



## **ABC's of Bible Prayer**

Glen A Coon: 1966

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### **GOD'S NAIL**

Lord, make me a nail upon the wall,  
Fastened securely in its place.  
Then from this thing so common and so small  
Hang a bright picture of Thy face  
That travelers may pause to look  
Upon the loveliness depicted there,  
And passing on their weary ways,  
Each radiant face may bear  
Stamped so that nothing can efface - -  
The image of Thy glory and Thy grace.  
Lord, let not one soul think of me.  
Only let me be a nail upon the wall,  
Holding Thy picture in its place.  
Mildred Hill

## FORWARD

We are really thrilled to tell you, dear reader, that this little book, which presents the A, B, C's of prayer, is itself an answer to prayer.

Because of the urgent requests from people all across America for these sermons in printed form, I decided one morning to fall on my knees with the Bible open to Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I told God I needed someone to transcribe these sermons from tape, edit them and prepare them for printing, as I could not possibly do it by myself. I prayed most earnestly. I asked (Matthew 7:7), I believed (Mark 11:24), and I claimed the answer by returning thanks that I had received -- just like Jesus did at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:41) and as we are recommended to do by our favorite author in the book, *Education*, pages 257, 258.

That very night as I spoke at Pastor Gery P. Friesen's church in Norwalk, California, he approached me with the words: "Have you ever thought of securing someone to transcribe these sermons from the tape, edit them and make arrangements for the printing?" I could scarcely believe my ears. Pastor Friesen has done just that! With his heavy church program, he has sacrificed time to carry through on this project, and our thanks to God and to him, for being God's servant and letting God answer our prayer through him.

God will answer your prayer, too, as you learn the simple A, B, C's of prayer.

G. A. C.

## 1: AT THE END OF MY ROPE

I'd like to have you notice seven Bible facts with me:

1. Jesus is coming again. "And, behold I come quickly..." Rev. 22:12.
2. He's coming for those whom He calls, 'Chosen'. Rev. 17:14, "...and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."
3. They will have become chosen in a furnace of affliction. Isa. 48:10, "...I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."
4. This furnace of affliction is called, 'the time of trouble', or 'the time of Jacob's trouble'. Daniel 12:1, "... and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; ..." Jeremiah 30:7 says, "... it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."
5. Jacob was delivered out of his time of trouble because he learned the prayer of reception. Genesis 32:8, 9, 12, 28. This was the prayer of reception, not the prayer of commitment, not the prayer of thanksgiving or adoration or penitence, merely. Nor was it merely the prayer of confession. He was delivered because he had learned the prayer of reception.
6. His time of trouble and deliverance is a type of the time of trouble and deliverance of the people of God in the last days. Jeremiah 30:7, "... it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jacob here is represented as a type of a group of people living just prior to the coming of the Lord who have gone through the tremendous refining process in a furnace of affliction. Notice that they will be saved out of it because they have learned the prayer of reception which Jacob learned and which guided him through his time of trouble.

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7. The result: They will be like Jesus Christ Himself. 1 John 3:1-3, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Jacob represents a group of people who through this great time of trouble - this refining process - will come forth as gold. The promise is that this group of people will be saved out of this time of trouble because they have learned what Jacob learned. They have learned to pray as Jacob learned to pray; not merely the prayer of repentance, not merely a prayer of confession, nor of thanksgiving or adoration. They have learned to pray the prayer of reception. God, coming down through the flaming vault of the skies looks upon these people and says: "They are like me." I want to belong to that group of people when Jesus comes again, don't you? And I want to be a part of that people so earnestly that I am determined to pray this prayer of reception.

A number of years ago there was a young man at La Sierra College who for years had been trying to find solutions to his problems. He had questions that needed answers. Although he had received many answers to prayer, on vital issues the answers eluded him. The answers to the great questions of life he could not find. The real solutions to problems he could not discover. Even after going from one teacher to another, and from one Christian to another, the questions remained unanswered. In vain he sought.

He often went to a lonely spot to pray, pleading with God for the answers to his questions. Although he felt refreshed after a season of prayer, the solution to the questions he faced remained unclear. Finally one day, he decided on a course of action and left a note for his room-mate.

For the sake of identifying these two boys, we will call them Bob and Jim. Bob wrote a simple note which said, "Dear Jim: I've gone to San Diego to join the navy. Will you kindly pack up my belongings in my trunk and when I'm settled I'll tell you where to send them." When Jim returned to the room and read the note, he read between the lines. Jim felt that the navy did not hold the solution to Bob's problems. He knew that for a man to run away from the problems was merely an attempt to run away from himself, and as long as a man carries himself with him, he will carry his problems as well.

Jim realized the need for help in this situation and so he called in some of his close Christian friends and asked them to pray that God would prevent Bob from being able to join the navy. Earnestly they united their hearts in pressing to God their prayer.

This was the time of the Korean War when Uncle Sam needed every stalwart, red-blooded American boy available. Against these odds, these young men set their faces.

In the meantime, Bob arrived in San Diego and quickly found a navy recruiting officer. He stepped up to him and announced his intention to join the navy. To enhance the situation, he did a little self-advertising. He explained the advantage the navy would realize by his enlistment. This was just for good measure so he wouldn't be turned down. When he finished, the officer looked him in the eye and said, "Young man, we're not interested in you right now. We're not accepting men for a month. Come back later if you want to." His answer was cold and hard.

This shook Bob visibly. He hadn't expected this at all. He went back to his hotel room and, undaunted, looked through the ad's in the newspaper hoping to find a job for a month after which he would go and enlist. He found an ad calling for a salesman. Bob felt himself to be a pretty good salesman and so quickly made his way to the office at the address given. Shortly he was seated in the manager's office and they fell into conversation.

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In a few minutes this man sized up the situation. Standing to his feet and shaking a menacing finger in Bob's face, the man said: "Young man, go back home and decide what you want to do - and do it!"

Now Bob was shaken. Here was a man who was looking for a salesman; he had spent good cold cash advertising for a salesman and a salesman shows up and he sends him home! He had offered his services to his country in a time of dire need, and his country had turned him down.

Now what will he do? He can't go back to college and save face. He didn't know what to do. He had only \$8.50 in his pocket. There in his hotel room he remembered that he had had many answers to his prayers. Falling on his knees he prayed, and in effect he said, "Dear Lord, I've come to the end of my rope. I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go. But, dear God, if you'll come to my rescue and tell me what to do, I will do it. I'll go where you want me to go and do what you want me to do. I will be what you want me to be."

Just then, Bob told me, he heard an audible voice speaking to him. A distinct, clear voice, such as he had never heard before or since. That voice said, "Go to Madison College in Tennessee." Bob had never heard of Madison College, nor did he know where in Tennessee it was.

With \$8.50 in his pocket he started across the continent for Madison College. Six days later he arrived in the town of Madison, two miles from the college. Bob walked the last two miles to the college. It was a dreary, cold, rainy morning. As he was walking along he kept asking himself, 'why did I come across the continent to come to this school? What can I find here that I couldn't find in California? What is this really all about?'

He arrived on campus, introduced himself and was welcomed. He had a little time to think and to crystallize his thinking. When asked by fellow students what his purpose in coming to Madison was, he answered, "I have come here for one express purpose, I am trying to find a philosophy that will guide me through the coming time of trouble." This was Bob's consistent answer to the questions of his fellow students.

If there is anything the church ought to be anxious about, it is a clear concept of this philosophy. I'm not so interested in people repeating the fact of the coming of the seven last plagues and the time of trouble. The mere repetition of these things merely fills us with fear, and the Bible says, "Fear hath torment", and "...he that feareth is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18 The important thing, however, and that which I am interested in is, helping people learn of the philosophy that will guide a people through the coming time of trouble and make it possible for a people to look up and say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us."

These messages have been prepared with this one thing in mind. I want you to know more than simply that there are some dark, dreary days ahead. The devil knows that; and the angels know that. God knows that - most everyone knows that! But we need to know more than that! We need to know - we need to become acquainted with the philosophy that will guide us triumphantly through the time of trouble. We can be walking like angels as Zechariah 12:8 says we can in the closing days of human history.

In spite of the fact that Bob had determined that he would never again seek counsel from a living soul, after two weeks on the campus, he decided he would try once more. He made his way over to the pastor's study and knocked on the door. It was my privilege to have been the pastor at the Madison College church at that time.

What Bob didn't know as he stood there knocking at the door was that I had been going through an experience similar to that which he had been passing through. He didn't know that this pastor had gone down some weary, lonely lanes and had been pleading with God to give him some answers. Although I

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had been a minister for years, there were many questions that remained unanswered in my mind. Another thing that Bob did not know was that after pouring out my heart to God and searching importunately, I had found some answers.

I have come to this conclusion: When God, in His mercy has given light to a searching soul, and someone else is looking for the same light and understanding, He will bring these two people together if it means crossing the continent. God will give the answer when the thinking has been crystallized sufficiently to know the need. Bob had crystallized his thinking; he knew his need and was ready for some answers.

Bob entered the office and began to relate his experience. He told of his problems and shared with me some of the questions to which he had not been able to find answers. God sent His Holy Spirit to my side at that moment. I knew there were answers to these questions, and I recognized them as questions to which I had discovered the answers by the help and power of God. You see, it is not enough to have knowledge; one must be able to detect the other persons need. I felt the Lord was directing me to understand the immediate need.

I turned to Bob and said, "Bob, I'm not so interested in your individual problems. I'd like to share with you a philosophy of answered prayer." And so I opened my Bible and we began. One hour later Bob walked out of that office as though he were walking on air! He had made some thrilling discoveries. He was elated! I had given him a study on the science of the prayer of faith which I had learned in my Gethsemane. I had found in my agony of searching something for which I have been continually grateful. I had found the A, B, C's of prayer - like a little child.

In Matthew 7:7 I had learned the 'A' of prayer. "Ask (that's the 'A') and it shall be given you." In Mark 11:24 I had learned the 'B' of prayer. "Believe..." Believe that you have received the answer! Isn't that simple? Yes, the rudiments are simple, but to do it is something else. To kneel down before God and open His Book to any of the 3,573 promises or clusters of promises and place my hand on it and ask God, like a little child, to fulfill this promise in my behalf - and then believe He will do it, simply because He has promised, is a complicated thing. To do this does not require the faith of an Elijah, but the faith of a little child.

So often we come to Him knowing too much. We're too wise - far too mature. Was it not Jesus who said, "Except ye become as little children...." How does a little child accept a statement of her mother?

There were two little children disputing a point. The one said, "It's so."

"No, it 'taint so" the other girl said.

"Yes it is so, because mother said it's so."

The basis of her belief was not so many words, but it was mother. The basis of our belief is not so many words, but it is that God said it! Our faith is to be based on God.

Does God lie or does God tell the truth? This is important as we consider this question. The little girl was still not satisfied.

"It still 'taint so", she insisted

"It is too so, because mommy said it's so, and what mommy says is so, even if it 'taint so."

That's child-like faith. That is taking what mother says as so, because of mother!

I found I had to fall on my knees and say, "I believe the promises you have made because YOU say it's so, even if the devil says it's not so." Even if circumstances say it can't be so - if God says it's so - It Is So! This is the 'B' of prayer. This, however, is not the prayer of reception.

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The 'C' is the prayer of reception. And this I had to learn after having preached for many years. The 'C' is to claim the promise for which I have asked, and for which I have told Him I believe in. To claim it, and to return thanks that I **have** received it, is the secret that had eluded me for many years. This is what Jacob did in his time of trouble. He confessed his unworthiness and said, "Lord you told me that you would stay by me, and you told me that you would bring me back home safely. I'm frightened because my brother is coming with four hundred soldiers. I'm afraid he will destroy my family, my little ones and all that I have. This is my problem, Lord, but I'm relying on the promise you made to me regarding my safety. You promised me, Lord."

Humbly he confessed his sins and cried to God for mercy repeating the promises and reminding God of all He had said. Now he was asking God to fulfill it. Then he claimed the promise. Reverently he said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." This is the prayer of reception.

Oh that we, like Jacob, might say in prayer, "I will not let Thee go except Thou give me the assurance that Thou hast heard me and given me the assurance of the fulfillment of your promise.

There are millions of people today who are praying prayers of adoration, prayers of penitence, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of confession and prayers of request. Very few even admit that they believe! But I do not believe there is one Christian out of a hundred who is fulfilling the conditions and saying, "Lord, I believe that what You have promised you are now fulfilling." This is the prayer of reception.

We are going to explore this together as we continue, so that we can know how to take hold of this Mighty God, this Creator of the universe, this Saviour who is eager and willing to deliver anyone who came to Him. We, too, can come to Him and say, "Lord I believe this promise. I believe you are now fulfilling this promise and I thank you that you have fulfilled it."

Where did I get this from? I got it from the Bible. But a favorite author of mine was the medium of God to point out these thrilling facts. It is found in the book Education pages 253 - 258. Here is just a line or two that will thrill you: ". . . for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received."

Isn't that thrilling? That was from page 258 of the book Education by E. G. White. I want to share with you in the succeeding studies how each of us can do just what has been recommended. And you are going to learn how to do it! This experience can and will be yours. Your problems can be solved in the framework of this arrangement. God has promised it would be so.

In the book, Christ Object Lessons on page 147 it tells us to take our Bible in our hand and open it. Then we are to come to God and say, "Lord, I have done as You have commanded. I present Thy promise, and I claim the answer."

George Muller, that great man of faith used to pray with his Bible open before him. When asked why he did this, he would answer: "This open Bible is the channel of communication between God and man. The Holy Spirit gave this book; the Holy Spirit indicts our prayer, so this open Bible forms a great channel of communication between God and man."

This is God's Holy Spirit's Word. So as I take His book, I realize according to Romans 10:17, "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." So then, faith comes by hearing the Word of God! We can come to God and say, "This is Your immutable, eternal, everlasting, undying Word. It cannot fail."

"...hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good.? Numbers 23:19

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It is impossible for God to lie! In this we can place our complete trust and confidence. There need never be a question in our minds about God's veracity.

Bob left the office that morning having found what he wanted. He was thrilled! He returned to my office a few days later. He said, as I ushered him in, in response to his knocking on my door that he had come back for a little more information. Before we went into another discussion I was curious as to whether Bob had followed the counsel I had already given him. I asked him, "Bob, have you already put into practise what I have already shared with you?"

"No, I haven't", Bob said

With that I kindly ushered him back to the door and with a smile on my face I told him to come back just as soon as he had done that. A little shaken Bob left the office and, as he told me later, he determined to put the information he had received into practise. Bob is now my son-in-law, and he confided to me later that it was not until that moment that he realized the importance of following through on a conviction. God had led him across the continent to find what he was looking for. He had found it and now it was time to do something about what he had found.

It's time for us to do something about what the Lord has revealed to us, don't you agree? Knowledge is of no value unless it is put into active use - unless we do something with it.

Here now is what we have learned:

1. Jesus is coming again.
2. He is coming for those that are 'called' and 'chosen'.
3. They will have been chosen in a furnace.
4. That furnace is a time of trouble.
5. That time of trouble is the time of Jacob's Trouble.
6. Jacob was saved out of his time of trouble because he learned the prayer of reception.
7. All, who like Jacob learn the prayer of reception and fulfill the conditions as Jacob did, will be led through the time of trouble and will look up into the face of God and say, "We're ready for You, O Lord, we have waited for You...."

"Thank you, Father, for the wonderful love Thou hast shown us; for Thy eternal Word; for Thy precious promises. Thank you for having spoken and for performing what Thou hast promised. Thank you for One who will teach us to pray, in Jesus name, Amen. "

Open your Bible now to 1 John 1:9 and place your hand on that promise. Then reverently pray this prayer of reception:

"Dear Lord in heaven, I have read this promise. I confess that I'm a sinner. Please forgive me for my sins. Now I believe that Thou hast forgiven me, and I return thanks to Thee for this forgiveness, in Jesus name, Amen."

## **FROM NIGHTMARE TO DREAMLAND**

I'd I like you to notice seven Bible facts with me:

1. Jesus is coming again. "And, behold I come quickly...." Rev. 22:12.

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2. He is coming for the righteous and the holy. Rev. 22:11, "...he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be."

3. He is coming for those individuals because they won't sin any more. Rev. 22:11 . A man that righteous is not sinning for "all unrighteousness is sin." 1 John 5:17.

4. These people will stop sinning for they have learned the philosophy of 1 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." They have learned that if they will take God's seed and place it in their hearts and keep it, and hide it, and hold it in their hearts, they will not sin. They have learned it by looking to Jesus. They are doing what Jesus did when He was tempted. In Matthew 4:4 the Bible record states that Jesus, when the devil came to Him, hurled a promise at him, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

These people have learned that Jesus came to take our place and that while here on earth, He had no means at His disposal that we do not have. They have adopted the formula for victory that Jesus used - the power of the Word of God! This is the philosophy of hiding in the heart the Word of God. It is a new experience, even as Peter mentions: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1:23. The seed, which is the Word of God has been hidden in the heart, as Jesus hid it in His heart. They will have, by experimentation, found that the method Jesus used is the only method that is successful in dealing with temptation. They will have read such texts as John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." They will have read such promises as 2 Peter 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

These people have learned the philosophy of 1 John 3:9. God's life is in His word, and when they let the Holy Spirit plant that word, and hold and retain that word, and feel it, they will have stopped sinning, because God's immutable, eternal word declares they will be holy still . I want to belong to that group! More than that - I determine to belong to that group! I believe I CAN belong to that group. I believe we all can belong to this group.

5. The secret of Jacob's victory in his time of trouble recorded for us in Gen. 32:8,9, 12,28 is clearly seen to be the fact that Jacob took God's immutable, eternal promise and in humility and utter selflessness, presented to God the promise that He had made. Jacob said, "Lord, you promised me You would stick by me when I left home. When I slept on that pillow of stone and You showed me that ladder extending from heaven to earth, again You assured me that you would go with me and see me through. Lord, You told me You would not forsake me, but promised me that my seed would be as the stars of the heavens, and You promised me I would be able to return home.

This is how Jacob succeeded. He did not merely pray a prayer of penitence in declaring his unworthiness, but he prayed a prayer of reception by which he asked God to do something he believed God would do, and then he returned thanks to God that He had done it! This is the prayer of reception: returning thanks to God for receiving the thing that God has promised. How important that we stretch our faith to include this miracle of prayer. Jacob didn't stand before God at the end of that night of wrestling when the angel said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh..." and say, "... if it is Your will to bless me, then bless me..." That would have been a prayer of commitment. Christians today have completely missed the mark as far as the prayer of reception is concerned. They have confused it with the prayer of commitment. Jacob needed more than the prayer of commitment that night - he needed to receive power and victory. He needed a new life! He must have it or else perish! Tenaciously he clung to the



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Mighty Deliverer and cried from the depths of his soul in agony, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." In other words he said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou give to me the thing You have promised me and for which You have come."

God said, "Let me go..." Jacob held on. Again he cried, "I cannot let Thee go.... You must give that for which You have come .... I want it, Lord." "Alright", God said, "no longer are you Jacob. From here on you are Israel. You're a prince - you're a victor. You have found deliverance. You have received what you have asked for."

6. All who do what Jacob did will go through the last time of trouble safely. Jeremiah 30:7, "...it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be delivered out of it." This is the promise! Deliverance is promised those who have learned the philosophy of accepting the life of Jesus Christ in His word, and receiving Him in His word. They will pass through the time of trouble victoriously - triumphantly!

7. God Himself will declare that they are without fault. Jude 24, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,"

Think of it - God will present us fault-less! God Himself looks upon His children in the last great day when He comes for them and Jesus presents them to the Father and says, "Father, here they are. There's not one fault in them.

I feel like singing the song the colored people so often sing, "Lord, I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in". Don't you? When we can say, "Lord, I plan to be in that number when the saints go marching in.... or "Lord, You promised to help me, and because You promised I know I am going to be in that number..." then I won't fail.

In the previous message I told you about the experience our son-in-law went through. I told you how that because of a lack of communication, a failure to see clearly perhaps some of his own thinking so he could intelligently ask the questions, he was unable to find the answers to some very important questions. You will remember that the Lord led him across the continent to me because I had gone through a time of trouble myself and the Lord had led me to some answers that He wanted me to share with Bob.

The Lord gives us these little times of trouble so that we will be prepared to go through the larger time of trouble when it comes. That's a reasonable program, isn't it? We also saw how he finally prayed the prayer of faith and reception. Let's continue to explore it further.

It was in my time of trouble that I became acquainted with this seed. It was a marvelous revelation to me. Jesus said in Luke 8:11, "The seed is the word of God." It was in my time of trouble that I learned how to hide the seed in my heart. Like the apostle Paul I must confess that I have not attained. But I want to move forward and march onward. This, I believe, is what counts.

God led me through a time of trouble so that I could learn some of these things. So that I could help Bob, first of all - and then a host of others, when he came to me. Now the event that prepared me for this encounter was an amazingly small thing. It was so small that I have come to the conclusion that it is the small tests of life that prepare us for the big tests. It is the little times of trouble that prepare us for the great time of trouble. It is as we meet temptation that we realize that which God would perform within us. As we meet the everyday temptations - the common, ordinary temptations successfully, that we are prepared for the greater temptations. It may well be, that when we arrive at our Father's house and look back over our experience that what we thought was a little incident in our lives, was, in reality, a tremendous event - a turning point in our lives!

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So it was with us. It was over twenty years ago. We were living in Rochester, N.Y. We had just completed a very heavy series of evangelistic meetings. Our energies were drained. I had been counseled on several occasions to get some diversion - some exercise. Good health depends upon good circulation, and good circulation depends upon physical exercise. We were living in a home that was on a lot so small that there wasn't room for a garden.

I had been reading two books. The one was called Country Living. I realized more than ever before that if I was going to keep my health, I had better get a garden. I knew I had to get exercise somehow! The other good book that I had been reading was entitled, What God Hath Promised. From my childhood I could look back and realize that God had answered many of my prayers. There were so many answered prayers that I could account for that you would have thought that I could never lose my way. But, you know, it's not the number of answered prayers we have experienced, but rather how we have held on to the arm of the Lord that's important.

Often I would see the title and think of the remainder of the verse that reads, "What God (Ha) had promised, he was able to perform." Romans 4:21 I kept this in my subconscious mind day after day. I was reminded of it often because we were giving this book away at the evangelistic meetings as an attendance incentive. The Lord blessed us in our meeting. There were 131 baptized as a result of that one campaign. Night after night we gave them this book, What God Hath Promised. I thought of the many times I had taken God at His word, and the wonderful deliverances God had used me to bring, as a channel, to individuals with habits of one kind and another. I thought of many instances of answered prayer in my personal life ever since I was a boy.

At the age of twenty-one I had become a teacher in our church school system. I had told my pupils that the day would come when I would prescribe the promises of the Bible just like a doctor prescribes medicine for his patients - a promise for each kind of problem. But I had never done anything about it. Now here I was, looking at that book, What God Hath Promised.

The time had come for me to put the plan to a test in my own problem. It was a small request I made, but it has meant so much to me ever since. For weeks, as I travelled, I was looking for a home with enough land for a garden. But look as I may, I could not find a home that would satisfy my need. I decided I would buy an acre of land, if nothing else, and build. But no one would sell me an acre off of those big farms. I was beginning to get desperate.

I had been spending an hour or more every morning in prayer. I had a list of 165 names that I would pass through morning by morning, presenting them to the Lord, asking for His divine blessing to be upon them and to move upon them in such a way that they would surrender their hearts. It was such a sweet fellowship. But I needed more. I wanted a closer fellowship. I wanted to be able to reach out and take God at His word and expect the impossible to take place - and in this case hope it would take place somewhere where I could have a garden! It didn't revolve around a situation where someone said, "I'll kill you if you serve the Lord." It revolved around a garden! That's why I say the Lord is testing us in some of the smallest things of life.

After I had kept my eyes open for weeks, one morning as I was finishing my prayer, the thought came to my mind, 'I'm not going to fool around keeping my eyes open any longer. I'm going to ask the Lord to give me a place today, and if He doesn't give me that place today, I'll know that maybe I'm going to be transferred.' So I wrote a letter to the Lord! I believe it was the first letter I ever wrote to the Lord. In the letter I said, "Dear Lord, I want a place where I can have a garden. I know You know where such a place can be found, for You know the end from the beginning. Help me find it today. If I don't find it today, I'm not going to look around any longer, because You know I just don't have the time. We have a heavy program here and today must be our last day to look."

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I took this little letter downstairs to where my wife was doing the washing and I said, "Honey, the Bible says in Matthew 18:19, '.... if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' Do you agree that this is reasonable? If the Lord doesn't give us a place out in the country today, we'll just forget it."

"That's fine with me", she said, "I agree"

So we had fulfilled the condition, and whether she signed the letter or not I don't remember, but we prayed together and presented this letter to the Lord.

I told my wife to forget the washing, and away we went. We hunted all day, and found nothing that was appropriate. My wife decided it was time to fix supper, so I took her home and she prepared supper. While she was busy in the kitchen I told her I was going out for a few more minutes, and I drove out to route 104. I parked the car and reverently bowed my head and said, "Lord, if You're going to give me a place in the country, You're going to have to move fast. I'm going to keep looking for just a few more minutes, and when I've made this little trek, I'm through looking. I'm going to go home and forget about it."

Just then I had the strangest feeling. I was impressed that the place was right there on my right. All I could see was an old dilapidated farm house. Whether this was an impression or the voice of the Holy Spirit is not too important to me. I'm convinced that many times these impressions are the Holy Spirit talking to us endeavoring to guide us and lead us. Here it was! I wasn't sure I was hearing right - or seeing right. But I got out of the car and went up to the house - but there was no 'For Sale' sign to be seen anywhere!

I thought to myself, as I was walking up the walkway, 'how am I going to accost these people when there's no For Sale sign anywhere? How do I know it's even for sale?' Then I decided that I would go to the door and say, 'Is this the place that was for sale?' At least then I'd be safe.

So I rang the doorbell. When the lady arrived at the door I said, "Is this the place that was for sale?" Her mouth fell open and she looked shocked!

"How did you know? To tell you the truth, it has been for sale, but we had given an option and the option expired just today. My husband is at the store on the corner. You'll find him there. He'll sell it to you."

I went back to the store to which she had directed me. I asked for him and found him and told him what I was there for. "Yes", he said, "I'll sell it to you". Right then I gave him a deposit - ten dollars - I believe it was! I had fifty dollars that I was going to pay him the next week, and that was all the money I had. The next week I brought him the money and that was it! I never even looked the place over. I knew that was the place and I was just thrilled that I had found it. I was sure of it!

When I brought them the fifty dollars, I told them that I had found the place in answer to prayer. I told them I was going to tell people about this experience every where I went - and I've done just that.

I had big plans for that farm. I had decided that I would sell all the land except one acre that would be mine for the garden I needed. The devil listened to these plans and he started to get busy. When I mention the devil and his antics, I don't want you to think I'm a devil worshipper. Some people keep talking about the devil and all he does. Let me tell you I believe God is bigger than the devil and I want people to know that I believe God has more power than the devil. I want people to know what God is like - to know of His power and might. But the devil intruded at this point in a very forceful way. God had promised to step on the serpents head in the very beginning of the sin problem - but just like a serpent - you can step on his head and he still squirms. The devil was doing a lot of squirming just about that time.

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Just after I bought this farm, I had a visit from one of my brothers. I'm the youngest in a family of eight boys. I have had to take advice all my life! Well, I told him about my new place and was anxious to show it to him. And so we drove out to it. I was so proud and thankful for it, and it must have shown as I said, "This is the place the Lord gave us in answer to our prayers and a letter we wrote to the Lord."

This brother of mine had been a preacher for many years, and I admired him greatly. I was anxious for his reaction. At this point he looked me full in the face and said, "You wrote a letter to the Lord?", half in unbelief.

"Why yes", I said

"Do you want me to tell you something? I'm convinced the Lord didn't get his mail that day."

Well, you know, that didn't make me feel too good. But that wasn't all. Another brother came and took a look at it and he wasn't quite so gracious as the first brother had been. He said, "Do you mean to say this is the result of answered prayer?"

"Yes", I said, still confident of my position.

"Well, if you ask me, this prayer was answered, but I think the devil answered it!"

My mother was next on the scene. She came and wanted to see the place. This time I was sure she would speak a word of encouragement. But when she saw it she said, "Son, if you'll back out of this deal, I'll give you all the money you need to do it."

Three lovely relatives! There was just one ray of sunshine in it all. When my wife came to see it for the first time, she said, "I'm going to stick by you. I think it's fine." Thank the Lord for a wife who will stick by the side of her husband, and for a husband who will stick by the side of his wife."

I had had an infidel lawyer draw up the contract. This contract called for me to pay \$3,500.00 on a certain day in a certain number of weeks. "You have that amount in hand, of course", he said.

