

THE ADVENTURE AND THE TRAPS

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FOREWORD

Three books have been written by the same author in order to collectively reveal a “mystery which was kept secret since the world began”. (Rom. 16:25b).

This book is the first of the three and serves as an introduction to this revelation. It allows one only to progress to the privilege of knocking on the door of the mystery. The second book, “He That Hath Ears...,” reveals the mystery, and the third, “The Mysteries of The Kingdom,” consummates its teaching.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

“HE THAT HATH EARS...”

This is a full revelation of the doctrine of the Bride and the “My Gospel” of the Apostle Paul. It is a verse by verse exposition of many parables of our Lord explaining the mysteries, as well as a textual study throughout the Epistles of Paul. This in-depth study opens the eyes of the Christian to the stark reality of what God is saying to the Christian in this latter day.

“THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM”

This is probably the most complete exposition ever done on the seven parables of Matthew 13. It is a prophetic study of the doctrine of the Bride as well as the future position of Israel. However, this in-depth study should not begin until the principles of the doctrine of the Bride are clear. See the book, “He That Hath Ears.”

CHAPTER ONE

THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION

“Most of God’s children have never understood the full meaning of salvation.” Does this sound like a strange way to make a beginning? Well, as strange as it seems, it is true. But there is still a stranger statement that is just as true, and that is, “Many of the men behind the pulpit have no better understanding of this doctrine in its entirety than the layman.” If I were to employ this rule and ask the average Christian or minister to explain what salvation is, he would probably answer like this, “When I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, I experienced salvation and that’s all there is to it.” Do I somehow hear the reader whole-heartedly agreeing with him? Then permit me to say, you are right as far as you go, but that’s not all there is to it. The definition of salvation as given to us by the Holy Spirit and found in God’s Word is much larger than that. As a matter of fact, this statement is only a point of departure in our study and is only the first of three parts that make up the total definition of salvation. This part is the past tense of salvation in a Christian’s life. It happens once and is an historical fact. What the average believer does not know is that there are two other parts that make up his TOTAL salvation. They are: a present tense and a future tense salvation.

Now with this in mind, let me illustrate what I have written. Suppose someone were to walk up to me and ask, “Are you saved?” I would be theologically correct in answering, “I am saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved.” You see, salvation has within its full definition three tenses, which are: past, present, and future. In theology each tense is a doctrine in itself. The salvation of a person in past tense is called justification, in the present tense it is called sanctification, in the future tense glorification.

Let me try to bring all three into spiritual focus for your understanding. When I received Jesus Christ as Savior through faith I became justified in God’s eyes. This part of my salvation which is past tense saved me from the penalty of sin, which was eternal damnation in the lake of fire. Now that I have been saved, I am presently and continually being saved from the power of sin in my life. This present tense of salvation is not an act like the first tense but rather a process that began the moment I trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior and will continue until the moment of my physical death. It is accomplished by my works while trusting in the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. It is not accomplished by my working for the Lord, but rather by allowing Him to work through me. It is upon this doctrine and the total results it has on my life through my obedience that determines my eternal rewards and position in the coming kingdom.

Finally, one day when Jesus returns I will be glorified: that is, saved from the presence of sin. If my body at the time is lying in the grave, then it will be raised and changed into a glorified body and my soul and spirit will again take up residence in that body that will live forever without any limitations in the presence of the Lord. If Jesus comes while I am still in the body then I will be translated in a twinkling of an eye into the glorified eternal presence of the Lord. But that isn't all: immediately after the day of resurrection for all Christians, there will be the judgment seat of Christ where each Christian will receive rewards, or suffer loss of rewards, according to the kind of life he lived (process of sanctification) after he was saved by grace (act of justification). These rewards will determine our eternal position as well as determine whether or not we will rule, and to what degree we will rule with Christ in His coming kingdom here on earth.

Now, once more I am going to illustrate all that I have written, for it is very important to make sure it is understood. If I were to teach this to a group within my church, I would probably use the notes found in the Scotfield Reference Bible on page 1192. On this page is recorded the scripture from the Roman letter. In verse 16 of Chapter 1, Paul says,

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ;
for it is the power of God unto salvation to
everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and
also to the Greek.”*

The word salvation used here is in all of its tenses. At the bottom of the page in Dr. Scotfield's notes we read these words:

“The Hebrew and Greek words for salvation imply the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness: “Salvation” is the great inclusive word of the gospel, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts...Salvation is in three tenses: (1) The believer has been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin (Lk. 7:50 ; I Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9) and is safe. (2) The believer is being saved from the habit and dominion of sin (Rom. 6:14; Phil. 1:19; 2:12, 13; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom 8:2; Gal. 2:19, 20; 2 Cor. 3:18). (3) The believer is to be saved in the sense of entire conformity to Christ. (Rom. 13:11; Heb. 10:36; I Pet. 1:5; I John 3:2).”

As I taught my group I would probably emphasize by drawing on the blackboard, as I am so accustomed to doing, and would illustrate justification by making a quick dot with my chalk and then explaining that this represents an act that happens in a split second when a person trusts in Jesus. Then from the dot I would draw a long chalk line and finish my illustration by drawing a small circle at the end of the chalk line. I would try to show that the long chalk line represented sanctification and is a process beginning at the chalk dot and ending at the circle (from justification to death). The circle drawn on the board then would stand for the end of time in every believer's life and his eternal existence and glorification with Christ. The three tenses of salvation rightly divide the New Testament theology into three parts.

When one attempts to interpret a passage of scripture not knowing these truths, he will invariably place it under the wrong tense (usually past tense) and thus wrongly divide the Word of God, making it say something it does not say. This has caused the formation of whole denomination who have, as sincere as they were, based their teachings on a false premise.

There are portions of scripture that use the word "salvation" in all three tenses at once. Consider the following verse of scripture:

*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be
Saved; but he that believeth not shall be
Damned."* (Mark 16:16)

Now is this verse saying that one must be baptized to be justified and receive eternal life? If it did, then there would be an error in God's Word for Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we are saved by grace through faith and not of works. Works mean anything that man does, whether outward or inward, and baptism is an act of works. No, the word "saved" here in this passage is the all inclusive word of salvation thereby covering all three tenses of salvation. One must believe to be saved from hell and that's all. This is emphatically stated in the second part of that verse by God Himself when He said: "...but he that believeth not **SHALL BE DAMNED.**" Notice He had nothing to say about baptism here, but rather He emphasizes unbelief as the only reason why men go to hell. The reason the word "baptism" is placed in verse 16 by the Holy Spirit is to show it as the first "work" of the believer in his salvation over the power of sin. Thus, both tenses of salvation are clearly seen in the one word "saved".

Let me qualify my remark on sanctification before moving on. It is the daily obedience in Christ that completes our sanctification here on earth. Obedience is the basis for all works that win rewards. What is the first work of obedience after one

becomes a Christian? The answer is baptism, and I believe firmly that one can never be obedient to Christ if he has never done the first work of obedience which is immersion.

It is amazing how many well-meaning people mix works into the first part of salvation. We must be careful to rightly divide the Word of God. With that word of caution I will close this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TWO GATES

In the preceding chapter of study, our eyes of understanding were opened to the three tenses of salvation. As we enter chapter two, and continue through the remaining chapters to come, it is hoped that the reader will see its experimental side.

“Enter ye in the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way the leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it.”

(Matt. 7:13, 14)

“Strive to enter in the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and not be able.”

At the outset, the reader is encouraged to study these two scriptures in a comparative method and then to try and answer this question. Is there any major difference in the interpretation of them, and if so what are they?

Immediately, most bible scholars would answer the above questions thusly: “There is absolutely no difference in the two!” As an example, I have before me a book by a most imminent scholar, whom I admire and respect greatly, yet he did not see the spiritual difference between these passages. I quote a portion from his book: “Enter ye in the strait gate” says Christ at the beginning of our passage, and that this is far from being an easy thing to do appears from His work on another occasion: Strive to enter in the strait gate (Luke 13:24). That he should employ such an expression clearly implies the slothfulness and carelessness which characterize mere nominal professors, as it also denoted that there are real difficulties and formidable obstacles to be overcome. The Greek word used here for ‘strive’ (agonizomai) is a very expressive and emphatic one meaning ‘agonize’. It occurs again in I Corinthians 9:25, *and every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things*; the reference is to the athletes who took part in the marathon races, willing to undergo the most self-denying discipline to be at their fittest, thereby hoping to win an earthly crown. This word ‘strive’ is translated ‘laboring fervently’ in Colossians 4:12, and ‘fight’ in I Timothy 6:12. Ah, my reader, becoming a Christian is not done simply by holding up your hand in a religious meeting or signing

some ‘decision’ card. Alas, that such multitudes have been deceived by these satanic catch-pennies.”¹

What this author did without knowing it is the same many expositors have unconsciously done before him, and that is to mix works with grace thereby breaking what I consider the cardinal rule of interpretation. He as much as said that one who does nothing but trusts in Jesus is not saved because his moment of faith was not made manifest by striving, agonizing, laboring, and working. Again, I say very emphatically, works are the results, not the cause of justification. A man strives after he is saved by the power of the Holy Spirit within him; not to obtain justification, but for the purpose of pleasing the Lord and winning rewards. Works always have to do with the winning of rewards and not of initial salvation, for this is a free gift of God to them that believe.

Now let us consider the two passages of scripture that are before us. The passage in Matthew begins by saying, “*Enter ye in at the strait gate*”, as opposed to the passage in Luke which begins by saying, “*Strive to enter in the strait gate.*”

One says “enter” and the other says “strive”; what is the difference? The answer lies in the fact that the two passages are in two different tenses; Matthew’s passage is in the first tense of salvation and Luke’s is in the second. In order to show the force of their messages, I shall draw several points of difference between them.

1. In the Matthew passage the lost are shown how to obtain eternal life through faith; whereas, the Luke passage is showing the saved how to obtain eternal rewards through works.
2. In the Matthew passage the word “enter” is invitational in nature, and infers that there are no barriers; therefore, no need for works or labor in order to pass through its gate. In the Luke passage the word “strive” means work, labor, and agonizing, with the successful result being entrance into the gate of rewards.
3. In the Matthew passage we are shown the opposing gate and road that the “many” (lost world) are already following. On the other hand, Luke does not mention these simply because he is not speaking on heaven and hell, but rewards or loss of rewards.
4. In the Luke passage we find a point that is not applicable to the Matthew passage. Here, Luke speaks of many seeking to enter in without any

¹ Arthur W. Pink, An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount.

success. Now the word “seek” cannot be applied to a lost man, simply because the Roman letter in chapter 3, verse 11 says that *there is none that seeketh after God*. Therefore, Luke in using this term “seek” is speaking of people who are already saved, having accepted the free invitation of the Matthew passage to enter in by faith the gate of justification. Now they seek to enter by works, another gate. It is this gate that is identified as the gate into the bridal chamber or the kingdom of heaven, or the gate to reward.

5. In the Luke passage there is no path seen after the gate, for the gate represents the “Finish Line”, whereas, there is a path after the gate in the Matthew passage. Matthew’s gate is salvation and the path is the “Christian race” or works after one is saved. It is upon this path that one runs *“with patience the race that is set before us.” (Heb. 12:1)* that he may cross the finish line or “Gate of reward”. Paul mentions this path of striving in I Cor. 9:25, 26, showing himself as a participant in it. Then he gives us a glimpse of the finish line in II Tim. 4:7,8 at the end of his life when he said:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day...”

In conclusion to this section, our two principle passages show us three classes of people living in this life. First, we see the people on the broad road that “leadeth to destruction”. This is a picture of where the majority of the world is going. that is the meaning of broad or “wide”, for the wide gate gives entrance into a broad way so that many people may go to the “Lake of Fire”. It is the course of this world. (Eph. 2:2). It is the path of self-will and self-gratification. This way is a pleasant and easy way to the unregenerate. In order to stay upon it there need be no inquiry or diligent search, or resolution, or self-denial. It is a crowded road with no “Quota” limitation, no barring of races, colors, caste or creed. It is an attractive road for it is thronged with people and all going downhill. It is a deceptive road, for few upon it know where it leads. Most believe they are on the wise course because of the materialistic advantages and pleasure that are theirs. They laugh at anyone who is not on the same course and call foolishness the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ which takes all off the broad way who will believe it.

The second class is those few that enter the strait gate and the narrow way. These are those who have been regenerated by receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord. Because of their act of faith they have been guaranteed eternal life as a free gift from God. However, most of these people will be spiritual paupers in heaven because they did not go on in the Lord after they were saved. They will have tied themselves up in this world, spending all of their time satisfying themselves with its pleasures. Instead of walking the path, they are seen sitting down in it, with the results being the loss of all rewards.

The third class of people is very few indeed. They are those who are saved by trusting Jesus and who not only entered the gate of faith but diligently and faithfully lived their life for Jesus. They are those who completely forsook the world and its pleasures and set about to be daily yielded to Jesus so that He may live His life through them. These are those who suffered from the attacks of the world on them as witnesses. There are not too many on this road, for the scriptures tell us it's narrow and only a few will enter into its gate at the end. Its narrowness suggests that travelers thereupon must be spiritually narrow-minded and uncompromising in keeping God's commandments both in the word and through the promptings of His Holy Spirit. In order to travel its length and enter the gate at the end, one must strive, agonize and work by the power of the Holy Spirit to please God and be in his perfect will. The reward of those in this class is to be "sovereigns" in the "Kingdom of Heaven", whereas the second class will be mere "subjects". God reminds us of these second and third classes when He says, "Many are called" (saved) "but few are chosen", (called out of as sovereigns). Again He said, "If you suffer with me you shall reign with me."

