

## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Power of Truth*

*Give us this day our daily bread.* This verse is a part of the Lord's pattern for prayer. This pattern prayer covers a field that should interest our hearts and help us in our prayer life. It deals with the question of God's holiness, refers to worship, to our hallowing His name, doing His will, and other matters that pertain to God. Then He slips in a petition which relates to us, and says, "Give us this day our daily bread." He does not lay such great stress or emphasis upon what occupies us today. We are so world-conscious, material-conscious, and body-conscious that by and by we are overwhelmed, and forget that man is, after all, essentially spiritual.

I often say, "You have never seen me, nor have I seen you." I mean that. You have seen the body, the Follette tabernacle, but you have never seen *me*. I have never seen *you*. I have seen the house you live in; but the real you is too evasive and elusive to be seen. We have personalities indwelling the house, or tabernacle, and we become conscious of things which make appeal to us in our sense life by sight, hearing, and touch, and become attached to the whole matter

of living that pertains to the purely physical life. But man has an invisible, spiritual personality within the confines of his being. We forget that. So our emphasis is pushed out into the realm of the flesh, the natural, and the world in which we live.

Now that is legitimate, proper, good, and foreordained to a certain extent. But when we become Christians our emphasis in life shifts and the norm of our being is brought back to its proper place in God. We should receive, then, the Father-concept of truth. We are spiritual beings. Therefore in that prayer Christ does not elaborate upon all the details of our daily living. He says, "Give us this day our daily bread." Christ places the emphasis in our life as Christians where the emphasis belongs. The emphasis is not on the *here* and *now* if we are spiritual people and spiritually minded.

Now don't mistake me. Just as soon as I touch the least on that line someone says, "Here's one of those pink-cloud mystics." To be spiritually minded does not mean to live in a pink cloud. You can be beautifully spiritual and spiritually minded and have power in the Spirit to penetrate through a lot of things which are localizing, and yet at the same time you can tell beans from corn, and I am sure God wants us to be able to do that. He does not want us to live in a potato patch; we are seated together with Christ in heavenly places. But being in the Spirit does not mean that you cannot tell beans from corn. There is a perfect poise, a spiritual equilibrium, a perfect balance. To be spiritually minded does not mean that you are so above the material that you are not practical. The most deeply spiritual life is the most practical life. There is a strong reaction to truth in your life because you belong to a

heavenly nation or race. It causes you to adjust your life here, to walk and live and talk as God would have a spiritual being do.

So the words of Christ, "Give us this day our daily bread," I should like to lift out of their setting for a time, for I think we are permitted to do that. The first interpretation of this pertains to the physical welfare of man, and if we have a concept of God as the *Heavenly Father* we appreciate that. But if you have never had the Spirit reveal to you the Heavenly Father concept of truth you don't know what I mean. Many people (good Pentecostal people) are still walking under the concept of the *Great God; the Maker of heaven and earth, the One who has all power in heaven and on earth*. They walk under that continually. This is a mighty concept of truth, but at times it is quite overwhelming for a soul tabernacling in a house of dust. A bit of truth like that was too overwhelming for my dust.

God said, "Remember you are made of dust." I said, "Thank You." He said, "Remember that you are made of dust; and since you are made of dust I will reveal Myself to you in a form to suit your need as dust. I am your *Heavenly Father*." I said, "Thank You. *Now* my dust feels better." I am going to make a confession. I am very human. I want to be human and at the same time I want to be spiritually minded. I think there is a unique combination in there somewhere for all of us. If we are patient God will strike a balance. Don't get scared to death when He begins the operation. Be patient!

So it does pertain, in the first interpretation, to the physical welfare of man. God will provide, and I am *sure* of it. For we have a Heavenly Father concept

of truth. There is the objective aspect of truth, that God is my Heavenly Father, but to know that in my mind does not carry it to my heart. A lot of people are blessed and blessed and blessed through the presentation of truth from the objective standpoint. But when the blessed Holy Spirit, who is come to interpret truth and make you a partaker of it, takes that which is purely objective and judicial in its aspect, and makes it a reality in your heart and life—until it is incorporated into your being and you *know* that truth—it will then be a subjective realization made by the Holy Ghost.

Truth is not only objective, blessedly so, thrillingly so, but when people yield their hearts and lives to the mighty operation of the Spirit, then the Spirit can take this truth and incorporate it into their lives. You then say, “I *know* in my heart that God is our *Heavenly Father*.” Now some have not had that revelation. They still move with the impetus of the terrific impact of the revelation of *Almighty God*. This is splendid, but sometimes overbalancing. But isn't it nice to have the Spirit bring truth to us from a different angle, until the things which are purely judicial may be brought down to actual living? That is what the Holy Spirit is doing for us today; that is His ministry in my heart right now.

So if we have had a revelation in the Spirit (and truth comes by revelation), the *outworking* is quite a different process, and there is where one “slips a cog.” We hear so much preaching on the *power* of the Spirit, and the truth is so magnificent. If our hearts are open we receive quite a flash, and we say, “The Spirit has revealed the *power* of God to me. Isn't it marvelous!” Now, wait a minute. That is truth purely in its power of revelation. What has the Spirit done

to us in order to have it *demonstrated*? There are two little words that I am very fond of—we *grow*, and we *learn*. The truth divine and spiritual, in that aspect is purely by revelation. Paul says so. What we know by natural processes, natural wisdom, and human reasoning down here in the world where we live, comes to us wholly by natural means. But Paul says *divine* truth comes by revelation.

But listen. What else does he say? "I have learned." That was *after* the revelation, wasn't it? So learning involves a process. What is he learning? He is learning, learning, learning—a subjective discipline of the Spirit—how that which is so purely a revelation can be incorporated into real living, and so become subjective. What else does he say? "I grow." A coming forth . . . a maturing and consummation.

So let us get some of these things cleared up, and then we shall not be so upset when someone gives us a lovely statement of truth which is purely objective. You accept it and go home, and the next afternoon about two o'clock you think the devil is chewing your ears off, and that you never had quite so difficult a time. You say, "I never knew it was going to be like this! When I saw the truth it was all so beautiful. What is the matter?" I will tell you. You were blessed and exalted in your spirit, thrilled under the power of the Spirit as you began to see possibilities in that truth which was presented to you purely from the objective aspect. A little later God brought you to a little crisis, and said, "Now I am going to take that truth and make a demonstration of it in your life. This is the way it is done." Then He starts. Then it is that people are upset and confused. They thought the revelation was all there was to it. They had said Amen, and thought

that would finish the picture. But it is then God begins to get ready to do something. After a little while you say, "Oh, I think I see *what* it is." So you have to make a little adjustment along so many lines. The Lord said, "Give us this day our daily bread." Now I want to take that out of its setting, and let it apply to our Christian experience. Truth is not to be restricted to a special day alone in the Word of God. A day may cover a long period of time or a short period of time. That is why in Genesis we get into trouble sometimes if we are not careful. Those who understand Hebrew know that the word *yom* in Genesis for "day" really means an indefinite period of time. It does not set a time limit at all, it merely means a period. It may be twenty-four hours, it may be a year, it may be a thousand years. We say *day*—twenty-four hours—that is what it means to us. We cannot always do that in Bible study. It may be something else.

So when He says, "Give us this day our daily bread," I like to make an application like this: *The day* is the period in which I am now living. Every one of us is living in a certain period. I call it a day in our evolution. I like the thought of evolution as it relates to spiritual growth, the coming forth, the realization, the fulfilling, the coming into full bloom and fruitage of the pattern in which God put me when He saved and baptized me—moving out, glory to God!—into eternal ages.

And so we pass through an experience. A crisis comes, and we walk out *through* that crisis. Then God brings us to another crisis, another epoch, another period, in which God is working out a design and purpose in our hearts and lives. God is everlastingly working, evolving, and bringing us through. I like to

think of those periods as days. How many of you are on a holy quest? I am on one of the most delightful adventures. My heart is hungry for God. I am on a quest for truth and the Holy Spirit is conducting me.

God reveals some certain phase of truth to me and I say, "Thank You, Lord. Take me through *this day*. Will this day be very long, Lord?" Maybe it will be a year, or two years, maybe it will be months—oh, what will this day be? God brings us out into a new day. Truth—truth—truth, that sets us free, that liberates us, that frees us from bondage of soul, and is the daily bread. That heavenly quest pushes us out toward God upon still another day.