"No, I don't. But I will when the time comes."

"Well, how are you going to get it?" he wanted to know. "Oh, I'm going to sell my place in the city" I said.

"But you have a deadline date when you must have the money here in the office, and suppose your house doesn't sell?"

"You see, sir," I said, "I'm a minister and the Lord is a part of this deal, and He always hears and answers prayer."

He looked a little astonished and blinked twice. "Just suppose you don't have it sold by the time the money is due; what then?"

"Oh, it will be sold - there's no question the Lord always answers prayer. Don't you worry, I'll have the money here on time."

He tried to rephrase the question several different ways, clearly indicating that what I was telling him just didn't make any sense to him at all. With almost a look of pity he said, ". . . but just suppose it isn't sold . . . suppose the Lord . . ."

"Sir, don't you worry", I said, "It will be sold. I'm sure of it."

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When the day arrived that we needed the \$3,500.00 our home was sold. In glee I took the money to his office and presented it to him. "See, here it is - just as I told you!" He was delighted to see the money in on time, but assured me he didn't believe the Lord had anything to do with it. To him it was just luck - happenstance!

The next step wasn't quite as easy. Within three months I had to have another \$6,000.00 and I didn't have another home to sell. With my brothers having said what they did and my mother having said what she did, I knew there was something I had to do. One of my brothers told me I was being presumptuous instead of exercising faith. This led me to a study of everything I could find on the subject of faith in comparison to presumption.

I found the difference between the two. Presumption, I found, is when we take the promises of God and expect Him to fulfill them without us first fulfilling the conditions. Presumption also involves using the promises of God and the answers to these promises for selfish reasons. If we will fulfill the conditions and use the answer for God instead of for ourselves, we are not presumptuous, no matter how far we reach out in faith.

In my study I came across the stories of men like George Mueller, and how God had answered his prayers of faith in times of trouble and unselfish need. I found a number of stories involving men who reached out in faith and how the Lord came to their rescue when the need was great and the answer would glorify His name. I went out into the middle of my land and with my hands in the soil I poured out my heart to God. I prayed most earnestly. I said, "Lord, if I've acted presumptuously, forgive me. I'll back out of this deal even yet. But if I've been consistent with principle, if I have done right, I can't back up because I've put You right in the middle of it, and I'll not turn my back on You."

My mother came to me, and as all concerned mothers do, she said, in a way which I knew came from a heart filled with love, "Glenn, I'm afraid for you."

"Why, mother?" I asked. "What are you afraid of?"

"I'm afraid you're going to be an infidel."

"An infidel! Me, mother? Why would you think that?"

"Well, you're expecting so much of God, and when He doesn't come through, I'm afraid you'll turn completely from Him."

I assured my mother that I had no question but what God would help me. I was practising what I had been encouraging others to do. I had been telling people to talk faith - talk as though ours is an invincible faith - and it is, if it's founded in the Mighty God of the Bible. I had been telling people not to say, 'my faith is weak', but rather to say, 'my God is strong'. I had realized the truth in the statement, 'By beholding we become changed', and this prompted me to encourage people to focus on the positive attributes of God - His strength and might. You see, to talk about our failings - we become weaker; talk about God's power, and faith will increase. It's a law that has proven itself over and over. This prompted me to tell my mother, "Mother, God is going to answer my prayer and I'm not going to be an infidel."

In my study I found one book that I would recommend above all others. It is the book Education, by Ellen G. White. Pages 253-258 hold some of the most precious lines I have ever read. It says that the seed is the Word of God. For any promise that God has made we are to ask. Then we're to believe that we receive, (Mark 11:24) and to return thanks to God that we have received, for the gift is in the promise.

This is it! We can come to God and place our hands on the promise and tell God, "Lord, I claim this promise and I thank You that I have received the answer." This is the prayer of reception. There are

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certain promises that allow me to approach God on that basis. I have a right to do that. There are other promises that call for a prayer of commitment. There are prayers of praise, adoration and confession. But this is the prayer of reception. This is the prayer that guides us through the time of Jacob's trouble.

Time went on. In just a few days - five to be exact, I must raise \$6,000.00 and I didn't have a penny in sight. The chapter in the book Education was a million-dollar chapter as far as I was concerned right then. I determined that if I could find a promise that would assure me of \$6,000.00 I would ask for it. More than that I would believe it would be provided and thank Him for having received it. But you know, I couldn't find a promise for \$6,000.

I prayed earnestly and said, "Lord help me find a promise that is the equivalent to \$6,000." And do you know - God guided me to it! Here it is, Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches..."

That was it! That covered \$6,000. and more! How happy I was to find it. How relieved I was, for I had been pretty concerned, as you can imagine. You see, I still had to deal with the questions and doubts that had been planted in my mind by my brothers and my mother. I had been told that the devil had answered my prayer; that God didn't get His mail. I had to know just where I stood. I had to be sure - did God answer my prayer or didn't He; did God get His mail or didn't He? I had to know - was this place the result of answered prayer, or wasn't it? These questions had to be settled beyond a reasonable shadow of doubt!

I asked God for \$6,000. I said, "Lord, please let me have this money. I want it so I can keep my word - because You keep Your word. It was You that gave me this land, and it was You that gave me the determination to keep my word. Thank You Lord for having supplied the money I need."

Well, I looked for it - but couldn't find it. But then I remembered that I still had five days before I needed it. Although God had promised to supply the need, the need was yet five days away. Each day I prayed this prayer and again on the day it was due, except on that day I thanked God for having supplied the money. Again I said, "I have received it." But there still was no money to be seen - not a penny! This took faith. I believed and I wasn't going to back down. But I said, "Lord, where do I go from here?" I was satisfied that I was following divine guidance. Jesus said, "Ask". I had done that. He also said, "Believe", and I had done that. That's the prayer of reception. But now where to turn? I didn't know!

I was reminded at that time of the hens on our farm. After the hay was mown, they would go into that hay and lay their eggs. They were there - but we had to go and find them. "So," I said, "the money is here - I've just got to go and find it." So I took another promise, Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

After reading the promise I said to the Lord, "Lord, I'm going out to find the \$6,000. Please guide me to it." I got into the car and started out. I turned left. Then I turned right. Down the street and another left, until I found myself in the heart of town. I parked the car and here I was right in front of the office of my atheist lawyers office. I said to myself, "What a place to come for the money." I felt impressed to go up to his office and talk with him. And so I did just that. We chatted for a few minutes and I said, "Phil, where can I borrow \$6,000.00 for three months?"

"Down there," he said without a moment's hesitation, and he pointed to a bank. This wasn't his bank, however. Nor was it the bank I was dealing with.

"But they don't know me at that bank", I said. With that he picked up the telephone and gave them a call. He asked for Bill and said, "Look Bill, loan Dr. Coon \$6,000.00 for three months. Thanks alot." And that was it!

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He told me to go to the bank and ask for Bill and he would arrange it. I moved fast after that! When I got there all I had to do was to sign on the dotted line and within minutes I had the \$6,000. After I asked him if it was common for a preacher to be able to borrow \$6,000.00 without co-signers or collateral. "No", he said, "we require the signatures of five property owners and then very often they don't get it."

God helped me pay the entire amount off on the days the notes were due. That did something for this poor heart of mine. I know there is a God and that He answers prayer. I'll tell you more of this thrilling story in succeeding chapters.

Right now, won't you open your Bible to 1 John 2:25 and lay your hand on the promise that promises us eternal life. Where it says 'us', put in your name and read it aloud that way. Now won't you pray a prayer of reception and thank Him for this gift, tell Him you believe you have eternal life and then thank Him for it. May God bless you.

### **3: IN AGONY I SOUGHT**

A short while ago it was my privilege to conduct a series of meetings in the state of Oregon. While there, a young lady made an appointment to see me, and shared with me a problem that is, it seems, an affliction of so many Americans. She was nervous. This must surely be our most common problem. There are many pills that have been prepared to deal with just this one problem. She knew she wasn't going to be receiving any pills from me, but I gave her something much better. I gave her a ten-point program from the Bible for nerves. After discussing it with her, she promised to put it into effect daily, just as I had outlined it to her. It had proven to be the most effective program for nerves I had ever heard of. Later she wrote me a letter and told me it wasn't working for her and that she was ready to discard it. I wrote back to her and suggested that she incorporate 'emotion and will' in her ten-point program. After a week or so she wrote back and confessed that no adjustment of the program would be able to help her since the root of her problem was that she wasn't sure that God existed at all.

Not long ago, Mrs. Coon and I were invited to have lunch with another minister by a mutual friend. Our friend thought that perhaps I might be able to say something to encourage the other minister. During the course of the meal our host very diplomatically asked the question, "Is there a God, and if there is, does He intervene in the affairs of men?"

I had been invited to conduct a week of spiritual emphasis in one of our Academies a few years ago. While there I presented to them a number of studies on the wonderful promises of God's Word. Early in the week the service was opened for questions from the students and the students responded enthusiastically. There were so many questions that I could see it would be impossible for me to answer them even if we classified them. Because they could not all be answered in the chapel period, one of the teachers came to me and asked if I would take one of his class periods and use it to answer the questions of his pupils who might not otherwise receive answers to their questions. I was happy to respond to the invitation. So eager were the students to get answers to their questions that other requests came for similar attention and students who were not members of these particular classes came in for these special sessions. These youth wanted to know Bible answers to their questions. That thrilled me.

Perhaps the most repeated question was, "How can I have faith?" Or, "How can I know there is a God?" We explored these questions thoroughly and with God's help I believe some answers were found that satisfied these hungering hearts.

So often, during a series of meetings, people come to me and with a note of frustration in their voices say, "My problem is that I have so little faith. What can I do to increase my faith?" This question has

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been raised so often that I have chosen to share with you my own experience in finding faith. I am convinced that no program; no series of meetings or question and answer periods are of any value except there first be a firm belief in God and His power to save and to intervene in the affairs of men.

The Bible is still true. God is still alive! This is a fact and is demonstrated every day. But the devil is working hard to fill the hearts and minds of men with doubts about His existence. Men and women are asking, "How can I be sure?" Many are filled with fear and unable to step out by faith on the promises of God. Many are desirous of increasing their faith - and I'm so happy about that, for there is an answer; there is a solution to this problem. I know - for I experienced it when in agony I sought.

About four years before I met Bob Law, who later became our son-in-law, I had had gone through a personal Gethsemane. This experience that I passed through was the result of my taking a Bible promise and the determination to step out by faith in accordance with the provisions of that promise. I was simply ready to take God at His word and claim the promise for a specific need. My wife joined me in this experience. Now you might wonder how anyone would be asked to go through a Gethsemane experience for a reason such as that. I'll have to admit there were times when I too, wondered about that. But let me tell you, there is nothing Satan dislikes as much as a man really in earnest about taking God at His word - and the trouble started very soon after our decision was made. There is one thing that steadied me through the entire experience. I knew then as I know now - God is bigger than the devil; His power is greater than that of the devil. Let's never forget that!

Now I would like to share seven facts from the Bible with you:

1. Jesus is coming again. Rev. 22:12, "Behold I come quickly...."
2. He is coming for those who have faith. Rev. 14:12, "....here are they that (have) the faith of Jesus." This is one of many things that they have acquired through experience.
3. God is very well pleased with people who have faith, and He is very displeased with those who don't. Hebrews 11:6, 5 "But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Here are two fundamental facts: God will not be pleased unless I believe that He IS - that He exists; and I must also believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. You see, I must not only believe that He exists, but I must believe that when I come to Him in prayer He will answer the prayers of my heart. I must believe that I can receive answers! Whether the answer comes in the way I expect or in the way God see's is best is not really important. But I must believe that God is interested in me - that He loves me and will answer me when I come to Him in prayer.

4. Faith comes by my observing God through nature. Romans 1:20, 21, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"

God says that men are without excuse because He is to be seen in the invisible things He has made - creation! If after viewing the handiwork of God and I still I choose to believe that God does not exist, I am without excuse. Notice that the Bible says that there is no excuse because it has been made very clear. God wants us to know that He exists and has allowed creation to cooperate with Him in making it very clear for each of us.

5. Faith increases by my bringing it into contact with God's word. Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing the word of God."

This is how faith comes. It comes by my bringing faith into contact with God's word.



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6. God has given every soul a measure of faith. Romans 12:3, " God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith."

Every person who has ever lived has been given a measure of faith. We each have a measure of faith, and it is our privilege to increase that measure of faith. This, we are told pleases God.

7. To get answers from God, we must mix our faith with His words. Hebrews 4:1, 2. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: (the children of Israel, two million strong) but the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith."

In other words, here is a book. This book represents faith. It contains the promises of God. God has given to everyone of us a measure of faith. Now, for me to get answers to my problems - answers to my prayers, I must take one of the 3,573 promises the Book contains and MIX the faith I have been given with the Word of God. It's just as simple as that: mix faith with the promise!

Now you might ask, 'How can I mix faith and promises?' Well, if it were possible I would like to have us go into the kitchen right now and we would do a bit of mixing. There is no mystery to mixing flour and water, is there? Now the cook just pours one into the other and stirs it briskly and in minutes it's mixed. Using that illustration, we can understand the instruction of God's word. We're to take the faith we have been given and pour it over the promise of God and mix the two.

But again, you say, 'How do I pour my faith over the promises of God's Word?'

I pour my faith over His word, saying, 'Lord, I believe Your word.' When I say Lord, I believe this promise - what am I pouring over it? I can even feel my breath as I'm speaking. Even as I'm speaking, I'm pouring spoken faith over the word of God.

My favorite author in the book, Christ's Object Lessons page 147 suggests that we can take our Bibles and turn to any of the promises and claim it by faith. We're teaching classes now in which we urge people to do this very thing. We tell them to take any of the promises, put their finger right on the promise and say, "Lord, I believe this promise." Then, you see, I am mixing my faith with God's word. It's just that simple - and that thrilling! You will thrill with me as you experiment with this new concept. It isn't really new - it's just not been understood and practised as yet.

The importance of mixing faith and the promises of God is revealed in the experience of the children of Israel. Of the two million who came out of Egypt, only two entered the land of Canaan because they failed to follow God's simple plan. They failed to mix faith and the promises He had made to them. Think of it - 'One in a million'! Had the people in that day simply taken the promises of God and poured over it the faith that had been given them-what might have happened! God is love; but God is also in earnest when He gives a command. It is necessary for mankind to know and believe that God is and that He will reward His people if they will follow His simple plan. He was in earnest back then, even as He is in earnest today! We must believe that God exists - and - that God will reward me. These are basic.

People are anxious to learn and put into practise these wonderful principles. The most exciting days are just ahead of us when we come to know, and experimentally attest to the power of God in our lives. Recently a lady came to me during one of our series of meetings, which, by the way was directed entirely to the exploration of this very theme, and said, "I am going to test this thing. I am going to test God by a very special request." I smiled and said, "Don't you do anything of the sort." I told her about the nobleman who came to Christ and reasoned that if He answered his request, then he would know that Christ was God. Jesus turned to this man and said, in effect, "Nothing of the kind. You are not asking a sign of me. You have received plenty of signs that I am the Son of God. That question has been answered sufficiently. You must come to Me and say, 'I know You exist and I know You are going to hear

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and answer, therefore I present Your promise.'" Do you see the difference? One is using faith as a basis; the other uses doubt as the basis. We cannot come to God and say, "If You do this I know You exist..." No, emphatically NO.

When we, however come to God and say in our hearts - demonstrating it with our actions, "I know that God exists and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him", and we present to the Lord a promise that we would claim not to prove His existence, but rather because He exists and we know He will answer - then we please Him!

It is said of Enoch in Hebrews 11:5, before he was translated, that he pleased the Lord. He knew that without faith it would be impossible to please his Lord. The world looked on and as its people watched this man of God asked, "What do you think you're going to gain by believing in God's existence?" One day they found that Enoch was missing! He had so pleased God by his way of life that He took him to glory land to be with Him through the countless ages of eternity. Enoch believed God! Enoch believed that He was and that He was a rewarder of men!

We, too, must believe as Enoch did. And we have as much reason to believe as did Enoch. Often we pass by the very instruments of God's love by which He would have us know of His existence. This is not confined to the lay-men. There are ministers of the Word that have harbored the question of God's existence, too. Just the other day a minister spent more than an hour with me in discussing this very thing. "How can I know He exists?" was the burden of his heart. I tried to show him how God has revealed Himself in a billion ways. There is proof on every side. Nature's book is replete with testimonies to God's existence.

When my wife and I claimed that Bible promise, and the devil went to work to bring discouragement, I went into the woods. On my knees I picked a little flower. With this tiny, beautiful flower clutched in my hands I lifted my face heavenward and prayed to God. I needed an answer. I must have an answer. I had to have an answer to some of my deep problems. I was willing to stay there until it came - I was just that desperate. This was four years before I met Bob, our son-in-law.

It's wonderful how the Lord works. He loves us and demonstrates it in so many ways. A few years before this I had received a sermon that was written by one of my brothers. It was entitled, 'How I Convinced an Infidel That There is a God'. At the time I read it I wasn't particularly impressed, but here in my agony, on bended knee, I realized the logic and power of that sermon. I took my Bible and in the fly-leaf I began to write. I began to recall what I had read and gave myself a Bible study right then and there. I wrote it down so I wouldn't forget it. It's been such a blessing to me ever since and I want to share it with you.

I wrote down five things. The first was, 'How I Know that God Exists'. Then I borrowed from my brother's sermon and listed five evidences of God's existence. The first of these was Order. I looked at the little flower I held in my hand and as I looked at it and saw the delicate arrangement of its petals, I could see it had Order. Then I was impressed with its Beauty. It was just simply beautiful - indescribably beautiful. The next was Plan. This flower demonstrated a definite Plan. Design was next on the list. It had symmetry - no question about that. Last I put down, Means to an End. These five things showed me that there was an Intelligence behind this little flower. It showed Wisdom - the existence of Mind. This is so in all of nature.

And there on my knees I said, "Lord, this little flower shows me that You exist. For in this flower I saw, (1) Order, (2) Beauty, (3) Plan, (4) Design, (5) Means to an End. This has proven to many great thinkers that a Mind must be in back of nature. This is what Romans 1:20 was talking about. That verse says that God is clearly seen by the things He has made, and those who won't accept Him on the basis of these proofs are without excuse. This is what I shared with my minister friend who came to find out how he could believe that God existed. There are billions of evidences of God's existence - by the simple fact

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that there are billions of little flowers around, to say nothing about the rest of nature. Think of the starry heavens! We cannot look up and see the handiwork of God - see those beautiful shining stars - and not be impressed with the existence of a Master Mind. The five distinctive features that were demonstrated in the little flower are to be seen in all of God's handiwork. Yes, these five things always postulate Mind.

This concept is so simple that a child can understand it. Take any little boy or girl and show him a traffic light. It's not hard for them to see that it has order. It goes on and off. It has design and a definite plan. It's not hard for them to realize that a mind was behind that. It may not necessarily have beauty, but there are enough evidences in its working to show even my four-year-old grandson, Randy the reasonableness of there being a mind behind the traffic light. I can show him a little flower and point out the five points I've mentioned and prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt that God exists. It's just that simple and that logical. I shared with my minister friend that it is not the mind of the child that is doubting God, but rather the so-called sophisticated mind that is doubting and questioning the existence of God. But His existence is written in every little flower that grows! Oh that men would only let themselves believe.

The next thing I wrote in the fly-leaf of my Bible was, 'How Do I Know that He is a Wise God?' I took the same tiny flower and said, "This tiny flower shows tremendous wisdom from the time it starts germinating through to maturity." I thought of the miracle of pollination; the budding and the miracle of blooming. It all showed to me that there was tremendous wisdom behind that little flower. "I have a wise God," I said.

Then I wrote and asked, 'How Do I Know You are a Big God?' I had some big problems and I needed a Big God to solve them. Through my tears, there on my knees, I sobbed out these questions. I needed an answer. I couldn't go on living with the doubts that my brothers had put into my mind when they came to see my property and told me that God didn't receive His mail the day I wrote Him that letter. The other brother told me that the devil had answered my prayer. I had to find out. I had to know for sure, and so there on my knees I wanted to know if God was a Big God.

I looked at the flower again. I saw the Order, Beauty, Plan, Design and Means to an End in that flower and realized that the vast expanse of the heavens showed these same features. I had studied astronomy in college and had been impressed by the immeasurable distances in the starry heavens. I knew as I reflected on the Greatness of God, shown by His ability to create and direct the myriads of heavenly bodies, that my God was a Big God. I found confidence there out in that lonely spot - confidence in my God to solve my biggest problem.

I had now seen that I had a God. I had seen that I had a Wise God and that I had a Big God. Now I said I want to know if I have a God that is interested in little, tiny me. And so I wrote that question down in the fly-leaf of my Bible. I wondered where I would turn to find the answer to that question. I picked up the little flower again and thought - this flower is only a fraction of my size, and yet, You're interested in that flower. I reasoned, if God can be interested in that little tiny flower, that today blooms but might be cut down tomorrow, surely He must be interested in me. As I thought on that, the truth of His interest in me came home to me with conviction.

My last question was this: 'How Do I Know that You Communicate to Me in the Bible?' To answer this to my satisfaction I listed three things. Before I wrote them down, I knew of course that God speaks to me through nature, but that doesn't detail my God. It doesn't tell me anything in detail about my God. The Bible is the only source of information to give detail about God, and if He doesn't communicate to me through the Bible, I didn't know where to turn. So I listed three things: (1) prophecy. I had been preaching that there are 1,335 Bible prophecies of which over 1,000 have accurately met their fulfillment. One of the fulfilled Bible prophecies came to my mind which proved God's communication to

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me through prophecy. I thought of the story of Josiah Litch, who in 1838 was preaching in Philadelphia. He was preaching Bible prophecy and the Lord blessed him. The Infidel Clubs of America challenged him. They said, "You talk about how Babylon fell according to the prophecy and how Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome came on the scene of action and came and went in accordance with Bible Prophecy. You tell how Tyre would be a place for the spreading of nets, and so on. How do we know these things weren't written after the event took place?" They challenged him to show them an event that was yet future that would take place that they could see with their own eyes.

Josiah Litch said, "I accept your challenge. In 1840, August 11, according to Bible prophecy, the Ottoman Empire will lose its independence." They said, "We accept your prediction. We'll wait and see." When August 11, 1840 arrived, four powers took over the Ottoman Empire and 1,000 infidels were converted in a day!

I said, "If a thousand infidels would accept your Word as a communication of God's command through that one prophecy, can I question Your communication when I know that over one thousand prophecies have already been fulfilled?"

The second reason that I listed by which I knew that God communicated to me thru His Word was (2) It changes My Life. When I thoughtfully and prayerfully read His Word it makes me pure when otherwise I'm impure. It makes me honest when otherwise I would be deceitful. It makes me kind when otherwise I would be unkind. I knew it had changed my life. I recalled my college days when I would get up at 3:30 in the morning and spend an hour with God in prayer and then go and work on the farm. I was convinced of His power in my life during that time. Some of the boys that were my friends - at least I thought they were, had engaged in stealing bicycles. They had been successful, too! But they had not spent time with God and so had entered upon some very deceitful practises. I knew that had it not been for the power of God in my life through the study of His Word, I too, would have been with these boys in their escapades.

And so I knew by the experience of prophecy that had been fulfilled that God communicates through His Word; I knew by the change in my life that I had received communication through His Word, and (3) I knew of God's communication through His Word because of the Transformed Lives I had witnessed.

In agony I sought and found that God communicates to me through nature and through His Word. It is by the study His Word that faith comes. So I opened my Bible and I took a Bible promise. I began to pour my faith over a Bible promise, remembering that this was very important and indicated in the experience of the children of Israel when they left Egypt and how that only two of the more than two million people, twenty years of age and over, had entered the promised land. The reason for this tragedy was that they did not mix the faith God had given them with the promises of His Word.

I decided I must do some mixing of faith with the promises. So I opened my Bible to a promise and put my finger right on the promise and I said, "Lord, because You have promised, I know You will fulfill this promise." You see, this is mixing the two, as the Lord desires us to do. I remembered what Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man that He should lie. ." This is what gave me the assurance. The verse also says, "...hath he said, and shall he not do it?" And so, you see, I knew that God had made a promise, and since He can not lie - I knew He would keep His promise. "Now," I said, "I believe You will fulfill Your promise for me." I turned to Matthew 24:35 and read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." I claimed that promise, too. What was I doing? I was strengthening faith.

Then I said, "You've said in Hebrews 6:18 that it is impossible for God to Lie, so I take this promise on which I have put my finger. It's impossible for it not to be true. It came from a God of love - a God that cannot lie." And so I began to see some of these wonderful things that God had wanted me to see which I needed to see - that unless I saw I might lose my soul as my mother predicted might happen.

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My faith was beginning to be strengthened. By the way, what is faith? When people say, 'My faith is weak', that's a direct insult to God. Faith is simply, Trusting God! Faith is, believing God! If I say, "My faith is weak," I'm saying, "I don't much believe in God." When I doubt the miracle of answered prayer and keep taking the disappointments of life as fate and keep talking about my doubts - I'm simply tell the world, "I don't believe in God!" Don't ever say your faith is weak. No. Talk about the power of God. Talk about His might and ability to answer prayer!

The Lord has shown us in nature that He exists. He has given proof that He communicates to us through nature. Now we can take any of the 3,573 promises He has made and on the basis of His love, we can know that He will fulfill each one. It may not be fulfilled in the exact way we might want it to be fulfilled, but because we know that He loves us, we can relax in the fact that He will answer it the very best way, and in the way that we would want it to be fulfilled if we could see the end from the beginning.

I have no business to prescribe how God should answer my prayer. This would be presumption. I found through my study at that same time, that God reserves the right to answer my prayer according to His choosing - not mine. I had read the text in the book of Jeremiah 33:3, "Call upon me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." You see, God says that He will surely answer our requests, but He will answer them in the way that He see's best. Isaiah 42:16, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known."

I used to say to the Lord, "Lord, as I go down the highway of life and I come to a fork in the road, and I turn to the right, let such and such a thing happen. If it does happen then I'll know I should do so and so. If it doesn't happen then I know I must take the other fork in the road." Have you ever done that? This was the way I used to bargain with the Lord. I thought I really had it made. But I didn't have it made at all. Because when I got to the fork, it wasn't a fork, but rather it was five-points! Now what? That's when I had to go to Jeremiah 33:3 and trust that the Lord would show me what to do, plain and simple. The Lord assured me He would answer my prayer but not necessarily my way. I must not lay down the ground rules for answered prayer. When I finally saw this, I was so happy and satisfied. My vision and wisdom are so limited that I can't see all the possibilities - and God can see them all.

One day I walked into a room and found my little daughter putting a razor blade in her mouth. She hadn't closed her mouth. I wondered what to do. Knowing that she mimicked me so often (that's why I was often ashamed of her), I smiled broadly and opened my mouth wide. She did the same. I walked toward her and gently I lifted the blade out of her mouth and when it was out I said, "It will cut you all to pieces!" Immediately she closed her mouth tight. She thought it was something good to eat - perhaps candy or something. Daddy knew better!

When you and I say, "I must have it this way," remember our Father knows best! He doesn't want to give us something that will hurt us and cut us all up. A lady, whose husband was in the army said, "O God, I demand that You bring my husband home to me safe and sound." God did bring him home, but how often she wished she might have asked for God's will to be done. This once kind, loving, sweet husband, came home a wretch. With bitter tears she realized that to demand of God is often to receive something we don't want. How important that we understand this basic rule of life.

Like a little child - with the faith of a little child we are to come to God and say, "I know that You will fulfill this promise because You have promised. I believe You are fulfilling this promise, because You cannot lie. Thank You for having fulfilled this promise, because You love me."

Romans 8:32 says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." Don't you see, God gave His best - would He withhold from us that which is of lesser value? God loves us and He is anxious to answer our prayers in His best way, and at the best time.

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While I was talking to the college students and answering their questions I presented to them the things you have just read. Then I said that there was one more thing I was anxious to share with them. I asked them, "How many of you believe in the Bible?" They all raised their hands. Then I encouraged them to say it out loud. I asked them to take the Bible in their hands and say, "I believe Your Word." This, you see, is pouring faith over His Word.

Then, the next thing to do is to open the Word to a promise. It may be Philippians 4:19. You may be in need of financial help. God can and WILL respond. He has promised. And since we believe the Bible, we can believe His promise. Doesn't that make sense? And since I believe the promise, we can say, "I believe, Lord, that You are fulfilling it."

We simply use the A, B, C's of prayer. A is "Ask..." Matthew 7:7; B, is believe. Say, "I believe." Mark 11:24; C, is to claim and then we are to return thanks to God that we have received. This is receptive prayer. Most Christians are praying prayers of commitment, instead of prayers of reception. They are saying, "Lord, forgive my sins if it be Thy will . . ." That's a shame! We don't have to pray a prayer of commitment for the Lord to forgive our sins. He has already promised to do this through His Son, Jesus Christ. I can pray a prayer of reception and say, "You promised to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me. I thank You for having done it!"