MISCONCEPTIONS

Before leaving this chapter, we need to discuss one of the misconceptions of our subjects to which so many individuals and groups hold.

This gross misconception is the mixing of works with faith as practiced by some well-meaning Christians who subtly do so without realizing it. This misconception is the teaching that the nature of saving faith is effort. They arrive at this conclusion when they attempt to interpret passages such as Luke 13:24 in the light of justification. They cannot visualize this passage saying anything other than how to be regenerated. Therefore, the word "strive" to enter in must be the nature of faith; and, this nature of faith is brought out in the attitude of "meaning business" for God at the moment of decision.

The truth of the matter is that the nature of faith is just the opposite of effort and is manifested in the "ceasing of effort". It is true that when one is under conviction before he is saved he fights, strives, and labors; not to become saved, but rather to keep from

becoming saved. It is the battle of self against the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Only when that person ceases to fight, lays down his instruments of war and abandons self, unconditionally surrendering to Christ, does he exercise the nature of saving faith.

Again, the proponents of this misconception point to the context of Luke 12:24 in order to bring out more ammunition for their argument. They say that the context speaks of two classes of people, those that go through the gate, and those who do not and are left outside knocking to get in. These two classes, they say, are the lost and saved. In answer to the question, “Why were the lost knocking to get in, calling the Lord “Lord”, and generally acting like they knew the Lord?” they answer that they are lost church members who thought they were saved. Therefore, they say this is one of the best proof texts in the bible showing the lost and the saved in the Church. They call them professors and possessors, and end their argument by saying that only those who “strive” to enter in become possessors.

Now, dear reader, even as attractive as this interpretation may sound, even though it may make for good preaching, it just isn't true. We must be careful how we handle God's Word. If we do not diligently study it and ask God to show it to us, we can err grossly.

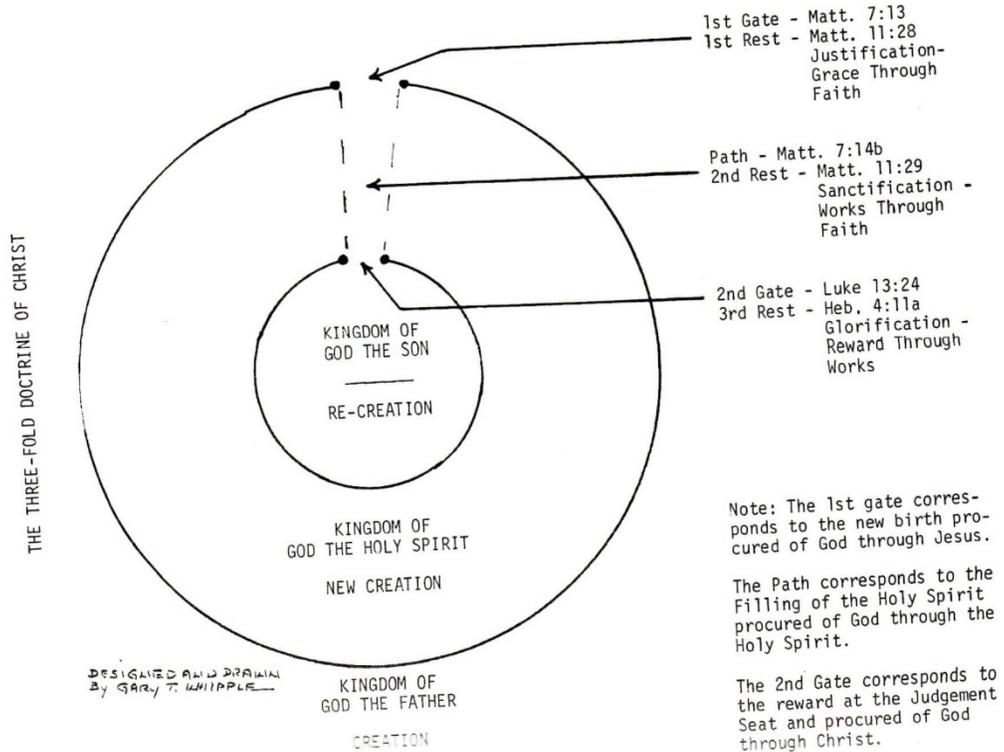
Now I think I hear the reader asking, “Why is this interpretation false, and why has its proponents erred so greatly?” To answer this I must show you another misconception which is really an error in the use of the principles of interpretation.

All Biblical interpreters will agree that one of the most important principles of interpretation is interpreting a passage in the light of its context, both immediate and remote. What is the context? It is simply a continuity of thought through the passage. “We may safely assume that an author intended a logical connection throughout a section at least and usually throughout an entire book. To disregard this logical process of thought in interpreting a passage is inevitably to distort the meaning at some point.”²

Now, let me ask, “What establishes the interpretation of this process of thought?” Ah! This is the problem of many interpreters when they deal with a passage that speaks of salvation. They know the passage is interpreted in the light of its context, but what they overlook in many cases is that the context must be interpreted first. This is always done by certain established spiritual principles. Without applying these principles to the context, one establishes a false context and will interpret the entire passage in a false light.

² H. E. Dana R. B. Glaze, Jr. INTERPRETING THE NEW TESTAMENT.

This is exactly what has happened in the popular interpretation of the Luke passage. Failure to apply the cardinal principle of justification by faith and rewards by works, has caused a false context and led to a false interpretation of the entire passage, thus “wrongfully dividing the Word of God.” The word “strive” throws the entire passage into the context of rewards; thus the whole passage must be interpreted in this light.



CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVIL'S TRAP

In Chapter two we used a comparison between two passages that I want to be kept in mind and used here as a mental outline (Matt. 7:13-14 and Luke 13:24). There we learned that the individual has a door to be entered (Justification), a path to be traveled (Sanctification), and another door to be entered by laboring (Glorification by works).

Since we have already the knowledge of justification, we can visualize our mental outline as having its beginning just inside the first gate, which is the gate of justification. At this position we view ourselves as one who has just entered the first gate by faith, and as we stand gazing ahead we find a path to walk and another gate to enter.

Before beginning our journey up the path, which represents the process of growth in the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to spend some time in God's Word in order to gain both an understanding of the marvelous work that God has done within us, and a knowledge of His will as to how to progress. The believer who has just stepped through the gate of Justification will not, and indeed cannot, progress without this knowledge. For it is right here in the life of a new Christian that the Devil lays his biggest traps in order to keep a believer from going on. It is a sad commentary, but nonetheless true, that the majority of Christians fall prey to wiles of the Devil at this point in their life and never progress any further, the end result being not only a miserable life here on earth but the loss of all reward in the Kingdom.

Now let us look at some of the pitfalls of the Devil, and at the same time examine what God's Word says about them.

The Doubt Trap

The first trap that he loves to trap people in is called the "doubt trap". If he can spring this effectively on the new Christian he will need nothing else, for the victim will struggle the rest of his life trying to find out if he is really saved. With this trap he not only renders the life of the Christian ineffective, but he makes the Christian many times more miserable than he was before becoming a Christian.

His tools in this trap are two in number. One is the ability of placing thoughts in your mind so that you think that they are your own. The second is the ability to control the feelings of people that are not absolutely attuned to the Lord Jesus. His method is to come to the believer and whisper "you may not be saved", or "does God really say you're

saved?” The believer, not familiar with his tactics, begins to frantically look within himself for some proof of his salvation. What he is really looking for is a feeling. This is just what the Devil wants. He has the believer disarmed by making him think that these thoughts were his own, and also he has him looking in the wrong place for proof. Now all he has to do is manipulate his feelings, and he keeps him in the trap.

It is sad to say that this trap has been so effectively used against God’s people that out of it a whole system of false theology has developed called armenianism. Its advocates are so trapped in the “doubt trap” that they have come to believe that an individual can lose his salvation after he has been saved, and thus go on through life being saved one day and lost the next. For just as soon as they doubt and lose the feeling of their salvation they feel forced to ask God to save them all over again. Now in order to make this heresy work, its unsuspecting advocates force God’s complete work out of justification and make it strictly a work of the free will of man. Thus, many of them have degenerated to a point of believing that they can actually lay down and pick up their salvation whenever they please.

Now, let me ask you this. On what foundation does this false doctrine rest? The answer is the same for all doubters. It rests on feelings only. And feelings can and are controlled by the devil in every individual who is not resting on the Word of God.

I think I hear the reader saying, “but in order to grow in Jesus (travel the path) I need assurance and I cannot have assurance without feelings!” My answer of course is to say that I agree with you, for God Himself wants you to have proper assurance and feelings, for He commanded that a Christian has a clear conscience and a heart full of faith (see I Timothy 1:5, 3:9), but the problem with the doubting Christian is that he is basing his assurance on the wrong thing. You cannot have assurance on feelings for at least three reasons. (1) First of all feelings are of self, and it would be just as foolish for a believer to try to rest on himself as it would for a ship to try to anchor itself by attaching its anchor to its own keel. (2) The Devil can manipulate your feelings since you still have in practice your old nature. I might add here that your old nature is to be constantly reckoned with even though it is judicially dead in God’s eyes. (3) Feelings are fruits of faith and not the foundation. When we try to make them the foundation, the Devil then goes to work and makes them quicksand.

Many times during my ministry I have had people desperately trying to see this truth after they had already fallen into the “doubt trap.” They would come to me in misery because their feelings kept telling them they were lost, and yet they had already experienced that initial act of justification at one time in their life. In counseling with them I would use the following illustration:

Let us go back in our imagination to your college graduation and examine your feelings just after you have received your degree. Now, let me ask this question as you stand there, “Do you feel your degree?” The answer is no, for feelings do not enter into it. Now, if feeling doesn’t tell us if you have graduated or not, what does? Why, your diploma says so. And how do we know that the diploma isn’t lying? We know, because it is signed by the president of the school, who is the highest authority of that school. Wouldn’t it be silly to look at your diploma hanging on the wall years later and wonder to yourself if you have ever graduated because you don’t feel like you have?

At this point I apply the illustration to the individual and ask them, “Suppose Jesus Christ Himself were to walk into this office while we are talking and present you with a golden diploma which stated that you are saved and can never be lost. As you read this you take note that it is signed by Him personally. Would you then believe your feelings or the diploma?” They always blurt out at this point, “Why, I would believe the diploma!” Then I would say, “Jesus has already presented you with that diploma if you will only see it. It is just called by another name. We call it the Bible, for in it He tells me I am saved, and those words are God’s words that cannot lie.” Remember, you cannot please God without faith, for He has said, “*For without faith it is impossible to please Him...*” (Heb. 11:6A). Remember again if you purposely move your will to believe God’s Word without any feelings to support your faith, then you will discover that your feelings will change according to your will and support the fact that you are saved. For the *fruit* of faith is your feelings. Again, if thoughts begin to come into your mind that try to tell you that you may be lost, ignore them, and place your faith in Christ. Be like the little girl who when asked the question, “What do you do when the Devil knocks at your door,” said, “I send Jesus to the door to answer it.”

To those who may have doubts up to this point concerning eternal security, I have listed a few of the many scriptures that teach it. Please look them up and read them and notice such words as “sealed” “established” “kept” --- Romans 8:9, Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; II Corinthians 1:21, 22; John 10:27-30; Jude 24.

Before going on to the next trap of the Devil, let me ask you one last question. Can a lost man doubt his salvation? Of course not, for he has nothing to doubt in the first place.

The Sinless Trap

The next trap that the Devil tries to spring on the newborn Christian is the “sinless trap.” It is amazing how he has just the trap for just the right person. If you are not the type of person that will fall for the “doubt trap,” then you may fall for this trap. Let us see how it works. When an individual steps through the gate of Justification and becomes a believer, the Devil, not being able to make him doubt, actually tells him a lie in the opposite direction. He attempts to make him believe he is sinless. Now, what more subtle plan could be devised? The believer cannot be made to believe that he may be lost, so he is told, “It is true you are saved and you can never be lost; in fact, you are so saved that you are sinless.” Now, it is true that judicially speaking all sin was paid for on the Cross so that the believer will never have to suffer its penalty, and in this sense God sees the old nature as dead. But that again is the judicial side of Justification. We are now speaking of the practical side.

Now, I imagine the reader might say at this point, “I don’t see why anyone would fall for that lie. After all, there is nothing in this that would even attract the believer.” Don’t be too sure, for as a matter of fact there are a few very attractive points to the newborn. Let me bring them out briefly. First, the idea of sinlessness produces pride in the believer, which in itself is sin. Second, this idea again makes self its foundation, thereby causing the believer to degenerate to a state of mind that believes every sin he commits, no matter how bad it is, is really not sin at all. Third, this heresy does away with the Christian’s prayer life, for he has no deep conviction of sins committed daily. Fourth, it does away with the daily study of the Word, for he does not feel that he must grow, when he has already made it all the way.