Have you seen truth? Let us bare our hearts and embrace it. If it slay me, yet I want to embrace it. It is *costly* but it is worth it. So there is a day, there is a period, there is a cycle through which I am moving, surrounded by a thousand strange intricacies in life. That is but the general framework. I am conscious that my soul is being led out into a new day. You know that we must have our daily bread. Why? Because bread is the sustaining portion. Bread is what I must have to sustain me and carry me through that day. Give me this day, Lord, my daily portion.

"Oh," you say, "the Lord will provide a good table and I will have something to eat that relates to my body." All right, if you want to limit it to that. But I don't think that is what it is. Every last one of us lives continually under some concept of truth. There is no use excusing it, or saying anything more about it. Our lives are *daily* being influenced and shaped by the truth we entertain.

I find three sets of quarreling people. I have contacted one group of people who are constantly quarrel-

ing with the divine. They are trying to understand God with their head, and of course that is hopeless, isn't it? With their natural powers they are trying to figure out God, or else they are trying to tabulate God or reduce Him to a formula. Today everything has to be reduced and analyzed in order to be understood. You cannot do that about spiritual things. How they are trying to reduce even God to a formula! They want to get every religious experience reduced to a formula, tabulated, explained, pigeonholed. "Man by wisdom knew not God"; yet we have found people who are always quarreling with the infinite, quarreling with God, quarreling and wrangling. They have not learned the first little step—that God is to be understood in the heart, and not in the head.

Then there is the group of people who are always involved with the injustices of life, quarreling with the devil and with everything. That is wrong. They develop a strange complex, until every disturbing feature in life seems related to them and they become sensitized to all the disagreeable elements. Have you ever found people like that? Too bad to have to be always quarreling with the difficulties of life.

And then there is another group, and they are always quarreling with themselves. When they say their prayers, they explain to the Lord what they could be if they were not this or that way, always trying to fix themselves over.

Let's leave the whole mess alone. Let God alone. Let the devil alone. Let trouble alone. Let yourself alone. Sit down and say, "I am going to take it for what it is worth." But people will not. They will not take themselves for granted. They still have a little kick coming. We are constructed in certain ways in our



general human makeup. God has made us so. Let us take that for granted and abide by it. That will help some. Face the conditions as they are and let God work out the problem.

So when we come to this matter of our daily food, our bread, let us remember that this bread is really the concept of truth under which we live. You are living under a certain concept of truth to which you react. God made you that way. Take that for granted. Don't quarrel about it. We are reacting agents. I react to truth, and to every concept that is brought to me. There is a positive and a negative reaction here. Therefore, this bread is the truth which is necessary to sustain the soul while it passes through that cycle, that evolution, that period, that discipline, whatever may be necessary to my spiritual welfare. My heart and life demand of God a certain concept of truth and a revelation of Christ that will sustain me while I pass through it. That is why today people are trying to compare their experience in God and live under the revelation of truth which they had twenty-five years ago. You cannot do that. God is today putting His people through a period of discipline necessary for a future life. How many of you know that you are living in terrible days? Do you need anything more to make you conscious of it? We are living in most troublous times. Jesus is coming soon. This is our glorious hope. You can be lifted up to the third heaven *thinking* about it. But listen, how many of you know that it takes some preparation, some *discipline of the spirit*, to be ready for His coming? I need a conception of truth in this blessed Word that will make me the person God wants me to be when He comes. My day demands it. The period into which God is ushering my

spirit and taking me through demands a spiritual concept of truth which will set me free from "religiosity," religious habits, forms, and all the rest of it.

So my spirit is set free, free, free. May He set people who are Christians free; those who are held *not* by sin but by religious habits of life, and whose trembling souls are trying so hard to march to Zion. May they be set free, and cleansed out, so that the spirit of the person shall stand stripped of unreality, religious habits, and all doubting and fearing. "O God give us life, and then discipline it, train it, breathe upon it, and possess it. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Thou art truth. We love Thee as truth today. We *adore* Thee as truth. We *worship* Thee as truth. Give us *free* spirits. Grant, Lord, that we shall be set free. *Feed* the stripped spirit with that daily bread which this day may demand, that revelation of truth, that spiritual conception of Jesus Christ that shall bring correct reaction in every heart. Give us this day—*this* day—our daily bread, this bread of God, for Jesus' sake."

These are very terrible days. Aren't you conscious of it in your spirit? Do we need any greater manifestation in the world about us? No. My heart is haunted everyday. I am haunted. The Spirit of God haunts us, and I want Him to haunt me. I want Him to convict, so that this spirit, this life, shall not be robbed of that for which Christ died. *This* day, what shall I have? My bread is my portion. What is the bread? A revelation of truth that will carry me through, a revelation of Christ that will carry me to a new experience in God. This lovely Word will open afresh, and the Holy Spirit will bring it to my remembrance. He will lead me into *all* truth. I am coming step by step, but my heart already knows of vast territories that I

have not yet touched and my hungry heart is crying for it. God is bringing our hearts through testings, provings, and exercises to fresh openings of His Word that we may be fed. We cannot walk in the power of what we had twenty-five years ago. God desires to feed the heart so it may meet the tests.

Another phase of that bread is this: You remember that when Jesus was on earth, the disciples one day were concerned about food, one of the last things which occupied His attention. He turned to them and said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." To what did He refer? To the will of the Father. That was His meat and His drink. That seemed a strange thing. When Jesus is hungry and He desires something for meat and drink, what does He do? He does the will of the Father. *That* is meat and drink.

The next time my heart is hungry and thirsty for God, how may it be satisfied? By doing the will of God. Let me tell you something: in the cupboard of God's will you will find plenty. You say, "I am so hungry for God." Dare then to embrace the *will* of God. Take it into your innermost being, where that will of God will do some things to your ego—disturbing things, annoying things, bothering things, demanding things, and challenging things. Dare to say, "Come on, will of God. Come on in. Don't mind all this crying and disturbance. Come on in!" Do you know what will happen? God will give you a feast. Jesus said, "My meat and My drink is to do the will of My Father."

Let me tell you something to encourage you. God has a daily portion which will be adequate for every period. The children of Israel while in Egypt had their diet—fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, and garlic. God

always has a diet or daily portion or revelation to fit your location and day. When the children of Israel are in the wilderness God changes the diet. It was no longer the day in Egypt, but the *day* in the wilderness. "Give us this day our daily bread." "Give us in the wilderness today our daily bread." What was it? Manna. When they got to Canaan's land they had another change in diet. "The manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Joshua 5:11, 12).

"Give us this day." Every time you have a new experience in God and there is a transition, an evolving or moving forth, God will change your diet. The diet is the revelation of the Word of God, and you will have a fresh revelation of truth which will be adequate to carry you through this experience. We cannot live the same life we lived a year ago. Absolutely not. The Lord says: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "Give us *this* day our daily bread." God has something for your individual heart. Do not be afraid. Be patient. Be quiet. Look up into His face. Be honest with Him. Say, "Thank You, Lord. You have some truth that will grip my heart and spirit and qualify me and make me able to march in victory through *this* day. Jesus, what is the revelation You have for me?"

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Personality and Truth*

In the Scriptures it is said, "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21). That is merely stating a fact that through the ordinary process of human thinking you cannot know or appreciate God or spiritual matters. It does not imply that wisdom is wicked or that we should not possess it. I am sure these days we are all very conscious of our need of wisdom—both human and divine.

There seems to be a mistaken idea among some Pentecostal people that because one receives the baptism in the Spirit and seeks to walk in the Spirit and develop a spiritual life in God, that he must depreciate learning and education. This idea is quite foreign to the Word or Spirit. We are all quite sure that what God tells us is that truth comes by revelation and not by human reason or natural process of education. However, we find Him continually taking the fact for granted that we are reasoning human beings and by His own creative acts He gave us brains to be used. God never destroys His creation—He corrects it where necessary and uses it to His glory. So He does not destroy personality or individuality. He teaches us un-

der the power of the Spirit *how* to build a personality pleasing and powerful and to His glory.

Some, when there is apparent defeat or failure, are all the time excusing God or trying to explain Him. I don't explain Him (I just can't), but I do love Him and enjoy Him. That does not mean I do not have burdens or trials or that there is no discipline in the Christian life. All that is true but I still enjoy Him.

Now back to this idea of Christ's being the perfect, ideal personality. Let us look at a few scriptures to help us. Luke 2:40, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." The whole human concept is recognized—the physical, "He waxed strong"; the mental, "becoming full of wisdom" (see margin); the spiritual, "the grace of God was upon Him." The normal was seen here—nothing one-sided, but rather a perfect picture of the ideal again.

