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Holiness Writers

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

This digital publication is a compilation of 36 editorials written by my brother, I. Parker Maxey, and published in print at various times in The Missionary Revivalist during the years when he was the Editor of that periodical. Our thanks to him for allowing Holiness Data Ministry to digitally publish these articles. In this work, the thirty-six articles are presented as thirty-six chapters. — Duane V. Maxey, Holiness Data Ministry

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Chapter 1

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE OF GOD

The Scripture identifies Christians as "a peculiar people." We read in Titus 2:11-14:

(11) "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (13) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a *peculiar* people, zealous of good works." (emphasis mine) We want to notice particularly the words "peculiar people."

Living a holy life from day to day is of tremendous importance. The sainted Wesley observed in his day that many people obtained the experience of heart purity, but comparatively few lived the life for any length of time. If that was so in his day, I wonder about us today! There is so much to draw us away from a holy, Spirit-filled life in these days! How alert and diligent we must be in constantly exercising ourselves and our will to serve God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." God plans by His grace to see us through if we will do our part on the human side. Too often, I fear, the need of praying clear through to a "pure heart" experience witnessed to by the Holy Spirit, has been so presented and urged upon us that if we can just get a "pure heart experience, all the battles and troubles of life will be forever solved." We know this is not so for there is a life to be lived following the crisis experience.

Our continual victory and hope lies in the fact of our becoming "the peculiar people of God." The word "peculiar" is thought of as meaning something odd or strange. In this setting, however, this word is translated from a Greek word (περιουσι) made up of two words. *Peri*, meaning "around" and *ousi*, meaning "to be." This immediately brings to our mind a rich, meaningful and comforting truth. Picture, if you will, a dot within a circle. As the circle encompasses the dot, in like manner God's grace encompasses each one of His saints who are wholly given over to Him. The circle monopolizes the dot, has the dot within itself. So it is with God and us. We are His own private, unique possession. God has reserved His sanctified ones for Himself. "The church of the Thessalonians in God" (I Thess. 1:1) carries the same idea. It is locative of sphere, that is, it is in the sphere of God, circumscribed by God, encompassed by Him. It is the saints' position in the Lord. If we make it to heaven we must, at any cost, keep spiritually alive by keeping ourselves within this circle.

It is a place of high privilege. We read in I Peter 2:7, "Unto you who believe," is the preciousness, i.e., the preciousness of Jesus is imputed to us. The Son dwells in the bosom of the Father, closest to the Father's affections. In Christ we are brought into that favored place closest to the Father's affections. The Father loves us as much as His only begotten son.

It is a place of protection! There is a false concept as well as a true view of just what the protection of God means in the life of a sanctified saint of God. Those who have been awakened and entered a born-again relationship with the Lord many times look upon a matured sanctified saint of God and think, "if I can gain an experience like they have and enjoy, my troubles will all then be o'er." Little do they realize that our pilgrimage on earth, even when one is sanctified wholly, is beset on every hand with troubles and temptations, sufferings and heartaches beyond what they can conceive. As a general rule God does not exempt His sanctified saints from what the common lot of humanity face. He does not shield us from the fiery darts of the enemy, the unforgiving laws of nature, the laws of sowing and reaping, the onslaughts of wicked people and wicked tongues. The song writer put it this way:

"Trials dark on ev'ry hand, and we cannot understand
All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed promise land,
But He guides us with His eye and we'll follow till we die
For we'll understand it better by and by.

Temptations, hidden snares, often take us unawares,
And our hearts are made to bleed for many a thoughtless deed;
And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best,
But we'll understand it better by and by."

Whatever the test, however, the true view is that God will never leave us nor forsake us but will be with us with abundant grace to endure if we keep our trust in Him. For example, place a dot outside of the circle and draw an arrow from that dot to the dot inside the circle. Label that dot a temptation. The arrow cannot reach the dot within the circle except it penetrate the circle. Temptation cannot reach us only by the permissive will of God. As we walk in the center of God's will, He will not let the devil confront us with temptation too great for us but will, with the temptation, make a way of escape (I Cor. 10:13). Glory to God! It is right here, however, that some of the fiercest battles of faith are fought. There are things in life that happen to us that make us wonder why God would permit such if He really loves us, and is in control of the affairs of our life. What happens to God's protecting power?

It is one thing to talk about trusting God to protect us and to guide us in our life but it is another thing when others around us cause problems that appear to contradict God's care for us in His divine leadership in our life. Our trials often are the result of somebody's failure, or ignorance, or carelessness, or sin that appears to thwart God's plan in our life. It is right here in this area that some of our fiercest battles of faith are met. We know God cannot be the author of these things. Many times in one's lifetime one will be faced with the "why" question when it comes to God as a Sovereign being. Why did the young pastor's wife happen to get the one tainted bottle of blood? Why do so few prayers for healing go unanswered? Why was the saint of God killed in an auto accident by a drunken driver? God does not will drunkenness, drug addiction, immorality, dishonesty, greed and cruelty. He allows them as expressions of the freedom with which He Himself has endowed those created in His image. Where then is our security and secret of victory? In those times of testing we must look to God's Word. In Hebrews 13:6 we read: "We may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me."

God help us to hold fast in every trial and hard place, keep our eyes on Jesus and the glory in our soul. Whatever upsetting causes enter our life that would seem to contradict God's will and plan for and His protection over us we must commit to Him believing that He has all things under His command and control. We cite one example out of God's Word — Joseph. Nothing could have seemed to be more utterly contrary to the will of God than the action of his brothers in selling him into slavery? And yet Joseph, in speaking of it, said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50:20). "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5).

It is a way of provision! God, in His WISDOM, plans the test and limits the temptation. God designs to condition us so He can use us for His glory and the salvation of the lost around us. God help us right here to hold fast in every trial and hard place, keep our eyes on Jesus and the glory in our soul. There is no other way that we can be mightily used of God unless He can grind us between the millstones of suffering and trial. It is then that we can become bread for the hungry multitudes.

The saint's part in Christian warfare is to walk, work, witness, win in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 17). The Spirit impels you one way in order that you may not do the evil Satan would like to entrap you in. Your spiritual enemy impels you the other way in order that you may not do the good you would. Your alternative is to walk in the Spirit. The Spirit is already doing for you what He can. Your self-hood as a free agent must exert its energies and put forth the decisive act by which you commit yourself to the Spirit's leadership and walk in the Spirit. In other words "be constantly conducting yourself in the Spirit." The "dot" is insphered within the circle. "Be constantly conducting yourself within the sphere of the Spirit."

To live within the circle is synonymous with following in the steps of Jesus. Jesus was our example who walked the path of non-retaliation — he who was betrayed by His disciples, betrayed by the people, betrayed by the Sanhedrin, betrayed by the Romans. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. Three times he declared His innocence and it was Pilate's duty under Roman law to acquit Him but he feared people. He broke the law to save himself. Jesus was human, sensitive to injustice, cruelty, and cowardice of friends, and a sense of having been deserted and betrayed, but when we look into Jesus' heart there is the absence of resentment, revenge, bitterness, self pity or any effort to justify Himself.

On the positive side we see in Jesus, meekness, gentleness, humility, acceptance, nothing but love for His tormentors, ready to suffer and die for those who had betrayed Him and for the ones who had cowardly forsaken Him. We read in I Peter 2:19-23: (19) "For this is trustworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

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

Live within the sphere of God! Be one of God's "peculiar" saints.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

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I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 2

IS YOUR HEART TROUBLED?

or, Faith's Security

"Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1)

"When we come to that portion of Scripture found in John's gospel, chapters fourteen through seventeen, we enter the Holy of Holies of evangelical history. Here we find the record of the last moments the Lord spent with His disciples before His passion. Words full of heavenly thought flowed from His heart of love. The evening had begun in conversation (c.13), but when the "supper" was finished, the language of Jesus silenced His disciples as they gathered around their Master and listened to the words of life, ending at length in that sublime intercessory prayer in which His full soul was poured forth in petitions to His heavenly Father on behalf of those who were His own. These chapters deal almost exclusively with profound relationships — the Son to the Father, both to the Spirit, Christ to the Church, the Church to the world. Such an evening occurred but once in the world's history." (Schiff)

Trouble in this world is so common! In these chapters our Lord gives us a revelation concerning Heaven. However, before speaking of the next world, He gives words of comfort on the way thither. Peter had been humbled and now was troubled. Judas had defected. The atmosphere was ominous. Think it strange that in this setting we would run into God's imperative — "let not your heart be troubled"? What strange command is this — a command not to be troubled when the world is full of trouble! Just what is it that causes heart trouble? We mention three basic things:

Guilt causes heart trouble! Because of sin everyone feels guilt (Rom. 3:19). Sin and the guilt it brings is the underlying cause of all physical, mental and spiritual suffering. "Wherever a human being is found, there will be found a conscience, however stupefied, yet troubled and agitated with guilt. This is the curse which goeth forth over the face of the whole earth, and secretly appalls the proudest, and flashes in upon the hardest, through their steel and adamant convictions which shake the soul with terror. Nor from this pressure of unpardoned sin has man ever found, nor will man ever find deliverance but by the blood of Christ. Let men effect to despise the Gospel . . . Let men plunge into excesses, and seek in vice and revelry to drown the foreboding within the fearful looking for of judgment . . . Let men seek by mere repentance to atone for guilt, it is vain . . . Everywhere the imploring cry is heard, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God; shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old; will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil; shall I give my first-born for my transgression the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? And blood, blood, flowing in every land, altars groaning with victims, torturing pilgrimages . . . the wail of anguished women on the Ganges, proclaim the inefficacy of repentance to give peace to the conscience. The great want of a guilty world is the sacrifices of Jesus Christ." (Swiss) Of a truth, confession (I John 1:9) and faith in Christ (Acts 16:31) must precede victory, but the grand desideratum of all the people of the earth is the

sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Do you have guilt? Is your heart troubled? It need not be. You need not go longer plagued with guilt. "There is power in the blood of Jesus To make the vilest sinner whole; Power to take the guilt and condemnation From the weary, sin-sick soul."

People are in trouble because of unbelief! The disciples were in trouble time and again because of their unbelief. Let us cite two instances. The first was on the stormy sea. They cried out, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4:38). After calming the troubled sea, He asked, "How is it that ye have no faith?" Jesus before this (v.35) He had plainly said to them, "Let us pass over unto the other side." In the fury of the storm they had given way to unbelief. Unbelief had caused them to doubt His Word. By the same token, how many times are we in trouble because of unbelief? Unbelief is the cardinal sin of the human heart. It dates back to the Garden. It was there they disbelieved the Word of God, and because of this unbelief, all the evil and trouble have come on the human race. You may say, "I believe God's Word," but do you believe it enough to rely on it when there is no warrant in outer circumstances to do so?

Another instance of unbelief was when the distraught father brought his son who had a dumb spirit (Mark 9:14-29) to the disciples to be healed and they could not. Jesus said to them, "O unbelieving generation — without any faith." (Amplified Bible) After casting out the dumb spirit Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Here again Christ's disciples were in trouble because of unbelief?.

Unbelief — Lack of faith — is such a persistent evil! I have thought many times of the words of the Bible, "And he marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5,6). How many times are we in trouble, suffer things we need not suffer, lack where we need not lack, are so fruitless, all because of unbelief?

Follow the disciples before and after Pentecost. Note the difference in regard to their faith. What a difference the coming of the Holy Spirit made. It banished unbelief and produced fruitfulness. Can we not see here a cure for unbelief? To battle through the moods and evils of a heart of unbelief into an absolute devotion to the Lord Jesus where the soul can, in utter abandonment, rely on the naked Word of God, is the key to a faith that pleases God and rids the soul of a blighting unbelief. Are you plagued with unbelief? You need not be!

Fear causes heart trouble! We read such phrases as these in the Bible: "the disciples cried for fear," "hearts failing them for fear," "for fear of the Jews," "fear of death," "they feared exceedingly." Mark 10:32 states, "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid."

Guilt and unbelief are no doubt the principle causes of fear. "All our fears are wicked, and we fear because we will not nourish ourselves in our faith" (Oswald Chambers). How dreadful to have these as companions in life when we need not have them! Death, judgment, eternal punishment in a lake of fire — these are the things men dread. What are you dreading?

There is a way out. When you bring yourself to judgment, face yourself and others openly and honestly before God and trust His blood, you lose your fear of judgment; when, by an act of your

own free will, you give up everything that death, when it comes, will mercilessly strip from you and are willing to possess only what God would allow in His will for you, you lose your fear of death; when you submit yourself to the cleansing fire of the Holy Ghost, you no longer fear hell fire.

Furthermore, we need not be haunted by fear or apprehension concerning life in the here and now. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (He. 13:5-6). This does not mean that we will not be tempted to fear, but in the face of every temptation or apprehension we will be able to rest in "God's say-so," for did He not say, "I will in no wise fail you?"

Does fear torment you? It need not! How comforting Jesus' words, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Yes, we can be delivered from "heart trouble" in this world, but not from trouble, paradoxical as that may seem. The song writer pictured the other side of the coin — "trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand all the ways that God would lead us to that blessed Promised land."

H. W. Beecher gives the following graphic picture. "It was stormy from shore to shore, without a single fair day. But the place to which we were going was my home; there was my family; there was my church; there was my friends, who were dear to me as my own life. And I lay perfectly happy in the midst of sickness and nausea. All that the boat could do to me could not keep down the exultation and joy which rose up in me. For every single hour was carrying me nearer and nearer to the spot where was all that I loved in the world. It was deep, dark midnight when we ran into Halifax. I could see nothing. Yet the moment we came into still water I rose from my berth and go up on deck. And as I sat near the smokestack while they were unloading the cargo, upon the wharf I saw the shadow of a person, apparently, going backward and forward near me. At last the thought occurred to me, 'Am I watched?' Just then the person addressed me, saying, 'Is this Mr. Beecher?' 'It is,' I replied. 'I have a telegram from your wife.' I had not realized that I had struck the continent where my family were. There, in the middle of the night, and in darkness, the intelligence that I had a telegram from home — I cannot tell you what a thrill it sent through me! We are all sailing home; and by and by, when we are not thinking of it, some shadowy thing (men call death), at midnight, will pass by, and will call us by name, and will say, 'I have a message for you from home; God waits for you, 'Are they worthy of anything but pity who are not able to bear the hardships of the voyage?'"

As you travel amidst troubles and sorrows toward the city of God, "Let not your heart be troubled!"

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 3

"... THERE I WILL MEET WITH THEE ..."

God has appointed a place where He has promised to meet man — what wonder of wonders that God has provided a way whereby sinful beings can come into His holy presence and there abide. Just to live with God, abide forever with Him, enjoy His presence, be free from all defilement and to be secure from all the ravages of sin and dark damnation! But this meeting place that God has appointed is not just any place — "there will I meet with thee."

It is a chosen place. It is the place of propitiation. The word "propitiation" occurs in Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2; 4:10, and is translated in Hebrews 9:5 as "mercy-seat." The mercy-seat was sprinkled with atoning blood on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16:14) in token that the righteous sentence of the law had been (typically) carried out, so that what must else have been a judgment seat could righteously be a mercy-seat (Hebrews 9:11-15), a place of communion. In fulfillment of the type, Christ is himself "the place of propitiation" — the mercy seat sprinkled with His own blood — the only place where fallen, sinful mankind can meet with a holy God. We must meet God in Christ if we meet Him at all. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" but, all glory to the Lamb of God, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; . . . that he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus . . . Therefore we conclude that man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:24, 26, 28).

This chosen place is a place of compassion. The place is Calvary and it is the place where God poured out all His love to redeem a lost race — "for God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten son." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

This place where God meets man is a place of cooperation. The invitation to sinners is "Come unto me." The way to God is not open to all unconditionally, but each must of his own free choice accept the invitation and act upon it. He must leave his sins and come to Christ. By his confession of guilt the sinner establishes the law as right and acknowledges that he is justly condemned because of his own sins to its penalty and death and his only hope is the free grace of God through Christ. It is the place of full repentance and reliance on Christ. Some never come to the appointed place of meeting, for they never leave their place of sinning. The prodigal was restored to the favor and blessing of home because he arose and left the hog pen he had himself gotten into, and made his way back to the "meeting" place.

It is a place of completeness. God, in Christ, has provided a double cure — a cure for both actual and original sin. The promise is, "from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 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 put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,

and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:25-27). We read in Colossians 2:10,11, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, And ye are complete in him." This place of completeness is a place of soul rest; a place of deliverance from heart sin — the carnal mind; a place of holiness because it is a place of wholeness. Some press quickly by faith into this land of perfect rest and purity. Others struggle, some for years, before they gain this coveted place. Some struggle. struggle and never make it. They are never able to sing from the heart:

Is not this the Land of Beulah?
Blessed, Blessed land of light,
Where the flowers bloom forever,
And the sun is always bright?

It is a place of communion. "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of testimony" (Exodus 25:22). Communion means a sharing. We note that the place of communion is above the mercy seat between the two cherubims — there I will meet with thee and commune with thee. The mercy-seat sprinkled with the blood speaks of mercy through the atoning blood of Jesus, our only means of approach to God. Cherubims were guardians of God's holiness. This typifies the work that God designs to do within our hearts to make them His dwelling place where He can take up His abode and where we can "sup with him, and he with (us)." The song writer gave meaning to this when he wrote:

Since the wondrous grace of my living Lord
Has redeemed and set me free,
All my heart is filled and my soul is thrilled —
He is all in all to me.

He has come to dwell in my inmost self;
He's the Bridegroom of my heart.
What communion sweet and what rest complete,
Rest that never shall depart!

It is a place of commandment. Strange as it may seem, this place where God and man meet is a place where God commands us and we command God. First and foremost we are to respect God's commandments (Psalm 119:6). In them are revealed His will for us. They are for our good and our protection. His commandments are holy, just and good. No wonder the Psalmist declared, "I delight to do thy will, O God." We prove our love to God by keeping His commandments (John 15:15).

In Isaiah 45:11 we read, "Thus saith the Lord . . . concerning the works of my hand command ye me." Are we to command God? Like the widow who borrowed vessels, God miraculously filled with oil all she brought. In like manner we are to come to God bringing our largest conceptions of Him and then multiply those ten thousand-fold and believe Him as we are instructed to do in His Word. We are to command God with the sublimity of our faith, as C. H. Spurgeon puts it, we are to be daring with our God. Thus God instructs us, "ask me of things to come concerning My son, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me."

It is a place of constancy. "This shall be a continual burnt-offering" (Exodus 29:42). Such as continual, continually (Lev. 24:2-4, 8; Isa. 49:16), living sacrifice, dwelleth, speak of constancy in Christian experience. God designs that we enter into such a life where we are constantly giving our all day by day in glad service to Him and at the same time where we are constantly being recipients of His all. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). Reference here is to the most holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness where the high priest went once a year. It was that place where God met man. It typifies spiritually that place of constant, unbroken fellowship we can have with God in our heart wherever we may be — at home, on the job, at church, traveling across the country, whether sick or well, rich or poor. All glory be to our wonderful Saviour and Lord!

It is a place of communication. Our lives, whether by silent influence or by word of mouth, should communicate to others that we dwell with a Holy God and that He lives within our heart.

Give me, Lord, the mind of Jesus;
Make me holy as He is.
May I prove I've been with Jesus,
Who is all my righteousness.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

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Chapter 4

ARE YOU INCLUDED?

Fortunate are those who are qualified to lay hold of God's promises! It is not everyone who has a right to claim the promises of God. Every promise has a condition. I am thinking of Romans 8:28 where it says "all things work together for good." But "all things" do not work together for good for just anyone. The first condition is that we love God. To love God means that we keep His commandments, all of them (John 14:15; I John 3:22) — we will not break His Sabbath, we will not covet, we will put God first in everything, we do love God's laws. Another condition — we must be among those who are called according to His purpose. The purpose of God is that we be conformed to the image of His Son. God's Son possesses moral perfection. For us this amounts to nothing less than holiness of heart and life. It is these two conditions that qualify one for claiming Romans 8:28.

The text does not say that all things separately work for good, but "all things together" work for good. Many things of themselves are not good, but God can put them in the context of life and cause them to add to the good of the whole. I want us to notice seven things that this promise will do for those who qualify to claim it:

1. It will lift them above disappointments. It will give to them a faith that will enable them to trust God in the midst of the most severe trial or storm of life and to believe that He is in control and knows how to bring benefit out of it. In his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," Wesley states, "The best helps to growth in grace — and we could add, victory over what could be classed as disappointments — are the ill-usages, the affronts, and the losses which befall us. We should receive them with thankfulness . . . The readiest way to escape from our sufferings is to be willing they should endure as long as God pleases." In the Christian philosophy of life and in the light of Romans 8:28, disappointments become His appointments. There is absolutely no way to defeat a person who possesses this kind of faith in God. Job certainly qualified to claim a promise like this one in Romans 8:28.