Like most of the false religions and false doctrines produced by the Devil, he has a scripture to make it look authentic. Let us look at the one main scripture that he claims supports this false doctrine. It is found in I John 3:9, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” But those people who believe the Devil and use this scripture forget that the same man that wrote those words also wrote in the same book these words, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and His Word is not in us.*” (I John 1:8-10). Now, dear reader, these are strong words. God says that if we fall for the sinless trap, we make God out to be a liar, because we say that we have not sinned.

Now, how does one reconcile these two scriptures? In I John 3:9 the word “commit” in the King James translation is the Greek word “POIEO” which means

“practice” or “purpose.” So we see that the first part of the verse reads that “whosoever is born of God doth not practice or purpose sin.” In the last part of the verse we see why – because the Holy Spirit, which is the new nature and the giver of the new nature, cannot sin because this part of the believer is born of God and is called “His seed.”

All this then points to a fundamental truth that we all need to know, and that is that every born again believer has “two natures.” The Bible clearly shows that at the moment a person believes, he is sealed with the Holy Spirit. At the sealing, the believer receives his new nature. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor. 5:17).* But when the Lord gives him a new nature he does not take away the old. The old nature still lives in the believer alongside the new nature, causing the believer to sin. Only at death or at the translation will the believer be relieved of his old nature. It can be said then that the new nature cannot sin and the old nature can do nothing but sin. This makes the two natures diametrically opposed to one another which causes a continual warfare inside the believer.

Now let us look at other scriptures that speak of this truth. Turn to Gal. 5:16-23; notice in the 17th verse the warfare between the two: *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things ye would.”* As you read the complete message you will see all of the works that come out of a Christian life that allows the old nature to rule. This is in verses 19-21. But in verses 22-23 we see just the opposite. That is, the works of the new nature, when allowed by the Christian to rule.

Another scripture that needs mentioning here that teaches this same truth is found in Romans 7:15-25. Here Paul describes this warfare in his own life between the two natures. We learn here the attitude of the believer whenever he does sin. To illustrate this attitude we can say that when the lost man sins he joys over it because he has only one nature. But when a Christian sins he sorrows over his sin because of his dual nature.

Now the reader may ask, “Why does God leave the old nature in a believer?” Ah! this is the secret of what God expects from us. He leaves the old nature so that the Christian can learn through the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the old nature and make its works ineffective. If there were no battle, there could be no victories; if no victories, then no growing in Jesus; if no growth, then no reward in heaven.

Let me illustrate once more. When young men go into the armed service of our country, they must undergo intensive training. Part of this basic training is to daily run an obstacle course for the purpose of getting into physical shape. Now they always begin

their training climbing over small obstacles and finally advancing to the larger as their muscles are developed. It is the same with a Christian He is to overcome spiritual obstacles for the rest of his life, beginning with the small and advancing to the larger. As he overcomes small obstacles, he develops spiritual muscles to overcome the next size, which in turn matures him for the next size. It is through this process that he grows in Christ. Thus it is his daily duty to allow the new nature to win over the old nature in this spiritual obstacle course, for the achievements on this course have to do with the ultimate measurement that determines his rewards.

The method of one nature winning over the other is for one to be starved of the things it loves and the other to be fed of the things it loves. Thus, the old nature must be starved of sin and the new fed with the Word of God and prayer.

To sum up the “sinless trap,” the Devil can and does trap people with half truths. His scriptural authority in I John 3:9 proves this, for that which cannot sin is not the believer but the new nature in the believer.

“SECOND BLESSING TRAP”

Another trap of the Devil to be on guard against is called the “second blessing” trap. The lie that is used to spring this trap is produced by twisting the truth concerning the sealing of the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that there is only one time in the life of an individual when he receives the Holy Spirit and that time is when he first believes. (See Romans 8:9b and Eph. 1:13b.) At this time he receives all of Him and all of His works, for His different works are no more than different aspects of Himself that cannot be separated. However, the Devil tries to tell the individual that he doesn’t have all of the Holy Ghost. He admits to the believer that he has been saved, but he subtly tries to convince the believer that he must frantically work, strive and pray to receive Him. As an extra bonus of glory he tells him that he may know when he has reached this “second blessing” when he begins speaking spontaneously in some unknown tongue. Thus, by using this trap the Devil renders the life of a Christian useless to God for he will spend the rest of his life trying to get something he already has.

In order to expose this trap of the Devil, we need to meet it head on in the light of the scriptures. As we have already stated in earlier traps, the Devil will always try to make his life look genuine by using scripture. So let us begin by looking at the scripture that he tries to use in supporting this trap.

There are three main ones, namely, Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the Samaritans receiving of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-17), and Cornelius receiving the Holy Ghost

(Acts 10:44-46.) The Devil, in using these scriptures toward his own design, points out that each incident shows two different spiritual experiences, the first being initial salvation through faith, the second, the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, he suggests these three incidents should be considered as a form for all Christians to follow.

Let us look closely at these passages of scripture and notice some apparent discrepancies of the Devil. The first incident, which is Pentecost, is actually composed of two separate incidents. These are the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the apostles after they were saved and the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the 3,000 at the time they were saved. The second incident, which is in Samaria, is in the form of two experiences, but on the receiving of the Holy Spirit the Samaritans did not speak in tongues. The third incident, which is the conversation of Cornelius, is recorded as only one experience, for the moment he believed he received the Holy Spirit. Now, we say to the Devil, what is right? Are there two experiences we should have, or just one? Are we supposed to speak in tongues every time, or not? I think the answer is a very simple answer if we let God show us through His Word.

In interpreting these three incidents for our lives, we must go back to the passages that teach them. If we look close, we will see one common denominator that shows up in each passage, and that is the presence of Peter. You will find that this will literally be the key to understanding these three passages. You ask, what did he have to do with it? Just this – I believe that these three incidents fulfill what the Lord said to Peter in Matt. 16:19. *“And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.”* Here our Lord promised to give Peter some “Keys”; this word “Keys” represents having authority or the badge of power to open something that has not been previously opened. Only Peter had this power, no one else. Then our Lord tells him what it is that the keys are supposed to unlock. He calls it the “Kingdom of Heaven.” Now, what is the “Kingdom of Heaven?” Let me first tell you what it is not. It is not “The Church” as the Roman Catholic hierarchy would like you to believe. Neither is it initial salvation or “The Kingdom of Heaven in your Heart” as a lot of our unlearned teachers are teaching today. Its literal meaning in Matthew is the “Rule of Heaven over the Kingdom,” and points directly to the visible kingdom that will be set up by our Lord hereupon earth for a period of 1,000 years. It is this kingdom that expresses the full glorification of every obedient Christian. For only those saints who suffer with Christ will reign with Him in this future kingdom. (II Timothy 2:12). Since it takes suffering (works) of a Christian to win him the right to reign with Christ in the “Kingdom of Heaven,” Peter’s keys, then, can refer only to the “power” that every Christian must have in order to work and suffer with Jesus Christ.

Notice that in our three passages God used Peter to unlock three doors of power to all of the human race. In the first incident, Peter preached to the Jews and won 3,000

souls. They believed and they received the power. In the second incident, Peter, along with other apostles, laid hands on the heads of the Samaritans after they were saved, and they received the Holy Spirit. In the third incident, Peter preached to Cornelius and his household and at the moment they were saved they received the Holy Spirit. Again, these three doors that were unlocked by Peter represent all of mankind. The first to the Jews, the second to the half Jews, and the third to the Gentiles. Still again, Peter's "Keys" were not to unlock the door of initial salvation, for in the second incident, he was not even there when the Samaritans believed, but rather to unlock the door to power which deals with the second and third tenses of salvation (Sanctification; Glorification.)

In finalizing this subject in the mind of the reader in regard to Peter's role, I set forth the following facts.

- (1) The Lord gave Peter authority to unlock the door of power to all mankind.
- (2) This power refers primarily to the second tense of salvation which is Sanctification.
- (3) The Holy Ghost then, given through Peter, gives power to serve which in turn wins rewards in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is a picture of the church.
- (4) Peter's key does not refer primarily to salvation (Justification), for on two occasions (Jews and Cornelius) Peter preached and the Holy Ghost fell immediately after they believed. But on one occasion (the Samaritans) Peter wasn't there when they first believed (Justified) but came later, not preaching, but simply laying his hands on them in order that the Holy Ghost might fall.

Now, these three happenings could only occur once, since each represented the beginning or doorway into the Kingdom of Heaven for each group. As an illustration I might say that I can be assured that the Holy Ghost, according to God's will, was given to be freely received by me through the instrument of Peter. For proof of this, all I need to do, as a Gentile by birth, is to see what happened to Cornelius in God's Word. For there we see him and his household believing, and having the Holy Ghost fall upon them, and speaking in tongues in order to signify to the Jews that God had opened the door of power for the Gentiles.

At this point I think I hear the reader asking, "What makes the difference between the role of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost and His role after Pentecost?" To answer this we must simply recognize that before Pentecost, Jesus had not yet been glorified; therefore, the apostles were saved but had no power. In John 20:19-23 on the day of the

Resurrection, Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples and breathed upon them and said, “*Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*” Fifty days later the Holy Ghost fell on the disciples at Pentecost, with the result being the ability to speak in a foreign language, plus power for one man to speak and win 3,000 souls to Jesus Christ. What’s the difference?

The first experience was not the fully poured out Holy Ghost, and indeed could not have been for Christ had not yet been glorified. Mr. Rene Pache in speaking of the disciples first experience wrote:

“It seems to me that they received a certain measure of the Spirit on the evening of the Resurrection, but that this experience did not let them overstep the bounds of the Old Covenant, despite the promises and the order that accompanied it. (We have sufficiently proved how, in this setting, the Spirit acted in an incomplete way, it is true, but nevertheless a sovereign and varied manner.) In breathing upon His disciples, Jesus gave them in some measure a token of the real gift which they could not fully receive before Pentecost, when they entered into the New Dispensation. It was only a partial, prophetic fulfillment of the great promise of the Spirit.”³

The disciples received then the Life of the Spirit in the first experience, but not the power of the Spirit until Pentecost. The first experience came from, and gave proof of Christ’s Resurrection. The second came from and gave proof of Christ’s Glorification. “The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet Glorified.” (John 7:39) “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” (Acts 2:33)

In summing up what the Scriptures teach in regard to Pentecost, we find four distinct facts. (1) The Holy Ghost could not be given until Christ was Glorified. Thus, the Holy Ghost in a particular way manifested the Spirit of the Glorified God-man, on the day of Pentecost. This had never happened before in history. (2) The Pentecostal experience was “power” from on high in order that the disciples may work and serve God. It is only through this experience that one may receive a reward in the Kingdom of Heaven, since rewards are won by works. Notice what happened after they received power. They began immediately to win others to Jesus. (3) It is at this point in history that the church began, for the body cannot come into being until there is a head. The disciples, therefore, could not receive power that comes from Christ the Head (Eph. 4:16) before Pentecost, since the body of Christ had not yet been constituted. (4) Finally, this power for works was given to all believers (Jew and Gentile) through the instrument of Peter when he used the “Keys” spoken of in Matt. 16:19.

³ Rene Pache, “The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.”

I hope that the reader can plainly see that since we are living on this side of Pentecost, we do not have two separate experiences of the Holy Ghost coming upon us. Now that the doorway of entrance has been opened to all of the world through Peter's "keys," we receive all of the Holy Ghost (both the life of Jesus and His power) at the same moment we trust Jesus as Savior and Lord. Thus, we are immediately baptized into the Body of Christ for service.

We have now arrived at the task of exposing the last lie used by the Devil in his "second blessing trap," namely, the speaking in an unknown tongue. I hope the reader will study this section in a prayerful attitude, remembering the Christians who are in this trap. For the Devil has successfully used this inducement of self glory to trap entire denominations.

The best way to expose this heresy is to make a premise and then prove it with Scripture. Therefore, my premise is as follows: There are no legitimate, genuine demonstrations today of speaking in different tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit, and has not been since A. D. 62. Furthermore, there has never been any genuine demonstration of speaking in unknown tongues in public for there is no such thing in the Bible. Therefore, all who practice it are either willfull counterfeits or unknowingly under the influence of the Devil.

Let me begin with the second part of my premise which has to do with unknown tongues. It is extremely interesting to witness the practice of this doctrine which is established upon a false premise for which there is no scriptural foundation at all. I refer to the word *unknown*. This word occurs in connection with tongues only in I Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19 and 27. In each instance the word is italicized, showing that the word does not appear in the original text, but was used by the translators without any authority whatsoever.

What then does the word tongue mean? The Greed word is *Glossai*, which means language or the sound of words made with the tongue. In other words, speaking in a known language. We read of only three instances of tongues that were used in the Bible. The first occurred in Acts 2 when the apostles were given the gift of talking in foreign languages to all of the foreigners. The second occurred in Acts 10 when Cornelius and his household spoke in foreign languages. The third occurred in Acts 19 when the apostles of John who had been associated with Apollos also received this gift. Now, there are two reasons why this gift of speaking in foreign languages was given by God. (1) To prove to the Jews, as a sign from God, that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit and thus were part of the body. (2) To talk to a lost Jew in his own language and tell him about Jesus.

Another strange thing about the talking in foreign languages today is that most of its proponents are women. Now, there is not one instance found in God's Word where a woman was given this gift. As a matter of fact, Paul in his Corinthian epistle (I Cor. 14:34) absolutely prohibits women from speaking in tongues. This is backed up by verse 37 which says that the commandment is of the Lord.