At this point some may ask *why* this normal development was necessary since He was God the Son. We must remember that from the divine side of His nature He is truly God the Son, but the fact remains that while He is indeed God, He was actual Man. His human life was lived wholly within the realm of humanity. He refrained from giving to the human in its testing and development any help other than was originally at the disposal of Adam—unfallen man.

Let us look just a moment at Him as a child in the temple. Here we find the revelation as to call and destiny coming with clearer outline and form. Let us remember where He is. He is *up* in the temple. Get the preposition correctly—*up*. You see, *up* is the place

of revelation (not demonstration). While up in the temple He is conscious of the whole spiritual side of the question and He thrills at the thought and is fairly overwhelmed at the prospect. Under the inspiration and thrill and power of revelation and illumination He feels He should (at once) be about His Father's business. But did you ever note the wording of Luke 2:51? "And He went *down* with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." What sublime reading! O, the power of that truth! He went down! Why down? Because being *up* is the place of revelation. He must now go *down* to the place of demonstration, where He *learns* the meaning of subjection. Always remember the *up* of revelation (the unveiling of truth) calls for a *down* to Nazareth, and the learning of subjection. Have you a Nazareth calling you? Have your eyes been opened afresh to truths? and your ears, have they heard afresh His voice? Then let us *go down!* Nazareth is no common place, but here we demonstrate and learn.

Finally He reaches maturity—He is a man. And note the Scriptures do not fail to so declare Him. I Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men the *man* Christ Jesus." I Corinthians 15:45, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the *last Adam* was made a quickening spirit."

As students of the Word we know that a name always suggests the character behind the name. That is, a name tells the exact character of the one who bears it. If Christ bears certain names, then He must *perfectly* in life and character bear the fullest significance of such a name. And praise God! He does. He is called man because from the human, natural, limited

sense of His manifestation He perfectly demonstrates God's ideal of man when He said, "Let us make man." He is the last Adam because he is in life actually what the first Adam should have been. So from the human side of life He is a perfect, satisfying human being. His personality has normally and perfectly demonstrated God's plan in making a *man*. So we have this pleasing testimony, "In favor with God and man."

Although He chose to move under the structural law of human nature, limited and dependent, yet He was without sin. Hallelujah! What a Saviour! He has wrapped, as it were, the human limitation all about Him and carries the treasure of the Godhead within the secret place of His heart. So He moves submerged under the law of the human.

Here is a good place to swim. I mean in the Spirit. He tells us of waters to swim in. We know something of the waters about the ankles and walk of life. Here we may swim. He showed me how to swim on my back! When you are out in the waters of the Spirit deep enough to swim in—just turn over on your back. Then your face will be Godward, heavenward, up, up, up, and there we behold Him, the glorious Christ! When we see Him and know of the mystery of His stooping and the man-side of His nature our hearts are strongly moved. He draws me! How can people keep away from such a Christ as this?

It seems that I want my life to be a libation poured at His feet. Let me adore Him! Let us melt and pour out low at His glorious feet! We may not be great preachers, teachers, evangelists, but we *may pour* out our lives in love and adoration. How I long to help people to know *Him*. We know so much *about* Him.



O, do we *know Him*? Let us be limp, liquid, pliable, fluid, and flow and pour at Thy feet, Thou adorable Christ!

Even God the Father blesses Him with a word of approval and blessing: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Under the power of this truth He goes through the temptation and returns home. Now let us see *how* He is received. We have seen the perfect personality-side of the question, now look at the other side.

Let us remember that God does not destroy your personality He—desires to *build it*. He desires it to become an instrument, a vehicle for the Holy Spirit to live in and to possess. Paul knew it. He said, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—summing up the whole matter. God did not destroy Paul's personality—He used it.

So let us see Christ as suggested in the 2nd chapter—pleasing, satisfying, a fine young Jewish lad, clean, healthy, active, interesting—a beautiful specimen of humanity, and everybody liked Him. The human personality may be so constructed, so wrought upon, so surrounded, so yielded that people may enjoy one. Why not?

What happens to this beautiful, acceptable youth who is in favor with God and man? All this time Christ is also seeing something. He has perspective of thought and vision. He sees the future looming up before Him, His tragic destiny, for He has come into the world not merely to be a living demonstration of what God's concept of man is, but He has also come in order that this ideal concept shall be sacrificed to death for the redemption of the world.

He knows that the Passover Lamb was truly to be

without spot or blemish. That is the perfect ideal wrought out (no sin, no failure, no shortcoming, no loss—perfection of *life*).

Trace His steps down to the Jordan. See Him push back the shavings from the carpenter's bench, hang His apron on the peg in the shop and say, "Mother, I must go. John is baptizing and I must *needs* be baptized."

Now He returns. The account is recorded in Luke 4:14-21. "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up." Now let us remember this is the place where He is *loved* and in *favor* with the people.

"And, as his custom was [He had done this any number of times; there is nothing amazing about it] he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Why? Because if you ask a rabbi with a knowledge of the conduct of service at that time, he will tell you that three of the younger brethren of the community worshiping in the synagogue were called upon to participate in the service. One read from the Psalms, one from the Law, and one from the Prophets.

And so Christ was called upon to read from the Prophets. And here we trace the finger of God. Even the old rabbi no doubt was stupid as to the full meaning of his direction, but he was surely in God's order and purpose. God does get His way sometimes in such unsuspecting things. "He stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias." Now look at something beautiful. "And when

he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written." He had definite instruction. It was Holy Ghost dictation. It does not say He hunted through the Scripture until He found a passage which He always *enjoyed*. So many times the reading is what we *like*—not what He directs us to read. O, that He could only *direct*—direct in the choice of a hymn, a testimony, a verse, or what *He* desires. So many times the whole force and power of a meeting may hinge on the hymn suggested. I would rather have the Spirit use *one* hymn or chorus over and over twenty times until the meaning sinks in than to sing ten hymns and chorus just because they "sound good" or have "rhythm."

When Jesus takes the scroll the Holy Spirit prompts Him to read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

He stops right there—He must for He is telling the character of His *first* visitation. He cannot read the next clause telling about vengeance for that covers the second visitation. How careful He is! Not like so many who read anything at any time—promises and all—and try to *fit* it all into *their* pattern. And do so, saying, "Well, isn't it in the Bible?" Yes, there are some things in the Bible that have no relation at all to what you would *like* to relate them.

Now it says a strange thing. "And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down." Now let me show you something that used to bother me and I could not see why it should read so.

“And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.” If He had read the Scriptures dozens of times as suggested, *why* at this time does it say “all eyes were fastened on him”? If it were a common occurrence there should be no reason to so gaze and stare at Him. I asked a rabbi once for information about seats and chairs in the old synagogues. “Oh,” he said, “They were Oriental people and either sat on the floor or stood up. As a rule they stood.” They did not have chairs in the synagogue as we do. There was always a chair reserved for the Messiah, just as the orthodox Jew today will have a special seat at the table for the Messiah.”

The thing that amazes them is that He dares to sit in the Messiah’s chair—all eyes are fixed on Him, and He says, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” How daring! But He is able to do it because of steps He has just taken. He is taking His place as the Messiah—identified with Israel at Jordan, subjected to proving in temptation, and now fully *dedicated* to truth. He is Truth personified. He is the eternal Word, the Truth now personified. He can do and dares to do what no other person has done.

He says, “*I am the Truth,*” not I have some truth, I can tell you some truth, I see some truth, but “*I am the Truth.*” This charming, lovely, beautiful, perfect, God-blessed personality has been dedicated upon the altar of truth. He knows true identification! That is surrender unto. He *is Truth*. So He dares take such a position.

You must remember that up to this point the community has *no* idea that He is the Messiah. Luke 3:23, “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as *was supposed*) the son of

Joseph. . .” Mark 6:3, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.” They could not reconcile the wonderful, authoritative words of power and strength that proceeded out of His mouth, with the thought that was bothering them: “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” and what later bothered the Jews: “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” They *hear* but cannot reconcile.

Have you ever been there? What really has happened? Did He change His personality? No, He is the very same Jesus, the identical personality that had grown up in their midst and whom they loved. *But* that personality has become fully and fearlessly dedicated! It has become the perfect medium and instrument of Truth. For this was He born and unto this have *all* the steps led. *How* did they treat Him? They pushed Him out of the synagogue, ran Him up a precipice, and would have thrown Him over.

And dear soul, if you allow your life to be sacrificed on the altar of truth the same identical treatment will be forthcoming. It will be a deeper fellowship with Christ than a little emotional joy of salvation. Do you not see what is the matter? They could not see the difference between personality and truth. They liked Him—some loved Him (a perfect man) even Jesus. But the truth had disturbed them. It always does disturb flesh (even good, religious, pious flesh). Have you seen it? I have and even shared the fellowship of its meaning.