2. It places them under the protective wing of God and keeps them secure in their confidence that God is in control of "all things." The kind of security this text talks about does not necessarily protect from material loss or physical harm or suffering — it may include these and it may not. We mean here the keeping power of God that Peter talks about concerning those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." It is that security that come from total resignation — a true resignation consisting "in a thorough conformity to the whole will of God, who wills and does all (excepting sin) which comes to pass in the world. In order to this we have only to embrace all events, good and bad, as His will."

"We ought quietly to suffer whatever befalls us, to bear the defects of others and our own, to confess them to God in secret prayer, or with groans which cannot be uttered; but never to speak a

sharp or peevish word, not to murmur or repine but thoroughly willing that God should treat you in the manner that pleases Him.

"We are to bear with those we cannot amend, and to be content with offering them to God. This is true resignation. And since He has borne our infirmities, we may bear those of each other for His sake." (Wesley)

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, is certainly an example of perfect resignation to the will and providence of God and could well qualify to claim a promise like Romans 8:28 as his very own.

3. It will make everything work in a pattern of good. The poet expressed the faith one would possess along this line when he penned these words:

My life is but a weaving,
Between my Lord and me.
I cannot see the pattern
He weaveth steadily.

Full oft He weaveth sorrow
And I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper,
And I the under side.

We can see how Romans 8:28 worked in the life of Ruth the Moabitess. She lived to see the day when "all things: had worked together for her good. She qualified for this by her simple faith and ready obedience.

4. It will turn catastrophes into stepping stones to heaven. There is no real catastrophe outside the loss of personal faith in God. Through all the vicissitudes of life, by God's grace one can be made better and not bitter if he can lay hold of this great promise recorded in Romans 8:28. If one can qualify to lay hold of this promise every apparent catastrophe can help build for him a richer habitation in heaven. His character will be enhanced by it. When we depart this life we will be stripped of everything but our character. If we live by this promise here in this life our character will stand in the day of Judgment. Paul qualified. He testifies, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." He proved by his life that he believed "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

5. It will bring them to a place where neither man nor devils can inflict spiritual detriment upon them. Chrysostom was brought before the Emperor, who said, "I will banish thee." He replied: "Thou canst not for the world is my Father's house." Then said the Emperor: "I will kill thee." "This is not in thy power, for my life is hid with Christ in God." The Emperor threatened: "I will deprive thee of all that thou possessest." Chrysostom replied: "That, too, is impossible, for my treasure is in heaven, and my riches are within me." "I will separate thee from all thy companions, and thou shalt not have

one friend left." The preacher replied: "Neither canst thou do that, for my Divine Friend will never leave me. I defy thee, proud Emperor; thou canst do me no harm at all."

Chrysostom surely must have known something about the promise in Romans 8:28.

6. It will protect them from an untimely death and allow God to fulfill His will through them on earth. Christians — True believers — are not fatalists. Man is a creature of free choice. Fate does not determine what man does and is. Neither is man's time to depart this life left to fate. Those who die untimely death — ultimately from God's viewpoint — are those who by their free choice have either taken themselves out of God's will or never accepted God's will for themselves in the first place.

King David illustrates one who would have a right to claim Roman 8:28 at this point. We read in Acts 13:22b,36, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will . . . For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." David yielded himself to the will of God and when God got through with him on earth He took him home.

7. It will hold them steady until God can work His purpose amidst the seeming contradictions of life — if they qualify to lay hold of this marvelous promise. It is said of Joseph in Psalms 105:19, "Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him." Joseph's life is a commentary on Romans 8:28.

Pause a moment, reader, are you included in this promise?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 5

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

or, Loving As Jesus Loved

"Let love be without dissimulation." (Romans 12:9)

When it comes to our relationship with God and people we are commanded to lay aside all pretense. Sincerity is an indispensable ingredient of goodness; it stamps a valuable character upon all our actions, and recommends them to the favor both of God and man. Hypocrisy, play acting, on the other hand, is the blackest of all transgressions, and bears the badge of the original liar. We are to have no hypocritical love; we are not to allow our love to wear a mask; we are commanded to make no empty profession. We are commanded to love God and our neighbor. By obedience to the one and acts of benevolence to the other we are to show that our love is sincere. We are commanded to love like God loves.

Jesus demonstrated this unfeigned love toward His disciples and He is our example that we should follow in His steps. ". . .having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).

Jesus loved them knowing! He was not deceived by the profuseness of man's acceptance of Him in the days of His popularity. In the beginning of His ministry "many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:23-25). Jesus knew what others did not know. He "knew from the beginning . . . who should betray him." Jesus knew and kept on loving. Too often we love until we know. With the gaining of knowledge, the knowledge of something that existed when love was shown, there too often comes a loss of love, a cooling off, a freezing up of one's attitude toward a brother. Barriers are raised up. Men divide because we have not learned to love like Jesus loves.

Jesus took no one into His confidence concerning the covetousness of Judas and what he knew it would finally lead him to. He did deal with the awful sin of covetousness, Judas' besetting sin, more than any other trait of the carnal heart. He was faithful to Judas' soul, but did not unnecessarily expose him to others of His followers. Nor did Judas feel less of Jesus' love than the others did. He was not ostracized from the group because of what Jesus knew about him. Too often, to gain knowledge of the weaknesses, failures, and even carnality of brothers and sisters in the Lord (whether they be of our particular fellowship or not) is a signal to hunt somebody up and discuss it with them, and there the matter grows in proportion as it spreads.

I am dealing here with this matter of love. Can we learn something here from Jesus?

Jesus loved impartially! He had no favorites. He didn't take some into his confidence and leave others out. John the beloved, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, didn't know what Jesus knew about Judas' intended betrayal. There was no "inner circle" with Jesus when it came to his knowledge of the heart condition of others. Jesus was absolutely impartial. They each one felt and know His love toward them. They did not feel themselves out of the bounds of His love nor feel He had excluded them from His circle. Can we learn something here from Jesus?

Jesus loved them in spite of their carnal outbursts! No, Jesus did not condone evil in men — James' and John's position seeking, Peter's impetuous outbursts, Judas' love of money, Thomas' carnal unbelief, Philip's and Andrew's lack of faith in Jesus' ability to meet the need of the multitude. He kept on loving them in spite of it all. It must have been His love and patience that bound them to Him. How they must have felt His love and concern. He did not let facts or factions divide them into separate camps. They felt safe and wanted in His presence. Can we learn something from Jesus here?

Jesus was unprejudiced in His love. When Judas failed to make it to Pentecost, Jesus was clear in His treatment of him. He had no past record to be ashamed of or for which He had to make amends. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

We are without excuse! Some may no doubt say, "Well, Jesus is God and we are finite." But herein is to be found the miracle of Pentecost. This same love that Jesus had, He prayed that we might have (John 17:26). It is this same divine love that God designs to shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit.

Have you received this experience? Do you love like Jesus loves?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 6

CHRIST AND THE TOWEL

Once a year we celebrate Christ's entrance into the world by virgin birth. The writer of the Hebrews Epistle put it this way, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He came and was "made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." But also, in His coming, in His living, and His teaching, in His dying He brought to mankind a new way of life. He came to reconcile us to God by His sacrificial death but also to reveal that kind of life we are to live in the flesh. He expressed it in these words, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34) Jesus further said, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another." Words become powerful when they are demonstrated in real life, and Jesus demonstrated in real life what He taught by word. Furthermore we have an illustration of what He meant by what He enacted in the upper room. The occasion was the Feast of the Passover. The world had been shut out and all the clamor of the voices of His foes were silenced and the curious, questioning crowd hushed. He was alone with His own. In the midst of the ritual of the Passover feast, He interrupted, took a towel and gird Himself with it. The towel gird about the loins in the East was the sign and badge of slavery. In doing this Jesus was putting into act what He had said in word. The first verse of John thirteen is significant when it says, ". . .having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." ("unto the end" means in completion or "to the uttermost"). It is significant because of the fact we are to love one another as He loved.

Peter at first protested this act of Jesus, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" When Jesus had finished with the foot washing He asked a searching question: "Do you know what I have done? Do you know what this means? I arose, gird myself with a slave's apron, I have taken the place of a slave, the lowest place of service possible. Then He spoke with dignity and authority, "If I then, Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

Some sections of Christendom have taken this very literally and from this have practiced foot washing as an ordinance along with the Lord's supper. We do not share this practice but we must not lose its significance. Jesus was here demonstrating in actual life the essence of this new commandment He had given them that they should love one another as He had loved them.

He has stripped Himself of dignity, taken the lowest place of a slave to serve them, in their highest interests. He then concluded with a beautiful beatitude, "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them."

Later on Peter had caught the significance of it all when he wrote, "Likewise ye younger, be subject unto the elder, Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility." Surely Peter must have been thinking of that night when Christ girt Himself with the towel.

Those in the upper room missed it that night when they ignored the "towel" in their lustful reach for the "throne." They would rather have ruled than served. Since their gathering was a private meal in a borrowed facility there was no household servant. Ordinarily, in an oriental household, since footwear of that day did not protect the feet from the dust and filth of the streets, it was the job of the household slave to wash the feet of the guests. No doubt Jesus had waited for one of the disciples to carry out this role. The basin was there and so was the towel, but no servant. Surely they were all aware of this. But now has Jesus' opportunity. He became the servant. He "Made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." (Phil. 2:5-7)

Does this occasion of Christ with His disciples search us out? It should! Have we overlooked the "towel" part of life. Would we rather be served than to serve? Do we vie for first place instead of last? Do we want more than others rather than less? Are we seeking to be honored rather than looking for opportunities to honor others? Do we want to be the center of attention? Are we saying by our actions that I want what I want now, rather than seeing that other's needs are met?

We may say we love others. What does our life style reveal? Does our life demonstrate Christ's new commandment that we love one another as He loved us? If we catch the real significance of Christlikeness we will gird the "towel" about us.

In commenting on the passage in I Peter 5:4, 5, "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility," G. Campbell Morgan explains that "being clothed or girded, is being dressed in a knotted garment. The Greek noun for garment is used in two applications. It was the garment of princes. Whether the garment was a slave's or a prince's depended upon the material of which it was made . . . Possibly Peter saw the knotted garment of slavery on Jesus, and before he was through, he saw that it was the knotted garment of royalty. He was writing now to young people and to old people; and he gather's us all up, and says, "All of you, put humility as a slave's garment of true royalty."

Jesus concludes his teaching in this upper room occasion with these words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one for another."

God grant that we will catch the real significance of "Christ and the Towel." It is the vision of selfless life that is spending and being spent in interest of Christ's investment in others!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 7

FULL TIME OR PART TIME CHRISTIANS

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." — Ephesians 5:14-17

The word "circumspectly" in our King James Bible comes from the word "accurately." Walking accurately, according to the context of this Scripture, would involve being awakened out of the sleep of sin, resurrected from a spiritually dead state and ushered into the light of Christ to live and labor. Furthermore, it would involve a redeeming of the time — a buying up and making the most of every opportunity as it comes along in its season and turning each to the best advantage, since none can be recalled if missed or misused.

One other Scripture needs to be brought into focus as we consider this subject of walking accurately. "What? know ye not that . . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:" therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

There has existed among the holiness ranks of today a double standard of living and of Christian service. Consciously or unconsciously, a distinction exists between those who are putting their entire time and energies directly into the work of the Lord as pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and those who are only part time in the work of God. This concept would also include laymen who labor at secular jobs and spend only part of their time in church work.

Along with this concept of the difference between full time and part time laborers for God comes another concept to those who are only, as they claim, part time. This part time philosophy carries with it the unconscious feeling that one if "off the hook" and on his own that part of the time he is not involved in any phase of kingdom work or church work.

The natural reaction or outcome of this philosophy of the Christian life is to conclude, since I am only part time, then the rest of the time I am on my own to do as I please and spend my money as I choose — all, of course, in good, clean, but selfish living.

As a result of this kind of thinking thousands and thousands of man hours have been siphoned off for personal pleasure and selfish living that should have and would have gone into a "walking

accurately type of devoted life if the entire life were lived under the control of the Spirit. Also, as another result of this kind of thinking, thousands and thousands of dollars are spent in self-gratification, self-entertainment, self-instigated projects that should and would have been given to carrying on the work of the Lord. All, of course, justified in that the obligation to God and the Church has been dispatched in the paying of the tithe, and giving of offerings and the joining of a "calling team" once a week.

There is no such thing as a "part time" Christian. To be part time for God and part time for self is not the way of a life of victory in the Lord. Whether layman or preacher, it is all out for God all the time. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price. It is a life in and by the Spirit, controlled, directed and inspired by the blessed Holy Spirit. It is a life where He has control of one's money, one's time and one's talents. "Walking accurately" is to walk under the control of the Spirit. We sing it:

All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed pow'rs;
All my tho'ts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours.

But do we mean it?

Jesus is our example. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). It is said of Jesus, "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29). Again we read, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do they will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7) Laymen should go to their jobs under the control of the Spirit; House wives should perform their duties under the control of the Spirit; a preacher should go about his pastoral duties under the control of the Spirit. All my time, talents, money should be under the control of the Spirit. Only then am I "walking accurately."

How about you? Are you a part time or full time Christian?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 8

THE SWORD OF GOLIATH

"And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: . . . And David said, There is none like that: give it me" (I Samuel 21:9).

The story of David and Goliath is one of the best known stories to be found in the Bible. God's people Israel, were strapped down into immobility and defeat by their enemy, the Philistines, who had invaded their land and whose champion, Goliath, no one was willing to face. Their liberation and victory over this foe depended upon some individual who would defeat this giant in personal battle. No one had the courage or was willing to risk his life in meeting the challenge of this foe until David arrived on the scene (I Sam. 17). It was his personal victory in killing the giant that brought victory on the scene and routed the enemy. In this incident we have a microcosm of what we face today. In the conflict, Goliath's sword became David's possession and this sword in the hand of David is a symbol of:

Victory in personal conflict. Goliath challenged, "give me a man that we may fight together . . . if he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us." Victory for Israel depended upon some one person who could be victorious over a dreaded foe. It was an individual, personal conflict. And so it is in the spiritual realm. We are individuals of free choice and thus responsible for our own spiritual condition and destiny. Personal soul victory, though it may aid the cause of righteousness and holiness in the world in a general way, cannot be transmitted from one individual to another. The foolish virgins made a request that was impossible to fulfill when they said to the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." The getting rid of Goliath was an individual matter.

David met this "Goliath" in his life and conquered. He won a personal victory over this formidable foe. As there was a "Goliath" in the life of David, so there is a "Goliath" in the life of every individual.

Victory over a powerful enemy. Goliath's sword in the hands of David is a symbol of death to the carnal mind. Carnality kills the soul, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This conflict in the spiritual realm involves death. It is an inescapable dilemma — either David must die or the giant (you either get rid of carnality or it will get rid of you). If the giant lives, then God's people are servants to the Philistine host of invaders. You will note that this battle was being fought on Israel's territory (a fight for victory instead of with victory). It is this giant Goliath that ties the hands of God, introduces worldly-mindedness into the church, brings formality and deadness into the body of Christ, turns the church into a social organization and takes away its life-giving power.

Furthermore, David's victory over Goliath is a symbol of a supernatural deliverance from the being of sin. The odds were against David, but he fought this giant "in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom (Goliath had) defied." God has promised deliverance to all who will dare to put their life on the line and let Him destroy the powerful enemy of carnality out of heart and life. David, by a simple faith and a do or die determination, gave God a chance to work a deliverance from a god-defying enemy. When he did this he gained a personal victory and an indisputable evidence of deliverance. With the head of Goliath in his hands, what more or better evidence of total victory could he have desired? This is a first class illustration of God's power to rid an honest, open, do-or-die seeker from the carnal mind and give him an inner, indisputable witness that the work is done. And not only so, but an outer expression that is convincing to others.

Victory that brings blessing to a constituency. There is no corporate victory apart from individual and personal victory. The level of victory and freedom in any church is in direct proportion to the victory in the lives of its individual members. It was David's personal victory over Goliath that brought victory to the whole encampment. It is true that when individuals win in personal conflict over sin, it honors God and brings His blessing down in the midst of His people. However, the church has always carried a lot of dead weight from the spiritual standpoint. As a people, we thrive on a free, lively, spiritual atmosphere, but the glory of God in our midst comes only in the measure that individuals have won in personal conflict over evil and have been delivered from indwelling sin. These are the ones who furnish the channels through which God manifests Himself. Our great need as a church is for the manifest glory of God and each individual has a personal responsibility in this matter. The main reason we can not have the full measure of the glory we could have is that we have far too many who are not sanctified. It is no secret — the normal state of a sanctified church is the manifest outpoured blessing of God. The lack of this testifies that far too many of our people have not won a personal victory over indwelling sin — their Goliath still lives. They themselves live on the splash-over of some one else's personal victory. The great need of the church is to get our people sanctified wholly and thus become a positive channel of blessing.

Victory that endures perpetually. We read in Acts 13:22, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will." This sword in the hand of David is a symbol of perpetual victory. Continuous victory lies in the realm of glad performance of the will of God. This involves a constant and active obedience. With the giant Goliath dead and the Holy Spirit living in the soul, it is a delight to do the will of God. "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." (Acts 13:36) He was able to end his life in victory. While we do not believe in a "once in grace always in grace" doctrine, yet a "sword of Goliath" victory empowers a soul by the indwelling Holy Spirit to work a perpetual victory day by day and will bring one, as it did David, to the end of his days on earth a victor!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 9

THE "OPEN TOMB" OR "WAILING WALL," WHICH?

"On a day-by-day basis the Wailing Wall is still the most frequented place in the Holy City," says G. Frederick Owen in the book Jerusalem. This is not without significance.

Sad to say, but there is a "wailing wall" experience in Christendom today. Far too many Christians have a type of "wailing wall" experience. They frequent the place of moroseness, pessimism and mourning. Their life is a picture of darkness, dreariness, depression, disillusionment and despair.

Located on the west side of the temple area in Jerusalem and known as the Western Wall is the one remnant left of the "containing wall of the outermost enclosure of Herod's Temple" that has survived the destruction of war and of the elements. Many are confident, along with the Orthodox Jews, that when God's shekinah presence left the holy of holies of the temple at its destruction, the Divine Presence went to this section of the Western Wall and hovers over it to this day. For centuries the Jews have felt this spot to be the nearest they might approach to the holy of holies.

Here again there is a parallel among professed Christians of this day — even holiness folk. How many "good" people attend church, pay tithes, dress modestly, shun worldliness and make a real effort toward being spiritual. They approach the "holy of holies" experience of a sanctified life of liberty and blessing but do not get beyond a "wailing wall" experience. I am convinced that there are good people that secretly long for a life of liberty and fullness in the Spirit but in their innermost being are still frequenting the "wailing wall." They come to the outer court of a vital experience of grace but no further. They turn out to be peddlers of doom and gloom. They see the gravity of the hour and the awful judgments that are soon to fall upon mankind in these last days but seem never to be able to rise above the atmosphere of a sin-doomed age into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

The "wailing wall" speaks of a deferred hope; a joy that has not been attained; a Messiah who has not come; a people who are yet in bondage; the better day that has still not arrived.

In contrast to this there is an "open tomb" life that is better by far than the "wailing wall" type of life. The Christian's hope is toward the sunrise, not the sunset. There is no doubt but that this age of wickedness and apostasy is in its last throes. It is night time for the sinner but it is also the dawning of the day for God's saints. In Luke's gospel we read, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's heart failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28). Again we read in I Thess.

5:5, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day" we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

But I can hear someone say, are there not burdens to be born, heartaches and crushing blows the Christian must face even in this holy walk? Oh, yes! But here the note of a triumphant Saint of God: "As sorrowful, yet rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things; as dying, and, behold we live; as chastened, and not killed." (2 Cor. 6:9,10) This is the attitude of an "open tomb" spirit filled life.

Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He knew and suffered the afflictions that accompany a life in this sin cursed world. But he kept His eyes on the joy that was set before him. Jesus prayed that His disciples might have this kind of joy, His joy, fulfilled in them. Paul recognized the kind of a world we live in when he wrote, "We are troubled on every side." But he was quick to add, "yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed." The secret of it all is the open tomb, the risen, ascended Christ and the outpoured Holy Spirit — Alive with heavenly life. Praise God for LIFE. "Then we which are ALIVE and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit is the breath of Jesus.

Stand no more at life's "wailing wall." Move on into the holy of holies of a life with God! It is Easter time for the soul!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 10

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE

In James 1:2 we learn that the author is addressing his epistle to born-again Christians for he addresses them as "my brethren." Keep this in mind. Jesus here is writing to Christians, people who have been truly born of the Spirit but whose hearts have not been cleansed from inbred sin.