Many have asked, why was this written to the Corinthian Church and not to all the other churches? Well, first of all it is written to all of the church and is placed in God's Word for all to read. When one studies the context of I Cor. 14:34 he finds that it speaks of the practice of speaking in tongues by the women. In this sense, it is to all the women in all the church. Now, locally speaking, Paul did not write this same commandment to the other churches, for this epistle was for local problems that were not yet in other churches.

Two of these problems, which were problems of dress and speech, stemmed from the environment of a pagan religion whose temple was in Corinth. This environment, that influenced the Corinthian women, was the product of the practices of its pagan women priests who talked in unknown tongues in their rituals and wore short hair as a sign of their office. These women, in one degree or another, became the fashion style makers for all the Corinthian women, so that these two practices of tongues and short hair actually infiltrated the church, and as a result the church was losing its witness.

Dr. W. A. Criswell has an excellent paragraph on this local problem in one of his books. I quote him. "In front of the ancient city of Corinth was the deep blue sea. Behind the city of Corinth was the steep, high Acno-Coninthus; an Acropolis far more prominent than that in Athens on which was built the Parthenon. Crowning the imposing Acropolis at Corinth was the magnificent temple to Aphrodite (Latin, 'Venus'.) The Greek goddess of love and beauty was worshipped with sexual orgies. The Temple prostitutes who were used in these orgies of worship worked themselves up into ecstatic frenzies as they followed their heathen, immoral rituals. The sight of frenzied women speaking in unknown tongues in their dedication to immorality was a common one in the days of Greco-Roman culture. Paul's abhorrence of such speaking is explicable and obvious. Paul assumes that even strangers walking by an assembly of God's people, seeing and hearing the women talking in unknown tongues would immediately say, 'What have we here, a colony of Aphrodite? Let us go in and enjoy the sexual pleasure.' 'No,' said the apostle, 'A thousand times No! When it comes to speaking in tongues, let your women keep silence in the churches. It is a shame, (mark the word shame), for women to speak in unknown tongues in the church.' That interdiction still stands, un-

removed. The hysterical, unseemly excess of tongue-speaking women in public worship is a reproach to the name of the Lord.”⁴

Now getting back to the trap of the “second blessing,” we again remind ourselves of the lie of the Devil concerning tongues. He says it is fruit of the Spirit. God’s Word says that it is fruit of the Devil, for the Devil is the author of confusion. The real fruit of the Spirit is found in Galatians 5:22-23, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

In reviewing what I have thus far written in the light of my premise, I find one more part of it to be proved, and that is the first part. Let us look at it again. I wrote that there are no legitimate, genuine demonstrations today of someone speaking in a different tongue by the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice, I said “today,” for there was a time that this gift was given and practiced. In my premise, I tell the reader when that time was. It was from the time of Pentecost up to about A. D. 62 or 63. What I am saying is that there were signs and wonders that were performed by people in the power of the Holy Spirit from Pentecost to about A. D. 62. These signs and wonders included healing, raising the dead, speaking in tongues, handling serpents, etc., but when the dispensational line in time was crossed, which had governed them, they ceased.

Now let us see what speaking in tongues is according to God’s Word. Turn to I Cor. 14:22. “*Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...*” Here we discover it is a sign to unbelievers, not to believers. This just means when one spoke in a foreign tongue, he spoke to a lost man about Jesus in the lost man’s own tongue. Now look up I Cor. 1:22, “*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.*” Here we discover that signs are for the Jews only, for Greeks (Gentiles) need no sign. Now, in taking this and putting it together, we discover that speaking in a foreign language was strictly for lost Jews, not saved or lost Gentiles. It makes one wonder in the light of simple and easy to understand scripture why there is so much effort in many churches to resuscitate Pentecostal gifts for Gentile believers. God has said it was for the lost Jews.

In Acts 28:28 we find the dispensational boundary line for all signs and wonders. “*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*” This verse comes out of a context beginning with the 23rd verse that tells of God turning his back on National Israel. This was their last chance and they failed to believe. Paul, under the power of the Holy Spirit, invoked the prophecy of Isaiah that told of this moment that God was to set Israel aside. So at this moment (Acts 28:28) about A. D. 62 the Lord set Israel aside (Nationally, not individually – the

⁴ W. A. Criswell, *The Holy Spirit in Today’s World*.

individual Jew can still be saved) and “no longer was the kingdom proffered to them on the basis of National repentance, but instead God turned to the Gentiles. As long as the offer of the kingdom was extended to the whole national of Israel, the preaching was accompanied by signs and wonders and miracles. But when God turned to the Gentiles, these signs, wonders and miracles were no longer needed.”⁵ In Acts 28:28 he simply says that the Gentile “*will hear it,*” for they need no sign. The Jew requires a sign.

Let us examine individuals and churches in the light of Acts 28:28. Paul, before Acts 28:28, raised the dead, healed the sick, was immune to deadly snakes; whereas in his latter ministry (after Acts 28:28) none of these signs and wonders were evident. He told Timothy at this time to take a little wine for his sick stomach (I Tim. 5:23). He also was unable to heal Epaphroditus in Rome when he nearly died (Phil. 2:25-30).

It also seems proper according to Scripture that the early church itself up to the dispensational boundary line of Acts 28:28 performed these signs, wonders and miracles (again for the Jews), for in I Corinthians 12, verse 28, the spiritual gifts given to the church include signs, wonders, miracles. But after the dispensational boundary line, Paul wrote a new list of gifts for the church in Eph. 4:11 which deletes all signs, wonders and miracles, and replaces them with the gift of evangelism.

Notice one more thing. In all the Epistles Paul wrote after that moment of rejection in A. D. 62, not one mentions signs, wonders and miracles. These are Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, I and II Timothy and Titus.

Acts 28:28 says “*and they will hear.*” We are living in the times when there will be no signs from God. Those who claim they can heal or speak in an unknown tongue are frauds or else they are unknowingly under the control of Satan. The Bible says that we are to walk by faith and not by sight.

Now for one last thought. God will again deal with National Israel one day. The beginning of this is seen in the fourth chapter of Revelation, for it is here that we again witness signs and wonders and miracles. Revelation 4:1 is chronologically identified with Romans 11:25.

THE A-MILLENNIAL TRAP

The fourth and final trap that the Holy Spirit moves me to write about could well be called the A-Millennial Trap. It is this trap that will probably keep more people from winning a reward than any of the others. It is a wide spread trap that has claimed for its

⁵ A. E. Wilson, *No Signs Wonders or Miracles*.

victims the intellectual Christian as well as the status quo Christian. It is a new theology that has been born from the unspiritual church intelligencia of today. It simply states that there will be no millennium, or better still no future physical kingdom of our Lord. By taking away this future physical kingdom, the Devil had had great victory in convincing men to also do away with the physical return of our Lord in His body of flesh and bone. Simply then, the popular a-millennial belief of today states that Jesus Christ will return in a spiritual body only, for the purposes of consummating a spiritual kingdom only.

Our Lord warns every Christian not to fall into this trap. In II John 7, the Spirit of God records these words:”

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ.”

The King James translators failed to bring out the proper tense of this verse. Thus, it should not have read, “...who confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh...” but rather, who confess not that Jesus is coming in the flesh. The word for word translation of this verse from the original Greek text is rendered thusly:

“Because many deceivers entered into the world, who not confessing Jesus Anointed coming in flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-christ.”

The Lord God has a holy jealousy concerning this doctrine and it would do men well to heed it. In II Kings 2:23, 24 God allowed two she bears to kill forty-two young, accountable men for mocking Elisha’s doctrine. He had been so affected by seeing Elijah translated to heaven in his body of flesh and bone, that his preaching was changed. He went about preaching of Elijah going up in his body. When these young men mocked by saying, “Go up,” (go up in a whirlwind yourself, just like Elijah) you bald head! Go up, you bald head,” God’s anger arose and sent the bears.

In the same manner God’s anger is upon all who mock the return of our Lord in His body of flesh and bone (Glorified.) In II John 8, God warns us not to fall into this trap else we lose all of our reward. Verse 10 tells us not to even receive one that does not believe this, nor are we to invite him into our house, or even bid him God speed.

I close on a note of sadness, realizing that much of our denomination has fallen into this trap. It should bring tears to our eyes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THREE RESTS

“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.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” (Heb. 4:11)

We have come to a most difficult subject in this treatise that must be mastered by the reader in order to “see” the further truths to be revealed. Here I have introduced two different portions of the Scripture to teach this subject, and simply call it the three rests. It will be my purpose to teach the Matthew passage to a degree that suits its subject, and then to just merely introduce the Hebrew passage.

By studying the three rests in these two portions of the scripture we need to see immediately that they are different in nature and different in the way that each is procured. Notice that the first rest in Matthew 11:28 is an experience that is “given,” whereas the rest spoken of in Matthew 11:29 is an experience that is “found.” In the first rest, we discover that its procurement is through the invitation “come,” whereas the second is through the command “take.” The first affects the heart of the individual, whereas the second is unto the soul. The first is a rest from works that have already been completed. The second is a rest so that works may be completed. Finally, the third (Heb. 4:11) is the complete rest not yet procured by any Christian, but is promised to all who do work.

Now, what are these rests and what do they represent? The first represents Justification (New Birth) and corresponds to the first gate in our outline. The second is Sanctification (Fullness of the Holy Spirit) and corresponds to the path in our outline. And the third represents Glorification to its fullest extreme (Reward: entrance into the Kingdom) and corresponds to the second gate.

Knowing these truths, we can now understand in what direction we are to proceed according to our outline. In the last chapter, we discussed “traps” that lay just inside the first gate placed by the devil in order to trap and hold Christians from going on in their Christian life. Our position then is as follows: we have entered the first gate (the gate of Justification) by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have avoided, or been set free from

the traps of the devil by God's Word. Now we stand at the beginning of the path gazing forward to the second gate at the opposite end of the path. This shows us symbolically that a path must be walked before the second gate can be opened. What does this gate symbolize? The gate is literally the door to the millennial kingdom and to reward that will be exercised in the millennial kingdom of Christ. Its teaching in Luke 12:24 shows that only those who "strive" and "labor" will enter in, for many will seek it and not find it. It is through this gate that all who have labored and won a crown will rule and reign with Christ in His coming Kingdom, and contrary-wise all who do not labor to enter in will not enter in, will not receive a crown and will not rule with Christ. Now, this does not mean that every Christian who refuses to "walk" the path (labor) will be denied eternal life. For we have already learned that the gift of eternal life is through faith not works, and was given at the first gate. But this does mean that they will be denied rulership in Christ's coming visible kingdom that will be set up here on earth for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4.) They will be in the position of subjects rather than sovereigns.

If reaching this gate is by the path, then we need to know all about the path, and how to begin our walk up it.

First of all, I need to emphasize that the walk up the path symbolizes labor, for it is through labor that one enters the second gate. Now, in order to learn the method in producing this labor we must look at the "second rest" that is found through works. It is between these two verses of scripture (Matt. 11:28-29) that literally millions of Christians are caught, immaturely thinking that there is absolutely no more progression possible.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly..." (verse 29). What is Christ's yoke? To answer this we must put this verse back in its historical setting. In the 1st century, a yoke was a wooden harness device that was put over the heads of two oxen for the purpose of yoking them together as partners in pulling a load. Christ's yoke is the symbol of service and also designed to yoke two together for the purpose of laboring together. In His yoke the two laborers are Himself (Holy Spirit) and the individual Christian with His burden being the lost world. Now, what is the truth that He is trying to present with this symbol of a yoke? I believe that He is desperately trying to lead the Christian to the method of laboring for Him which is called the "second rest." Let us see what He is saying. First He says, "take my yoke," second "learn of me." Search all you may but you will not find Him commanding the Christian to exercise self effort. He commands only for him to take and learn. What does this mean? It means that He has ordained the believer to be a channel in which His work and power will pass through to the world. This principle is so unchangeable that without the channel the work cannot be accomplished. It is His commandment to us, that we be so surrendered daily that we will not attempt to use any self power, which comes from the old self, but instead

learn of Him, (progressively surrender) so that His power may be manifested through us. This again can only be illustrated by the picture of two oxen laboring together in the same yoke. Here they are both harnessed together to the same burden yet the power to move the burden comes only from one. It is the same in their movements-one does the stopping, the starting, and the turning. The other follows so precisely that both oxen appear as “one.” This serves to teach us that the two partners in Christian service really are one, even as the head (Christ) and the body (church) are one complete body, yet only one partner supplies the power. “...learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest in your souls.” (Matt. 11:29b). There is still a deeper truth to be gleaned from these words. The Lord here is giving the surrendered Christian, who has taken upon himself the yoke of service, a way of measuring or gauging his life so that he may know daily his progression into the “second rest.” Notice He says “learn;” this means learn of the second rest, for Jesus is this rest. And as one learns more about Jesus he becomes more surrendered to letting the Holy Spirit work through him, and as he surrenders, meekness and lowliness will come out of his life. This manifestation of the personality of Jesus through a Christian is always in proportion to how much he is surrendered. It is possible to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that the world would readily admit, when looking at you, that they do not see you, but Jesus. This is illustrated by placing a rod of iron in a fire for a long period and then taking it out. What would one see? Why he would see the fire, not the iron, for all would be fiery red.