I can claim from God, wisdom. I don't have to ask for it if it is His will. He has promised to give it to me if I ask. So when I ask for it, then I must believe He has given it to me and then thank Him for having given it to me. This is the prayer of reception.

"We thank Thee, Lord for being our Savior. We thank Thee that when we come to Thee Thou wilt give us power to become the Sons of God if we believe on Your name. We ask Thee for any heart who is not now Thy son or daughter, but wishes to be, and quietly in his heart says, 'forgive me for my sins'. Make that one Thy son just now. We believe Thou art doing it as he or she believes it, and we thank Thee and receive it through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.

## 4: INFATUATED

Again, I'd like you to notice seven Bible facts with me. I may repeat some of these facts for you. I do it because they are so important - they bear repeating, for if we can firmly establish them in our thinking now, they will prove to be of tremendous value in the days to come. Notice these seven great Bible facts:

1. Jesus is coming again. Revelation 22:12, "And, behold I come quickly..."
2. Jesus is coming for those who are like Him. 1 John 3:1-3. The third verse says, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
3. One of the features of being like Christ, is to hate iniquity. Hebrews 1:9, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity."
4. This hatred is a promise from Christ. Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This first promise of a Redeemer also contains a promise for man to be able to hate sin. This was a promise to make it possible for man to hate the devil and all of his program. Why did God need to make a promise like this? Simply because at the time of this promise, man had sinned and had become infatuated with the devil. The human race at that moment loved sin. Man would always have loved sin had God not projected hatred into the human heart for Satan. There are still some people who say, "I'll

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repent whenever I get ready." This is impossible. Man can repent only as God gives him repentance. This is why it's so important to respond at the time one feels the Holy Spirit speak. That's the time to act, for it is only God that gives a man a hatred for sin. It is only God that puts enmity between man and the devil.

5. It is the Holy Spirit that accomplishes this. John 16:8 ". . . and he, (the Holy Spirit) ....will reprove the world of sin...."

You see it is the Holy Spirit that reproves the world of sin. It is He that brings to a person the hatred for sin to the earnest appeal in prayer. This something we can all be very grateful for.

6. He also gives man repentance for sin. Acts 5:31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

This also is a gift from God. He brings not only a hatred for sin, but He also gives repentance, through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. How very grateful we ought to be.

7. This is how He does it. Ezekiel 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

The way God accomplishes this miracle of grace is to give us a new heart. This new heart is made in a way that makes it hate sin. The Holy Spirit in making His entrance into this new heart brings repentance and a complete restoration. Mankind has been given the invitation to accept this wonderful prayer of commitment is when we say, "Lord if it be Your will...." It's simply committing our lives into His will for us. It's placing a request before Him and then asking His will to be done. I use this prayer when I pray for the sick, for I cannot know if that person has fulfilled the conditions for answered prayer in his behalf. But if I am asking for wisdom for myself, I have a right to know - I do know if I have fulfilled the conditions of answered prayer. If I have fulfilled the conditions for answered prayer and I ask for wisdom, for pardon for sin, for healing, or for any request - then I can come to God and claim the promise without saying, "Lord, if it be Your will. . ." No. If I know God would forgive my sins, and I have met the conditions, I must not pray "Lord, if it is Your will to forgive my sins..." I know He wants to and if I have made it possible for Him to by fulfilling the conditions, then I must believe that He will do it. To pray differently is, I'm afraid, sin.

In Romans 14:23 Paul says that what is not of faith is sin. To ask God for forgiveness of sin if it is His will is a prayer of commitment, and that's no place for that kind of a prayer. I know it is His will to forgive my sins, if I confess them. Here is where I can pray the prayer of reception. You'll remember that the prayer of reception is when we take a promise, and after fulfilling the conditions of answered prayer, we ask God to fulfill this promise for us, individually. Then we claim the promise and believe that He has fulfilled it. We go one step further and thank Him for having answered our prayer, and for my having received it. You see, 'reception' means, 'I have received it.'

I am to take a promise of God for pardon for sin as surely as I've said, "Lord, forgive me..." I am to say, for I have a right to: "Lord, I have received forgiveness...."

Years ago, my brother and I were selling books. He went on one side of the road and I went on the other. He came to a certain home and when he told the man what his business was, the man said, "Well, I'm not interested in your book, but I have a book I'll give you." "Well, thank you a million times," my brother said. At that the man said, "Don't thank me a million times, just thank me once and take it." It wasn't the number of times my brother thanked him, it was whether my brother reached out and received that book that determined whether or not he would get it.

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When we pray a prayer of reception, we're to reach right out and receive what we ask for, when we know He wants us to have it. And we can know that by reading the promises He has given in His Word. We can then say, "Thank you Lord, I have received it." This may take some practise, because we're not used to saying it that way, isn't that right? We're used to asking for something "if it be Your will" when He has already told us it is His will. When we stop to think about that, it seems a little ridiculous, doesn't it? Why yes. Jesus came to save me, so I don't need to ask Him to save me if it is His will. I know before I pray that it is His will. I have a right to put my finger on Matthew 1:21 and ask Him to save me. Then I can claim the fact that He has saved me if I believe what He says. I can then thank Him for having saved me, and that He will continue to save me each day. Salvation is a daily arrangement and commitment to God. We can say, "I'm saved, now" - and believe it with all our heart! Perhaps it might be better to say, "He is saving me, now." You see, then we put Christ in the centre of the picture instead of us. And who we have in the centre makes a difference.

When we talk about eternal life, we can know and say that we have eternal life. It is promised to us. Notice 1 John 2:25, "And this is the promise that he hath given us, even eternal life." Here is where we have the promise of eternal life. Now I can say, "Lord, please give me eternal life." Then I can say, "Lord, I believe You have given me eternal life. I claim it, through Jesus, and I thank You for having given it to me."

Sometimes we are prone, when asked if we are a Christian, to say - "I hope so!" Isn't that something? To hope for something that has been promised us? I have a son. Now suppose someone would come to him and say, "I knew an Elder Glenn Coon. Are you his son?" And he would say, "I hope so..." Why, that would be an insult to both his mother and me, wouldn't it? Let's us quit hoping and say, "He is my Savior. I know He is!" This is receptive prayer.

When we talk about receiving forgiveness for our sins, we need not be in doubt about it if we have met the conditions for answered prayer. We can know, sure and certain that we are free from the weight and penalty of sin. Jesus has promised it to me, and I believe Him, don't you? This makes Christianity a joy. It's a delight now. I don't have to work myself into a frenzy to be saved. All I have to do is to ask, believe and claim what God has promised to give me. Oh, how thankful we ought to be for this beautiful arrangement.

What about this request to put enmity between us and that which is not for us. This fits the picture of infatuation. After I had gone through my Gethsemane experience, I determined to share it with all I could. I found such joy in putting my finger on a promise and receiving the answer, after I had asked, and expressed my belief in God for doing what He had promised and then thanking Him for having received it. No wonder it says, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord..." Ever since then I have been telling others of what I found, and believe me, this is fun! This is real joy! And if there is a people who can, and should be enjoying this kind of a real experience, it is a people who have entered into a solemn covenant to obey God. This is our right!

Like Paul, we can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." We can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. . ." I know that I don't amount to much, but I know that He does, and that if I will let Him, He will make me a worthwhile too in His hand.

It wasn't long after I decided to share this experience with others that a young man in our church had become infatuated with one of the young ladies of our church. This man was a married man with two lovely children and a beautiful, devout wife. He was working down at a hospital and became involved with a young nineteen-year-old girl. At first it was just innocent play, but it led to infatuation. They didn't mean to become infatuated, but that's the way it always is. You know how people become infatuated?



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The innocent tap on the shoulder. The little touch here and there. Some people call it 'puppy love'. If you want to keep from becoming infatuated - hands off and three feet distance - must be the rule.

The bigger part of yielding to temptation is proximity. The nearer you get to temptation, the more sure you are of falling into it and yielding to it. The farther we keep away from temptation, the safer we are. Greater distance, means greater assurance of staying victorious. Some people wonder why they are always falling into temptation. The answer is simple. They got too close to it. Infatuation is just that way. The closer you get to someone you shouldn't be near, the more possible it is for you to become infatuated. The sooner we learn to treat temptation like Jesus did, the sooner we are going to realize victory over it.

When someone comes up to you married ladies and starts to become familiar with you, that's the time to take your leave. Now, of course, if you're both single, that's something else. You might even want to get closer! But if either one is married and this friendship should never be, the sooner you correct it, the happier you will be.

Well, this young man began to play around with this young girl. They became hopelessly infatuated. Now in order to be consistent, he decided that he must divorce his wife. Obviously, he couldn't have two wives, and the wife he wanted was the nineteen-year-old girl.

It has been stated that eighty-five percent of the executives become infatuated with their secretaries. That's an amazingly high percentage, isn't it? Why do you suppose that happens so frequently. Well, I'll tell you. The man leaves home in the morning and his wife hasn't been too pleasant, so he growls at her and he leaves with this attitude in his heart toward his wife. He comes to the office and his well-dressed secretary very pleasantly greets him, "Good morning, Mr. Smith." Now he didn't have any plan to become infatuated with his secretary, but here she was so pleasant and nice. She looked so clean and smelled so good. And the last thing he remembered about his wife was that she looked messy and sleepy and just kind of growled at him just before he left home.

Of course, at the moment, he didn't stop to think that he was paying his secretary \$100. a week to be sweet. His wife would probably do it for \$85. But his wife is on twenty-four-hour duty, with children to diaper, a house to clean, the dog to feed, and a hundred and one other chores that he expects her to do for nothing. The secretary gets a very good salary and it's much easier for her to be sweet when the boss walks in! But just wait until he marries the secretary, and she has to diaper his children, and she has to wash the clothes and take care of the dogs and all of the household chores - she'll treat him just like his wife treats him now; and he'll treat her the same! His wife loved him when he was young, but the secretary gets him when he's old, and that always adds up to the same score!

Well, this young man was going to divorce his wife and marry this young girl. A couple of the church members went over to see him and immediately began to scold him. You know, the word of the creature cannot begin to put enmity between two people when they're infatuated. It just cannot be done, especially not with scolding. It takes the immutable power of the promise of the Creator to cause people to fall out of love who shouldn't be in love. God said, "I will put enmity...."

When I learned of the situation, I invited another pastor to go with me to visit with this young man. We got to the house and found that he was working in his garden which was in the back of the house. His wife could be seen through the kitchen window doing her work and keeping busy with the children. She was a lovely little soul. We began to visit and I told him why I was there. I assured him I wanted to say nothing that would offend him. I had not come to scold, but I wanted to help him. I told him I knew of a way by which he could have complete deliverance from the infatuation of the girl. He assured me I needn't be afraid of offending him, but he said, "I don't want to break off with this girl."

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I was stumped. I wondered what I could do about a man that didn't want to be released from a problem. You can't force a man to stop sinning. Force will never bring enmity between two people who think they're in love. The Creator alone can bring this enmity, and He does it by giving the needy ones a new heart. That's the only way it can ever be accomplished.

I wondered now what I might do and how I might use the 'A,B,C's' and apply it to this situation. I thought of the promise in 1 John 5:16, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life." I wondered if that promise might be of help to me just then.

In the book Testimonies to Ministers, a book written by my favorite author, on pages 18 and 19 it says "...Omnipotence cannot resist their (the churches) plea for the salvation of any tried, tempted member of Christ's body."

I know that any of us can claim the promise of 1 John 5:16 and apply it as it directs us to and people who shouldn't be in love, will fall out of love. This is what God has promised. But in this case the man didn't want to. Now what should I do? Then the Lord helped me to ask, "Are you willing to be made willing?"

"Yes," he said, "I'm willing to be made willing."

Then I thought of Philippians 2:13, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." I offered a prayer and used the 'A,B,C's' of prayer. I asked the Lord to make him willing, and He heard me. Then I claimed, believed and thanked God that this man would be willing to sever connections with this young girl. Three minutes later he said, "Yes, I'm willing to quit." Think of it! "But", he said, "She's not willing to quit." I asked him how he could be so sure of that. And then he told me the old story that perhaps most infatuated people have used. He said, "She has told me that if I leave her she would commit suicide." It usually doesn't mean a thing. It just means, 'I pity myself.' A person that threatens suicide is crying for help and is pitying himself. And they want you to pity him too.

This young man was just sure she would commit suicide and so he felt he just couldn't drop her. "Well," I said, "I have something for you." I told him about the 'A,B,C's' of prayer and shared with him some of the promises of the Bible. I told him about the fact that the promise contains the thing promised, just like the apple-seed contains an apple tree. We thrilled at the clarity of the promises and I shared with him that if we ask and then believe and claim the promise and return thanks that we have received what the promise promises - God works wonders! I told him about the promise that would help her to fall out of love with him.

"Where is that?" he asked.

"Genesis 3:15;" I said. Look at it! "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." It fit perfectly, and he caught the point! I've found this about the Bible, so many of its promises have a multiple fit. It meant originally, this promise did, that God would put enmity between the human race and the devil. If these people weren't raising the devil, I'd like to know what they were doing! So it fit! I was thrilled that He would do it, and I believed it!

"Oh, I know she won't break up," he said.

"I know she will," I said. "In fact, let's get into the car and go right down and talk to her. I know she'll do it." I was sure of it.

"Oh, I know she won't," he insisted.

"How do you know she won't?" I asked.

"Well, I went down and tried it before. We promised we'd break up, but it doesn't work," he said.

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"You promised? Do you know what it is when man promises?" I said. "Why, that's the old covenant. When God promises, this is the New Covenant!"

"Moreover," I said, "you went under the old covenant, but we're going under the new covenant." I assured him that God would be with us and He would not fail us.

"Well, just suppose she won't break up, what then?" he asked.

"Don't you worry about that," I said, "I'll take all the blame for it if it doesn't work out the way I'm sure it will."

"O. K., but I know she won't," he said.

"O. K., I know she will," I said. It scares me now to think how I knew she would. The human will is a delicate instrument - so unpredictable! Since then I've thought if this should not have been a prayer, "... if it be Your will..." But it is God's will that men turn from evil, and God impressed me to be definite and persuasive. There are times like this. Sometimes we must pray the prayer of reception that otherwise might be the prayer of commitment. The conditions at the time and the urgency of the situation determine that, and God knows all of this.

We got into the car and were headed for this young girl's house. On the way I became frightened. "What am I doing," I thought. I had promised this man that the young lady would break up, but I realized the fact that she had a sovereign will. This made me shiver in my shoes just a little. It seems as though the devil got right in the car with us and he began to whisper to me, "How do you know she's going to be willing to break up. This is a pretty big statement you've made," and so on. So I began to pray silently, and I said, "Oh Lord, come to my rescue. You've said, 'Ask', and I've asked. You've said, 'Believe', and I believe. You've said 'Claim', and I'm claiming Your promise. I believe, too, that it's going to work out."

When we finally got there, they had already gone to bed. The house was dark! And was that young man happy! "Oh, they've gone to bed, we'd better not disturb them," he said. He was sure we would just turn around and go back home. But the Lord impressed me to go through with it.

"Oh no," I said, "They'll wake up." With that I opened the car door and bounded up the walk and climbed those stairs two at a time. I knocked at the door and said to the Lord, "Lord, You've said, 'Knock and it shall be opened'". Yes, this promise fit for this occasion. I asked God to have them hear me. I believed they would and claimed the assurance of the promise.

Just then a rough voice said, "Who's there?" I told him who it was and told him I had come to help straighten things out between his daughter and the young man.

"She's gone to bed," he said.

"She'll wake up!" I said. Right then I prayed, "Lord, You've said, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'" I told the Lord I believed she would wake up, and thanked Him for having woken her.

I could hear him talking to her and asking her if she would be willing to come out and talk to us. She agreed to get dressed and come out. "Thank You, Lord," I said as we waited. Again I was impressed with the fact that these promises are placed here for our every day needs. He wants to answer the prayers of our hearts.

It wasn't long until she had dressed sufficiently to come out and invite us all in. We all sat down, and I didn't know what to say. But I claimed another promise. "If any of you lack wisdom..." James 1:5. I needed lots of wisdom. I asked God to give me the right words to speak so that I would approach her in the right way. This was a delicate situation and I must have the finesse of heaven so as not to provoke

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any unwanted feelings. I realized I was dealing with the human will. I knew souls were at stake. Before I said anything, I thanked God for wisdom. I had asked, and I knew He had given it to me.

I turned to her with a smile on my face, and with the most suaveness I had ever mustered, I said, "We have come here in the interest of this young man's home. He has a lovely wife and two lovely children, and we wondered if in the interest of his home, you would be willing to break up."

Without a moment's hesitation, she said, "Yes sir." This happened in the Southeast where people are very gracious, and you don't always know that they mean what they say. I wondered if this might be one of those times. But she was so quick in responding that I thought perhaps she meant what she said. I looked over in the direction of the young man as she said, "Yes, sir," and his mouth dropped open. He hadn't expected this. I looked over in the direction of the young preacher and his mouth was open, too. I think they looked at me, and I'm sure my mouth was open, too. She had said 'yes' too quickly. I wondered how she could decide so fast.

Then the young man began to talk. He said, "But I love you."

"Be that as it may," she said, "we're through."

"But I love you very much," he insisted again.

"But we're through," she said, with real definiteness in her voice.

"But I've loved you for a long while," he said again, and it sounded as though his voice was going to crack with emotion.

"Yes, but we're through," she said. There was no question about her state of mind.

There were very few more words spoken that night. The Lord had answered our prayer and there was no question about it in any one's mind. We knelt down right there in that living room and thanked the Lord for what He had done, and went home. That couple was broken up at that moment, and broken up for good. God had worked, just as He had promised He would. It happened so quickly that it took me a moment to believe my ears and eyes.

I decided right there that I would tell this story everywhere I went. I've told it in our colleges and in our academies. Over and over when I have invited the young people to write out their questions, invariably someone says, "Tell me how to fall out of love." I always have them turn to the promise in Genesis 3:15.

In one school a young lady told me a story of what had happened in the dormitory after I had related the story of this young couple. She told me how one of the young ladies had set her cap for a married man with two children. She was determined to have this man. Even after she realized that it wasn't right, she couldn't get this man out of her mind. She was just madly in love with him. So she had called a group of girls to her room and they had opened their Bible to Genesis 3:15 and claimed the promise just as she had heard we had done with the young man and the girl. After they prayed together and this young lady had asked God to adjust her affections, and then claimed the promise and returned thanks to God for having corrected her way-ward affections, they got up on their feet and this young lady embraced her friends and declared that she had fallen out of love with the married man.

Now this young lady asked if my wife and I would visit with her. We told her we would, and when we were seated in the office, she said, "Where do I go from here?"

I told her, "Go just as far away from him as you can. Don't go back to him to tell him you're through, because you're a piece of steel going into the mouth of a magnet. Just keep your distance, and you'll be alright. Get the message to him any way you want, but you stay away." She thanked us and told us that's just what she would do.

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Our son was at the same school and heard the same series. The next year he came back to the same school and entered his senior year. He believed that girls and books don't mix too well. He had behaved himself very well. But now he was going to graduate and he had been advised that if he was going to enter the ministry, he ought to be getting serious about the girls and find himself a wife. So he started looking around and sent us a diary of his activities. Almost every day we received a letter. For almost two weeks he told us about a girl he had met, and that although he knew she was not the girl for him, he was still infatuated with her. He was very infatuated with her, in fact, and every time he saw her, his heart did a double flip. Now what it was about this young lady that made him so sure she was not for him, I do not know, but as far as he was concerned, he knew that she would not be the one whom the Lord would have him have as his wife.

In a few days we received another letter in which he told of remembering the sermon that I had preached on falling out of love. He told us about his desire to fall out of love and the frustration he was having accomplishing this. He said, "I remembered the promise of Genesis 3:15! I went to my room and opened my Bible and put my finger right on the promise and asked God to put enmity between me and that girl." He went on to tell how he prayed and how he told the Lord he believed He would do it. "I claimed the promise and thanked the Lord that He had accomplished it for me."

"I got up from my knees and found that the Lord really had answered my prayer," he said. "But perhaps it had gone a little too far, for now I hated her!" He went on to say that he didn't want to hate her, but rather that he wanted to love her as a Christian. God had certainly put enmity between those two. But now my son thought of another text that would straighten him out of his mess. He thought of Romans 5:5 which says, ". . . the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts . . ." This made it possible for him to love her as a Christian, but yet not be infatuated with her. This is the power of God in the heart. God still answers prayer and delights in answering them if they can glorify His name.

I want to tell you, we have a Book. We have a powerful God. And in these closing days of earth's history, we have a right to go to God and claim any one of the 3,573 promises that are to be found in the Bible. We can go home or on our way rejoicing.

Won't you, just now, reach for your Bible and open it to Acts 5:31 and notice that here God has promised to give repentance, "Him hath God exalted. . . to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." God always gives forgiveness when He gives repentance. When God makes me sorry for my sins, it's a sign that He wants to forgive me. No one was ever made repentant that was not forgiven. You might want to repeat this prayer of commitment in the quietness of your room. Place your finger on the promise as you pray:

"Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee for this promise, and we ask Thee that Thou wilt give us repentance. We ask for forgiveness, also. We believe that Thou art doing it in Jesus' name. We claim the answer that we have received it, in Jesus name, Amen.

## **5: FROM DRUNKARD TO COUNSELOR**

Now we want to turn to a very important passage of Scripture. It is, perhaps, the most significant passage of Scripture as it relates to you and me. We're involved in this passage! As you read it again, imagine yourself involved in this setting. I refer to Revelation 14:6 and on. Notice:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

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God declares that there will be a message that will sweep the world. This message is called the 'everlasting gospel'. Not some new concept of religious thinking, but rather a message that is of old, of everlasting - from the beginning of time. The gospel is the power of God to save men and women.

With this in mind, I'd like to share with you an experience that has dramatically shown me the power of God on the human heart. This individual was once a Christian, but, as you will see lost her way as the result of a number of influences that were introduced into her life. At the age of six she was introduced to the use of snuff. The vice became firmly established and held her in its grip. In her 'teens she started to use alcohol. This, too, became a well established habit.

Somewhere along the line she came to know the Sabbath-keeping people and united with the church. For a short time she gave up both the use of snuff and the use of alcohol, and then just as suddenly she went back to her old habits. For years and years she remained a member of the church although she continued the use of these soul and body-defiling habits. The church members, however, knew nothing of her habits. You can just imagine the guilt that she carried all these years. Often she heard the pastor speak on the glorious return of Jesus. She heard 1 John 3:3 repeated on many occasions and had been reminded that those looking forward to the coming of Jesus will endeavor to purify themselves and leave off these habits. One can only imagine the guilt and remorse this dear soul must have suffered through the years.

Finally, one Sabbath morning, she heard a sermon that impressed her. She felt that deep desire to cut loose from these habits and not knowing what else to do, she telephoned the pastor. He was a young man. She asked him to come over to her home and visit about a problem she had. He responded immediately and soon found himself listening to a story the like of which he had never heard. She told him of her habits and the grip they had on her. She confessed that she was a drunkard and although she had tried many methods, nothing seemed to be able to give her victory. "I have now come to the place where I must have victory, and I want you to help me," she said in anguish of spirit.

The young man was shocked. He never realized she could be involved in any thing like that. She was faithful in attendance at services and active in many ways.

He told her he didn't know what he could do for her, but said he would talk to the church board about it and see what they might suggest. Think of it! A snuff-dipper and a drunkard on the church roles! He could hardly believe his ears. But there was no doubt in his mind since she had told him in very plain language.

The matter was brought up at the next church board meeting and they helped her alright -- right out of the church! Invariably when there is an inability to help a person up, he is helped out. The Bible makes it very plain that there is a time when a person ought to be disfellowshipped. But equally as plain is the instruction that this is to be resorted to only when all other methods for restoration fail. Galatians 6:1, 2 tells us that if a brother be found straying from the path, the spiritual members of the church are to go to the erring one and endeavor to restore that one. Criticism will never be a part of that restorative process. Faultfinding and judging of motives is foreign to the program the Lord has designed for the restoration of erring members of the church. If I find some brother that is straying from the path of right, if I'm spiritual, I will go and talk to him about it and keep our conversation confidential. This is very important, as well as being scriptural. Notice the words of Proverbs 25:9, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another."

Jesus Himself counsels that this ought to be done "alone" with the party involved. We are under a solemn oath to keep the confidence of the one with whom we are discussing a problem. No one else need be brought into it. James 5:20 tells us that this procedure will "...cover a multitude of sins." This method is divinely ordained to be the way to deal with the erring in the flock. Galatians 6:1, 2 also

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indicate that the one going to help another must go in the spirit of meekness. Humility, the third horizontal level down, will characterize my every action. I will not then condemn, but rather, I will let him know that I, too, have failed, but that there is hope and victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the 'gospel way'!

In this case the church board had no knowledge of this woman's activities outside church. She had told the pastor; he told the church board; from there it went to church business meeting, where she was disfellowshipped.

Some time later we came to that city to hold a series of meetings. As the pastor was looking over a list of names to whom invitations might be sent, he noticed her name and decided she might just appreciate an invitation. For the sake of identification, we will call her Bertha. This is not her real name, of course. He hesitated just a bit when he thought of the trouble he had already had with her, and thought that perhaps he might just as well pass her name by - but then, he thought, the meetings might just do her some good. So an invitation was sent to her.

Believe it or not, she came! She came to the opening Friday night service and was back again to the Sabbath morning and afternoon service. On Sunday night I invited anyone who wanted deliverance from any habit or anyone who would like to have special prayer for any problem to meet me in the wing of the church after the service. Bertha George stayed and met with a few others at the appointed place. We passed out some prayer cards on which provision was made for those who wanted deliverance from tobacco and alcohol to indicate it. There were several squares that could be checked. Bertha checked only the one that said she wanted to be a better Christian.

The reason she didn't check the squares indicating a desire to have help with alcohol and tobacco was that she had already been indicted and sentenced on those before. She didn't feel like admitting it again.

So many feel that very same way. They are unwilling to admit their failings because they're afraid of being helped 'out' instead of being helped 'up'. The counsel is, "...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one..." This is a command of God! Our commission is not to criticize or embarrass anyone. We cannot afford to indict or judge a soul if we expect to be of any help. The only time the Lord can use us to be of help to a needy heart is if we are willing to come in humility and recognize that we too, have failed and have needed the grace of God to rise above a temptation. When we can attest to victory and give the positive assurance that we believe that God will display His power in behalf of the needy one, only then are we ready to offer our services.

Some time after I had been pastoring, I was asked to pastor a certain church that was noted for their problems. It wasn't long after I arrived that I realized that the reputation was well deserved. I wrote to the conference president and told him that I thought there were certain people that needed to be dealt with. He knew what I meant. He wrote back a very nice letter but asked me what we were trying to do; were we trying to help these troublesome people 'up' or 'out' of the church. This question made such an impression on me, I never forgot it. I realized that there was a very real difference, and I asked the Lord to keep me ever sensitive to the need and to help me to be able to help people 'up' along the pathway of life. The everlasting gospel has, as an integral part of its message, the desire to help - a message of healing for needy, broken and hurt hearts. That's the message we preach - that's the message we've been commissioned to carry.

When the after-service was over and the people had gone home, the pastor and I looked over the cards. When we came to the card bearing Bertha George's name, the pastor stopped and told me the story I have just related. I suggested that we go and visit with her. He was somewhat reluctant because he didn't want to get into anymore trouble, but after discussing the situation, he agreed that it might be

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well if we did go and pay her a visit. And so in the morning we made our way to the home of Bertha George.

We rang the door-bell and in just a moment she stood at the door and invited us in. That conversation lives in my memory as though it took place only yesterday. The first thing I did was smile and say, "Sister George, we haven't come here to scold you." As I looked her in the eyes, I could see a visible sigh of relief. She began to relax when she realized that we hadn't come to condemn or embarrass her. However, she undoubtedly expected to be berated and scolded, for this is what had happened before. This is what those naming the name of Christ had done the last time they had called. God forgive such! Oh, that we could learn the approach Jesus used and find the success He found.

I felt impressed to continue in this vein of thought. I said, "We've come to help you, because we love you as a Christian. Now suppose you had been involved in an automobile accident and had lost a lot of blood. And suppose the doctor came in and examined you over very carefully. Is it reasonable," I said, "that he would stand by your bedside and scold you for having lost so much blood?"

She looked at me and in her timid way smiled as she shook her head, "No". She seemed to be unable to believe her ears; to think that here were two people who were not going to scold her for having been a slave to these terrible habits for so many years. "No," she said, "I don't suppose he would."