Continuing on in the second verse he says to these born-again ones, "count it ALL JOY when ye fall into divers temptations." That is, many and various kind and degrees of testings and trials. COUNT IT ALL JOY. We are living in a superficial age when people are demanding of God to be blessed continually or they lose faith or run out on God. As in the early experiences of Madam Guyon when she thought more of her emotional experience than about the Lord, more about the gift than the Giver, until she learned one day that there was more honor and blessing in living by faith than by feeling. Her faith finally brought her to the place where she could "bless the hand that smote her, knowing that God watches over His own allowing nothing to come to them but what He Himself permits. Glory! And shouldn't this be the faith of God's children? Read Psalm 91. "True joy and peace come from living by faith, without regard to feelings. We are filled with all joy and peace IN BELIEVING (Rom. 15:13). But when we look at our feelings and take our eyes off the Lord, then all true joy and peace leave us." "COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO DIVERS TEMPTATIONS." We are living in a day of pressure and heaviness and darkness. A day that tests the souls of men. A day that certainly reveals who the real MEN of God are. Men that will stay in there and fight without compromise for God and His glory. Men that will separate themselves from the modern day insipid, watered down holiness and stand for the old paths. This kind of faith and this kind of living throws the saints into divers temptations.

This testing of faith will work within the sanctified to God's honor and glory and add to the saints patience (v.3).

James' exhortation in the fourth verse is the acid test of whether or not we have within our heart the blessing of heart holiness. "But let patience have her perfect work." In other words, do I have within my heart that experience of divine grace that will enable me to "endure" "to remain under" the pressures of life with all of its manifold tests and trials that come to a soul from God, Satan, and wicked men, no matter how severe or long lasting they may be and in the midst of it all retain my faith and manifest the spirit of holiness? "But let endurance have its perfect work, in order that you may be perfect and whole in every part, lacking nothing" (Godbey).

At this point James appears, on the surface, to change the subject with which he was dealing. In verse five he says, "IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM." What does this mean? Many take this verse out of its setting and thus lose the true meaning and truth which the Holy Spirit would get through to us. Keep in mind those whom James is addressing. "IF ANY OF YOU," who have truly been born of the Spirit and are living in a saved relationship to Christ, "LACK WISDOM." The Holy

Spirit does not leave us in the dark as to the meaning here. Turn to the third chapter of this book. In the first verse of this chapter we are assured that the author is still addressing the born-again" ones for the author is still writing to "My brethren." Now look at verse 13. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." If I profess to have "wisdom" or, in other words, the experience of heart holiness, such as is wrought in the souls of men in a second definite work of divine grace, then I should be able to manifest this sanctifying grace in every vicissitude of life. Do I always have the POWER to manifest the wonderful spirit of Christ?

I could not vouch for the truth of this story but by way of illustration; it is told of "Uncle Bud" Robinson that at one time he lived neighbors to a very wicked man. "Uncle Bud's" life of godliness put the neighbor under awful conviction and made him meaner than he ordinarily had been. This meanness would cause him to dump all his rubbish and garbage over the fence into "Uncle Bud's" yard. Of course "Uncle Bud" had rights as a citizen of America but instead of using them he would gather up his neighbor's refuse and carry it to the dump and all the time singing the songs of Zion. One day "Uncle Bud's" chickens got through the fence into this man's garden. The man in great anger caught the chickens, wrung off their heads, and threw them back across the fence. "Uncle Bud," seeing his neighbor in the act, gathered up the headless hens, picked their feathers off and then took a couple of the nicest ones over to this man and in the Spirit of Jesus offered them as a gift saying that he had more than he and his wife could eat. It was "Uncle Bud's" life of holiness lived out under pressure and test that finally brought the wicked neighbor to his knees and to God.

Is not this what James means in the 13th verse of this 3rd chapter when he asks, who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? How many times have we stood up for our rights when the Holy Spirit has engineered us into a place where He, instead, wanted us to suffer for His glory in order to be the means of bringing the lost to repentance. Have we that kind of grace in our heart?

Notice in the 14th verse, "But if ye (Brethren) have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, (if it is there it will come out) glory not, and lie not against the truth." There is in the regenerated heart that awful spirit of envy and strife that renders him incapable at times — especially at the most crucial times — to live victorious and to God's honor and glory. If this is the case, and it is unless our heart has been fully cleansed, the exhortation is to face the truth. "This wisdom (v.15) descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." After a soul has been gloriously saved and then discovers through experience that awful monster of inbred sin lurking within his heart, it is not time to suppress him or make excuse for him, nor to throw up ones hands in despair and give up and quite entirely — "glory not, and lie not against the truth." Then is the time to fall humbly before the Master and confess that there is yet in the heart that is "earthly, sensual, and devilish." That sort of a thing will be forever barred from heaven's portals, "For (v.16) where envying and strife is, there is confusion (many are confused these days, why?) and every evil work." A good case of second blessing holiness clears up the confusion. Glory to God?

The seventeenth verse of the third chapter brings the fifth verse of the first chapter into harmony with the theme James started out with, holiness of heart that finds its expression in fruitful living. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Notice, God's wisdom in the heart is first PURE. This is the experience the disciples received at Pentecost and that was passed along to the Gentiles by the mouth of Peter, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9). This experience will make us pure in our words. (Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (James 5:12). It will make us pure in our thoughts (Phil. 4:18). It will make us pure in every phase of our living. Have our ears, eyes, hands, feet, mind, words been made pure in their service for God? I believe it was Shelhamer who, rounding a corner and observing an obscene picture turned quickly away saying that he refused to look upon that that would taint his mind and soul. Yes, this experience will remove the TV "beast" from the eye. It will make us pure in our motives and actions toward others.

Next, it is PEACEABLE — KEEPS one from stirring up strife and envy. Its GENTLENESS takes away the harshness from the heart and makes one meek and modest. God's WISDOM is also "easy to be entreated." The unapproachable, stubborn, obstinate kind surely do not have the wisdom from above. A young married couple just saved started out in life together. They both had an agreement with each other. The man, in case he had a hard day on the job, was to come home with the bill of his cap; turned up and the wife, in case things had gone wrong at home during the day was to have the corner of her apron pinned up. These were meant to be signs to each other to tread softly and not to ill entreat one another for patience was at an end. (Miserable way to live) All went well until the day when he came home with his bill turned up only to find the corner of her apron pinned up. Neither one was "easy to be entreated" in that hour and the peace of the home was turned into strife.

Wisdom is also "full of mercy and good fruit." The thing that is in the heart comes out under pressure and if by faith God had planted perfect love in the heart, divine love of some form should come forth from the soul of the wholly sanctified. "Without partiality." Nothing of the old self life will enter heaven. Unless we sink completely out of self, self-interest, worldly honor, or the fear of man, and into God we will not finally be numbered with the redeemed. "Without hypocrisy." "Without pretending to be what it is not. Seeking nothing but God's glory, and using no other means to attain it then those of his own prescribing" (Adam Clarke).

Now, let us return to the first chapter and fifth verse. "If any of you (Brethren who are born of God and endeavoring to live a victorious life) lack wisdom, (This wisdom that is described in 3:17) let him ask of God, (Glory not, and lie not against the truth. Confess it all out to God) that giveth to all men liberally, (He is more anxious to give us good gifts than we are to give good gifts to our children) and upbraideth not; (God will not upbraid us for something we personally were not responsible for — the carnal mind — only if we refuse to let Him rid us of it) and it shall be given him."

Praise God for this wonderful way of holiness. In verse six James makes clear that the way to enter into the blessing is by faith. If you have not entered into this wonderful experience will you not now open wide your heart to God, confess out the same thing that God says about your heart "for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart" and by faith enter into a Canaan Land experience.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By
I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 11 **DEFILED BY A ROOT**

We read in Hebrews 12:14-15, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord; Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

When any religious body fails in getting their people through to an experience of heart holiness, the "root" that has not been eradicated will soon spring up and in the end destroy the spiritual life within that particular body.

One of the prevalent forms this force of destruction takes is that of slander. Slander is speaking evil on hearsay rather than proof, or on half-knowledge. According to the Bible, slander includes whispering, backbiting, evil-surmising, tale-bearing, babbling, tattling, evil-speaking, defaming, bearing false witness, judging uncharitably, raising false reports, repeating matters. Babbling according to Webster means to chatter senselessly, to reveal secrets; to engage in idle talk.

Slander that has venom in it springs from a malicious motive and seeks through subtlety to do its malignant work. Equally or even more destructive, because more common than this form, is that widespread culpable carelessness in regard to truth. Like the Athenians who spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). Thus many spend their time in idle prattle. But "in a multitude of words there wanteth not sin." (Prov. 10:19).

Prattlers may claim innocence and harmlessness, but stemming from a root of carnal indifference and spiritual coolness, idle talk puts a blight on spiritual life. To say "I mean no harm," does not change the character of loose talk nor relieve it of its consequences.

The evil that slander causes is incalculable. There are men in every rank of life whose whole career has been blighted by some cruel slander which careless tongues have set going. Slander casts shadows, shakes and destroys confidences, brings people to the place where they do not know whom to trust. It creates suspicion among people. It has a crippling and deadening effect on the spread of the gospel.

Slander is the most common evil among professing holiness people of this day. For one thing, people do not realize the heinousness of this sin. The Bible (Romans chapter one) classes backbiting and whispering with fornication, murder and every other evil work. If people could realize that to sit around and idly toss men's reputations about glibly with their tongues is as great a sin as adultery and murder they would think twice before lending their tongues or their ears to such a practice.

But again, if the slanderer (and those who lend ears to such, for how could a slanderer long continue if no one paid him heed) when found guilty was held to the same radical form of confession

and restitution as those found guilty of lying, stealing, and committing adultery, there would be less of this in our midst.

In the next place, slander is so common a malady among religious people because there is such a meager conception of the value of reputation. Reputation is the foundation-stone of influence and usefulness — it is the door to society. Destroy a man's reputation and he is cut off from the rest of his fellows, cut off from his family, and God's designs are defeated. When slander sets in who can escape its crippling effect? It is the "root" that is defiling us. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Gal. 5:15).

Idle talk, jesting and careless handling of the truth are not the product of a sanctified heart. There are many ways one individual can slander another: by expressing to others a bad opinion of an absent person, what we thought, suspected or feared concerning them; to unnecessarily mention the faults of an absent person; to unnecessarily create suspicion in the mind of another regarding the sincerity, honesty, and uprightness of the absent person; to tell the most objectionable part of anything affecting the reputation of another, and omit the less objectionable; by making a practice of carrying news, repeating rumors and circulating evil reports; to speak of a person's faults to others instead of speaking to the individual himself. Especially culpable is that form of slander that is engaged in for the purpose of self-defense. One species of shell-fish defends itself when pursued by diffusing an inky fluid round it. Its chief object is to create a black outlook to save itself. The manner of this dirt-stirring mollusk is not unlike those vile persons who blacken the character of others to save themselves, whose only refuge is a cloud of dust.

Let us not be deceived nor pass this malady off lightly. Shaken confidences, deadening suspicions and ruined reputations that are the fruit of slander stem from a root of evil. James 3:1-12. The only cure is a brokenness and a contriteness. God help us to forsake the biting and devouring of one another and offer up to God the sacrifices of a broken spirit that bring repentance, confession, forgiveness, and cleansing. Perfect love is the answer. Divine love suffers long; is kind; is not envious but protects the rights of others; rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in the truth.

Let us beware of slander! The judgments of God against this dreadful malady are fearful. "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off." Psalm 101:5

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 12

ONE SPARK OF FIRE

or, Fire Is Our Need

How can we convince men and women of the reality of God in our lives? There is only one answer. Get on Fire! Billy Sunday said, "One spark of fire can do more to prove the power of powder than a whole library written on the subject."

One spark of fire in the pulpit can do more in a few minutes to prove the reality of God than all the studied academic, cultured, ear-tickling presentations of the gospel could do in a year's time. Paul laid this sort of thing aside when he went to Corinth. He said, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Cor. 2:4). He had the fire! When he went to Thessalonica he said about his ministry there, "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (I Thess. 1:5). Paul was more concerned that he possess that "spark of fire" than in having a polished, homiletical, man-pleasing message. He was concerned more about "truth on fire" than his preaching ability before men. Brethren, what is it we are most concerned about? Sermonizing? Preaching ability? Being men-pleasers? God calls — he sets on fire whom He can use. Can He use you? It is fire in the pulpit that we need! Do you have it?

One spark of fire in the pew could do more than all the pulpit utterances, exhortations, and pleadings could ever accomplish to "get the glory down." The Spirit-filled man glows, radiates, and burns with the fire of God. Can that be said of you? A Christian is a man ablaze. Do you qualify? The church filled with the Holy Ghost is a community of men on fire. Does that describe your church? "For a Christian to be cold is sin." On the way to Mount Moriah Isaac said to his father Abraham: 'Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' The Church today would have to lament in different words. We would have to say: 'Behold the lamb and the wood: but where is the fire for a burnt offering?' It's the fire that is lacking today. The Church is offering sacrifices; it has the wood of methods and techniques; but it lacks the fire." (The Prairie Overcomer).

The multiplication of rules and regulations is not our need. It is the "spark of fire" that "sets men ablaze for goodness, and makes them ardent in all the will of God." It is fire in the pew that we need! Layman, do you have it?

One spark of fire in the soul of an individual will do more to make him a true witness of the cross than all the courses in personal evangelism combined can do without it. At Pentecost cloven tongues of fire sat on each of them "without exception and without exemption." Tongues are given for speech. How true it is that Spirit-inspired speech is always accompanied by the demonstration of power. One of the outstanding things throughout the book of Acts is the fact that tongues were loosed for the ministry of telling forth the wonderful work the grace of God had accomplished within

the heart. We also are Christ's witnesses "without exception and without exemption." God expects us to speak and has provided an organ of effective speech. Has your tongue been loosed for the Lord? Do you have a message to tell of God's grace in your heart? Wherever and whenever He wants our witness, the Spirit is ready to give the right word, and to clothe it with power. Fire is mightier than learning. A soul ablaze is a better guide to effective speech than much scholarship. It is fire that must conquer the heart.

Samuel Chadwick has this to say: "At Pentecost the fire took shape, and sat upon each of them, a cloven tongue of flame. This sign of Christianity is not a cross, but a tongue of fire. The fire is given for speech. The Spirit is given for utterance, and for power to witness. What a difference fire makes to speech! When a man speaks as the Spirit gives him utterance, he always has the word that is appropriate, apt, and effective; the word that expresses the meaning, carries conviction, and captures the consent of the will."

But what is meant by fire? The Holy ghost is fire! The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is not one thing and baptism with fire another, but the former is the reality of which the latter is the symbol. "Without the Spirit of God the best arranged means are useless. They are lamps without oil, sails without wind, coals without fire."

This fiery baptism quickens and cleanses. Fire gives warmth. It comes to kindle in men's soul a blaze of enthusiasm, rapture and passion. Fire purifies. The Spirit produces holiness in heart and character. All other cleansing is superficial. The alternative for every man is to be baptized in fire or to be consumed by it. The Holy Ghost would be in every heart a Spirit of fire — fire for death or life, to purify or to destroy. God's presence in man's heart is His greatest gift; how truly it may be called a fire! It separates good from evil. It purifies. It tests. Our duty in life is to cherish and obey this awful fiery Spirit, to burn in the spirit, to have a glowing zeal for God. Furthermore, this spark can be blown into a flame by prayer.

This fire must fall from heaven. It cannot be kindled with earthly forces. It is not of the earth, but from God. We cannot kindle it. He must send it. Do you have it?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 13

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Before his conversion the Apostle Paul was a carnal, legalistic Pharisee. He was a stickler for keeping the law (the rule book). In the book of Philippians 3:3-9 we read as follows:

3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

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

Going back to Galatians 2:20 when Paul stated that "I am crucified with Christ," he was saying, "The death of Christ on the cross has showed me that there is no hope of salvation by the law: I am therefore as truly dead to all expectations of justification by the law, as Christ was dead when he gave up the ghost upon the cross. Through Him alone I live — enjoy a present life and have a prospect of future glory . . . God made man to be a habitation of his own Spirit: the law cannot live in me so as to give me a Divine life; it does not animate but kill; but Christ lives in me; he is the soul of my soul; so that I now live to God. But this life I have by the faith of the Son of God — By believing on Christ as a sacrifice for sin." (Adam Clarke)

Paul further stated in Romans 8:1-2:

1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

It is easy to conclude from what has been written above that before Paul's conversion his emphasis was on keeping strictly to the letter of the law hoping in that he would find himself justified before the throne of God. His only salvation was in the convicting power of the Holy Spirit revealing to him his own carnal self-effort in trying to work out his own salvation. That self-way had to be crucified and himself brought under the "law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus."

People are in grave danger today in putting the emphasis on the wrong thing. There is a tendency to emphasize rule, rules, rules and standards, standards, standards in order to prove or reveal that one has the blessing and forget about the "law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus."

People who profess to have a holy heart, to be sanctified wholly, but who have not really died out to the "carnal self-life," are under a self-imposed effort to prove their "sanctification." This leads to the putting primary emphasis on the outward stands of holy living in place of putting the primary emphasis on the crucifixion of trying to justify one's testimony by keeping "standards." Paul put the primary emphasis where it belonged — the life of the Spirit within.

A false profession of holiness of heart also leads to a superficial emotionalism — another effort to try to prove something that is not so.

Paul further states in Gal. 2:21, "I do not frustrate the grace of God." "do not condemn, despise, or render useless, the grace of God — The doctrine of Christ crucified, which I must do if I preach the necessity of observing the law." (Adam Clarke)

Outward standards of holy living, if they are unfeigned, spring from the life of Christ within. Standards will be in place if Christ lives within. Crucifixion of the self-life should be the primary emphasis.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 14

"THE BACK SIDE OF THE DESERT"

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb. Exodus 3:1

Moses was eighty years old when he found himself on the backside of the desert. This "backside of the desert" experience came to him after he had made his decisive choice to suffer with God's people rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It was after he gave up a throne, riches, position, power and reputation among men. This experience came after he had tried in his own efforts and through his own ingenuity to fulfill the call God gave him. This wisdom of his choice will bear up under the closest scrutiny, but in his own efforts to make his chosen calling a success he utterly failed and was forced to flee to the desert to save his life. After all his extensive training in the wisdom of that day, his brilliant military career and his position among the peers of his day, he found himself alone on the backside of a desert with a small band of sheep. He had proved to be no good to God, a failure among his people and a disappointment to himself. Something had to take place within Moses before he could be a mighty instrument in the hands of God to deliver His people out of bondage and fulfill God's plan for his life. The real desert was in the heart of Moses and it was only God who could make this desert "rejoice and blossom like the rose."

The trip to the backside of the desert proved to be for Moses the long road that led to the end of self. Far too many people never travel this road and far too many who start never get to the end of it. For this reason Christ three times pronounced doom on fruitless professors of religion.

It was on the back side of the desert that Moses came to the mountain of God. It was here where self got out of focus and he was enabled to see God clearly. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Moses saw clearly that it was God who was going to deliver His people and not himself — but God was going to do it through His servant as the instrument (Exodus 3:8,10). How wonderful it is to see God, His plan, His purpose, His way — to be just an instrument in His hands — to become solely and completely the property of God for Him to work His will in and through you.

It was on the backside of the desert where the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. Thank God for the burning, cleansing fire!

The burning bush unconsumed by fire captivated the attention of Moses. The "unclean . . . creeping things that creep upon the earth" (Lev. 11:29), were destroyed or fled in terror when the bush got on fire! It was the symbol of a work God would perform in him. It is the fire of God that burns out all carnal traits (the sensual self) but leaves unconsumed the essential self to be a marvel in the eyes of those who behold. It was on the backside of the desert that Moses learned to reverence and fear a holy God. He had learned by bitter experience his own inadequacy. Now he learned what

God could do with even a shepherd's staff (Exodus 4:2-4) if given over in obedience, and he himself was now prepared and ready to be a pliable instrument in God's hands.

It was from the backside of the desert that Moses came forth as one of the mightiest instruments of God among men. On the backside of the desert is an unmarked grave where the carnal Moses died and was buried and the meek Moses arose and came forth.

Check through the sacred record and the annals of church history. Who is there that has done exploits for God that has not had a "backside of the desert" experience?

Have you, reader, been to the backside of the desert and experienced a death and then a resurrection?

Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flame,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!
Thy blood-bo't gift today we claim,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!
Look down and see this waiting host,
We want another Pentecost.
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!

God of Elijah, hear our cry,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!
He'll make us fit to live or die,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!
To burn up ev'ry trace of sin.
To bring the light and glory in,
The revolution now begin,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!

'Tis fire we want, for fire we plead.
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!
The fire will meet our ev'ry need,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!
For strength to ever do the right,
For grace to conquer in the fight,
For pow'r to walk the world in white,
Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire!