THE THIRD REST

Now let us briefly look at the third rest spoken of in our Hebrews passage. “*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest...*” (Heb. 4:11a). This rest speaks of the goal of those who enter the second rest, and is manifested as rulership in the millennial kingdom of our Lord. This is the goal Paul spoke of in II Timothy 4:7-8a, just before his execution.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day...”

Notice that Paul had to labor (fight, run a course, keep the faith) in order to enter into this rest. Also notice that the proof of his entering in was a “crown” that is reserved for him. This crown was earned by works, not given by grace, for initial salvation only is by grace. This crown is reserved until “that day,” the day of the judgment seat of Christ. It is also a symbol of rulership and will be exercised in Christ’s coming kingdom.

Now, again, "How does one enter this rest?" He must labor. It must be kept in mind here, else the reader will become confused, that this labor is really the labor of the Holy Spirit manifesting Himself through the surrendered Christian, for the "walk" of a Christian is characterized by "rest."

If one is not careful, he will think that a paradox has been presented when he is unable to reconcile "rest" and "labor" at the same time. To once and for all straighten out any confusion that may exist for the reader, let me present one more passage of scripture that proves the existence of a partnership in the Christian walk.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12b-13).

In this scripture we are individually commanded to "work out" what each one of us already has, and that is our "own salvation." Then the Lord tells us that it is Him who is in us performing the work according to His will and good pleasure. So then the partnership expressed in this verse is teaching that it takes two individuals, one supplying the power, the other the channel for that power to pass through before any work can be accomplished that is in God's Will. The surrender of one to be an unobstructed channel is the "second rest," whereas the labor that passed through that channel is that which is needful to enter into the "third rest."

UNBELIEVING BELIEVERS

It will be helpful to understand that there are scores of Christians who believe that they have already entered into the second rest, when in reality they have not. There are two classes in this group.

First, there is the largest class, making up the majority of our congregations, which have never seen past the first gate of Justification. These people have had an experience of salvation with Jesus and as such believe that they have "made it all the way." They reject the idea of rewards for those who labor in the work of the Lord, and believe that all Christians will receive the same when they get to heaven regardless of how they lived their lives after becoming a Christian. This heresy, that is so strongly believed, originates from the pulpit, for the majority of preachers themselves do not spiritually see anything past the first gate. Therefore, their messages deal only with

initial salvation, and when one is saved by faith in Jesus he as much as tells the new convert that he is “home free” and as such need do nothing more.

Second, there is a class which is smaller who recognize that they must do works for the Lord. This is the class in a church that sings in the choir, ushers, visits, takes up the offering, works as a deacon, works as a pastor, preaches, and even gives tithes. But when we examine the labor coming out of their lives we discover it is their own labor, not the Lord’s. This class has never seen “the principle of second rest that says they are not to do for the Lord, but rather allow the Lord to do through them.” They are much like a glove that tries to work independently of the hand. Of course, this is impossible, so until it becomes surrendered to the hand, and allows the hand to work in and through it, no work can be done.

Both of these classes make up a group that will be spiritual paupers in heaven, for they are building on the foundation of Jesus a house of wood, hay, and stubble. (I Cor. 3:11-15).

I call this group “the great army of unbelieving believers.”

HOW TO ENTER IN THE SECOND REST

“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.” (Rom. 8:3-4).

There are two spiritual positions that must be experienced by the reader in order for him to enter into this “second rest.” The first is the judicial and the second is the practical. In the passage of scripture just quoted, both of these positions are evident. In order to see them we need to exegete the truths found in this passage.

First of all, we are told through this passage that the law is Holy and as such is good. It alone could save if a person could keep it. However, in order to keep it one would have to be absolutely perfect in all things from the beginning of his life to the end. This means that if an individual sinned by only consenting momentarily to a wrong thought sometime during his life, he would be condemned by the law with no possible chance of forgiveness from the law. The law is a standard of righteousness that is

without variance. This is why it is impossible for men to keep it and as a result are already condemned by it. (Romans 3:23).

Now, in order to escape the wrath of God, every man must have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in him. You say that this is an impossibility? You are right, “it is impossible with man,” but with God all things are possible. According to our scripture, God completely fulfills all of the demands of the law on a believer so that the law is completely satisfied. All this is completed through His one, all inclusive, unfathomable work of love on the cross through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, how does He take an old, sinful man and make him perfect in the eyes of the law? He doesn't but rather He does the opposite, He slays the old man and makes a new man. He knows that the law can never be satisfied with a patch up job on the old man, for again, man must be perfect in the eyes of the law, so He does away with sinful man by slaying him. With the old man dead the law can no longer place any demands on him and as such cannot condemn him.

Coming back to our scripture (Rom. 8:3-4) we see that God kills the old man in two ways. First, judicial, “...*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...*”; second, practical, “...*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” It is these two ways of God (or positions of the Christian) that I feel compelled to write of and as such will take up the remaining portion of this chapter.

ENTRANCE INTO SECOND REST FROM THE JUDICIAL POSITION

Our scripture (Rom. 8:3b) tells us that God sent His “*Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...*” Notice that this last part of verse 3 is predicated on the first part that says it is impossible for man to keep the law and thus save himself (both Justify and Sanctify). So Jesus was sent forth by His Father into the world in a physical body, yet without sin, in order to make full payment for sin. He did this by willingly laying down His life so that His death would become our substitutionary death, thus causing all who would ever receive Him to judicially “die in His death.” Again, this is what God means in II Cor. 5:14, when He said “*for the Love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, if one died for all, then all were dead.*” It is so important to understand that nothing of the old self or creation can enter into the new, therefore, it must die. Here in this verse God simply says that He gathers up all that was in Adam (old creation) and crucifies it in His Son. Therefore, all believers have already died.

Now, having knowledge of this truth is not enough. One must have experience; that is “see it,” for it is only from experience that rest springs forth. The Lord is keenly interested in every Christian experiencing by faith this judicial death. Therefore, He gives much light on the subject in Romans, chapter 6, for this purpose.

*“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified
with Him...” (Rom. 6:6a)*
*“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be
dead indeed unto sin...” (Rom. 6:11a).*

The word “reckon” in Romans 6:11 is the Greek word *Logizoma* and is used as an accounting term. It means exactness without varying, for that is the science of mathematics. God said, “reckon” yourself dead. When did I die? I died on the cross in Jesus. Romans 6:6 says so, and Romans 6:11 says I have a right to claim it by faith – that’s reckoning.

Now, you may say, “sure we died in Christ in principle, but that is all.” But that is not what the scriptures say. The scriptures emphatically say that we actually died with Him – that is, we historically died on the cross. Paul brings out the force of this when he wrote, *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live...” (Gal. 2:20)*. Here he says that he was historically crucified, yet he lives. He seems to suggest a paradox, for it is beyond comprehension. Now, of course you were not physically taken to Jerusalem 2,000 years ago and nailed to the cross as Jesus was, or were you? What the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us through these scriptures is that we were historically, personally, physically, crucified with Christ through God’s judicial eyes. It makes no difference that we live 2,000 years this side of the cross, the fact remains that at the time of the crucifixion God judicially put us to death with Jesus. It makes no difference if the physical laws of science completely disprove it. God has placed us there through His judicial eyes, and if He has done it, it has actually and historically happened. That is why He says “reckon” yourselves dead. Claim it by faith because God has said it. Watchman Nee had another way of saying it when he said, “Why does God say we are to reckon ourselves dead? Because we are dead. Let us keep to the analogy of accounting. Suppose I have fifteen shillings in my pocket, what do I enter in my account book? Can I enter fourteen shillings and sixpence or fifteen shillings sixpence? No, I must enter in my account book that which is in fact in my pocket. Accounting is the reckoning of facts not fancies. Even so, it is because I am really dead that God tells me so. God could not ask me to put down in my account book what was not true. He could not ask me to reckon that I am dead if I am still alive. For such mental gymnastics the word ‘reckoning’ would be inappropriate; we might rather speak of ‘mis-reckoning!’”⁶

⁶ Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*.

So, judicially speaking God justifies us by crucifying us in Christ on the cross. Whenever we reach the point of seeing this (or experiencing this) in our life, then we will have an assurance and power to build our sanctification on, for we will discover that if we are truly dead then sin cannot affect us as to its penalty.

Let us go on further with the judicial position. If God historically, personally, and physically placed you in Christ's death, then He also historically, personally, physically placed you in His burial, so that your old self has also been buried. Again you can "reckon" on it. This is why we carry out the commandment to baptize every believer. For water baptism is a symbol of that burial that has already taken place "in Christ."

Paul has said in Romans 6:4 "*Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death....*" Who then qualifies for burial? Only those who have died. So when I recognized that I have been crucified by God in His Son is only natural that I ask for baptism. And by asking for this baptism I am announcing to the whole world that I am dead. It is a shame that this truth is not known to those who practice baptismal regeneration, for they believe that burial is a means to death rather than an end to death. Therefore, they try to die by burying themselves. Again, it is a shame for those who are blind to this truth who baptize by sprinkling or pouring. They are telling the whole world that they have died and need only a little soil sprinkled on their old dead body.

May God open your eyes to these truths and give you the faith to claim them.

After the believer has experienced by faith his death and burial with Christ, it becomes easy for him to take, by faith, the fact that he has already been resurrected in Christ's resurrection (Romans 6:5b), ascended in Christ's ascension and is now seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). We are so prone to look only on the realistic side of our Christianity instead of the judicial side and say, "I cannot understand how all of this has happened to me, especially when the facts say that I am still here on earth in this corrupt body of sin which is very much alive." But God says that He has a different set of facts that supersede all others, and which will one day be manifested over all the physical universe. God says you are dead, buried, resurrected and in heavenly places; these are His facts. Now, God cannot lie, nor change His Word, so are we going to argue with God about it? No, a thousand times!! If He counts it as already having happened, then I can do nothing less than reckon it as so.

ENTRANCE INTO THE SECOND REST FROM THE PRACTICAL SIDE

Now, we come to the practical side of a Christian's death taught in Romans 8:4. It is here that the scriptures teach us that the old man, even though dead "judicially" is alive "practically." It teaches that a Christian has two ways to walk, after the Spirit and after the flesh. If a man walks after the Spirit, then the old nature, in practice, will remain dead while the new produces works pleasing to God. If he decides to walk after the flesh, then the old man, in practice, springs into life and produces works that are sin in the sight of God. Once again, God does not recognize the works of the old nature because (1) it is condemned by the Law, and (2) the old self is judicially dead, therefore, it is unable to produce live works. It is here on the practical side that we must learn to deal with the old man so that he will produce no works, for the only way to keep him from producing works is to daily crucify him. This is the task of a Christian as he daily surrenders to the Lord.

Man is a three-fold being of body, soul, and spirit. (I Thes. 5:23, Heb. 4:12). In his spirit he is God-conscious; in his soul he is self-conscious; in his body he is sense conscious. It is in his soul part that his old nature lives and must be daily crucified by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christian who has not yet learned this practical side of his death is a "carnal" Christian. He is one who is dominated by his soul. He is ruled by his own personal feeling, his own emotions, his own affections, his own passions, his own likes and dislikes, his own desires and his own will.

On the other hand, a spiritual Christian is one who has experienced the practical side of his death, and is controlled by the Holy Spirit of God, acting through the man's own spirit, so that his emotions, feelings, passions, affections, likes and dislikes, and will are of the Holy Spirit.

In order for a Christian, who is dominated by his soul, to become a Christian ruled by the Holy Spirit, his soul must in effect die daily. This is taught in Luke 14:25-35. Here our Lord teaches that we cannot follow Him without paying a price. And the price for discipleship is three-fold. First, his love for the Lord must far surpass his cherished possessions (verse 26). Second, he must willingly bear his own instrument of execution and die daily (verse 27). Third, he must forsake all (verse 33). In every instance our Lord is telling us that we must relinquish the throne of our life and crucify self so that the Lord may unconditionally rule.

I think I hear the Christian asking at this point, "Suppose I slip and sin?" Well, first of all you will slip and sin, second you will progressively discover sin that you did

not know existed before in your life. When this happens, confess it as once and ask God to forgive you. According to I John 1:9, He will completely cleanse you.

Before ending this section, I feel that I must draw at least three points of contrast between the judicial and the practical.

1. The judicial side shows the old man crucified once and for all, whereas the practical shows the Christian daily crucifying the old man.
2. The judicial does away with the old man by placing him in Christ's death, whereas the practical does away with his daily sins by washing him in His blood.
3. The experiencing of the judicial side is the foundation for all of God's works; whereas, the experiencing of the practical side is the channel out of which these works flow

Once one takes hold of the judicial and applies the practical, he will find the "second rest," for he will become an unobstructed channel for God to use. Remember, the surrender that causes one to become a channel is the "second rest," whereas, the labor that passes through that channel is that which is needful to enter into the "third rest."

THE RECIPROCAL INDWELLING

Another way to see the judicial and practical sides of the Christian is to see the reciprocal indwelling of Christ and the believer. All through the New Testament we see evidences of this seeming paradox. As an example in John 10:30 we read, "*the Father in Me, and I in Him,*" and in John 15:4, "*Abide in Me and I in you....*" Now, how can this be? Well, if we were to go on in John 14:4, we would discover an illustration in botany that Jesus has chosen to use in teaching us this mystery.

