

# The battle for your faith

by  
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# Foreword

During 40 years of close association with Dr. Willard M. Aldrich, I have often wished that he would put down in writing some of the great truths he has pronounced and stood for. These are truths that need to be emphasized again and again. It is with real joy now that I write this foreword to his book.

Many of God's people are ignorant of the battle that continually rages all around them. We sleep as the enemy of our souls vies with the Captain of our salvation for the possession of our faith. With clarity and power the truths of this spiritual warfare are set down in *The Battle for Your Faith*.

Although the Word of God assures us that eventual victory is sure and that our Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and in earth, we must also remember that He exhorts us, "Watch therefore . . . and what I say unto you I say unto you all, watch."

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "Let us not sleep as do others but let us watch and be sober . . . putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

This is a timely book—a book much needed today.

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# 1

## Everybody Wants It

**Yes, you do** have something everybody wants. The butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker want it. The banker, too. Your friends and relatives want it. God wants it. The devil wants it. What's more; **THEY WANT IT BADLY**. They want it enough to fight for it.

What you've got that everybody wants is the prize of political campaigning. Every aspirant to public office must have it. It's the coveted scalp of ideological warfare. It's the victor's crown to the advertising man and the key to the golden treasures of business and commerce.

It's the invisible bond that joins heart to heart in marriage and in the family circle. Without it there can be neither love nor hope.

Satan came into the garden of Eden to get it.

God sent His Son into the world to win it.

**Your faith** is what everybody wants. Your faith is mighty important. It's important to you. It's important to those who want it; and it's important to know why they want it.

Businessmen want your faith so they can sell their goods. Sweethearts, family and friends want your faith because the fabric of intimate, inter-personal relationships is woven out of faith. Statesmen need your faith so you will support their programs for the common good. Politicians need your faith to keep themselves in office.

Communists wanted your faith so they could control and exploit you. Their propaganda sought to brainwash and convert; and, when that failed, liquidation was the "ultimate solution."

**We must** realize that communism in this new century is not the rabid bear it was in the last; but just because it is not in our headlines does not mean it is dead. Many nations are communist-controlled, and we must be alert to that. I have deliberately made many references to communist doctrine in this book in order to keep that threat before us.

Admittedly, Al Qaeda and the terrorist movement are holding our attention at the moment. The combined forces of many nations are ganged against the terrorists. But the time may come when terrorism is no longer a threat and all nations will revel in the peace they have achieved. That could well be the time when Satan calls his "Lazarus" to come forth, and the sleeping giant awakes. We must be on guard!

**On their way** toward world dominion, those who believe Satan's lies will consider it imperative to destroy your faith in God and to rob you of the heritage of political and economic freedom which has made our country great. They will want you to sell your inheritance for a mess of pottage. They will promise freedom and plenty but give slavery and poverty. They are but one of the many ways in which Satan works to destroy faith in God and to create faith in a

humanity that is Satan-inspired and self-sufficient.

**From the** temptation of man in the garden of Eden to the present time, Satan has sought to persuade us that God is evil or non-existent and that man is good and godlike. To the end that he may debase and destroy you, Satan wants your faith.

And God wants your faith; but unlike those who want your faith to use both it and you for selfish ends or for your destruction, God wants your faith for your own highest good.

**The late** President Dwight D. Eisenhower summed up the history of the world as a "struggle for the soul of man himself." And what was true then is true now. No other age has seen the conflict so widespread, so bitter and so definitely centered upon the soul of man as has our own.

In other ages, conquerors have arisen to capture the lands, loot the wealth and to enslave the bodies of the vanquished. But no age has seen dictatorships aimed so directly at the souls of men as has this age. In communism, victims are brutally brain-washed to destroy all belief in God and all standards of social and economic justice.

**The late** President Eisenhower and then Prime Minister Anthony Eden issued a joint statement as to "the Essence of the Struggle," a statement even more pertinent today. It was reported as far back as "TIME" magazine of February 13, 1956.

We are conscious that in this year 1956 there still rages the age-old struggle between those who believe that man has his origin and his destiny in God and those who treat man as if he were designed merely to serve a state machine. . . . It would be illusory to hope that in their foreign policies, political and economic, the Soviet rulers would reflect a concern for the rights of other

peoples which they do not show toward the men and women they already rule. Any free nation that may be persuaded by whatever threat, promise or enticement to embrace communism will lose its independence and its people will forfeit their rights and liberties. These contrasting records of recent years reflect the essence of the struggle.

**In like manner** General Douglas McArthur spoke of the Korean war as basically theological in character. In the words of Merrill Root, one-time professor of English at Earlham College, it was a continuation of the conflict between God and Satan with his "wrecked" angels which began before the creation of man. Obviously there are many people, concerns and causes that are interested in the faith and, ultimately, the souls of men. They may be good or evil, from God or from the devil. At heart, then, the battle of the ages for the faith and souls of men is a battle between God and Satan.

**Satan strives** to keep the Word of God from producing faith in the human heart. This is graphically portrayed in the parable of the sower that was told and interpreted by Jesus Christ.

"A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; . . . and some fell upon a rock; . . . and some fell among thorns; . . . and other fell on good ground" (Luke 8:5-8).

**Once I** was tempted to think the sower was a bit careless to allow his seed to fall into so many potentially unproductive areas. I have come to believe the parable portrays, rather, the prodigality of the Divine sowing. He has not left Himself without a witness. The seed is everywhere present and only needs to be given the right conditions in which to germinate and grow. The

places into which the seed was cast represent different conditions of the human heart as affected by natural endowment, worldly circumstances and depth of spiritual perception and desire. And Satan can profoundly affect man in each of these areas.

**In the** interpretation of the parable, however, Jesus pinpointed the direct agency of Satan in a “search and destroy mission.” He portrayed it in terms of birds of the air eating up the seed:

Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved (Luke 8:11-12).

**The struggle** for the souls of men between God and Satan centers upon man’s faith. God seeks to nurture faith in Himself through His Word (Romans 10:17); Satan tries to snatch the Word out of the heart so as to prevent faith in it.

Before we can be pardoned of our sin and be morally comfortable in the presence of God who is absolute in holiness, we must be born again. The new birth takes place when we believe God’s Word concerning His Son.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth (James 1:18).

And Peter tells us that we are:

Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever (I Peter 1:23).

When one is thus born again, he becomes a child of God, a child of the kingdom.

In another parable, a man is represented as having sown good seed in his field, and an enemy is represented as sowing tares in among the good seed. “The enemy that sowed them is the devil” (Matthew 13:39). In the interpretation of this parable, the “good seed” are the “children of the kingdom,” and the “tares” are the “children of the wicked one” (Matthew 13:38). This parable represents a development of thought beyond the parable of the sower whose “seed” was the Word of God.

**In this** parable the good seed are those who have received the Word of God into their hearts to become born-again children of the kingdom. They are sown in the world to influence others for God and good. The tares are children of the devil.

From the two parables it becomes evident that the devil sows as well as plucks out what God has sown. He sows his own wicked men. They have become wicked men because Satan has plucked out from their hearts the seed of the Word of God and because he has planted instead seeds of doubt toward God and seeds of faith in his lie that man shall be his own god (Genesis 3:5). They have not received the “love of the truth” by which they could be saved and as a result are delivered over to believe Satan’s lie to the destruction of their souls (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).

**Satan caused** Eve and Adam to doubt the goodness of God and to believe his lie that they would be advantaged by acquiring the knowledge of good and evil, even to the extent of becoming as God. From that day to the present, Satan’s strategy has been to destroy man’s faith in God and to establish man’s faith in himself as independent of God.

Inasmuch as Satan is the “god of this age” and the “prince of the power of the air,” he wields great influence in the affairs of men both in government and in society at large. We believe, therefore, that many of the great movements of our time, whether in government or education or religion, are being manipulated by Satan in order to turn men from the worship of God to the worship of the idols of self and Satan.

**The battle** for the minds of men is carried out through every conceivable means of communication. Radio and television, books, newspapers and magazines are a part of Satan’s arsenal in the battle against God for the faith of mankind. And the children of God counter-attack Satan’s propaganda with the truth of God and likewise

employ the mass media to produce faith in God.

Political candidates use the media to laud themselves and hurl their invectives against their opponents. Rulers use the media to control their people through propaganda which molds opinions and builds faith; for wars are begun, stopped or lost in harmony with successful propaganda to control the masses.

**Religious** leaders may be serving Satan and denying God and yet many succeed in winning followers through the powerful impact of the mass communications media.

The fate of nations and the destiny of individuals are inseparably bound up with their faith. It can be saving faith in God or soul-destroying faith in Satan. We urge you to become aware of the battle which is presently going on for your faith.

## 2

### You Walk by Faith

**You may** be like a great many people today who claim to walk by sight rather than by faith. You may let the slogan, “Seeing is believing,” state your philosophy. This practical “I’m-from-Missouri” attitude demands to be shown proof before it will commit itself. Now, with others you may think that the facts of scientific discovery have made religious faith nebulous and irrelevant.

If you have relegated faith to the limbo of religious feelings and profess to live your life only in the light of provable fact, then let me say to you, “You are already walking by faith—why not faith in God?”

Perhaps you respond negatively to the idea that you are walking by faith if you have made observable facts the controlling factor in your life. But in order to be sure that such a “facts-based philosophy” is not after all a faith, you must be sure you have all the facts.

**Until** a man walking by facts is sure he possesses all the facts, he is in reality walking by faith. Such is the case of the atheist. He walks by sight, but he hasn’t seen everything; and so, for him to affirm that there is no God is a statement of his faith.

**We may** carry this a step farther. Even the man who possesses all the relevant facts in a given situation still walks by faith in the interpretation of those facts. So it is with the creationist and the evolutionist. Each has the same factual data from ob-

servable nature; and each lives by a different faith, based in part upon the same data.

In the final analysis, every man has a faith; and if that faith is a reasoned faith, it rests upon a choice of explanations of the universe. He either decides that the universe is basically a chaos, without design or Designer and hence completely irrational or it is a cosmos, an orderly universe with design and purpose demanding a Supreme Architect to account for it.

W. T. Stace of Princeton believed that the quintessence of the modern mind was the belief in the ultimate irrationality of the universe. If you find no evidence of God and design in the universe and prefer to believe that man is pitted against the darkness, you are certainly entitled to your belief; but remember that such belief is your *faith*, not something which demonstrable scientific fact compels you to conclude.

**It is no** less a faith to say, “In the beginning chaos—or primordial ooze,” than to say, “In the beginning God.”

Unfortunately, the subject of origins is not always treated fairly so that fact and faith are clearly distinguished from each other. Such is the case of the entry on Creation in the *WORLD BOOK* bearing the copyright date of 1942. Its bias against creation is shown in the fact that it relegates creation to the realm of mythology. Creation is dismissed with a single line, now more: “CREATION: Myths concerning; see Mythology.” But three and a half

pages are devoted to evolution. We are happy to report, however, that a subsequent issue of *WORLD BOOK* carries an account of creation as presented in the Bible.

**Although** altogether too many treat creation as an unscientific belief and hold to the evolutionary explanation of origins as scientific fact, yet honesty compels them to admit that evolution is no more than a theory which they confess as their belief. Such seems to be true of the famous Harvard astronomer, Dr. Harlow Shapley. He stated that in the beginning the universe probably consisted only of hydrogen gas from which everything evolved. He gave this expression of his belief in an address before a convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

**David A. Warriner, Jr., Ph.D.**, associate professor of natural science at Michigan State University, a man who believes in creation, quoted the following as a sample of the way encyclopedias deal with the subject of origins:

Most biologists *believe* that life is the result of natural physical and chemical reactions and processes, and *believe* that organisms recognized as living today evolved from non-living matter as the result of such processes.

The quotation occurs in a published address by Dr. Warriner entitled, "What is Life?"

**He points** out further that those who prefer to find the origin of the universe in matter itself rather than in God leave the realm of science and enter the domain of belief quite as much as the man who believes in God.

So, in the final analysis, you must make a choice in the realm of faith. You

can say with the Christian theist, "I believe in God," and thereby indicate your belief in an Intelligent Creator. Or with the scientist who has left his domain of test tube and proof to enter the field of speculation, you can say, "I believe in hydrogen gas."

**There you have it:** "I believe in God" or "I believe in gas;" and you place Creative intelligence in the balance over against chance. You choose between eternal matter and omnipotent God.

As for me and my house, we will believe in God, God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3).

He is before all things, and by him all things consist (hold together) (Colossians 1:17).

This wonderful Creator became our Redeemer by giving His life a ransom for our sins. We honor Him and save our own souls by trusting Him as our Savior. Yes, ultimately, you believe in God—the wonderful, wise and living Creator and Redeemer—or you believe in gas.

**Perhaps** you are one of the many people who have a seeking faith but have not found a satisfying object for your faith. Like the dove which Noah sent out from the ark to seek above the flood waters either a bit of dry land or a tree upon which to light, your faith has searched for a place to rest.

**Such a** search may have taken you from church to church, from the temple of reason to the palace of pleasure or from one religious cult to another; but just as "the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot," you have searched in vain.

Your search can end and your faith be satisfied only when you come to Jesus Christ. His disciples heard the approving voice of God from heaven concerning Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). And Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). Here is a good place for your faith to rest.

**Faith**, religious or philosophical, is not divorced from reason and reality, but rather it has a factual and reasonable basis. And faith in God is not a leap into the dark from a springboard of religious feeling. Faith is rather the intellectual bridge from the known to the unknown.

The Christian faith may be reduced to three basic beliefs about God and his relation to the world: 1) God is the Creator of the universe, 2) God is the moral Governor, and 3) God is the redeemer of mankind.

**If instead** of believing that God is the Creator of matter, life, mind and men, you believe that eternal matter somehow by chance evolved to become all these things, then we invite you to come up to faith in God as Creator. Is it not more reasonable to believe that a God of supreme intelligence and power created the world and all that is in it rather than to believe that it just happened by chance?

Christians believe that God is the Moral Governor of the universe. The first tenet of our faith is that He created the universe, and the second is that He rules over it. We believe that the moral law is an expression of God's essential nature and that

there are therefore moral absolutes which are binding standards for human conduct.

**In addition** to the uniform biblical representation that man must be holy because God is holy, there are obvious facts from human experience that point to a moral universe ruled by a moral God. There is the human conscience which insists that there are qualities of character we ought to have and standards of conduct we ought to observe. And conscience never wittingly pronounces wrong to be right and right to be wrong.

Then there is the observable fact that violations of the moral law carry built-in punishment. Social sins are visited by social diseases. Unrelieved guilt may produce both bodily and mental illness. And finally, history bears witness to providential judgment. Historians say that the great civilizations have been destroyed by moral decay. In the language of Scripture, God allows nations and civilizations to exist only until "the cup of their iniquity is full."

**The third** distinctive of the Christian faith is that God is the Redeemer of mankind. He is not only a wise and powerful Creator, a holy and demanding Moral Governor, but He is a gracious and loving Redeemer.

Man finds himself confronted with a moral law he cannot keep. He is aware of a bondage to sin he cannot break, he faces death and judgment he cannot escape, and his conscience affords him no comfort.

He is confronted with several alternatives. He may deny the existence of God and of moral absolutes and deny that man is under obligation to live uprightly. If he believes in God, he must believe that God

has either relaxed His standards or has provided redemption for mankind.

**Christians** believe that God sent His Son to be the Redeemer of man. They believe Christ's witness concerning Himself:

The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).

The alternatives are not science versus faith or facts as opposed to religious feelings. The alternatives are between a false faith and *saving* faith in God and His Son the Savior. It is human philosophy versus Divine revelation accepted by faith. We invite you to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

**Faith is** like a high voltage wire through which power flows. Faith in self taps the highest of human potential and harnesses it for achievement and success. Faith is the tenuous bond that joins man to man in any well-ordered society. And if man's faith in his fellows snaps, society crumbles.

**Faith is** also the bridge between the finite and the Infinite over which man traffics with God. And at this high level, faith in Jesus Christ brings the wealth of salvation from God to bankrupt man.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

The Bible not only teaches that men are saved by faith but that men are lost by faith. Faith brings salvation when it lays hold upon God as Creator and Redeemer.

This is saving faith. On the other hand, faith may bring disappointment and slavery to sin and death because it is placed upon an unworthy and incapable object. And this may prove to be condemning faith.

**The Apostle Paul** tells us that if Jesus Christ had not been raised from the dead, even He would be unworthy of our faith and our faith would be in vain. It would not be saving faith. But, thank God, He was delivered to death because of our offenses and was raised again because through His death He won forgiveness and justification for those who trust Him (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 14, 17).

When the Bible speaks of *saving* faith, it refers to faith in God and in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. So Christians are "of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39). Since the forgiveness which God offers to us is based upon the death of His Son as a sacrifice for our sins, faith in Him is the common requirement laid down in Scripture for obtaining forgiveness and salvation:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).

**Failure to** believe on the Lord Jesus Christ does not arise out of a lack of capacity for faith but rather because there is a rival faith which precludes confidence in the Savior. The person who is out of step with Jesus Christ is marching to the beat of another drum.

Many, like the Pharisees, trust in themselves that they are righteous (Luke 18:9). Jesus spoke a parable to the self-righteous

Pharisees about the prayers of a self-abasing tax collector.

**And the** despised tax man who prayed, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” went down to his house justified rather than the proud Pharisee. If your faith is resting upon your own righteousness and upon your religious rites and ceremonies, it may well be *condemning* rather than *saving* faith.

Others are like the prosperous farmer whose folly is the subject of another of the parables. He had such bumper crops that he tore down his barns to build larger ones. He made the mistake of believing, however, that prosperity meant security for his soul. And his false faith cost him his soul. For God said, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20).

**The Bible** tells of many others who were lost or destroyed by their faith. They trusted in military might, wealth, lying words and lying vanities, graven images or in their own beauty, righteousness and ways (Psalm 20:7; 44:6; Proverbs 11:28; Jeremiah 7:4, 8; Psalm 31:6; Isaiah 59:4; 42:17; Ezekiel 16:15; 33:13; Hosea 10:13).

**History** repeats itself, but the mistakes of history can be avoided if we will learn from them.

In the beginning of the race, man fell by faith. He fell from faith in God through faith in Satan and in himself. Satan first questioned the restriction God had placed upon Adam’s freedom to enjoy all things. Then he denied that disobedience would bring death.

And finally, he promised that to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would make Adam and Eve as God, wise enough to make moral judgments independent of God. And, because

Adam and Eve believed Satan, sin and death entered the race.

**And now**, at what appears to be the end of time, Satan’s lie that man shall be as God is becoming the faith of many. Evolution is substituted for God as Creator. Man’s judgment concerning good and evil seeks to displace the law of God. And Satan is being worshiped openly, often with rites too obscene to be mentioned. History is moving toward the worship of a predicted “man of sin”—Satan’s man, who will exalt himself above God and demand the faith and obedience due to God alone (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

**Those who** do not receive the love of the truth concerning Jesus Christ, that they may be saved, will believe Satan’s lie and be lost (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Whether you are saved by faith or lost by faith depends upon whom or what you trust. We urge you to renounce faith in self or Satan and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

You are living by faith. Is it faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

**So long** as we do not know everything, we walk by faith. Life is lived, even science progresses, on probabilities. No one of us has all the answers, so we all walk by faith.