— John T. Benson, Jr. —

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 15

THERE WAS NO TIME TO STOP AND CHANGE CLOTHES

or, Dressing and Undressing

In fifty-two history making days Nehemiah, his brethren, and his servants accomplished a next to impossible task — that of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, clearing the streets of rubbish, and replacing the gates that had been burned with fire. One of the secrets of this accomplishment was the total dedication of these men to a cause ordained of God. In Nehemiah 4:23 we read: "So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing."

It is certainly not the ordinary thing to go fifty-two days without putting off one's clothes except for washing. But here was a desperate situation that called for heroic action — a job that had to be completed with no intermission. The Holy Spirit did not inspire this verse to be put in the Bible for no reason. We need to heed what God is saying. There is soul searching truth here that we need to stop and prayerfully consider. It is always profitable to stop long enough to take inventory.

In the context of the Scripture in which this verse (Nehemiah 4:23) is found the Spirit of God is addressing a principal that we can well apply to the City of Mansoul. The City of Jerusalem contained the Temple of Worship, the place where the Israelites could come to meet God. Because of Israel's sin the temple had been destroyed and the walls of the city laid low. Now, our bodies are the temple of God and our heart is His dwelling place. The Spirit of God is crying out in this verse to every individual saying STOP, take a look at your City of Mansoul. Don't go through another year in spiritual defeat. Don't go on without victory. Don't even take time to "change clothes." The inference is that of desperation and desperation to the point that nothing else is as important as getting those walls up. They had to be desperate enough to lay everything aside until they had pressed clear through, and through clear to spiritual victory. Such are the ones that become established and then become the ones who know how to "get through" again and again for others, and for every test and trial they themselves face in living a victorious life!

In the first place, Nehemiah got through himself. He was a captive in a strange land and filling a position of honor. In the language of our day he "had it made." But here is a man that could not be satisfied with position and the comforts of life knowing that his beloved city lay waste. Hundreds of miles from his native land, settled in a good position, secure from want of food and shelter, why should he be concerned? But he was! He wept and prayed four months before any action was taken. He prayed until he had a clear vision. He saw what was and what could be. He prayed until he could see a city cleared of rubbish, walled up and with gates. He knew that with the city laid waste and its walls down, the very center of true worship was threatened, personal possessions were insecure, peace of mind was impossible, sleep and rest endangered, the rights of the defenseless could not be guaranteed. His vision moved him to action, action that caused him to ring down on everything but

that ONE important thing. God help us, neighbor, if we don't have a vision. Could the lack of fasting and praying answer to why our vision and faith are no stronger than they are?

Nehemiah fasted, prayed and wept before God until he was able to resist all discouragement from within, threats from without and the cunning of the enemy, not allowing himself to be diverted even by the common routine duties of life.

In the second place I want to ask you who are not in real spiritual victory some questions. You may be under a profession, but you are inwardly defeated. You are not enjoying the victory you know you should have or can have. You are inwardly miserable. You may at one time have had good, clear victory. At one time the City of Jerusalem stood impregnable behind fortified walls. Her people were safe and her atmosphere was glorious. Peace reigned and songs of triumph rang through her streets and out over the highways and by-ways that reached across the hills and valleys of Palestine. Three times a year all the sons of Israel made their way to their beloved city waving palms of victory. But there came a day when she forgot her Sabbaths, allowed her attention to be taken up with the gods of heathen nations, become idolatrous until her defense departed from her. With God gone she lost her song of triumph and became an easy prey to her enemies and soon the walls of her beloved city were torn down, rubbish filled her streets and her temple was desecrated. There was no safety or peace with this condition existing. Spiritually, neighbor, is this your condition?

You need to look well to your city of Mansoul. Has "rubbish" accumulated in your life? Are you allowing "things" to interfere with a holy walk with God? Are bad habits, a wrong thought life, uncharitable words a part of your life? Get rid of this "rubbish." Within the walls of Mansoul does peace reign? Are you filled with satisfaction? Are you experiencing heavenly joys, joy unspeakable, hope immortal? These things will show if you are! Are you surrounded with walls of holy character, Christian principles, habits that correspond with holy living, courage to do or die, faith that accomplishes for God, a consecration that is complete? Do you need to rebuild the walls of the City of Mansoul? Has worldliness or compromise entered your soul. Do you complain about your lot in life and thereby charge God foolishly? Do you need to rebuild the walls of salvation? Have you been overrun with the spirit of this lukewarm, superficial age until you have suffered a breach in the walls of your soul? Are you wearing the "crown of life" or are you shackled by a despondent, defeated, gloomy, faultfinding spirit? Do you make your way to the house of God with palms of victory and shouts of glory or do you commercialize the house of God with the burdens of secular thoughts? Do you charge the atmosphere with the weight of unsolved problems and discouragement that you should have cast on the Lord? Do you bring into the house of God a guilt? Are there lurking secret sins?

If you find your City of Mansoul with walls down, do what Nehemiah did. He never resumed normal living until his defense was restored. I am afraid we have not learned this lesson. Across the years we have observed the same people who are regular attenders in our churches filling our altars over and over. This alone testifies of defeat. We are satisfied with a little seeking while continuing on in normal life, never seeming to catch the vision that real Holy Ghost victory can be obtained. It took Nehemiah fifty-two days of desperate, all out effort, and he never quit until the job was done. Every soul without clear victory can also go after it like that.

In the third place this verse is telling us that Kingdom work cannot be done without vision, without faith, without grace. The sanctified, victorious Christians are the ones that should lead the way in these. Our age is our responsibility. I wonder what we are doing about it? Nehemiah through weeping, with fasting and praying obtained personal victory himself over every obstacle that would hinder him in carrying through to a victorious end a God given vision of what could and should be accomplished.

Real faith — if we pay the price to obtain it — sees what God wants to do, concurs with that and then appropriates the grace that is necessary plus the sweat to do it.

God help us all in these days to be able to render up a good account of our stewardship.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 16 CONSCIENCE

The Apostle Paul penned words of deep significance when he wrote, ". . .herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

"Old antinomianism (*anti*, against; *nomos*, law), made void the law through a so-called faith. They cried, 'Believe, believe, believe.' No matter how bad their practices, if they only believed. Believing would cover a multitude of sins. The new antinomianists also make void the law, but they do it not through faith, but through a false principle of conscience, which takes precedence even over the Word of God. Whatever conscience allows, even though contrary to God's inspired Word, is right with this old antinomianism in new clothes." Arthur C. Zepp.

"The chief fact of this world is conscience," says Dr. Banks. "It announces the supreme distinction of right and wrong, commands one, forbids the other, praises if we obey, condemns if we disobey. Its praise is sweeter, its condemnation heavier, than any outward praise or blame." It cannot be doubted that conscience is found in every man born in the world. "In its ordinary use the word covers everything in man's nature that has to do with the decisions and directions of moral conduct." Standard Dictionary.

It must be kept in mind that conscience may be weakened, perverted, stupefied, defiled, hardened, and seared. There is a strong tendency and practice among professed Christians (but unspiritual people) to make a "god" out of conscience. The cry is "obey your conscience. If it does not condemn you, you are safe." There is a tendency to set conscience as a final court of appeals — a judgment throne from which emanates the final word on conduct, character and righteousness. It is referred to as the "Voice of God in the soul."

Because of this false principle of conscience the cry comes from the worldly segment of the church to tone down the direct, specific statements concerning conduct and adornment in church manuals and disciplines and leave such matters to the "individual conscience." This statement for the "lowering of the bars and restrictions on worldliness" that is sticking its head up in our midst will be a growing thing unless rooted out. Such is fraught with peril to the church if yielded to!

Those who would dare intimate with an assumed air of innocence, "my conscience does not condemn me for wearing immodest dresses, watching television (on selected occasions), condoning worldly songs and literature, pleasure riding on the Lord's day, " etc., speak as though their conscience is all they must live, die and be judged by. To such we would say the Church is not called to please the individual conscience nor the intelligence of a more enlightened one, but God. Simply put, the subtle snare that so many professed people fall into is the belief that the individual conscience is a safe guide, and that, as long as its decisions are followed by no condemnation, therefore the soul is pursuing the right course.

In answer to this we would first say that the decisions of conscience are only right and safe to follow when certain conditions are met. A conscience which allows the questionable reflects on the sincerity of its possessor. Who has not met uneducated people, notwithstanding their illiteracy, who were thoroughly awake to the things of God, correct Christian conduct and deportment, even down to the minute details of Christian courtesy, while others of educational advantage failed at these points? What is the explanation? John Wesley stated that God writes these things on all truly awakened hearts. Unawakened hearts, though cultured, do not have this. A truly awakened conscience may be perplexed as to the propriety of doubtful things, and yet such an one invariably gives God the benefit of the doubt. Unawakened conscience give self the benefit.

Again, Paul stated a fundamental truth when he said, "My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 9:1). The word "conscience" means literally "to know with another or joint knowledge; or knowing together; or, knowledge in common with another."

We stated earlier that the decisions of conscience are only right and safe to follow when certain conditions are met. According to Paul's teaching in both the 24th chapter of Acts and the 9th chapter of Romans these conditions are four in number:

First, he stated, "my conscience bearing me witness." That is to say, his sanctified conscience. Paul, in a sanctified experience, makes a decision in the fear of God. It is rational, reasonable and justifiable. It is a decision empty of self and for God's glory alone. Such actions, as a rule, may be relied upon as a safe expression of the "voice of god." Such actions and decisions would ordinarily be safe for sanctified, conscientious people, but Paul does not stop here, allowable as it may be. He at one time claimed to have lived in all "good conscience" according to his light, but his conscience led him astray and, although now illuminated, purified and reasonably safe to follow, he still is not willing to follow its decisions alone.

Second, the Apostle exercised himself "to have always a conscience void of offense toward men." The inference here is that Paul considered his conscience right "toward men" when it coincided and agreed with the examples of holy men and gave no reasonable offense to any man in its liberties. In too many instances the law of God has been effectively voided by the mystical practice of "letting your conscience be your guide." According to this modern holiness way each individual must get his own pattern for Christian conduct. The primitive Christians, however, followed so closely the same path that Christianity was called "The Way." Today we are not supposed to force (press) our convictions on another. Wesley, on the other hand, in searching for the true Christian way of life, discovered this pattern within the pages of the New Testament and also found it exemplified in the lives and writings of the early church fathers. He thus came to the conclusion that there are some things "which are written on every truly awakened heart, ". . .ethics of Christianity practiced by all true Christians, and this pattern is always universally followed wherever there is a return to God and primitive Christianity. It was this that Paul felt his conscience must be in harmony if he were not to be deceived by a false conscience.

Third, Paul stated that his conscience "bore him witness in the Holy Ghost." Here he is saying, "I no longer decide anything by conscience alone, but by conscience and the Holy Ghost." The

Apostle coveted above all, the personal, inner witness of the Holy Spirit, assuring him that he was acting in all good faith and practice. This is "knowing together."

Surely a conscience bore witness to by a sanctified heart, plus a life that is in harmony with the pattern of Christianity (so sure of this pattern were the early Methodists that they included them as the rules of discipline for all members), plus his conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost, would have provided him an infallible guide.

Fourth, he stated, "herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men." The "herein" had reference to the agreement of his conscience with all things written in the law of God. His final court of appeal was God's written word and he "exercised himself" to find out of what that consisted and to live thereby.

Thus we have these four restrictions on conscience. Any one who violates these necessary safeguards is insincere in his claims of being all right because his conscience does not condemn him. He is only using conscience as a dodge to justify himself in wrong doing.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 17

SKILLFUL LAMENTATION

People tend to become adept in the things they habitually practice. In Amos 5:17 we read of those who were "skillful of lamentation." Such were professional mourners hired to wail for the dead. I have met people whom I would classify as "professional mourners." No, they have not been hired by anyone as such, but they have become skillful at making great lamentation — mourning some loss or calamity that has come to them, always blaming some one or some thing or some providence for their apparent failures and defeats — people who carry an atmosphere of defeat with them.

I read in Pulpit Helps: "The joyful people are those who are generous and kind: the miserable people are those who are selfish and unforgiving."

The problem-solvers are those whose lives are powered by faith and optimism; the problem people are those whose lives are drained by doubts and pessimism.

"The winners are those who have learned to take full responsibility for their actions; the losers are those who have a handy excuse for their failures."

There are those who habitually lament their failures because of what people, the ones they have to associate with, said or did to them — always governed by people. If it is not people it is circumstances — if the economy hadn't been so bad they would have been rich. If it is not circumstances it is because of physical problems. In their lamentations they are overcome by worry, fear, anger, selfishness, inertia, nearsightedness.

Amos was speaking to those (5:8) who saw in the stars more than material lights. His hearers believed in astrology; prevalent in all ages from the very dawn of history and so much in evidence today. Astrologers have blamed their fate or fortune on the relative positions and movements of the moon, sun, and stars. They miss it! Mankind is exhorted in this passage of Amos to look beyond Pleiades and Orion to the God who created and who governs all things.

Our fortune in life is not to be accredited to "the sweet influence of Pleiades" or "the doleful effect of Orion." Circumstances are not the result of chance nor the decree of blind fate, but are to be ascribed to Him "who made the seven stars and Orion," and to the Judge of all the earth who will do right.

This Divine revelation in Scripture affirms of God that He appoints the lot of each, and this with a view of the training of character, which far outweighs the pleasantness or the painfulness found in mere circumstances.

Take for example children who are born in prosperity and contrast them with children born in a drunkard's home. Are we to ascribe their circumstances to the result of chance or blind fate or are we allowed to look beyond that and ascribe it to Him "who made the seven stars and Orion"? Adversity for those who in the midst of it will prove themselves faithful and trustworthy, will appear by and by to be stepping stones to character. On the other hand, prosperity will seem in retrospect of little worth to him who, through his thanklessness and prayerlessness, has failed to "lay hold on eternal life." Heredity and environment do determine the context into which our present lives are set. These two forces can destroy life at its first spiritual budding, but they do not need to.

Whatever influences surround us, let us for our own sakes recognize that it is "the Lord who gives power to get wealth." If we are in adversity let us not blame our "luck" on people, but seek comfort and help in Him "who maketh the seven stars and Orion." Away with lamentation and mourning. May we rather exercise skill in praising and worshipping Him that doeth all things well.

Lamentation and mourning! Yes, but every coin has two sides and in one respect it is proper and of inestimable value to be skillful in lamentation and mourning. To lament is to express outwardly sorrow and grief, and to lament over the wickedness of this day and with a burden for lost souls is a ministry so needed but so scarce. We read in Ezekiel 9:3b-6: "And he (the Lord) called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And . . . said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary."

When the "marking" and the "slaying" had been accomplished Ezekiel testified by saying, "and I was left." I wonder who among us would be left today if such were to take place? There is apparently not much "weeping between the porch and the altar" these days.

Where are the sighers and criers today? These are certainly the marks of true intercession — the one thing that is so desperately needed and so scarce. This is the primary element in the ministry of the saints that is responsible for keeping the fires of revival burning, and that God uses to bring pungent conviction on the lost. Where are the intercessors? Why are they so scarce? How can this be when our condition in these last days is so desperate? The ministry of intercessory praying is taxing, it is demanding, it is time consuming. The push button, materialistic, Laodicean age has produced an ease loving people, a people too busy, too weary, too taken up with "things" and man made programs to know much, if anything, about true intercession — what it means to sigh and cry for the evils of this age. Multitudes are not needed here. A few, even one who can sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in this day, could bring revival to pass.

Would you, reader, be that one in your church — a skillful lamenter and mourner over lost humanity until salvation, revival, would be outpoured on those around you?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 18

COINS THAT HAVE NO VALUE

There is a Scripture verse in Titus 1:16 that is startling — at least it should startle us — and it reads like this, "They profess that they know God: but in works they deny him, being reprobate" (i.e., counterfeit). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells about those who profess that they belong to the Lord but are not really members of His kingdom (Matt. 7:21-23). They are the ones who hear His sayings and do them not. Their mouth says one thing and their life says something different. They are termed by some "Conventional Christians."

Conventional Christians are practical atheists. They deny God's authority in every-day life. They ignore the claims He has on them; their existence, their talents and their possessions. They deny His teaching that spiritual interests are supreme by declaring in their daily life that temporal interests are paramount. They deny His teaching that no man liveth unto himself by declaring that self-interests are uppermost. Jesus likened them unto a foolish man. In our ranks we might term them Calvinistic-Arminians. There are three ways men can deny God — With the tongue; with the heart; with the life or actions.

Are we denying God with our life or actions? I wonder! We are if we think, just because we profess Christianity, we are released from the requirements of the law of God. We are if we think we do not have to obey God's Word until we feel some peculiar kind of impression, leadership, or prompting of the Spirit. We are if we think we can keep saved and still live day after day on a carnal, fleshly level, never becoming involved in a life of service for the Master.

To know the Word of God, its teachings, laws and commandments, makes us responsible for the doing of them. We make void the law of God when we think we can keep saved and still do nothing. We separate saving faith in God from works of faith. We seem to forget that our works of faith make genuine and prove the reality of our saving faith (James 3:18).

How many young people who testify to being saved, spend their long summer evenings in pursuit of pleasures innocent in themselves, meeting at some hamburger joint or eating place, or pee-wee golf link, or gathering for a wiener roast, or out-door recreation, or just sitting around in a "jam" session and never seem to be moved to go calling or witnessing or to get involved in a prayer meeting to pray for the souls of the lost? All this when the Bible plainly indicates that the new-birth experience creates a zeal in the heart to seek out the unsaved. But instead of responding to the God implanted zeal and entering into a life of service, they have let this zeal die and have found themselves just one of the gang out for a good time. Having lost the soul-yearning to do something for the Master, they now wait until there is a special organized effort before feeling obligated or making an effort to witness. They thus set the authority of God's Word aside. They make void their faith by lack of works and by this testify that their faith is no longer genuine and they are back again in their sins, for "he that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin."

While there are a few who for physical reasons cannot fast, many do not for the simple reason they feel no obligation to obey the Word of God concerning systematic fasting. By their lack of "works" they make void the Word.

If we have Bible faith it will produce conduct in harmony with the laws and teachings that are revealed in the Bible. To demand special light before we will obey the plain instructions and laws of the Bible is to fall into the error of antinomianism. Our spiritual fathers found their light by the help of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. They tithed because it was set forth in the Word. They dressed modestly because the Bible taught them it was God's will. They witnessed to the lost because God commanded it (Matt. 28:19,20), and it was in harmony with their heart desire. They were doers of the Word. They had a love for the Word and searched it to know and obey its revelations.

Many a young person has wrecked his or her life by not obeying God's law. They ask counsel of God for a life companion and then take up friendship with some ungodly person which is contrary to the Word of God.

Many today make void God's law by claiming they have no convictions of their own on certain things they allow. When they face the standards of holy living that cut across the fashions of the day, they excuse themselves on the ground that they have no conscience about those things, but they never seem to have a concern or sense of responsibility to "search the Scriptures daily" to see if those things be so.

We need to get back to a practical living based on a "thus saith the Lord." Have we become accustomed to letting the Word of God go into one ear and out the other? We are commanded in the Word to keep the "precepts" of God. Precepts are the teachings of God's Word that get into the sphere of "little" things. The Bible has a lot to say about our thought life — bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; our words — every idle word must be given account of at the judgment of God; our dress — simplicity and modesty is the rule here; our daily walk — we are to walk in the Spirit, redeeming the time; the Lord's day — we are to keep it holy, avoiding unnecessary labor; witnessing — carrying out the great commission. These are just a few among the many things the Word of God gives specific direction in.

How many in this day are caught up in the whirl of fleshly, earthly living, not willing or too indifferent to know and obey the commands of God? These are not Bible Christians. They are in the antinomian crowd who set aside the Word of God and live as they choose while claiming the benefits of salvation.

Getting back to our Scripture, Titus 1:16, we find that professors of salvation deny God in works by being abominable — abominable means having unnatural lust. How true it is! We are either serving God by our works — keeping His commandments, zealous of good works, or are taken up with all kinds of unnatural lusts — lusting after pleasure, having constantly to be entertained; lusting after the latest fads and fashions; lusting after the approval of the carnal crowd; lusting after "gab" sessions to hear and tell the latest juicy "news." This is the crowd that asks the question, "What harm is there in it?" If they ever had spiritual life they have lost it. Thus they are "disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," i.e., counterfeit. They are like a bad coin, without real value. Even if

they do good works, they do them not from the heart or in the spirit in which they should be performed.