Here the scripture teaches it is botanically true that the branch abides in the vine and the vine in the branch, even as the Christian abides in Christ at the same time that Christ abides in the Christian. When the vine was planted, the branch was planted also, for it was judicially in the vine. When the vine grew out of the ground, the branch grew also, for it was still judicially in the vine. When the branch visibly grew out of the vine, it was for all purposes still in the vine, for no one could separate it from the vine without mutilating both the vine and the branch.

Now at the same time that the branch enjoys its judicial position in the vine, it also enjoys its practical position of having the vine in it, for without this practical position

the branch could not bear fruit. To understand this, one must know that it is botanically impossible for the branch to produce any fruit without the vine, for it is the sap, that flows from the vine into the branch, that makes the fruit. Therefore, it is the vine that produces the fruit through the branch.

All of this serves to graphically illustrate the life of a Christian, for he must be “in Christ” (judicial) and “Christ in him” (practical) before any fruit can be produced. In the illustration, if the branch refused to let the sap properly flow and work it would not die, for it is still in the vine, but it would fail to produce fruit and would produce instead more wood (self works.) These works of self effort would have to be pruned off by the husbandman, even as our self efforts, which are produced by failing to allow the Holy Spirit to work and produce fruits, are cut off through chastisement by the divine Husbandman. (Heb. 12:5-8).

IN CHRIST

Let us discuss briefly the Christian’s position of “in Christ.” This phrase occurs in the New Testament more than 120 times and is the key phrase of seven of Paul’s Epistles. Let us look at them keeping in mind that this is the judicial side of a Christian and occurs in God’s eyes the moment he believes.

Galatians – “In Christ Crucified” (Gal. 2:20)

Romans – “In Christ Justified” (Rom. 3:24)

Philippians – “In Christ Satisfied” (Phil. 1:11)

Ephesians – “In Christ Ascended” (Eph. 1:3)

Colossians – “In Christ Complete (Col. 2:10)

Corinthians – “In Christ Sanctified” (I Cor. 1:2)

Thessalonians – “In Christ Glorified” (II Thess. 1:10-12)

CHRIST IN YOU

As the new life is expressed through the phrase “In Christ,” so is its daily manifestation expressed in the phrase “Christ in you.” This expression is in the form of fruit which comes out of the Christian life. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us what these fruits are. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.”*

In the summation of all the truths taught in this chapter, we are driven to the stark reality that a Spirit-filled Christian and Christ are one person. Thus, whatever the Christian does it is not him doing it, but rather Christ. (John 15:5). Whatever words he

may speak, it is not him speaking, but Christ (Prov. 16:35; John 15:7). Whatever life he may lead, it is not him living, but Christ. Our problem in entering into the second rest lies in our insisting that while a Christian is totally yielded and filled by the Holy Spirit, he at the same time is a separate individual and different from Christ. This is not true. The head and the body may have two different functions, but nevertheless they are still one body. Thus, only when one believes the truth of the oneness does this truth become experiential. It is here that one may have a rest and a joy beyond measure (John 15:10-11.)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PATH

In the preceding chapter, the reader discovered what is needful to lawfully walk the path of sanctification and enter the second gate, where all who suffer for Christ will reign with Him (II Tim. 2:12.) In this section we will discuss how this, that is needful for entering in, is obtained.

FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are two definite experiences in a growing Christian's life, the first being when he received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and the second when he is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is these two experiences that are caught up in the meaning of the two "rests," recorded in Matt. 11:28 and Matt. 11:29. It is this second rest, in verse 29, that God commands every Christian to have. For in Ephesians 5:18 we read these words: *"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."*

Now, what is God saying? Is he telling us now that we are saved, we need to possess the Holy Spirit? No, no, a thousand times no! We cannot possess something we already have, for at the moment we were saved we were, at that same time, sealed with all of the Holy Spirit. (See Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30; II Cor. 1:21-22; Romans 8:9.) This is the problem with so many of our Holiness brethren. They are "trying" to get something they already have. Here then is the key to being filled. It is not trying to possess the Holy Spirit, but allowing Him to possess you.

God wants to fill every facet of a Christian's life. He wants to fill and control his personal life, his married life, and his business life. He wants control of the body, which includes all the members of the body, (hands, feet, eyes, tongue, etc.); the mind, which includes all of your thoughts; the soul, which includes your desires, aspirations, feelings and personality. In short, He wants all of the Christian. But, unfortunately, too many of us do not want to yield our all to Him.

In presenting ourselves to God, we are much like the man who in presenting his house to God said, "Lord, you may have the living room, the bedroom, the kitchen, and all the other rooms in the house. But this one closet you cannot have, nor even look into, for it is mine." Needless to say, the Lord could not use any part of that house because He did not have all of it. This is the nature of the Holy Spirit. If He cannot have control over all of the Christian, then He will not have control over any. Being filled with the

Spirit, therefore, is predicated on a full surrender of everything consciously opposed to God, or not consciously yielded to God for His control.

Now, of course this is a daily, or better still, moment by moment surrender. One does not experience just one filling in his growth process, but rather he experiences a filling every time he consciously yields his all to the Holy Spirit.

It is much like a glass of iced tea. One might say that when the tea is poured into the glass at the point of running over, that it is filled with tea. This is true, but only until a cube of ice is removed. When this happens, the level of the tea is lowered. Now, I might ask, is there the same amount of tea in the glass after the cube of ice was removed as before it was removed? The answer, of course, is yes, but it cannot be said that it is still filled. In order for the glass to be filled again, more tea must be added to it. The same is true with a Christian, for as he moment by moment yields his conscious sins to God for forgiveness, and asks God to fill and control those areas of his life that were previously occupied and controlled by his sins then God forgives and fills his emptiness.

Now, again I want to remind the reader that this is a process that continues all of your life, for it is impossible to reach perfection in this physical body. If a man could live for 10,000 years and yield his life every day he would still, at the end of his life, discover areas not surrendered that he never consciously knew existed before. It is this yielding of control to God that determines our walk on the "Path" and ultimately our "Position" in the kingdom by entering the "Second Gate."

When one is born again, there are untold areas of his life that are as yet not surrendered to the Lord. The reason for this is simply because the believer does not yet know that these areas exist. He is much like the man that has many obstacles between him and a huge source of light. Now, some of the light infiltrates all of the obstacles to reach the man, but in order for him to receive more light, he must remove the obstacle that is directly in front of him. When this is done, it allows him to move that much closer to the light source and thus have more light. Then, only at this point is he made conscious of the next obstacle between him and the light source, for before he could not see this second obstacle or even know of its existence. Thus, he goes through life surrendering each obstacle that is revealed to him and with each step moves closer to the light source. However, the closer to the light source that he moves, the more light he receives; and the more light he receives, the more obstacles (sins) he discovers, until at long last at the end of his "Walk" he cries out what Paul cried out, "I am the chief of all sinners." Now, to the immature Christian, it seems like Paul had moved backwards, for at the beginning of his ministry he had said, "I am a sinner," but now at the end of his walk, "I am the chief of all sinners." The truth is he did not move backwards in his

Christian life at all, but rather his eyes were opened as he moved closer to the light, even Jesus Christ. Now, the same is true with a Christian who is walking the path of Sanctification. Each time he surrenders all that is consciously pointed out to him by the Holy Spirit, he moves closer to the light source, which is Jesus Christ Himself.

Now, even though a man's life may come to be yielded to the Lord Jesus Christ daily, step by step, even as this illustration teaches, I do not believe that it in itself constitutes "being filled with the Holy Spirit." In my experience with the filling of the Holy Spirit, and I must speak from my own life experience, the experience of yielding is only one prerequisite to this experience. There is one more prerequisite that I, personally, found to be a must in order to receive the evidence of this experience, and when this prerequisite is met, the joy, power, victory, and full assurance are given by the Holy Spirit.

Now, let me name this remaining prerequisite, and then I will elaborate on it. It is Faith.

Before one can be filled by the Holy Spirit, he must believe he is filled. This is the second prerequisite and a very important one. God does not change his method of work, and since he has ordained that all things be done through faith, the filling of His Spirit is also by faith. Now let me draw a parallel between one being born again and one being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is true that a lost man can have a desire to be saved, confess his sins, ask God to forgive him by praying the sinner's prayer, shed many tears, and yet remain lost if he does not believe he is saved after he has asked God to save him, for the scripture says, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith;....*" (Eph. 2:8). It is the same with the filling of the Holy Spirit. One can meet the first prerequisite of a yielded life without one conscious barrier to the filling of the Holy Spirit. With this he may pray night and day to be filled and yet he will remain as he is, not filled until he "believes" that he is filled. One may ask, "But on what basis can a Christian believe that he is already filled?" The answer, of course, is that your faith rests on God's Word that he would do it if you asked Him, and this is without any feelings, or proof of any kind, for if faith required proof of any kind, then it could not be faith.

In order for us to get a clear picture of how faith operates, we need to turn to the scriptures. In I John 5:14-15, we read these words:

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything 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.”

Also in Isaiah 1:15:

“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hid mine eyes fro you’ yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.”

According to these two passages, the three requirements for answered prayer are forgiveness of sin, asking according to His will and then believing. In the Isaiah verse, God is emphatically stating that he will not hear the prayer of a Christian if he has unforgiven sin in his life, and in the other passage God says He will not hear if we do not ask according to His will. Therefore, we are led to conclude that the basis of faith is first approaching God in prayer through the shed blood of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins, second asking God according to His will. When all of this happens, then God’s Word says, “We can know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him.”

To add to what has been said in order to complete our understanding of faith we must turn to one more passage. This is found in Mark 11:24:

“Therefore I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.”

In this passage we discover the real nature of faith, and also why it is utterly impossible for anyone not understanding this nature to lay hold of the things of God. Here, God tells us that faith is in the past tense, not the future tense. In other words, one must believe that he has already received, before he will receive. In this sense, God says, “believing makes it so.” Therefore, when we ask God for something that is in accordance with His will, all we need to do is honestly thank Him for already giving it to us.

To give a good scriptural illustration, we read of the account of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites in Exodus 14. This passage shows that the Israelites were trapped on the west shore of the Red Sea with no way of escape. This is made clear when we realize that the Egyptians had cut off all exits of escape with 600 war chariots. Now, what were the Israelites to do? They could not train an army in just a short time to defend them. They could not build ships in just a short time to carry them to safety over the Red Sea. They were seemingly at an end of themselves. Now, notice the first thing God said to His people through Moses in verse 13: *“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the*

salvation of the Lord.” God is teaching us through this that He cannot do anything for us until we come to the end of ourselves and stop trying to do for ourselves. Oh, how carnal is the human heart! Did not the Israelites know that God had led them to that very spot of seemingly no escape only to show them His great power and incomprehensible love, if they would only put their trust in Him? Now, notice what God said after they had stopped their striving. Look in verse 15, “*Go forward,*” “*Go forward,*” but where? There is only ocean in front of us, reasons the carnal mind. But God commands us to go forward just as if a way has already been made in the ocean. If we will believe God that a way has already been made and act upon it even though all of our senses tell us that there is no evidence of this way, then the way will be made.

God shows us this principle by pointing to the fact that the sea did not part for the Israelites until they marched toward it as if it had already parted. This is faith in the past tense. Now look in the 21st verse of that chapter and you will discover that it took all night for the sea to part. Putting this truth together with the truth that the Israelites took all night to cross the Red Sea, we arrive at the conclusion that the sea went back as the Israelites marched forward. I believe this teaches that as the foot of the first Israelite came down at the water’s edge the waters began parting, for Hebrews 11:29 says: “*By faith they passed through the Red Sea...*” So the point God is trying to get us to see is that faith is past tense; we must claim it as already happening before it happens.

Now, let us get back to our second prerequisite for the filling of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Before you will be filled, you must ask God to fill you, and then just simply believe you are filled without the supporting evidence.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF ENTERING IN

This is a very elusive subject and hard to set forth. Nevertheless, without it our subject would be incomplete. May the Holy Spirit open the eyes of the reader to it.

When one claims the filling of the Holy Spirit by faith, he must not only claim Him in the present tense, but also in the FUTURE TENSE. This means that it is not enough to claim the filling of the Holy Spirit to meet the immediate need for “REST,” but one must claim his filling to meet all future needs of “REST.” Unless the individual is willing to allow the Lord absolute authority in both tenses of his life, and thereby lay hold of both rests simultaneously, he cannot experience the filling.

In studying these two tenses closely, we discover that they both make up our total surrendered lives before God. The present tense is the upward look for cleansing and the future tense incorporates all that He plans to accomplish in us and through our outward

look for service. In this future tense we must not only be willing to be used, but we must also claim all future events and circumstances as being from the Lord before they happen; for without these, God will not even give the capacity for faith which lays hold of the filling.

As one's eyes are continually opened to these truths, with each fresh filling he discovers that the willingness of a Christian to be used, is no more than the act of vacating his life and giving the Lord Jesus unlimited permission to live His life through us. Therefore, we become a vehicle of the Holy Spirit both present tense and future tense. This is why it is totally wrong for an individual reaching this realization to take over the controls himself by planning and putting into operation how he will please God in his work, for this work is the work of the Holy Spirit who brings it about Himself, as He pleases, when He pleases, how He pleases, and according to the talents and purposes of the individual. He accomplishes this through the effortless and normal thoughts, conversations, occasions, and circumstances of the filled individual. Yet, in reality they are not normal, but rather they are the divine providence of God, planned and carried out in the supernatural realm.

GRIEVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the seventh chapter of Joshua, there is an account of Israel suffering defeat and humiliation at the hands of just a small force of village defenders after they themselves had overwhelmingly defeated and destroyed the great fortified metropolis of Jericho without losing a man. What was the reason for this defeat? As we look into this historical event through God's Word, we will not only discover the reason but also some very important spiritual principles that never change.

Israel had great success in everything that they attempted, but this was only because God was with them and manifested His power through them. They had crossed the Jordan dry shod. They had defeated Jericho by shouting the victory shout, and the walls fell down flat. All this was by the mighty power of Jehovah's hand, which went before them; all they had to do in order to keep His power was to stay obedient to God. But they did not. God had ordered the army of Israel not to take any spoils from the defeated city of Jericho, but they did. Achan, one of the Israelites, stole some gold, and silver, and a garment from the ruins of Jericho. He took them to his tent and buried them in the tent floor. He thought no one saw him, and no human did, but God saw him and because of his moment of weakness all of Israel suffered. Now, why should all of Israel suffer? Because God dealt with Israel on the national basis. He saw all of those thousands of individual Hebrews as one. This is why He referred to them as Israel. Now,

if all are accounted as one, then when one individual broke God's commandment, they all were collectively guilty.

The Bible tells us that Joshua sent just a few men to capture Ai, for it was a small town. But when the invaders arrived, they were met by fierce defenders that drove them off. At the news of this, Joshua went to the Lord to inquire why. God just simply told him that Israel had sinned, and because of this sin He would not manifest His power through them. Now, notice only one man sinned, but God had accounted it as all of Israel sinning. He said Israel hath sinned.

Theologically speaking, Israel did not lose their salvation when they sinned, for God was still in their midst as evidenced by the Ark of the Covenant still present. But they did lose their power, victory, and joy, all because God was grieved with them. It is here that I must point out this one fundamental truth-God does not change. His principles and precepts never change. Also, man in his basic nature never changes. He has today the same thoughts, emotions and motivations that he had 3,000 years ago. All this is what makes the Bible eternally fresh, for it is a story of conflict between the never changing fallen nature of man and the never changing eternal God.

Having knowledge of this basic truth, we then can easily take Israel's plight out of its historical setting and directly apply it to our own lives. In Ephesians 4:30 we read these words: "*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*" Here God gives us knowledge of two fundamental principles in His dealing with Christians. The first is eternal security that is taught by the words "*sealed until the day of redemption.*" The second shows the loss of fellowship by sin. This can be seen in the words, "*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...*" God is simply saying that when a Christian slips and sins he does not lose his salvation, but rather he loses his fellowship, and without this fellowship he is powerless. Now this is exactly what happened to Israel. They as a nation were saved and as a result had power to defeat all of their enemies through God. But when Israel sinned by Achan's disobedience, God then became grieved and withheld His power to the point of allowing them to suffer defeat at the hands of a few villagers.

Dear Christian, do you see what God is saying? He is sealed in you and cannot get out. When you sin you try to make Him who is pure and holy a part of your sin, thus grieving Him and causing the cessation of all power in your life. It is the understanding of this principle that sheds light on the reason why so many times we are defeated in our Christian lives. It is not that God puts some hex on our efforts, or purposely causes us defeat. All He has to do is withdraw His power and we are powerless without Him, for the scripture has said, "*...For without me you can do nothing.*" *John 15:5b.*

Not only is this on the individual level, but it can be on a church level. That is, if a church has unconfessed sin in the lives of its members, the Holy Spirit can become quenched and ultimately grieved, and that church will then become cold and powerless. I can remember pasturing in such situations where all it took was for one member who had sin in his life to walk into the presence of the Spirit-filled group to quench the Spirit. It was like pouring a bucket of water on a fire.

In other instances I have seen a church so powerless because of the sin of faithlessness, and this all came about by the leadership of the church leading its members to put their trust in other things in order to do the work of the Lord. For instance, there are many churches at this very moment that are trying to move ahead by trusting in a program. Now, there is nothing wrong with a program as long as one does not place the program before the Lord. But in most cases they have forgotten that the power of a church comes from the Lord, and without the Lord the church can do nothing, so they are subtly led by the Devil to put into operation a sure-fire, cure-all program that will make them successful. Then, because the Devil has power over materialism, he leads them further astray by giving them beautiful buildings, programs to fit every need, soul-stirring music, silver-tongued preachers, etc., while the Lord is on the outside knocking to get in (Rev. 3:20.) All that is within this church is cold, impersonal, and powerless. Instead of spiritual blessings there is human boredom. Instead of evangelism there is evan-jellyfish, for the pastor is continually busy in trying to please the people in his preaching.

This kind of church reminds me of the story of a local lodge that was having a meeting one night when the electricity went off. Immediately they voted in a committee to determine how to correct the situation. After much study, the committee reported back to the lodge members that they had decided to launch a program of installing more light fixtures in the building. They reasoned that if the building is dark, then they must need more light fixtures in order to give more light. It was only after this that a member discovered what was really wrong when he went outside and found that the power line was down.

Oh, Christian, do we not in our own life as well as our church life need to keep the eyes of our soul on the Lord Jesus? Do we not need to daily count ourselves as dead so that our plans, our aspirations, our feelings, our efforts, and our programs are dead too? Do we not need to see that when the Holy Spirit is grieved with us that our “power line” is down? Let us let Jesus live His life through us by giving Him the throne of our life while we take the cross. Let us understand the true life of rest and freedom that God so desperately wants us to see. This life that is experienced through the exchanged life of Christ in us, this life that is expressed in Galatians 2:20, when the Holy Spirit spoke

through the pen of Paul these words, *“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.”* Let us be determined by the power of the Holy Spirit to root up every known sin that would ever so slightly grieve the Holy Spirit and cast it out of our lives.

In the Ephesians passage that is still before us, we need to study the list of sins that God has placed there, realizing that they are the most common for the individual Christian to commit and thus grieve the Lord. In reading this list from Eph. 4:31 to 5:8, let us pay particular attention to verse 5 of chapter 5, which says:

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

Here we must stop for a moment and consider the meaning of this verse. First, we see by the context that our Lord is speaking to “Christians” about sins that can grieve the Holy Spirit. Second of all, He is warning them not to commit those sins under the penalty of losing an inheritance. And what inheritance are they in danger of losing? Certainly it is not eternal life, for eternal life is not a condition of works, nor can it be lost after it is received for it is a free gift of God by trusting in Jesus as Savior and Lord. The inheritance is rather the kingdom of Christ and of God, or better still the kingdom that Christ will bring down upon the earth and rule over for a thousand years. It is in this kingdom that every Christian who receives a reward will rule and reign with Christ. But Christ warns all those that commit sins of immorality, covetousness, and idolatry that they cannot enter this kingdom.

The qualification for entrance through the second gate into this kingdom is a Spirit filled life. This means that those Christians who have never experienced this level of Christian life must still be carnal and for the most part grieving the Holy Spirit. It also means that they are daily and consciously committing those sins listed in this passage that causes the Holy Spirit to be grieved. They are saved from the penalty of their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, but they are not experiencing salvation over the power of sin by letting Jesus live His life through them. Therefore, they have eternal life, but without any reward and as such will be excluded from the Kingdom of Christ when it comes on earth.

In our continuing study of Eph. 4:30 through Eph. 5:18, we notice many other sins listed such as lying, anger, theft, and evil speaking. The latter includes dishonest speech, foolish speech, impure speech, unseemly speech, jesting speech. Also it lists evil

feelings which are bitterness, spite, wrath, clamor, railing, and the absence of love, forgiveness, goodness. Along with this He exhorts us not to have fellowship with the works of darkness and not to listen to the world as they try to flatter us with vain words.

The names given to the Holy Spirit in other passages also teach us how we may grieve Him. He is called the Spirit of Holiness in Romans 1:4. This means that all impurity grieves Him. In Romans 8:2 and II Timothy 1:7, He is called The Spirit of Life and Power. According to this, a Christian who fails to grow and develop grieves Him. In Isa. 11:2, He is called the Spirit of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge. When a Christian comes to prefer secular and obscure teachings of men to His Word or willfully remains ignorant of spiritual truth found in His Word, he grieves Him. In II Corinthians 4:13, He is called The Spirit of Faith. A Christian that is living short of complete faith and constantly doubting, having anxieties, or becoming discouraged grieves Him. In Hebrews 10:29, and II Timothy 1:7, He is called The Spirit of Love and Grace. Any lukewarmness toward Christ, any unforgiveness of the heart, complaining, indifference to the lost grieves Him.

Now of course what we have written is not a complete list of all the sins that grieve the Holy Spirit, but rather those that are probably the most common. To write such a list would be impossible, since all is sin that falls short of perfection, which is Jesus Christ Himself. However, some of the more subtle sins will be taken up in the next section under "The Leading of The Holy Spirit."

We have come now to a most logical question that is probably on the mind of the reader. "What do I do to remedy the Holy Spirit from being grieved in my life?" To answer this we must turn back again in the scriptures to Israel's plight and read from Joshua 7:14 – 8:2. Here we see what Israel did to remedy the grieving of Jehovah, and at once we recognize that it is the same for us. First, they had to surrender their sin. They did this by discovering it, recognizing it, denying it, judging it, executing it and burying it (verses 14-26.) Second, they had to believe that God had empowered them once they had done all this. This is important, for if they had not believed they would still be defeated and camped at the ruins of Jericho. But they did believe and furthermore manifested their faith in God's Word by marching on Ai (8:1-2.) Thus, they showed their faith by their works (James 2:18.)

It is the same for us, for the principles never change. In order to remedy a situation of defeat and frustration brought on by our sin, thereby grieving the Holy Spirit, we need to be renewed with His filling. And this is caused only by bringing into operation three principles which are: surrender, faith, and motive. All we need to do is ask God to show us our sin so that we can recognize it and surrender it. Then, with all

our heart, ask Him to forgive us of that sin and to fill us. When this is done, simply believe that you are filled, without the benefit of any feelings, and then act upon your faith according to your commission, purpose or talents (motive.) Only then will your Ai's fall and give you the feeling of victory.

THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many times in my ministry I have encountered the following questions: Does the Holy Spirit desire and actually attempt to lead the Christian in every aspect of his life, and if so, how does He do this?

As loaded as these questions may seem, they are not out of the ordinary, and their answers are clearly stated in God's Word.

To answer the first question, all one has to do is point out the fact that God has a perfect will for everyone. When any individual is out of this will, the Holy Spirit is grieved and contrariwise, when he is in it, he is filled and led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, one who is in the will of God is being led by God and this includes all the details of his life.

I believe that God's "Will" is His "Perfect Revealed Will" for the individual Christian, and nothing less. I do not believe that the scriptures teach of a "Permissive Will of God" as so many Christian teachers refer to. Nor does logic allow for it, for it follows that if a permissive will existed in the councils of the Godhead alongside a perfect will, then there would be in reality two wills of God. And if two "Wills," then no "Will" at all for each "Will" would cancel out the other. It further follows that since God is perfect, then all of His person, including His will, must be perfect. This then would leave no room for another "Will," for to insist upon another will is to say that His one will is not sufficient and therefore not "Perfect," thus concluding that God Himself is not perfect.

However, it is the opinion of this writer that there exists a secret will and revealed will of God, but this is an entirely different subject. For whereas the perfect revealed will and the permissive will of God are two wills and therefore cannot exist together, the secret and revealed wills are but two aspects of the same will. Again, whereas the perfect revealed will and the permissive will contradict one another, the secret and revealed aspects reflect entirely different objects, thereby complimenting one another. All this becomes perfectly clear when we examine these objects of God's secret and revealed will. For whereas His secret will shows His degrees and purposes, His revealed shows our duty. Again, whereas His secret will shows what He will do according to His eternal

council, His revealed shows us only what we should purpose to do by our own will in order to please Him.

This brings us to understand that God's secret will cannot be thwarted by man. This is because of His sovereignty, that it has already been decreed from before the foundation of the world what will be, and what will come to pass. This He declares in the following passages: "*My council shall stand and I shall do all my pleasure.*" (Isa. 46:10). "*For who hath resisted His will?*" (Romans 9:19).

On the other hand, God's Word tells us that when this secret will is made known to man it becomes God's revealed will, thus making it possible in many cases for man to thwart. Take these two passages: "*The Lord...is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*" (II Peter 3:9). "*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.*" (I Thess. 4:3).

The summation of the two aspects of God's will then is: while man can at times thwart that aspect that is made known to him governing a certain situation, he at the same time cannot thwart that aspect that has already been determined in the secret council of the Godhead.

Now, let us get back to the subject of this section, which is the leading of the Holy Spirit, and let me also restate my position. There is but one revealed, perfect will of God. All those who are in it are being led by the Holy Spirit. This is so because the terms "led" and "God's will" are synonymous with one another, for when we speak of being led, we speak of moving by God's will from God's will to God's will, or, stated in a different way, as we moment by moment conform to God's continuous and revealed will by the power of His will, then it can be said that we are being led.