Dr. Donald Chittick, professor of chemistry at George Fox College, once said, “We accept the Bible by faith; and if we reject it, we reject it by faith.”

Belief in God implies faith. Denial of the existence of God is also a matter of faith since no one can know there is no God.

**Faith** comes by hearing and saving faith comes from hearing the Word of God. Hear what it has to say about Jesus Christ:

These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:31).

# 3

## The Origin of False Faith

**On one New Year's Day**, we watched the Orange Bowl football game in which Nebraska trounced Notre Dame, 40 to 6, and saw, even more impressive than the game, the half-time pageantry calling for world peace. Yet, while there and elsewhere men and women and especially youth demonstrated for peace, war goes on.

Year by year, the crime rate steadily rises. Immorality, violence and rebellion increase as does social and legal tolerance toward them. Such moral breakdown finds expression in recommended legislation to legalize marijuana and to make the sins of sexual immorality and perversion no longer criminal among consenting adults.

**The Apostle** Paul tells us that in the perilous times in which we live ungodly men will creep into houses to commit immoral acts with sinful women. But the wickedness of our age exceeds the sin of the creepers. We witness almost daily in our newspapers and magazines some account of individuals or groups taking a bold stand for the practice of unnatural and immoral acts, such as homosexuality.

**Those who** creep in the darkness to indulge their sin have not repudiated the witness of their conscience to God's moral order. They act out of fear and shame and seek to hide their sin from being discovered. But the one who stands "in the way of sinners" (Psalm 1:1) boldly renounces the

moral order and pronounces evil to be good and good to be evil (Isaiah 5:20).

And what can we say of governments which will encourage trade with enemy governments with whom they are at war? And what can we say when presidential commissions or conferences publish reports and papers which make the definition and prosecution of pornography more difficult and which openly advocate tolerance of every style of sexual aberration?

At the turn of the century a somewhat widely-held evolutionary optimism anticipated a golden age of peace and prosperity based upon the imagined improvability of human nature. But, instead of realizing the beneficent results of inevitable progress, we face the inevitability of doom through global war.

How can we account for man's helplessness to improve his condition and to win the battle against sin, crime and war?

**We certainly** do not find the whole answer in the tragic fact that man is a fallen creature, capable of noble aspirations and heroic self-sacrifice, but normally living beneath his ideals in self-indulgence and revolt against God and His law.

We find the ultimate answer in the revealed fact that there is personified evil in an intelligent and malicious being called Satan, who foments the organized rebellion against God and who incites mankind to lust, immorality and crime. He is "the

prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). He is “the god of this world” who has “blinded the minds of them which believe not” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

**The mystery** of iniquity”—its origin, its master-mind and its historical climax—is a matter of revelation in the Bible. Apart from such revelation, the origin of sin would ever remain in the uncertainty and obscurity of human speculation.

Second Thessalonians 2:7 tells us that the “mystery of iniquity (or lawlessness) doth already work.” The goal toward which iniquity is working is the enthronement of “a man of sin, the son of perdition,” to be worshiped as God. He is the Wicked One “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-9).

**The enthronement** and worship of Satan’s man as god is the goal of Satan’s sinful rebellion. It is in harmony with his purpose when he introduced sin into the world with the promise to Adam, “Ye shall be as gods” (Genesis 3:5).

Whittaker Chambers, the former communist spy, well calls man’s self-deification the race’s second oldest faith in his masterpiece *Witness*, as quoted in “The National Laymen’s Digest.” He points out that this is the faith of communism and that it had its origin in the garden of Eden:

It is not new. It is in fact, man’s second oldest faith. Its promise was whispered in the first days of the Creation under the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: ‘Ye shall be as gods.’ It is the great alternative faith of mankind. Like all great faiths, its force derives from a simple vision. Other ages have had great visions. They have always been different versions of the same vision:

the vision of God. The Communist vision is the vision of Man without God. . . .

**The Genesis** account of Satan’s tempting man to become God leads us to believe that two cryptic passages in the Old Testament which tell of a glorious angelic being who exalted himself and sought worship as the Most High God are indeed a revelation of the origin of sin in the universe.

**The two** passages of Scripture are Ezekiel 28:12-18 and Isaiah 14:4-14. They form a lamentation or a taunting song against the King of Tyre and the King of Babylon. Each of these kings is proud and ambitious because of the greatness of his kingdom and the beauty and worldly-wisdom of his own person. Each is guilty of self-deification which was not an uncommon practice among ancient rulers. But both are addressed by titles which indicate that they were heavenly, angelic beings. The King of Tyre is called, “the anointed cherub” who was upon the holy mountain of God, and the King of Babylon is addressed as “Lucifer, son of the morning,” who fell from heaven (Ezekiel 28:14, Isaiah 14:12). Further, God ascribes perfection to them. Of the king of Tyre, God said, “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty” (Ezekiel 28:12).

**We shall** reserve for later treatment the intriguing and important subject of how a wise and beautiful being could be dumb enough to think himself to be God and to rebel against his Creator. For the present, let us simply give the reasons why we believe, along with others, that the songs about the two kings were a means of revealing the ultimate origin of sin and the basic strategy of Satan.

**Inasmuch** as sin entered the race by means of a tempter, it is clear that the account of the fall of Adam and Eve does not tell of sin's ultimate origin but only of its entrance into the human family. It is clear therefore that, at some point in the dateless past prior to the creation of man, sin had its origin. The book of Revelation calls the leader of rebellion against God, "the great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Revelation 12:9). It reveals that men will worship him and his ruler on earth, who is called the "beast" (Revelation 13:4). Along with Satan, a great number of angels sinned against God and "kept not their first estate" (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

**The first** reason for believing we cannot limit the meaning of the passages in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 to the two kings mentioned in them is that they are addressed as angelic beings having moral and spiritual perfection which fallen man does not possess.

Second, the psychological process by which self-occupation led to pride and sin appears to be a basic pattern common to man; and it could, therefore, be the actual route along which an unfallen angel could travel into sin.

Third, self-deification, involving the worship of self and ultimately of Satan, is the goal of fallen man and Satan. It is reasonable to conclude that Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 reveal the ultimate origin of sin for two reasons:

First, the common cord of self-deification binds these passages to Genesis 3 and 2 Thessalonians 2.

Second, both Genesis and 2 Thessalonians reveal Satan's ambition and activity

as already in existence and demand a revelation of their origin. Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 supply this revelation.

**The objection** against interpreting these two passages as referring to the origin of sin in the fall of Satan is not a weighty one. The objection is made on the ground that they are addressed to historical kings in the midst of historical circumstances. But it is not an uncommon method of biblical revelation to reveal some remote event in terms of an immediate happening. This not only involves the use of the present as the vehicle of revealing the remote, but it also uses a prophecy which has a near and partial fulfillment in such a way that the near and partial fulfillment serves as a key to understanding its remote and complete fulfillment.

**Thus Isaac**, the promised son of Abraham, was a type of his greater Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). And when God made a covenant with David in which He promised him that his son should inherit his kingdom and throne in perpetuity, there are some portions of the covenant which Solomon fulfilled but other parts which remain for Christ yet to fulfill (2 Samuel 7:12-17; Acts 2:29-36). Thus, Scripture blends the immediate and the remote future into one prophecy. It's like a picture window framing a foreground of rolling hills and a background of towering mountains.

**In using** Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 as a means of revealing what took place in the remote past, the method of revelation is the same as that commonly employed when using the immediate present to foreshadow the remote future. The only thing different

is that the present is used to unveil the past rather than the future.

Elsewhere in Scripture, as in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, we find the devil seen as controlling a person and being spoken to directly or referred to as “in charge.” Jesus commanded Satan, who was in Peter and controlling him through deception, to get behind Him (Matthew 16:23). Peter accused Ananias of being controlled by Satan because he gave a part of his possessions to the early church as though it were all of them. Paul charged Elymas, the sorcerer, with being full of subtlety and mischief because he was a “child of the devil” (Acts 5:3; 13:10).

Thus the Spirit of God looked at two great and proud kings who had exalted themselves as God, and He looked in them to see hearts controlled and lifted up by Satan; and then He used what Satan had brought about in their hearts to reveal how Satan’s own heart was lifted up and corrupted as he became occupied with his own beauty (Ezekiel 28:17).

But Scripture describes him as the Old Serpent, the Dragon, Satan, and the Devil (Revelation 12:9; 20:2). He could also be well called the Great Chameleon because he ever changes his appearance to hide himself. He may appear as an “angel of righteousness” or be seen in all his immoral ugliness as is the case when he is worshiped in Satanist cults. He is the great deceiver and his basic strategy down through the ages has been to deceive people into repudiating God by propagating the lie that there is no other God but the creature himself, both man and Satan.

**Four times** in the New Testament the word “lie” appears in the Greek text marked out by the definite article in such a way as to distinguish it from any old lie by pointing to it as “the lie.” (The writer is aware that abstract nouns such as truth, lie, love, hate, etc., are sometimes employed with the definite article without the article serving its normal function of pointing out a particular one out of a class of things. But he is also aware that the definite article does serve to point to a specific and definite thing, as *ONE* of a class of things, represented by an abstract noun. In short, I am saying that *THE* lie means a specific and definite lie, not *A* lie, much less lying in general, as wrongly translated in Ephesians 4:25).

In two out of four occurrences of “the lie,” the lie is identified as Satan’s lie; and in the other two occurrences, they are so obviously a part of his basic lying strategy that all four places in which the word occurs can readily be seen as a fact of the lie with which he deceived Eve in the garden of Eden.

**Satan’s** age-old strategy centers in the propagation of the following fourfold lie:

1. The creature is to be exalted and worshiped and served as God (Genesis 3:5; Romans 1:25).
2. Men are the children of God and do not need a liberating Savior (John 8:41-44).
3. Men are like God in being capable of deciding their own moral standards (Ephesians 4:25).
4. Satan’s man shall be enthroned and worshiped as the great peacemaker and liberator (2 Thessalonians 2:2-4).

Subsequent chapters will deal with each phase of Satan’s soul-destroying lie.

# 4

## The Lie About the Creator

The first facet of Satan's prime strategy for defying God and destroying the souls of men is found in Genesis 3:5 in the promise, "Ye shall be as gods (or God)." The lie rears its ugly head again in the Apostle Paul's indictment of the ancient world for its rejection of what could be known of God through creation. Men not only did not like to retain the knowledge of God in their minds, but they changed the truth of God as seen in creation into the lie that the creature is to be worshiped rather than the Creator (Romans 1:18, 25).

**Before** examining this passage of Scripture, permit me to remind you that the belief that man is God is current and alive. What the Scripture has to say finds corroboration in history and in present-day beliefs. Man's tendency to exalt himself to the place which God alone should occupy is graphically stated by Will Herberg, author and lecturer, in the "National Review" magazine of July 27, 1971:

Men, sinful men, 'fallen' men—that is, all men in history—have always been in revolt against God, because (and this is the essential mark of their sinfulness, their 'fallenness') they have always exhibited a virtually unconquerable reluctance to acknowledge their own creatureliness and an equally unconquerable urge to organize life and reality around themselves as center, individually or collectively.

But this revolt has taken many forms and a variety of expressions. In his delusions of self sufficiency, man has tended to make his vitality, his

reason, his cultural creativity, even his religion, into a vehicle of his frantic straining for absolute autonomy against God; and, almost always, he has implemented this urge toward self-absolutization by projecting some part or aspect of his humanness as the ultimate reality to be exalted and adored.

Man's vitality becomes the Life-Force, his truth becomes The Truth and so on.

In thus proceeding, man, in recent times usually collective man, betrays, at one and the same time, his metaphysical need—without some absolute, he cannot live or think—and his inner drive to self-exaltation. He is always manufacturing his own idols to suit his intellectual, spiritual and cultural predilections. This is the perennial condition of man, not merely today or yesterday, but through the succession of ages that marks his career in history."

**Walter** Reuther is reported as expressing his belief that man is God. He was asked, "Do you believe in religion and God, or in science as a religion?"

He answered, "We do not believe in God, but that man is God" ("Congressional Review," August 2, 1955, p. 7).

In an article entitled, "Dead-End Dialogue," Sheldon Moody Smith points out some irreconcilable differences between Christianity and communism. He shows that the goal of those who believe Satan's lie is the enthronement of man as God:

For the Christian, the exemplary Man before God is always Jesus Christ. For Marx, and it is an explicit point in his writings, the exemplary man before the gods is Prometheus, defying them and

calling, 'In truth, I hate all gods.' Man as the pinnacle, man as the ultimate, that is Marx . . . Man without God is only the first stop. Man, seizing the godhead, that is the goal. That is the Marxist wish. The son of light, who sat by the throne of heaven, had the same wish ("National Review," April 6, 1971, p. 367-38).

**The denial** of God and the deification of man is not limited to the ranks of the professing atheists. A professor of theology at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago confessed that he structured his religion on a non-theistic basis ("Christianity Today," December 6, 1963, p. 9).

A book review entitled, "Theology Without God," appears in the January 30, 1970, issue of the same magazine. *The Secular Search for a New Christ* is the book reviewed. Gustave H. Todrank, the author of the book, considers traditional Christianity to be largely irrelevant to the current world situation. The reviewer summarized the author's proposed changes in "Christian" theology to make it relevant for modern man:

We need a theology without God, a Bible without authority, a Church without clergy, salvation without immortality, and morality without immorality. The solution is nothing short of the complete secularization of life. This world is enough—what more does man need?

**Man is** not only "seizing the godhead" as a religious belief, but seeking to control his own destiny in practical ways just as though he was actually God.

Dr. Edmund Leach calls upon us to assume the role of God, saying,

Men have become like gods. Isn't it about time that we understood our divinity? Science of-

fers us total mastery over our destiny. . . . ("The Listener," November 16, 1967, pp. 621-23).

Now, before we look at the first chapter of Romans to consider in some detail man's self-deification and his denial of God as Creator, let us remind ourselves that this unpleasant disclosure about mankind not only squares with the facts of past and present history but is in line with the basic strategy of Satan as seen in the Bible.

**He said,** "I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14).

He told our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 3:5).

And he aspires to have his man worshiped as God: "He as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The present effort of man, both inside the professing church and in the world at large, to make himself God constitutes amazing evidence that this is indeed Satan's basic lying strategy and that man has been ensnared by it.

The apostasy of the race from "that which may be known of God" took place in three stages.

**First,** men refused to glorify the God whom they clearly saw and knew through His creation (Romans 1:19-21). The Psalmist tells of the universality of the revelation of God in nature, saying,

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. . . Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard (Psalm 19:1-3).

But knowing God as thus revealed in nature, men did not glorify Him as God.

**Second**, they changed or altered the glory of God into the image of man, of birds, of fourfooted beasts and creeping things (Romans 1:23). Satan's lie, "Ye shall be as God," is often twisted to mean, "God shall be as you are." Creature limitations and creature sins are attributed to God. Thus the incorruptible God is changed into the image of a corrupted creation.

The ancient world bears testimony to the accuracy of this description of its religious apostasy away from that which may be known of God. John Ellicott's "Commentary on Romans" points out that changing God's glory into the corruptible image of the creature was common. He wrote:

This anthropomorphism applies more especially to the religions of Greece and Rome. Representations of the Deity under the form of beasts was most common in Egypt.

Worship was universally paid to cattle, lions, cats, dogs, weasels, and otters; among the birds, to the sparrow-hawk, the hoopoe, the stork and the Sheldrake; and among fish, to the eel and lepidotus. Besides these, other creatures received local worship.

The sheep was worshipped in Sais and Thebais, but sacrificed and eaten in Lycopolis. The hippopotamus in the district of Papremis, and the crocodile in the greater part of the land, were considered especially sacred; but the latter was chased and eaten in Tentyra and Apollinopolis.

The sacred serpent Thermapi which served as head-gear for Isis had holes in all the temples, where it was fed with veal fat.

'Among the sacred beasts,' says Dollinger, 'the first place was given to the divine bulls, of which the Egyptians worshiped four.' No doubt the images in Greece and the beasts in Egypt were by some of the people regarded only as symbols of the Deity, but it was in all probability only a small minority who were capable of drawing this distinction.

**And third**, they exchanged the truth that God is Creator for Satan's lie that the creature is God, and they worshiped and served the creature more than, or rather than, the Creator (Romans 1:25). This seems to be the final and most blasphemous step in apostasy from the truth of God as revealed in creation.

**It is one** thing to represent the glory of the incorruptible God in the likeness of corruptible man, birds, beasts and creeping things. It is a much more terrible sin to say that the creature itself is God. This sin is implicit in atheistic evolution which says in the words of Sir Julian Huxley, "The earth was not created; it evolved" ("The Columbian," November 27, 1959). This lie of the devil has gained such wide acceptance today as the common theory of origins that it has displaced the "creation theory" in our public schools.

**The "theology** that man is God is based upon atheism for it denies a supernatural Creator. This means that the basic concept of God as a self-existent, all-wise and all-powerful Creator must be eliminated from the word "God." Man devaluates the word "God" and then appropriates the meaningless remains of the word "God"—stripped of self-existence, omnipotence and omniscience—and exalts himself as God above all that is called God or is worshiped (2 Thessalonians 2:4)

This god-making is not innocent, nor does it begin with problems of the intellect. It is primarily a matter of the will. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and as a result, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28).

Because men have suppressed (or held down) the truth of God in steps of deepening

ing apostasy, God gave them up to greater depths of moral depravity. Because they did not glorify God as clearly revealed in creation and because they changed His glory into creature-corruption, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their darkened hearts to dishonor their bodies between themselves (Romans 1:21-24).

**Because** they changed the truth of God into Satan's lie and worshiped and served the creature more than, or rather than, the Creator, God gave them up to vile affections or dishonorable lusts. Those who advocate that the homosexual should be brought without the cleansing transformation of the new birth into the Church as a first-class citizen of heaven ought to read what God has to say about sodomy in this passage (Romans 1:25-27).

**And because** they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate or disapproved mind (Romans 1:28-32). What marks out this condition as more depraved and degraded than the uncleanness and vile affections already mentioned is that these sins are now indulged with the approval of that reprobate mind. They, "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:32).

**Such a** reprobate mind exercises the God-like function of setting moral standards, even as Satan promised that "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" but the standards are devilish, contrary to nature and bestial. Such standards are producing character and conduct today like

that of the days of Noah when "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

**In the days** of the judges "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). But by the time of Isaiah there was such a perversion of moral values among some of his people that the prophet pronounced woe upon them saying,

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20).

And today, much that is right in the eyes of autonomous man is wrong in the eyes of God and worthy of His judgment.

**We ought** to take heed, therefore, to the warning against the wrath of God and to the implicit invitation to turn to God as they are found in Romans 1:18 and its Gospel context, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (suppress) the truth in unrighteousness."

**That facet** of Satan's lie which denies the Creator and substitutes evolution as the explanation of the universe exalts man into the place of God, usurps the moral authority of God and substitutes man's low standards for the high demands of God. This lie of the devil should be exposed for what it is and be repudiated. And along with it we should shun evolution as the profane and vain babbling of false science as indeed it is (1 Timothy 6:20).