What will the judgment be for those who have not the fruits of righteousness in them? May God have mercy on us and save us from this awful antinomian trend that spells death to any spiritual movement. Bessie F. Hatcher caught the need of the hour and the prayer that should be prayed by many in these days when she wrote:

LET ME BURN OUT FOR THEE

Oh God, the world is lost in sin, And so few that seem to care!
Many of whom profess Thy name no burden will help to bear.
We need a passion, Lord, for souls, to bring the lost back to Thee;
Our hearts must be stirred, till all have heard at least once of Calvary.

How cold has been our giving, Lord! How selfish our love has been,
Keeping from those who never heard the gospel that saves from sin!
How often we have turned aside, Neglecting to do our part,
Forgetting Thy tears and agony, Forgetting Thy bleeding heart!

Meet us and break us up, dear Lord, Until driven to our knees.
Bare to our gaze Thy cross and love, Of blood-baptized Calvary.
Speak till we hear again Thy call, And hold nothing back from Thee.
Oh, burn on our hearts the hopeless wail of souls damned eternally.

O God, with shame I humbly bow, In tears and with contrite heart.
Forgive me for the broken vows, And failure to do my part.
I heed Thy call and say, "Fare-well," To all that would hinder me;
Thy grace and Thy love to lost ones, tell, And my life burn out for Thee.

Chorus:

Let me burn out for Thee, dear Lord, Burn and wear out for Thee.
Don't let me rust, or my life be a failure, my God to Thee.
Use me and all I have, dear Lord, And get me so close to Thee
That I feel the throb of the great heart of God,
Until I burn out for Thee.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 19 WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

Among the most sobering words in the Bible are those of the risen Lord to John on Patmos concerning the Church in Sardis: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and are dead." Rev. 3:1

How tragic and sad! A name, but a name without reality or concrete evidence to back it up. And yet, what difference is there in this and a Christian who is one by profession but whose life gives his claim the lie?

To be a Christian is to be Christ-like. Christ came to this world not only to make atonement for sin but to teach us by example how we should live in this present world. I Peter 2:21. Primarily a Christian is one who has had a change of heart and this change of heart should make him Christ-like within and without. To be a Christian, then, is to be Christ-like in our living. How can men judge that we are Christian except by our lives, for it is the outward life than man looketh upon and by which he judges another. Would anyone by observing your life suspect that you are a Christian? To the degree that we exemplify the life of Christ, to that degree and in that respect we can be called Christian. Let us examine ourselves in this light and see if we are Christ-like.

1. Christ was taken up with the interests of others. Do you ever go out of your way to help others? It is said of Jesus that "he must needs go through Samaria." In the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus answered the question "Who is my neighbor?" The "priest" in the story (we are "priests unto God"), and the "Levite" were too busy being "Christians" to truly be one. How many all around us can be put in the class of the poor man in this story who "fell among thieves, was stripped, wounded and left half dead?" Sin has robbed man, stripped him of his character and manhood and left him wounded and dead in trespasses and sins, and we are too busy being Christians to be "neighbor unto him that fell among thieves." Are we really Christian? Would anyone suspect us to be like Christ in this respect? How much more like Christ are we than the priest and Levite?

2. Christ was guileless. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." I Peter 2:21-23

Guile carries with it the thought of deceit. "It is very likely," says Adam Clarke, "that the apostles mention guile, because those who do wrong generally strive to screen themselves by prevarication and lies." But how do we account for our barrenness and fruitlessness in the kingdom of God unless it is that we screen ourselves with "excuses," and "explanations." We would not be so bold as to call them prevarications and lies. How far are we from guile — the craftiness of deceit — at this point?

Jesus did always the will of the Father and so what He said of Himself was true. There was no need of a cover-up by guile. In this respect, also, Christ came to be our example.

3. Christ associated with sinners. By this we mean that Jesus did not isolate himself from sinners. He was called "a friend of publicans and sinners;" he "sat at meat in the Pharisee's house." There is great meaning in Christ's prayer when He said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Have we become "locked in" to our church organization so that we have only beaten paths to walk in "within the body of the church" and there are no paths leading out to a lost world? How many have you gone out of your way to witness to this past week? Or, how long has it been since you have witnessed at all to a lost soul? Have you dined with sinners or invited them to dine with you in an effort to get them to God? Are you a real Christian or a make-believe one?

4. Christ was human. He knew what it was to live in a human body and not be a slave to its appetites. He sought nothing for Himself but a cross to die on and a tomb in which to dress for Easter Sunday morning. To be Christian means to be properly related to our body. Christ is our example here and Paul rang the bell when he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." I Cor. 9:27. The "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," not an instrument of lust or gluttony. Are you a Christian in regard to your body?

5. Christ kept constantly in touch with the Father. In this He taught us the value and the necessity of prayer. The chief sin of man, the number one sin, is independence, an independence that says to God, "I am big enough and know enough to run my own affairs and all I need you for is the big emergencies of life." This independency is revealed in Christians when they do not take time to wait on God, to seek His way and will in their lives. Christ did always and only the will of His Father but His life was one of consistent and constant prayerfulness. He never was at any moment of His life on earth outside the will of His Father. In our finiteness and fallen state we might not always be able to know the perfect will of God in every detail of our life, but we miss it when we do not take time to diligently seek His will and we sin when we do not desire to do so. Prayerlessness reveals the awful spirit of independency and keeps us needlessly outside the will of God. No doubt the chief "sin" of Christians is lack of prayer. If your prayer life were made public would you be thought of as a Christian?

6. Christ suffered for the cause of righteousness. It was totally foreign to the mind or purpose of Christ to regard Himself apart from righteousness and holiness. To think and act in this manner in the kind of world we are living in is to invite suffering. Stronger still, it is to make suffering unavoidable. Yet Christ drew not back in the least but became obedient even unto the suffering of death for righteousness' sake. How Christian are we if we shun the world's reproaches, compromise our stand, follow the world in its styles and trends to avoid suffering? Charles Finney wrote, "They who have overcome the world are no longer careful either to secure its favor or avert its frown . . . 'To me,' said Paul, 'It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment.' So every real Christian; his care is to secure the approbation of God; this is his chief concern, to commend himself to God and to his conscience. No man has overcome the world unless he has attained to this state of mind. Almost no feature of Christian character is more striking or more decisive than this — indifference

to the opinions of the world." But this is bound to invite suffering. Are you Christian (Christ-like) in this respect?

7. To sum it all up, Christ subordinated his life gladly, freely, voluntarily, and continually to the Father in obedience. In His obedience He moved so harmoniously along the lines of the divine will until God could always approve of Him and manifest His power through Him. In this, Christ is our example and to this end He prayed for us, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Are we Christlike in this respect, or are we like those of Sardis that have a name that "thou livest but are dead"?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By
I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 20 **"LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER"**

"The Kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

"But while he slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

"But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

"So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

"He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

"But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." — Matthew 13:24-30

Perhaps it would have been more appropriate to have titled this article, "Tares In The Wheatfield," or "Harvesting Out of Season." We will leave it to the reader to decide. However, there are a number of truths presented in this parable that are applicable to our day and to us individually and collectively as holiness people.

In verse twenty-five we read, "But while men slept." How applicable this is to the Laodicean age of lukewarmness in which we live. When professors of religion are lukewarm and pastors are indolent — when the fire of the Holy Ghost burns low, genuine Christianity degenerates. It is then that the righteous and the carnal (degenerate or bastard wheat) are mingled together in the visible church. There is in every church those who have an outward resemblance of good, whose hearts are not right with God.

Woe to those pastors who are not constantly in an all out effort to keep a revival atmosphere alive in their church. We are living in that age (Matt. 25:1-13) when, as the five wise and five foolish virgins, all are slumbering and sleeping. There was a third group, however, the ones who gave the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." May God increase that number who are alive and alert in this midnight hour.

This parable teaches us, as we have already inferred, that in the kingdom of heaven on earth (the visible church) there will exist side by side, genuine Spirit-filled professors of religion and

counterfeit, carnal, false (many times deceived) professors of holiness of heart. Adam Clarke states that, "It is the interest of Satan to introduce hypocrites and wicked persons into religious societies, in order to discredit the work of God, and to favour his own designs."

How insistent we must be to warn people to dig to the bottom and not let Satan or their own carnal heart deceive them into professing something they do not possess. If we are not careful our church membership will be loaded with carnal, spiritually deceived people and we will have more trouble on our hands than we can handle.

In the third place we learn from this parable that our efforts in kingdom work, especially those of the ministry, are not to be taken up with an endeavor to separate the true from the false professors of religion. True, "every minister of God should separate from the Church of Christ every incorrigible sinner, yet he should proceed no further."

The picture that Jesus draws is that of root systems of the wheat and the darnel (a plant that looks so similar to wheat that in its stages of growth it is hard to detect from genuine wheat) becomes so intertwined that to uproot one would also uproot the other. Adam Clarke stated, "Men often persecute a true Christian, while they intend to prosecute an impious person. 'A zeal for the extirpation of heretics and wicked men,' said a pious Papist, 'not regulated by these words of our blessed Saviour, allows no time for the one to grow strong in goodness, or to the other to forsake their evil courses. They are of a spirit very opposite to his, who care not if they root up the wheat, provided they can but gather up the tares.' The zeal which leads persons to persecute others for religious opinions is not less a seed of the devil than a bad opinion itself is."

In the fourth place, the dealing with a situation that Jesus presents in this parable can be approached from one of two standpoints. It can be dealt with, first, from the standpoint of accusation — a frontal, open attack in an effort to separate, from human estimation, the genuine from the counterfeit. How many, at one time or another, have waded into a situation with great zeal and well meaning and in all sincerity, but without the needed prayer and divine wisdom and without being sure the gospel sword was dipped in the oil of the Spirit, and in the end succeeded in doing more damage than good. Wheat was destroyed in an effort to eliminate the darnel. Secondly a mixed situation can be dealt with from the standpoint of revelation, or the proclamation of truth, "not enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power." (I Cor. 2:4) This was Paul's method. His was a ministry of compassion, a ministry that was Biblical and uncompromising with the truth. He was willing, after a faithful proclamation of truth, to leave the results in the hands of the Holy Spirit. His (God's) "skillful hands" will heal where human hands will only hurt. With patience Paul allowed himself to be "shut up" to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, in the fifth place, the parable certainly teaches that we are to leave the task of separation to the God appointed reapers.

May we in our humanity have wisdom enough to fulfill our task under God and leave to the blessed faithful Holy Spirit, the part that is His in this great work of redemption.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 21

KEEP YOUR VISION CLEAR

Great events are about to erupt on a judgment ripened age. We need, as never before, to keep a clear vision of our origin, duty and destiny in the face of these great end-time events that are now upon us.

We read in 2 Corinthians 4:5, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." God has revealed His glory in His Only Begotten Son through the incarnation, fulfilling the great plan of redemption promised before the foundation of the world. To keep a clear vision in relationship to redemption has always been the responsibility and privilege of every age and no less ours in end times.

It was a vision of this glory that Moses was so desperately in need of when he cried to God and said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." His burdens had become heavier that he could bear. We read in Numbers 12:3, "(Now that man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)" This was not a eulogy of Moses, the author of the Pentateuch, upon himself, who was certainly as humble and modest as he was meek. The Hebrew word which is translated "meek" in this place carries the meaning, depressed, afflicted, so that we could rightly translate this verse, "Now this man Moses was depressed, or afflicted more than any man of the land."

The reason of this depressed, or affliction was the great burden he had to bear in the care and government of this people, and because of their ingratitude and rebellion both against God and himself. (Strange, isn't it, that men envied Moses his position, and just as strange why carnal men seek for position and power when the very power they envy and reach for is oppressive to its possessor and more than their shoulders can sustain?)

Moses was a man without peer as a leader, organizer, lawgiver, statesman. He was divinely assigned the stupendous task of leading several million people out of Egyptian slavery, forming these slave people into a nation and building them into a united people to the end they would provide the channel that would bring Christ, the expressed glory of God, to the world of lost men. Circumstances arose that were humanly insurmountable, the people turned against him; bringing on him awful depression and affliction. He himself needed help that no human being alone could supply. He needed God's touch and enablement. In that desperate hour he cried out to God, ". . . shew me thy way . . . shew me thy glory." He needed the assurance of God's presence. He needed a renewed insight into God's purposes. He dare not move ahead without this! It was not long until God granted him his request. We see this in the latter part of the thirty-third chapter of Exodus. Moses saw the glory of God "in the face of Jesus Christ." I am sure that Moses got a vision of his place and his task as it related to the entire redemptive purpose of God through Jesus Christ. It was this that illuminated his mind and corrected his moods and lifted him above depression and affliction. Having caught the

vision of the ways of God and of His glory, he then gained courage to press on, power to do what God bade him do, understanding of the way, grace to hold him steady, patience to time with God's plan, the peace of God that passeth all understanding and an unmoveableness that would render him an able instrument in God's great purpose. As the shadows of this dispensation close in around us, we need what Moses needed and obtained in his hour of temptation.

What was the secret of Moses in gaining divine aid in his hour of desperation? As a mere man, Moses was an unimpressive figure. He was shrinking, self-distrustful, inferior. When God called him to deliver His people, he said, "Who am I?" "I am not eloquent." "They will not believe me." His own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, were not afraid to challenge his leadership. Korah, Dathan and Abiram rose up against him, Moses' secret lay in his invisible assets — he knew God and he was humble and meek enough to call on God in his need. He prayed at the burning bush, he prayed to God in Egypt when people blamed him for the extra burdens heaped on them, he prayed at the waters of Marah, he prayed (and, oh, what a prayer) at Sinai in the incident of the golden calf, he prayed for Miriam in her leprous condition brought on by her rebellion, he prayed when the ten spies brought back their evil report. He prayed to God, "Shew me thy way, not my way." He prayed, "Shew me thy glory, that the way I take might be right and that the shadows be dispelled." Did not God say in His Word, ". . .not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things which are; That no flesh should glory in his presence." I Cor. 1:26-29.

There comes a time in our lives when our hearts cry out to God for help. Burdens get heavy, pressures build up, material needs arise, physical health wanes, loved ones slip away, church problems surmount, things take place in church life that are inexplicable and appear so inconsistent with our message of holiness, misunderstandings and criticisms from others are our lot. Questions fill our thoughts — why do I feel this awful depression? Why am I suffering these afflictions? It is in times like these we need, like Moses, to cry out to God, "Shew me thy glory." We need a renewed vision of God's great redemptive purposes in Jesus Christ until our minds are thoroughly illuminated with this divine truth and our moods are corrected and lifted above depression and affliction and our souls are set aflame with a zeal to proclaim this glory lest we miss the very purpose of our place in God's great redemptive program.

Going back to the thought in 2 Corinthians 4:6 we read, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts (He is the author of light) to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And here we have the great purpose of God in redemption through Christ, not only to be partakers of this glory, but to diffuse this light among men.

Back in that distant past when Moses was a vital link in the great plan of God to provide a Redeemer, God let him look ahead to see "the face of Jesus Christ." It was the vision of this coming Divine-human one that fortified him in that hour and enabled him to carry out his part in the Divine plan of providing redemption for a lost race. Moses was a faithful servant in his day in the great household of God. We are living in another day, the closing day of this gospel dispensation. As

shadows lengthen and the darkness of a God-rejecting age deepens, we must not allow this darkness with its afflicting pressures to keep us from occupying 'till He, the Son of God, appears, but to continue faithfully to fill our place in the redemptive purposes of God in Christ.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 22

ON THE BORDERS OF CANAAN

The Philistines, the Midianites, the Moabites and Ammonites, the Zidonians along with other nations bordered the land of Canaan, the home of the Hebrew people. It is of more than passing interest to note how the Moabites and Ammonites came into existence.

As to the origin of these two nations we have the story related in Genesis 19:30-38. After experiencing a remarkable escape from death, Lot with two of his daughters retired into the mountains and set up a home in a remote cave. Here he became entangled with wine through the subtle conniving of his daughters and they each through incest succeeded in giving birth to a son.

To judge this incident as compassionately as we can we must realize that the series of disasters these young ladies faced were in no way trivial. In all appearances no one in the valley had escaped destruction besides themselves putting them in desperate straits. Where was there a man to marry them and where was there a son to preserve their father's name? This question loomed great in importance in their day. The solution they devised was a shocking one but somehow they managed to rationalize it to their own satisfaction. By reducing their father to insensibility with wine, they could, by their own father, preserve seed alive. So the Moabites and Ammonites, closely related to the Hebrew people, came into existence. Their origin is a matter of record but God's Word gives it no sense of moral approval.

We can learn from this some of the dangers of a purely rationalistic way of life and what it can lead to.

A purely rationalistic approach to life rules out all morality and leads to a deceitful way of living. We can imagine two daughters of Lot in their dire circumstances saying something like this, "We owe it to ourselves and to our father to preserve his seed alive on earth." Isn't it strange what people think they owe to themselves and to what extremes and even dastardly and immoral acts evolve from such a philosophy? To give them the benefit of the doubt we might say that they made their own willingness to participate in such an act seem altruistic and noble on their part. But the truth is that no man owes anything to himself but to do the will of God, nothing more, nothing less. "I owe it to myself" philosophy, puts self in the saddle and selfishness is always immoral. We have the picture here of a deep seated carnal desire that is willing to be immoral and reaching out in a rationalistic way to justify the act.

Furthermore, rationalistic living is often a deceitful way of life. Jeremiah under the inspiration of the Spirit tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (17:9) These two young ladies knew better than to discuss their plan with their father. Why? What is it that makes one unwilling to be above board with his plans? They knew if this "noble deed" (?) of theirs was to be carried out it would have to be done through subtlety. Acts that cannot stand

up to the white light of God are sinful. Deceitfulness reveals insubordination. It is the subtle working of the carnal mind to circumvent right and decency and obtain what self desires.

A rationalistic way of life is a self-centered versus a God-centered way of living. Eve finally reasoned her way into eating the forbidden fruit — she saw that it was "good for food." It was "pleasant to the eyes." It was a tree to be "desired to make one wise." Sin and evil always have a reason. There is no out-arguing the devil once he gets a person into a debate. It is always the course down! Reason apart from revelation works havoc to the soul.

A purely rationalistic approach to life must first set God's Word aside. the Word of God was clear to Adam and Eve. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Eve went ahead anyway but to do so she had to set aside the plain Word of God. Her act led to death. Paul states it thus: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). Any time we set God's Word aside to do our own will it brings on spiritual death. The Psalmist declares (119:130), "The entrance of thy words giveth light."

The "What's wrong with it" crowd rationalize their way into worldly living and thus justify themselves, even at times, in gross sin. They can dress like the world, act like the world, talk like the world, go to places the world goes and testify like a saint, but to do so they first have to ignore God's Word. I John 2:15 says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This includes love of its fashions, places and entertainment. The "no harm" crowd first has to disregard the plain teaching of God's Word. They must leave the land of Canaan (holiness) and dwell with the Moabites and Ammonites — The way of carnal reasoning.

A purely rationalistic approach to life must rule out faith. Elimelech and Naomi with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, left for Moab when a famine got on where they lived. While in Moab — Out there where she had forsaken the way of faith and trust in God — Naomi lost her husband and two sons and finally returned to Bethlehem in bitterness. If one is willing, however, to humble himself and return (Oh, the marvelous grace of God!), God has a way of bringing victory out of defeat. How many a soul because of extenuating circumstances have taken themselves out of the will of God only to find the way bitter in the end. Their faith failed them in the test. The writer of Hebrews (3:12) warns us, "Take heed, brethren, let there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." How blessed it is to keep our faith in God and although we may not be able to understand all the ways that God designs to lead us to that blessed promised land, but holding steady under the leadership of God, to find out in the end that God's way is always best. We have the promise, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding, In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5,6) Isaiah gives these encouraging words, "And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highway shall be exalted" (49:11).

A purely rationalistic approach to life must, in the final analysis, rule God Himself out. When this is done self becomes its own God. We read in Acts 17:26, "For in him we live and move, and have our being." Again in verse 25, "He giveth to all life, and breath and all things." We read in Isaiah

49:16, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me." How suicidal to take ourselves out of the center of the will of God who created and then sustains us by every breath we breathe.

God is a sovereign being. He is omniscient and He is faithful. One who takes the bit in his own teeth, proclaims himself his own god and tells the world by his actions, "I am big enough to take care of myself," is a first cousin to that spirit that brought the Moabites and Ammonites into existence. People who forget God or set Him aside and try to work out the problems of life by their own ingenuity follow that same spirit. In Isaiah 50:10 we read, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

To act from the standpoint of wisdom is to keep dead centered in the will of God. To rationalize our way through is to run our life like we choose. It's a way of carnal mindedness. On the very borders of a sanctified life lay that temptation to doubt God and turn to human reasoning in place of trusting a faithful Creator. There are many warnings in the Word against departing from God by taking life in one's own hands — the way of rationalistic living. Jude exhorts us to "keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." If Israel had kept true to God she never would have suffered the evil influences and destruction that came from these border nations. But because of their unfaithfulness to God and because in their heart they had departed from the ways of God we read in 2 Kings 24:2, "the Lord sent against (them) bands of the Chaldeans, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets." Paul sums it up on these words, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Remember, we owe ourselves nothing but the will of God!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 23 CONTINUALLY

The word "continually" is used throughout the Bible and has great significance in relationship to a successful, prosperous, happy Christian life. In Exodus 29:42, it speaks of "a continual burnt offering." This implies not only a momentary total abandonment or full consecration to the whole will and plan of God but a continual, day by day living out of this commitment. Again in Leviticus 24:2, the Levites were "to cause the lamps to burn continually." This word "continually" means "going on without interruption." We read in I Timothy 4:16, "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." In connection with this word "continually" at least seven things are required throughout the Bible extending from Genesis to Revelation.