"What do you suppose he would do," I asked. She was a registered nurse and I knew she would know.

"I think," she said, "that he would order a transfusion."

The moment I heard her say that, I felt impressed to give to her a spiritual transfusion. Just then I said, "Sister, that's exactly what we have come to do!" I had never thought of the claiming of Bible promises as being a spiritual transfusion, but I felt impressed by the Holy Spirit that that's exactly what it is! I must have looked overjoyed as I told her of the victory she would receive that very afternoon as the result of the spiritual transfusion we were about to give to her.

She had already heard the A, B, C's of prayer in the meetings she had attended. She was acquainted that 'A' stood for 'ask', and that 'B' stood for 'believe', and that 'C' meant 'claim' after which thanks was to be offered. She knew that! She had related these A, B, C's to the promises of God's word and realized that each step was important to victory. But we sat there and reviewed it together and thrilled to realize how simple and yet how powerful it was.

"Now," I said, "we are going to take a promise just for you. And as we put our finger on this promise, Matthew 1:21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,' we're going to ask Jesus to save you. Now as we ask Jesus to save you with our finger on the promise, we're going to think of it as the transfusion needle piercing the skin and reaching into the vein."

We turned to John 6:53 and I told her this was the reason we were going to think this way. Then I read, "... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

"Now," I said, "so you will be able to make the parallel with the blood transfusion, we're going to read John 6:63, '...the flesh profiteth nothing ... it is the spirit that quickeneth; the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'"

Very quickly she saw that the 63<sup>rd</sup> verse explains the 53<sup>rd</sup> verse. She saw that the life blood mentioned in verse 53 is in reality the word of God. She saw immediately that to ask for salvation was God's will, and that the way He would do it is by the transfusion of His life through the medium of His word, the Bible. Now we could kneel and with our finger on the promise we could imagine the flow of blood being turned on as we asked God to fulfill this promise. "Imagine the blood flowing into your veins," I said, "as we place this request before the Lord in prayer." Then again I invited her to believe that God was doing



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this very thing, and claim it as being so. We agreed that then we would return thanks to God for having done it.

"How long does it take to give a transfusion?" I asked. "Oh, about an average of forty minutes," she said.

"We're not going to hurry either. We'll just take our time," I said. I then endeavored to have her see that it was impossible for her, in her own strength to find victory over this bad habit or any habit. We turned to Romans 7:14 and saw there, how that because of our carnal nature we are incapable of meeting the standard of the spiritual law by ourselves, simply because we are sold to the program of the devil. I told her about the early American days of slavery and how that one of the slaves one day decided to run away from his master. But when he got beyond the masters property, he didn't know where to run. Whoever would see him would know that he was a slave because he had been sold into slavery. He was a slave and everyone would know that he belonged to someone. There was no place where he would be free. This is our condition in sin. We're sold into sin because we're a part of the human family. As such we do not deserve a scolding - rather we need to help each other in love and understanding.

Scolding will never release a man out of prison. You can go up to him and remind him of all the evil, terrible things he has said and done; you can berate that man all you want, but it will never release him. What does he need? He needs the keys to that cell door. This is the only thing that will get him out. Why is it we cannot make the transfer of principle to our daily lives. We seem to think that when a man has done something wrong and has become entangled in the snares of Satan, that what he needs is a good scolding.

"Now," I said, "we have seen the condition that we all find ourselves in. Verse 14 has made that very clear." Then I pointed her to the 15th verse and we read it together.

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

When we read this verse together, she looked up and smiled and said, "That's my problem right here!" "I don't want to do these things at all. I honestly don't want to.

"I know you don't," I said, "but the reason you do them is because you're a slave." I pointed out that there were many things that I did that made me unhappy, but again I pointed out that we are all slaves of sin. And as slaves, we don't need scolding, but we need the keys to set us free.

"Since we can't help ourselves," I said, "but since Jesus can, we're going to kneel in prayer and put our finger on Matthew 1:21 which promises that Jesus will save us. And as we pray we will use the A, B, C's of prayer. We will ask God to save you and release you from the enslavement of these habits. Then we will exercise faith and tell God that we believe that He is doing it right now. We will claim the promise as God has given it and then thank Him for having given you victory and salvation."

I invited the pastor to lead in prayer. I told Bertha that I would pray next and that after I prayed it would be her turn to pray. She admitted that she had never prayed in public before and that she was a little nervous trying it now. But I assured her that this wasn't 'public' and that it would be of real benefit to her to engage in this prayer service. She consented to do it and even felt relaxed about it. I suggested, too, before we knelt that we would mix faith with our prayer. Just before we knelt in prayer

I turned to Romans 10:10 and read, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

"You see, I said, "you will Believe that the Lord will give you victory, and then with your mouth you will confess that it has taken place. Don't be afraid to say it," I told her. "Belief", I said, "is essential to salvation, for the Bible says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' ....saved from sin!"

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So we knelt. First the pastor prayed, and he prayed a very beautiful prayer in which he confessed that we all have sinned and that all of us have come short of the mark that has been set for us. He included each of us in that prayer. But, he reminded us, provision has been made for each of us to become strong where we are weak through the power of Jesus. "Now here is a promise, Lord," he said, "Jesus will save us from our sins. I ask You now, Lord to save Bertha George and give her victory over these habits. I believe that You are, on the basis of these promises, saving her." Then he continued by saying, "Lord, I claim this salvation for her and return thanks unto You that You are doing it."

I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit as this pastor prayed. He was praying a prayer of reception - claiming what God had promised. Since God cannot lie, I knew He was going to answer this request. When he finished, it was Bertha George's turn to pray, and this is what she said:

"Dear Jesus, I don't ask You to save me just from alcohol and tobacco, but I ask You to clean me all up, Amen."

That was a beautiful prayer and prayed so sincerely, but she had left the B and C out of the prayer altogether. I thought for a moment that I ought to have her include them in her prayer, but then I remembered how timid she was and it might embarrass her. I didn't want to do that, so just as soon as she said, "Amen," I continued her prayer by saying,

"...and Lord, we believe You are doing it, and we want to thank You for delivering Bertha George completely." And I got just that far and Bertha George remembered what we had decided before we knelt to pray, and she interrupted my prayer and said,

"Dear Lord, You do love me, don't You? I didn't know that You loved me so. I'm so glad You do love me..."

Why do you suppose she prayed that kind of a prayer at this time? It was because of Pharisaical Sabbath-keeping Christians. When someone has made a mistake and we feel a burden to go to that one and speak to him, instead of saying, "I've come to be of help and comfort and courage to you. Let's pray it through and tell it to no one" - instead of doing this, we give it to them right from the shoulder, and report it next Sabbath morning as 'one missionary visit'! It may be a missionary visit alright, but it cannot be counted as being made for the Lord. No, no.

This poor woman had had that type of a visit made to her and she had lost all sight of the fact that God loved her. But here in the presence of the love of God that filled that room, the Lord helped us to help her see that He still loved her. In the quietness of that moment the impact of His love broke through and she realized it with clarity and power. It broke her all up. She wept for joy as she realized the God loved her. Then she continued, "...thank You Lord, You have delivered me..."

We rose to our feet and I gripped her hand and said, "Sister George, not because you feel it, but because God has promised, do you believe that you have victory?" I wanted to have her say it again, realizing that confession of belief is so important to lasting victory.

"I know He has given me victory. I know it!"

"Now to whom are you going to give the credit for your victory," I asked. "Well, I do want to thank you both for coming to see me," she said.

"And we're thankful that we could have the opportunity of coming to see you, but the Lord has said the He will not share His glory with another, and so you must give God all the glory."

"Yes, I know," she said, "God is the one who has given me victory through the power of Jesus."

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"That's exactly right," I said. "It was in Jesus' name that we claimed the promise and He has come to deliver you." Then I told her to be quick to tell others about the marvelous deliverance she had received. "When people see you in the market and ask you why you are so happy, tell them Jesus has delivered you from alcohol and tobacco. Don't mention my name at all. Wherever you go and whoever asks you why you are so happy, tell them of your deliverance through the power of the name of Jesus. But do not mention my name."

She agreed to this and her face bore testimony to the fact that she had found something that she had desperately been searching for. I reminded her that continued victory depended on her willingness to believe and share the experience that she had had.

We had organized Victory Clubs in that church. Whenever someone received the victory over a habit, realizing that the devil would move in and try to discourage that one, we arranged for two church members to come in and have prayer with that one every so often. Two hours from the time we left two ladies dropped by and read a passage of scripture and had prayer with Berth George. They used the A, B, C's of prayer just as we had done. Then they put their arms around this lady and demonstrated the love that is so necessary when victory has been experienced. Soul-winning is soul loving. That's why it's important to have your wife with you when you visit. A man needs to have another man put his arms around him and let him feel that we rejoice with him in his victory; a lady needs to have another lady put her arms around her at this critical time. This procedure was repeated every three or four hours. These ladies didn't scold or condemn. They came and demonstrated love in action. They came so that they might rejoice with her in her victory. Each couple stopped to give thanks to God for the victory she had had. This was continued for several days in a row.

A few days later we visited the home again just to see how she was coming along and to see if perchance any one had scolded her. When I inquired how she was doing and whether or not the ladies had come by, she just beamed and told of the love and understanding they had shown. She was just so happy! And I was happy too, not only because Bertha George had experienced victory, but because a change had taken place in the lives of the members of the church.

Less than a week later, in the same church, two alcoholics were present at the after-service. They had come in response to an invitation extended them by two of the members of the church. Now these two alcoholics were not ordinary alcoholics. The neighborhood, on several occasions, called the police officers two and three times a day because of the disturbance they caused. They needed help desperately. They had sat through the evening service and now here we were at the after-service. Each one signed a card and indicated the area in which they most needed help. Both of these individuals signed their names to the card after indicating a need for help in their battle to overcome the habit of drink.

Somehow Bertha George found out about the problem these two people had, and very quietly she slipped over to where the lady sat and gently took her hand. Bertha was going to begin to witness right then and there. I could hear her say to this lady as she patted her hand and looked with love and understanding into her eyes, "I was one of the worst drunkards in all the city. Jesus helped me to overcome, and He'll help you too. Just ask Him for help. Then believe He will help you and claim the promise that Pastor Coon has shared with us. And then .... and then .... and then - you will thank Him for having given you the victory!" She just beamed as she spoke to this lady. You could tell she was talking from experience. Tears streamed down each of their faces. The husband looked on, visibly moved.

It was ten days before our busy program would allow us to visit in the home of these two alcoholics. I was so anxious to find out what had happened. I didn't want to express doubt, so I said, "Isn't it wonderful what the Lord does for us?" They agreed to that, but nothing more. I still didn't know

whether they had gotten the victory over drink, and I didn't want to ask. I said, "Isn't it wonderful how the Lord gives us victory?" Again they agreed. I thought I would plunge into the question and ask it right out. I asked, "How long has it been now since you've had a drop of alcohol?"

"The last drop we drank was ten days ago. Not a single drop since we attended your meetings!" Both of them looked so clean and neat - and so happy.

I, too, felt happy and wanted to shout and praise the Lord for what He had done. The story doesn't end there. Bertha George continued to be an inspiration to this couple and they continued to have the victory. But not only was Bertha George an inspiration to this couple. A few weeks after this experience, I overheard Bertha in the lobby of the church talking with a stranger to me. I edged a little closer so that I could overhear their conversation without looking inquisitive. The lady was asking Bertha the secret to victory over alcohol. Bertha George was sharing with her the A, B, C's of prayer. She gave them perfectly and with such conviction. She spoke from experience and I could tell that the lady sensed it. Oh, what a story of deliverance she had to tell.

This is part of the everlasting gospel that will go to all the world. And when it is received into the heart it will change men and women so that they become like Jesus. Isn't it a wonderful thought that regardless of our problem, Jesus has the answer? He wants to answer the earnest request of your heart. He can, and will do it for you.

## **6: WALKING AWAY WITH VICTORY**

I want to discuss with you in this chapter the place that giving God thanks has for a promise that He has made to us and that is fulfilled before there is any external evidence. This is all tied up in the glorious experience of walking away with victory.

The first text that I would direct your attention to is Zechariah 12:8,

"In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them."

This text of scripture declares that the day is coming when men and women who are feeble will be like David in his strength. And those who are normally like David, will be like God. 1 John 3:1-3 declares that when Jesus comes again those who are ready to go back to heaven will be like Him. This text says that there will be men and women who will be like God and like the angel of the Lord walking up and down this earth with victory in their hands and in their hearts. I believe with all my heart that the 'C' of prayer is very important if we are going to walk away with victory and be the means of helping others to experience the same victory.

By way of review: the 'A' of prayer is 'Ask'. Jesus invited us in Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." The 'B' of prayer is 'Believe'. Mark 11:34 says, "....What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. The 'C' of prayer is claiming the promise and returning thanks that we have the answer before we have any sign that we have received it, except the promise that is found in God's immutable word. The 'C' of prayer is the difficult part of the prayer program. Most people find this part almost impossible to accept.

Most people must see the evidence of God's answer to their prayer. They are not satisfied to believe that what God says is so, and that He will do it simply because He has said He would. Herein lies the reason for the failure on the part of so many.

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Many years ago, I prepared a talk for one of our camp meetings. My heart was full of the subject we now have under discussion. I felt there was a real need for an understanding of reaching out and accepting God's promises on the basis of His word, in spite of not seeing a visible answer. I called my sermon, 'Talking Your Way Into Heaven'. I used as my text Romans 10:10. Notice its startling words:

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

You notice it says, "...unto salvation", not 'because' of salvation. There's a real difference! When we take God at His word and we declare that we have received what He wants us to receive and what He has promised us - this proclamation of reception is acceptable unto God. Then God performs His part and gives to us what we have by our proclamation said that we have already received. This takes faith - real faith.

An example of that kind of faith is demonstrated in the account of the visit to Mary, the mother of Jesus, by the heavenly messenger. Mary was told that she would become the mother of the Saviour of the world. She could not understand how this could be possible. There was no outward evidence that would lead her to know for certain that it could or would be accomplished, excepting the word of the angel Gabriel. Even though Mary could not see logically how this event could be - in spite of this - Mary said, "...be it unto me according to thy word." Luke 1:38

Here she was accepting a promise as though it had already been fulfilled. Had Mary taken any other attitude than the attitude she took, she never would have become the mother of Jesus. Christ was the Word of God made flesh, and He was made flesh by her accepting the word of God for her soul. Her attitude of acceptance was of vital importance to the accomplishment of this miracle of miracles.

All through the Bible are to be found incidents of where God accepted the expression of faith on the part of mortal man. Hebrews eleven is a chapter filled with this kind of an experience. In each case faith is the center of success. In each case it says, "...by faith...", and again, "...by faith. . ." Notice this example, verse 30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down..." Here the falling of the wall is credited to the substance, Faith. But when you turn to the book of Joshua and read the sixth chapter and the fifth verse, it states that God promised the people that if they would march around the city once each day for six days and march seven times around that city on the seventh day, the walls would fall down flat. The instruction was simple but very definite. On that seventh day, after they had marched around the city seven times, the people were to shout. What were they to shout? They were to shout that the walls are going to fall down.

The record says that Israel followed the instruction of the Lord. On that seventh day they marched. Once, twice, three times. Nothing happened. After the sixth time around the city wall - there wasn't even so much as a crack in the wall! But when they marched around it the seventh time, the people exercised faith and shouted that the wall is now going to fall down - because God said it would. But notice, they had to shout first, not after the wall fell! Verse twenty tells us how God fulfilled His word. The word 'faith' is not mentioned, however, in the entire chapter, but in the eleventh of Hebrews it says that the walls fell down as a result of the faith of Israel. God accepted their actions of faith and their words of faith as faith itself. But notice again, God accepted as faith only after they had acted and spoken their faith - only after they had given a practical demonstration of their belief in the promise of God.

This is so different from the way we do things today, isn't it? Most of us withhold our expression of faith until after the promise has been fulfilled. Instead of living by faith, as God says the just will live, we are prone to live by sight. This is not pleasing to God and is the reason why the church is so weak. We wait

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and say, "When we see it, Lord, we'll thank You for it." This is not God's plan for us. He would have us accept His promise on the basis of His word - before we can see fulfillment.

The experience of Gideon provides another example of faith. In Hebrews 11:32 Gideon is mentioned along with the other illustrious men as men of faith. What did he do to warrant being in this lineup of men who were giants of faith? Judges 6 tells us.

Gideon was instructed to arm his men with a trumpet, a pitcher and a lamp. They were to do things and say things. Success depended on their willingness to obey the command of God. The seventh chapter of Judges records the fact that Gideon and his chosen three hundred men followed explicitly the word of God. These mere three hundred men were to descend on the Midianite camp and at a given signal they were to break their pitchers, blow their trumpets and shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" Not until they did what God told them to do and spoke what God told them to speak, did He fulfill the promise in such a way that they could see it. Upon fulfillment on the part of Gideon and his host of the word of God, He demonstrated His power and an overwhelming victory was theirs. It could have been accomplished in no other way!

This principle is carried through all of the Old Testament and all the way through the New Testament as well. Let us probe a little deeper and notice two more incidents. The first is recorded in II Chronicles 20. The chapter begins by telling us that Jehoshaphat is in trouble. Great armies have gathered themselves together and are coming to fight Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat is afraid. He is so afraid that he proclaims a fast in all Judah and verse four says that Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord. Notice, it says they 'asked' help of the Lord. Verses five and on record the prayer that Jehoshaphat prayed in which he recognizes God as the Supreme ruler of heaven and earth; the One in Whose power former victories had been won. He then quotes a promise to the Lord taken from I Kings 8:33 and in this time of trouble presents this promise to the Lord. Notice, "If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help."

These words were first spoken by Solomon in I Kings eight as a request of the Lord. In I Kings nine the Lord says that what he has asked will be done. In other words the request has now become a promise because God said it would be so. Jehoshaphat knew this and with his people bowed in prayer came to God with this promise, presented it to the God of heaven and said, "Lord, this is what You promised. We are in trouble now and need Your help." In verse twelve he states it this way,

"O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. "

Notice that Jehoshaphat came to the Lord confessing that they in themselves were unable to meet this army. There was no question in his mind. But he came to God with the assurance that He would come to their aid - because He had said so! There was no other reason for the petition. God had said He would come to their aid when in trouble and Jehoshaphat believed God!

When we take our eyes off ourselves and place them on God, as the children of Judah did, and come to Him for the answer to our problems, then we have a right to claim what God has promised - simply because the promise was made by God and God cannot lie. He will always fulfill His part of the promise if we will in humility come to Him and accept His promise on that basis.

Notice now how the promise was fulfilled. In verse twenty it says, "And they arose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe...."

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"Believe..." this was the burden of the message of Jehoshaphat. He wanted to impress upon the people that this message had come from the Lord God of heaven. He had made the promise. In effect he said if you believe God and His prophets you will have success. But belief was primary. This was the all-important ingredient to realize success.

Jehoshaphat had asked according to God's promise; he had focused his eyes on God, and now he says to the whole army and company of people - "Believe, Believe!" Without believing in what God had said, there could be no success. It is still so today.

My favorite author says in Testimonies for the Church volume five and page five hundred, fourteen:

"Say, 'I will believe, I do believe that God is my helper,' and you will find that you are triumphant in God."

When am I to tell Him I believe? On the basis of His promise before I have any external evidence whatsoever! This is the hard part. Here is where we so often fail in meeting the requirements of outstanding victories and accomplishments.

Now notice the tremendous things that Jehoshaphat did. In olden days the armies had a victory song. Each army had its own special victory song. But this song was sung after the victory was won. Not so with Jehoshaphat. He had his choir sing the victory song before they engaged in this battle. Notice, "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever." verse 21

My favorite author in commenting on this text declares that this is exactly what he did. He sang the victory song that the army usually sang when they returned from the battle, as they went into battle. When they claimed, by returning thanks to God that they have received it, notice what happened:

"And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another." verses 22, 23.

God came to their aid when they asked His help; when they demonstrated belief in His promise and now claiming the answer by returning thanks to Him. And it all took place before they had any external evidence that God had heard them. They were using the A, B, C's of prayer! Yes they were! And when they did this He turned these enemies against each other, as He did in the story of Gideon and his enemies. Verse twenty-four tells us that the victory that God gave was complete. Out of this horde of men who had armed themselves to come against God's people, but against whom He Himself would fight, the verse says, "...none escaped!" God gave the people more than just a decisive victory. He gave them spoil to the extent that it took three days to carry it away. Our God is a generous God as well as a powerful God. We can without question, walk away with victory - in the face of any problem. This is the way God works; He has in the past and He will again today!

My favorite author makes this statement in the book Early Writings, page 72, "True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt."

True faith claims the promised blessing. This the 'C' of prayer. Notice as she continues, "...We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing and claim it as ours." *ibid.*

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This is the 'C' of answered prayer. Not only are we to ask God for big things - difficult requests, but we are to reach up and claim it as ours. This is the divine plan and only as we relate ourselves to it in the way God has ordained can we expect to receive the answer that is waiting for us. It is so simple, yet so important that we do it God's way.

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Mark 11:24

This is faith. Naked faith! Belief in answered prayer before any indication is given that the answer has come, is demonstrated in this promise. This we must put into practise if we are going to experience all that God has in store for us. If we will do this, we can walk away with victory!

In Mark five is recorded the story of a woman who had been sick for twelve long years. She had spent all she had in an attempt to get well. But all attempts failed to bring her any relief. Now she hears of Jesus. Somehow in that heart is born the conviction that if she might just touch the hem of Jesus' garment she would be whole. Notice her words:

"If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole." Mark 5:28

That woman put her A, B, C's all in one sentence, didn't she? It doesn't make a great deal of difference just exactly how we say them, as long as we will follow through and ask, then say that we believe. This is very difficult for most people to say. They just find it almost impossible to express belief in something they haven't tested, tried and seen with their eyes. And then to claim the promise and return thanks to God for having answered, before any external evidence is seen, is not easy, but it's God's way!

There was a man that came to our home when I was a little boy, and he put the A, B, C's all in one sentence. He said, "I thank you for passing the bread." We boys wanted to snicker. We would always ask someone to pass the bread, and then when we saw it coming, we thanked whoever was passing it. But this man thanked whoever would pass the bread before it ever left the table!

That is how Jesus used the A, B, C's of prayer at the grave of Lazarus as found in John 11:41,

"Father I thank thee that thou has heard me.... Lazarus, come forth."

The woman with the issue of blood did this same thing, and she was healed instantly. Paul and Silas did the same thing in the prison at midnight. They thanked God for delivering them before ever a chain fell from their hands and legs. But when they thanked God, the very walls shook and the chains fell from all of the prisoners. This is what happens when we follow God's plan! The prison keeper was so impressed that he wanted to know of the power that attended these two men. He was instructed and became a follower of the way. He was a converted man - due to the display of the power of God in response to the request and faith of Paul and Silas.

During the time that I struggled to grasp this concept for myself and put it into practise, a young man came to me. I had performed the marriage ceremony for him and his new bride just a few days before. This boy's mother was a member of the church but his father was not. "I have a problem," he said, "and I wonder if you would help me?" He was to return to the service in a few days, but had this problem on his heart. He told me about his father and that the father would be coming to see me shortly. The father was a very timid man and the son was afraid that he wouldn't come to grips with the issue, and so wanted to tip me off before the father came.

"My father smokes," the young man confided. "That is why he is not a member of the church. He has tried to stop smoking on several occasions, but each time he stops, he begins to hemorrhage at the nose. He gets violent nose-bleeds, and because of this my mother has told him that she thinks that he will never be able to stop. He's coming to see you about this problem."



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My first thought was, 'what can I do?' I had never heard of a thing like that before. I had never heard of a man getting a nose-bleed because he wanted to give up smoking. But then I thought, 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' Of course I had to admit I didn't believe there was anything too hard for the Lord. But I wondered just how the Lord would take care of this problem.

A few days later I was washing my car in the driveway and up drove this boy's father. He was a big man. He was a great big man! We talked about the weather and made a bit of small conversation. I invited him into the house and it wasn't long before we got to his problem. He told me frankly that he wanted to get rid of the tobacco habit. "Alright," I said, "here is what you do. Take the promise of Matthew 7:7, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'" Then I said, "If I pay for something, is that a gift?"

"Why, no." he said.

"A lot of us think we have to earn salvation," I said. "But the Lord says, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' We have a right to come to the Lord and claim a promise and God has already paid for it on Calvary by His gift of Jesus. He has already bought it. We are merely to receive what God has given."

Then I gave him a number of case histories, just as we have been reviewing together here. When it came time for us to pray I told him that we were not going to merely ask for deliverance, but we're going to receive it. We knelt to pray and both of us prayed. When we rose from our knees I gripped his hand and said, "Brother, not because you feel it, but because God has promised it, has He delivered you from tobacco?"

"Yes, sir," was his quick and firm reply.

He said it so quickly that I wondered if he knew what he was saying. I said, "Wonderful," or words to that effect, but I wasn't sure that he knew what he was saying. I thought he might just go home and tell his wife that the preacher prayed for him but nothing happened, and his wife would say, "Well, I knew it wouldn't." So I claimed James 1:5 because I needed wisdom right then to know what to do. I wanted to exercise faith because I knew how important that was. But I wasn't sure that this man was going to walk away with victory. And so I said, "Look, I'm going to go home with you and I'm going to tell your wife of the wonderful victory you have gained." I had two purposes in mind. One was to impress upon his mind that he had received it; the other was to impress her that he had received victory, so she wouldn't talk doubt. He agreed to that.

On the way to his house I began to think of meeting his wife. I knew that she could talk more doubt in five minutes than I could talk faith in an hour. And I began to tremble in my shoes. So I prayed. He didn't know what I was praying about. I was praying, "Lord, help me to talk faster than a woman!" The Lord had answered that prayer for me before and I believed He would do it again. So I planned that from the moment I stepped into that house I was going to smother that woman with faith. I would smother doubt with faith.

When we got to the house, we walked through the front door and there she was in the middle of the living room. I said, "Sister, rejoice with us. God just gave your husband complete victory over tobacco!" Well, you know, she was so shocked that she just stood there and looked at me. And for a moment I lost my tongue and didn't say a word either. We just stood and looked at each other. It seemed like the longest few minutes. I wanted her to say something first. I didn't know which way to move, and I didn't want to move the wrong way. I could see she was about to speak. She said, "Well - I wish while the Lord is giving out victory, He would give me victory too."

"Give you victory?" I asked. Now I was shocked. "Victory over what?"

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Then she told me that she was a slave to coffee. I think she called it 'coffee heart'. She knew it was harmful to her and told me that her doctor told her that unless she quit it was going to kill her. But she couldn't quit although she had tried many, many times. She told me how that every time there was an altar call made at the church she had gone.

"I've gone to my closet and fallen on my knees and begged God to deliver me," she said. "I've sobbed out my prayer, but then gone right back and had another cup of coffee. I keep the coffee pot on the stove twenty-four hours a day," she said. I could tell she was speaking with great emotion. "I just can't quit," she repeated.

I wondered just what I should say. Then the Lord helped me to know what to say.

I said, "Sister, just suppose your son came home and he was in desperate need of five dollars. This wasn't just spending money, but he desperately and honestly needed five dollars. Now if you had the money, would you give it to him?" I asked.

"Why, yes. Of course I would," she said.

"And when you would hand out the five-dollar bill, what would you think of your son if he put his hand behind his back and keep pleading? I dare say you would not be too well pleased, would you?"

"No, I guess I wouldn't," she said.

"Now," I said, "you have asked, but you have never reached up and taken what God is offering to you." She saw what I was telling her was true in her case. She saw that she was failing to do something that was very important.

"Now let us kneel and pray," I said. When we knelt we put our finger on a promise and asked God to give her the victory. She prayed a very nice prayer and it was evident that she really wanted victory. When we rose to our feet I went over to her and said, "Sister, not because you feel it, but because He has promised, has He given you the victory over the coffee?"

What was she doing? She was fighting faith. Did she dare to tell God that He had given her what she had sought for years and had never received. Did she dare to? The devil said, 'don't do it'. God said, "do it!" Finally she said, "Yes."

Again I said, for I wanted to have her impressed with her decision, "Sister, not because you feel it, but because God has promised, has He delivered you?" This time it came a little easier.

"Yes," she said.

Again, I took her hand and shook it and asked the same question. This time she responded with firmness and ease. God had delivered her, too. The next Sabbath morning I saw her at church and she fairly ran over to meet me. Had I been a woman she would have hugged me. She said, "Pastor, it worked, it worked!" Years later when we were about to move on to another church, at the farewell party they held in our honor, she came over to where my wife and I were sitting. She spoke of the day in her living room and the victory she had received. "I have never touched a drop since," was her testimony.

You, too, can walk away with victory by applying these rules to your problem!