# 5

## The Lie About the Savior

**The scribes** and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery and reminded Him that under the law she should be punished by stoning. What would He do?

They prodded Him into replying, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

His response had echoed the law. The righteous were to stone the adulterous (Ezekiel 23:47). But her accusers, convicted by their own consciences, “went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.”

This left the Righteous One, who alone had the right and the obligation to punish, face to face with the woman whose death the law demanded. What would He do?

“Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

**How could** He waive punishment?

John tells us that God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). He was able to set aside the death penalty for the woman taken in adultery because He was to suffer her punishment as her Substitute. And along with HER sin, OUR sins were laid upon Him, and

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Jesus followed the act of saving the sinful woman by a declaration of the world-wide scope of His redemptive ministry. He said,

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

**As a result** of this claim for Himself, the Pharisees voiced their opposition to Jesus, saying,

Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true (John 8:13).

In response to Jesus’ statement that “the truth” and “the Son” would make them free, the Pharisees said they were Abraham’s seed and never in bondage to any man.

**Further**, they said that they were not born of fornication (implying that He had been) but that God was their Father (John 8:32, 33, 36, 41). In short, they had no need of Him as their light or truth, and as children of God they did not need a Savior. And as for Him, they twice charged Him with being demon-possessed (John 8:48, 52).

**In the course** of the deepening opposition to Himself, Jesus perceived their hatred and their intent to kill Him. They sought to kill Him because He told them the truth (John 8:40). They did not love

Him because God was not their Father; and they sought to kill Him because they were of their father, the devil (John 8:42, 44).

And in the charge that the Pharisees were children of the devil and that they willed to do the wicked desires of their father, Jesus made the further statement that the devil was a murderer and a liar. And

When he speaketh the lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44, literal translation).

**In short**, the devil speaks the lie of which he is the father. It is the lie by which he deceived Eve in the garden of Eden. That lie began by questioning, then denying, what God had spoken (Genesis 3:1-5). And in this encounter between Jesus Christ and the Pharisees, the Pharisees, as children of the devil speaking for him, called Christ a liar and repudiated His unique relation to the Father as the Son sent into the world (John 8:13-19).

They denied Him as the Light, the Truth, the Liberator, and as the Life; they refused to believe that He came to reveal God and to redeem lost men.

In the process of denying Christ as the Revealer of God and Redeemer of men, the Pharisees rejected the truth concerning their bondage to sin and their need of a Redeemer. They did so on the ground that they were Abraham's seed and God was their Father. But the Lord Jesus Christ attributed to the devil what they were saying and doing,

You are doing what you have heard from your father—you are of your father the devil (John 8:38, 44).

**They were** living and uttering Satan's lie, which he began by denying God's revelation of Himself in the Garden and which he updated by denying God's revelation of Himself in the Gospel of His Son. They rejected Jesus Christ as sent of God and as revealing Him. It was in their heart to kill Him (John 8:37); and in accusing Him of being demon-possessed (John 8:48), they definitely called Him an emissary of Satan instead of the revelation of God.

**The ground** upon which they rejected Him as Savior is significant. They rejected the Son of God as their Savior on the ground that they were sons of God. They said,

We have one Father, even God (John 8:41).

In effect, they were saying, "We have no further need of a revelation from God, much less of redemption from Him, because we are Abraham's seed and the children of God."

This second facet of Satan's basic lie, "'Ye shall be as God,'" persists in a variety of forms today.

It is found in the belief that sonship by creation was not materially affected by man's sinful rebellion against God and that all man needs, if he sins, is reformation, not regeneration.

**It takes** an even more ominous form in asserting that Jesus is no more divine than ordinary man is divine. Further, His value to us is not that of a Savior who died as a Substitute for us in order to discharge our obligation to sin and death, but He is to be considered only as an Example whose life we are to strive to imitate. This type of

thinking is common to much of liberal theological thought today.

**It denies** the need of Christ as Revealer of God and Redeemer of men on the ultimate ground that man is God, but we shall reserve the treatment of that facet of the lie to the discussion of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12.

By way of summary of this facet of Satan's lie, let us first note what it has in common with the other passages in which the lie is found, then see what additional and distinctive aspects are revealed in John 8.

**All of the** passages reveal Satan's denial of some phase of the revelation of God to men: Genesis 3 records Satan's denial of God's revelation of Himself through His word. Romans 1 names the lie as the denial of God's revelation of Himself in creation.

John 8 gives the account of the denial of God's revelation of Himself in His Son. Ephesians 4 warns against repudiating the truth of necessary godlike character as revealed in Jesus. Second Thessalonians 2 records the repudiation of the total revelation of God—in His Word, in creation, in His Son, in Christian character and proposes the worship of the man of sin, who both opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God.

**In common,** the several disclosures of Satan's lie have references to death in them. Genesis 3:4 records the original lie concerning death. It is Satan's promise, "Ye shall not surely die." Romans 1:32 points out that they who changed the truth of God into Satan's lie committed abominable sins worthy of death and took pleasure in their fellow reprobates. Both the Ephesian and the 2 Thessalonian passages

warn of death and judgment for those embracing Satan's lie (Ephesians 5:5-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12).

In comparing Satan's lie in Genesis 3:4 with the warning that the Lord Jesus gave in John 8:21 and 24, it is significant to note that although Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die," Jesus warned, "Ye shall die in your sins." In a then deathless world, Satan promised there would be no death; but in a world in which death obviously reigned Jesus warned that if the Pharisees did not believe in Him, they would not only die, but would die in their sins. And this meant that sin would be followed by judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

**The several** passages revealing Satan's lie have in common some type of denial of or disregard for sin. According to the Genesis account, Eve was led to believe that for her to take what God had forbidden would be a rewarding experience (Genesis 3:3-6). The Romans and the Thessalonian passages speak of those deluded by Satan's lie taking perverted pleasure in their wickedness.

In Ephesians 4:19, Satan's devotees are portrayed as "past feeling" in the sense of being incapable of feelings of moral guilt and restraint and hence giving themselves over to unbridled lusts of the flesh. And in the encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees, the Pharisees saw no need of Christ as a liberating Savior because they felt no bondage to sin.

**While all** of the passages have certain facts of Satan's lie in common, each has its own particular disclosure and emphasis. And the eighth chapter of John tells us that the Pharisees denied any need of a savior upon the ground that they were already

children of God. The Pharisees spoke Satan's lie and did works worthy of their father by repudiating Christ as the Light, the Liberator and the Life and by seeking to kill Him.

We seek to lay bare Satan's lie because it is his basic strategy in destroying faith in God and in building faith in himself. He is still seeking to win the throne of the Most High God. Moreover, he is working on the good psychological and Scriptural principle that "faith comes by hearing." And interesting confirmation of this principle is found in a statement in the *University Bookman*, as follows:

If things are repeated often enough, people will believe them, no matter how absurd and fantastic they may be and no matter how obviously they conflict with common sense or the evidence of one's own experience.

We may trace in some measure the deepening darkness of the Satanic blindness which gripped the deluded minds of the Pharisees and led them to reject Jesus Christ as their Savior and have it in their hearts to kill Him. Several statements in the narrative of John 8 give clues.

"Ye seek to kill me," Jesus said, "because my word hath no place in you" (verse 37). His word had no place in them—no opportunity to produce the faith which comes by hearing because they had given place to the devil, against which Paul warns in Ephesians 4:27. They rejected His claim, "I am the light of the world," saying, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true."

**Second**, Jesus charged them with doing what they had heard from their father, the devil (verses 38, 44). "Ye do the deeds of your father" (verse 41). Hearing Satan

had produced faith and their deluded and demonic faith was to issue in the evil deed of putting Christ to death, little wonder that Jesus elsewhere warned, "Take heed what you hear."

**Third**, Jesus charged them with inability to understand what He was saying because they could not hear His word. Their inability to hear and to understand His word came from the fact that they were listening to Satan's lie. They were marching to the tune of another drum. Because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved, God sent them the strong delusion to believe Satan's lie.

**Fourth**, they could not hear God's Word because they were not of God (verse 47). This must be understood in its historical setting as referring to Jews to whom God had spoken through His prophetic Word, but who had refused Him and His teaching and who had fallen into that dreadful state of judicial blindness of which Isaiah spoke in Isaiah 6:9-10.

John 6:44-45 explains that the father draws to Christ those who hear and are taught by His Word. Not being drawn of God through His Word, they did not belong to Him and could not hear His Word with a believing heart.

Unlike the Pharisees in their refusal and inability to hear God speaking through His Son, His true disciples hear His voice and follow Him:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27).

The dark record of the rejection of the Savior by the scribes and Pharisees is brightened by the account that many who

heard His words believed on Him (John 8:30).

And these are the words upon which they built their faith and upon which ours must also rest:

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death (John 8:51).

Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:58).

# 6

## The Lie About Morality

**In the fourth** chapter of Ephesians, Satan's lie takes the form of rejecting God's standards of righteousness and of ascribing to man the God-like ability to determine his own moral standards. This is in line with Satan's promise in Genesis 3:5, "Ye shall be as gods (or God) knowing good and evil" (verse 5). And Satan's lie generally settles for the proposition that evil is good.

The reference to this third facet of Satan's lie is found in Ephesians 4:25 in these words,

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.

**The gerund** "lying" is a noun marked out by the definite article in the Greek original and is properly translated, "the lie." We are enjoined to put off the lie and to keep on speaking the truth. The character of the lie and the character of the truth are revealed in the context. The lie is that the ungodly and unclean life is an acceptable way of life. The context shows that the intellectual emptiness of the ungodly, their ignorance concerning God and their unbridled lust result from the lie which was to be put away. These had been accepted as a way of life by the Gentiles, but they issued from the lie of Satan.

The context in which the lie is set forth begins with Ephesians 4:17, which sounds

a warning against the kind of life which has no higher control than its own standards.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind.

**The same** warning is sounded in the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse in these words:

Put off concerning the former conversation (or manner of life) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

Satan's lie gives one license to indulge in "deceitful lusts"—better translated "the lusts of the deceit—that is, the lusts inherent in the deception that man has the god-like prerogative to set his own standards in line with his own fleshly desires. But the Spirit of God warns against this folly in Ephesians 5:5-6, as follows:

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

In contrast to the unbridled lusts and the uncleanness which enslave those who embrace Satan's lie, the truth as exemplified in the life of Jesus manifests itself in righteousness and true holiness. Having referred to the wicked ways of the ungodly, the Apostle then addresses the children of God with these words,

But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:20-24).

**In dealing** with Satan's lie that man has the right to set his own moral standards, the Scripture warns that ungodliness and intellectual vanity lead to moral corruption. The process which results in moral depravity begins with rejection of the knowledge of God, issues in intellectual folly and ends in corruption. The vanity or emptiness of the mind without God is explained as a condition in which the understanding is darkened and the person is alienated from the life of God because of his ignorance and because of the callousness of his heart (Ephesians 4:17-18).

**The first** chapter of the book of Romans gives a similar account of man's moral decadence as a result of suppressing the truth which could be known of God through creation (Romans 1:18-19). Because man did not glorify God as God and did not like to retain God in his knowledge, he became empty, vain and reprobate in his mind and given over to the grossest kind of immorality (Romans 1:21, 28).

**Out of the** foolish and darkened heart of Satan's devotees moral evil proceeds, unchecked by feelings of guilt and sorrow for sin. They . . .

Being past feeling have given themselves over into lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (Ephesians 4:19)

To be "past feeling" means to cease to feel pain or grief, to be insensible to truth, honor and shame, and hence to feel no pangs of conscience at wrongdoing. Those embracing Satan's lie have adopted another value system, substituting their personal judgment concerning good and evil for the system of absolute moral values based upon the holiness of God. So they call evil good and good evil. And the light that is in them is darkness (Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 6:23). In contrast to this, we should walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8-9).

**The old** English word, "lasciviousness," means unbridled lusts. It is defined by Fritzche, as quoted by Thayer, as "filthy words, indecent movements, unchaste handling of males and females." Are not these indecencies some of the "liberties" which are being practiced and defended by a vocal and radical element in our society today?

**A few** quotations, principally from sources related to our government, set forth the fact that our country is in very dire peril because Satan's lie that immoral conduct is an acceptable way of life is being advocated. The late President Lyndon Johnson formed a commission to study the subject of pornography, hopefully for the purpose of stopping the sale of immoral and indecent books, magazines and films.

And the report of the commission contained recommendations which made it more difficult to define pornography and to defend decency in the land. Instead of setting up barriers and limits to stem the flow of pornographic literature and indecent films, the report served to make it more dif-

difficult to define and to defend traditional moral standards.

**In April** 18-22 of 1971, a White House Conference on Youth met at Estes Park, Colorado, and “on the Tuesday after the Conference, the President and his cabinet reviewed the Conference and its recommendations. As a result of this Cabinet meeting, the President directed all departmental secretaries and agency heads to appoint liaison officers who would coordinate a government-wide response to the Conference proposals,” according to Stephen Hess, National Chairman of the Conference (“Report of the White House Conference on Youth,” pp. 1 and 11).

The 310-page report was sent to approximately 26,000 institutional leaders throughout the nation asking for their reactions and responses. This gives an idea of the importance of the Conference and its recommendations.

**The Conference** was attended by 918 persons, two-thirds youth between the ages of 14 and 24, and one-third adults. It was supposedly representative of America, though purposely weighted toward minority groups.

The Conference spoke out on many themes of national and international interest and importance. Of particular concern to us are the recommendations made by the “Task Force on Values, Ethics and Culture.” Their libertarian doctrine was at the heart of much of the Youth Conference work. They interpreted liberty “as the freedom of all human beings conscientiously to choose their own way of life when their choices do not limit or harm this right of others” (“Report,” p. 9).

**Further** light is cast upon their concept of liberty by their resolution 10.4b on page 243 of the “Report”: “Resolved: The American Civil Liberties Union be commissioned to make a review of all laws in order to guarantee alternative life styles.”

Alternative life styles is further defined in terms of any type of sexual behavior. This is found under the heading of Sex Roles and Relationships:

Human beings are sexual persons. Ideal sexual relationships are sensitive, concerned and responsible expressions of human beings. Every person has the right to fully express his or her individual sexuality. Furthermore, any sexual behavior, when occurring between consenting, responsible individuals, must be recognized and tolerated by society as an acceptable lifestyle” (“Report,” p. 247).

**The Task Force** on Values, Ethics and Culture passed a resolution to repeal sexually restrictive legislation, as follows:

Resolved: We demand sweeping repeal of legislation which restricts and represses individual freedoms. Laws, as those forbidding fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism and so-called ‘unnatural acts’ restrict such freedom. Furthermore, laws restricting or prohibiting abortion or distribution of contraceptives affect this right. Contraception and education must be available to every person and abortion is an individual right and choice, a matter to be solely decided by the woman and her physician . . .” (Report,” p. 250).

One is reminded of the Word of God found in 2 Peter 2:19, which says,

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.

**Another** example of decadence in morals as evidenced by government is the

report of a special commission appointed by President Nixon to study “population explosion.” The account was found in the “Oregonian” newspaper as follows:

President Nixon’s special population commission has handed a shocker both to him and to deep traditional values of this country in recommending that abortions be made available everywhere on demand.

The commission also recommended wholesale access to contraceptives by teenagers and advocated an “ideal” of moral diversity in which it would be equally honorable to marry or not to marry.

**In commenting** upon the terrible fact that our government is guilty of encouraging impurity and irresponsibility in the sex life, N. B. Gardener, in an article entitled, “What’s Wrong With Our Nation?” has this to say,

Our government becomes itself the chief culprit in lawlessness and the prime breeder in lawlessness throughout the country.

And,

When the authority of God is rejected by His representatives for authority on earth, every subordinate authority collapses. Little wonder there are expressions of anarchy in our land.

And all this was written before the Watergate scandal!

**The American** Civil Liberties Union went on record at its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary session, which was reported on June 8, 1970, by “The Oregonian” newspaper as advocating as its goal for the year the guarantee of “personal liberty” to every one. By this it meant, “Every individual has the right to use his body as he wishes.”

The extent to which the concept of “personal liberty” has been accepted as higher than the moral law as expressed in the laws of society may be seen in the report of the San Francisco Crime Commission which advocated that “personal sins between consenting individuals be made legal.”

Further, the Supreme Court’s decision that a woman has the right to abort her unborn child because to restrain her from doing so would be an invasion of her right to privacy is a frightening and wicked extension of the idea of “personal liberty.”

**Satan’s lie** that man has the godlike prerogative of determining his own moral standards finds further expression today in what is called “situation ethics,” which teaches that circumstances can modify, alter or suspend absolute standards of right and wrong as given by God through His word. Situation ethics would teach in effect that God’s standards are subject to human acceptance, modification or rejection. In short, that man is autonomous.

In bringing this chapter to a close, allow me to emphasize the practical reasons for “putting away the lie” and for speaking and living the truth as it is in Jesus, for, in spite of the lie that man can function as God in the realm of moral judgments, there are certain dreadful results which plague the life which is controlled by this Satanic deception.

**First**, in spite of modern attempts to set aside Divine moral law, man is unable to do so successfully and happily. God’s law is written in the heart, and guilt plagues the heart which transgresses that law (Romans 2:14-15). The pangs of unresolved guilt have in our day sent countless suffer-

ers as patients to professionals for psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment.

Others, more happily, have gone as penitents to their pastors and found Divine forgiveness through faith in Christ. God's moral law also governs the body, and many who have exercised their "personal right" to use their bodies as they choose in accordance with their own personal values have found misery and tragedy instead of liberty and happiness. And I am talking about their present miseries, saying nothing at this point about their eternal state.

**Second,** belief in Satan's lie that man is morally autonomous destroys the basis upon which the Spirit of God brings conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment. It also renders the individual thus deceived morally incapable of repentance, faith in Christ and conversion, because conviction of sin is based upon a Divine standard of right and wrong.

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring conviction; but if the word of man has replaced the Word of God and says, "I have done no wrong," then so long as this judgment persists there can be no conviction of sin, no repentance and no Divine forgiveness.

**Third,** the wrath of God *does* come upon the "children of disobedience" because of their repudiation of His moral government and because of their outbroken sins. His wrath has fallen upon decadent civilizations in consistent repeated judgment when the cup of their iniquity has become full. And the Scripture warns that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Wherefore, let us put away the lie that we shall become as God knowing good and evil, and let us speak and live the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

# 7

## The Lie Incarnate

**The fourth** facet of Satan's lie is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:11:

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe (the) lie.

The context shows that the lie in question is the final form of Satan's lie, "Ye shall be as God." It is the "incarnation" of the lie in a Satan-empowered man, who will exalt himself above God and receive worship as God. He . . .

Opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

**Just as** Jesus Christ became Truth incarnate, so this "man of sin" or Antichrist will be the lie made flesh.

For man, born today and dead tomorrow, to believe that he individually or collectively is God requires the blinding of his intellect by strong delusion. How can that life, which as a vapor appears for a little time and then vanishes away, be likened to the eternal, self-existent life of Jehovah! How can a creature, born in time and into an already existing creation, claim to be the Creator?