We are to seek the Lord continually. "Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually." (I Chron. 16:11). The face of God indicates His favor, His blessing, His approval, His smile. His back would indicate His wrath, His displeasure, His judgment. I want His face. How about you?

We are to obey Him continually. We read in Psalm 119:44, 117 respectively, "So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever." "I shall have respect unto thy statutes continually."

We are to fear Him continually. "Happy is the man that feareth (continually) always" (Prov. 28:14). We read in Acts 9:31, "Then had the church rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." The kind of fear we are talking about is the fear of veneration — the act of showing reverence and honor. We should stand in awe of God and sin not.

We are to wait on Him continually. This also carries with it the thought of hope. "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually." Hosea 12:6. "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more." (Ps. 71:14). "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7).

We are to continually worship. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen" (Luke 24:51-53).

We are to pray continually. "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually." (Hosea 12:6). "Pray without ceasing." (I Thess. 5:17).

We are to praise continually. "Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified." (Ps. 40:16). "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13:15).

If we could discipline ourselves so that we would be continually occupied in seeking God, in obeying Him, in being possessed with that fear of veneration; in waiting on Him, in worshipping Him, in praying to Him and praising Him, what time would there be left to grumble, complain, fault-find or backslide from a walk with God? In the face of what we have been looking at, idleness is inexcusable — idleness in respect primarily to the highest interests of life. How many are content to do nothing for God, nothing for their own souls, nothing for one's own generation according to the will of God, nothing for the future. Why? They are not continually occupied in those things a Christian should be taken up with. Idleness — The opposite of being continually occupied — defeats the object of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It deteriorates character. Like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. There was plenty to do — to dress the garden. There was every tree pleasant to the eye for good. They had to turn aside in interests and heart loyalty.

Continually being rightly occupied does hold a key to spiritual and final victory!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 24 WHEN SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The sixty-second psalm has been called the "only" psalm from the sixfold use of the word found in verses one, two, four, five, six and nine.

We note the word "only" in verse one. "Truly (or only) my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation." Unadulterated faith is that which rests on God alone. Confidence which relies partly on God and partly on self or some other person or thing is vain confidence.

We have pictured here in this first verse a surrendered soul — "my soul waiteth upon God." The posture here is that of a soul whose inmost self draws near in reverent obedience to God, not in a formal hypocritical manner but in an attitude of humbled awe, submission and acquiescence.

Not only is there pictured here a surrendered soul but a silent soul. The original is "only to God is my soul silence." Not a rebellious word or thought is allowed to break in to disrupt the peaceful silence. "No eloquence in the world is half so full of meaning as the patient silence of a child of God. It is an eminent work of grace to bring down the will and subdue the affections to such a degree, that the whole mind lies before the Lord like the sea beneath the wind, ready to be moved by every breath of his mouth, but free from all inward and self-caused emotion, as also drop all power to be moved by anything other than the divine will. We should be wax to the Lord, but adamant to every other force . . . If to wait on God be worship, to wait on the creature is idolatry; if to wait on God alone be true faith, to associate an arm of flesh with Him is audacious unbelief." (C .H. Spurgeon)

A soul in silence before God! No fretting to have one's way. No carnal reasoning to obscure God's perfect will. No other voice allowed to turn the soul away from God's Sovereign plan. A silence that takes the soul away from the rush and bustle of a materialistic way of life. A silence before omnipotence that allows a soul a right perspective of time in relationship to eternity. There are several reasons for a silent, resting, expecting, reflecting, solicitous and observing posture.

In the first place we ought to be subject to God as silent disciples before a master. Whatever God allows to happen to me, I need to be silent before him, enduring whatever pain He designs to come my way, learning the lessons He would have me learn admiring His ways with my soul. In the next place, we ought to be subject to God as creatures keeping quiet before their Creator. In Isaiah 45:9 we read, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makes thou? or thy work He hath no hands?" In the third place we ought to be subject as clay in the hands of the potter, ready for the form into which He wisheth to fashion us. "As clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." Jer. 18:6 Fourthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a maid servant to her master, observing his wish, even in the most menial affairs.

George Muller comments on this first verse in Psalm sixty-two: "The natural mind is ever prone to reason, when we ought to believe; to be at work, when we ought to be quiet; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature . . . How different if one is enabled to wait God's own time, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith and patience it may be, how sweet it is and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for his deliverance.

This Psalm gives us a third glimpse and that is of a steadfast soul. In verse two we read, "He only is my rock and my salvation, he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved." Here we run across that word "only" again. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a secure refuge and declaring Him to be his only real protection, all-sufficient in Himself and never failing. The metaphor, however, changes with the words, "I shall not be greatly moved." A ship at anchor swings with the tide but is not swept away by the tempest. Personal weaknesses will cause one to be somewhat moved but his faith in God will prevent him from being much tossed about. "Moved," as one says, "but not removed." When a person is sure of his salvation circumstances of life nor devils in hell can greatly alarm him.

There is a fourth picture we can glean from this Psalm and that is of a secure soul. We look now to the sixth and seventh verses. The sixth verse is a repetition of the second verse with the exception of the last phrase. Here it is not "I shall not be greatly moved." The word "greatly" is left out here and we simply read, "I shall not be moved." God "only is my rock and my salvation." Here is perfect security. God alone, without other help is the foundation and completion of our safety. When a soul fully realizes that he will not be moved in the least degree. In the words of Robert Hawker, "If God is my "refuge" what enemy can pursue me? If my "defense," what temptation shall wound me? If my "rock," what storm shall shake me? If my "salvation," what melancholy shall deject me? If my "glory," what calumny shall defame me?

When we turn to a comparison of this sixty-second psalm with the sixty-third psalm we gain a full-orbed picture of the value of practicing silence in the presence of God. In the words of Charles Mackintosh, "The heart is ever prone to divide his confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must "wait only upon God. "He only" must be our "rock," our "salvation," and our "defense." Then, we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh first, and when that fails us, we look to God. This will never do either. He must be our first as well as our only resource. "O God, thou are my God, early will I seek thee." This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm 63. When we have learnt the blessedness of seeking God "only," we shall be sure to seek him "early."

We virtually leave God out when we do not seek Him first and "only." What is most prominent in our lives, God or self? May God help us practice silence before Him!

(Gleanings from The Treasury of David, Vol. II)

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 25

TRUTHS THAT FIT THIS DAY

One story is commenced in the Book of Ezra, and completed in the book of Nehemiah. The period covered by the two books was about one hundred and ten years. As history merely, it is the history of a decadent people, the story of a ruined economy. It is pitiful in the light of former things. All that is left of a one time glorious past is a poor remnant, paying tribute, rebuilding the temple, frightened in the midst of work, leaving it for long years, taking it up again and bringing it to such completion that old men wept as they remembered the former glory. It is a dark and sorry page of human history.

The question comes, what does all this mean in the economy of God? The divine purpose, as seen in Nehemiah, was that of putting the people under law, locking them up, until the faith should come. It is God working His eternal purpose, working in Nehemiah's day, to bring salvation to sinful man. Nehemiah was not a king, a priest nor a prophet. The king had failed and was set aside; the prophet's message though delivered, was not persuasive. The priest was corrupt, though still in the midst. Then God took a common man, made him neither king nor priest, nor prophet, but a plain, blunt man, who went right on and flung up a wall in seven weeks, and made a chance for the law to be read and expounded. The Law of God was that instrument designed to drive men to the only source of salvation, Christ, and it was the one thing in that day that needed to be preserved.

Nehemiah's task was divinely inspired, courageously carried out and triumphantly completed, and by his presumably insurmountable undertaking, he presents us with a timeless challenge that can be summed up in three words (4:14); fear not, forget not, fight.

First, we are commanded to fear not? What are we not to fear? God's people are not to fear the hereafter. If we keep true to God, He promises a "safe" tomorrow. Read John 14:1-3. It is sin that brings fear on the soul, but perfect love cast out the fear of the future. We read in Hebrews 2:14, 15, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

God's people are not to fear the here and now. It is estimated that during this past year 28,000 Americans took their own lives, an estimate that reveals only the tip of the iceberg. For whatever the reason one to take his own life, the suicide represents those who are not able to cope with life here and now. With the Christian, it is different. We read in Hebrews 13:5, 6, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Again in Matt. 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." A Christian is able to commit his way unto the Lord and to trust in the Lord with all his heart, acknowledging God in all his ways, knowing that it is God who has promised to direct his paths (Prov. 3:5, 6).

God's people are not to fear tomorrow, what it might bring, knowing that nothing will ever come to him without passing through the permissive or directive will of God — Nothing but that which in the overall picture of life will work for his good and God's glory (Rom. 8:28), and along with whatever comes, God promises sufficient grace to bear up under it all (2 Cor. 9:8; 12:9). We are not to fear poverty, disease, sickness or death. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; And ye are Christ's and Christ is God's (I Cor. 3:21-23).

Secondly we are commanded to forget not. We are exhorted to "Bless the Lord, . . . and forget not all his benefits" (Ps. 103:2). In this Psalm, we are reminded that it is God who forgiveth all thine iniquities; healeth all thy diseases; redeemeth thy life from destruction; crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. Besides this, He executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

We are admonished to remember the Lord. We are to remember Him because He is great and terrible (Neh. 4:14; Ps. 48:1). He is great in His creative power and wisdom (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 51:10), He is great in His redemptive power and purposes (Eph. 1:19; Col. 2:14-16). He is great in His love and forgiveness (read the book of Hosea). He is great in His faithfulness (read the book of Habakkuk).

We are to remember the Lord because He is terrible! He is terrible in His holiness. The great High Priest dare not approach this holy God unprepared. No sin or uncleanness can stand in the presence of a holy God (Read Isa. 33:14-16). God is terrible in His judgment. Read Romans chapter two. God will judge every man according to truth, his deeds, with no respect of persons, according to conscience and according to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to remember the Lord by giving Him first place (Matt. 633) in all things (Col. 1:18); by worshipping Him (John 4:23,24).

Thirdly we are admonished to fight. We are in a battle and we must not underestimate the enemy. He means to destroy us. We must continue "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). We must, as Jude exhorts us, "earnestly contend for the faith," i.e., the entire body of revealed truth. May God keep us in balance here lest we be led away to our own destruction. How the devil would like to destroy us by false brethren who "creep in unawares" (Jude 4, Acts 20:28-31).

We must fight for our sons, our daughters, our wives and houses. How are we to fight for these? We are to fight by setting a proper example (Phil. 4:9); by prayer (Col. 1:9); through self-discipline (I Cor. 9:27); through keeping up the lines of communication both with them and God.

The devil means to destroy us by any means possible. Through discouragement. Satan will bring discouragement upon us through vain regrets of the past (I Cor. 15:8-10). Paul won the victory here by "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," and by doing this one thing, pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Through encouragement. Satan will encourage a person in a wrong thing or a compromise way if he possibly can. Through diverted attention. Whatever gets a person's attention will finally get him, and Satan has a thousand ways to divert attention if we allow him. The secret

is looking constantly unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Through deceit. We need to beware lest we be deceived by Satan, by others or by our own self. The great danger of the unsanctified is his own heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9,10).

How are we to fight in this battle? We are to fight with obedience. (Rom. 6:16), an obedience that is instantaneous. We are to fight with victory; with the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11-18); we are to fight aggressively. Faith must first be sure of God and then must act with God and for God in strenuous endeavor. "The man who is evangelical believes that men are lost, and lost irrevocably unless saved through the Cross. If we believe these things, we must put blood and sweat into saving men. Faith is first sure of God. It then acts with God and for God. It declines all compromise with foes outside or inside. Faith trusts God as Nehemiah did, does its own day's work and leaves the future to Him." (Morgan).

We are to fight victoriously and whole-heartedly, not like the laborers in the vineyard who bargained for wages. May God help us to enter into these truths that make for success in our day!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 26

PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

". . . The Angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in to her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. . .

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Luke 1:26-38.

Two outstanding truths can be readily discerned in the experience of the Virgin Mary, as pictured in the above scripture, that have a spiritual application to every Christian heart.

The glory of it. Mary was highly favored of God. To have a messenger visit her straight from the throne room of heaven, though a fearful experience in some respects, nevertheless was glorious. She was to be highly favored in that she was to be the human instrument that would bring the Redeemer of mankind incarnate into the human race. ALL of God's love for a lost race was to be wrapped up in her. What a glorious experience. We see Mary in humility, self-abnegation, quietness (more ready to be silent than not), fidelity and submission — not what self might want, but what self ought. Her response to this heavenly visitation and annunciation lifts her forever into that realm where God intended man to live in regard to his relationship to his Creator, "be it unto me according to thy word." Any vital experience man has alone with His Creator is glorious.

The distress of it. Mary was a virgin, betrothed to Joseph, found with child. She knew the secret and it was precious. But this experience, and she consented to it, nevertheless, among men would put her reputation and honor in question and her life at stake. It created a barrier between her and her betrothed, Joseph, that seemed impassable. It subjected her to abuse from the outside world. There

was a real price for Mary to pay when she responded, "be it unto me according to they word." Never was a mother so honored, yet so tried. But it was of the Holy Ghost and she was the chosen instrument to bring the Christ Child to this world and, although it meant suffering, she was as secure in it as God Himself, for it was all within the Divine will and therefore had the protection of God Himself.

We see in this account of the annunciation to Mary and her response to it a type of God's visitation to all men. The glory of a visitation from God, when through faith He brings a soul to the consciousness that Christ has been born within the heart, is indescribable. When a soul has been brought to genuine Bible repentance through the convicting power of the Holy Ghost and the groundwork has been laid for Christ to "be formed in them" (Gal. 4:19), there then can come by faith the glorious reality of an indwelling Christ. This transaction takes place in the deep recesses of a soul, is satisfying, thrilling and inexplicable. But, just as Mary could not keep the "immaculate conception" hid and as it brought her reputation, honor and life at stake among men, so it is with the person who experiences the new birth. This life that is hid within cannot long remain a secret. They say it was the secret desire among Jewish women that they might be the chosen one to be the mother of the Messiah, but how many Jewish women, do you suppose, would have been willing to pay the price in ignominy and shame that it took to become the mother of our Lord? But we face this same thing in the spiritual birth of Christ in the heart. In John 12:42, 43 we read, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." They could not stand the distress of an indwelling Christ. Men desire the glory, but are not willing to bear the shame. Paul tells us, (Phil. 1:29), "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake." (emphasis mine). Again in Romans 8:16-17, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God; And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we *suffer* with him, that we may be also glorified together." (emphasis mine)

In Acts 5:41 we read, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to *suffer* for his name." (emphasis mine) Peter takes up the same subject when he says, (I Peter 4:13), "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy." But he reminds us in the 19th verse that our suffering must be "according to the will of God."

This life of Christ within us is of the Holy Ghost and just as Mary, on account of the immaculate conception, so also is He the agent in the born-again experience. He not only regenerates, but purges, purifies and indwells the human heart and protects that new life that He imparts within the heart. When Mary gave consent unto God, as we have previously stated, she became subject to misunderstanding, abuse and death. But as the Holy Ghost miraculously protected that life that was conceived within her, so also will He protect that new life within the soul in miraculous ways as long as one can from his heart keep saying, "be it unto me according to they word."

Martin Luther, weighed down with the burden of sin, seeking to justify himself before God through penances, found the glorious new birth experience instantaneously by faith. It came to him suddenly when he laid hold of the promise, "the just shall live by faith." It was glorious to his soul,

but history reveals the suffering he faced as he proclaimed and lived this new life in the Spirit in a Christ-rejecting world.

We could well ask ourselves, just how much suffering in the spirit are we subjected to? If we truly have His Spirit abiding within how can we escape suffering in a Christ-rejecting world?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 27 THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving in its simplicity is simply the act of giving thanks. This contains in it two basic principles of life, namely, the principle of thankfulness and that of giving.

To be thankful is to be conscious of benefits received or of what one is about to receive and to be expressive of the same. Thanklessness is among the chief sins of mankind. To fail to give expression of thanks for benefits received or to fail to acknowledge benefits that have been made available, dwarfs a personality and moves one in the direction of darkness and loneliness. Thanklessness has a tendency to isolate people from the better things of life. This truth is expressed in Romans 1:21 where we read, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful*; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (emphasis mine).

Praise is akin to thanksgiving and we read in Psalm 33:1, "praise is comely for the upright." In I Thessalonians 5:18 we are exhorted, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." A thankful spirit springs from a heart that has full confidence in God that whatever comes to us comes through the watchful eye of God who loves us and would shield us from anything that would do us permanent harm or have consequences that would affect our eternal being. While we look at the things that come to us in life in relationship to the here and now God sees things in our life in relationship to our immortality. Thus a thankful spirit expresses faith and confidence in God and honors Him. A complaining, critical, faultfinding spirit is an indictment against God Himself, inferring that God does not know what He is doing and that He should be doing something different than He is for us. It charges God with negligence on His part.

We mention the second principle inferred in the word "thanksgiving," that of "giving." We should learn the blessedness of giving, not only of thanks but just plain "giving." The Dead Sea got its name from the fact that nothing can live in or around it. It is dead because it does not give out. It receives waters from the north that flow into it but there are no streams that flow out of it. Because of this it has become dead and stagnant and no life can survive in it. It is a picture of a thankless heart that is all the time receiving but not giving out. God wants to open the channels of our heart until He can flow not just into us but through us to others. We should learn to be great givers — give ourselves in every way possible — in prayer, in witnessing, in friendliness, giving liberally of our means. Doing this gives an opportunity for life to flow freely in us and through us. As a result we are not only blessed and enlarged in our being, but many, many others are blessed because of us.

In the present time and always, let us Give Thanks!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 28

THOSE DISTURBING QUESTIONS

People are disturbed today. Many voices are calling. Their own immortal soul is calling to them. Yet the multitudes rush on, aware, yet heedless of that cry from within. Questions arise — vital questions, questions that involve eternity. Listen! What is truth? Is it conditioned solely by society or is it eternal and changeless? How can my soul, the real me, find peace and satisfaction? Does man have a free will to choose his own course in life and for which he can be held responsible? Why does one have guilt feelings? Is the soul of man immortal? Is there a real place of eternal torment for the wicked beyond this life? How can I tell, among all the different churches and religions in the world, which one is really right? Is there a God? Can He be proven? These are some of the questions that vex the minds of men today. Is there really a satisfactory answer to them?

Pilate voiced man's most intriguing question when he asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Jesus gave the answer to this question when He spoke to Thomas, saying, "I am the . . . truth." (John 14:6) Truth is the essence of Christ. Christ came to teach us the way to life. The key to truth, then, is singleness of heart to be like the Author of truth.

The tragedy is, if we are not careful, we can shut ourselves away from truth and in so doing come to believe a lie. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21); his own heart will shut him away from the truth. Unless he will recognize this and let God through Christ save him from himself he will be eternally doomed. He is where multitudes are today, while they are loudly proclaiming to have the truth! God's word warns us concerning those who turn from the way of truth: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:10b-12).

Man's relationship to truth is both wonderful and fearful. Jesus said to those Jews which believed on Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32). But the opposite is also true — without truth one will be morally and eternally enslaved. Truth either saves us if we obey it or damns us if we disobey it. We must see that truth makes us morally responsible, and if we do not heed it our light will become darkness. "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:21).

But . . . is man really free to choose his own course? We simply answer that the consciousness of man that testifies within him, "I know I am free," is perhaps the greatest evidence of his freedom outside the Bible. The common sense realization that in acts of volition we are always free to will the opposite should convince us of our moral freedom. Such freedom involves the feeling of moral obligation, and consequently the sense of guilt for our misdeeds. Not only the voice of conscience within but the Scriptures everywhere assume that men are free to obey God's law and to comply with

the conditions of salvation and on this basis will men be brought to judgment. (Prov. 1:23-31; Matt. 23:37; John 7:17).

But let us look deeper into this question of guilt. Every man is so constituted that even apart from the Bible, his own conscience brings guilt upon himself. Both the word of God and experience confirm this.