At this point I think I hear the reader saying, "But I knew someone once who refused God's perfect will for their life by refusing the call to the ministry, or mission field, or refused to teach Sunday School, and God gave them a second choice. Now, even though they are not as happy as they could have been had they obeyed the first call, nevertheless, God is allowing and using them in their second choice." Now, as popular as this view may be and as plausible as it may sound, it just isn't true. We human beings think only human thoughts, but God's thoughts are far above our thoughts. Somehow we get the notion that God deals with us in the same way as some of our modern-day parents deal with their own spoiled, non-disciplined children. That is, wink at their sins and give them whatever they may want in order to keep them from crying. No! God's thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways, for He has a master blueprint for each of our lives that cannot be changed, and all the praying, begging, reasoning, compromising,

attempting to make a deal with God, forming a new theology, etc. cannot change this plan. For if it were possible for God to change His will even to the slightest degree to conform with ours, He would be admitting that He had previously been in error, and thus strip Himself of His sovereignty.

Now, let us examine what the Psalmist has said about this subject. In Psalm 143, David declares that God has a perfect plan or “will” that cannot be changed set out for each one of us, for he says in verse 8, “...*cause me to know the way wherein I should walk...*” These terms “way” and “walk” just mean the continuous, unveiling and revealing the will of God as a Christian progresses up the path of sanctification that ends at the second gate.

If we look closely, we should also see in this Psalm David telling us how we are to find this “way” or path. First, he says that one must have a teachable attitude or intense desire. Look at verse 10 and notice the word “teach.” Also, notice that he did not say teach me to *know* thy will, but “*teach me to DO thy will.*” Second, he declared his trust in the Lord, his full surrender, and dedication of his life to the Lord, for in verse 8 he said, “...*for in Thee do I trust...*” and “...*for I lift up my soul unto Thee.*”

These are the prerequisites of finding God’s plan. No more, no less. They are the same as for the filling, for one cannot be in God’s will if the Holy Spirit is grieved with Him.

The time has now come to answer the second question: “If God does attempt to lead a Christian in every aspect of his life, how does He do it, or putting it in the words of the Psalmist, how does God teach me to do His will?”

Since the answer to this question is threefold, I will attempt to answer it by expounding in the order of its three subjects which are: (1) The Word, (2) The Prompting, and (3) The Providence of God. It is also noteworthy here at the beginning of this exposition to recognize that although this threefold answer can be easily grasped on the academic level, it cannot rightly be understood until it is experienced on the spiritual level. Therefore, I pray that the Holy Spirit may open the spiritual eyes of the reader as we “proceed,” that he “may see” and have a joy that he has not yet experienced.

God leads a Christian firstly by His Word. It is through this that God tells us of Himself, and of ourselves. He shows us His perfection and sovereignty, and reveals to us our total depravity. His Word, which is as a sharp two-edged sword, cuts us deep to show us that we are fallen creatures and have need of a Savior; then He reveals through

His Word this Savior (Jesus) who has already purchased our salvation by His precious blood on the cross of Calvary.

To those who have received Him by faith, He reveals through His word what type of life they should live, what type of clothing they should wear, what type of speech they should have, what type of friends they should have, what type of partner they should marry, what type of business partner they should choose, what type of church they should worship in, what type of actions they should demonstrate, what type of attitudes they should have, what type of thoughts they should think, etc. Moreover, His Word is a complete book of instructions for handling the problems of all Christians who discipline their lives by it.

The key that unlocks the Bible is Jesus Christ, for without Him there would be no Bible. Take the literal key out and all one would have left is a beautiful book of literature. Take the typical key out and all one would have left is a few unconnected verses, for Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews: “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.*” (John 5:39). Take the prophetic key out and all one would have left is a pipedream. Let an educated man read the Bible without the key and he would understand nothing of it. On the contrary, let an uneducated man read the Bible with the key and the deep mysteries of God will be revealed to him.

Jesus Christ is also the divider of scriptures so that every Christian may not be ignorant in knowing the way in which he should walk. God has commanded us to, “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” (II Tim. 2:15). So again, without Jesus as Savior and Lord an individual has no key for dividing unto the church what God has given to the church, or dividing unto Israel what belongs to Israel, or dividing unto the nations what God has said to the nations, or dividing prophecy from history, or what God literally says as opposed to what He symbolically or figuratively says, or dividing time from eternity, or ages from dispensations of time. For, “while the Bible was written for all classes of people, and for our learning, it is not addressed to all people in general. Part of it is addressed to the Jews, part to the Gentiles, and part to the church. These three constitute the three classes into which humanity is divided. I Cor. 10:32. All scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction (II Tim. 3:16) and what happened to Israel was written for our ensample and admonition (I Cor. 10:11), but we must not apply to the church what does not belong to it. To do so is to misapply scripture and lead to confusion. We must also not forget the Divine Conjunctions and the Divine Disjunctions of the Word of God. We must not separate what God has joined, as the

Word of God and the Spirit of God, nor join what He has separated as Baptism and Regeneration, Law and Grace, The Church and The Kingdom.”⁷

We need also to learn how to rightly divide what is sin from what is not sin for our individual lives. For where there are many questions clearly answered in the scriptures concerning the regeneration of our lives before God, there are many more questions that cannot be answered with clear cut lines for everyone alike, for no specific command is given by God’s Word concerning them. These usually have to do with what we eat, how we dress, the question of pleasure and amusements, matters of habits, rites, ceremonies, Sunday observance, etc.

God is silent concerning these questionable things, simply because they are sin to some people and not sin to others, depending on the individual’s temperament, background, and whether they are weak or strong in the faith. So, He instead lays down certain hard and fast rules that can be applied to every question of concern so that the individual Christian may know what is right for his life.

The following is a list of these rules found in the 14th chapter of Romans. If any one of these seven rules is violated when applied to a questionable action, attitude or thought, then that questionable action, attitude or thought becomes sin to that individual, and therefore places him outside the will of God.

- (1) Do not judge anyone else because he does not see things exactly as you do. (verses 2-4)
- (2) Always think and act in the light of the judgment seat of Christ. (verse 10)
- (3) Do nothing that would put a stumbling block in the way of someone else. (verses 13, 15, 21)
- (4) Recognize that a thing is only wrong for you when your conscience tells you it is wrong. (verses 14, 20, 22)
- (5) Be careful that you do not major on minor things. (verse 17)

⁷ Clarence Larken, *Rightly Dividing The Word*.

- (6) Make sure that your attitude regarding so-called doubtful things maintains peace and that it edifies. (verse 19)
- (7) Make sure that there is no doubt whatsoever in what you allow yourself to do and that your attitudes and actions are consistent with your faith. (verse 23)

Since it is not the purpose of this section to deal with the subject of the “Word” in its entirety, I sum up by reminding the reader that God’s Word is infallible and verbally inspired by God Himself. We should study it, and rightly divide it for our lives, that we may know the way in which He would have us walk.

The second way that the Holy Spirit leads a Christian is by “Providence.” In Proverbs 3:5-6 we read: *“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.”*

The reader will discover that this method of being led by the Holy Spirit is completely different from that of the “Word,” although all methods must harmonize with the “Word.” God cannot lead a Christian by providence into a position of thought or action that is opposed by His Word. He must be consistent with Himself.

According to the passage that is before us, God is saying that if the Christian will meet certain conditions of God, then He will cause every circumstance in that Christian’s life to be divinely ordered.

Now just what are these conditions? They are (1) trust (2) lean not, and (3) acknowledge. God wants the full surrender of a Christian to Himself. This is the same kind of surrender that we have already spoken of in the “Filling of The Spirit.” But to go a little further and make it crystal clear to the believer, God defines it. Notice, He says that this type of surrender abandons self: *“And lean not unto thy own understanding.”* This means that everything that happens good or bad must be accepted by the believer as coming from the hand of God. He must have come to an end of himself to the degree that he doesn’t even try to understand the circumstances. The Lord God further defines this by saying that when one is fully surrendered, he will by faith acknowledge every circumstance as being from God: *“In all thy ways acknowledge Him.”*

How wonderful the Holy Spirit is! If we will trust Him to the degree that we abandon all our own ability and reasoning and by faith claim Him as author of every

circumstance, then whatever may appear as normal occurrences, normal actions, normal thoughts, normal speaking on subjects that just normally arise is not normal at all, but rather divinely decreed and controlled by God so that the believer will be in, and doing, the will of God. This just means that your visitation will take on a new power. This just means that your visitation will take on a new power, for whomever you happen to visit or happen not to visit will be decreed by God. Your witnessing, too, will take on a new thrill, for whoever you happen to witness to, and whoever you happen not to witness to will be controlled by God. You will find no effort in whatever you do, for whatever you just happen to do will be what God wanted you to do. Praise the Lord! Our God is a mighty God; one Who is God of our providence. *"...and He shall direct thy paths."*

I ask the reader to go back and meditate on this passage found in Proverbs, and also to look up and meditate on Romans 8:28.

The third method which the Holy Spirit employs in leading a Christian is by the "Prompting of the Spirit."

This method is used many times by the Holy Spirit to lead a believer into actions not generally found in the Word or providence of God. For instance, He may employ this method to call someone into the ministry or to the Foreign Mission Field; or He may employ this method to give a message to the heart of a preacher. Again, He may use this method to get a Christian to move out of state to another job, or to change churches. Whatever may be, that is not found explicitly in the Word, and is not chosen to be accomplished by providence, will be done through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Now the question may arise, "How do I know that my feelings in a particular direction are those of the Holy Spirit?" It could be my own desires, or it could be that Satan is trying to get me to do something out of God's will. This is a good question and it can be answered by putting your "prompting" to two tests.

In the first test, be absolutely surrendered in the manner God has already pointed out, and then do nothing for a period of time (approximately a week; no more than a month.) If your promptings are of Satan, they will cease after a short period of time, for he has no patience and will try to get you to do his bidding from a different direction. However, since God doesn't change His mind, His promptings never cease. Now, it is possible to dull your spiritual hearing and ultimately harden your heart, but nevertheless the promptings will still be there and will follow you to your grave.

The second test is to see if your "promptings" harmonize with God's "Word" and His "Providence." If there is no hindrance in God's Word to your promptings, then you

can proceed with testing it with God's providence. Remember this, when one steps out in faith, claiming the "Promptings" by faith as God's will for his life, then the doors of circumstances will open or close in front of the believer in such a way that it will confirm or deny those promptings. God cannot by His nature allow a surrendered believer to move by faith out of His will.

To illustrate this: When I was called into the ministry, God first employed the "prompting" method. I can still remember where I was and what I was doing when the strong suggestions began to flood my mind. At first, I told myself that it was just a passing fancy. But the promptings continued until finally I felt like I had to get some relief. I felt like I had to once and for all find out if this was God's voice or just me. I finally went to the Lord in prayer and I said in effect something like this, "Dear Lord, there is only one way I can find out for sure whether or not you are calling me, and that is to surrender and step out in faith in the direction of going to school. I pray that if this is not your will for you to stop me by arranging the circumstances." You see what I was doing? I was placing the burden back on the shoulder of the Lord by faith. It was up to Him now to confirm or deny the "promptings." The next day I placed my house up for sale, and before it could even be advertised by the real estate broker, it was sold. I had to leave now. The following week I made application for school and rented a house, sight unseen near the school, all from circumstances. I could go on and on explaining the multitude of circumstances that I have had happen to confirm a prompting, but I think I have made my point.

Adversely, I have seen the opposite of this in effect; that is, circumstances that fail to confirm certain promptings. I have learned one thing, that whenever God is in anything and you employ this method, the doors of circumstance only need knocking on. You don't have to force them. As a matter of fact, if one does force them even to the slightest degree, it will be found that God is not in it.

There is yet a more intricate method of prompting employed by the Holy Spirit. This method has to do with putting the very thoughts of God into the mind of the believer. The Lord tells us of this method in Proverbs 16:3, "*Commit they works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*" God will use this method on every full – grown Christian who witnesses, teaches, or preaches His Word. He not only gives the preacher or teacher his message, but while he is in the course of delivering that message He adds to or deletes from it by changing the preacher or teacher's thoughts. This method actually makes the will of the believer the same as the will of God. But a word of caution is in order. One must be sold out to the Lord before he can claim this method by faith. And unless he can claim it by faith then he is not being led by this method.

This method is also the secret of powerful praying, for when one is claiming it by faith, he may pray for whatsoever he will and have confidence that his prayers are answered. This is so because the believer's will is the same as God's will, for He has already established his thoughts, "*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).

There is yet another method God uses to lead a Christian in making a correct decision. Rightfully, this method belongs to the providence of God, but I have been persuaded to treat it differently. In Proverbs 16:33 we read, "*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*" In the Old Testament time when God's saints wanted to know God's will on a certain matter, they cast lots. That is, they made their decision on pure chance, trusting that God would be the God over chance. Now, I am not suggesting the reader to find himself some lots. But I am suggesting its principle.

When a Christian comes upon a decision that must be made, that cannot be tested by the providence of God, God simply says that if he is completely surrendered, and if he will claim by faith the truth that whatever decision he makes will be of God, then it will be of God. Again, a word of caution to the wise, when claiming this by faith there must not be even the slightest doubt.

I remember a very crucial time in my ministry when I had to seek God's will by this method. The decision was whether or not to move our church to a new location. The people had already made up their mind to move and this made it doubly hard. I was on my face before God five days seeking the faith that I needed in order to make the decision. That was the only thing I needed. Once I had obtained this, the decision was easy, for God's Word had said whichever way I choose will be His will. I chose to have the church remain where it was, and after the choice I found myself full of faith, and without the slightest doubt. It wasn't until some months later that we discovered why God wanted that church to remain where it was. The decision had come from God on the spiritual level, yet on the physical level it all came about by chance.