So many times we find people get vexed and disturbed and restless and angry at you (when all the time it is the *truth* you hold that “eats them all up”).

They think it is you or I—when it is, after all, the truth which has become a part of us or truth radiating from us. You cannot get rid of truth by throwing a personality over a precipice—that is silly. The Jews tried to end truth by killing the Son of God, but hallelujah! *Truth* goes marching on! It will.

So dear ones, we have no time to spend playing like children—angry over *people*, liking and not liking people—that is carnal.

The lovely Truth is here. Christ is Truth. It will slay you! Hallelujah, it will also make you alive! Let us deal honestly before God. Let Him help us to see personality where He sees it and place only the value on it He does—then let us see Christ the Truth, and distinguish between man, the instrument, and *Truth*, the life and heart of Christ.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *The Way into the Holiest*

*The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing (Hebrews 9:8).*

God is a great teacher, and very often He teaches the most profound and deeply spiritual truth by means of types, parables, and symbols. Especially is this true in regard to the Tabernacle which is a complete picture of the redemptive work of Christ.

The revelation of God to us is more or less of a mystery since much of it is only understood by means of the Holy Spirit. What is a mystery? It is a profound secret, something beyond human comprehension. It is a truth undiscoverable aside from revelation. The human reasoning powers, no matter how advanced or cultured, are dumb and quite inadequate before a mystery of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10—"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth

all things, yea, the deep things of God"—and then look at Colossians 2:2, R.V.—“To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, *even* the Christ.” This makes Christ a mystery—and how very true! Only the Spirit of God can reveal or unveil this Christ to a human heart. All may see or know Him in the initial steps of truth, but the deeper and more profound aspects of Christ come *only* by revelation of the Spirit. That is why we need the Holy Spirit as an indwelling Guide or Instructor, to make known to us this wonderful Christ whom we took years ago as a Redeemer though we knew so little about Him. It is one of the duties or office works of the Holy Spirit in the life of a saint, to give us this revelation of Christ. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew [declare] it unto you” (John 16:13, 14).

Many people approach this blessed Word in what I call “goat fashion.” A goat goes at anything *head first*. So many who study the Word go at it with their mind, with human technique of reason and deduction—only to find the secret has eluded them and the *real* Christ is still undiscovered. We must learn to approach it *heart* first. The mind has a place, and a trained mind is always at a great advantage, but the secret is not there. It is in the *heart*—clean, unbiased, unprejudiced—and the *will* absolutely surrendered.

Salvation, the Baptism, reception of gifts are all initial experiences and belong as equipment to the babe in Christ. The baptism in the Spirit and gifts of the Spirit are precious and necessary but they are no sign of deep spirituality or understanding in the things of God. One may have these and not know



the "way into the Holiest" at all.

Jesus said, "Ask, seek, knock." All these are heart attitudes representing degrees of intensity in prayer. Much may be obtained by *asking*. Gifts of any kind are obtained by asking—salvation, the Baptism, gifts of the Spirit, etc.—all these most necessary and delightful gifts may come by asking. But Jesus also said, "Seek." There are places in God—truth, revelations, etc.—which come by *seeking*, never by asking. Read Colossians 2:3—"In whom are *hid* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "If ye then be risen with Christ [that is, saved, etc.] *seek* those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).

So many think of Christ as a sort of Christmas tree, full of delightful things, experiences and gifts, as though all one has to do is, by prayer and asking, pick them off. Christ is rather like a treasure chest, full of treasures, not disclosed, but hidden. (See Matthew 13:52.) Many Christians never lift the lid and discover the real Christ; they never dig, seek, and uncover the treasures He holds.

The *first* tabernacle is still standing in so many lives. In the new creation we are blest with wonderful capacity for the deep things of the Spirit and fuller revelations of God. That is why, after *real* prayer for a closer walk and fuller knowledge of Him, He begins uncovering, as it were, and digging down into the inner life, to make room and enlarge our powers of apprehension and appreciation. There are potential powers for God waiting to be released and set free. But the pain and the cost thereof hinder many. Some have become conscious of a cry for God and a strange

hunger for Bread. God does not mock us—let Him work in you and He will feed you.

It is *truth* for which the inner man hungers, and truth is the most costly element in a Christian career. We value the things in life for which we have paid dearly. I had to work to help defray expenses for both my college and seminary training, so never had money for many things the other students had; but I learned to value a dollar and to treasure the privilege of learning. In the Christian life, if you pay a price for truth you will incorporate it into your system and become a "partaker."

These treasures are not found in the broad daylight of life. Much that is sweet and precious may be readily found in the presence of Jesus, as we walk and commune in the way; but in order to discipline us in faith He often withdraws His conscious presence and we are called upon to walk *alone*, sometimes amid shadows, down darkened ways of trial and severe testings. He seems so far away; the soul is dry and our communion seems to have lost much of the original sweetness and vigor. Yet we are not conscious of any sin or failure—our hearts are clear and open—but we must go *alone* into the shadows.

Faith counts, and not feeling. It is there we get rare treasures, very choice and lasting. "I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel" (Isaiah 45:3).

This calls for a very real and peculiar death to nature; the natural man, gifted though he may be, has no place here. Even the religious man with works of ministry must let his life and experience go into total

eclipse that the treasures may be discovered. There are plenty of Pentecostal Christians today who will have to suffer the going *down* of much that is religious (not spiritual) before they get far into the things of God. In the new creation there is a continual *crowding* out of the *I*, or natural—even the good, religious *I*—from the life, and a displacement and interchanging of positions. Paul voiced it so well: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Paul knew what the falling down of the first tabernacle cost him, and the value of the life in the Holiest with God. It is this life which the Spirit has come to make a reality in the saints of God. The old, or former, tabernacle goes *down* and a way is opened whereby the life of Christ is made manifest in us. That is why Jesus said in the last message to His disciples: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

Did you notice what He said in using the word "*witness*"? It comes from a Greek word, *martus*, meaning a martyr. How suggestive! A martyr is one who, by his death, bears witness to the truth of the gospel; one put to death for his faith. This does not sound like the popular idea that as soon as we are baptized in the Holy Ghost we should rush out and *do* something. I know the slogan, "The Baptism is for service," but here He says it is for *witnessing*. And service is only *one* phase of witnessing.

This witnessing suggests martyrdom or death. *We* die that He might *live* in us and thus we become

witnesses unto Him. The *whole life* is a witnessing, a process of divine manifestation of Christ through the human instrument. What was it that gave the Early Church the dynamic power to blaze her way through awful odds? Do you think it was her works, her service? It was not service that carried her through—it was witnessing, the willingness to die, that did it. Her witnessing came at a heavy cost. We have not yet suffered. We may have *served* and *done* much, but we have not yet suffered enough as witnesses. The great revivals came after people had suffered and paid the price.

We make the way too *easy*. We think a brass band will get folk to God and a brass band will carry them through. But the bride of Christ does not go to heaven riding on a bandwagon. She *leans* upon her Beloved. Her tabernacle has suffered a wrecking and she knows some of the secrets of suffering, discipline, and witnessing. Of course she serves—but she *lives* first—and the new life she lives comes *only* as she lays down her old life.

But let us return to the thought of the Tabernacle. At the entrance of the court stood the brazen altar—a type of Christ on Calvary. Brass means the judgment of sin. It speaks of Christ the Sin-Bearer and Redeemer. Many part there and never know Him in any other relation or fellowship. Do not rest there but let the Holy Spirit lead you on into a fuller life and understanding.

After you leave the brazen altar you meet the laver. This is also of brass. Here is a picture of cleansing through His Word, a picture of daily washings of the saint as a priest in service and communion. How we need this cleansing! Christ's blood cleanses us from sin

but the Word (Truth) cleanses us from so much after we are saved. Jesus walked and talked and ministered with His disciples for three years and at the close He said, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). He had not yet shed His blood, so He was not speaking of the cleansing by that. He was speaking of a cleansing by the truth which had to be applied to their hearts and lives to cleanse away tradition, material concepts, etc. Do we not need it today? How much has accumulated in Pentecost in 50 years—traditions, habits, issues, doctrines. The laver comes *after* the brazen altar. How big is your laver? Your conception of grace and the power of truth governs the size. You may have one as small as a dishpan or big enough to swim in.