## 7: THRILLING FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

Again, I have seven important Bible facts I would like you to notice:

1. Jesus is the foundation of all truth. Romans 9:1, "I say the truth in Christ."
2. This knowledge of Christ constitutes eternal life. John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent."
3. Since this is true, God does not have us pay Him a tenth of our income because He needs it. Psalms 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Put with that Psalms 50:10, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

Realizing what these verses say, the question comes, Why does God ask us to return to Him a tenth of our income. We know that God isn't dependent upon us for His sustenance. He doesn't need our money except as He chooses to need it. But why would He choose this method? Of what value is this doctrine? God has given every Bible doctrine to acquaint us with His Son, for His Son is the basis of all truth. As we get acquainted with His Son we have life eternal. This, then, can be the only logical reason.

4. The tithing system was given to us so that God might do something wonderful for us. Notice the promise: Malachi 3:10

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

This is an unqualified promise God makes to anyone! God is anxious and willing to fulfill this promise to each of us. It is part of the plan of heaven to acquaint us with the Foundation of Truth, Jesus Christ. God owns the world. He says that if we will return to Him a tenth of our income, He will open for us the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing, and in doing this we will become acquainted with His Son, in whom is life!

It may be that in the process of experimentation, the Lord will allow us to come to want, or near want. It is then that we take the promise of Malachi 3:8-10 and ask God to open the windows of heaven; we tell Him we believe He will open the windows, and we tell Him that we claim these open windows and return thanks that we have received the blessing that is in the process of coming. This, of course, is the A, B, C of prayer. Few of us have realized all that God is willing to do for us, but the challenge is waiting! God is aware of some of the strait places tithing might bring us to, but He knows, too, the blessing that He can only give us as we accept the challenge of obedience.

When we accept the challenge and claim the promise for this special time of difficulty, the windows open and we come to know God, not only as a Saviour, but also as a Provider as well. You see, we then come to know God by personal experience, and knowing Him that way, we have a knowledge that no one can take from us. This knowledge will prove priceless in our journey toward the Kingdom of heaven.

5. This experience elicits a sharing of the wonderful gifts of God with others. Malachi 3:16,17, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Here is the picture. We have been in trouble; we have called on the Lord. The devourer tried to devour us; we presented to the Lord the promise He has made and He answered in a marvelous way. Then we talk to each other about it - we share the experience of the good things of the Lord.

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The tithing system is one of the ways - one of the processes by which the Lord makes up His jewels. It is by this method that He perfects a people that will be ready to go home with Him to glory-land.

6. Any trouble we might experience will allow God to come to our rescue and this will give us reason to glorify God. Notice Psalms 50:15,

"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

There are three key words in this verse: 'call, deliver and glorify'. This is the Christian experience. To call on God when we're in trouble; He will deliver us, then we tell the world we know He exists and we glorify Him.

7. We shall witness to His glory throughout eternity. Revelation 5:13,

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Throughout eternity as we travel from one planet to another; from one unfallen world to another, we shall be declaring the love and care and interest that the Creator of the Universe has had for us in providing for our every need. We will show our gratitude in our never-ending praise to God, and help the unfallen creation to know a dimension of the love of God that they have never experienced. This is the Christian experience.

I was born into a tithe-paying family. My father was very conscientious tither.

He believed in not only the first tithe, which according to the Bible is sacred and used only for the support of the ministry, but he paid a second tithe. The second tithe is used for the maintenance of the church and its organization. It pays for the building of churches, the purchase of Sabbath School supplies and other necessary running expenses. No organization can operate without funds. My father believed this and set aside a second tithe for this. That is why the Bible says, "Bring ye all the tithes. . ." You see it's plural!

Many times I have seen my father take out the Bible and place his finger on the tenth and eleventh verses of Malachi three and tell God that he believed what was written there - and claim the promise. There were times when he reminded God that the verse says, "... and I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...." Some of those years on the farm were difficult. But God always answered and was true to His word.

There were eight boys in our family. Father had a real handful! I have understood in later years why father lost his temper sometimes, because what we boys didn't do, scarcely was done! But father instilled in us boys from the very earliest years the importance of tithe-paying. Whenever we received ten pennies, one of them went into the tithe envelope and we marked it opposite the word, 'Tithe.' We, as a family, came to expect God to work miracles for us - because we had fulfilled the conditions of the promise. We returned to God a faithful tithe. And God did not disappoint us either. We knew that He was watching over us, for He demonstrated it time and again.

One Sabbath morning we were ready to go to church. My father was the local elder of the church and it was his responsibility to take care of the services. One of the brethren called father and told him he would be unable to attend church that morning because he had a sick cow. After he hung the receiver on the phone, I remember that he turned to us and said, "I wouldn't be surprised if that cow dies. That man is robbing God of tithes and offerings." I never forgot that! It made a very deep impression on my young mind.

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When church was over we called that man to see how the cow was. I was very interested to know whether my father's prediction was true. When they reached him on the phone and inquired about the cow, the man said, "I'm sorry to tell you it died!" Father was right. He turned to us and said, "Just as I expected..." Let me tell you, I have never forgotten that incident.

A few weeks later, father had a sick cow. Now I wondered what was going to happen. It was sick with the same sickness the neighbor's cow had died from. This was going to be interesting! I can remember it as if it were yesterday. Father took the big family Bible and opened it to Malachi 3:8-12 and he read it aloud. He read how that God invited us to prove Him. He read how that God would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing and how that God would rebuke the devourer. He paused when he read verse eleven and read it again, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground.... And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." Father closed the book and we knelt to pray. Father very simply and humbly claimed this promise. He reminded God that we could not afford to lose the cow and we stood to our feet. Father had read the promise, he had believed the promise and claimed it.

Father believed that faith without works is dead. So he took a bottle with a very long neck on it and filled it with a concoction. I don't know what was in it - but he gave that cow the works! He poured that concoction down the throat of that cow and it stirred up the cows stomach and whatever else needed stirring - and that cow got up and got well! I have never forgotten that incident. It made an indelible impression on me; to think that God cares about cows! Oh, I'll tell you, we knew that God lived and cared.

The world at large today, even among those that call themselves Christians, believe that God is dead. They have the impression that even if He does live, He can't do much for us - He is unable to intervene. My friend, if God is up in heaven and does nothing about our plight, He might as well be dead. But He DOES something about our plight, thank God!

When I was a little older another experience showed me that God lives. My brother Clinton was in his teens and was planning to become a minister. But he had a problem. His voice wouldn't change. Now it's normal for boys nine and ten to speak in the high treble voice, but when a boy gets to be thirteen and fourteen, the man-voice usually takes over and the voice changes. But Clinton's voice just wouldn't change, and it worried him as well as mother. One night Clinton decided he had worried and stewed long enough about his voice. Before he went to bed that night, he got down on his knees and prayed to God. He said, "Lord, You know I can't preach with a voice like this, and if You want me to be a preacher, as I think You do, heal my voice."

The next morning he came downstairs and came into the kitchen where mother was busy making breakfast. She had her back to him as he entered the room. He said, "Good morning, mother."

"Good morning, Miles," she said and then turned and saw it was Clinton. "Oh," she said, "I thought it was Miles. Your voice .... why it has changed!"

Clinton went out into the barn, and father seeing someone come in said, "Good morning."

Clinton said, "Good morning, father."

Father said, "How are you this morning, Miles?"

"It's me, father, Clinton"

"Clinton!" father said. By the voice I thought it was Miles. Why your voice has changed!"

"Yes, father, the Lord heard my prayer and healed it."

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There were some prayers of thanks that morning, let me tell you. It changed that day and has been perfect ever since. Clinton went on to be a mighty power in God's hands.

I say, we came to expect these miracles, simply because we believed God and believed what He said He would do. This is God! There is nothing magic about Him or His promises. He makes a promise and then expects us to believe it so that He can fulfil it.

When I was six years of age, my mother was dying of a valve leak in her heart. Medical science hadn't come through with some of the miracles of surgery and plastic parts that are now available. Every diagnosis showed only that mother was not going to be able to live. We clustered around her bed and were impressed with the seriousness of her condition. We knelt together and prayed to the One who had come to our rescue so many times before. We each prayed. I was the youngest and was last. When it came my turn I said, "Lord, I have four dollars in my bank. If You will heal my mommy, I'll give You all the money I have."

God healed my mother right then and there. Immediately! You say, 'How do you know He healed her?' I'll tell you how I know. On her next birthday she'll be 99 years old! That's how I know. Mother and father told me later that I didn't need to make that promise to the Lord - He didn't really need all my money. But father said that since I had promised God and He had healed mother, I had better pay it! And I did - and was glad to! And I have still been able to make out financially!

You can see why I came to see that God's blessing and tithing go hand in hand! There was no question in our minds, as a family; nor has there been any question in my mind as an individual. Years later, while preparing for the ministry I was receiving ten dollars a week. I had been tithing, but only a single tithe. I hadn't adopted the plan of double tithing. But in my study I read from my favorite author that the Hebrew people returned to God fully a fourth of their income. This normally would have reduced them to poverty. But on the contrary, it made it possible for the God of heaven to bestow upon them a very special blessing - an extra special blessing. I reasoned that if God would do that for them, He might just do it for me. I decided to test God and see what He would do for me, and I put aside one-fourth of my ten dollars. That still left me with seven dollars and fifty-cents. That was still quite a bit of money!

I was taking a correspondence course and that cost a few dollars, but that still left me with over a dollar a week on which to eat. I did very well on that schedule and the Lord blessed me. I was still single, of course, but I was doing very well. About that time we Coons had a Coon reunion! Five of my brothers were preachers, and with their wives and children, there were forty-three of us Coons! I was the youngest Coon. In the course of our get-together we preacher brothers talked about those things that we had in common. We had a good time visiting together. I told them, among other things, that I had come across something wonderful. I told them of my plan to lay aside a quarter of my income for the Lord as the Hebrews of old had done. They evidently hadn't heard of it because they looked rather shocked when I told them about it. They weren't too impressed, but I told them that the Lord has invited us to prove Him, and that was what I was doing for maybe a three-month period.

They reminded me that as a young preacher I wasn't getting too large a salary and that I ought to be careful how I used it. "Yes," I said, "I am. But if the Lord will bless a man for giving one tenth, He ought to bless time and a half as much for the giving of a quarter of my income." I told them that I wanted to be an example to the members of my church and inspire them to greater faith and obedience.

I told them that I would conduct this experiment and at the end of the experiment would write and tell them about it. If I would be in the need of money, they would hear from me and I would give them the opportunity of helping their younger brother. If the Lord blessed as He said He would, I would want to share that with them, too. One of my brothers said, "If you're really going to be blessed, you'll be married by the time your experiment is over."

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Now I hadn't planned to be married near that soon, but by the time the three months were over, I was married! I didn't make out well at the end of those three months - I made out exceptionally well! Just think of all the gifts we received at the time of our wedding! Usually when a man gets married, he expects to give the minister at least ten dollars. We had my wife's father, who is an ordained minister, perform the ceremony and he gave us forty dollars. We saved fifty dollars right there! Talk about financial problems being solved! The Lord helped us in a marvelous way.

Soon after, we were called to go as missionaries to the West Indies. We didn't have any money to buy a car and over there the sun really shines. It's hot! And I had walk around to make my visits in that very hot sun. One day, the Union Conference treasurer, a man by the name of M. D. Howard, came to preach in my tabernacle. He reached a sermon on the life of George Mueller and told of the wonderful answers to prayer that this man received. George Mueller made a practise of opening his Bible to promise and placing his finger on it and claiming that promise on the basis of the fact that God said He would perform it. It was a powerful sermon and made a deep impression on me.

When my wife and I returned home we talked about the sermon and the experiences that George Mueller had had. We said, "If God could do that for George Mueller, is it too much for the Lord to give us a car?" We could think of a thousand reasons why it was reasonable for us to have a car. We knelt by the side of our bed and prayed and claimed the promise of Malachi 3:8-12. Within two weeks we received a letter from our friends in the States and an unsolicited \$100. bill. We decided this was the Lords way of answering our prayer and used the money to put a down-payment on a car. Now, we should have asked God for wisdom in buying a car, but we failed to, and as a result we sought a car with the roll-up-and-down curtains, instead of windows. If we would have had wisdom, we would have bought one with glass.

There in the tropics when it starts raining, it really rains! Often, before we could get those curtains on, the rain had stopped and we were soaked! But even with this inferior car, some of our minister brethren asked, "How can you afford a luxury like this?" We simply told them that we were claiming the promise and the Lord was answering us. You know, even missionaries sometimes have a problem knowing that God really will answer prayer. Some of them thought that we were guilty of presumption. Unfortunately some of them had never experienced real answer to prayer. But they looked at us and thought that we were acting very unwisely.

At the end of each month we had to make our car payments. Now in order to do this we couldn't eat quite as well as we used to. We couldn't eat the canned foods. We had to eat that which grew naturally. The Lord impressed people to bring us such things as oranges and bananas and many other fruits and vegetables. We had a very low food bill because of that. Our money went into the car! It kept that running.

After a time we were blessed with a baby girl. Now we were faced with an increase in our expenses for which we hadn't made any provision. I remember one day coming home and saying to my wife, "Unless the Lord works a miracle, we're going to lose our car. It seems as though we can't afford both the baby and the car. But, then, we have had it for several months and we have enjoyed it. Like Job we must say, "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away." We decided that we would not be stubborn and if this is what the Lord wanted to do, we would be happy with it. But somehow we just didn't think that the Lord would want to deprive us of something that was such an aid to us in our work for Him. But if He wanted us to keep the car, He would have to work a real miracle. It would take more than the kindness of the church members bringing fruits and vegetables to us - this would have to be a real miracle.

The next day I drove the car in to the gas station for some gas. I felt somewhat like the widow mentioned in the Bible who used her last bit of oil to make some cakes for herself and her son and then

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await death. I was going to get a little gas with the last bit of money I had. This particular gas station owner was also a car dealer. He said to me while filling the car with gas, "Why, pastor, you ought not to have a car like this." I thought to myself, If he only knew it, I'm pretty close not to having it!

"Here's the kind of car you ought to have," he said pointing to a lovely car with roll-up-and-down windows!

Well, my heart just beat an extra beat, and oh, how I wished I could have that car, but I knew it was impossible. But for once I kept my mouth shut and just let him do the talking. He went on to tell me how much he would allow me in trade for my car. It was a fabulous offer. Then I prayed silently. I said, "Lord, You have always taken care of us. You have promised to open the windows..." And then I remembered that it was the coming of our daughter that had caused us to get behind in our budget. It wouldn't take too long to clear that up and then we would be alright again. So I said, "If I trade would you give me three months before I made the first payment?"

"Sure," he said. "I'll do that for you."

"Sold," I said, without a moment's hesitation. He took the car with the roll-up-and-down curtains and let me have the car with the roll-up-and-down windows. I drove that car home and bounded into the house and said, "Honey, come out and see our car." She wondered what I meant for she had seen the car many times, but she did come outside. Well, when she saw the new car, she just about went into orbit. She was thrilled. I invited her to come for a ride. Oh, how we enjoyed that car. We went to visit a photographer who had just recently joined the church. He had had a thrilling experience and was happy in the church and we wanted to go and have him rejoice with us in the purchase of our new car. This particular car was the 'Whippet' and it was built real high. When he came out he looked at it and said, "I see that Isaiah fifty-eight has been fulfilled!" I looked a bit astonished but then he said, "You know where it says, 'Ye shall ride upon the high places of the earth!'"

Yes we did ride upon the high places of the earth and the Lord was good to us. Over and over, the Lord has led us through one crisis after another and each time WE have been brought closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no question in my mind that God knows how to solve financial problems. I want to be quick to say that this does not mean that we go out and buy the most expensive furniture and obligate ourselves financially with debts incurred because of an over-active want gland. But the Lord will bless us if we will make our wants correspond with our needs and then buy wisely. It may be that we will not be able to keep up with the 'Jones'; it may be that we will have to be content with something less than our neighbors as far as this worlds goods are concerned, but God says that He will supply our needs. God promises that those who see and watch us will call us 'blessed' in that they will be impressed that the Lord is with us, supplying our needs. This being so, we will not look shabby or tacky, but on the contrary, we will have the appearance of God's blessing.

One of the thrilling experiences that comes to mind took place during the second world war. It was almost impossible to rent a home. We had just come to Madison College and the problem existed there to the extent that the conference brethren suggested that we buy a home. This was going to be a difficult solution to our problem for two reasons. Number one, we had no money; and number two, it was just as difficult to buy as it was to rent. One morning my wife and I opened our Bible to Malachi 3.

We said, "Lord, You can help us to find a place to rent or buy whether there are places or not." We called the Real Estate man again with whom we had driven many, many miles looking for a place. It had been a frustrating experience thus far, because look where we might, there just weren't any places to rent - or buy.



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This particular morning we got in his car and went down Oakdale Drive and came upon a beautiful home with a 'For Rent' sign in front of it. We could hardly believe our eyes. How had this house evaded our searching eyes all these days. But there it was. We went up to the door and knocked. A very sweet lady came in response to our knock and we told her why we had come. She was very gracious and it just took a few minutes and we had rented a very beautiful home at a modest figure. We lived there for two years.

We then decided that we ought to try and live on the Madison College campus. It would be two miles nearer and it would enhance our work program so much. Again we went to the Lord and asked Him to help us. Places were still very scarce, but the Lord opened the way. A man was just getting ready to move away from the area and his house was for sale. I went and looked it over and was pleased with what I saw. The price was right, too. But there was just one problem. I had no money. "Look," I said, "I'll pay you a very good monthly rent and maybe we can allow some of this to go on a down-payment." The man agreed and we moved into this house. We stayed there until we were through pastoring that church.

The Lord had blessed in our work at Madison to the extent that we were able to start a new church. I was to leave Madison and pastor the new church. This meant we would have to move. This time we went to the Lord and said, "Lord, You have heard me tell the people how You come to our rescue, You have heard me tell the people how we claim the promises - if it is Your will, give us a real nice home. We're willing to live in a shack, but people might say, 'Is this the man that tells about the promises? Look where he lives'. I wouldn't mind, Lord, if it could be a nice brick home on a double lot on a corner - if that's alright with You."

I knelt in prayer, praying that prayer with my tithe envelope containing one quarter of our income for that month in one hand, and my other hand on the promise of Malachi 3:8-12. I lifted my hands to God and said, "Lord, You've said that You would that men lift up their holy hands as they ask, so there is God; here is Jesus - and here am I. Through the name of Jesus I come, and I believe that You are going to give us just the place You see we should have."

I jumped in my car and went up on Florence Avenue, and there on the corner was a brick house and two lots - and a nice 'For Sale' sign out in front. I called the broker and I said, "How much is the place?" He told me how much and that the down payment would be \$1,800. I knew I didn't have that much ready cash.

"Well, now," I said, "would you let us buy it on a rent-payment basis?" I could almost hear him puff over the telephone.

"Mr. Coon," he said, "that's a reasonable price." "Yes, it is," I said.

"And it's a reasonable down payment," he said.

"Yes, you're right," I agreed. "But you see I just don't happen to have the down payment, and I think the people will agree to these terms."

"But this is a reasonable offer," he insisted.

"You're right, it is reasonable," I said, "and I think they'll be willing for me to pay for it like rent."

"But...but...we just don't do business this way...."

"That may be so," I said, "but I do..." Then I said, "Would you do me the favor of presenting it to them and asking them about it?"

"Well, I guess I could do that," he said.

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That afternoon he called back and said that the owners had agreed to do it. "But where do I get my commission?" he asked. I told him I would pay him \$25. a month until it was paid for. We lived in that lovely home until we went into Revival work for the Southern Union Conference. Then we asked the Lord to help us to sell it to the one who needed it most and would appreciate it most. I found this pleases the Lord, too. It's good for us to ask the Lord to help us to help someone else, too, instead of only asking the blessings of God for ourselves. There was a very needy family that came and bought the home and it was years before they paid us for our part of the mortgage. We were once again impressed with the leadership of the Lord. Again we knew that God intervenes in the affairs of men.

What is your financial problem? If you are willing to be led of the Lord, you too, can have thrilling financial solutions to any problem that you have, regardless of how great or how small it might be. Won't you prove the Lord and let Him lead you to the heights of experimental Christianity? May the Lord bless you as you venture out by faith.

## 8: OUR AMAZING HEALINGS

I'd like you to notice seven important Bible facts with me as we endeavor to understand our subject:

1. Jesus is coming again. John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again...."
2. He is coming again to receive us. John 14:3, "....to receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
3. He is going to take us to a place where the inhabitants shall not say, "I'm sick." Isaiah 33:24, "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick...."
4. There is only 33 1/3% of a chance that God now wants us to be sick.
5. Of that 33 1/3%, I would say that it is probably God's will that only 2/5 of those be ill, which makes it only about one in ten that could be sick for any purpose as far as God is concerned.
6. Therefore we are to learn to obey the laws of health, as a condition to healing. This is the law of sowing and reaping pointed out in Galatians 6:7.
7. Then we are to claim the A, B, C's of healing: the anointing service of James 5:14,15; the laying on of hands, Mark 16:17; the healing power of God's word, Psalms 107:20. The last one is the one we have found to be one of the most powerful: the laying of our hand on a Bible promise for healing. One such promise is found in Hosea 6:1, "....he will heal us...." Another is Jeremiah 33:6, "....I will cure them...." These are wonderful promises.

In reviewing these seven points I want to draw your attention to point number four. Draw a circle in your imagination and divide it into three parts. Let us allow this circle to represent the will of God with regard to sickness. One part of the circle we will allow to represent God's original will; another part will represent His ultimate will; the third part will represent His permissive will.

We know that God's original will was that no one was to be sick. The early record of man indicates that man was free from sickness. The Bible makes this very clear. We know, too, that God's ultimate will is that there will be no more sickness, Rev. 21:4, 5.

These verses tell us that in that better land "....there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:...." This, then, covers two-thirds of God's will for mankind as

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regards sickness. The only part of the circle that we have drawn in our imagination relating to God's will with regards to sickness that we have not dealt with, is that third which we have designated as God's Permissive will.

This area of God's will is not difficult to understand. It is simply the law of reaping and sowing. If a man jumps off a building, God permits that man to break a leg or an arm, or perhaps even his neck. This is not God's original will, or His ultimate will. It is His permissive will. There are thousands of people who are sick and are under the illusion that it must be God's will that they are sick. God finds no pleasure in seeing a person sick. Very often these people who want to credit God with their sickness are quick to turn to the experience of Job and say, "Look at Job, wasn't he sick? Didn't God want him to be sick?" Yes, but you and I are not in Job's class. Do you know how I know that? We need but look at the first two chapters of the book of Job to see that the devil came to God and challenged Him. In this challenge by the devil, he said that up to that moment he could find no fault with Job; there was no selfishness in Job at all. "But," the devil said, "if you touch his possessions first and then his body, then Job will display selfishness and curse You." Job's sickness was a demonstration of the power of God within a fully surrendered heart. It was to prove to the devil that Job would remain true to God even in trial; it was to show that selfishness was not in the heart of Job and that even severe trial would not reveal it. I say you and I are not in Job's class because we show our selfishness every day without being tried! So there is not one of us that are sick because we are like Job - or for the same reason that Job was sick. We can cross that reason off our list.

No, most of us cannot claim the perfection of Job. The question of our selfishness is revealed far more readily than it would need to be. Our families might well attest to that. There is another class that say, "I must be sick for the same reason that the apostle Paul was sick." Why was Paul sick? II Corinthians 12:7 says that Paul was sick because of the abundance of visions might make him exalted. To keep him from being exalted, God gave him a thorn in the flesh. Paul was caught up to the 'third heaven' in vision. Are you and I in that class? I think most of us would have to say that we are not in the apostle Paul's class, for we have not had visions such as Paul had.

We cannot say, "I'm sick because I'm in Job's class," because I'm not; nor can we say, "It must be God's will for me to be sick because I'm in Paul's class," because we're not in Paul's class.

Then there is that person that says, "I believe that probably it's God's will for me to be sick so I can bring glory to Him." What could that individual mean by a deduction like that? Is it reasonable to believe that if there was an Adventist church on one side of the street and a Methodist church on the other side of the street and all of the members of the Adventist church were sick and all the members of the Methodist church were well, that the sick Adventists would bring glory to God by their sickness? Is that a reasonable deduction? Why it's ridiculous. We don't glorify God, nor does God intend to display His glory through sick bodies. No, a thousand times no! This kind of reasoning is nothing more than an attempt to cover up the real reason and perhaps an unwillingness to face reality.

Then there's the person who says, "Well, Jesus bore our sicknesses...." Jesus died vicariously. I can't possibly be in His class. Matthew 8:17 says that Jesus did take on our infirmities and bare our sicknesses, but that was that He might pay the price of our salvation. Certainly we cannot enter into this class! Very few people die vicariously. Sometimes loved ones are led to Christ because of someone's death, but not too often. Very few have I ever seen sick who so nearly represented the Lord that I thought that by their sickness they could lead someone to the Lord. These are almost non-existent.

This one thing is clear thus far. I'm not in Job's class; I'm not in Paul's class; I'm not in Christ's class. What class is left for me to fit into? Well, there are those who say, "I must be in the hereditary class." This class turn to Exodus 20:5 and point to the place where God says that He will "...visit the iniquity of the

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fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation..." This is often referred to as hereditary or inherited weaknesses. This is possible, but let us hasten to notice that Romans 5:20 says that "...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." So not too many can point to this as a reason for their sickness. No, not too often can we blame father or mother for our sickness, because here is a promise I can claim and find deliverance from that class.

This brings us to another class of sick people. This class is sick because they are breaking God's laws. Galatians 6:7 says, "...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Isn't this the biggest reason why we're sick? I think if we'll be honest with ourselves we'll agree that this constitutes the biggest reason for our sickness.

What are some of the laws that we're breaking? It is of vital importance that we understand this first of all. If we're sick and want to claim the promise for healing, we first of all must fulfill the conditions for healing. So this is a most important question that must be answered.

Man is a three-fold being. I Thessalonians 5:23 says, "...and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Man has a spirit, body and soul. Let's draw another circle in our imagination and divide this circle in three parts. One part would be the mind, the next part would be the soul and the third part would be the body. What things can the mind do that will lead me into sickness? My favorite author indicates that ninety percent of the sickness originates in the mind. One of the things the mind does that causes sickness is that it wills to be sick. There are countless millions who are sick only because they 'will' to be sick. Their mind tells them they are sick.

Why would they 'will' to be sick? Why would a person choose to be sick? There are many reasons for this. One person chooses sickness because if he's sick he can have his own way. Many have learned this from childhood. I've gone into a home where the child would throw a fit and then mother would do what the child wanted her to do. Many grown-ups find they can get their own way only if they throw a fit. They can't do this in the same way a child does it, but they disguise it by getting sick - choosing to get sick! Yes, this is often the case. And it starts during childhood when these children are allowed to throw a tantrum and then get their own way because mother or father don't want to put up with the fussing any longer. Tragic that parents today are giving in to this kind of devilish performance. Thank God there are yet a few who don't.

Yes, one reason why people 'will' to be sick is so they can have their own way. I have a relative who can have a heart attack whenever he wants to. I've watched him do this for many years. He even had hydrophobia several times, at will. He enjoyed it very much. There are many people who enjoy poor health - many do it unconsciously - but they do it because they know that then they can have their own way.

Another reason why the mind 'wills' to be sick is because people 'will' to fail, but in order to fail they must have a good excuse. Sickness is about as good a reason as one can have. And, many reason, if I'm sick I will not be expected to succeed. Thousands are afflicted with this type of sickness. Let me be quick to re-emphasize that these people don't do this on the conscious level; they do it unconsciously.

The great governing power of health is the Will. The mind wills to be well or sick whatever the case may be. My favorite author says in the book, *Counsels on Health* that there are thousands that could regain health if they only willed to do it. God does not want them to be sick. I'm glad to know that! We can totally discount the story that some people go around telling, that they believe it is God's will that they be sick. Just remember the story of the Adventists and the Methodists that lived across the street from each other! This will immediately show the ridiculousness of that type of thinking. God wants His children to be healthy and happy. It is a far greater glory to Him to have His children in the lime-light of

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health, rather than on the sick-list. But many people are too lazy to put forth the effort to succeed, and so they are sick - because it's more convenient that way. People will surely not expect as much from a sick person.

