The first part of the prophecy of 70 weeks (= 490 days = 490 years), foretold the victorious redemptive work of the Messiah and His ratification of the New Covenant, read Daniel 9: 24- 27. It also foretold the destruction of the earthly sanctuary by the Romans.

The starting point of the prophecy was the 7th year of Artaxerxes, Ezra 7: 1- 7. (For a thorough exposition on the 70 week and 2300 year prophecy, see our publication "The Hour of His Judgment is Come – Section 2).

That starting date was the autumn of 457 BC. The 70 weeks or 490 years therefore started in 457 BC and ended in 34AD. Since the 490 years were "cut off" from the 2300 years, 1810 years were left. From 34 AD, 1810 years would bring us to 1844 autumn! Therefore the judgment announced by the First Angel's message started in 1844 autumn. In fact, 1844 October 22nd was the last day of the 2300 year prophecy. At that time, Jesus our New Covenant High Priest, moved into and commenced the work of judgment in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary.

WHAT JESUS IS DOING NOW?

In the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, Jesus our High Priest is now performing three (3) functions.

Firstly – Jesus continues His intercessory or meditational work, which has two distinct dimensions:-

- i. His intercession allows God's general grace to sustain physical life and human achievements on planet earth.
- ii. By His intercession, the Holy Spirit through the angels and through the human ministry of the Word of God draws all individuals to accept the free gift of salvation. Those who respond are converted, transformed and sanctified by the imputed and imparted victorious righteousness of Christ.

Secondly – Jesus performs the work of the Pre-advent or investigative Judgment.

In this work the record of the sins of true believers is blotted out and their names retained in the book of life. On the contrary, false professors have their names blotted out and their preference for sin confirmed. It is important to understand that true believers finish their Christian race in Christ!

Thirdly – Jesus is working to perfect the character of His true end-time remnant church. When the living saints in the end-time cease sinning then the transfer of sin to the Heavenly Sanctuary will cease, the sins of God's people will be blotted out and the sanctuary will be cleansed or vindicated. The demonstration of this final victory will be their victory over the mark of the beast global end-time system.

“When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the *precious grain*. {COL, page 69}

PERFECTING THE CHARACTER OF LOVE

And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him. By this love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love. We love because he loved us first. {1 John 4: 16- 19} NET

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it

is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But if there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be set aside. {1 Corinthians 13: 4- 8} NET

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. {Galatians 5: 22- 23} NET

When we are permanently cleansed of the spirit of retaliation and when we have overcome the inclination to hate or hurt or not to forgive those who are even intent on killing us, we are being perfected in Agape Love! This means that self is crucified with Christ and permanently eradicated from the character, resulting in rest of soul , the same rest as the creation rest, a seventh day Sabbath rest. And therefore the Seventh Day Sabbath will be the peculiar sign of character perfection of God's end time remnant.

CLOSING GEM

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

Awake, my Soul, Stretch Every Nerve

Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown,
And an immortal crown.

A cloud of witnesses around
Hold thee in full survey;
Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way,
And onward urge thy way.

'Tis God's all animating voice
That calls thee from on high;
'Tis His own hand presents the prize
To thine aspiring eye,
To thine aspiring eye.

Then wake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on,
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown,
And an immortal crown.

My God, How Wonderful Thou Art

My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty, how bright;
How beautiful Thy mercy seat
In depths of burning light!

How dread are Thy eternal years,
O everlasting Lord,
By prostrate spirits day and night
Incessantly adored!

How wonderful, how beautiful,
The sight of Thee must be;
Thy endless wisdom, boundless power,
And glorious purity!

O how I fear Thee, living God,
With deep and tender fear;
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears!

Yet, I may love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art;
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart!

No earthly father loves like Thee,
No mother, e'er so mild,
Bears and forbears as Thou hast done,
With me, Thy sinful child.

Father of Jesus, love's Reward!
What rapture it will be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie,
And gaze, and gaze on Thee!