After the outer door of the Tabernacle is passed we enter the Holy Place. Here the articles are all made of gold, speaking of Christ in His heavenly ministry. The golden candlestick is at the right. Jesus is the Light of the World. There were no windows in the Tabernacle, therefore no natural light. He becomes the Light to the soul now introduced to this heavenly fellowship. Human philosophy and reason are shut out.

At the right is the shewbread table—this is Christ, the Bread from heaven, the Bread of Life. The saints must now live by other means than that which the natural man can produce. We must feed upon the living Bread daily if we would have spiritual life.

Now we stand before the golden altar—Christ in intercession, and the worship born of sacrifice. A coal from the brazen altar (Christ in sacrifice) was used to light the golden altar of incense, meaning that sacrifice is the basis of all true worship and prayer.

His prayers carry us when we have none to offer. He is the High Priest to the trusting saint.

But a way was not made for all to enter the Holiest place. There was a magnificent curtain, or veil, hanging there. This *hid* the ark and the presence of God (the shekinah glory) which rested upon the ark. As we know from the Bible, at the time of Christ's death upon Calvary this veil was supernaturally rent (torn apart) from top to bottom, for it typified the body or flesh of Christ. As His flesh was rent on the cross, so the veil was rent and the way into the Holy of Holies made open.

The real heart of God, as a God of love, was manifested in the death of Christ. Sacrifice is the measure of love, and God *so* loved that He *gave* His Son. In His death we find the full revelation of God's heart. The superb and wonderful life of Christ *before* Calvary was absolutely necessary, for He was the Lamb without spot or blemish. There had to be a perfect life to be sacrificed. The perfect Lamb was slain. We are not saved by His noble character, or sinless life, but by His death. All the teaching of Christ was like the rich fellowship one may know in many phases and yet not enough to introduce one to the heart of God. All the beautiful life of Christ in matchless victory and devotion, His miracles and profound message, were all *unto* His death. The way into the heart of God (a direct access) was not open as long as He lived. The tabernacle of His earthly manifestation first had to go down in death.

Here is a bit of teaching that is hard to take, for a man does not like death. Yet it holds true in our lives also—the outer Tabernacle of the natural and even good, religious Christian must go down ere he

can see the truth for which he hungers. But it is hard to understand why a thing so good as life and service should have to suffer a death stroke. It is easy to see how sin might have to be smitten, but *why* a good natural life should have to go down is hard to understand. That is why there are so many very good people who never seem to know anything about the hidden and secret things of God.

Dear Christian, God is leading us home. Where is home? In the heart of God. There are so many parked at the brazen altar who do not press on into a life of faith and of the Spirit. Let Him lead you past the laver of truth cleansing and on to deeper fellowship of light, bread, intercession, and even to rending of the old creation, that you may walk in the way now made open because the old tabernacle has come down. Only then is Christ the reality that your soul demands and so hungers after. The deepest longing of the heart can never be satisfied by service, by doing. Let Him rend the self and dwell inside, and you shall find in "the way into the Holiest" such ecstasy of spirit and perfect rest as tongue cannot express nor words portray.

Our hearts were made for Him. He is after us. Do not allow any step or crisis to be final—all are *unto*. Keep pressing on. Dare to be a witness, a living martyr, and you will see what I mean. Of course, we must all serve, but that is only one phase of the matter. Live! Yes, live to die, and die to live. God will lead any hungry heart, that is willing to pay the price, into the Holiest with Him.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *The Psalmist's Prayer*

*"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 enquire in his temple."* (Psalm 27:4)

**T**hat Chamber still and stately waits us ever,  
That sacred pure retreat—  
That rest in Arms of tenderest enfoldings,  
That welcome passing sweet.  
O Home of God my Father's joy and gladness,  
O riven Veil whereby I enter in!  
There can my soul forget the grave, the weeping,  
The weariness and sin.  
O Chamber, all thine agate windows opened  
To face the radiant east—  
O holy Temple, where the saints are singing  
Where Jesus is the Priest—  
Illumined with the everlasting glory,

Still with the peace of God's eternal Now,  
Thou, God, my Rest, my Refuge, and my Tower—  
My Home art Thou.

T.S.M.



My title might suggest that there is only one prayer accredited to the Psalmist, but that, of course, is not true. He made many, many prayers. I have selected this verse from a psalm which declares his faith in such assuring terms it holds in digest the secret, as it were, of his prayer life. Right in the midst of his declaration of assurance and faith in his God, he drops this little nugget. It is an epitome of his teaching on prayer.

It is particularly helpful and suggestive because of its sheer simplicity. So much has been written on the subject of prayer that one sometimes either becomes bewildered or tired by the elaboration and side issues involved in the subject such as faith, earnestness, God's power, etc. Here he comes directly to the points he wishes to make and leaves the mind and heart fresh and buoyed in faith, because of the simplicity of prayer which invites the confidence of even the weakest suppliant.

Let us once more read our text: "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 enquire in his temple."

This is direct, comprehensive, and inclusive because it covers the essentials of a deep and fruitful prayer life. First he says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord." In other words he has gotten away from the complicated atmosphere of the material realm. Life today has become too complex for very definite and particular seeking of God. The appeals from all angles of life clamor and call, making demands and attracting our attention, until it is almost impossible to get any freedom from the present drive of seemingly legit-

imate demands. This spirit of complication has crowded its way into the spiritual realm and would make fatal inroads upon the Christian's prayer life. Here we find the Psalmist has reduced his prayers to *one* thing. This is indeed a blessed and fortunate position. He has been able to pass judgment upon the issues clamoring for attention and has now sifted them down again and again until the essential and vital element remains. So often we think many things are essential when after all many of them (after deep consideration) may be dropped out and we find in the last reduction that perhaps, as here, *one* thing after all is necessary.

Did you ever notice the "one things" mentioned in the Bible as being essential when one might think other elements should be forthcoming to complete the situation? "One thing thou lackest," "This one thing I do," "But one thing is needful," etc. So it is here, "One thing have I desired of the Lord." However, he does not let it remain in the early stages of desire, but it grows into an intense attitude of seeking. Prayer is more than desire—that is but the first stage of it. The desire becomes paramount and finally overwhelms the lesser wishes and desires until this desire, which at first may not seem so strong, has been fed and nourished by the *will* and *heart* until it becomes the driving force in the prayer life. It fills the consciousness of the person and so his thought life carries it continually to the front. This desire now fills his vision and becomes the vehicle upon which the strength of his life rides out.

What is the character of the prayer? "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life." In other words it is lifted from the realm of the

natural, above asking for *things* and material blessing, up to the plane of the spirit. It is spiritual in character and in its last analysis suggests "spiritual adjustment." *It is the essential and necessary prayer for all of us.* This same teaching is again given to us by Christ Himself in the Sermon on the Mount. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Again Jesus emphasizes the necessity of putting spiritual things *first*. It is a law or principle fundamental in the Christian life and is as exacting, effective, and operative as any law in physics, chemistry, or in the realm of nature.

The Bible does not contradict itself, but rather the laws and principles it holds for Christian living are at once the same in any part of its wonderful teaching. The psalmist discovers and voices the spiritual principle which Jesus two thousand years later again takes up and emphasizes. Jesus continually stressed the spiritual meaning of life. Not by ignoring the natural but by placing proper emphasis where it belonged. The fact was ever clear before Him: man is essentially spirit. Therefore the absolutely essential items concerning him will be of spiritual character. The natural order will by divine arrangement follow when the fact of his spiritual relations are *first* regarded.

The psalmist surely does not mean by this desire that he wants to move bag and baggage into the house of the Lord and sit down. Please do not think along such crude lines of interpretation. Rather, he wants to move "in the spirit" from the distracting, complex materialistic arrangements of the natural into the realm of the spirit or "the house of the Lord." Here (in the house of the Lord) his spirit, which is the essential

element in his makeup, may find adjustment and poise in God. The heart was neither made for the world nor for anything the world may offer. It can never find peace, rest, or true happiness in material things. Jesus says, "Come unto *me* all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The psalmist here calls it "the house of the Lord." After all, this is not merely a picturesque but a very happy statement of truth.

Dear one, have you found your way into the house of the Lord? Or do you still find the pressure and struggle of life driving you to seek rest in material things, all of which are *outside* His house? In His house we find *Him* and He is *all we need*. "Yes," someone is saying, "that sounds good in a hymn or a talk as a theory, but I want bread and butter." Very well, I do too. God never wants us to be so spiritual that we do not eat. We are to live normal, healthy, natural lives, balanced and sensible. We do need bread and butter—some need it badly. But we are Christians and must abide by the law or principle which Christ has established. What law? The law mentioned in Matthew 6:33, as I just quoted. If we seek *first* the things which He says we are to seek, we at once become involved in an arrangement of God's doings which will make it possible to *release* for us the material things. The very first verse in the Bible gives us the divine order, "In the beginning God." Let us see that we keep Him there.