Obviously, any right-thinking person knows that man cannot fill the role of this kind of a God. The attributes that go to make up a personal,, self-existent, all-wise and all-powerful God must be stripped

from the meaning of the word, "God." He is therefore reduced to a philosophic abstraction, and His creative and providential role in the universe and in the affairs of men is replaced by blind evolutionary forces as an explanation of origins and development.

**The theology** of the man of sin is based upon atheism. The God of Scripture, the God of creation, and the God of the great theistic arguments, is defined away and His role in the universe is taken by the evolutionary process having man as its end product.

Two great events, one in progress and the other in prospect, contribute decisively to the establishment of the man of sin as the object of man's worship. The first is the *falling away*, or apostasy, of the professing church from the truth it once held, and the second is the *catching away*, or rapture, of the true Church to meet Christ in the air when He comes again.

**The Church** was intended to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:14-16 and 5:13). It was to proclaim the truth of God and to live it. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, it serves to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:7-11). But apostate, the light that was within it has become darkness, and its salt has lost its savor. And when the true Church is caught away, the revelation of the man of sin will no longer be held up by the Church's restraint of evil.

Both the apostasy of the professing church and the rapture of the true Church are found in the context in which the revelation of the man of sin is predicted. The apostasy of the professing church serves as a necessary preparation for his appearance and acceptance, and the rapture of the true Church removes the greatest hindrance to his worship as God.

**The apostasy** and the revelation of the man of sin are both on the prophetic calendar as necessary antecedents of the great and terrible day of the Lord. "Let no man deceive you by any means," the Apostle Paul wrote, "for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

This final form of apostasy is particularized and pointed out by the definite article in the Greek original. It is THE apostasy, whose central doctrine is the lie that man is God. It will prepare the way for the worship of this lawless son of perdition who exalts himself above God and calls for worship as God.

**Godet** wrote that the theological system of the Antichrist may be summed up in three statements, as follows:

1. There is no personal God without or above the universe.
2. Man is himself his own god—the god of this world.
3. I am the representative of humanity; by worshiping me humanity worships itself" (from Godet's article on "Revelation" in Johnson's *Cyclopedia*).

**Theological** liberalism, known also as Modernism, introduced into the professing church for the first time the teaching that man is divine.

The belief that man is divine has been embraced by peoples, religions and cults apart from the church down through the ages; but modern liberalism won the tragic distinction of introducing this climactic phase of Satan's lie into the church. Since the "peculiar doctrine of the apostasy is that man himself is divine, that man himself is God," apostate liberalism prepares the way for man to worship himself as represented in the Antichrist.

**A rapid** succession of man-exalting liberals, under such labels as "neo-orthodoxy," "existentialism" and "God-is-dead theology" have used great swelling words to obscure God and to exalt man in His place. Two chapters in J. Rodman Williams' book, *Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith*, are entitled, *The Centrality of Man* and *The Obscurity of God*. These titles summarize his evaluation of the existentialist's teaching about God and man: God is obscured; man is exalted.

For those of us who have been brought up under the biblical revelation that God is holy, good and loving, it becomes doubly difficult to believe that man could worship the incarnation of evil, as will be the case when Satan's man sits in the temple of God and demands worship as God. But Satan's lie that man is God with the right to determine his own moral standards prepares the way for worshiping the man of sin.

**Those** who embrace this Satanic delusion and assume the godlike prerogative of setting moral standards will repudiate God's standards and substitute their own. Many have already adopted standards diametrically opposed to traditional morality based upon God's revealed will. They re-

gard good as evil and evil as good (Isaiah 5:20).

The growing demand for the recognition of “any life style” as equally acceptable to society and to the law is a case in point. The sins for which God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah are now being called an acceptable life style by them. And the apostate church has been vocal in support of such immorality. It will be natural for sinful men who accept a basic immorality as a proper norm to worship the man of sin because he will embody and personify the evil to which they have given themselves.

**Satan’s lie** has not only promised man the capacity to determine good and evil but also the godlike sovereignty to exercise his choices without any restraint. Man was to be completely autonomous and his freedom, absolute.

Apparently in line with this unwholesome concept of human liberty, our Supreme Court has ruled that a woman has the right to kill her unborn child as a part of her right to privacy and her right to complete personal freedom. This is, of course, an utter perversion of the historic Christian and American concept of liberty under law or freedom under God.

The French existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, insists that man must learn to live without inhibition, without repression, in the firm assurance that EVERYTHING is permitted. This can only be done when God’s existence is denied (*Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith*, p. 42).

**The goal** of the ungodly who would make themselves God is to cast off all restraint from the true God and His anointed, according to Psalm 2:1-3, which says,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

In the final analysis, the acceptance of the lawless one as god will be man’s highest expression of rebellion against the true God. Such rebels will choose evil instead of good, Satan instead of God.

The Antichrist is not only the man of sin, but he is the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:8). As such, he will be the model and representative of a growing rebellion against God. Such rebellion against God and His government takes two forms today. One is to make sin legal, arguing that we can cut down crime by taking personal sins off the criminal law books.

**This is** being done by making it lawful for consenting adults to engage in immoral acts. Hence, adultery, fornication and homosexuality are no longer criminal acts in a number of states, and great pressure is being exerted by libertarian groups to repeal all laws which limit their so-called “personal liberty” to use their bodies as they choose.

**Rebellion** against God and His government also takes the form of hating all law, chafing under its restraints and refusing to be subject to legal process in the settlement of grievances with governments or individuals. Such rebellion refuses to be subject to “the powers that be.” Every man seeks to do what is right in his own eyes, and the rule of law breaks down before violence and anarchy. The Antichrist will in essence be lawless. He will hate the rule of law, especially God’s law, tolerating no restriction on his absolute dictatorial powers. Hence, he will become the “perfect” god for the lawless, the crime syndicates and the underworld.

**Even now**, all around the world there is a growing spirit of lawlessness as evidenced by political bombings, international protest killings, kidnappings, guerilla warfare and terrorism. Many who hate the rule of law operate within the law only to destroy it. Such is the case of William Kunstler, the criminal lawyer, who has delighted to defend left-wing rioters against prosecution by the government. In a debate with James J. Kilpatrick, he stated, "I hate the law." He represents a breed of world anarchist whose god could well be the lawless one. The son of perdition, being both sinful and lawless, will become men's representative and god after those men have rejected the Holy One.

The presence of the true Church upon the earth has served as a brake upon the gathering momentum of the development of iniquity. The liberating light of the Gospel has broken the chains of darkness and brought salvation and cleansing to individuals, communities and nation. Its moral salt has held back the spread of corruption.

**But the** time is coming when the Church will be removed from this earth, and the restraining power of the Holy Spirit working through the Church will no longer hold back the manifestation and worship of the man of sin. The Apostle Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he had instructed them about the removal of the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit through the Church.

He wrote,

Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now re-

strains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:5-8, NASB).

**The restraining** influence which holds back the revelation of the Antichrist is referred to in this passage of Scripture both as "what" and "who" restrains. Both a power and a person are involved. Along with many others, we believe the person to be the Holy Spirit exerting His power through the Church. When the Church is caught away to be with Christ in heaven, the last hindrance to the manifestation of the man of sin will be removed and he shall move rapidly toward the throne and the temple to be hailed both as liberator and God.

**The Scripture** does not leave us in doubt about the identity and activity of this malign being variously called the Antichrist, the man of sin, the lawless one and the beast. Moreover God has employed some graphic visual aids to help us in understanding his place in history. We feel we are good communicators and very much up to date when we employ visual aids, but God did it through His prophets thousands of years ago.

God portrayed the development of the history of nations by revealing that the world, at least the Mediterranean world, would be ruled by four great empires. The Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and the Roman empires came on the world scene and passed away in precisely the same manner in which the prophets predicted they would rise and fall. Their development and demise were portrayed by representing each nation as a monstrous

beast, each of which was destroyed by its successor, except the fourth beast which is yet to be destroyed by God at the second coming of Christ.

**These beast-empire**s were composite arrangements made up of parts of different creatures. Ancient tombs and temples were inscribed with such beasts, and many were carved out of stone. Two long rows of such composite animals line the pathway which forms the entrance to the great temple at Karnack in Egypt. The utter grotesqueness of the composite combinations did not seem to bother the ancients, but the meaning of their symbolism came through clear and strong.

God gave the Prophet Daniel several visions in which the course of world history was portrayed by using such symbolic beasts. The first one, representing the Babylonian empire, is like a lion which has wings like an eagle and stands up on his hind feet like a man. To it was given the head of a man (Daniel 7:4).

**The fourth** beast is rather non-descript. Its strength and fierceness are depicted by its great iron teeth, and it has ten horns (Daniel 7:7). The ten horns represent ten kings and their kingdoms (Daniel 7:24). Inasmuch as the destruction of this fourth kingdom is represented as taking place when the Ancient of Days shall establish His own kingdom upon the earth (Daniel 7:9), it is commonly understood to refer to a revived Roman Empire to be made up of a federation of ten kingdoms.

Students of prophecy see in the European common market the beginnings of this revived empire. The energy crisis in Europe caused by the curtailment of oil shipments from the Middle East has made

the nations of the old Roman Empire acutely aware of their mutual need and greater dependence upon one another. This may speed their economic alliance into an actual political entity.

**As Daniel** beheld the ten horns of the beast, he saw another horn rise up in their midst, uprooting three horns as he rose to power (Daniel 7:8). He is represented as a "little horn" having "eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost in his book, *Prophecy for Today*, traces references to the "little horn" through the prophecy of Daniel and clearly shows that he is the Antichrist or man of sin mentioned in the New Testament. We quote him at length:

He has been called the "little horn" in chapter 7, the "king of fierce countenance" in chapter 8, the "prince that shall come" in chapter 9, and now in Daniel 11:16 he is called the king that "shall do according to his own will," or as we sometimes refer to him, "the willful king." Here he is seen in authority over Palestine.

Daniel says he "shall do according to his will; and shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, . . . and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished" (11:36). The "indignation" is another word for the tribulation period (*Prophecy for Today*, p. 101).

**The Antichrist** is also the political beast whose rule and pretensions to be God are found in Revelation 13:1-10. Note especially the reference to his "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (verse 5). The age in which we live has been variously called the electronic, the atomic and the space age. Because of the radio, television and the press, all of which bring world news daily into our living rooms, our age

has also been well named the age of communications.

It strikes me as significant that the “little horn” was characterized by just two things. He had eyes like the eyes of a man and he had a mouth speaking great things. No ruler in any age ever had a mouth as big and effective with which to manipulate the masses by propaganda as do modern rulers through the mass media.

**In recent** years in our own nation we have heard and read much concerning the “almost infinite power” of the mass media as wielded by opposing political forces. And we have observed the eyes of our leaders studying public opinion through the poll takers before they open their mouths to further mold and manipulate the masses. Was there not a favorable public reaction to a ping-pong tournament with Chinese Communists before President Nixon visited Communist China, and were not the Chinese portrayed as a wholesome and friendly people such as they had not been pictured in decades preceding?

**Was the** man of sin called a “little horn” because he was of smaller stature than the kings over which he will rule? Will his personal deficiencies be overcome by his diabolic perception of man’s mounting rebellion against God? Will his massive use of propaganda inflame such hatred and enable him to become man’s popular hero and god?

Since faith comes by hearing, the little horn with the blasphemous mouth “shall speak great words against the most High” (Daniel 7:25). By massive propaganda efforts he will seek to brainwash every vestige of faith in the true God out of the hearts of men, and he will be aided by “the

great swelling words” of the false prophets (Judges 16).

**When the** Wicked One rises to power, Satan will work both in him and in his followers “with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). And the deceptiveness of unrighteousness will work death in his devotees because they will not love the truth by which they could have been saved. And because of their attachment to Satan and his lying wonders, God will send them a “strong delusion” to believe Satan’s lie to their own condemnation.

**Just as** the Wicked One will become a pretender to the throne of God, so he will ape the circumstances involved in Divine election, debase them, and for all practical purposes guarantee his devotees an election to hell. Corresponding to those whom God has chosen to salvation in sanctification of the Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13), the followers of the Man of Sin will be separated by Satan unto unrighteousness (2:9-10). The children of God are chosen to salvation in belief of the truth (2:13); the devotees of the Antichrist will believe Satan’s lie to their own destruction (2:11).

**On the one** hand, a people are appointed to destruction because they will be gathered together in unrighteousness by Satan and believe Satan’s lie; and on the other, God’s elect are those set apart in holiness by the Spirit of God and those who believe the truth.

**Belief of** the lie or belief of the truth makes the difference between heaven and hell. Men perish not for lack of faith, but because they hear and believe the enemy of their souls. The battle for the faith of mankind will reach its climax when the Anti-

christ is confronted and destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

For when He returns to earth to destroy the little horn who has become the mouthpiece of Satan, He will consume him “with the spirit of His mouth” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). John presents an awesome but wonderful picture of the return of Christ, leading the armies of heaven, to judge the earth and to make war against His enemies. And “his name is called the Word of God,” and “out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations” (Revelation 19:13, 15).

**The mouth** which spoke blasphemies shall be overcome by the mouth speaking the Word of God. Truth shall overcome error. Christ shall destroy Antichrist. And the

victory shall be a moral one as well as a victory of omnipotent power. The lie which wrought false faith will be exposed in all its wicked deceptiveness, and the Word of God shall prevail as true and abiding.

But even now there are many antichrists in the world. These emissaries of Satan bid for your faith. “Take heed what you hear.” May each of us be found in that company “chosen . . . to salvation . . . in belief of the truth,” as expressed in 2 Thessalonians 2:13:

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and in belief of the truth.

# 8

## Satan's Faith Came By Hearing Himself

**In the struggle** for your soul through the capture of its faith the battle is joined between God and Satan and between good and evil upon the ground that "faith comes by hearing" (Romans 10:17). Inasmuch as saving faith comes from hearing the Gospel of Christ in the Word of God, the Apostle Paul reasoned that preachers should be sent to all men so that they could hear and believe (Romans 10:13-15). And in opposition to the "words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14), Satan employs the enticing words of his lie to deceive and to destroy. He uses his age old lie which affirms that man himself is god and denies God as Creator, Savior and Example. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the propaganda of the devil both make their bid for the human soul on the ground that faith comes by hearing. Little wonder, then, that Jesus warned, "Take heed what ye hear."

**The fact** that faith comes by hearing has made communications one of the great and important industries of modern times. The social fabric is held together by faith; and every facet of human relations strives to be heard so that its products, philosophy, politics and religion may win the faith and approval of all.

In God's gracious provision for the salvation of lost sinners, He has spoken through His Word so that men would hear and believe and be saved. In turn, Satan has

questioned and denied God's Word and set about not only to produce doubt of God but to engender faith in himself.

The principle that faith comes by hearing not only gives us the key to understanding the present-day struggle for the souls of men but also unlocks something of the mystery of both sin's entrance into the world and its ultimate origin in Satan's rebellion against God.

**Adam and Eve** fell from their estate of created holiness by faith which came from hearing. They listened to Satan question, then deny the Word of God which warned them against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and as they heard and believed Satan's lie, they were converted downward to become children of the devil. And the lie which they heard and believed expresses both Satan's own aspiration to be like God and the basic strategy he has used to entice men to reject God and to exalt themselves above all that is called God. That lie is found in Genesis 3:4-5, as follows:

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (or God), knowing good and evil.

**Earlier** we considered Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 as revelations of the origin of sin in the universe. We believe that the princi-

ple that faith comes by hearing can give us an insight into the mystery of the origin of sin and can help us to understand how a wise and perfect being, without any solicitation to sin from an already existent evil being could originate sin. His development of a deluded faith in himself through the process of “hearing himself” sheds light on the problem of how a wise and holy being could corrupt himself and rebel against God.

First, it should be considered that the faith which comes by hearing may come by hearing someone or something else. We may develop saving faith in God by hearing Christ’s words, even as they are recorded in John 5:24:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

**Or we may** “hear” God’s message in the revelation of Himself in creation. The 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm calls what we may see of the glory of God in nature something which we may “hear” and believe:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (1-3).

**Second**, it is important to realize that faith may come by hearing oneself. We talk to ourselves, whether audibly or not; and our faith or philosophy and its resultant course of action and kind of life come in great measure from hearing ourselves. We may reflect upon what we have heard from

others and talk to ourselves about it and build a faith upon what we have to say.

It is also interesting and tremendously important to note that we “program” ourselves, much as an IBM computer is programmed, as to what we hear from ourselves. We program ourselves by the education we have received, by the books we read, the television we watch and by the conversations in which we engage.

**If our** minds have been filled with godless philosophies as to our origin, purpose and destiny, our minds are “programmed” so that the normal faith which would come from listening to our own reasonings would be a humanistic and atheistic one. Hence, it is important for us to take heed to what we hear and to hide the Word of God in our hearts so that when we listen to ourselves we have a proper, factual basis from which to advise ourselves and from which to build a faith.

**Third**, we have reason to believe that “hearing” stands for all the avenues of acquiring knowledge in the statement “faith comes by hearing.” In Revelation 1:3 “hearing” comes from “reading” the prophetic Word, and in this case “hearing” is closely associated with the idea of obeying. In this connection it should be noted that repeated hearing of a thing tends to produce faith in it, but that when an individual wills to develop his faith he must obey the thing he has heard. “Seeing” is sometimes used as the opposite of exercising faith. It is used in somewhat this sense in Romans 8:24 in the question, “for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” But “seeing” is also used like “hearing” as an avenue through which faith is developed. It is so used in John 6:40 which states,

This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. . . .

**As we approach** the consideration of the fall of Satan, we shall do so on the basis that faith comes by hearing, and in this case, by hearing himself. In the case of the defection of Adam and Eve, their faith in Satan, which led to their “conversion” downward, came from listening to the voice of the tempter. But Satan’s tragic faith came from listening to himself. And what Satan heard from himself was based upon what he saw of himself.

God said of him,

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.... (Ezekiel 28:17)

He was blinded by his own brilliance.

**His fall**, then, began with self-occupation. He became enamored with his own beauty and brilliance. The qualifications for the office of bishop specify that the nominee not be a novice, “lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (I Timothy 3:6).

Pride led to self-deception, even as it did to the Edomites, of whom Obadiah wrote, as follows:

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me to the ground?

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD (Obadiah 1:3-4).

**Just as** the Edomites listened to the pride of their hearts and developed a faith in a false security, so Satan’s heart was lifted up and it deceived him. The self-deception of the Edomites caused them to boast, “Who shall bring me down to the ground?” And the LORD said, “I will bring thee down.”

Similarly because Satan was lifted up in his pride, God said, “I will cast thee to the ground” (Ezekiel 28:17).

**Satan’s** deluded faith in himself came from self-occupation and self-deception as he saw his own beauty and brilliance and heard the deceptive reasonings of his own pride-filled heart. What did he hear from himself which bolstered his illusions of grandeur? It was his perfection of beauty and wisdom.

The blindness with which his pride afflicted his mind was that of nearsightedness. He observed his own beauty so fixedly that he lost sight of the fact that he was a creature under Divine authority. Such is the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

As it is possible to focus a camera on an object so near that its surrounding background will be completely blurred, so Satan’s self-occupation became so intense that the background of his creaturely origin was blurred and the process of self-deception went on to become self-exaltation.