In Romans 1:32 — 2:1,3, we read: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in (consent with) them that do them. Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself . . . And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

Francis A. Schaeffer, in his book, "End Of The 20th Century," gives this cogent illustration. "If every little baby that was ever born anywhere in the world had a tape recorder hung about its neck, and if this tape recorder only recorded the moral judgments with which this child as he grew bound other men, the moral precepts might be much lower than the Biblical law, but they would still be moral judgments. Eventually these men come to that great moment when they all stand before God as judge. Suppose, then, that God simply touched the tape recorder button and each man heard played out in his own words all those statements by which he had bound other man in moral judgment. He could hear it going on for years, thousands and thousands of moral judgments. Then God would simply say to the man, though he had never heard the Bible, now where do you stand in the light of your own moral judgments? The Bible points out in the passage quoted above that every voice would be stilled. All men would have to acknowledge that they have deliberately done those things which they knew to be wrong. Nobody could deny it. God is completely just. A man is judged and found wanting on the same basis on which he has tried to bind other men."

Another question that is confusing the minds of people today is the multitude of different churches, cults and isms, all different in their beliefs, but all professing to have the truth. The "woman at the well" (John 4:1-30) raised this question when she said to Jesus, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." She was raising the "many church" question. Jesus had said to this woman, "Go call thy husband." She had been living with five different men. Her problem was not the many different churches and beliefs but SIN. Jesus was trying to help her solve her own personal problem of sin. If one is ever to get the kind of help he needs, he must acknowledge that he has deliberately sinned and done what he knew to be wrong. And if he is to be in the place for which he was naturally made, that is, in a personal relationship with God, something is needed in order to remove the moral guilt which plagues him.

This leads us to our final question, can God be proven? Theologians, philosophers and religionists will readily admit that the existence of God cannot be proved with mathematical certainty or by the chemical test tube proof. He doesn't have to be. The fact of the matter is that God will prove Himself by revelation to anyone who sincerely wants to know Him. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight"

(Luke 10:21). God will prove Himself to anyone who sincerely wants to find Him, who will come to Him on His terms and simply trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

No man can honestly deny the existence of God and absolute truth unless and until he is willing to let God reveal Himself to him. But when that step is sincerely and honestly taken the question is forever settled.

A doctor was called to the bedside of a suffering, sick man, who, in the face of threatening death, showed such calmness and cheerfulness that the doctor, in amazement, asked how in his circumstances he could have such peace.

"Simply by trusting in Jesus," replied the sick man in a weak, faltering voice.

What do you mean?"

"Well, doctor, it's this way. You see how helpless I am. I can't raise my arms. I can talk but faintly. I can do nothing to make myself better. Left alone I should die. But I trust myself to your care and skill.

"And, doctor, that is just the way I came to Jesus — So sinful, so guilty, so hopeless, so vain my efforts to make myself good. Then I trusted myself to the loving hands of Jesus, and He took away my sins and my guilt. No longer do I fear death, because I rest on the promises of Christ, who died in my place."

"Is that all?" exclaimed the doctor. "So simple! In the pride of my self-effort I missed the way. Today I trust myself wholly to Jesus."

Then the doctor, too, found peace.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 29

KEEPING IN THE MAINSTREAM

II Peter 3:17, 18

The Apostle Peter concludes his writings in the New testament with these words:

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We are reminded in this passage that growth in grace is directly related to our growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore if we want an increase of grace we should be careful and zealous students of the Word of God and of the leadership of the Holy Spirit. But there is also a warning in the above words. Of all people, the inquirer after truth needs to be on guard against the wiles of the devil. We read in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But partial truth, or half truths, or truth unrelated to the whole body of truth can be dangerous and even fatal to the spiritual life.

I was preaching from that passage over in the fifth chapter of Mark where Jairus besought Jesus to come and heal his daughter who was lying at the point of death. The Scripture said, "And Jesus went with him." However, there was an interruption — the woman with the issue of blood interrupted Jesus as He was on His way to heal Jairus' daughter. In the meantime the daughter died and from the human standpoint all hope of healing was forever gone. I was emphasizing the truth in this message that if Jesus starts with you He will go with you all the way, for He did go on the Jairus' home and raised his daughter from the dead. We had a wonderful time preaching this truth with much help and blessing from above. At the conclusion one man said to me, "Why didn't you preach the whole truth? You only preached half of the truth. You said; 'Jesus will go with us all the way, He will not forsake us.' The other half of the truth is, IF WE WILL NOT FORSAKE HIM." The man was right. Many start out with God, but they run out on Him and do not reap the blessings and final rewards of a Christian life.

"The Prairie Overcomer" has an article about "the evolution of error." How subtle the enemy is to capitalize on unenlightened zeal or green enthusiasm — characteristics of new converts and people who fail to be ardent students of the Word. Note: "First, there is enlightenment concerning some Biblical truth. The seeking spirit finds some fresh truth in the pages of Scripture. He rejoices as one that finds spoil. He feeds upon the milk and honey of Scripture truth.

"But what begins as enlightenment he now turns into an emphasis. The seeker claims to find the same truth in every part of Scripture, no matter how diverse in subject, scope, and spirit the passages

may be. He reduces the multi-stringed harp of Scripture to one solitary string from which he feverishly attempts to draw out music that is pleasing to God.

"In time what was an emphasis becomes an extreme. He traces the stream of his solitary truth to the place where he stands on the border between truth and error. His whole ministry is now taken up in the preservation and propagation of what to him has become a gospel. He peddles his line of truth wherever he goes.

"Unrelated to other Biblical truths, the extreme eventually becomes error. The Bible student stares so long into the sun of his own chosen doctrine that he lost the power to see any other truths. The Word preserves, but if one truth — as in the case of chlorine which combines with sodium to make salt — is separated from the rest of Scripture teaching, that truth may become deadly in its influence.

"Enlightenment, emphasis, extreme, error — that is an evolution of which all who are engaged in the search after truth must be afraid."

One of the great truths in the Bible is the Sovereignty of God. To overemphasize this leads to the error of the predestination of souls by the Sovereign act of God alone. But alongside of this great truth runs also the great truth of the freedom of the human will. In my message concerning Jairus I had emphasized only the former. To emphasize the Sovereignty of God, His faithfulness, His mercy, etc., apart from the cooperation and freedom of the human will would lead to rank error — a sinning religion.

The balance of truth is preserved when we consider the main stream that flows throughout the entire Bible from beginning to end — holiness! All other truths must harmonize and blend in with this main stream of truth. God is a Holy God. The Bible is holiness from cover to cover and — as has been said — has spilled out and gotten on the outside cover, Holy Bible. God designs that His children be Holy in heart and life and not alone by imputation!

Bishop Foster says of holiness in the Bible, "It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from alpha to omega, from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed, holiness required, holiness offered! holiness attainable! holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the progress of completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over, ebbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles and whispers, and sings and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so wonderful so full of comfort."

The mighty Mississippi river drains the entire mid-continent of these United States. There are other great rivers in this section of the nation, but they all eventually feed into this one mighty river. There are many wonderful truths in the pages of Holy Writ but the one mighty truth that underlies them all and brings them into perfect harmony is Holiness, holiness unto the Lord — holiness of heart, holiness in our thought life, holiness in our speech, holiness in our acts. We can best avoid the

pitfall of error by keeping to the mainstream of truth — holiness. All the great truths of the Bible must harmonize with the doctrine of holiness, the spirit of holiness, the being of holiness, and above all, with a Holy God.

"Beware," says the Apostle Peter, "lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Beware of truth that becomes unrelated to the mainstream — holiness!

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 30 PROCESSED FOR GLORY

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." — James 1:2

For those who are steadfastly resisting the Devil in this age there can be no doubt that the powers of sin and Satan are increasing in the final struggle which will end in their defeat. As never before in the history of the Christian Church, shallow seeking, weak testimonies, and indefinite victories testify of the need for a whole-hearted wakefulness to the tactics of the enemy. It is at just this point, too, that Satan is liable to win his greatest victory; for we in the twentieth century holiness movement are in danger of missing all the joys that a conquering arm should have. Sadly, despite the fact that Christians often come through trials and temptations victoriously, many never see them as more than necessary hindrances to the heavenly race.

If one really stops to consider, it is surprising to note that Christian virtues are to a large degree and from the practical standpoint, well developed attitudes. Faith is the attitude of simple trust which leaps above reason and rationalization to grasp that which lies beyond their scope. Humility is the attitude of realizing one's own utter helplessness outside of God's grace. Love is the attitude of relaxing into the image and spirit of One whose very essence is love. And so it is with hope, mercy, long-suffering, meekness, and all the other Christian virtues, that attitudes are the determining factor of their essence. Certainly, if we could maintain the right attitude to the temptations and trials of our day, then we would not fail to make of them the blessing which they are intended to be.

Oswald Chambers has said that "it is of Christian culture to know what God's aim is." God's Word clearly reveals that His ultimate purpose on our behalf is to restore us to His image. Man, though created in God's image, through sin fell from his holy estate. The withdrawal of the Holy Spirit at the fall of man, like withdrawal of life from the body, brought on corruption and putrefaction which only God's wonderful plan of salvation and restoration can end. God has outlined three steps in the restoration of fallen man to His image, and to attain to each of them is to realize God's present plan of triumph over sin. The first step, the new birth, is that by which "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," God triumphs here by putting under the blood of the Lamb all of our past sins by which Satan intended to damn us. The second step, entire sanctification, is that by which God will "cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God triumphs here by crucifying carnal self and all of the carnal traits and tendencies and filling the soul with His blessed Holy Spirit. The final step, glorification, conquers the final enemy of death and fully restores man to the image in which he was created.

What all of this has to do with "divers temptations" is readily apparent, too, for when we grasp the magnitude of God's ultimate purpose we can only cry out with St. Paul, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." Though all trials and temptations are only possible because of the existence of sin in the world, God permits

their existence in the lives of His children as a means of processing them for the glory world. As we spiritually become stronger we find that trials are meant as much to "unteach" us as they are to teach us. Sinking into simplicity of a deepening walk with the Lord must always mean more of casting off the bad than taking on the good.

Have I, through a grasp of God's ultimate plan and correct attitude toward trial and temptation learned to "count it all joy"? God wants to take me through this temptation or trial to give me enough backbone so that He can permit Satan to send a greater one a little further on. We have but to read the Bible and note the times that joy comes most frequently in the midst of victory over trials. As Dr. Godbey has said, "the terrible conflicts with the strong intellect of Satan constitutes our grandest means of grace this side of heaven.

Like Job of old, may God help us individually to see that "he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 31

A BACKWARD LOOK FROM HELL

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." — Luke 16:23

A lost soul in hell — how awful to contemplate, but how about the one who finally awakens in that awful place of eternal despair! All hope is gone and there is nothing to look forward to but to be locked up in the prison house of the damned forever — nothing but remorse, and how dreadful is remorse that continually accentuates itself because of the memory that comes from a backward look. What could have been by what once that soul possessed — the freedom of choice! Three things about freedom of choice that will forever torment a soul in hell — its power to determine destiny; its privileges to put a soul in possession of eternal life with a holy God and with saints who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb; but, now stemming from that choice, punishment, eternal loss, eternal suffering in the regions of the damned.

If a soul in hell could trace his steps back through life — and how oft in his memory through the countless ages of an endless eternity would a lost soul take this trip would be hard to calculate — he would stand at that place where, by his own deliberate choice, his feet were turned hellward. There he once stood at the crossroads of willfulness and submission. At that point in childhood or early youth hell seemed so unreal and so far off and there certainly was no intention or thought of ending there. A soul does not deliberately, consciously and purposefully choose the eternal lake of fire. But the sin of willfulness, his own willfulness, fired by selfish desires, turned him hellward.

Willfulness is the essence and soul of sin. It was this sin that make demons out of angels; it was the sin of Adam; of the prodigal son; the sin of man from earliest childhood; the way of impersonation of ALL SIN. The devil can do no more than to do totally his own will (Daniel 11:36). Willfulness is not the law of the Christian but the law of submission is — not his own will but God's will, God's alone, always and in everything. And so a soul pressed his feet either hellward or heavenward at the crossroads of willfulness and submission.

Willfulness versus submission is the first battle of free agency and the one to be oft times faced by the hell-bound soul over and over on his downward course. How wonderful to be able, by one's free choice, to sing that hymn written by Fanny Crosby, "Blessed Assurance," early in one's life. Listen to her sing: "This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Saviour all the day long," What was her story? Listen again:

Blessed assurance, Jesus in mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

But what was the secret of all this? She gives it in the following verse:

Perfect submission, all is at rest.
I in my Saviour am happy and blest
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

How awful hell's backward look with a memory of what could have been! Look for a moment at those crossroads where the issue of willfulness or submission to God's will are faced ere a hell-bound soul meets his final doom.

There is the crossroads of pride versus humility. The knowledge of need was there. The opportunity for repentance was at hand. But because of that one, and perhaps greatest sin of humanity, pride, he held back, would not humble himself. King Saul found himself at this crossroads one day. His plea to the prophet Samuel when he knowingly disobeyed God was, "honor me before the people." It all looks different now from his place in hell.

There is another crossroads of popularity versus Christ. Here Pilate stood one day. He identified himself with the crucifiers of Christ. He would rather have their approval than stand alone with Christ. At that point he could have turned his feet toward the city of God but by his choice in that hour he kept pressing hellward. The crowd we choose determines the path we take. He made a choice and the consequences of that choice he is bound with forever. His backward look will continue to torment him world without end. How many today are headed the wrong way, too proud to be identified with old time religion?

People face the crossroads of choosing between this world and the next. When Moses stood at this crossroads he made a wise choice. He turned away from the pleasures of sin (no doubt very attractive) which he could have had, but only for a season ("*Love not the world*, neither the things that are in the world . . . the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" 1 John 2:15-17). (emphasis mine) How many cross this point in life with their feet still pressing hellward?

How many in hell this very moment who have come to the crossroads of personal, selfish, sinful desires and have hung on to these desires only to find their feet pressing the way of eternal doom. It is trite but true:

Desires determine decisions,
Decisions determine direction,
Direction determines destiny.

David expressed his secret, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple" (Ps. 27:4). Paul had the secret of a happy life and of a glorious future when he wrote, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, . . . and I count

them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:7,8). But now the backward look of that soul in hell who failed to let God crucify those selfish, sinful desires — what remorse!

Yet another crossroads that sinners pass on their way to eternal doom is that of cover-up versus exposure. Some have said they would rather go to hell than to uncover and face their past sins. False professors of salvation would come in this class — those who profess victory but do not possess it. Through pride they press their way hellward. How do you suppose a backward look from hell would be to those individuals?

Yes, there are many crossroads to traverse on a hellward journey, far more than we could mention in a brief article, but probably the most haunting of all will be those memories of the faithful dealings of the blessed Holy Spirit — those times impressed on the memory of that doomed and now damned soul when the Spirit had humbled them and brought them under deep conviction and they were aware that victory was in reach, but the sin of procrastination carried them past those moments with their feet still pressing the downward way — almost persuaded, almost, but lost!

Stop and consider, friend, are you pressing your way to the city of God or are you on the broad road to destruction? How dreadful to be lost in hell forever and forever when you one time lived in reach of heaven!

Choose I must, and soon must choose,
Holiness, or heaven lose.
If what heaven loves I hate,
Shut to me is Heaven's gate.

Endless sin means endless woe,
Into endless sin I go,
If my soul from reason rent
Takes from sin its final bent.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By
I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 32 **LIGHT**

ITS PRESENCE IS A BLESSING: ITS ABSENCE IS A TRAGIC LOSS

Light is a blessing we too often take for granted. Light can be sinned against and finally sinned away until nothing of it is left — only outer darkness (Matt. 22:13). Jesus said, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John 12:35).

It is worthy to note that on the fourth day of the creation the sun was formed, and then first tried his beams athwart the gloom profound; and that at the conclusion of the fourth millennium from creation, the son of Righteousness shone upon the world, as deeply sunk in that mental darkness produced by sin as the ancient world was while teeming darkness held the dominion, till the sun was created as the dispenser of light. What would the natural world be without the sun? A howling waste, in which neither animal nor vegetable life could possibly be sustained. And what would the moral world be without Jesus Christ and the light of His Word and Spirit?

Light and darkness are in direct contrast with each other. So are those things that they produce. One of the greatest blessings that can come to man is for God to send him light. "Jesus spake saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When light comes it is a revealing and humbling thing, but light accepted and walked in, brings blessings manifold beyond the fondest imagination. Who could enumerate or describe the blessings that light brings? Light is synonymous with God, with truth, with self-abasement, godliness, honesty, integrity, harmony, unity, happiness, blessedness, fellowship, faith, purity, peace, joy. These and many other like things are the accompaniments of light. Who, in his right mind, would not want to dwell where these are to be found?

The Bible teaches us that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." He that dwelleth with God, dwelleth with light. New light keeps coming to us and if we are to dwell in the light we must keep pace with the light as it comes. "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light." Then He gives this warning, "lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35).

The darkness that Jesus warns about is synonymous with Satan and Anti-Christ and their accompaniments are: all moral wrong such as lying, stealing, cheating, self-will, disunity, self-centeredness, hatred, envy, strife, pride, jealousy, evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murder, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, foolishness, disease, separation loneliness, rebellion, unbelief, anarchy and damnation. Who, in his right mind, would want to dwell where these are found?

We are compelled to choose our dwelling place — either in light or darkness. Men are not lost because of their sins but because of light. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jn. 3:19).

The World is in a cesspool of iniquity, not because of ignorance but because of the rejection of light. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:21).

The Church World is in trouble today, not excluding our own, because of light that has gone unheeded. God works through many avenues to draw men out of darkness and into His light and fellowship and His design is that men dwell in that light (I John 1:7). Trouble begins when men become careless and reckless and back of revealed light and no longer dwell in the white light of God.

Individuals are in trouble because they have not obeyed the truth and walked in the light they have or have had. We can only progress in light as we love truth. "Because they received not the love of the truth, . . . And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:10,11). Soul victory is conditioned upon keeping pace with light as it comes to us. There is no salvation back of light. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). We are not saved from sin and entirely sanctified now because we received this experience five, ten, or twenty years ago, but because we are walking in the light today. Too often we burn incense to a past experience but have become careless with light.

Victory lies in the singleness of light. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Matt. 6:22, 23). Trouble starts when we quench the Spirit, the dispenser of light. We quench the Spirit when we cease to have an eye single to the glory of God. Our purpose and goal in life is to glorify God. If every member of our body were to be controlled, not by the will of the head, but by a separate and independent will of its own, terrible physical consequences would ensue. In like manner terrible moral consequences result when man's will is exercised independent of God's will.

When self gets into focus rather than the glory of God anything can happen. Men become self-protective, begin to watch out for number one, become interested and greedy after filthy lucre, begin to magnify problems and get things and self out of focus with the great purposes of God. Nothing but moral chaos can result from this. Instead of giving vengeance over to God and letting Him fight their battles, "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers." The Bible warns here, "Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? . . . I speak to your shame" (I Cor. 6:1-6). Self-will was Satan's downfall and so it will be of any free moral being. When men choose self in the place of self-surrender they choose to dwell in darkness with Satan and all the disintegrating forces of darkness and hell.

When children get into focus rather than truth and the glory of God, both children and parents are in trouble. When parents cease to seek and contend for the things that will glorify God, but choose a compromise route to protect their children from the reproaches of Christ and from the pressures of the world and worldly living — thinking by this to save them — they cease to have an eye single to the glory of God and pass from the light of God into the darkness and chaos of Satan. It is hard to pray around our altars today. It is hard to keep the glory down on our services. It is hard to keep the fire on our family altars. Why? We have passed out of the bright light of God into the shadows of a compromise living! Instead of dwelling in the light with God we take up company with those elements that are the accompaniments of darkness — self-will, pride, unbelief.

When the pay roll and what it can buy gets into focus rather than the honor and glory of God and concern for a lost world, men's souls are in danger. It becomes increasingly harder to part with the tithe and harder yet to find joy in giving offerings beyond the tithe. Whatever we allow that does not relate in the long run to our spiritual welfare and our eternal existence can be put down as "worldly." Jesus said of his disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Check up, reader, do you have an eye single to the glory of God? If you were ever entirely sanctified you had to come to that point. Are you dwelling there or have you slipped back into a sort of hazy, twilight zone?

Men cease to dwell in the light and maintain an eye single to the glory of God when position gets their attention. It is certainly not a sin to hold a position of responsibility when it is ordered of the Lord, but things get out of focus when men begin to use position to their own advantage or to control or manipulate the affairs of the kingdom in place of evangelizing the lost world.