Now we find a twofold purpose in this seeking of God. First—"to behold His beauty." In other words we are to be occupied with Him. His glory, beauty, purpose, and person. It is the same thought suggested in the Lord's prayer. The first part of the prayer has

to do with His position, honor, will, kingdom, purpose, etc. Then the question of daily bread follows, but God *first*.

Do you notice that David is first occupied with the beauty of the Lord? This does two things for us. It pushes out of the mind and heart the lesser items. Sometimes in prayer (when we first come into His presence) we are *so full* of thoughts, plans, suggestions, reasons, ways, wishes, and what not, that it makes a perfect screen between the heart and God. The psalmist has found out the danger of this and so tells us *what* occupies his attention first—"the beauty of the Lord." His beauty, grace, love, and mystery soon place the other things in shadow (and sometimes we even forget about them). How *strange* some prayers would sound if we *truly* realized that we were in the very immediate and glorious presence of Jesus. The second thing that happens by beholding Him is that an atmosphere is made. How much at times depends upon "atmosphere"!

The second part of the desire is, "to enquire in His temple." The Holy Spirit creates this atmosphere of faith and confidence by enabling us to behold Him. Then it is that the Holy Spirit brings to our hearts the petitions and things for which we should pray. While occupied with His beauty *how* could one ask foolish and nonessential things? To be occupied with Him brings the heart so close to His that we shall be bearing the same burden and have the same interest that is on His heart. Being now in divine order we are free to open our hearts in a most personal and wonderful way.

Shall we not afresh let the Lord work in our prayer life and if necessary revolutionize it a bit? Let Him

reduce it. Let Him sift and search until we are reduced in the desires and wishes which demand so much attention. Life will become more livable and God-honored when we follow the divine plan for prayer as for any other phase of Christian living. This chapter is not to be technical. I do not want to put anybody in bondage and make him feel he must pray only thus and so. Let it rather be a little suggestion in building up and enriching our prayer life for His glory.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *The Ideal Christian Character*

The most sublime and inspiring description of the ideal Christian character is found in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Jesus Christ our Lord and Master was and is the first and perfect character. In Him we find this description in perfect expression. In Him as the head of a new creation, the ideal is perfectly wrought out in all motives, conduct, and character. We cannot now take time to trace this ideal in the life of Christ, but we are encouraged to know that its completeness and perfection are ours, to be freely wrought out in us as we are willing to let the Holy Spirit reproduce His life in us.

First of all, let us clear our minds of a possible difficulty in regard to the question of character lest we get it confused with the thought of nature. Always remember that nature (the divine nature received at the new birth) is one thing—a gift received as a definite and specific act—while character is the result of a process of growth and building. We become part-takers of the divine nature at the new birth, by an

act but not a process. We do not continue to become more and more born as we grow in the Christian life. But if we yield to God we continue to grow in grace and may thus build a Christian character. We may come to God and become partakers of His nature the moment we believe, but He cannot make us into mature characters in one experience. There are any number saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit, but those experiences in themselves do not make them into developed Christian characters. The experiences are very necessary but are only initial steps which make it possible for God to start the work of conforming us to the image of Christ.

Did you ever look up the derivation of the word "character"? It is both interesting and suggestive. It comes from a Greek word which means to scratch, furrow, or plow. The Greek sculptors had a little instrument by the same name which they used in working upon the material before them. The instrument was a "character," and *charassin* was to furrow or plow or scratch. The artist worked out by plowing and furrowing the desire of his heart. So you see, our character is whatever is plowed or furrowed upon us. It is that which gives us our distinction and makes us different from others. Is that not exactly what God is doing with us today? Have you not felt the plowing and furrowing as He has worked in you and upon you to produce again the image of His Son? The Bible tells us, that "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10); and again, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29); and again, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect



man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). So are we not safe while we feel the deep plowing and furrowing of His disciplining hand?

Let us notice before we take up the study of character here what God says about cringing fear. It is not of God, but is the result of sin and failure. It may often be the indirect result of sin. We find it first mentioned in Genesis after the fall. It is always a disorganizing element and is overcome only by love. "Perfect love casteth out fear." So let us remember that fear is not of God and does not belong in the life of a Christian.

In this description of character we find three necessary elements. They are all given by God. He knows we are bankrupt and destitute as far as furnishing or originating anything for character building; therefore, He gives us these in Christ and will work them out in us as we let Him. The first is power. Christ is the head of a new creation and as such has all power vested in Him. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Before He went away He carefully instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Ghost and power. That was not for the Early Church only but for all believers. Why, some may ask, do we need that power when we have been saved and baptized in the Spirit? Because it is the dynamic and vital life of the new creation. We are His mystical body and have no life apart from it. As He lived by the Spirit, wrought and taught by the Spirit, and laid down His life by the same power, so are we to do today. He was continually dependent in His human aspect upon the power of the Holy Spirit to carry Him through. It is the same for us. All power is in Him. Let us not get under

such a burden about power, but keep our hearts and lives in vital connection with Him and He will see to the demonstration of power Himself.

Next in order He has given us love. Why do we find this element next mentioned? Because it follows in His divine arrangement and *must* come next since there is a logical arrangement here. Never interfere with God's arrangements of words, plan, order, system, or methods. The Holy Spirit has a reason for every choice of a word and placing of the same. He gives love next because it is the *motive* which is to govern the power in its manifestation. By motive I mean the urge or that which moves or incites to action. How we need the Holy Spirit these days to search out our hearts and discover to us the motives which prompt so much of the activity and doing in Christian circles. Today we see some marked manifestations of power, but I am wondering if our motives can bear close scrutiny. Even our faith is to be governed by a motive of love (Galatians 5:6). By love I do not mean a sentimental sort of feeling, not an emotional stir which is on the surface. I mean a love which has as a measure of its value or worth that costly element called sacrifice. The true measure of love is always sacrifice. It is not how much we say we love by words and promise, but how much we are willing to suffer and sacrifice for love which really gives the measure and strength of it. How many times I have had my students memorize these beautiful lines by Ugo Bassi:

“Measure thy life by loss and not by gain,  
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine  
Poured forth.

For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,  
And he who suffers most has most to give."

This is beautiful because it is true. Love which is born of suffering and sacrifice becomes a safe motive for the manifestation of His power. This was the whole difficulty with the Corinthian church. As we read 1 Corinthians 1:5-7 we find some very complimentary statements concerning the church. "Ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; . . . The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: . . . ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." If such things could truthfully be said of an assembly today, we should very likely think the assembly very spiritual and far advanced in the things of God. But that might easily be a false judgment. Even though Paul says these things and they are true, yet in another chapter quickly following, he says they are carnal and babes in Christ. They were carnal because of divisions. To have all such gifts and manifestations of power is no sign of spirituality. Rather, it is a sign that God has been unusually generous in His giving of gifts to such carnal Christians. They were not deeply spiritual or they would not have had such fleshly and natural manifestations in their church. Therefore, Paul has to correct them.

In the twelfth chapter we find Paul speaking of the gifts and the unity of the Spirit in relation to them and the need of mutual cooperation and understanding. Why do we find the message in the thirteenth chapter placed just where it is? Because there is no logical place other than this for the message it holds. It must come next because it shows the motive or *law* by which the gifts are to be operated. Never

take the thirteenth chapter from its proper setting simply because it is a bit of beautiful literature. It was not given to show the *beauty* of love as a sentiment; it was given to show the *necessity* of love as a motive for the proper display of the gifts.

In the thirteenth chapter he tells us some very solemn and awful truths. Truths which spiritual leaders might well ponder. The word, "though" in the first three verses throws the matter into possibility. He says it is *possible* to do all these markedly, spiritual, and supernatural things and yet be lacking in love and have the whole display or manifestation to profit him nothing. Is that not a solemn fact? Maybe this will clear up the questioning in the minds of some who are stumbled in seeing such manifest working and at the same time know there are very questionable things connected with the work or worker where the power and miracles are going on. If you note, the Bible says it profits the worker nothing who is thus used, and he is nothing. It does not say others may not be helped and blessed. God has promised to honor His Word. It is not a question of the power being genuine or gifts genuine, but a question of love or motive back of the operation. Paul did not say their work was all of the devil or their gifts not of God. They had been using the gifts for selfish ends and natural and fleshly purposes, not for the glory of God. It had resulted in divisions, envy, vaunting, and puffing up of self, unseemly behavior, self-seeking, provoking and thinking evil, delight in iniquity; things that were condemned in the thirteenth chapter. Therefore, Paul shows them a *better* way or (law) by which the gifts are to be operated that God may be glorified

and the body edified. All the work accomplished by other motives becomes hay, wood, and stubble.