**In a chapter** entitled, “The Search for Glory,” Karen Horney describes the use of imagination in the process of self-idealization or self-glorification which an inadequate person may employ to win for himself a feeling of significance and superiority over others.

Gradually and unconsciously, the imagination sets to work and creates in his mind an idealized image of himself. In this process he endows himself with unlimited powers and with exalted faculties; he becomes a hero, a genius, a supreme lover, a saint, a god.

**Could it** be that the “anointed cherub,” although a perfect rather than an inadequate being, employed his imagination to endow himself with growing powers until he made himself God? The passages in Ezekiel speak of the beginning of his aggrandizement in the pride which his beauty and wisdom engendered and the fearful consummation of his self-glorification in his claim, “I am a God; I sit in the seat of God” (Ezekiel 28:2).

Isaiah 14 suggests a process of self-glorification, which may well have begun simply with unholy selfish ambition as a creature but which developed into blasphemous self-deification. Isaiah 14:13-14 would seem to point to such growth in self-exaltation:

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.

**Could it** be that his own fall paralleled the pathway of discontent outlined for Adam and Eve? Was there first of all a questioning of God’s Word about his sphere of dominion and privilege? Was there a tree whose fruit he could not eat? And then in the process of self-exaltation did his self-induced faith in his own prowess result in a self-hypnosis so that he exalted himself above all that is called God,

even as the man of sin will do in his rebellion against God (2 Thessalonians 2:4)?

**It is written** of Satan that he corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness. He deceived himself; and by the repetition of thoughts about his own power and glory, he persuaded himself of his own godlikeness and hypnotized himself to strike out to seize the godhead. In short, the archdeceiver became victim of his own deception even as 2 Timothy 3:13 predicts that evil men will be, saying, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

Something of the process of self-deception is described in the quotation from the *University Bookman* given earlier:

If things are repeated often enough, people will believe them, no matter how absurd and fantastic they may be and no matter how obviously they conflict with common sense or the evidence of one’s own experience.

According to Laurens van der Post, the communists carried this self-deception a fatal step farther: “They believe in the power of words to alter reality” (Quoted by Sir Arnold Lunn in *Humbug for Beginners*, in “National Review,” Nov. 19, 1971, p. 1292).

**Followers** of Satan who will worship the man of sin as God, as predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-11, will not receive the love of the truth but will have pleasure in unrighteousness; and for this reason God will send them “strong delusion” so that they will believe Satan’s lie. What God will do to the devotees of Satan in the end times may well be what He did to Satan when he went through the process of self-

occupation, self-deception, self-exaltation and self-hypnosis.

We do not presume to comprehend how a perfect being, who totaled up the sum of wisdom and beauty, could originate sin. We think it helps us to understand, however, that the process of building faith through hearing with which he seeks to destroy men now and through which he converted Adam from God to himself, is also the process by which he deceived and deformed himself.

**First, he** “heard” the message of his own exceeding beauty and brilliance by self-occupation and this caused his heart to be lifted up with pride. And pride led to self-deception. Proud of his prowess, he persuaded himself that he could use his wisdom, beauty and power to his own advantage. He built his deluded faith by hearing himself. The process of self-glorification led to the illusion that he could capture the throne of God.

We can with great profit shun the possibility of being lifted up with pride so that we shall not fall into the condemnation of

the devil. Second Corinthians 10:5 gives a very practical way to avoid the pitfall into which Satan fell. We are enjoined to cast down imaginations and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God. That is, we are to cast down those faith-producing imaginations or reasonings which our deceitful hearts would cherish over against the knowledge of God. Because, unless we bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ, the subtle process of self-occupation, self-deception and self-exaltation will go on in our hearts.

**Over against** building a faith around those things which would exalt themselves above God, we should speak to ourselves in terms of the Word of God so as to build a faith arising out of hearing His Word. Let us speak to ourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. And in order to do this, we must hide the Word of God in our hearts so that when we speak to ourselves, we will do so from God’s revealed Word. Only then shall we build up ourselves upon our most holy faith and avoid the snares of the devil.

# 9

## Today's Struggle for Your Faith

There is a battle going on now to capture your faith. It goes on in the business, social, economic, political and religious realms. The sales pitches of advertisers, the ideologies of social, economic and political theorists, and the dogmas of true or false religion contend for your commitment.

**The battle** is being fought in the market place, in the schools and churches, and through the mind-persuading mass media. It invades the home. It revolves around one's personal identity, his concept of freedom in the market, academy and church; his relation to political power at every level; and it ultimately involves his own soul and its destiny. It is a struggle for the soul which ultimately must choose between God and Satan.

The battle joins issue on the matter of personal identity, a question that has bugged our younger generation to the point of drugs and despair. Am I a "trousered ape" or a fallen son of God?

The outcome of the battle decides whether one will be a part of the free world or a part of the slave world. While these terms have been used by the West to neatly partition the world into non-communist and communist nations, they would better serve to distinguish those whom Christ has made free and those who are taken captive by Satan to do his will (John 8:36; 2 Timothy 2:26).

**The battle** for your faith is basically a battle of words and ideas. Failing to heed our Savior's statement, "Man shall not live by bread alone," America has sought to win the world largely by bread alone. We have exported foreign aid unlimited but have not been paid back in love, respect or loyalty. What we have failed to export on the government level is the idea that made America great.

With greater cunning, communism has exported ideas and held out Utopian hopes. Dennis Warner, on "The Oregonian" editorial page back on May 22, 1972, reported that a Burmese leader pointed out the American mistake and the communist strategy in the following words:

Offer the Asian a loaf of bread or a good idea like "liberty, equality and fraternity," and he will take the slogan every time.

**Tragically** enough, there is truth in the statement attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson, "Man is a creature who lives not by bread alone but principally by catch-words."

According to Frank E. Gaebelien, for years the renowned headmaster at Stony Brook Academy, "The perennial battle for the minds of men is still being fought by words—some of them violent and crude, others strong and healing" (*Typographical Man . . . THE GREAT PERSUADER*, in

“Prophetic Voice” of January 1972, as condensed from “Christianity Today”).

**The nature** and outcome of the battle for the souls of men was anticipated by the American statesman Daniel Webster (1782-1852). He uttered this solemn warning:

If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country . . . I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. The thought is one to cause solemn reflection on the part of every patriot and Christian. If truth is not diffused, error will be (Prophetic Voice, January 1972).

**You may be** inclined to treat the psychological warfare lightly. But the world is fearfully aware that words can break spirits and armies and nations and, in short, that the pen is mightier than the sword.

How often the words of our treaties have lost for us what military victory has gained!

And remember the determining effect which the propaganda war had on the course of the hot war in Vietnam. We were not able to win on the battlefield because we had not been winning the propaganda war at home. We counted communists to be enemies on some far away battlefield but allowed them to instruct our youth in our colleges and universities, teaching alien philosophies and breeding loyalty to our avowed enemy.

**You may** feel that what you believe is a private matter, and so it is. It is also a very personal matter who gets your faith, because whoever or whatever gets your faith gets a part or the whole of you. Ultimately your soul and destiny may be involved. Your faith determines the kind of person you will be. “As he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

Your influence, your confidence, hopes and fears, your money, your property, your business, your happiness and your soul depend upon the object of your faith. Is your faith in God? In self as autonomous and sufficient? In Satan? Or in the state?

Your faith or philosophy is a powerful force for the transformation of your life—for good or for evil, depending upon the nature and object of your faith.

**If your faith** is placed in Christ, you will become a new creature—God’s “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

On the other hand, a false faith can wreck your life and contribute to the destruction of society. The immoral and violent conduct which characterized our campuses in the late sixties reflected the atheistic humanism, moral relativism and communistic anarchy of those times. Campus conduct caught up with campus philosophy. Such activist faith did its evil works in the dormitory bedrooms, in the capture of administrative offices and in mob violence.

The history of communistic takeover around the world presented the unhappy options of brainwashing and slavery or liquidation. In view of the faith-forming power of propaganda, little wonder that Jesus warned, “Take heed what ye hear” (Mark 4:24).

**The Bible** is God’s good Word to us concerning salvation through Jesus Christ. We should give heed to it. In it, the Apostle Peter recounted his experience in going to the house of Cornelius to tell about Jesus Christ. An angel appeared to Cornelius instructing him to seek out Peter, “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). Like-

wise the Apostle Paul wrote of the “holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15).

**The heart** of the good news of salvation is summarized in the words of 1 Corinthians 15:3-4:

How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

**And the** response to God’s provision of salvation which results in personal salvation was expressed by Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

An editorial in “Christianity Today” back in September 1969, wisely observed that “the contest of the modern world is not between belief and unbelief, but, as it has always been, between belief of the truth and belief of the lie.”

This is but another way of saying that every life has its faith. It may be faith in God’s truth or Satan’s lie or an admixture of both.

**Are you** believing the truth about God as Creator and Redeemer or are you believing Satan’s lie which substitutes evolution for creation and affirms that man does not need a Savior?

Sincerity of belief is not enough. You may be sincerely wrong.

It is of utmost importance that you believe the truth. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Jesus Christ is the liberating truth who gives freedom from sin and death.

And He said, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

Conversely, if we trust Him as our savior, God will forgive us our sins and give us eternal life.

**God instructed** the Apostle John to write his Gospel to show that Jesus is God’s Son who died on the cross to become our Savior. John summarized what he wrote in these words:

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

Over against the life and liberty which God offers through faith in Jesus Christ, the forces of Satan, whether deployed in economic, political or religious battle formations, seek to capture your mind, control your person and exploit your person and property.

**And to** that end the propaganda warfare is being fought to win your faith, your mind, your body and your property—mine as well as yours. Yes, OUR heritage of freedom, OUR right to think, OUR right to worship, OUR right to decency and privacy, OUR possessions and OUR land form the coveted prize of the cold war of propaganda. And “despite the propaganda with which we are engulfed, nothing has changed in the character of the enemy” (Frank S. Meyer, “National Review,” August, 1971). He is still out to destroy and to despoil us.

Behind communism is the devil, but in the battle for your faith, communism is not the only force employed by the Evil One. Every influence that can weaken faith in God, lower moral standards, incite frustra-

tion, inspire rebellion against authority, whether Divine or human, serves to strengthen the hand of Satan.

**In the chapters** following, we shall seek to point up some of the many Satanic forces which are being brought to bear upon your life to destroy your faith in God,

in government, in law and order, and biblical morality. And we are particularly concerned to show that the mass media of communication, education and religion have a major part in molding and manipulating your faith.

# 10

## The Media Bids for Your Faith

The almost infinite power of the mass media has forcibly reached our attention through its political use both on the national and the international scene. Its power is illustrated by the story told of two parties of Indians in the desert of Nevada talking to each other by means of smoke signals. Their conversation was moving along quietly as they released puff after puff into the clear desert air, when suddenly a huge column of smoke was blown up some twenty miles into the air. An atom bomb had been detonated.

“**Wow!** I wish I had said that!” commented one of the redskin signalmen.

And yesterday’s means of communication in comparison with today’s could well be likened to the difference between the puffs of smoke from the Indian’s campfire and the atom bomb’s colossal pillar of glowing smoke.

Today, we are aware of the use of the mass media—newspapers, magazines, mass-produced personalized letters and radio and television—to brainwash whole nations and to manipulate opinions and confidences at the whim of the politicians.

**Art Hoppe’s** syndicated column in “The Columbian” newspaper was a case in point. It was entitled, “The Games Leaders Play.” It had to do with then President Nixon’s visit to China and the propaganda which accompanied it to represent the red Chinese and their leaders as warmly per-

sonal friends. But before the President’s visit, they were our sinister enemies. To quote Columnist Hoppe: “Six months ago I had 800 million enemies where now I have 800 million friends. And I am angry.”

He went on to point out that his anger arose out of the fact that we were as a people being manipulated by the presidential use of the mass media. He did not oppose friendship with the Chinese people. He was angry because for 20 years Americans were taught to fear and hate the Chinese people and their leaders; and then, after a political ping pong game, “the papers, the news magazines and my television set seemed crowded with laughing Nixons, chuckling Maos and wryly grinning Chou En-lais.”

**Part of** my purpose in calling attention to the modern means of mass communications is to point out that modern rulers have a unique and unprecedented power in their hands. And this power may be abused.

As someone has said, “The control of the modern communications media may be a much more serious threat than the possession of modern weapons.”

A report from a White House Conference on Youth stated concerning the mass media that its “dominating influence upon us all is infinite” and “we are concerned about the incredible strength of the media in all phases of our lives.”

**In light** of the meteoric rise to power of the mass media, it is of great interest that

Daniel prophesied an end-time ruler, called the “little horn,” who is characterized by having “a mouth speaking great things” (Daniel 7:8). At no time in history has a ruler had a “mouth” with which to control his people as that which the mass media affords the modern leader. “And he shall speak great words against the most High” (Daniel 7:25).

**Our generation** has witnessed the mass-manipulating power of the communications media. This fearful mouth fights a cold war more deadly than the sporadic hot wars which it incites and controls. The world leaders use its propaganda power to brainwash men and blaspheme God.

The mass media has not only given its great power to twist our faith in the realms of politics, but it is being used to glorify violence, glamorize sin and laugh at Christian faith and virtue. The following quotation from *Discern the Times*, taken from “The National Observer,” is proof in line with what others have reported:

Viewing 37 movies in one week—believed to be the typical film fare showing around the country—a University of Utah psychologist and his research team saw 59 murders, 89 ‘justifiable killings,’ 76 attempted murders, 11 massacres, 6 bombings . . .”

**Then 200** acts of sexual immorality too defiling to repeat were listed, plus a variety of “seductive exhibitions.” The quotation goes on to cite the conviction of Dr. Victor B. Cline that movies and TV are headed for an era of unrelenting violence and exploitive sex. He said,

By making violence appear glamorous and exciting, and illicit sex normal and desirable, these

media are setting the stage for a society based on aggression and irresponsibility.

Other findings: two-thirds of the films took a fatalistic view of life and human destiny; 22% of the protagonists were killed or in some way destroyed. In 57% of the films dishonesty was presented in a heroic light or justified; in 38% criminal activity paid off—there were no negative consequences; in 43% the heroes were lawbreakers or anti-social figures; in 60% premarital sex was normal, acceptable, desirable; 70% of the heroes were to some degree sexually promiscuous.

**The use** of television as a propaganda weapon is cited in “The National Laymen’s DIGEST.” We quote at length from its article “Television as a Propaganda Weapon.”

The pastor of the Calvary Bible Church of Derry, New Hampshire, the Reverend Ivan W. Smith, has written a brilliant exposure and biting indictment of a proposed public television program which “Sesame Street” has scheduled for public viewing.

It seems that Dr. Alan Guttmacher, Director of Planned Parenthood World Population and a member of the board of directors of the Euthanasia Society of America, and his fellow creators of “Sesame Street” have planned 26 one-hour shows on “health” for their (upcoming) schedule.

Dr. Guttmacher and spokesmen for a task-force which advised on the “family planning segments” decided the word “abortion” should be used constantly in 16 of the 26 scheduled shows in order to “detoxify” the viewing audience from cultural shock. Following this, they include a segment which involved a pregnant eight-year-old girl who will be denied an abortion by her mother.

Not one pro-life representative was asked to take part in the planning sessions for these programs.

The tragedy is that public tax dollars are used to finance such propaganda on public TV networks. There are 240 nationwide stations affiliated with the Public Broadcasting Service.

**When it** is considered that today’s eighteen-year-olds have watched an aver-

age of 15,000 hours of television, it is easy to understand that their faith and life could be twisted and ruined by such an exposure to indecency.

The abuse of the power of the mass media, particularly television, has been the subject of scores of articles during the past few years. A liberal and left-leaning reporting of the news has all too often portrayed sympathetically the crimes, riots and rebellion of anti-government activism. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the national guard and the police forces of the nation are often put in a very unfavorable light. So flagrant has been this abuse that an investigation has been launched to search out and expose false and misleading presentation of the crucial issues of law, order and justice.

**A letter** by J. A. Parker, president of Media Probe, states,

Frankly, I think it's about time for someone to *seek out the truth* about this bias—how and why it's done—and to *speak out against* the media propoganda that excuses rioters, looters, snipers, bombers, while it *accuses* the law enforcement officers and agencies that protect us and our homes.

**The headlines** of a few articles on the power and abuse of television will help us to understand the tremendous role it plays in shaping our lives.

Note the following: “How TV News Gets Slanted” by Edith Efron; “Television Reporting Runs Risk of Destroying its Credibility” by Victor Lasky; “The Cold War of the Air Waves” by Alice Widener; “A Conservative Candidate Examines Media Bias” by Robert J. Markle; “The Alarming Potential of TV News Broadcasting” by Jenkin Lloyd Jones; “Political Hucksters Need Code of Ethics to Avoid

Broadcasting Abuses” by Paul A. Porter, and “TV Plays an Awesome Role” by Bruce Herschensohn.

**In the last-**named article by Mr. Herschensohn, the thought-provoking charge is made that the TV camera . . .

Has one vice which goes unmentioned. . . . The camera is a liar. All those lenses, viewfinders, turrets, cranks and buttons have been made to preserve the visible on film or tape or for live transmission. But that assumes the visible is the truth. It's not. The invisible is the greatest truth.

What is so important that's invisible? Everything that's truly important. Peace is invisible, freedom is invisible, love is invisible, faith is invisible. Even the motivation behind political decision is largely invisible.

The camera, unable to record the invisible, not only focuses on the visible, but it lives with an inborn prejudice. It ignores the visually dull and records the visually interesting. And most often the visually dull is the more vital hint of the invisible truth.

Mr. Herschensohn's observation approaches the insight of the Word of God on the question of true values:

The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

**Over** against the mouth that brain-washes and blasphemes is the life-giving word from the mouth of God. As “it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

God's revelation of Himself began with a written Word and climaxed in the sending of His Son into the world as the Living Word. Hebrews 1:1-3 records it as follows:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (New American Standard Bible).

**Opposing** forces want your faith. Too often those who use the mouth of the mass media want your faith to get your pocket-book or your vote or your soul. God wants your faith in His Son so that He can save your life from destruction and hell.

“Faith comes by hearing,” so “take heed what you hear.” Do not be manipulated by the false faiths propagated by the

big mouth of the mass media. Avoid the profane and empty babblings of the ungodly. Do not become a victim in the battle of words lest catastrophe overtake your soul. But give heed rather to the health-giving words of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:14-16; 1 Timothy 6:3-4).

**Saving faith** comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Give heed to what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say about hearing and believing as a condition for obtaining eternal life:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

# 11

## Education Attacks Your Faith

**What is** happening in the education of our children and youth also has a profound effect upon their faith. The practical elimination of God from the classrooms is resulting in a materialistic faith where at most God should only be considered on Sundays.

When sex education and sensitivity training are being foisted upon the children in our public school systems without the safeguards of a morality based upon God's standard of righteousness, then much of our education becomes education for the enemy of our nation and our souls.

**Academic** freedom, which should safeguard the right to search for and teach the truth, has become a fortified ivory tower in which many subversives of the moral order, of government and of the truth of God are finding sanctuary. Along with freedom of speech and freedom of the press, academic freedom is being used to destroy faith in God and in our country's government. Unspeakably vile and treasonable material has been published by professors and students and defended upon the ground of constitutional rights.