When the narrow, unpopular way of crucifixion and death to the carnal man becomes an embarrassment and men take a lesser way, they take the way that leads deeper and deeper into darkness and farther away from the light of God. Multitudes have made the shift from the narrow back to the broad way. Under the pressure of loved ones, or friends, like Peter, they become deniers of Jesus the Light, and the darkness of damnation reaches out and they slink away into its shadows.

How many people dwell where the bright lights are shining and where nothing is hid, but all is open? When church problems get up — and where is it that there are none? — men will either take the way of a compromise program, allow a critical, hard spirit to take over or keep sweet and keep the blessing.

We must not only maintain the singleness of light, but we must also realize the sensitiveness of light. We quench the Spirit when we trifle with light. When Balaam overrode the sensitiveness of light he put himself in the dark. When desires get in and reason takes over, one is already in the dark.

The results of rejecting light are fearful and tragic. Satan steps in and puts on God's clothes — he comes as an angel of light. He can counterfeit the witness, make one feel an assurance. If he can get you away from the fire, and in a place where the glory never falls; he can make you feel comfortable while you are living in darkness. Where the Spirit ceases to move and the glory ceases to fall people are not moved and their poverty of spirit is not detected; human sentimentality is mistaken for the

blessing and approval of God; light has turned to darkness and how great is that darkness — a darkness that is mistaken for light. How tragic!

Our only hope is to dwell where the light is brightest. Jesus said, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you."

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 33 OUR FATHER

One of the main things Jesus taught us in the Lord's prayer found in Luke 11:1-4 is a child's approach to His heavenly Father.

When it comes to songs and scripture, words do not always come through clear to the children. A new Sunday School teacher had to iron out some problems with the Lord's prayer with her class of children. One child kept repeating, "Howard be thy name." Another prayed, "Lead us not into Penn Station." Still another surprised the teacher with, "Our Father, who art in heaven, how'd you know my name?"

Jesus taught the disciples, "When ye pray, say, Our Father," It carries with it the thought of approaching the Father as a child would approach an earthly father, yet in a deeper sense. A child should:

Respond to his heavenly Father (or an earthly father, as far as that is concerned: with a spirit of:

1. Hopelessness and helplessness within himself. Jesus taught us this in the first beatitude in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." A new born babe and even in early childhood, a child is certainly helpless and hopeless in itself even to stay alive. He needs protection. He needs provisions. Apart from God a soul is totally hopeless and helpless, and until we realize that and admit it we will not be recipients of all that God is and wants to be and will be to us as immortal souls.

2. Humbleness. The spirit of arrogance has no place in a helpless person. What person in the whole world of mankind possesses anything when it comes to personality, talent, that has not come to him unbidden and apart from any personal merit of his own? And who can fully exploit all a person is or can be apart from Him who holdeth all things, even our breath that we breathe apart from Him?

3. Honesty. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all . . . Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." How foolish, then, is it not to be honest all the way to the very centrality of our being.

4. Honoring Father as head. We owe it to God and to ourselves to recognize that we are not the head, but our Father is, and rightfully so. How consoling it is to repeat over and over, "our Father, my Father!" How our hearts should rise in praise to Him that this is so.

5. Home instinct. There is born within every soul a hunger for some place we can call home. It is our heavenly Father who has planted that instinct within our heart and it is our Father who said, "I go to prepare a place for you," — Home, our heavenly home!

6. Recognition. As He is our heavenly Father, we should recognize our obligation to love Him. God is love and we should respond to that infinite love that is so lavishly poured out on us. We do not always recognize God's love to us, for He loves us in the context of our immortal life and not just in reference to our life here on this earth. What we deem might be a blessing to us here and now, might be in the light of our immortal soul, a curse rather than a blessing. The great test of our love to God is to keep His commandments. Did He not give us the key to our fullness and happiness when He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments"? And His commandments are not grievous to those whose hearts are made perfect toward Him.

We need to further recognize that He has come to implant His very life within us. Paul summed it up when he said, "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Finally, we need to recognize that He loves not only me and mine but He loves the world of mankind and to have His love within me I will share that love with Him.

7. Respect. There is every reason in the world that we should respect God as our heavenly Father. In the first place He is a Sovereign being. The Sovereignty of God screams at us throughout the pages of holy writ. It was God that placed man in the Garden of Eden. It was God that put man to the test of obedience. It was God that destroyed the antediluvian world. It was God that confused the tongues at Babel. It was God that initiated the great plan of redemption. And we could to on and on throughout the Bible. He, God, is Sovereign! Not to recognize the Sovereignty of God is to sin not only against God Himself but against our own immortal soul.

God assigned Moses as His instrument by whom He would deliver His own people out of Egyptian bondage. Moses went out on his own to accomplish the task. After forty years of herding sheep on the back side of the desert Moses caught on that it was God who would deliver His own people, but would use him, Moses, as His instrument. After this Moses was known as the meekest man in the Bible. He learned respect for God's Sovereignty.

Perhaps the capsheaf of respect in the end is to respect the fact that God has created us free moral agents — the one greatest power an infinite, eternal, sovereign God could bestow on a created being. God help us not to sin against our own freedom of will! To do so carries eternal, irreversible results.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 34 AN IMPOSSIBILITY

The Bible simply states that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Impossible means just what it implies, it just cannot be done; there is absolutely no other way possible. If you do not have faith you cannot please God. Putting it simply, the chief end of man is to "please God," for in so doing he will please himself. He that pleases God is, through Divine grace, journeying onward to the ultimate reward of all those that love and fear God; but he who is ill-pleasing to God must, for Scripture has declared it, be banished from the presence of God, and consequently from the enjoyment of happiness. If then, our chief end is to please God, the one important question is, how can I please Him? And there is something very solemn and sobering in the utterance of our text: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Do what you may, strive as earnestly as you can, live as excellently as you please, make what sacrifices you choose, be as eminent as you can for everything that is lovely and of good repute, yet none of these things can be pleasing to God unless they be mixed with faith. The kind of faith that pleases God has three basic elements. Let us notice them.

Knowledge is the foundation element of faith — knowledge of God; knowledge of His Word; knowledge of His will. To know is to comprehend, hence it is the comprehension of God by and through our moral faculties. God, in His Word, reveals to us His will. He reveals His moral character; the evil of sin; the love of Christ; the manifestation of that love to the human soul; the necessity of the atonement; the freeness of Divine grace; the renovation of the heart by the power and compassion of the Holy Ghost; the value of prayer; the desire to be with Christ; man's responsibility in the great redemptive purposes of God. Knowledge is absolutely essential and foundational to a faith that pleases God. Paul tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 11:17). The word of God is the foundation of our faith.

Again Paul writes, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). Multitudes are weak in faith because they are weak in the knowledge of God's Word. The attitude of a faith that pleases God is an insatiable desire for knowledge of the truth. It is the attitude that the Berean Church manifested when it was said of them: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so: (Acts 17:11). If days go by without the Bible being opened; if the heart thirsts not for the knowledge of God; if things of the world are more attractive than spiritual realities — he who is guilty of such cannot please God.

Hosea brought this truth thundering home when he said: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). It was not, however, that they had not had knowledge, for he goes ahead to say, "because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee." Knowledge alone, however, as essential as it is to faith, is not all there is to it.

Assent is basic to faith. Assent must accompany knowledge. What we know, that flash of light to the inner conscience, we must agree unto as being most certainly the verity of God. The term, faith, "expresses a confidence or persuasion of the truth of anything not self-evident, received upon the testimony of another." It brings honor to God when we accept what He says just because He said it, whether we understand it fully or not. A pleasing faith gives assent to God's revealed will just because it is God's will. Paul writes, "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." He was not only desirous of having men possess the revealed knowledge of God, but he would have them persuaded of it to the extent that they would in their hearts and minds give assent to it. God has not only given to men knowledge through revelation — the Word — but through the direct operation of His Spirit on the mind and heart He endeavors to persuade men of the truth. We call this conviction. Conviction is a wonderful blessing. Men will not be strong in their faith unless they are strong in their convictions. The moral and spiritual foundation of life must be based on a "thus saith the Lord," and must so possess one's mind and spirit that he would rather die than be untrue to it. This is a convictionless, compromising age in which God's word has lost its authority. Such a generation cannot please God. There is a letting down and a caving in on every hand which give testimony to the fact that God's eternal word is looked upon as irrelevant. Paul states in 2 Thess. 2:10, "they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." The inference is that they had at one time possessed the true knowledge of God concerning His will for them but did not assent to it in their lives, "And for this cause God shall send (sent) them strong delusion(s), that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." But for those who seek to please God not only is there a desire for knowledge but a love of the truth. Carnality fears God's truth and holds reservations concerning the truth, but a faith that pleases God gives open and ready consent to all truth. The attitude of the heart and life toward the demands and commands of God for holy living, modest dress, the absence of outward adornment, the willingness to bear reproach for Christ's sake, is a true indication of whether or not an individual possesses a faith that pleases God.

Appropriation is essential to faith — it is the chief part. The knowledge of truth as it relates to man's fallen state and God's great redemptive plan, and the assent of the mind to this, is incomplete unless there is an appropriation of the great benefits of redemption to the soul of man. Faith is the act of appropriation that brings God to the soul, a moral change to the life, putting one in harmony with God and at rest and peace with himself. Faith, in a word the old preachers used, is a recumbency of the soul — a complete resting in God and a reliance on His veracity and trustworthiness. It is a faith that rests in and readily responds in happy obedience to all God demands and commands.

Faith is an appropriation that produces a drive to do or dare for God and lost humanity. It is not a faith that rests on good works, but that produces good works — "even so faith if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." The faith that pleases God produces Spirit-filled laymen that can pray, pay, and stay to see the work of God advanced; it produces preachers that are a flaming fire; it produces missionaries of the cross that make a mark for God on foreign soil. It puts Christians in the homes of the unsaved, out on the streets, in factories, wherever men are, seeking to bring them to Christ.

Knowledge, assent, appropriation — the three elements of a vital faith without which it is impossible to please God. Are you pleasing God?

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 35 DOING OR DYING

"The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." — Daniel 11:32

In this scripture the word "exploit" is in italics in the King James version, indicating that this word has been supplied by the translators. To read this verse without the supplied word is quite revealing. "The people that do know their God shall be strong and DO." The word "exploit" supplied by the translators means a remarkable deed or heroic act. To do anything for God or by His power would certainly be classed as a remarkable deed and an heroic act. Thus, in this instance, "do" and "do exploits" are really synonymous. The truth is that God's people these days are falling short of the doing business. Too little is known about doing that has the supernatural in it. How many start out for exploit station but break down before they get there?

In an article written years ago, R. G. Hamilton stated: "Before an exploit, there always comes a tremendous test or severe trial, and that is where God's people are failing. They fail in the test, and never get to the exploit. They stop too soon, and don't hold on until God answers. Abraham was a man that did exploits, but it was because he didn't fail in the test. Now God had given him a son. Isaac was the child of promise. When God said, 'Take thy son, and offer him for a sacrifice,' Abraham could have gone to his neighbors, his wife or relatives and said, 'Do you think that is the voice of God?' Without a doubt everyone of them would have said, 'No, that is the voice of the devil. Why, God gave you that son, and He wouldn't be telling you to sacrifice him. Abraham, that is the devil talking now.' But how did Abraham know it was God speaking? Why, he had been in touch with God, and knew His voice so well, knew it had to be God's voice. If I hadn't heard the voice of my friend for 25 years, I probably wouldn't recognize it when he would call me up over the phone, but when I hear his voice every day, I know that voice. Folks, some of you haven't heard God's voice for so long that when He speaks, you think it is the devil talking, and you won't pay attention to Him. Keep in touch with God, and when He speaks you'll not be mistaken, you'll not have a breakdown on the line, you'll do exploits."

"God had some faithful servants back there that refused to bow the knee to an image; they knew God could deliver them, but they said, 'If He doesn't we'll never worship that image.' You know, God was so good to those folks, He let them be carried to a prayer meeting. I know it was a prayer meeting for Jesus was there with them, and He said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' Folks, that was such a hot prayer meeting that the folks on the inside were blessed and set free, and the folks that stayed on the outside were burned to death. I tell you, it's a dangerous thing to be on the outside of a hot prayer meeting; you'd better be on the inside. Those fellows never failed in the test, and they got to exploit station. They did a remarkable deed and an heroic act."

"Gideon and his 300 did some remarkable acts and heroic deeds. It was a remarkable deed and heroic act when David killed the giant. Moses did a remarkable deed and heroic act when he went through the Red Sea on dry ground."

We could well ask, where are the exploits of the people of God today? We are falling short. We need to humble ourselves before God. It's in the test where we are failing; there are too many breakdowns along the line and God's people are not getting to exploit station in these days. God does not let us know when we are about to do some remarkable deed or heroic act, but He sends the test. In these days of apostasy many are caving in in the hour of test. Let's be faithful in the test. We need to—

Dare to be a Daniel!
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known!

Multitudes of professed Christians are failing in the test of a disciplined, devoted, consecrated life of holy living and moment by moment communion with a personal God. They know not His voice. To them His call to a holy, separated, modest, world-free living is the voice of the devil. They cannot, like Abraham of old, detect His voice. What a tragic hour not to be sure of the voice of God. Such will not hear His trumpet call to the Rapture.

Multitudes are bowing the knee to "an image" — an image of shallow spirituality, prayerless profession, popular approval, self-centered living, the things of earth and time, satanically controlled television. They never get into the furnace of affliction. They are strangers to the red hot, spirit anointed prayer chamber where the fetters of fear and worldly conformity are consumed and the soul set absolutely free from the bondage that will keep them out of a life of perfect liberty and finally out of heaven.

Multitudes among professed holiness people are settling for a false holiness, have missed heart purity as a personal, present experience, have failed to slay the giant of inbred sin, "Goliath," have failed in the test, have not reached exploit station.

We are living in the last days of apostasy. The final, crucial test and sifting time is on NOW. It is a do or die proposition. These are days of mighty revolution. Men have passed through periods of revolution and apostasy before — in fact, the age of revolution is an age of apostasy. The 17th and 18th centuries saw men demand political, economic and religious freedom. The upsetting of old traditions at the time resulted in corruption in governments, moral and spiritual breakdown like we are witnessing today. The churches saw the breakdown and concluded that Christianity, so-called, had failed and had to be brought down to a level that every man could accept. They threw out the supernatural and as a result their ministry had no effect on the hearts of men or on society. We are seeing this repeated in our day. An effort is being made to bring religion down to the man in the street — to make it meaningful to today's world. Thus have many churchmen taken religion not just into the street, but all the way to the gutter.

The pressure is on. We are in the midst of testing. Let's be strong! Let's stand firm! Let's honor the Supernatural! Like Abraham of old, let's keep a close, familiar contact and acquaintance with the voice of God. The call to the Rapture will soon be heard by those who heed Him now. Then the midnight cry will be sounded out, "Behold He cometh!" Many will cry to the faithful ones in that hour "give us of your oil for our lamps have gone out." It will be too late! It will be a remarkable deed and heroic act to be among the number that cry, "Behold He Cometh!"

Like the three Hebrew servants that refused to bow the knee to an image, let's refuse to bow to the sham of empty religion today. Let's dare to stand in a way and with a spirit that this present age will know we are standing for a Supernatural, Holy God who is separate from sin and Satan.

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By

I. Parker Maxey

Chapter 36

LIVING IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN

In a day that is marked with deception, superficiality, compromise and disdain for the Word of God, we must not lose sight of the fact that God still has a faithful remnant. For this group God has special words of encouragement. These are the ones who are not seeking the approval of the world, or of false prophets, or those who are not obedient to truth, but such are the ones who are seeking the approval of the One who has redeemed them from sin and sanctified them wholly. These are they who will hear Him say at the end of life, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of the lord" (Matt. 25:21).

We are living in a day when God's children are passing through an unprecedented time of testing; testings that try men's souls and test their faith to the limit; testings that have their effect upon the physical, mental and spiritual man. This, however, should not cause any great alarm for God has already told us, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you, But, rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12-13).

To all God's children who, because of their stand for Christ and the Bible, are suffering financially, physically, mentally, emotionally, or at the hands of some false shepherd or some ungodly or unspiritual loved one or acquaintance; those who, like Job, can find no reason for their present distress or suffering, should look to the God of all comfort and to His precious Word for strength and sustenance.

We call attention to the fact, first, that they have the RIGHT to a secure, constant, uninterrupted dwelling place in God — a right no others have. I am talking about that group of believers who through genuine repentance and faith have a saving knowledge of Christ and who have come to the end of self and have a simple but genuine faith in God as their sanctifier and an inner witness that the blessed Holy Spirit dwells in their heart. It is this group, this remnant, who are the peculiar target of the hosts of darkness and who are suffering the onslaughts of the enemy of souls from every conceivable avenue, that we have in mind. All that are endeavoring to live godly these days are engaged in fierce battles, mainly mental. Satan is in an all-out effort to captivate the minds of men and there seems to be no limit to the tactics he uses to accomplish this end. Many times the preachers themselves become unintentionally tools of the devil to discourage young Christians in their effort to live a godly life by projecting a constant negative emphasis from the pulpit without balancing their ministry with encouragements of victory one can have in the Holy Spirit despite the accusations of the enemy. Those who have gained victory and are conscientiously walking with God need to plant their feet firmly on the promises of God, such as found in Hebrews 13:5, 6 ("Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what

man shall do unto me.") and hang on. Our people need to know that they do not backslide just because the devil attacks them, or because they do not feel blessed, or because they are tempted or feel heavy and it gets dark around them. In spite of all this, to them is the promise that they can here and now live in the atmosphere of heaven in their innermost being.

We read in Psalm 91:1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Hallelujah! God's children don't have to wait until they get to heaven — they have a right to a secure, glorious dwelling place here and now in the heart of God. To dwell in the shelter of the Most High — what a privilege! What does this mean? In the Old Testament typology the High Priest only, and that just once a year, took the blood of sacrifice and entered through the veil into the Holy of Holies, a place not lit by sun, moon or candles, but where dwelt the shekinah glory of God. He could not dwell there. He could only appear there once a year to make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people. But at Christ's death that veil was rent in twain and now every true believer, by the blood of Christ, can enter and dwell in the presence of God. For us who know God, to dwell in His presence does not mean to shut ourselves away in some cloister; oh no, we become walking temples of an indwelt God.

This verse is talking about a man's walk and union with God — in the kitchen, on the streets, at our place of labor, wherever we are. Men see the outer court of our being, our bodies, but the Almighty God in His presence is within. It is the life of the Spirit, in the Spirit and flowing out of the Spirit — our very inner soul light, not the sun, or moon, or some artificial light, but by the presence and glory of God Himself. Most of Christianity is a ghost of what it is meant to be; a shell, a ritual is what most lives are. But the remnant, their right is to dwell in the presence of God's shekinah glory. He, our refuge, our fortress, our God. What a privilege! For this our lips and our heart should be constantly praising and worshipping Him. What joy unspeakable that I, one day a poor lost sinner, am now dwelling with the Most High God without interruption.

There is a **RESPONSIBILITY**, however, that goes with this right. Our first and prime responsibility lies in the realm of faith. God expects us to walk by faith, not by sight. The cause of despondency, spiritual depression and gloominess in the ultimate sense is unbelief. It is by faith that we are able to obtain a true and proper perspective of both the present and the future. God says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal: (2 Cor. 4:17,18).

A faith that will secure for us a constant dwelling place with God and His glory must be more than a passive faith. Look once more at the first verse of the 91st Psalm, "He that dwelleth (a present fact) in the secret place of the Most High shall abide (a present tense experience) under the shadow of the Almighty." Such privileges, however, must be followed with a ready proclamation. Note the second verse, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust." Here is an active proclaiming of our position. It is so easy these days to become depressed when we allow temperament, physical conditions or the devil to rob us of our faith in God (and in a faithful God) when we are faced with fiery trial. May God help us to dwell with Him in His glory and proclaim

victory despite our outer circumstances and testings. What are you saying about the Lord? What do you have to say about Him? Say it for your good and God's glory and see what will happen.

If we are to live constantly in the atmosphere of heaven we must not only obtain true perspective, but we must retain it. The Psalmist had the key to this (read Psalm 37:1-7) when he exhorted us to "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, . . . Trust in the Lord, and do good, . . . Delight thyself in the Lord, . . . Trust in the Lord, and do good, . . . Delight thyself in the Lord, . . . Commit thy way unto the Lord, . . . Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.

One other thing we need to consider in the line of responsibility is to recognize our weakness and God's strength. Paul had to learn this lesson. In 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 we read: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Finally, we must not forget the REWARD that comes to those who are faithful and labor for the Master. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). People will tell you that you will never amount to anything; you will never get anywhere; you will never really realize your full potential if you hold to "old-fashioned" biblical standards and principles in your life and ministry. But remember that God who cannot lie tells us to be steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in His work — and that all such labor is not in vain, no matter what men may think or say.