There are three things we may do with a gift God has deposited in a believer. It may be used to the glory of God and the edification of the body; it may be prostituted—misused for selfish ends; or it may be left dormant, unused in the heart. Paul does not say that God takes the gifts away, but he does say to “Stir up the gift of God which is *in thee*.” The talent wrapped up in a napkin was not taken away until the man had to give an account at a later time. We are accountable for the use or abuse of a gift. Let us not be deceived when we see and hear of some marvelous doings. For I am sorry to say that all those things may be possible and yet God have little or nothing to do with it. He does bless the hungry heart and will honor His Word. He may not always be pleased with the instrument and may not sanction the methods as being spiritual. He often blesses in *spite* of and not *because* of the instrument or methods, because of His Word and the hungry hearts in faith seeking Him.

Third, He has given us (this translation says) a sound mind. A better translation is, “disciplined mind.” How very different that is. It means self-controlled for use and service. Jesus was perfectly disciplined and was therefore perfectly *safe*. He had all power and was the personification of love, and with a disciplined, understanding mind, He was the perfect manifestation of God. The New Testament tells so much about our minds. Because we are Christians and baptized in the Holy Spirit, do not think God has taken away our minds. We need them more than ever now. He says in the Word, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23). “I will put my laws into their hearts,

and in their minds will I write them (Hebrews 10:16). "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:16). We yield our minds to His perfect will and only thus are we *safe*. It is quite possible to have power and love and be lacking in the third element and make a failure of it all.

Look at Peter in this incident; "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed. . . . Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me" (Matthew 16:21-23).

Peter had *power* to protect the Lord and was happy to use it; and he had *love*, looking out, as he thought, for Christ's welfare. But he did not have a mind which was disciplined to *think* and therefore Christ had to rebuke him. Here it was not a question of power or of love but rather a lack of understanding. It would have been very unsafe to have allowed him to use his power, for it would have ruined God's whole purpose. Again let us look at the story in Luke 9:53-55: "And they [the Samaritans] did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." James and John had *power*. It had been given to them as we read in the first verse of this very chapter. They

had *love*, too, for they wanted to vindicate their Master and prove their loyalty to Him. It was not a question of power or of love, but a lack of understanding. Their minds were not trained, disciplined, subdued to correctly use power. Again Christ has to rebuke them. Christ is not done with John yet; his mind and spirit need to be subdued and trained. Christ always gets at the root of the trouble when we let Him.

It is interesting to note later on, after John has gone through a life of training, trial, suffering, and pain—when he had become *safe*, he wrote (so gently), “Little children, love one another.” That does not sound like thunder and fire from heaven, I am sure. When God wanted an instrument to whom He might give that marvelous Revelation—full of fire, thunder, war, beasts, lightning, tribulation, and most awful and mighty prophecies, He took the broken, subdued, banished, and hidden John. Now he is *safe* to thunder, now he is safe to call for fire, for in character he holds not only power, but love (the sacrificing kind) and his mind is *one* with God.

You might be tempted to discouragement thinking the ideal too high. Do not let the enemy rob you thus. It is quite impossible for us in our natural powers, but the work is God's, and by His Spirit He can accomplish it if we do our part. Shall we not afresh *yield* our whole being to His mighty power? We long to be like Christ and often pray it. He is plowing and furrowing the character upon us as we let Him. Not only are we blest, but He is glorified in finding material which will stand the test. Do not be too concerned with your work and service. He is after more than that. For all we do has its reaction upon the soul to

trace thereon faithfulness, yieldedness, love, suffering, and all the other elements and marks to make us like Jesus. All the while you are serving He is looking at the effect, result, reaction of it upon your character and will reward you accordingly. May He in that day be glorified in you because you loved Him enough to let go and let God trace upon you the image of His dear Son, even our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *The Marriage in Cana*

The marriage in Cana is one of the interesting incidents in the life of Jesus. Note in the Gospels how wonderful and beautiful His contacts are *with* the human and everyday relations in life. These are His necessary contacts. He must have them and desires them if He is to communicate life, and He says He has come to bring this heavenly and spiritual element. Here He is at a wedding, a festive, joyous occasion which is sanctioned, blessed, and honored of God.

We also find Him at a funeral. He is in the house of mourning. He understands the depth of loss and death. He is in sympathy with and loves the sick, the poor, and the needy. He feeds the hungry. He understands the needs of the people. He knows that Peter needs tax money and sees that he gets it.

He loves the little children and takes them up into His loving arms and blesses them. He knows all about the things of commonplace life: shops, houses, boats, farmers, merchants, flowers, fruit trees, plows, fish, the natural elements, and the very prosaic and common interests of life. He *has time* for all these things, even though there is a burden upon His heart and a most

tragic life before Him crowded with features of the most intensive and striking character.

Here we find Christ fresh and strong as He comes into the first stages of His ministry and with the vision of His tragic accomplishment ever growing upon Him, yet He has time to attend a wedding. I am so glad that He went. Aren't you? He thus becomes a rebuke to the stern asceticism of John. What a striking contrast! And yet both are in divine order and fall into divine patterns of life.

We do not condemn John because he is an ascetic. He is the last of a line of Old Testament prophets. He can condemn, but he never creates. He can hew down, but he has nothing constructive to offer. That is right. He is true to his vocation and we love him in his mood and ministry. One cannot feature John at a wedding feast. He belongs in the perfect habitat he is in—the desert. Please leave him there with all others who serve in that mood. God needs John in the desert and the Christ in the human relationships. God's economy covers great acreage and includes some very interesting personalities.

The Old Testament interpretation of life from the religious side had become very cramped and narrow, so far afield from God's ideas that Christ came like a terrible rebuke to the selfish, bigoted ways of the Jews. To have Christ, and Him the Messiah, *dare* step over their stupid little pattern and forms was very annoying. He was a continual disturber of *their* ideas and notions. They could not fit Him into their cherished and narrow style of living.

Please don't make religious and natural forms and designs for God to fit into, even when you get the material for them right out of the Bible, for it is

dangerous and disastrous. John is correct in the mission laid upon him. He is in the correct setting and the truth he presents is in nature exactly what he represents in manner of life. He is still of the old order.

But here we find Christ very *daring* to do the unusual. I love Him in these daring moods—He is thoroughly refreshing. In all His processes of life and manner of accomplishing the will of God, He is a demonstration of the truth told by Isaiah long before Him. Had man been able, no doubt he would have planned a global campaign, involving *all* the higher authorities in the religious, political, educational, and economic world. To the natural man such a gigantic feat as the redemption of the world would, of course, take in all these very human features (and how very human, too). I can imagine, and so can you, how wonderfully well organized the whole thing could have been and would have been if only some wise organizer or promoter could have “put it over.”

Man cannot seem to learn a simple lesson—a spiritual lesson of untold value—that a highly spiritual inflow and impact such as God occasionally brings to us, does not need the wisdom and the technique of even a religious group to manage it. A purpose or a plan born of the Spirit must be *executed* in the Spirit and *by* the Spirit.

Now let us turn more directly to the story in John, the second chapter. Did you ever notice the first person mentioned in this incident? Of course, it is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She is to play a leading part in the dramatic symbol picture presented. Then follows the statement that Jesus and His dis-

ciples were also called. This is an oriental feast—numbers from the neighborhood also came along.

The feast is on. There is music and song and gaiety, joyous exchange of talk, and good things to eat. And, of all things, we find Jesus and His disciples sanctioning it and entering into the happy mood of the day. Next we find a shortage of wine. That could very well be, since many had come.

Now we find in verse three a very important statement and a sad discovery as to Mary's lack of good etiquette. Remember this is not *her* feast. She is not the hostess. To be truthful, the wine shortage really is not her concern at all. She is a guest. But we find something here (which also persists today). Mary is a patriotic woman and a devoted mother. For these long years she has borne bravely the reproach and the misunderstanding caused by her faithful yielding to God to bring forth His Son.