Little wonder then that faith in God gives way to materialism and nihilism—the doctrine that all values are worthless—in the lives of many who go unprepared into the educational arena.

**A conference** of contemporary college and university educators voiced concern about the lack of moral standards among

our youth and entertained the idea that as educators they ought to do something about it. A moral standard and a code of ethics was suggested as something they ought to agree upon as a way of life to teach their students.

But to this suggestion came the reply, "As educators we could not agree upon a moral code or ethical standard. The best we could hope to do is to arouse in our students a curiosity concerning moral questions."

That such a tragic indictment of the educational community is not without some foundation is borne out by an article in a university student newspaper. It said that professors at that institution had left the impression on their students that their highly-prized academic freedom amounted to freedom from commitment and loyalty to spiritual and moral truth. To quote, "The University demands . . . a faith in non-faith, a paradoxical commitment to non-commitment. . . ."

**"Faith in non-faith and commitment to non-commitment"** means professors are trusting in and are dedicated to basic agnosticism. The Bible speaks of such as "ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." In its practical outworking such irresponsible academic freedom has championed the right of the atheist and the worldling to speak his piece and has too often denied a voice to the

Christian and loyal defendant of the historical values of our country.

**Evolution** is assumed to be scientific fact, and the evidence of its falsity is not made available to students. The academic freedom that demands the right to be uncontrolled in thought, speech or conduct if it expresses a godless philosophy, has succeeded in denying the right to be heard to the one who believes in God, the Bible and eternal truth.

**As one pastor** expressed his concern over teaching the occult in public schools, "You can teach about any god but God."

Delinquent schools, delinquent parents, and churches without the transforming message of Christ share in producing a delinquent youth. An article in "Human Events" called "What Can We Do About the Spoiled Generation?" reaches just such a conclusion. The writer, Virginia Held, put it in these words, "In sum, almost no one seems willing and able to instill, simply and directly, a basic understanding of the difference between right and wrong."

**Our country's** greatest peril today is that her people are spiritually and morally adrift, not knowing what to believe and too often believing that a life detached from faith and commitment is the proper kind of life.

**Unfortunately,** under the guise of academic freedom and scientific detachment, many professors are influencing our youth away from God, away from eternal truth and away from the virtues and advantages of our Christian heritage.

Moral law and judgment of sin as ordered by a holy and sovereign God are denied and tossed aside in favor of the false belief that man struggles upward in a world

without God and without a Moral Governor. Loyalty to our nation is being discouraged and loyalty to world government is being fostered. And in the meantime the same enemy who is succeeding in destroying morals and loyalties in our midst is vigorously indoctrinating the youth in other countries in the principles of world revolution.

**The enemy** of our souls leaves no stone unturned in his master strategy of destroying faith in God, country and decency. And one of his devices is to destroy the images of national heroes in virtue and courage and to replace them with figures of men and women of moral abandon, daring violence and rebellion.

Columnist Denis Warner attributed much of the disciplined toughness of the North Vietnamese army during our war with that country to the emulation of heroic soldiers. One such "hero" defected to the South, but his image was still used in propaganda to make fearless and dedicated fighters.

**"Show me** a nation's heroes, and I will show you the state of its health." It is axiomatic that the ideals and aspirations of a nation find expression in its popular heroes. And insofar as there are historic ideals and moments of greatness in a nation's past which the nation seeks to perpetuate, the national heroes of the past embody those virtues.

It is also obvious that to change a nation's heroes serves to change the nation itself. This principle has been employed by revolutionaries whose purpose is to destroy the historic ideals and virtues of our country and as a result to destroy our country itself.

A **necessary** part of the strategy of hero-changing is to destroy the heroes of history. It is called “de-bunking” them. The muck-rake is used; character is besmirched, and the great and idealistic leaders of a nation’s past are made commonplace and cheap. Many textbooks used in our public schools are guilty of using this device to destroy pride in our heritage.

The art forms, such as music, sculpture, painting and literature, may reflect contemporary heroes and thus be interpretive of the culture and spirit of the day. Or they may be used as powerful influences to mold society for good or for bad.

To use the art forms to degrade, demoralize and destroy our Christian culture is the avowed purpose of such revolutionaries. Hard rock music appealing to sensuality, drugs, illicit sex and to rebellion against parents, country and morality is advocated and effectively employed to corrupt our youth and to turn them against traditional values of our country.

**Art students** have produced grotesque sculptures and ugly paintings violating the normal canons of beauty and decency. These perversions have been found acceptable in some of our universities. And modern literature has produced the anti-hero who wallows in immoral filth, uses obscene language, has no inhibitions arising out of decency or modesty and serves as literature’s contribution to the breakdown of morals and morale. Even grade school children are being exposed to such immoral and indecent books.

A **survey** of novels of some 20 years ago revealed “the exit of the cad.” The “bad guys” disappeared; and instead of the

black and white of moral distinctions, there was compromise and moral grayness.

But the immoral creeper of yester-year now stands upright, displaying his moral leprosy as though it were his badge of beautiful love and freedom. Samples of the depraved immoralities contained in books in our grade school libraries have been published in magazines. They are shocking and disgusting.

The anti-hero in literature has a real counterpart in the moral and political revolutionaries of our day. These godless, profane and obscene young people have been committed to the overthrow of our government and to the destruction of our traditional ideals. They had their hey-day on our college and university campuses in the late sixties, inflaming students to hatred and mob violence.

**The anti-hero** not only hates the best in human society as governed by law and order, but he expresses rebellion against God and His moral government. He desecrates the already marred image of God in man and casts off all restraints imposed by the law of God. And in the measure he is seen and heard in the educational world, he serves to destroy faith in God and in government by law. He exalts license as liberty and rebellion as virtue. He exemplifies the moral and spiritual anarchy of those who believe Satan’s lie that “ye shall be as God.” And he dramatizes what education without God ultimately produces.

**The godless** philosophies which form the world-view of much of secular education have been in large measure responsible for the anti-hero revolutionaries who have blighted the educational world. The outworking of these philosophies has changed

the life-transforming process of education from good to bad.

Ideally, education ought to result in the transformation of life for good by renewing the mind. But the transformation has been downward and degrading in the measure that man-exalting, God-denying humanism has made man the arbiter in the area of morals. The restraints of a divinely ordered morality are cast off. Much of modern education defaces the already marred image of God in man and replaces it by the image of an evolving ape.

If we as Christians cannot turn this tide of godless immorality, we must at least keep our sons and daughters from being engulfed and destroyed by it. Modern education bids for their faith and their souls. Let us build their faith in God as Creator and Redeemer as revealed in the Bible. Such "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

**We should** be grateful that there are those parents who have not ceded the victory to the educational colossus and who are fighting to have God and morality re-

stored to the textbooks and library books used by their children. Along with them we need to reassert the parents' right to determine what their children are taught. These good people have been represented as fanatics because they want God, not evolution, to explain the universe and because they want to be moral, honest and industrious. But they are the salt of the earth. We should raise our voices in support of their protests.

**The educational** system is one of the greatest factors in building the faith and shaping the lives of our little children and our maturing sons and daughters.

And the faith that is being built is not "the faith of our fathers." It is an alien faith dedicated to uproot, destroy and replace our nation's heritage. It would change a God-fearing people into God-denying atheists. Such education has sown to the wind and is reaping the whirlwind of irresponsibility, immorality and anarchy.

We must put God and morality back into the education of our children.

# 12

## Capturing Words To Control Faith

The capture of ideas and ideals and the words used to express them is of paramount importance in the conflict between the free world and those who believe Satan's lie as it is in the age-long conflict between God and Satan for the souls of men. This is true because "the control of language is a necessary step toward the control of minds" (Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in "Today's Education").

**Yes, WORDS CAN HARM YOU.** The proverb from childhood, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never harm me" is not true. No doubt this dogma of childhood pacifism has kept many a neighborhood cold war from breaking out into hot fist-slinging. And since it tended to keep black eyes and bruises from the bodies of little men of war, its basic untruth was never questioned. But bone-breaking sticks and stones work less harm than words which can wound, enslave or destroy the soul.

**Words have** become weapons of war. The cold war between the communist slave world and the free world was a war of words. In this war, the capture and use of words and the ideas they express is quite as important as capturing and controlling forts and armaments. And since you and I, whether we like it or not, are involved, it behooves us to be aware of the strategic use of ideas and words.

"Faith," "love" and "hope" are words which express inter-personal relationships and dynamic motivations for action. The meaning given to these words can control individual conduct and shape the social structure. What makes up the faith of a people largely determines its loves and hopes. Ideological warfare is basically a conflict between faiths or firmly held ideals, and these *ideas* become *ideals* when loved and made the object of hope.

**The operation** of this conflict of ideas is seen in the problem of the inequities of life. Socialism calls for the redistribution of wealth by taking from the rich and giving to the poor. The poor are persuaded to hope that this will be the ultimate solution to their problems, and their love for the idea may lead them to vote the wealth away from its creators or to take it by violence.

By this route, an ideological war becomes a shooting war. And in the prosecution of a hot war, the defeat of the enemy must involve more than the destruction of armies and the capture of fortresses and the control of territories. It must also involve the capture of *ideas* and *ideals*. These have to do with the human spirit, and wars may be won or lost largely upon the basis of the tenacity with which a people hold to their ideals.

**The three** great words, "faith, love and hope" as a part of the American heritage are biblical words and are inseparably

bound up with the Christian faith. They have been largely determinative of American ideals, freedom, enterprise and prosperity. And today they are under attack and need to be defended or, if captured by the enemy, need recapturing.

**Words, like** fortresses, can be captured by an enemy and filled with alien and enemy ideas just as fortresses can be manned by enemy troops. Thus communism has captured the word “democracy;” and oppressed peoples have run to it, as to a city of refuge, only to find themselves slaves of a bureaucratic dictatorship. And instead of finding wealth, they have become workers for the state.

Since the American “dream” of liberty, equality and justice for all is built upon the Bible and the Christian faith, these have been the object of Satanic attack.

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe (Proverbs 18:10).

**Communism** saw the name of God as a strong fortress blocking its capture of America; and, in league with the devil and with the natural enmity of the human heart against God, it sought to destroy the name of the LORD as the object of our faith.

For “LORD,” also translated “Jehovah,” means the eternal, self-existent God. It is the name associated with His work as Redeemer. And the bitterest attacks of unbelieving atheism are leveled against the Christian belief that God has undertaken to redeem mankind from bondage to sin and death. But it is the Redeemer-God who is the strong tower in whose presence there is safety!

**The Apostle** Peter tells how God wrought redemption for us through the sacrificial death of His Son. He wrote:

Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:18-19).

And the Apostle Paul wrote that God grants redemption through the blood of Christ and the forgiveness of sins to all who trust Him (Ephesians 1:6-7, 12-13).

**Do not allow** the enemy to destroy American faith in God, lest our citizens be deceived by the false faith of atheism and by the lie that man himself is God. Rather, let us herald our faith in the Redeemer-God who sent His Son into the world to be our Savior that men may give heed to the words of Jesus Christ. Let me repeat them again:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

In commending the Thessalonians for their “work of faith, and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:3), the Bible recognizes the powerful motives for action in faith, love and hope. And the “isms” likewise recognize the motivational power of these words and have set about to destroy love and hope as well as faith as Christian virtues.

**Christian love** is a moral love. It comes from God, and the “righteous LORD loveth righteousness” (Psalm 11:7). Because God loves righteousness and hates

evil (Hebrews 1:9), it is a Satanic perversion of biblical love to say that God loves us so much that He will not punish sin.

Christian love means personal involvement in people and their needs through self-impartment. Christ “gave himself” (Galatians 1:4 and 2:20), and His love extends to individuals in their needs. Paul wrote, He “loved me and gave himself for me.”

**Christian love** calls for a practical demonstration of self-sacrifice. Christ not only gave Himself for us, but He gave Himself a sacrifice for our sins. He “died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3).

We need to recapture the word “love” and to restore its high Christian definition and manifestation. We need to take the word out of the hippie communes, out of the brothels, out of the environs of indulgent permissiveness. We must not allow the “flower people” to make love synonymous with sexual promiscuity and perversion. For communism and the other isms would have it so to destroy us.

**Let us** get back to biblical love and believe that God’s love is the source of all true and beautiful and sacrificial love. Let us urge men to believe in God’s love as described by the Apostle John:

Herein in love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10).

“Hope” is also a word which needs to be recaptured. This is so because false hopes are being stirred in the hearts of discouraged and disillusioned people around the world. Communism creates a hope of freedom, equality and economic betterment which never materializes. It is the free

world whose surpluses overflow their storehouses. Communism either slaughters or enslaves its victims. It is a false hope.

**And by** denying God and His law, atheistic “isms” promise release from the guilt of sin and fear of punishment. Here again, it is a false hope because the fear of death and judgment continues to plague the hearts of men. Christ alone can give hope and assurance of Divine forgiveness and relief from the fear of death and judgment. We join the Apostle Peter in praising God for such a hope. He wrote:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5).

**Jesus** came into the world the first time to save men from their iniquities; He will come again to save men from the iniquities of their social and economic differences. Not those who believe Satan’s lie but Christ will usher in the Golden Age which has been the hope of all the ages.

The Apostle Paul wrote of the abiding significance of faith, hope and love in his incomparable treatment of love found in 1 Corinthians 13, saying, “And now abides faith, hope, love, these three.”

**Peace** and safety were favorite catchwords employed as communist weapons of war. It was communistic strategy to lull us to sleep with false promises of “peaceful co-existence” until moral decay, defeatism

and a better-be-Red-than-dead philosophy made take-over-from-within a possibility.

The same code marks the terrorists of today. They follow the plan announced in 1931 by Dmitri Z. Manuilski of the Lenin School of Political Warfare:

To win, we shall need the element of surprise.

**But Dmitri** was more sophisticated. To put the bourgeoisie to sleep, he wanted to launch the most spectacular peace movement on record. He felt that his “electrifying overtures and unheard of concessions” would lull the “stupid and decadent” capitalistic countries into thinking that everyone can now live in one accord. They . . .

Will rejoice to cooperate in their own destruction. They will leap at another chance to be friends. As soon as their guard is down, we shall smash them with our clenched fist (Congressional Record, May 31, 1955, p. A3764).

The following Bible prophecy concerning the day of the Lord, “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them,” may well be applied today to the Islamic design and intent to overthrow its victims.

**Other stolen** words such as “brotherhood,” “equality,” “rights” and “liberty” do yeoman’s duty in political doubletalk to deceive men into believing that Satan’s lie is the remedy for all man’s ills; but it really offers the brotherhood and equality of slavery, the right to serve the state, and liberty to do as you are told.

Certain liberals in theology have deliberately stolen the good words of the Christian faith and invested them with unbiblical meanings. They employ these beloved

words, in many cases deliberately, to deceive the unwary into thinking that liberals hold Bible-based beliefs.

The great words of the faith such as “regeneration,” “atonement,” “redemption” and “resurrection” have been given meanings to suit the fancy and theology of men wholly unsympathetic to historic Christian faith. “God” is emptied of biblical meaning. When a professor at the divinity school of the University of Chicago said he was “operating (his) religion on a nontheistic basis,” he was confessing he worshiped a non-existent God!

**Little wonder** the Apostle Paul admonished Timothy to “hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). He warned of “lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Jude likewise warned of the coming of false teachers who would employ “great swelling words” (Jude 16).

Sticks and stones can only break my bones, but lying words could deform and destroy my eternal soul or yours. Let us not be deceived by lying words either from Al Qaeda or the communist or the religious unbeliever or the devil himself.

Don’t be deceived by offers of false peace.

The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isaiah 57:20-21).

**Jesus** Christ alone can give peace within, peace with God and peace with our fellow men. He . . .

Made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:19-20).

He bore the judgment of God due us for our sins and made provision for reconciling us to God.

“Liberty” and “freedom” are words that belong also to Jesus Christ.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36).

Don't settle for the liberty of the libertine when you can enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

# 13

## Who Is Winning The Propaganda War?

Speaking of the Cold War which troubled our nation for many years, Frank Shakespeare, director at the time of the U. S. Information Agency, said that the United States lagged behind Russia in the global struggle for the minds of men.

He pointed out that our biggest problem in producing an effective bid for the minds of men was our national failure to realize that we are actually engaged in a psycho-political war. We were not exploiting the fundamental differences between the free world and the communist slave world. We were not effectively confronting people with the choices they face.

Propaganda war is not limited to the international scene nor are the issues limited to territorial and temporal consequences. At heart the propaganda war is between God and Satan. At stake are the souls of men and their eternal destiny. At issue is man's faith. Will man believe God or the devil?

And in the spiritual battle which is being fought for man's soul, we are constrained to set forth clearly the issues at stake. Moses did so in addressing the children of Israel as they were about to take possession of the "promised land":

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life,

that both thou and thy seed may live (Deuteronomy 30:19).

God makes a bid for your faith through 1) creation, through 2) the Bible and through 3) Jesus Christ.

1) Every created thing is in reality proper "propaganda" that God is a wise and powerful Creator:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard (Psalm 19:1-3)

In the language of Romans 1:20, God's eternal power and godhead are clearly seen in His creation. Every evidence of design in nature—the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing and the tongue for tasting—cries out, "God made me."

**Every** flower of your garden is Divine "propaganda" bearing testimony to the great Artist who created beauty.

But the Adversary has long since attacked with counter-propaganda: Not God but chance must account for all things; not design from the mind of God but evolution must be the "scientific" explanation of all things.

2) The Bible is God's basic "propaganda" concerning Himself, the world, and man and his condition. Through the Bible

God seeks to build faith in Himself and to save and set free the souls of men.

**The Bible** tells of man's origin as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). It records the tragedy of his fall as a result of disobedience to God and faith in Satan's promise that he could himself become as God (Genesis 3:1-5).

Today, men are denying the existence and authority of God and asserting godlike prerogatives in defiance of God. This follows the battle strategy adopted by Satan in his struggle for the souls of men as portrayed in Genesis 3.

**God warned** that disobedience would bring death:

In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:17).

Satan denied God's threatened judgment and promised that man would become as God, capable of deciding how to conduct himself without restraint from, or judgment by, a God who watches and judges.

God's Word still says, "The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). And death reigns. One generation follows another into the grave.

**But in** one way or another satanic propaganda whistles in the dark, "There is no death." Or if death, then no judgment following it because death ends all. But death doesn't end it all because "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27); and "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Propaganda, in the sense of spreading information with a view to propagating faith, is a proper term to describe God's ef-

forts to persuade men concerning Himself, man's lost condition and the good news of salvation.

**3) God** not only spreads information about Himself through creation and through the Bible, but through Jesus Christ, His Son, who, as information about God, is called the Word. And this "Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Or in the language of Hebrews 1:1-2, God has spoken to us in His Son. So completely did the Son reveal the Father that Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

The struggle for the souls of men does not stop with claim and counter-claim about the existence and nature of God and the sorry state of man. The issue is joined on the fact that God has provided a way of salvation. There is a way of escape from the dominion of Satan and sin, and there is Divine provision for pardon and reconciliation to God.

**God has** provided redemption from sin and death through the sacrifice of His Son:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

God has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. This is the Good News, the Divine "propaganda" which, when believed, brings the new birth.