Another class of people who 'will' to be sick is that class that is looking for pity. You see, there are many people who know they will get much more attention if they are sick than if they are well. They crave pity and attention. Haven't you asked on occasion, someone, "How are you?" and they say, "Well, I'm not feeling too well today. My head aches and my stomach is upset...." and on and on they go. What are they doing? They are looking for pity, rather than for good health! Pity is more precious than health! Oh, the answers you get when you ask some people how they are. It gives them an invitation to begin to list their aches and pains. And do you know, people get into the habit of mentioning a complaint when they're asked how they are. They might not think of it otherwise, but when you ask them how they are - this gives them a spark of inspiration and away they go, listing all their troubles - and they enjoy doing it! Instead of saying, "I'm fine. I feel just great!" and begin to enjoy good health, they would rather say, "Oh, so so." Or as they say in the South, "Tolerable". It's difficult for me to tolerate that, too much!

Again, may I repeat - these are symptoms of that class that has a sickness originating in the mind. I'm not speaking of those who are sick in spite of their desire to be healthy. But before this class can be well, their mind must be changed. They must 'will' to be well. The will of man must be brought into harmony with the will of God. III John 2 says that God would have us prosper and be in good health. Therefore I know that it is God's will that I be well and I must, if I am going to be healthy, put my will in line with the will of God.

In Jacksonville, Florida, several years ago we were conducting meetings just like his and a lady who was ill came to the services, anticipating the subject on healing. We did not know that she had been healed during that service, but later she wrote us a letter telling us about it. She said, "I expected to be healed in that service." In other words, she put her mind and will on the side of getting well. On the other hand, in the same state of Florida, a mother and her daughter heard me preach this same sermon on healing - and they were downright angry with me. They felt I had exposed them before the whole church! Now I had no knowledge of their condition at all, but evidently the proverbial 'shoe' fit and it made them very uncomfortable.

Now what about the soul? How is this involved in this matter of health? What conditions must the soul live up to in order to claim Bible promises for healing? The soul, must first of all, get rid of hatred. Hatred is a deterrent to good health. In fact it is impossible to have good health with hatred in the heart. Many Christians are unwilling to own up to the fact that they have hate in the heart. This is serious because the Bible says that the one that hates is a murderer (I John 3:15). Who is it that is being murdered? The one who is doing the hating. He is murdering himself! Health authorities declare that if a person hated intensely for one hour, unable to throw off the poisons that are produced by hate, through the eliminatory processes - enough poison could be generated to kill eighty people! When a person holds hard feelings; when a person hates - he is murdering himself!

In one of our meetings in a large Eastern city, a man came who was all crippled up with arthritis. He could hardly walk, and was in pain constantly. He said, "I'm this way because I have carried hard feelings; I have hated. I must stop doing that because it's killing me!" Hard feelings are a form of hatred and men will not admit it. Oh, that we might learn the value of a sweet spirit, and the destructive force of hatred.

A lady was telling me on one occasion of all the people that were mean to her. "But," she said, "I don't hate them because I'm not supposed to." Since she was not supposed to, she would not own up to it and as a result carried both hatred and guilt in her heart. Guilt and hatred in the heart are killing

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thousands of people every day. All forms of impurity in the heart: impure thinking, impure talking, impure actions - all of these are deadly! Jesus made this very clear when He said that he that looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already. This kind of activity is part and parcel of the work of the agency of darkness, and God says that light and darkness don't mix. There will be no place in those heavenly mansions for those who engage in this kind of activity.

The soul must be cleansed from hatred. All of this whispering and talking about the injustices that have been done us, whether it be in our families, in the church or in the community - must be brought to a certain halt. It will surely kill us. This is why, when claiming the promise for healing, one of the prerequisites according to the apostle James is to confess our faults one to another. We must get hate and hard feelings out of our heart before the Lord can do anything for us.

On one occasion my wife and I responded to an invitation to come and visit a lady and pray for her healing. We went and talked about the promises of God and the conditions for healing. I was about to engage in the sacred act of prayer when I asked, "Sister, is everything alright between you and everyone else?" She paused and I said, "How is everything between you and the Lord?"

"Oh, fine," she said. "Everything is fine between me and the Lord."

"How are things between you and the neighbors?" I asked. "Well, my neighbors are not nice to me," she said. That's a nice way of putting it, isn't it? She and her neighbors were fussing, but it was the neighbors that weren't being nice to her. "I'll tell you how mean they are," she said. "Their cat comes over here and I feed it. It's such a scrawny cat - they never feed it, so I have to, and that makes them mad."

She was willing to be angry with the neighbors because of a cat. She was willing to endure the poison of ill-feelings for the sake of a cat. This was noble, but even the Lord said that a man is much better than a beast. We ought to be kind to animals, but how tragic to be feeding a cat and feeding the fires of hatred at the same time. How much better it would have been if she would have gone over to the neighbors and straightened things out - and fed the cat besides, if this were possible. But here she was asking the Lord to heal her so that she would have more strength to quarrel with the neighbors. The soul needs cleansing first before God can do that which needs doing as far as the prayer of healing is concerned.

I was conducting a series of meetings in the deep Southeast. A lady related an experience to me that she had had some years before. This lady had been afflicted with a rapidly growing abdominal tumor. By the time she went to see the doctor it had grown to be very large and she had lost weight and strength. The doctor told her he would be unable to operate until she gained more strength. The lady realized that the only way she was going to be able to gain strength would be to be healed. She was in a very serious predicament. She decided to call the conference president to come to her home and have special prayer for her. This was many years ago when transportation wasn't as available or as rapid as it is today. The president came, with his little bag under his arm in which he carried his Bible and the anointing oil.

In the quietness of that bedroom where she lay, unable now to even sit up, the president said, "Sister, is everything alright between you and every living soul?"

"Yes, Elder," she said, "everything is fine with everyone ....except one person. We had a flood here some time back and I allowed this lady to use my guesthouse during the time of the flood. I didn't charge her any rent, but when she left she didn't even pay the light bill. Ever since then I haven't felt right toward that lady."

The lady told me that with that, the pastor-president picked up his Bible and oil and put them in his case and started for the door. At the door he said, "Sister, when everything is alright with everybody, call on me. I'll be glad to come and pray for you." And he was gone!

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I want to tell you that I believe that president had some sense. He knew that God is not mocked. Men and women who refuse to acknowledge hatred in their heart and call it righteous indignation, are hiding the facts of the case. What they have in their heart is hatred - pure and simple. It is selfishness covered under a cloak of righteousness. This conference president recognized this and wouldn't anoint her with this feeling in her heart.

She told me, "I had three days of complete misery. There was a terrible battle raging in my heart. I was unwilling to acknowledge that I was to blame for this feeling. I told myself over and over that it was the other lady that had done me wrong. I was pitying myself and trying to justify my feeling toward her. After three days of agony I finally realized what had happened and I prayed to God, asking Him to take this barb out of my soul. I made these wrongs right and cleared the slate. Then I was ready to have the president come back again. It took quite a while before he could come back, and by this time I was very weak. But again he came, with his Bible and the anointing oil. Again he asked, "Sister, is everything alright between you and every living soul?" I knew what he meant. I knew that I was being asked if there were any misunderstandings and feelings that had not been settled. How happy I was to be able to tell him that everything was alright.

"But even at this point the president was cautious. He said, 'Sister, I am going for a walk down the street. I'll be gone for about twenty minutes; I want you to study this over once more. Search your heart - I want you to be sure.'"

This took courage. I don't know if I would have had the courage to do this; but this conference president did, and I say, Thank God! Anyone who will allow the poisons of hate to infect his soul is a murderer! This is a very serious matter; one that each of us as individuals must own up to.

"While he was gone," she said, "I searched my soul. I wanted to be sure there was no malice or hate or any undesirable feeling in the recesses of my heart. When he came back he again asked me, 'Sister, are you sure that everything is alright between you and every living soul - no misunderstandings?' This time I could say with real conviction, 'Elder, not one!'

"With that the president took out his Bible and began to read. He read the promises of God's Holy Word. Then he took the little bottle of sweet oil and kneeling by my bedside he prayed - and what a prayer he prayed. Then he anointed me with the oil by placing his hand on my forehead, claiming the promise in the Name of Jesus. While he was praying, I felt no pain, but I felt the surgeon's knife cutting out this large abdominal tumor. I actually felt my body contract back to its original size."

How her face beamed as she stood there, the picture of health. "I couldn't pray," she said, "because I was filled with emotion and thanking God in my heart that He had come and healed me right on the spot! The pastor went home - and I got up! I was healed! There was no question about that. I went about my work. When my husband came home, he came in the door expecting to go to the bedroom to see me. But he looked and saw me standing there in the kitchen - working! He said, 'Ethel, whatever happened to you?' There I was healthy and strong and down to my school-girl size. I said to him, with a smile on my face, 'Honey, Jesus has been here.' What a time of rejoicing we had! And I have felt wonderful ever since."

Dear friend, in order for us to be eligible for the answer to the promises for healing, we must first have our souls cleansed by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must first of all be willing to make wrongs right and pray for the forgiving power of heaven to come in and purify these hearts of ours. We must be free of fault-finding, malice, criticism and jealousy. This freedom comes only in response to a willingness to have this miracle of grace performed in us. It can be accomplished only by the power of the Holy Spirit - but there must first be a genuine desire to be rid of these unwanted feelings. When in earnestness we pray for deliverance from these hindrances to a fellowship with Jesus, then the shackles

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that would bind us are loosed and we find the sweet peace and joy and release in a spirit of love and unity. This must precede the work of God in answer to the prayer for healing.

The third condition deals with body. This is the physical aspect of God's program for healing. This deals with the seven basic laws for good health which are: 1) pure water, 2) sunshine, 3) fresh air, 4) rest, 5) exercise, 6) an adequate diet, 7) abstemiousness. These laws of health have been given for the maintenance of good health. How often we violate them; and when we do we suffer. It's just that simple. Our bodies react to the violation of God's best program for us. But we can come to Him and ask for forgiveness and He will forgive us. More than that, He will put us back on the road to good health. Then with the gift of health once again ours, we can put our hand in His by faith, and say, "Lord, I purpose to live in harmony with Thy Laws, help me to do it." We may fail again, but if we are in earnest and honestly desire to subscribe to His will, He will help us, and we will benefit by it a thousand times over.

What a wonderful Lord we have! Through the apostle Peter He has told us that there is healing in forgiving. Not only is He willing to forgive us without number, but He says that if a brother sin against us, we ought to be willing to forgive him, not once or twice a day - but if need be - seventy times seven! There is healing in forgiving. I challenge you to try it.

Having set our 'will' on the side of the Lord to be well, and having let Him cleanse us from all ill feelings, and having determined to live up to the laws of health to the best of our ability by His grace, then we come and we use the A, B, C's of prayer for healing. One of my favorite promises is Hosea 6:1 which says, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." With this promise before us we then can 'Ask', (Matthew 7:7) according to what God has promised. 'B' is 'Believe', (Mark 11:24). 'C' is claiming the promise and returning thanks that we have received what God has promised.

I have witnessed some mighty miracles performed by the simple application of these principles. They have been given to us for our healing. They are mine and they are yours. It is our privilege to use these tools for our health and happiness. When we meet the conditions, the power of God is available without measure. It is God's will that His children be well; God lives today in mighty power to heal, just as when He walked the dusty streets of Galilee. When we do our part - He does His! Health for us was God's original will. It is His ultimate will as well. And I believe it is His permissive will, too!

Elder Eugene Farnsworth was very ill at one time and went into the hospital for an exploratory operation. The doctors found that he was filled with cancer. They didn't try to remove it, for it was impossible; they just sewed him up. They told him of his condition and suggested that he would not be able to live long. "How long do I have?" he asked. He was told that in cases like his people usually lived about two weeks. "Then I must appeal my case to another board of physicians," he said. "This board has Jesus at its head." The doctors agreed and a special service of prayer and anointing was conducted. Elder Farnsworth prayed, "Lord, I am asking that only Your will be done. If for some reason it should not be Your will to heal me, I surrender to Your will and I shall not be bitter. But now Lord, having done that, I believe You want to do something for me, for You have promised." He reached out and took hold of God's promises and he was completely healed! In giving his testimony before hundreds he told how that for a time he had reoccurrences of the symptoms of cancer. Then his wife would say, "Eugene, assert your freedom!" He said that he asserted his freedom and he was a well man. He lived many years after that experience and when he died it was from natural causes. Cancer never again afflicted his body.

Many thousands are stumbling over the phrase, 'If it be Thy will'. I recommend that you treat this phrase as a stone. Once you have met the conditions for answered prayer, then pray, 'If it be Thy will', but then roll it over into a corner of your mind so you won't be stumbling over it and fastening your eyes on this



rather than on the promises for healing. "I would above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in good health...." This is God's primary will for us. Let us focus on this rather than on the possibility that God might want us to be sick. Again, I say, there are very few whom God wishes to be sick - very few! Chances are He wants you to be well.

One of the recent thrilling experiences of answered prayer involves a very dear friend of mine, Elder Richard Barron. This man was filled with the Spirit and the Lord was blessing Him in His work. We were together in a meeting such as this and he heard these same sermons. Shortly after the meetings were over, he contracted what was diagnosed as cancer of the spine. He was confined to his bed and to all appearances his work was over. But I felt impressed to write to him. I wrote him a letter the like of which I have never written, before or since. I invited him to put into practice the A, B, C's of prayer. I challenged him to put God to the test. He accepted the challenge and although a little time was involved, he is once again doing a mighty work for God - a healed man!

God wants to do much for you. He wants to do great things for all of us. Shall we not allow Him to perform His best will in and through us? The provisions are here. Are we ready and willing to accept them? I trust we shall accept and enjoy all He has for us to the fullest here on this earth, as we wait expectantly for the earth where there will be no more sickness. May this be your experience, is my prayer.

## **9: THE DOCTRINE OF NON-RETALIATION**

We have come now to the subject, The Doctrine of Non-Retaliatio. As we begin to explore this fascinating subject together, I want to ask you, have you ever had a nightmare? Some have spiritual nightmares; others have mental nightmares. Still others take a trip into dreamland! Regardless of what your departure might have been, you will find this chapter a thrilling one.

Notice with me, once again, seven great Bible facts:

1. Jesus is coming again! Hebrews 9:28, "...and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."
2. He is coming for those who are like Him. I John 3:1-3, "...now are we the sons of God, and it cloth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
3. Those who are like Jesus have learned not to retaliate. I Peter 2:21-23, "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:..."
4. This class of people will not murmur or dispute. Philippians 2:14-16, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

Did you ever stop to realize that murmuring and complaining could keep you out of heaven. That's just exactly what the verse says! We can be ever so faithful in tithe-paying or Sabbath-keeping or missionary work and any other kind of church involvement; but if we have complained and disputed throughout our sojourn here, the Lord will I tell us we have laboured in vain. Do you begin to see how important it is that we understand this?

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5. Why won't they do these things? John 19:10, 11 "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have not power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

Why it is when Jesus comes again there will be a people waiting to meet Him who will not be a retaliating people? When they are reviled, they will not revile again? They are not a complaining, murmuring people. Because they know that all the events that take place; all the circumstances that surround them are by God's divine permission, and no harm can come to them except as God allows it. The hand of the Almighty is watching over them and they trust His wisdom.

6. They know that God allows trials and tribulations to come but for one purpose: to refine their characters. Isaiah 48:10, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

John, the Revelator saw in vision that those who are with Jesus are, ". . . called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14. The furnace of affliction is one of God's chosen ways to purify a people. But in the process of purification these people recognize that their wise and loving Father will allow only that which is necessary for their purification to come to them by trial and tribulation. They have learned to trust God for this by experience.

7. Therefore, the only fight in which they will engage, is the fight of faith. I Timothy 6:12. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..."

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord...." Exodus 14:13

I wish I had learned these things when I was a boy - or in academy or college. I wish I had learned these things in my early ministry. I hope I have learned it by now! "But let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall..."

The following experience that I relate to you is only one of the many experiences I had in forging my way from nightmare to dreamland. I am sure that those of us who will enjoy the final Dreamland that Jesus has gone to prepare for us, will have gone through many nightmares. My favorite author mentions time and again that no individual will ever reach glory-land without first going through some almost crushing experiences. I have had a taste of some of these experiences, and I want to relate one of them to you. I will change some of the names and places to protect the innocent parties involved.

The experience revolved around the starting of a new church. The Lord had been very good to us in our ministry, as He had in several other places, and this necessitated the organization of a new church. I had some reluctance in promoting this venture, for through experience I had found that every time a new church is formed, ugly feelings seem to show themselves. Otherwise wonderful people show an attitude that is totally foreign. I had seen this happen time and again in many churches that I had had a part in organizing, and so I felt somewhat hesitant in starting this new church. But, the membership was enthusiastic and requested that a meeting be called at which this possibility could be fully explored. I went to the meeting, hoping against hope that somehow this could be averted. We had a wonderful meeting. A vote was taken as to whether or not we ought to form a new church, and the vote was unanimous. It was very evident that the mind of the church was to organize a new group. They even suggested the number of charter members there should be for the new church. It was the biggest church I ever started - over 100 members. I wrote my brother and told him the size of this new church. He wrote back and said, "That church was born with its pants on!"

After the meeting was over, I walked away from our place of meeting and said to myself, "Satan must be dead. I've never started any new church in my life where there has been such a feeling of love and brotherhood." The feeling of unity was marvelous. Everything went along beautifully for a period of nine

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months. During that time the final touches were completed for the formation of this new church. We had over 100 members! These were fine people; dedicated to the work of the Lord.

I made my mistake in thinking the devil was dead. Just about the time everything was working out gloriously, five men - members of my church - for a reason I have not ever been fully able to understand, turned on me with an anger akin to that of a demon. These were the very men who originally initiated the organization of the new church. It was too late to retract our steps in the formation of this new church, and being a believer in the idea that once a work is begun, it should be completed, I determined to carry it through to completion. It was at this point that it seemed that all hell let loose in our midst.

These five men determined among themselves that the only thing to do to solve the problem was, to get rid of the pastor. To this end these men set themselves. They used every conceivable means to accomplish their task. I might say that there are some conferences where the membership have a great deal more to say about the hiring and dismissing of their ministers than others. These men felt that their weight unitedly might influence the president in their direction. To complicate matters, it was election year. The president was up for re-election or dismissal, according to the vote of the constituency. My church sent a delegation of two men to the conference president during the time camp was being pitched for camp, meeting. They said, "We have come to tell you that you are to get rid of Elder Coon."

"Well," the president said, "election is just a few days away, I couldn't give you any assurance at this time. Why don't you come to see me after election?"

"That's just it," the men said, "we want to settle this before election."

"Oh, is that the way it is?" the president said. "You gentlemen can just be on your merry way, because I'm not going to be high-pressured into anything. I don't believe the Lord would have me operate that way." And with that he dismissed them.

Somehow word got back to me that these men had made an appearance and had had an appointment with the president requesting my dismissal. These things are hard to be kept absolutely quiet. I'll have to confess that it has always been hard for me to practise the doctrine of non-retaliation. How I wanted to go in and defend myself and show that I was being treated most unfairly, but I knew that it would be very difficult for me to do this without hurting someone else. I was frustrated and anxious; it was very difficult for me to stand still while all of this was going on.

This was just about the time my wife and I learned the secret and power of the A, B, C's of prayer. We had experienced marvelous answers to prayer by simply asking, believing and claiming Bible promises. We talked it over together and I determined that I was going to take a Bible promise and claim it in this situation, and that was all I was going to do about it. I chose Isaiah 54:17, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper: and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord"

In this promise I found my comfort and refuge. I read it and re-read it and realized that as long as the Lord wanted us in this particular church, we would be there and no amount of pressure could change God's best plan. We determined not to run away from the situation. We agreed, too, that if God was through with us here, we were willing to leave. We were determined to have the right attitude and let God lead. We found comfort in the statement Jesus made to Pilate, too: "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above:..." When God would be through with us, He would see that we were moved; but until then we knew that no one could accomplish our move. We decided, too, that we were not going to talk to people about this problem; we would not seek sympathizers. We were determined to leave it all in the hands of a wise God.

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I knelt, together with my wife, and putting my finger on the promise of Isaiah 54:17 asked God to do for us what He had promised. We claimed the promise and told the Lord that we appreciated His action in our behalf. We confessed our unworthiness and asked for grace and strength to meet the situation. There on our knees we put into practise the A, B, C's of prayer, and returned thanks to God that He was already working out the problems.

My wife shared with me the promise she had taken and was claiming. Acts 18:10, "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:...."

I thought this was a wonderful promise! This promise was given to Paul when he thought his work was finished, but he stayed in the very same place fully one year and six months after he was given this promise. We thrilled together in the provisions our Lord had made for us in this situation. We had the promises. We were not afraid of what might come. The Lord had promised; we believed His promises, and just waited and watched how the Lord would fulfill them. We had gone through our trial, but had found the answer. Now we were ready to be spectators and see the Lord's arm bared.

Election time was coming in just a few days. Word got around that since the president of the conference would not subscribe to the plans of these men, they were now determined to see that he would not be re-elected to the presidency. They felt they had the force needed to accomplish their scheme. Again, I called on the Lord and claimed the promises of His word.

I realized that it was possible that I might be called to serve on one of the many committees during the constituency meeting. I determined that if I was placed on a committee, I would not say one derogatory word about a living soul. I would not try to seek revenge or vent my feelings in any way. I asked God for grace not to retaliate in any way, for I wanted to be like Jesus, Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. I read and re-read I Peter 2:21-23 and determined I would act like Jesus. I would support the Cause and speak for positive programs, but not murmur or retaliate.

The time finally came. We assembled in the large auditorium. I was pastoring two churches at the time. The delegation from the one church sat in one pew; the delegation from the other church sat in another pew. I took charge of the one delegation and had one of the elders of the other church take charge of the other delegation. It was necessary for each church to choose one delegate to represent that church in the large committee. This large committee chooses all of the committees which in turn decide the future of the conference. I knew that the church over which I was presiding had everything cut-and-dried as to who their delegate was to be. I knew this but I had made a decision that I was not going to revile against those who were scheming my ouster. They made their choice, and I asked for a motion and a second and their candidate was chosen. Unbeknownst to me, while we were choosing our delegate, the other church of which I was pastor had elected me to represent them on the large committee.

Here we were. I would represent the one church, and the man whom the other church nominated was the very man who had boasted that his group would eliminate both the conference president and me before the day was through. We went into the assembly hall and the first committee to be chosen was that committee which should choose the conference president. I sat there and listened and waited to see what would transpire. When the votes were tallied, there were more votes for me to be on that committee than for any other man. I wondered, 'how did this ever happen?' But before the tallying was over, the other man was put on the committee too!

The nominating committee now went to their quarters for the very important work of electing the president first of all. This other man was chosen as secretary of the committee. You can only imagine what was going through my mind and how the devil was attempting to have me show a spirit that was like his. But I prayed, "Lord, You have promised and I claim Your promise. Help me not to say an unkind

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word about a living soul." I had a little battle of my own right there, but God came and gave me strength and victory as I placed my will in His hands.

The chairman of the committee said, "Gentlemen, you have seen the work of our president over the last term of his office. His record is open to us all and we're well acquainted with what he has done. What is the pleasure of the committee? Who do you want as your president for the next two years?"

Within two minutes, the president was re-elected and re-instated in office. Within forty-five minutes the entire slate of officers was chosen. The man who acted as the secretary for the committee had been on the conference committee for the past two years, but in the newly-elected slate, his name was not even mentioned. He was completely out of the conference picture as far as influence was concerned. All of this was accomplished without a single derogatory word having been spoken by anyone. The work of the committee was taken back to the large delegation and it was voted within the hour.

These men then came back to the chairman of the committee and accused him of having rail-roaded the slate through. Why did they accuse him of doing this? The answer is found in Romans 2:1, "... thou that judgest another doest the same things." They had had their cut-and-dried scheme foiled; now they were accusing the chairman of doing the very thing they were attempting to do. The chairman confessed that he had had no plans whatever with regard to officers, and his conscience was clear that he had acted in good faith in harmony with the attitude of the committee.

In a few days camp meeting was over. We had had a good sitting together and the Lord had blessed that camp meeting with His special blessing. In a few days after the camp meeting was over, word came to me that these men were now setting their eyes on the up-coming General Conference at which time they were going to present my name to the General Conference president. I didn't know I was that important! Imagine, a delegation going to our world leader trying to get rid of a little man like me! Again my wife and I prayed together, each of us claiming the same Bible promises we had claimed under the previous time of stress. Again we determined that we would not say one word to anyone, but let this scheme take its course. We were ready again to stand and let the will of the Lord be revealed. We would not revile, or murmur. God had shown us His power once, and we were ready to look for it again. We were determined to fight only the fight of faith.

I began a program in my churches of conducting the Wednesday evening prayer meeting services as a teaching service. I was teaching my people the glorious truth of the A, B, C's of answered prayer! We had a Bible on a table right below the pulpit, and I invited people to come and put their finger on a promise that they wished to claim in harmony with the instruction given in Christ's Object Lessons page 147 and also in volume five of the Testimonies page 322. We had some wonderful prayer meetings. There were many who asked and believed and claimed the promises of God. Souls were converted in those mid-week services. God's Holy Spirit was present and gave evidence of His presence by the change in the lives of the members of that church.

In the meantime these men were in attendance at the General Conference. The new president was elected and these men sought him out. There in the main auditorium of that great session, they found him. They said, "Now that you're our new General Conference President, we have a request to make of you."

"What is it?" the president asked.

"We want you to get rid of Glenn Coon," they said. Then they proceeded to tell the president all about me and present their case.

While they were talking to the president, another member of my church who was never very close to me, walked by and stopped to listen to what these men were saying. This man had great trouble

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sleeping that night. In fact during the night he got up and found out where the General Conference President was staying and he called him on the telephone. This man told the president that he just wanted to tell him that his church was blessed with a wonderful pastor. Then he went on to tell him some things about me that I didn't deserve. I don't know the exact words he used, but I know I am not, nor have I ever been good enough to deserve all of the nice things he said about me that night, to the General Conference President!

When the General Conference was over these men came back. Word soon got around that although they were foiled in their first attempt, this time it was going to be successful. "We'll get rid of him yet," they boasted. Again, when I felt the forces of evil pressing around me, I claimed Isaiah 54:17 and put my trust in the Lord, asking Him for guidance and understanding. I was determined to fight only one kind of fight; and I was determined it must be the fight of faith. I needed someone to turn to, and those of you who have been in the midst of a struggle of some kind, know that one needs help in a very special way during that kind of a struggle. I didn't want to turn to any other mortal, so I put my trust in One Whom I knew would never fail me or forsake me.

I was unafraid, for God had given me peace of heart and mind, and you know, when you're at peace with God, it's not hard to be at peace with your fellow-man. I went right on with my plans. My schedule for the mid-week services was made out for several months at a time. I had advertising prepared which was posted in many places announcing the topics. One of the announced topics was on God's care of His own. It included a by-line to the effect that people better not attempt to foil God's plans or His program for His children. I was preaching these sermons, not for any present circumstances, but rather in preparing material for a book that I was writing. The night of the announced service came. The church was filled and God's Spirit was there. I'm sure He led in the choice of that topic. I spoke on what a serious thing it is to tamper with the plans of God and to set oneself to accomplish that which God had not designed should be.

We were enjoying the service when a man appeared at the door of the church. I could see him motion to me to come to him. I excused myself and went to the door. He said, "Would you please pray for brother so-and-so, he's deathly sick!" This was the very man who had set himself to see that I was to be removed. Just that morning I had called him on the telephone. I had heard that this brother was unhappy with me because I wasn't giving him enough opportunity to preach, and so I had asked him to preach in one of the two churches the next Sabbath. But when I called, I heard a very strange babble on the other end. I couldn't understand what he was saying, but finally he did manage to tell me 'no' to my request. Now he was on the brink of death.

Several weeks prior to this a representative of the General Conference visited us in our community, presumably on vacation. But while in our town he visited each one of the men involved in the program to get rid of me. He visited every businessman of the church as well. He asked them all how things were going with themselves, their business and also the church. The report he got from the businessmen was glowing. Without exception, these men reported that the church was prospering and they were receiving bountiful blessings. However the five men gave a rather conflicting report. When he asked them about the church, they said everything was fine, excepting the pastor.

"What's wrong with the pastor?" the visitor asked. "Everything!" the five men said,

"Well, for instance? Give me an example," he said "For one thing," these men said, "he's a liar.

"A liar! That's a very serious charge. He wrote it down and then asked them to give him an example. They hummed and hawed, but failed to come up with a single example.

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"But Elder," they said, "he lies about everything!" But search as they might, they found it impossible to give an example of a single incident.

"Something else perhaps?" the General Conference man asked.

"Yes," they said, "he doesn't cooperate."

"He doesn't cooperate," he said as he wrote that down on his pad. "Now if you will, give me an illustration of that charge, please."

"Why, Elder," they said, "he doesn't cooperate in anything." But they failed to come up with a single shred of proof or an incident substantiating their charge.

They had five charges, but were unable to give a single illustration. This convinced the representative of the General Conference that the charges were false. He turned to the men and said, "Gentlemen, your house is going to crumble unless you have a change of heart and attitude!" With that he excused himself and left.