Luke tells us that people supposed Him to be the son of Joseph. Luke 3:23. No one would believe Him to be God's Son, the Messiah. But Mary had *pondered* this revelation and truth in her heart all these years. And *now* that He has come so wonderfully through the baptism and testing and is standing on the threshold of His ministry, what could possibly be a more opportune time for Him to declare Himself? Surely He must want to prove His identification and manifest Himself as the longed-for and much-desired Deliverer. This is a fine illustration of the natural, zealous, religious ambition trying to execute a spiritual matter.

How the wedding festivities and even the miracle fade and take form in the shape of a wonderful frame, a setting. And now in this frame we find a symbol

picture of such deep spiritual proportions. Listen to the conversation—it is highly symbolic and of fundamental importance.

Here is a thoughtful, ambitious, and loving mother anxious for the vindication of her loyal and beautiful Son. She no doubt justifies her venture on the ground that the revelation given her was from heaven, therefore divine, and that He is in truth the Messiah. All this is very true. The difficulty is not there; it is in the *method* and the *time* for vindication and manifestation. Here we have zeal (a truly complimentary quality, but *without* knowledge).

Her vision does not carry far enough. She would have the thing already conceived in the Spirit and planned of God brought forth in the flesh now and thus form an abortion. It would be born out of season and forced. She would crowd "His hour," which was a long, long way down a tragic and painful road, into a present shortcut.

She sees in this wine shortage just a grand opportunity for her Son to work a miracle and *prove* Himself and *win* His place as the Messiah. So she ventures her remark. Anyone knows by the reply which Jesus gives that He discerned her real purpose. Words are not always needed; understanding hearts do not need clumsy words. He knows very well what she desires. He knows *our* thoughts too.

He knows very well that this is not the time for such an accomplishment. This is not the hour for which He has been born. The accomplishment and the *victory* will rest upon something more than this miracle. He will perform many of them before He reaches, by God's clock, the majestic will of God, *the hour* for which He has come into the world. His

vision is long; it has true perspective and penetration.

Listen to His answer: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4). Please note that in this rebuke He does not condemn her for her *hope*—that is God-given. He does not rebuke her for believing God's Word concerning the Messiah and His final victory. He does not condemn—He *corrects*. The hope was Spirit-born; the vision she had was truly of heaven; the dream she holds of her Son being God's Son and the Messiah is all true and divine. Jesus knows that and does not rebuke her for it.

But what He does see is the natural man, flesh, the broken human effort trying to execute and bring into materialization a spiritual feat. Therefore, He turns this dramatic scene and conversation into one of the most sublime symbol pictures to portray an eternal truth which He continues to proclaim all through His ministry.

Do you notice that He does not address her as "Mother"? No, not now. She is truly His mother from the human relationship. She gave Him the body He wears. But the point is not now concerning that. The term *woman* becomes the symbol of nature, flesh, the natural order, the human. And so since He is *in* the Spirit, living *in* the Spirit, ministering *in* the Spirit, and has a *spiritual* mission and work to accomplish, as well as a prophecy breathed by the Spirit to be fulfilled, *what* in the world would He have to do with flesh, nature, the human, to accomplish it?

So from the realm of the Spirit, holding all in true spiritual proportion and perspective, He looks at the poor human, natural effort and desire of the flesh, and addresses *that* as the woman, and asks what

He could possibly have to do with that. In other words, He is saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). That which is born of the Spirit, such as a life, a purpose, a design, a plan, an act or a feat, if truly born of the Spirit must be carried out, executed, and accomplished by the Spirit. One must *wait* God's time and hour.

O friends, what a powerful and very fundamental lesson is set before us! Do we need God to bring to naught and confusion many more of the lovely things He has given birth to in the Spirit and which the religious, zealous activity of the human has ruined and brought to such a narrow end? Remember, dear ones, that in a desire to bring to pass a vision, a dream, a purpose, some ideal, or a spiritual matter which God intimates in the Spirit or shows us in the Spirit, the method of expression and the process of accomplishment *must* partake of the same essentials. The means of putting it forth *must* be spiritual (no highly efficient flesh can do it); it *must* wait God's appointed hour. "He that believeth shall not make haste." (Isaiah 28:16). Faith can afford to stand and wait. Flesh *works* while faith rests and rejoices and waits.

Let us look again. Is this really an hour for Him? Let us look at these texts: John 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1. In the hour darkened by the shadows of a cross towering over Him, at a time when the life of victory and triumph is to be offered in supreme sacrifice, *that* is God's hour, that is *His* hour. How patiently He waited for it! See John 7:30 and 8:20.

And note in John 19:26, when *His* hour had come, He again uses the term *woman*. What a quiet, sug-

gestive means of prompting gentle Mary's mind! Does she not very well remember when He addressed her before as woman? Surely she does, and *now* there dawns upon her tired, troubled, believing heart the revelation of a truth she so little understood in the early days when she *longed* to see His hour. He is telling, as in a conversation or a dialogue, in picture form, a sublime message.

Some may ask, "Did not He perform a miracle?" Yes, indeed. But that was not *all* Mary wanted. That is *why* He answers her as He does, "*Mine* hour is not yet come." He knew that she wanted the hour of triumph and victory. But He could give that *only* in God's prescribed, ordained, and prophesied fashion by way of an obedient life and a victorious *death*. So He could perform the miracle—that was beautiful—but Mary had to *wait His* hour.

She must have understood something of the significance of the answer, for immediately she says, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5), trusting Him with *all* authority and wisdom. Quietly she submits to His *way* and subjects her wish and will to His.

How beautiful that He can use a wedding feast as an occasion for such rich spiritual teaching! No one knows *who* got married, the length of the bride's veil, fingertip length or what not. No one knows about the details usually crowding the mind of a person interested in framework. The wine has long been drunk, the gaiety has died away, the guests long since have passed on; but what a beautiful *frame* they made.

Have you found the *real* picture *in* the frame? Or are you of the class which forever is looking at frames? Many frames are lovely, full of detail and cunning work, but, alas! where is the picture? This whole



affair—the wedding, the feasting, the joyous festivity, the guests, the miracle—make *only* a frame. Christ and Mary and the dynamic and wonderfully arranged dialogue make the real *picture*. Look at it! Study it! Let its truth grip the heart. Let it sink into the deeper recesses of our spiritual nature the absolute, terrifying, and freeing truth.

Ask God for courage to lay aside the human mechanics which you have so cleverly devised. He does not need them. They prove but a snare and in the end divert the real purpose of God. Don't try to justify your means and time by the fact of God's promise, covenant, or intimation of a spiritual purpose or a desire He has for you. The desire and the purpose of God for you no doubt may be Spirit-born, *but* do wait God's hour and His method for fulfillment.

The *method* of God for Christ's victory was *not* a miracle of water turned to wine, but a *cross*. His hour was not a hurried demonstration of flesh "to prove God," but an hour tragic and profoundly magnificent, set like a jewel in a framework of the ages.

The Bible has numerous beautiful, spiritual, illuminating pictures, all veiled to the natural eye. I am finding them all most interestingly framed, and only as the Holy Spirit gives vision do we discern the beauty and the grace as they take form in the *very well-known* frames. *Frames* are interesting, fascinating, historically instructive, prophetically true, but *pictures* (the reality of truth) are abiding, endless, and forever triumphant.

## A NEW YEAR PRAYER

O Lord, I pray that through this coming year  
Our fellowship may deep and richer be;  
That I may recognize Thy presence near.  
And turn as to a friend, my Lord, to Thee.  
Walk with me, then, and guide me with Thine eye —  
I dare not trust myself to move one pace.  
I know not what ahead of me may lie  
Of joy or sorrow; yet, whate'er the case,  
One thing I know, that Thou art near my side,  
And knowest well my weakness and frame.  
Thou needed strength wilt give, if I abide  
In Thee, and in the strength of Thy dear name.  
I ask Thee not to give me joy aside  
From that which comes from doing Thine own will.  
To know Thy thought and purpose, naught beside  
Except that Thou wilt them in me fulfill.

Oh, help me not to fail Thee, Lord, in this,  
But with Thy grace and strength, oh, keep me true.  
Forbid that in Thy thought for me I miss;  
But help me trust in Thee to bring me through.  
Afresh I offer up to Thee my life,  
To use me as Thou wilt, or set aside;  
To manifest Thyself in open joy and light,  
Or in some hidden corner there to hide.  
It matters not to me, if only Thou  
Wilt make my foolish heart what Thou dost choose;  
And daily yielding to Thee, teach me how  
To gain more of Thy life, and mine to lose.  
Live out Thy life through me, and let there flow  
Such streams from Thee, my Head, that naught can stem  
The currents of Thy life — e'en here below.  
These things I ask in Thy dear Name. Amen.