When we believe God's Word concerning His Son, we become "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

And at this point satanic counter-propaganda employs all the forces of hell to oppose the good news that God loves sinners and invites them to forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

**Satan** would persuade men that they're not so bad after all and that a God of love would reward them for doing their best. Their sincerity, their faith, their religiosity, their good intentions ought to count for something. Or again, if they are convinced that they are sinners and really need the Savior and resolve to get right with Him before they die, Satan will encourage them not to let their concern interfere with their present plans and pleasures.

Satan has many believing his basic lie that man is himself the only God and that he has no need of a Savior.

Who is winning the propaganda war—in your life? Is it God or is it the devil?

**Faith comes** by hearing. It may be saving faith based upon hearing the Word of God. Or it may be a soul-damning faith based upon Satan's counter-propaganda. At issue is present life and eternal salvation. God sets before us life and death, blessing and cursing. Let us choose life.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).

# 14

## What Faith Is

**Hebrews 11** exhibits God's gallery of great faith heroes. Their exploits of faith challenge us to trust God more fully. What was this faith which brought spiritual perception, formed moral conviction, begat courage and worked miracles in the lives of these ancient worthies? Because we too live in days in which men of great faith are sorely needed, it behooves us to find out their secret. What is the nature of the faith which wrought so mightily in them?

We are not left in doubt. The chapter opens with two statements concerning faith which are tantamount to a definition or at least a description of what faith is. The translators understand and state somewhat differently what those two statements are.

The Authorized Version states that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The New American Standard Bible replaces "substance" with "assurance" and "evidence" with "conviction." The passage then reads, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

**In considering** the first of the two things faith is said to be, we shall look at the Greek word which is translated "substance" and "assurance." The word is "hypostasis." Its root meaning is "that which stands under or supports a thing." It is used in Hebrews 1:3 of the nature or substance of God as seen in Christ. That which stands under and supports the brightness of God's glory in Christ is the Divine nature.

When the word "hypostasis" is used in defining faith, its root meaning enriches the translation "assurance" by adding the thought that such assurance has a ground or foundation which stands under and supports it. Several of the great Greek lexicographers lend the weight of their scholarship to this meaning of "assurance."

**In defining** "hypostasis," Liddell and Scott list its use in Hebrews 11:1 under the heading, "The foundation or ground of hope, confidence or courage, etc." Their definition carried the idea that faith is a confidence supported by a foundation or ground. Thayer catches the idea in "firm trust." Arndt and Gingrich express it in the words "confident assurance."

Faith, then, may be viewed as the supported confidence or assurance of things hoped for. If faith is a mental attitude of confident expectation, it has a rational foundation in known facts and experiences. There is supporting evidence for the things hoped for.

**Faith is** not a leap into the dark. It is not irrational religious feeling. It is clear-headed involvement with present knowledge and future implications. And other terms for faith indicate that it is also wholehearted commitment to God and appropriation of things promised by God.

Faith is not antithetical to knowledge. It has a rational and factual basis, but its perceptive outreach toward the not-fully known is based squarely upon what is

known. In this sense, then, faith is the bridge from the known to the unknown. There is “that which may be known of God” through creation, through the Bible and through His mighty redemptive acts. And the one who would come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

**Supposing** I was asked by a grocery clerk to identify myself so that he could have sufficient faith in my integrity to cash a check. What supporting evidence for faith could I produce? Ordinarily my Washington driver’s license with its colored picture of me would suffice. But not so always.

**Some time** ago we were asked to produce credit cards. While I reached for Rocket, Texaco, Mobil, Arco and Exxon cards, my wife produced her charge cards from several department stores. Occasionally a check in my pocketbook made out to me would add credence to my identity and possible worth.

A staff pass to Pacific Northwest College Conference athletic events identifies me as Dr. Willard M. Aldrich, as do my Blue Cross and State Farm Insurance identification cards. Then there are my business cards which name me as president of the Multnomah School of the Bible, to say nothing of my membership card in the Olympic Athletic Club.

**These** normal contents of my pocketbook would be facts for faith that I am Willard M. Aldrich and that it would be reasonably safe to cash my check or to lend me some money.

With reference to our faith in God, there is sufficient supporting evidence that He exists and that He is a rewarder of them

that diligently seek Him, so that men of science, men of great intellect—astronomers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, as well as clergymen—have put their trust in Him.

Faith is the undergirded assurance of things “hoped for.” The supporting evidence which builds faith or confidence is controlled by hope. The “control factor,” to borrow a word from the world of computer technology, is hope. The answers derived from the computer depend upon what is fed into it, and this in turn depends upon what is hoped from it.

**Suppose** I hope there is no God and no appointment to judgment after death. This hope will be a control factor in my selection and interpretation of factual data. Because controlled by the hope that there is no God nor judgment to come, the facts of existence may be interpreted to support the belief that matter, form and life have come into being by chance and have developed by evolution.

On the other hand, the hope of life after death and of eternity in the approving presence of God will cause the believer to see the facts of existence as explainable only on the ground of creation.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. . . . (Hebrews 11:3).

**In the final** analysis, the hope of immortality or the hope of annihilation determines whether the supporting evidence for our faith will serve to build faith in God or faith in chance.

Contrary to those who feel that as knowledge increases, faith in God must decrease, the supporting evidence for the wisdom and power of God increases with

every scientific discovery. He is not the “God of the gaps.”

He is not the explanation of the mysterious unknown adopted by the ignorant as a sort of intellectual stop-gap measure to be held only until further light is shed upon the matter. Rather, with every increase of knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, the greatness of God is revealed and the ground of rational faith strengthened.

**The DNA** and the RNA inheritance factors are discoveries of biological science since my college days in the biology laboratory. And if it’s true that enough code information to fill a set of six books is carried on the genes and chromosomes which determine inheritance characteristics in humans, then this becomes a large order for faith. And it appears that it’s a much harder thing for faith in chance to explain this remarkable phenomenon than for faith in an intelligent Creator. I find this and every other amazing scientific discovery to be supporting evidence for my faith in God as a wise and beneficent Creator.

The first part of Hebrews 11:1 states that faith is the supported confidence concerning things hoped for. It is saying that faith has a rational content, made up of observable facts, experiences and truths. These data are collected and arranged in support of something hoped for. The process could well be compared to the growth of a scientific hypothesis into scientific theory and ultimately into accepted scientific law. It starts with observation, is carried forward with attempted explanation and reaches its climax when all of the facts contribute to and support the adopted theory. This is a scientific faith and its development closely corresponds to the devel-

opment of the intellectual side of religious faith.

**But Hebrews 11:1** adds another dimension. Faith is the conviction concerning things unseen. Two things enter into this conviction.

First, the purely intellectual persuasion or confidence based upon supporting evidence; second, the enlightening or convicting work of the Holy Spirit as promised by our Lord Jesus Christ in John 16:8,

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

“Reprove” means to bring to light or to convict.

The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to prevent the light of the Gospel of Christ from shining into their hearts. But God has shined in our hearts “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

**Thus in** the development of faith into saving faith, the spirit of God acts as the catalyst which brings supporting evidence and human intellectual persuasion into firm conviction. Just as water added to cement, sand and gravel hardens them into concrete, so enlightenment by the Holy Spirit firms fact and faith into settled conviction. This is part of what it means to be born of the Spirit. The Spirit of God illuminates the Word of God to the heart, generating faith, and thus God of His own will begets us through the Word of truth (James 1:18).

Such conviction and conversion enabled the Apostle Paul to say,

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Timothy 1:12).

And it caused Peter to say,

We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God (John 6:69).

**Thus far** we have been considering faith as a maturing intellectual and spiritual conviction. Such confidence toward God takes on the character of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when each one of us commits his life to Christ and appropriates Christ's life for himself. To trust Him as Savior demands that each one commit to Him the salvation and safekeeping of his soul.

He crowns, as it were, his persuasion that Christ is indeed the Savior of the world by an act of his own will to commit his personal salvation to Him. By a personal act of faith he joins those who have received Him as Savior and have been given the power to become the sons of God. He believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and becomes saved.

**But in** addition to commitment to Christ, saving faith implies appropriation of Christ. It has been well said that failure in the Christian life on the part of those who have committed their lives to Christ may come from a failure to appropriate daily all that Christ has for them.

In talking to the woman at the well in Sychar of Samaria, Jesus encouraged her, and us, to appropriate the satisfaction of right relation to Him. He did so in terms of drinking the water from the well and the water of eternal life.

He said to the woman,

Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:13-14).

**And again**, following the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus said,

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:51).

**Saving** faith becomes satisfying and sustaining faith as the believer appropriates Jesus Christ as the water of life and the bread of life.

Whether living under the types and shadows of the Old Testament or realizing their fulfillment in Christ, the child of God lives by faith. As it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 19:38, quoting Habakkuk 2:4). It may be "claiming" faith which "demands" a specific answer to prayer on the ground of God's promises. Such faith "pleads the promises."

**Or it may** persist as "clinging" faith, hanging unto God in prolonged and inextinguishable trials and saying with Job, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him."

We have good reason to "have faith in God." There is ample supporting evidence for confidence in Him. Therefore let us come to Him in the firm conviction that "He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

# 15

## Armor for Psychological Warfare

**Thoughtful men** no longer scoff at the biblical prophecy that this age will end in destruction. It is man's common fear that atomic warfare may bring racial suicide. This dread prospect, coupled with the movements of history which lead to it, causes men's hearts to fail for fear as prophesied in Luke 21:25-26.

Our age has been properly called the age of overt fear.

While "wars and rumors of wars" bring to us the discouraging news of terrorist activities abroad, unceasing propaganda from the left is aimed at destroying American ideals and courage here at home. The breakdown of faith in God results in the breakdown of morals, and the loss of morals is a major contributor to the loss of morale. Hence, the strategy of the left is to get God out of our schools and out of our hearts.

**Man "without God and without hope"** falls easy victim to Satan's lie. It is the goal of liberal psychological warfare to produce such craven fear in us. The strategy of this enemy is to destroy our faith in God, in our free institutions and in our fellow men, and to put fear and frustration in our hearts.

**But the** same Word of God which foretells this age of fear also provides a remedy for fear, hatred and discouragement. It gives an adequate armor for psychological warfare. It is found in a passage

which speaks of the "day of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Before considering the armor against the fearfulness of that day, let us see what the Scriptures have to say about the day itself. It is the day of judgment upon the earth prophesied in the Old Testament. It is to be a day when the vaunted pride of men will be humbled (Isaiah 2:12, 17). It will be a day of darkness and of fear (Joel 2:2). It will be God's answer to militant atheism. The Psalmist predicted this great day of God's outpoured wrath:

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his Anointed, saying,

"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall have them in derision.

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure (Psalm 2:2-5).

**The Bible** prophesies that certain great movements and events shall precede the day of the Lord. It could well be that the present conflict with Islam with its prospect of nuclear warfare could lead into and form a part of the destruction to take place in that great and terrible day. Certainly the weapons of destruction have been prepared and stockpiled; and, even as predicted in the second Psalm, the militant anti-God na-

tional policy of the liberals challenges God to a confrontation.

The “sudden destruction” of the day of the Lord will be triggered by the proclamation of “peace and safety,” according to 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Thus we are forewarned that the announcement that peace has been attained is followed by disaster. It would appear to be no mere coincidence that “sudden destruction” follows the proclamation of “peace and safety” in both the day of the Lord and in the present-day anti-God strategy.

The Communists planned to destroy their enemies after lulling them to sleep with talk of peace. The tactic of making war by proclaiming peace was basic communist strategy. The all-out offensive against South Vietnam by the communist north following the cease-fire agreement was a form of this unprincipled strategy. So long as they did not renounce their ultimate aim of world domination, it was folly for us to ease the tensions and promote detente as progress toward permanent peace.

**The fact** that the communists used the proclamation of peace as propaganda in war added to the confusion and the fears of that day in this country and emphasized once against the relevancy of the Savior’s warning, “Take heed what ye hear.”

One great movement of prophecy to precede the day of the Lord has to do with apostasy from revealed truth concerning God and the exaltation of man as the object of worship. This is prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5:

That day shall not come, except there come a falling away (the apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is

called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

**Such** man-exalting, God-degrading apostasy is found within the professing Christian Church. It began there with the pretensions of modern liberalism. The evolutionary humanism of Julian Huxley, which is religion without the supernatural, is a part of it. The atheistic boasting of communism was expressed by its Cosmonaut Titov after his return from space, “I don’t believe in God.” That boasting joins the movement by denying God and exalting man. Thus the way is being paved for man’s worship of himself.

As we have pointed out, the belief that man himself is God began with the lie spoken by Satan to Eve in the Garden of Eden, when he said, “Ye shall not surely die. . . ye shall be as gods (or God), knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4-5).

**This rebellion** against God reaches its climax in the appearance and exaltation of the man of sin, the Antichrist, who will be worshiped as the representative man. In worshiping him, man worships himself (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 13:8).

When man’s rebellion against God reaches this climax, the day of the Lord will break with all its fury upon the earth. Afterward Christ will return to earth in “flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

In light of the inevitability of that day and the fact that we can do nothing to stop its coming, is there anything we can do or have to take away the fear of it? And inasmuch as the march of Islam may be a

preparation for that day and mutual destruction by nuclear warfare may form a part of it, can we find peace of heart in spite of it? Yes, God has made a provision to save us from fear, hate and hopelessness.

**The day** of the Lord is coming suddenly upon the children of darkness, but believers in Jesus Christ “are all the children of light. . . . we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thessalonians 5:5). Hence we are not to be caught in that great judgment, and we are to put on God’s armor to protect from the fear of it.

Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

In Ephesians 6:11 and following the “whole armor of God” is spoken of, but here protection is provided only for the heart in the breastplate and for the head in the helmet. There is no weapon for offense. The breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation are defensive armor for psychological warfare.

**The heart** needs to be protected by faith and love. There must be faith in God and faith in His prophetic Word. Such faith can drive out fear. It acknowledges personal sin and guilt; but finds pardon and release in the forgiveness granted by God through the Savior. Such faith finds rest in the Savior’s death for our sin and proof that He settled the sin question for us in His glorious resurrection. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God” (Romans 5:1).

Many years ago, the idea of a spiritual setting-up exercise was suggested by a dear friend and Sunday school teacher, Joe

Maddock, who is now with the Lord. It consisted of Bible verses setting forth promises and blessings for the child of God to be reviewed and appropriated by faith at the beginning of each day.

**Since the** “just shall live by faith” and “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,” I am suggesting that each one of us at the beginning of each day arm himself with faith and love by reviewing, meditating upon and appropriating portions of Scripture. Let each one choose those Scriptures best suited to strengthen and encourage his heart in God as he faces his own limitations, problems and fears. In the course of time, these verses should be memorized for instant recall to be employed when emergencies arise.

I am taking the liberty of suggesting a number of Bible verses which have been especially helpful to me.

**Let there** first be an expressed faith in our Heavenly Father, and worship, submission and petition as set forth in the Lord’s prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matthew 6:9-13).

Then I think it wise to review a number of basic passages concerning salvation to assure our hearts that we are indeed “children of God.” For the “children of light and children of the day” are not to be caught in

the sudden destruction to come upon the children of darkness.

As we review such verses as John 1:12 and 1 John 5:1, let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ and build our assurance that we are indeed children in the family of God.

**Note the** promises and the conditions in each verse and say to yourself, "I have received Him and do believe on His name. I do believe that Jesus is the Christ and hence am born of God." And now the verses:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12).

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (1 John 5:1).

Because you have received Christ by faith and are a child of God, you have peace with God. Believe the expression of this blessed truth as found in Romans 5:1:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**To this** peace which arises out of reconciliation to God, we should add peace as repose which comes from resting our mind upon Him. Claim such peace as you believe the promise set forth in Isaiah 26:3-4:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Trust in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

To this add the promise and the wise advice of Philippians 4:6-9:

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

**There indeed** is armor for psychological warfare! Use it to cast down every imagination that exalts itself against Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Use it to ward off anxiety and to protect the mind and heart from evil thoughts.

And because the God of peace is with me, I am adequate for the tasks and trials of the day.

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).

I am therefore enabled to stand the pressures of the day.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Philippians 4:13).

**In Christ** I am a super-conqueror in all the trials of life (Romans 8:37). In Christ I share a three-fold victory. First, victory in the eternal counsels of the Godhead as seen in Romans 8:28-30. It is His eternal and sure purpose to conform me to the image of

Christ which blends all things for good in my experience as stated in these verses:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

**Second**, I have victory also in the courts of heaven. The sin question has been settled by Christ's death for me, and I shall neither come into judgment nor even be called into court.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

God won't, for, "It is God that justifieth.

"Who is he that condemneth?"

Will Christ? No!

It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:32-34).

And because "it is God that justifies" on the ground of my faith in Christ, I can claim . . .

The blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Romans 4:6-8).

**Truly I** can rejoice that God is able to keep His own, wills to keep His own and has made provision to keep His own (2

Timothy 1:12; Jude 24-25; John 6:38-40;; 10:27-28; 17:24). And His keeping power extends into our present scene of conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil and promises us victory in all these things. This is the third sphere in which He gives us the victory.

Romans 8:35-39 represents Christian victory over circumstances and enemies, not in terms of changing the circumstances and crushing the enemies. Deliverance from them may come, if necessary, through our own death and/or through a triumphant faith able to say, "Thou he slay me, yet will I trust Him." We triumph in the assurance of the love of Christ from which nothing can separate us. The Christian must by faith adopt God's method of keeping score in totaling up what He considers victory. Think of this as you read Romans 8:35-39:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**To these** triumphant words of faith, we might well add three passages which are of encouragement for those undergoing special trials and possible suffering.

First, from Romans 8:16-18:

The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the 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.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

### **Second, from 2 Corinthians 4:17-18:**

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 at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

### **Third, from 1 Peter 4:12-13:**

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.

**Let us bind this breastplate of faith and love over our hearts with Peter's words of praise found in 1 Peter 1:3-9:**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you

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:

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

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

What better words with which to summarize than those of Romans 8:31,

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

**This wicked** world is fast moving toward the sudden destruction of the day of the Lord and is being fitted for destruction by its godless rebellion and immorality. For your peace of mind in it, we urge you to be sober and to take upon you the breastplate of faith and love.

If the promises of the Word which we have listed need to be augmented to make an armor fitted to your need, add to them and then make them the foundation of your faith. We urge you to read and claim them daily for your peace of heart. Remember, faith comes by hearing.

**But the** breastplate is fashioned not only of faith but also of love. Carbon added to iron can change it into armor-plate steel; so love added to faith makes a spiritual alloy which cannot be pierced. The Apostle Paul wrote:

Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

**But faith** and love, often joined by hope, are seen working together in Scripture. These three—faith, love and hope—abide, but the greatest of them is love.

As the world moves toward the judgment of the day of the Lord, Christ-

rejecting “vessels of wrath” are fitted for destruction by giving themselves increasingly to rebellion against God and to gross immorality. The heart of the child of God can easily be filled with fear and revulsion. His faith in the sovereign purposes of God may overcome his fear. But it takes the love of God in his heart to keep his moral revulsion against brazen indecency from degenerating into hatred of the persons whose lives are controlled by sin.