I had had many an opportunity to speak to this representative. I passed him on the street on several occasions. I knew where he was staying, but I determined with my wife that I was not once going to speak to him or endeavor to defend my cause. I was going to put my trust in God and let Him lead in the whole situation.

These five men were united in a business venture. They had formed a corporation. One of the men said, "In the light of what the General Conference representative has said, I believe I'm wrong and with God's help I plan to change my attitude. If you men continue to hold to your purpose, I'm afraid I'm going to have to resign from the group." He was joined by another member of the group who made the same kind of declaration of intention. The chairman just looked at them. Between that time and the next night this man was stricken with this terrible malady, and now lay at the point of death.

I went back to the pulpit and told the congregation about the plight of the man and we prayed most earnestly together that if it might be God's will, to save him and spare his life. I hadn't known of this man's physical problem when I called him, inviting him to preach. In the meantime I had asked another of the five to preach, and he accepted the appointment. His message was a message calling for unity of action and a challenge to full cooperation in the entire program. This man had had an entire transformation of attitude. And you can imagine he would, for the brother who was so sick, and for whom we prayed, suffered terribly. It put the fear of the Lord into that group, let me tell you!

We continued our program there with the Lord's blessing until our work was finished. Then, and not until then, did we move from that church. In this experience we had demonstrated to us the mighty power of God. It helped us to see that when inequities seem to come our way, it is not our responsibility to murmur or complain; it is not our responsibility to retaliate. God has promised to take care of His own, and if we will claim the promise, He will perform miracles in our behalf. God cannot lie; let us trust Him and be witnesses to His power and grace. When Jesus comes, may He find in us a people who are like Him, in spirit and in practice.

## **10: GUIDED BY VISIONS AND DREAMS**

There are seven great Bible facts to be considered as we probe our subject. Will you notice them with me?

1. Jesus is coming again! Joel 3:16 - "The Lord shall roar out of Zion. . ."

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2. Just before Jesus comes again, there will be a great out-pouring of His Holy, Spirit. Joel 2:28-30,

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

3. One of the reasons for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit is to guide people into all truth. John 16:1; "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth:...."

4. The Holy Spirit comes to guide people into commandment-keeping. John 14:15 says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Acts 5:32 says that God gives the Holy Spirit "to them that obey him."

5. We are to ask for His Holy Spirit. In Luke 11:1-13, Jesus says that fathers are willing to give their children those things for which they ask, He say that the heavenly Father is much more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the greatest gift Jesus promised His children this side of glory land. That is why He is so anxious that we ask for it. It brings all of the other blessings in its train.

6. Then we are to believe and claim the presence of His Holy Spirit. Galatians 3:14 says that the blessing comes through Jesus Christ, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

7. We are to give Him our bodies as His temple. I Corinthians 6:19. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:...."

I have made it a practise in my ministry never to preach a sermon; never to make a visit in a home or give a Bible study, without asking the Holy Spirit to guide me. There have been a few occasions when I failed to ask Him to guide me, and I noticed a great difference in the results. I am unable, in my own strength, to accomplish what I might otherwise accomplish when baptized by the Holy Spirit. As the special music is rendered, I pray for an infilling of the Holy Spirit so I might present a message that will be of help to those that listen. As I wait for an answer at the door of a home after I have rung the door-bell, I pray for the Holy Spirit to be with me. We have a right to do that because Jesus is coming again, and He wants us to be ready and to help others get ready. A part of getting ready is accomplished only by the Holy Spirit. This is the work of guidance, and the Holy Spirit will guide us only in response to a request for His guidance. Oh, that we might see the wisdom and need for asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I have not a question in my mind as to the difference His presence makes.

The Holy Spirit wants our bodies in which to dwell. As we allow Him entrance, He takes up His abode within us and then it is possible for Him to guide us and direct us in all our activities. Once we have asked for His presence, then we are to believe and to claim it. It has been my experience to see some marvelous things happen when men and women have asked for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A while back my wife and I were asked to come to one of the churches in California to conduct some revival services. The pastor and I made a number of visits together. Among the people we visited was a lovely Roman Catholic lady. During the course of our visit, I asked her how she happened to be visiting the Seventh-day Adventist church. Then she told us this story: It seems that about a year earlier she had become very dissatisfied with her church. In her dissatisfaction, in her own way, she asked God to lead her to the true church, if there was such a church. After having asked for guidance, she set out to visit a different church each Sunday morning. Each week she came home feeling that there must yet be more; she had not satisfied her desire for the true church, and so she kept searching and praying for guidance. She kept up this program for a year.



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Finally, one Sunday morning, she came home still feeling the void in her heart and in her desperation fell on her knees and poured out her heart to God. With tears streaming down her face she pled with God to direct her to His people, the true church. There in the quietness of her room as she waited for an answer from the Lord, she said that she heard a voice speak to her. She didn't recognize the words as a name of a church, for she said, "I had never heard a church by that name, and I thought I had been to them all." The voice said, 'Seventh-day Adventist'. I was somewhat confused about that name, but when my husband came home from work later that day I asked him if there was a church called, Seventh-day Adventist." He had heard of that church and confirmed the fact that there was such a church.

"There is?" she asked with a feeling of surprise and shock.

"Why yes," he said, "why do you ask, and why are you so surprised?"

Then she told him of her frustration and her attempt to find the true church and how she had prayed and what she had heard.

"Now it's my turn to tell you something, honey," he said. "You have never heard this before, but it's time for me to own up to it. My father was a Seventh-day Adventist minister, and I used to be a member but have become a back-slider."

Well, this was news to this lady! Then she told us how she asked her husband if he would mind if she went to that church the next Sunday

"Well, you might have trouble finding one open next Sunday, for you see they go to church on Saturday!"

"Saturday" That's unusual," she said. "Well then, would you mind if I went to church next Saturday?" she asked.

"No, honey," he said, "not at all. Sabbath School begins at 9:30 and the preaching service starts at 11:00 o'clock. I'd be happy to have you go."

And so the next Saturday morning found her in a Seventh-day Adventist church. She with her two children arrived just on time for Sabbath School. Two very gracious ladies met her at the door and welcomed her. Then they asked if she would like for the children to attend their Sabbath School and offered her assistance in showing them just where the department was. She said, "When we got there, there were many children the age of my own, and I was introduced to the ladies in charge. They seemed more like angels to me than humans. I knew the moment I stepped into that church that this was it! This was God's church and He had guided me to it!"

When we visited in her home that day, she was in the process of preparing herself for baptism into the church. She was studying the Bible, which Peter says, was written by men who were led by the Holy Ghost. No wonder she was learning truth, for not only was the Holy Spirit guiding her, but she was exposing herself to a Book that the Holy Spirit had inspired. The Holy Spirit always only guides people in harmony with the Book that He inspired; never in opposition to it.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to guide people into all truth. What is truth? The Bible says, "Thy word is truth." John 17:17. This is the vehicle of truth. As this lady studied the Bible she became more and more impressed with truth and saw the consistency of it; the beauty and joy of truth. She had no question about this being the True Church. The pastor had shared with her that this was not a people who claimed to be perfect, but rather a church where the people were endeavoring to follow the Word of God without compromise; a people endeavoring to prepare for the greatest event this world has ever seen, the second coming of Jesus. The more she learned, the more determined she was to live in harmony with the Bible and become a part of this people.

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Years ago, I became acquainted with another man who had a thrilling experience. He lived in the eastern part of the United States. He, too, had determined that he would pray for guidance. He had no knowledge of God's church, but he knew there must be something better than what he had known. One day he said to his wife, "I am going to fast and pray most earnestly that God will guide me to His church, if there really is such a church."

This man began right, didn't he? He placed himself in a position where God could hardly do anything else. He asked for the very thing the Holy Spirit was sent to perform - guiding honest souls into truth. No other promise is so bountifully promised as is the promise of the Holy Spirit. It was promised to any who will ask and believe and claim it. It is promised for but one reason: to prepare a people for the soon return of Jesus. When a soul humbly asks for guidance and for understanding God cannot do anything but respond. This promise is for each of us!

"On the third day of my fast," he said, "I was lying on my bed resting and praying. I was thinking about my request to God, when suddenly I heard an audible voice say, 'Exodus twenty'. Then as my eyes focused on the wall at the foot of the bed, I saw, in glowing light, the words: Exodus 20. I didn't know what the twentieth chapter of Exodus said, but I sprang from my bed and got my Bible and turned to it and read it.

"There," he said, "I found the ten commandments. I had heard of them before, but never had I read them with my own eyes. I was impressed with the fact that God Himself had given them from Mt. Sinai, and they must be very important. As I came to the fourth commandment, to my amazement I found that the Bible commands us to keep the seventh day of the week! Here the Creator of heaven and earth had plainly requested us to keep the Seventh day - the day that He had set apart as special and upon which He had placed His blessing!

"I don't know how I could have missed it all these years," he said. "I knew most of the other commandments and had tried to keep them, but the one commanding us to keep the seventh day was new to me. Now I knew why the voice had directed me to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and why the words appeared on the wall of my bedroom.

"How I thanked God for this revelation," he said. "I hunted the town for the church that kept the seventh day of the week, and found that it was called The Seventh-day Adventist Church. I started attending that church immediately, for I believed that God had led me to it. "

Jesus is coming again. He is going to "roar out of Zion." Not everyone is going to be pleased to see Him come. But before He comes He will pour out His Holy Spirit to prepare a people for this great event. He accomplishes this preparation by guiding His people into a study of His Holy Word, the fountain of truth. God is preparing a group of commandment-keepers. Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." John is speaking of the City of God - the Capitol City!

My wife and I spent several years as missionaries in South America as well as in Trinidad and Granada. While in South America we heard of a thrilling experience that took place in British Guiana, very close to the border. There was an Indian chief who had never seen a Bible. He, with his people, might be called half-civilized, living in a remote region, seeing very few civilized people. This chief claimed to have visions and dreams, just like Joel said men would have. He related these visions and dreams to his people. He told them things that you and I recognize as Bible doctrines. His only authority was the vision or the dream, whichever it was. But they so impressed this man that he taught them to his people with real conviction. Many believed and many changes were made among the people.

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"Now," he said, "when I die, you will go back to your old ways and you will forget what I have taught you. But in a few years a white man will come to you. He will carry a book and he will read to you out of this book the very things I have taught you; the things I have seen in my dreams and visions. It must agree. And when you hear it you will turn from your back-sliding and believe the book." What do you suppose he saw in his vision and dreams? He saw that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord God.

More than this; he saw that dead men are really dead, and that they do not go on living when they die. He saw also that people should pay one-tenth of their income to God. When finally our brother Davis, after whom these Indians are named, came, he found straw-houses full of produce that these people had been saving up for the white man that was to come to them. The Indian chief even saw the Bible picture of the marriage supper of the Lamb. He saw, too, that the ten commandments were God's set of rules for living; that adultery was evil and that they should be pure and clean. In vision this chief saw every one of the doctrines that God's Sabbath-keeping church is preaching in the world today.

When Brother Davis came from America to these Indians, now known as the Davis Indians, they recognized him as the one whom their chief had promised would come. He came with the Book and read to them the very things they had heard from their chief. They knew that this man was from the God of the heavens, and they believed his message and what a work was accomplished there. Yes, God had used visions and dreams to bring the message of truth to these half-civilized people to prepare them for the event that all of us are waiting for - the Second Coming of Jesus!

Among another group of Indians there was a nine-year-old boy who had had visions and dreams. His experience was almost a parallel to that of the Indian chief. This lad had seen the doctrines of the Bible, although he had never heard of a Bible, in clear, unmistakable clarity - just as the sabbath-keeping church is preaching around the world. I say, Thank God for the great gift of His Holy Spirit to lead and to guide mankind.

The Holy Spirit is not merely a Guide; He is also a Comforter. And He is even more than this. The Bible speaks of the "fruit of the Spirit," in Galatians 5:22. These fruits are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and faith, along with meekness and temperance. These are the fruit of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit really comes into a man's life, it changes him - it perfects his character so he will be ready to meet His Creator. It changes him to become loving, because it is the God of love that has taken up His abode in the heart. No wonder this is stressed in II Corinthians 6:16, "...ye are the temple of the living God...."

God has said, "...I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Then the seventh chapter of Galatians verse one says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." God's promise of the Holy Spirit not merely guides us, but it gives us the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit for one express purpose: that we might be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh! God wants a clean people and He has sent His Holy Spirit to make this possible. God wants a people who are pure, even as He is pure. This is the people who will be glad and rejoice when Jesus comes; these are the people to whom Jesus will say, when He comes, "These are My People!"

Perhaps one of the most thrilling experiences that has come to me happened while we were in the West Indies. My wife and I were in charge of ten churches and doing evangelistic work on the different islands. I was the only ordained minister in a large section of territory and I was expected to stay on the island to which I was assigned, and not go on vacation or make other trips without first receiving permission from my superior in Trinidad. I was the only one qualified to conduct funerals and weddings and the like. It was rather important, then, that we stay rather close by. But one Friday morning I had a very strong impression that I should leave the Island of Grenada, where we lived and go over to the

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Island of Trinidad. This would necessitate our taking a boat. There was no other means of transportation. I know now, that it was the Holy Spirit that was guiding me.

My wife suggested that she might stay with a friend in St. George, the capitol of the island, while I went on. But by the time we drove to St. George, she had changed her mind and wanted to come with me. I was glad for this, and so we both went to Trinidad and docked at Port of Spain, the capitol city. When we arrived at the conference headquarters, they looked at us and said, "What are you doing here?" Which meant, 'what are you doing here without permission?' I said, "I don't know!" Have you ever gone somewhere and not known why you went there? That was my predicament!

The pastor of the large church in Port of Spain came to me and asked me to preach for him for the Sunday night evangelistic service. I told him I hadn't brought any notes with me, but he insisted that I preach that which the Lord would impress me. Another conference official stepped up and invited us to spend the week-end with them as their guests. We were grateful for that. It seemed that our needs were being taken care of as well as perhaps the fulfilling of a mission.

On Sunday afternoon I was in the bedroom studying. I had placed the Bible on the bed and knelt down to pray for wisdom and guidance as to what I should preach. I had turned to the promise of John 16:13, "I will guide you into all truth...." and was now asking God for Him to show me His will. I said, "Lord, I don't know what I should preach, but as I turn the pages of Your Book, guide me so that I'll know what You want me to preach." As I was turning the pages, I was confident that He would guide me. I knew He would, but didn't know what it would be. I had come to the very end of the Bible. In fact I was in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Revelation and my eyes fell on the ninth verse: "And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

I knew this was the verse upon which I should speak. Then I prayed for further guidance to know which other texts the Lord would have me use in preaching this sermon. As I continued turning the pages, I knew the Lord would guide me, for He had promised, and I was confident He would keep His promise. I saw one text after another that impressed me, and, which I felt the Lord was impressing me to use. I jotted them down as I kept finding them. The sermon seemed to fall in place in my mind as I thought of how these texts blended to show forth a beautiful picture of truth. My heart was burning within me now! I could hardly wait for the evening service to start.

Finally the time came. The pastor, Dr. Millard, led the way up the aisle as we entered the lovely church, now filled with waiting worshippers. I followed the pastor and pastor Yip, a Chinese minister followed me. In the congregation sat a fine lady, not a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church, but a guest having come at the invitation of one of the members. As we walked up the aisle, this lady turned to her friend and said, "I have seen that man before. I recognize the clothes he's wearing. But I don't know where I've seen him." This was, however, the first time she had ever been in a Seventh-day Adventist church. In fact, as she entered the church that evening, she looked at the large choir that had assembled in the choir loft and said, "I've seen that choir before!" But she didn't know where she had seen it. When I stood up to preach, I turned to my opening text and began to read, "And he said unto me, Write." At that instant this lady put her hand over her friend's hand and said, "I know now where I've seen him. I saw him in a dream and he was writing he was writing texts of scripture that had come down from heaven on a ribbon. He was writing them out and giving them to the people."

Every text I used that night, she had seen me write out and hand to the people - two years before - in a dream! In this same dream she had been invited by seven different people of different faiths to go to church with them. One of the seven was a Seventh-day Adventist. In the dream she had followed this Adventist lady to the church. In her dream she had seen herself in the church and had seen me walk in

and preach on the very texts that I was using. She had seen me write them out and hand them to the people.

"Of all things," she said to her friend, "I have seen this whole service before! I recognize every single text. I saw this preacher hand these texts to the people in my dream!" When the meeting was over, this lady said to her Adventist friend, "If that young man had made a call to accept Christ tonight, I would have gone forward and made my decision." Usually, in my closing prayer I extend an invitation for those who would accept Jesus for the first time, or for those who have backslidden and want to return. At that service I failed to do this. I don't know why. But when I was later informed and the story was related to me how that I had followed through on everything with the exception of the call, I said, "Lord, forgive me for not extending an invitation at the close of that service. You used me as a mouthpiece to fulfill the dream the lady had - but I failed You. Please forgive me, and give me another chance! Let me meet her again, and I'll make up for it, somehow."

It wasn't very long until the leaders in Trinidad invited us to come to pastor the very church I had preached in that Sunday night. How I thanked God for this evidence of His leadership. I determined right then and there that just as soon as I could I would hold a series of meetings in Port of Spain and extend an invitation so this lady could respond and give her heart to God. We did just that, and this lady was there, night after night. She was in a terrible state of confusion. She had many problems among which were those connected with living out of wedlock. But the Holy Spirit came in and helped her straighten out every problem. What a glorious victory she experienced! When the call was extended, she was one of the first to come forward, and I later had the privilege of baptizing her. This was the last series of meetings I held in Trinidad before coming back to America. I have thanked the Lord many times for His wonderful leadership and for being able to be used of Him as an instrument for the salvation of a soul whom He was leading by visions and dreams. By the way, this lady had almost united with the Sabbath-keeping church eighteen years prior to this experience. How good the Lord is to us to extend His mercy over so many years!

Remember, dear one, Jesus is coming again! Before He comes He is going to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. The Holy Spirit will either harden or soften hearts, according to the choice of the individual. Those who receive Him, He will soften and guide them into all truth. He will make commandment-keepers of those who will follow Him. May we all be willing to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and be ready when Jesus comes.

## **COME, HOLY SPIRIT**

Come, Holy Spirit, save me from myself,  
And speak to me each day as friend to friend;  
My comfort be in sorrow, pain and woe,  
From hurtful, lurking foes defend.

Come, Holy Spirit, dwell within my heart;  
Guide Thou my feet to unscaled heights above,  
And every impulse of my being thrill  
With holy, pure, and matchless love.

Come, Holy Spirit, with Thy power intrust,  
Else would my toil and labor be in vain;  
For whitening fields the reapers now invite,  
As lowly bends the ripening grain.

Come, Holy Spirit, fire my soul with zeal,  
Consuming every trace of selfish dross,  
That I may lead my brother lost in sin  
To Calvary's bleeding, cleansing cross.  
- B. M. Grandy.

## 11: LORD'S DAY PROBLEMS SOLVED, TOO

To understand our subject clearly, I would like to divide it into four sections. You might wish to make a mental note of them. Each is vital in an attempt at a clear and vivid understanding of this important subject.

1. Which is the Lord's Day?
2. The relationship of the Lord's Day and the Lord's love.
3. The A, B, C's of How to Keep the Lord's Day.
4. The A, B, C's of How to Display the Lord's Love.

First of all, now, we want to settle the question of which day, if any, is the Lord's. In Revelation 1:10 we read of the fact that the Lord does have a day, for John, the Revelator says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day..." It does not, however, tell us which day of the week is the Lord's. It does tell us without question, that it is limited to one day. In Mark 2:28 the Bible says that the Lord's day is the Sabbath, meaning 'rest day'. But it does not tell which day is the rest day. We turn now to Hebrews 4:4,9, and here it says, "He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The marginal reading for the word 'rest' is: 'the keeping of a sabbath.' Now what have we learned? Let's review:

1. The Lord has a day.
2. That day is a rest day.
3. The rest day the Bible indicates, is the seventh day.
4. The seventh day is the Lord's day of the New Testament.

We find the location of this Sabbath in Luke 23:54-56; 24:1. Here it tells us it is located between Friday, the sixth day of the week and the first day of the week, known as Sunday. Many recognize the terms, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The Sabbath is located between those two days. This is how simple it is to find which day is the Sabbath or Lord's Day of the Bible!

Now we want to consider our second section of our original four: What relationship is there between the Lord's Day and the Lord's Love? In Exodus 31:15-17 we are told that the Sabbath was to be a 'sign' between God and His people. In Ezekiel 20, verses 12 and 20 we are again told that the Sabbath was to be a 'sign' between God and His people "that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." The word 'sign' means 'mark', 'flag', or 'banner'. These are all synonyms of the word 'sign'. The Sabbath, then, becomes God's sign, mark, flag or banner as referred to in the Bible. Since this day is the Lord's sign, mark, flag or banner, what relationship does it have to God's love? First we turn to I John 4:8 where the Bible says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love." Therefore since God is love, and since the Lord's day is the sign of tomes a sign between an un-loving world; those who have accepted Him, being a part

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of it, and a loving God. It is God's love-sign, for so the Bible says. Notice Song of Solomon 2:4, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."

The flag of a government represents that government; the flag of God represents God. The Bible says that God is love and we have seen that the flag or sign of God is His Sabbath, so then the Sabbath becomes the flag of God's Love Government! It bears such a strict relationship to God that it is a sign of love. Is it not reasonable, then, that Sabbath-keepers should be the most loving people on the face of all the earth?

What is divine love? We have learned that the Lord has a day; and that His day is a sign of Himself. We have found, too, that the Lord God is love. This makes His day a love-sign; a sign of divine love. Our next step is to define divine love, for which the Sabbath stands. The Lord of the Sabbath, Himself, tells us what this love is:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Here Jesus Himself spelled out divine love, of which the Sabbath is a sign. This love is not 'publican love', according to our Saviour. Do you know what 'publican love' is? It is when one likes another because he is being liked. Joe likes Paul because Paul likes Joe! That is the only reason they like each other; there is no basis or foundation for this kind of love. It is predicated on being loved. As soon as Joe doesn't like Paul, Paul doesn't like Joe. That's 'publican love'. I contend that the majority of Christendom has not gone beyond 'publican love'. For the past forty years I have visited churches across this great land, and in every church I have found a great deal of 'publican love'. I have found it in the Baptist churches; among the Presbyterians, the Holiness and the Seventh-day Adventists. But do you know what they call it? They call it Christian fellowship. God calls it Publican Love!

Now take the hypothetical case of two ladies; Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones. If one of the sisters comes to Mrs. Smith and says, "Say, do you know what Mrs. Jones said about you?" And then she proceeds to relate a list of unkind things that Mrs. Jones has said. Do you know what Mrs. Smith will say? - and this is in spite of the fact that just yesterday these two ladies were very good friends - she'll say, "Well I can tell you some pretty ugly things about Mrs. Jones, too." That's publican love. This type of goings-on is repeated time after time in the name of Christian fellowship. Next week finds them both in church singing, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." They are singing in the clouds, but living in the ditch. How tragic is this kind of demonstration.

Medical science tells us that only a small portion of our brain is being used. There are billions of brain cells that lie dormant - never disturbed. But each brain, so it seems, has a swamp area, where ill thoughts are bred - publican thoughts. He likes the man that likes him and despises the man that despises him. This is the slum area of Christian living. What is needed is a new development - a subdivision, if you please, where restrictive thinking, is enforced. This area is reserved for big thoughts, kind thoughts, loving thoughts! Here is where the love for un-loving people is born. Here is where there is a reservoir of gentleness and kindness; where blessings come for those that curse him. This is where the Sabbath-keeping, Christ comes in!

The Sabbath is a sign of divine love. And divine love prompts the saying of something good about the man that says something mean about me. This, and this only, is Christian love. This kind of love is foreign

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to the vast majority of Christians. There are millions of Christians who indulge in a love that is no higher than publican love.

Try it some time. Put this to a test and see what happens. Go up to someone and tell them that you have heard something about him from someone else. Invariably they will respond, "Well, I thought as much. I never did think I could trust him. But just you wait, I know something about him, too." A thoroughbred publican! That's all he is. Claiming to be one thing - but in actuality, he's something very much different. Singing about the Lamb of God and His love, and living like a hog in a pig-stye.

God says He has a day. He says that day is related to Him as a sign of the government of love. Therefore it is the banner of love. This is divine love; not to be confused with publican love. There are several different kinds of love. The highly educated can quote and define them all. I'm not interested in this multiplicity of love, but I do think that it is important that we understand publican love and be able to recognize it in our own lives.

There is another kind of love that I might mention. This love is called, 'hen love'. I lived on the farm and observed the mother hen and her brood. It is interesting to watch these hens. They have their counterpart in the church as well, and I have watched them too. Here is a good church member, perhaps the Dorcas leader, and here is another very good church member - the Sabbath School superintendent. Now you take these two hens; neither of them able to sing very well, but they cackle the best they can - and take one of the chickens from the one hen and introduce it to the other. Do you know what happens? The new environment is terrible; the hen just picks it to pieces, but is in church the next Sabbath, singing, "Love Divine All Loves Excelling." This can be repeated any which way you want to do it, and you'll always get the same results.

Another good illustration of hen love can be found in many of our day-schools or our Academies. Watch how some of the parents treat their children's teachers. They are so interested in how the teacher treats their child - theirs is a special child deserving of special treatment. They forget that the teacher is somebody's child himself or herself. The teachers' feelings don't matter too much - just as long as you make sure that my child is treated right. This is thoroughbred, registered 'hen love'!

Here's another kind of love, again an illustration taken from the farm. I call it 'Cow Love'. I used to milk many cows and was fascinated with their behavior. On one occasion, I remember, I saw these two lovely cows - both blessed with beautiful bass voices. But the one didn't think much of the other's voice. Each of them had a calf. I watched them one day and saw the one cow's calf inadvertently move into the pathway of the other cow. And do you know what that cow did? Brother! You would have thought that cow was a thoroughbred, registered Dorcas leader! Or a Sabbath School superintendent! That cow bunted this little innocent calf across the garden. That's 'cow love'.

God's flag is God's day; God's day is the sign of God's love. God's love is divine love, not publican love. I have been in homes across the nation and listened as the members of professed Christian families give instruction and counsel. The parents will do a little bragging first. "My Jimmy doesn't pick fights. I've taught him not to." You can see their eyes sparkle! But later I've heard that same parent say, "Now Jimmy, if John starts a fight with you, you give him a real whipping and don't let up until you've knocked the stuffings out of him." These parents build and boast of that kind of love. We can be sure of one thing: this is not God's love. It doesn't come from God.

In the example of the life of Jesus, we see clearly that when He was reviled, He reviled not again, according to I Peter 2:22, 23, He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Even when the devil accused Him when He raised Moses from the dead, He didn't enter into controversy with him then. He could have said to Satan, "You've always acted like the devil," and He would have been telling the truth. He could have said, "You're the one that stirred the mess up in heaven." If Christ would have said



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that, we would have said, "My, isn't that wonderful how He told him off. I think that ought to be recorded as one missionary visit." But Jesus did nothing of the kind. He said, "I'm going to turn you over to the God of heaven, He will rebuke you." This is Christian love.

Look at Christ on the cross. The mob spit at Him and shouted insults. Yet He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." This is the way true Sabbath keepers will be. They will be filled with love because the Sabbath is a sign of the love of God; it is God's flag of love. God Himself says so.

Now we probe deeper this problem of the Sabbath. What are the A, B, C's of Sabbath keeping? We were holding some meetings in a little town in North Carolina. We were told about a young lady who had become acquainted with the Sabbath through one of the Bible Correspondence courses. We went to visit her and found her to be a very charming young lady. After we visited a little, I said, "I understand you have become acquainted with the Sabbath and have a desire to keep it."

"Yes," she said, "I'd like to keep it, but my boss won't let me, and I've asked repeatedly to have the Sabbath off."

Then I shared with her that there is an answer. "We have a little formula that will help you to keep the Sabbath immediately," I said.

"Oh, is that right? What is it?" she asked.

"It's very simple," I said, "and it always works." Then I shared with her the A, B, C's of prayer. We turned first to Matthew 6:33 where it invites us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." I showed her how that after we seek first the kingdom of God, then He promises to add to us our living. Then I told her that now we would put our finger on the promise and ask God to take care of her and solve the problem. "Then," I said, "we will tell God that we believe He is doing it and then we'll claim the promise by returning thanks to God that He has already found you a new job, if this is what it will take to solve the problem."

She had never done anything like this in her life before, but she followed right along with the plan. We prayed just as we had planned. After we had prayed we stood to our feet and I said, "Now God has given you the job. I don't know if it's the one you now have, or whether it's a brand new one. Did you know," I said, "that God also tells you how to approach your boss when you make the request for your Sabbath time off?"

"No," she said, "I've never heard of a text like that."

"Well here it is," I said, and we turned to James 1:5 and found that God invites us to pray for wisdom and the assurance is given that God will give wisdom. "... it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." We read these words together.

"Now you will go to your boss," I said, "and you won't waver, because God has already taken care of this for the gift is in the promise. You have asked, believed and claimed the promise. You have met the conditions and God has promised - and He cannot fail. Now you don't need to say, 'can I have the Sabbath off?' God has already done it for you. But as kindly and as graciously tell your boss that you cannot work any longer from Friday night sunset until Saturday night sunset, and you'll have your job; either where you're now working or at another job."

She smiled and said, "O. K. that's what I'll do."

A few days later the pastor and I had occasion to see her again. "Tell me," I said, how did things go when you went to see your boss. She was working in a drug store at the time.

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"Well," she said, "I went to my boss and I said just what you suggested I say, and of all things - my boss said, 'if you mean business, yes, you may have Saturdays off!'"

She was just beaming with gratefulness. It's just that simple. God has made a promise and He will keep His word. We just cannot fail when we're linked up with the God of the universe. It will always work!

Now we come to the fourth section of our study. Now we want to know the A, B, C's of sharing or displaying the Lord's love. If we are retaliating at all - in any way to anyone - then we need this love. We need it badly. Have you ever retaliated? I have. Have you ever retaliated since becoming a Christian? I have retaliated since becoming a minister. So we're all in the same boat. But it's a pretty poor place to be and we must not stay there. This divine love for which the Sabbath stands, is creative love. In Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11 we are told that the Sabbath is a sign of God's creative power. He worked six days in which He spoke the worlds into existence and rested on the seventh day - therefore we ought to rest as He did and as He has commanded us to. The Sabbath is a sign of our God being a creator.

Now we take a promise by which to get the love that comes from God. Romans 5:5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

This is the promise. We can kneel down and put our finger on Romans 5:5 and ask God for the fulfillment of the promise. We can boldly ask Him for this creative love that comes from the God of the universe. We ask Him to fill our hearts with this love.

Or you may wish to claim Ezekiel 36:26 where the promise is made: "A new heart will I give you...." Only the Creator can give you a new heart. He has promised a new spirit as well. "And," God promises, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

Or you may wish to take Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Another promise is couched in the language of Romans 8:9 where it says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." We can be one of God's children if we ask. This verse tells us that to be one of Christ's children we must have the spirit of love and joy which Christ had. This is ours - Christ promised it to you and to me.

We can place our hand on any of these promises and claim just the promise it makes. How many times I have taken Ezekiel 36:26 and placed my hand on that promise and asked God for love and understanding of my brethren. How often I have taken Romans 8:9 and prayed for the Spirit of Christ to flood my soul. Psalm 51 has many tear-stains on it where I have wept and let the tears fall on the Book. God hears and marvelous things have happened in this old heart of mine.

It's so simple, yet so powerful! First we find the promise. Then placing our finger on it we ask God for this love to be shed abroad in our hearts. We look into His face and say, "Now Lord, because You are the Creator as well as my Redeemer, You have the power to speak a world into existence, and You can speak a new heart into existence. I have misrepresented Your love, dear Lord, for the Sabbath is a sign of divine love, and I haven't displayed it. Someone said some mean thing about me, and I retaliated. Forgive me, Lord. Now I ask You to shed abroad Your love. I know I can't speak kind words unless my heart is kind; I can't show love unless I have a reservoir of love in my heart. Lord, I need the love that comes from You. Please let Your love be shed abroad in my heart. Now Lord I believe You are doing it. I believe and claim it and return thanks to You for having done it."

Now what do I do? I follow the instruction of Matthew 5:44 where it tells me to love my enemy. I now make a list of all of the good qualities of the one that is being mean and unkind to me. You'll be amazed

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at what happens when you start doing that. All of the good qualities are there in black and white! The devil won't like that. He doesn't want you to make a list like that. It points up the good in the one whom he would have us think has not one good quality.

"Bless them that curse you...." Read the list over and let your ears hear these good qualities. This is blessing them. God didn't say, "bless them out!" He said, "Bless them. . . ." Many people would like to add the word 'out' into the phrase, but it isn't there! God says, "Say something good about your enemies..."

Now God says, "do good to them," This isn't just an idea - this is a command. It isn't my idea - this is God's program. It came from the One who said, "Be perfect..." You and I cannot change our motives; this has to be done by divine love. But we can ask and believe and claim this divine love, and if I claim it and return thanks that I have it, I'll start doing it. This is what happens. If I cannot change my motives, and I realize I can't; when I obey God and begin to do some kind, good acts to someone who has done a mean act to me, God gives me the emotion when I use the motion He tells me to.

Many years ago, my wife and I were living in a house trailer. We were in itinerant evangelism. We came to a little city and found a trailer park and arranged to park the trailer in a trailer space. There was an empty space right next to our space and I parked the car on that space. I had no idea it was being used by my neighbor, but when he came home and found I had parked my car on this empty space, he was very unhappy with me. I might say he was mad, for it was just that bad! He came out to where I was and he blessed me out, good and proper! I explained immediately that I had no idea that this was his parking space and I apologized for having taken it, but he wouldn't accept my apology at all. He might be called a thoroughbred, registered publican! I went into my house trailer and I'll have to admit I didn't feel very good. Here I had apologized and this man had simply refused to accept my apology. In the first place I didn't know it was his parking space; in the second place I never would have parked there if I had known it was his space. In the third place I had apologized; and in the fourth place the man didn't accept it in the first place!! This didn't make me feel very good.

I didn't know what to do. A man feels miserable when he's upset emotionally. So I had to have a talk with the Lord. I said, "Lord, do something to these emotions."

The Lord said, "Do what I have told you to do - do something good."

"But what can I do to a man who won't even accept an apology?"

The Lord said, "Didn't you bring a load of oranges and grapefruit up from Florida? Go and share some of them with the rascal!"

So I went into the cupboard and picked out some nice oranges and grapefruit and took them over to his trailer. This man literally stared at me. He just stood there and stared. I said, "Do you folk like oranges and grapefruit?" When I said that, I began to see the faintest smile come over his face.

"Why yes," he said, "we do."

"Well, I wonder if you could do me a favor. We brought so many with us and we would like to share these oranges with someone before they spoil. Could you use some?"

At that they smiled - a real publican smile and said, "Thank you, thank you..."

I don't know if they belong to a church choir or a board of deacons and Ladies Aid Society, but when they saw those oranges and grapefruits - every evil trait was gone - it vanished! I know one thing: I surely felt better. When I first went over, I felt I lived in a mobile home and he lived in a trailer; when I returned, I felt we both lived in mobile homes!

God says, "Do good to them...." Express confidence that God has shed abroad His love in your heart and speak words of commendation and love for those that might be guilty of mistreating you. Do it. Only then will you experience the entrance of this divine love. This experience is part of the great Divine Plan God has made for His people; this is Seventh-day Adventism - and I like it! Anything less than this is not Seventh-day Adventism - it's Publicanism; it's 'hen-love'; it's 'cow-love'. What we must have is the love of Jesus. Not only must we possess it, but we must display it!

Notice Psalms 60:4, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

Do you love truth? God says if we love truth, we'll display it. We'll not merely talk about the truth, we'll display it. When we hear that someone has said something unkind about us, what will we do? Retaliate with an equally unkind story? No, for if we have spent time with God on our knees and claimed His promises and received a new spirit, we'll retaliate with - 'I know something good about him'. This will be the kind of retaliation we'll display.

Oh that we might appropriate this love to our hearts by the power of Jesus Christ. This is the armor that we'll need against the darts of the wicked one. It will be our only safeguard in the time of trouble that lies ahead. If we will ask, believe and claim the promise for victory, and allow heaven to create a new heart and spirit in us, then when Jesus comes, we'll be ready to go home with Him. May this be your experience, is my prayer.

## **12: PROMISES FOR THE TIME OF TROUBLE**

In this final chapter, I want to share with you some of the most thrilling evidences that we serve a God of love. Of all the wonderful things I have learned from God's book, nothing is more wonderful than that which I want to share with you now.

I want you to notice with me, twelve Bible promises, or clusters of promises. As we read them together, I trust you will be able to rejoice with me in the provision the Lord has made for us. To think that small me - down here on the only planet in which the stain of sin can be found - is noticed and included in the great plan of salvation! This thought is overwhelming! But yet it's true.

I was reared in a Seventh-day Adventist home. At the tender age of six, my mother told me the story of Jesus. In her simple, humble manner she told me of His birth and His life. She shared with me how He healed the sick and brought joy to the unhappy, and finally gave His life for me that I might have eternal life. The story was so touching that I fell in love with Him. I said, "Mother, what shall I do?" She suggested that we do what I John 1:9 says to do: to confess our sins and believe that He will cleanse us from every stain that the sin has left.

We knelt down in my little bedroom in that old farmhouse, and there beside my mother I prayed and asked Jesus to forgive my sins. I believe that He did; I believed it then without question. I knew that I had become His child. I had fallen in love with Jesus. It was such a happy experience! That's the way it should be, shouldn't it? The Bible says in I John 4:19 that this love is natural because He first loved us. My love was the result of that kind of an experience. I felt His love for me very clearly. It was a joy to go to church and realize that the One that loved me was there. But something very unfortunate happened to me. For as I went to church week after week, I backslid - right in church! Yes, that's right, I backslid right in our little home church.

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You ask why. I John 4:18 tells me: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

I heard a sermon in church, preached by some of my own relatives about the seven plagues that were to come upon the world and we had better watch out or one of them would up and catch us! I heard about a time of trouble that was to burst in upon the world the like of which we had never known, and we were liable to be swept away by it. They told, too, about Turkey being driven out of Europe and if we didn't watch out, we might be driven out with it! Oh, the fears and chills and tremors I experienced! My spine fairly tingled with fear as I sat there! How scared I became, thinking about all of the terrible things that I had to look forward to. Right there in that church, I backslid.

If there was any love that had come in by my acquaintance with Jesus, which experience I know was real, for love was a real factor in my life, that love was driven out by an avalanche of fear. You see, love and fear cannot dwell in the heart at the same time. When one comes in, the other must take leave. In my case, fear took the place of love and I simply backslid. How often this happens. Time and time again, people start on the way to the Kingdom full of love and joy, enjoying an experience with the Lord - happy to be a part of the wonderful Advent family, when all of a sudden their entire experience is shattered because fear is injected into the heart.

Recently, while conducting a series of meetings, I mentioned the problems that I had faced, and a young lady came up to me and told me that she had had the very same experience. "In fact," she said, "I became so worried and fearful that I finally decided I would quit going to church. And even after I quit going to church, I would go out of my way not to have to go past the church, because I equated the church with this terrible fear I had. I didn't want to be anywhere near the church."

I believe there is something wrong with preaching of that kind, don't you? It is hardly consistent with a loving God to have His ministry present a message that will instill that kind of fear. The Bible tells us that we fall in love with Jesus because He is a Lover, and since the Bible says that fear has torment and no one can be made perfect in love, I say that these dear people who read from the Bible one thing to the neglect of something just as vital misrepresented God and failed to give a clear, complete picture. The Bible does picture for us some rather dismal days ahead; it does describe the seven last plagues in rather graphic language. It will be terrible. But, there is something else! God emphasizes the fact that in the midst of all of this, His people are going to be protected and cared for. God promises to look after His own during these terrible days of conflict. It was the absence of these verses of scripture that put the fear into my young heart and made me back-slide; it was the incomplete picture - the exclusion of God's protection that turned the young lady away from the church. It is the absence of these vital facts of God's love that is driving many away from the church!

God wants His people, as they face this time of trouble, to have peace. Yes, He has made it abundantly clear that provision has been made for those who will hide under the 'shadow of the Almighty'. But the devil doesn't want us to know this. He wants us to become scared, because he knows that fear has torment and this fear will quickly snuff out the flame of love. Once the flame of love has been extinguished, our Christian experience dies, for love is essential to the Christian experience like oxygen is to the existence of life.

God wants you and me to have peace. He wants us to have a peace that passes all human understanding. We might not be able to explain it, or define it, but we can testify to the fact that we have it! We can look forward, down the stream of time, and realize that these events will come, but they don't breed fear; we're not worried and disturbed about it. Peace has taken the place of fear, and we're happy. I want to share with you what I wish had been shared with me when I was just six years old and sat in church.

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First of all, I want to have us notice something that is very basic, as we discuss coming events. It is found in Jeremiah 30:7. There, speaking about the time of trouble that is coming, it refers to it as "the time of Jacob's trouble;" and it says of God's people, "(they) shall be saved out of it." Isn't that wonderful? God makes this promise to each of us. Let us keep that in mind as we share some of these promises now. This will be discussed again under point eleven, but I mention it at the outset to help us realize that provision has been made for each of us to come through this time, safely.

How was Jacob saved out of his time of trouble? Jacob represents God's people, and so it is important to know how he was saved out of his time of trouble. His time of trouble represents a similar experience to that which God's people will go through; this makes it doubly important for us to understand Jacob's experience. This brings us to point one:

### 1. Jacob claimed a promise of God.

Jacob was on his way back home, with his family and all that he had acquired. He had heard that Esau was on his way to meet him accompanied by 400 soldiers. Imagine the fear that Jacob had. Here were all his little ones, his cattle and servants; not a single soldier in his group. Coming toward him was his brother, whom he had wronged and cheated, with an army of trained soldiers. In his agony and fear, he begins to talk to God about it. Notice his words in Genesis 32:9,

"And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:"

Jacob says to God, "Lord, You promised me that You would look after me. You told me to go home and promised that You would deal well with me. I'm not worthy of the least of Your blessings, I know that. But my brother is coming with four hundred soldiers, and I'm terribly afraid. I'm scared, Lord.... but You told me I'd make it home...." Can't you see him agonize with God and place before his God the promise that was made to him by a God that does not lie, nor go back on a promise? This is just what Jacob did, and he had a wonderful promise to claim.

We, too, are on the home-stretch. Our heavenly home is almost in sight. God says that those who do what Jacob did, will make it home! I want to make it home, don't you? God gave Jacob a promise, and this same promise is ours: "I'll be with you and you will make it home safely," is the promise that we, too, can claim. I don't know of anything I want more than to walk through those pearly gates into that city and see my heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, my Elder Brother, my guardian angel and all my friends, and know I'm home at last! Provision has been made; the promise has been given to make this dream a reality. The Bible tells us that if we are Christ's then we are of the seed of Abraham. Jacob claimed the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac; we have the right to do the same. We, too, can say, "Lord, You have promised to see me home safely...." and know He will do it, because He did it for Jacob.

Notice with me this same promise phrased just a little differently. And in this promise we can know that God is speaking directly to you and to me. I John 2:25 says: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

I remember, as though it were yesterday, the first time I opened my Bible and put my finger on that promise. I put my name where it says, "us", and it read, "And this is the promise he hath promised Glenn Coon, even eternal life." God has given me this promise and He wants me to take Him at His Word, doesn't He? He most surely does. Abraham, we're told, believed God, and it (the fact that he believed) was counted unto him for righteousness. It is not how sinful I am, but rather how good God is. It is this God, the One who loves each of us, that says, "I'll see you home."

We have all been impressed, at one time or another, with the fact that during the time of trouble we will not be able to buy or sell. Revelation 13 describes that time. It says plainly in verse 17, "And that no

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man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast" This will be a terrible time! But the Bible has a promise for us that will take care of things for that time. It is found in Isaiah 33:16, He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

Then Isaiah says that we will see the King in His beauty! This is a double promise. It assures us again that we will make it home, and also that we will be given bread and water. Although the rivers and water ways will be turned to blood - God wants us to think of Him and remember that our bread and water will be sure.

That doesn't fill me with fear, does it you? Why no, we can look forward to that time without any trace of fear. I will be out there in the rocks, perhaps, but the Rock that will go with me will be Jesus. With Him by my side, I need never fear. He has promised to take care of me and supply me with the essentials of life - and all of this at a time when the world of ungodly men and women will be thirsty and hungry! No, this picture is not one of fear as far as I'm concerned. The only thing I've got to fear is sin, for this separates me from my Protector and Savior.

When I was a little boy this wasn't mentioned. I trembled to think of not having any food in my tummy. I pictured myself wasting away and being in such a terrible state. I was just plain scared! I didn't want that day to ever come. You see, I was not given the whole picture. God says we will have food; He says He will look after us.

II. When the seven last plagues come, the saints will have a place to hide.

I recall so distinctly, how this one particular preacher described those plagues. It seemed that every time he preached, he preached on Revelation 16 and the seven last plagues. I identified this man with the plagues. He had, it seemed to me, a plague phobia. He was plague-conscious! And during all this time he never read a single promise that would picture God's part in behalf of His people. Had he read Psalms 91, what a difference it might have made! Notice these words:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust ...Because thou has made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

Oh, how I wish they had emphasized that and given some assurance to my little, trembling heart. Peace would have returned; the love of God would have returned. But fear reigned supreme in my heart and the love of God vanished. Yes, right in our church I began to backslide because they were plague-conscious instead of God-conscious.

That preacher might have given us boys and girls the example of the hen and how she guards her little chickens from the dangers that are ever present. They might have told how the hawks like to swoop down and pick up these little chicks, but as soon as a hawk appears in the sky, the mother hen calls her little ones and they find shelter under her wings. When the hawk gets discouraged and flies away, the chicks come out and go on with their play. We sing, "Under His Wings, I'm safely abiding..." and then fail to make clear that Jesus died on dark Calvary so that in the time of trouble I might be safe. It's true, my friend, and you and I are invited to believe it now!

IV. Now let us turn to Daniel 12:1. This verse tells us of a time of trouble such as never was on the earth. The preachers of my day emphasized the first part of this verse so much that I never knew until I was older that there was another sentence that followed. It's not that I want to hide my head in the sand

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and say that there is not going to be a time of trouble. I'm suggesting that we do what the wise man suggests in Proverbs 22:3, "A prudent (wise) man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself...." He does something about it. He doesn't emphasize the fear, but rather seeks refuge in a safe place. We have been provided with this place and the place is Jesus. We can hide in Him. Notice:

"...and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Oh, I wish that as a little boy, sitting there in church that morning the second part of the verse might have been emphasized. They dwelt on the only the first part, and left out completely the provision for protection and safety. There are some, however, who fall to the temptation of the devil when he tempts them to think that there is no hope anyway, because it says that this protection is only for those that have their names written in the book - "and you don't have a chance to have your name written there," he tempts us to think. Don't you believe it. This brings me to the next point.

V. Are our names in the books of record in heaven? Notice with me several verses of scripture. The first is John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9

By taking advantage of the provisions offered, we have our name written in the book of life. This is recorded in Revelation 3:5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."

There it is! Our names are in the book of life, and we can claim the promise of Daniel 12:1. God says He will not blot out our name out of this book if we are overcomers.

"Yes," but someone says, "this raises another problem. It promises this only to the 'overcomers', and I haven't overcome everything." This is no problem, either. The very fact that there is a book of life and there are names written in it, presumes the possibility of my name and your name being entered there. God never asks us to do the impossible. I'm sure that by now, having read the preceding eleven chapters, you will have found the solution to any unsolved problems. Jesus has made Himself responsible for our victory, and He cannot fail. With Him on our side, every mountain-like problem becomes an anthill.

VI. The Bible says in Revelation 12:12 that before Jesus comes, the devil is coming down in great wrath. This used to bother me a great deal; and to be rather frank with you, I'll have to say it still bothers me some. No, the text doesn't bother me, but what bothers me is when I go into the homes of people and find that they are devil-centered. What do I mean by being 'devil-centered'? I mean that people go on talking about the devil. They rehearse all the things the devil is doing. They relive every antic the devil has accomplished and dwell on all he has done. They say, "Did you hear what the devil did last week? He did it again...." And on and on they go. This is devil worship, my friend - 20th century devil-worship. There are a cluster of texts to take care of that:

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.... "

I say that God is bigger than the devil. I know He is, because God put the devil out of heaven. I know that Christ is bigger than the devil because in Matthew 4 the devil came to Jesus with his strongest temptations, and Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan...." I know He's bigger. One is impressed with this fact when one reads the gospels. Each time Christ met the devil there was a conflict and each time Jesus



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won. Sometimes the devils surrendered with cries of anguish and thrashed around in their victims. But Christ was always victorious. He still is today. But let us remember that the devil is stronger than any of us - let's never forget that - but let's not engage in devil-worship. Let us follow the counsel of II Corinthians 3:18 and behold the face of our lovely Jesus and become changed into His Image, what do you say? As we dwell on the attributes of Christ, we'll become like Him and in Him we can conquer the devil and meet his temptations victoriously. On the other hand, if I constantly talk about the devil, I'll become like him.

One time a man came to me at the close of one of my messages and said, "Brother Coon, I see what my trouble has been all this time. I've been working for the Lord, like the devil. I've learned now what's wrong with me." If we spend our time talking about a devilish member of the church, we'll become just like him. What percentage is there in rehearsing the evil of another? None whatsoever, it just makes us like him.

Oh, that we might remember that, "By beholding we become changed." Paul admonishes us, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report think on these things." Here are the things that we are to think on. These are the positive traits of character that we want growing in our lives, isn't that right? Why, yes.

My favorite author has a priceless gem suggested for us in the book Education. On page 297 of that book is this sentence:

"When once the gaze is fixed upon Him, life finds its center."

Here Christ is plainly shown to be the center of a life that is in balance. When the gaze is removed from Christ, we become unbalanced Christians. This is why I backslid right in church. Mother had put the center of my gaze on Jesus, and I was a six-year-old balanced Christian. I went to church and the center of my gaze was put on the time of trouble and Armageddon. I became unbalanced and lost my experience. It is just that simple! It is possible, you see, to fix our gaze on the time of trouble to the extent that we become trouble makers! Yes, that's right. It happens all the time.

Now how can we avoid falling into this trap of the devil? How can we grow to be like Jesus, instead of like a trouble maker? Here's the promise. It's found in I John 3: 1-3.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Isn't this what we ought to be feeding on? Isn't this the promise that should be the inspiration of our souls? Isn't Jesus the One who should be the center of our thoughts? When someone says, "Say, by the way, did you hear what the devil did this week?" you can say, "No, but have you heard what the Lord did this week?" We need to talk more about what the Lord is doing. That's what those, whose names are in the Lord's book, will be doing. Notice Malachi 3:16, 17.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before the Lord for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

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What a promise for the time of trouble! Isn't this marvelous? God says, if you will talk of me and think of me, I'll spare you in the time of trouble. I will look after you, is the promise of God. When we're thinking of Christ and talking about Him, it is virtually impossible to be talking about the erring members of the church. It is impossible to be finding fault with a brother or sister in the family or in the faith. We can be centered on only one side at one time; it's either Christ-centered, or Satan-centered. The Lord loves us all - yes, even the devil. God didn't make the devil. He made a beautiful angel, and Lucifer made a devil of himself. God is awfully sorry He is going to have to destroy him in the lake of fire. Yes, God loves the devil.

VII. The Bible indicates clearly that as we near the end, the Lord is going to slowly, but surely withdraw His Spirit from the world. Genesis 6:3 says, "My spirit shall not always strive with man..." But in the face of this, we need not fear. The Lord has given us sufficient evidence of His power for that time, too. In Luke 11:13, the Lord has said that if we ask, believe and claim the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, we shall receive it - as a gift from our heavenly Father. Many people are afraid of the Holy Spirit. They don't understand what it means to have Him in the heart. What does it mean to have the Holy Spirit in the heart? Notice Galatians 5:22,

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"

Don't you want joy and peace during the time of trouble? Isn't that the most priceless gift for a time when people will be devoid of these qualities, their souls dry and barren and full of pain and anguish.

I was conducting a series like this one time and the pastor came to me and said, "One of my leading officers is quite upset about your series." I asked why, and he said in reply, "He says this is just milque-toast." I said, "Let me ask you just one question, pastor, How do he and his wife get along?" He said, "Like cats and dogs." That's the reason why. Yes, and this is what I told the pastor, "He's finding it hard to change from a dog to a human being."

When Jesus is not in the heart, it's hard to get along with our loved ones, and these eternal things seem insipid. Jesus makes the difference. At a time when the Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the earth, we can be assured that He will give us a great measure of it, if we truly seek Him, and if we really want Him. It will be revealed, whether or not we have the Spirit by whether or not there is love in the home.

VIII. Jesus says, in Matthew 24 that just before He comes, the times will be like those that existed in the days of Noah. It will be extremely wicked. Do you know of those who enjoy talking about and dwelling on the sins of the present day? People who enjoy talking about the sex perverts and the sins of the flesh and those things that are shameful - this is a special breed of people. Their saliva flows in double strength at a time when these things are discussed. The world is terrible, alright. We live in a very wicked age. But are we justified in talking about it and making this the center of our thoughts? What would this thinking do for us? "As he thinketh in his heart," says the wise man, "so is he." How much better it would be to center our thoughts on this promise:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers (parents) to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers (parents), lest I come (if I didn't do it) and smite the earth with a curse." Malachi 4:5, 6.

The Lord says He will do it for us. Things will be so bad that if He didn't do it, He just couldn't stand it any longer and He would have to destroy the earth before it was time to do it; before the world had run its course. A mighty revolution is promised. Revolutions that will make the home, "Home, Sweet Home". Homes that are looking forward to Jesus' Coming, will major in sweet homes.

My wife and I have a very dear friend. I suppose she puts in about thirty hours a week in dorcas work. How the church praised her for her unselfish service! She had glowing reports to turn in. But while she

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was busy with the dorcas work, her husband was neglected and lost his way. Her teen-age boy fell by the way-side and her lovely daughter sold herself to the devil! And all this time, mother is rejoicing that she is doing more dorcas work than all the church combined! Dorcas work is wonderful, and would to God more of our ladies were involved in it. How wonderful it would be if every lady of the church spent about one hour each week for dorcas work! Yes, and then spent an hour each day working for the Sabbath School program, and spent the rest of the time making the home the most delightful place on the earth! Tell your husband that you love him. Tell your wife that you love her. Tell the children that you love them! Make home a happy place. If we will follow the instruction found in the book of Deuteronomy (11:18-21), we are promised days, "as the days of heaven upon the earth." What a promise to take with us as we approach the time of trouble.

IX. What about these children of ours that are out of the ark of safety? How many there are that have a real burden for the children who have left the church. Here is a promise that you can claim:

"And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Jeremiah 24:7

God doesn't want us to whine about our children who are out of the fold. No, we can ask God for help, believe that He is giving it to us and saving our children, and return thanks that He has done it. Notice the words of Jeremiah 31:16, 17.

"Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border."

You can put a dance in the eyes and a song in the heart and claim this promise, believing that the Lord is working our His purpose for our loved ones. He has promised to do it. Let us claim and believe Him.

X. Do you want to be guided into this kind of an experience? You don't have to sit and wish for it. Here is a promise by which you can have it and have it now. We don't have to wait for a time in the distant future; it is ours to have now. Notice:

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do for them, and not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16

Isn't this a wonderful promise for guidance and light as we enter the dark days that lie ahead? How wonderful God is to us!

XI. And now the promise to which I referred at the beginning of the chapter:

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:7.

Here it is! God's word that we will be saved out of the terrible time of trouble that lies just ahead. Surely, it will come. It will be terrible! It will be the worst kind of existence this world has ever known. We had better believe it - because God says it will be just that kind of a time. But we can live in the assurance, that, if our hearts are right with God now, and we continue to have fellowship with Him each day, when that time comes, we will be saved out of it. Let us anchor our hopes and vision in God's promise.

XII. Now we turn to Hebrews chapter six. In this chapter, Paul says under inspiration, that God made a promise to Abraham and backed it up with an oath. This arrangement, Paul says, constitutes an

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immutable structure of truth. It is impossible for God to lie. This, according to Paul's letter, gives us hope and an anchor.

There are some rough waters ahead over which we must sail. But come what may; let the waters get rough - we have a promise and an anchor! What more can we ask for? God Himself has promised us safety and victory. Notice the promise found in Isaiah 43:2.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:..."

Isn't that plain? Isn't that satisfying? There are a total of 3,573 promises, or clusters of promises in which we can find hope and confidence as we approach the time of trouble so that we need not fear and lose heart. These form an anchor that will hold us secure in the most tempestuous storms. Our destination is the sea of glass. This is the final wharf the Lord has planned. He has promised to be the Captain of our ship, if we will allow Him the privilege. There we will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. What a chorus that will be. And the wonderful thing about it is that each of us can be a part of that large throng.

"We're sailing home, we're sailing home;  
Oh, won't you come on board; our Pilot is the Lord.  
We're sailing home, we're sailing home  
To the new Jerusalem."

It is my prayer that I shall be there, and have the privilege of meeting you there, too.