**The servant** of the Lord is admonished not to strive but to seek to help those who “oppose themselves.” This admonition is in keeping with the purpose of God in providing His children with an armor for self-protection but with no weapons for attack. Love for unsaved and lost captives of Satan is necessary if we are to heed the exhortation of 2 Timothy 2:24-26:

The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient;

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

**Putting on** the breastplate of faith and love certainly suggests that we should love what we believe. We should not only believe “the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints,” but we should love it supremely. We should love God, love His Word, love His eternal purposes, love His will for us, love His people, and love our enemies. Only this kind of faith and love can overcome the fears, frustrations and the hatreds which could destroy peace of mind in the perilous days which lie ahead.

**The same** Thessalonian letter which tells us to arm ourselves with the breastplate of faith and love points out that growth in love will serve to establish the heart in holiness. It will firm up and stabilize Christian character. This important truth is found in the Apostle’s prayer in 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, as follows:

The Lord make you increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

**Two passages** of Scripture point up the importance of love in the armor against fear and discouragement as the child of God faces the coming of the day of the Lord and the fearful events which lead up to it. Both of these Scriptures assure us that we have been delivered from Divine judgment for our sins. The first one is 2 Corinthians 5:14 which states that because Christ died for us all, then we all died in His death:

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died.

In the words of Galatians 2:19,

I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

**Neither** the condemnation nor wrath of God in time or eternity will be visited on the child of God because in Christ he has died unto sin and is alive for evermore.

The Apostle John tells us that “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:17-18). Specifically, it casts out the fear of judgment:

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

Just as the Rock, typifying Christ, could not be smitten twice, so also the child of God smitten once in Christ cannot be smitten again “because as he is, so are we in this world.” Perfect love perceives that Divine wrath could no more be poured out on the sons of God in the day of the Lord than upon the Son of God. Yes, matured love joins faith to cast out fear.

**God’s armor** for psychological warfare affords protection not only for the heart, but for the head. And the head can be protected from the worries and anxieties of mental anguish by the “helmet of the hope of salvation.” The “hope of salvation” is the hope of Christ’s return for the Church prior to the outpouring of God’s wrath during the day of the Lord.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10).

**The hope** of salvation from the sudden destruction to come upon the children of darkness in the great and terrible day of the Lord is strengthened by promises of deliverance we find in other portions of the Word of God.

Revelation 3:10 is such a promise:

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

**The contribution** to the helmet of the hope of salvation furnished by this verse has been attacked on the ground that the preposition translated “from” (*ek*) could as properly be translated “out of.” The verse could then mean that instead of promising us immunity “from” the tribulation, the saints will be kept through and saved “out of” it.

In the discussions of the possible translations of the preposition, the verb governing the preposition is too often neglected. The verb is to “keep.” And the preposition, when used with “keep,” whether translated “from” or “out of,” can mean nothing else than “from” in the sense of “not getting into.” To be kept from something means not to be involved in or with it. The meaning is the same whether the Greek preposition is translated “from” or “out of.”

**Had the** verb governing the preposition been “saved,” then the translation “saved out of the hour of trial” would be admissible. But the verb is not “saved” but “kept.” And there is no way that kept “from” or “out of” can mean kept “in” and “through.”

To be kept from (or out of) the hour of temptation can only mean to be kept from it by not getting into it. Therefore, Revelation 3:10 makes a valid contribution to the helmet of the hope of salvation!

But we do injustice to the helmet of the hope of salvation if we limit its significance simply to deliverance from the wrath to come. It is the hope of a pre-tribulation rapture; but more, it is the hope of the consummation of our salvation, the blessed hope of seeing and being like the Lord Jesus Christ.

**In view** of His coming John admonishes us to abide in Him lest we be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28). There is no contextual warning about experiencing, even as safe observers, the wrath of God poured out in sudden destruction. Certainly the possible experience of shame at His coming is far removed from going through earth's greatest agony! When He comes, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). This conformity to the Son of God is the predestination to glory of which Paul wrote in Romans 8:28-30.

Then it is that this mortal body shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:52-54).

**The helmet** of the hope of salvation not only protects us from the fears of judgment and wrath to come upon the earth, but it holds out to us in our personal failures and too-oft-repeated sins the hope of ultimate conformity to Christ and the satisfaction of possessing moral perfection.

How beautifully the psalmist expresses this blessed hope:

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness (Psalm 17:15).

**We urge** you to take the breastplate of faith and love, and, for a helmet, the hope of salvation so that you may be armed against the propaganda of the world, the flesh and the devil and cease to fear the inevitable terror of the day of the Lord.

As you put on God's armor for psychological warfare, it is good to realize the twofold and balanced protection it affords. While the breastplate and the helmet com-

bine to form protection for heart and mind from the fear of God's wrath to come, each has a separate function which serves as a balancing and complementary counterpart to the other.

**The breastplate** of faith and love enables us to endure trial and suffering. It has made God's persecuted children able to become "more than conquerors" through Christ even though "accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Romans 8:36-39). If we, like many of our fathers in the faith, must endure persecution and even suffer martyrdom in the darkening days ahead, we can rest in the protection of the breastplate of faith and love. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ!

God's people down through the ages have experienced this confidence as the breastplate enabled them to endure suffering. It strengthened them to "count it all joy" and to "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (James 1:2; Romans 8:18).

**Up until** the present time, the saints who have suffered persecution have not been delivered from their trials by the helmet of the hope of salvation. Christ has not come to deliver them out of all their troubles, but the breastplate of faith and love has enabled them to endure triumphantly even unto death.

As we face the darkness of the days leading up to the day of the Lord, we can rest in the confidence that the breastplate of faith and love will enable us to endure and to overcome.

But more, let us arm ourselves with the helmet of the hope of salvation. It is the hope that we shall escape the destruction

and wrath of the day of the Lord. The breastplate of faith and love enables us to endure trial and suffering, and the helmet of the hope of salvation gives the assurance that we shall escape the outpoured wrath of God.

**Together,** the breastplate and the helmet give us balanced protection from persecution from man and wrath from God. Let us put on this armor. Make your own verses of Scripture which we have suggested as the basis of our faith and hope.

# 16

## The Potential of Faith

**The amazing** and unlimited potential of faith is vividly portrayed by the Lord Jesus Christ in three incidents in which He used the expression, "If ye had faith." In two of the stories the possible achievement of faith is expressed in terms of moving mountains. He promised that "nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Inasmuch as "the just shall live by faith," it behooves us to consider and to appropriate the power of the faith which justifies us before God and enables us to live pleasing to Him.

In the three instances in which Jesus introduced the condition, "If ye had faith," the potential of faith is revealed as adequate to meet the challenge of the impossible in three areas of life. Let us turn to consider them.

**The first** has to do with the power of faith to overcome satanic opposition or more specifically demon possession. Since there has been a marked rise in interest in the occult, open worship of Satan and increasing evidence of demon possession in America during the past decade, it is wise for God's children not only to realize the provision God has made for overcoming Satan but also to lay hold upon it by faith.

**The setting** out of which Jesus challenged His disciples' faith to overcome Satan is in the valley below the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus had been revealed in His glory to Peter, James and John. The Father had borne witness to His Son, saying

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). Then in the valley below, He met the multitude; and a distraught father brought his demon-possessed boy to Jesus saying, "I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him."

**Jesus** answered him, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me" (Matthew 17:17).

Jesus rebuked the demon and the child was cured. Then the disciples came to Him after they were alone and asked, "Why could not we cast him out?"

"Because of your unbelief," Jesus replied; "for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:19-21).

Nothing is more fixed than a mountain, nothing more immovable. And nothing would appear more impossible than to break Satan's hold upon a life and to cast out his demonic emissary. But "nothing shall be impossible unto you."

This is not power inherent in us. It does not give us license to bring a presumptuous and railing accusation against Satan. It is rather faith's command, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9).

Without attempting to gather together all the provisions which God has made available to us to help us defeat Satan, may I suggest the following for your faith to appropriate:

**First**, the indwelling Christ, who is greater than Satan, should become the object of our faith. Paul prayed that believers might be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man and that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:16-17). And John assures us that “greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

**Second**, Satan can be defeated by use of the Word of God which has become a part of our very life. The young men of 1 John 2:14, who are spiritually strong, have overcome the wicked one because the Word of God abides in them. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and Satan cannot stand against it (Ephesians 6:17).

**Third**, we are to believe and to remind Satan that he’s a defeated foe. He was judged and despoiled at the cross (Colossians 2:13-14; John 12:31). The way to victory is outlined in Revelation 12:11 in these words, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. . . .” The redeeming blood of Christ has purchased salvation from the world and the flesh and the devil, and we should plead the power of the blood against Satan. We are no longer his captives and slaves.

**Fourth**, we are to resist the devil in the faith: that is, believe all that God has done for us to deliver us from sin, death and the devil (1 Peter 5:8-9). We are to resist this one whom Peter describes as a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour.

But such resistance is inseparably bound up with submission to God and nearness to Him, according to James, who wrote: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh unto you” (James 4:7-8).

**Fifth**, we are to “put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11 and following). Just as a literal armor serves to protect a warrior in physical combat, so the armor for spiritual warfare is to protect us in spiritual conflict.

We are reminded at the outset that to arm for spiritual conflict does not mean to marshal the powers of our own strength of character but to be clothed in the power of God. We are to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10). Protected by the whole armor of God, we are properly and adequately equipped to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Four times our responsibility is declared to be “to stand.” We are not to seek out Satan nor to fill our minds with thoughts of him; but, when attacked by him, we are to “stand . . . still, and see the salvation of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 20:14-30).

**Stand** therefore, having your loins girt about with truth” (Ephesians 6:14). The girding of the loins was a common way of expressing preparation for action. The messenger girded up his loins and ran; the soldier girded his sword upon his loins (1 Kings 18:46; 2 Samuel 20:8).

The loins are the central point of the physical system. They are the seat of power to stand and power to walk. They form the symbol of manhood and womanhood. God

called upon Job to “gird up now thy loins like a man” (Job 38:3), and the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31 “girdeth her loins with strength” (verse 17). And the loins are the seat of human sexuality and the power of reproduction. Children are “the fruit of the loins” (Genesis 35:11; Acts 2:30).

**The loins** are to be protected with truth, and particularly truth as it relates to our walk as moral beings created in the image and likeness of God. We are to put away Satan’s lie that man can decide his own moral standards, and we must embrace the “truth as it is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21, 25).

When Satan would tempt us through the flesh and would seek to persuade us to indulge the flesh in immorality on the ground that we can make our own standards and rules, then we need to be girded with the truth that we are to be holy because God is holy.

“Stand therefore . . . having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:14). Since Jesus Christ “was made unto us righteousness” and we have been “made the righteousness of God in him” (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21), to be protected by the breastplate of righteousness means nothing less than “to put on the Lord Jesus Christ” as our “armor of light” (Romans 13:12-14).

**This simply** means to sustain a living and vital relation to Jesus Christ, so that all He is in relation to the Father and all the victory He has won over Satan has become our constant protection.

The breastplate of righteousness is fabricated both of judicial and practical righteousness. It is both justification and sancti-

fication. It is God’s verdict that, because Christ died for our sins as our substitute, our sins are not charged against us. We enjoy the blessedness of “the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Romans 4:8). The accuser of the brethren cannot lodge an indictment against us in the courts of heaven, for God has pronounced us righteous (Romans 8:33).

**We may** have boldness in the day of judgment and be unafraid before our Adversary here and now because we are “accepted in the beloved” and “as he is, so are we in this world” (Ephesians 1:6; 1 John 4:17). Christ is our judicial righteousness. But more. “Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). And in the measure that I allow Him to live out His life through me, I experience deliverance from sin and I grow in His likeness.

If the breastplate of righteousness is going to protect us from the thrusts of the evil one, it must be a breastplate forged out of a living relationship with Jesus Christ. A living faith in Jesus Christ arms us with an eternal judicial righteousness against which Satan can forge no armor-piercing weapon. But the assurance that we are protected by God’s righteousness must sink its roots both into our knowledge that we have appropriated Christ as Savior and into the practical proof that our life has been changed by Him.

**When we** have such assurance of the reality of our relation to Christ, then we may completely rely upon the judicial righteousness of our breastplate of righteousness to wholly protect us while our imperfect, but growing, practical righteousness reaches out toward perfection in Christ.

Let's remember that the breastplate of righteousness is part of the "whole armor of God" and that it is "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:22). We do not meet the adversary in our own personal righteousness; but the awareness of a growing and maturing personal righteousness, however imperfect, is needed to lend us assurance that we have indeed passed from darkness into light through genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

Have you thanked God for giving you an eternal and unchangeable standing in righteousness before Him which protects you while practical righteousness struggles toward conformity to Christ?

**"Stand** therefore, having . . . your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15). It has been well said that the best defense is to take the offense against an enemy. Our Great Quartermaster has provided strange and interesting boots for His Christian warrior. These are not the hob-nailed boots of hatred with which the modern army is psyched up. The believer is not to be inflamed by the atrocities of Satan's strategy. He is to be shod with a preparation or readiness arising out of the Gospel of peace.

While "going with the Gospel" may be implied here as a part of Divine provision for the Christian warrior, it would rather seem his boots are fabricated out of the basic good news of peace with and of God. It is the protection for the warrior's feet which is of primary concern here, not the winning of souls.

**We are to** bind under our feet the sandals of the peace of God. There is no time when a warrior needs peace more than when he is at war. When the going gets

rough, when sharp thorns and jagged rocks beset his path, when he faces the prospect of possible death, how can he stand unless his feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace? He needs to know the peace of God which passes all understanding (Philippians 4:6-9). Many of God's faithful servants in conflict with the enemy have experienced the peace promised in Isaiah 26:3:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

**Nothing** can protect the feet upon which the Christian warrior must stand better than the Gospel's preparation of peace. So in the words of William's translation, "Put on your feet the preparation (that) the good news of peace supplies."

"Stand therefore . . . Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16).

The shield of faith is the one piece of protective armor that is movable. It can be shifted to add double protection to the feet, loins, chest and head. Wherever Satan attacks, he is to be met by faith in God and His Gospel. Since faith in God comes principally by hearing His Word, our shield of faith should be built out of those biblical truths which Satan would seek to attack. We should develop our faith in God as creator, in Christ as Savior and in the necessity of a Christian walk pleasing to God. We should understand that Satan's basic strategy is to destroy our faith in God through his lie that the creature is God and shall one day reign as such.

**Since faith** comes by hearing, we must take heed what we hear. We need to fill our hearts and minds with the revealed truth concerning God. We need to appropriate the truth for practical daily living. We can bring to bear against Satan and his flaming arrows the impregnable shield of faith in God's great redemptive program and faith in Satan's defeat and doom. Take up for yourself this shield of faith. It is the shield of *your* faith in *the* faith once and for all revealed to the saints.

"And take the helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17). Keep your head with the helmet of a full salvation. It's a salvation from the penalty of sin which became yours when you first believed. It's a salvation from the power of sin now as you believe. It is a salvation yet to be from the presence of sin. We shall be glorified like Christ in a sinless environment for all eternity? For the intellectual problems, for the evil imaginations, for the fears and doubts of our minds, and for Satanic attacks through these channels, we need the helmet of a full and operative salvation.

**When we** compare "the whole armor of God" as catalogued in Ephesians 6 with the armor for psychological warfare in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, we find two striking and instructive differences; and each difference is suited to the use of the armor.

The Thessalonian armor would be both incomplete and inadequate, not to say unsuitable, were it intended to be used in combat against Satan and his demonic hosts. But it is not so intended. It is an armor provided to guard the heart and the head against the fears, hatreds, and worries which would naturally afflict the children of God as they see the world caught up in

the vortex of fearful conditions and events moving inexorably toward the outpouring of Divine wrath in the day of the Lord.

**As the pace** at which the mills of God begin to grind quickens, and as evil men grow more wicked as they are fitted to become vessels of wrath, the believer's heart and life need the protection of the breastplate of faith and love. It must be faith in God's providential workings and love, such as is shed forth by His Spirit into our hearts—love for God and love for lost men moving toward condemnation, but men who in the meantime hate Christ and hate His people. We need the breastplate of faith and love. It alone can replace fear and hatred.

The helmet to protect us from the worries of our minds, plagued by the propaganda of the enemy and fearful of the judgment to come upon the earth, is the helmet of the hope of salvation. It is the hope that we will not be caught in the wrath appointed for a Christ-rejecting world but will rather obtain salvation from it by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Over against** this armor for the war of nerves, the armor against Satan and his hosts is the breastplate of righteousness. No mention is made of love in this armor. And the helmet is the helmet of a full salvation, a currently operative deliverance through a vital faith in Christ, rather than the hope of salvation which is realized only at Christ's coming for His own.

And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

**In dealing** with a young woman believed to be demon possessed, a group of believers sought to pierce and root out the

demon by employing verses of Scripture which they felt would loosen his hold upon the girl and force him to leave her. Having addressed a verse at the demon hoping it would serve as the sword of the Spirit, they heard the demon tauntingly say, “Ha, you missed me.”

The Word of God cannot only be successfully employed as the sword of the Spirit in casting out demons, but it can and should be used constantly to parry and to destroy the wicked suggestions, evil imaginations and vain reasonings with which the evil one seeks to destroy the child of God. But in order to use this powerful weapon, we must know it. Like David of old, we dare not attempt to meet Goliath with an untried and unfamiliar weapon.

“**Take the** helmet and the sword . . . praying always” (Ephesians 6:17-18). Effective use of “the whole armor of God” is inseparably linked to a Spirit-wrought and persevering life of prayer. God has made provision for His people to move mountains of Satanic opposition. But it may require prayer and fasting to bring forth that “faith as a grain of mustard seed.”

In the same experience with the young woman believed to be demon possessed, the prayer warriors were praying that the demon would release her throat so that she would be able to drink. Such prayer seemed fruitless for about a day. All the demands made in the name of Christ proved ineffective. Finally, the group one by one confessed lack of faith, asked God to grant them faith and went back to prayer again.

**Then from** the lips of the girl came these astonishing words, “I smell the stench of faith in this room.” Shortly thereafter, she was able to drink. The faith which was

a stench to the demon must have been a sweet savor unto God, even though as small as a grain of mustard seed.

The next occurrence of the expression, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,” occurs in a passage in which Jesus discusses forgiveness with His disciples. He instructed them to forgive an offending brother who trespassed against them seven times in one day, providing he turned and repented each time.

**This appears** to be a little too much for the disciples to grasp. They replied to this “outlandish” proposal, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

And in turn the Lord said, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you” (Luke 17:6).

“What,” you might ask, “does having a wee bit of genuine faith have to do with forgiving seven times?”

**Well, first** of all, we must admit that forgiving seven times in one day is a large order. Once, yes—twice, perhaps, but seven times is asking too much. Most of us wouldn’t forgive seven times in seven years, let alone seven times in one day. Our attitude is, “I’ll forgive you this time, but don’t ever let it happen again.”

About the third time the brother trespassed against us, we would begin to wonder if he had truly repented the first and the second time. And doubting it, we would feel under no obligation to go on forgiving him. We would have to join the disciples in asking, “Lord, increase our faith.”

Our faith might well increase in two directions if we are to realize its enlarged

potential in developing a forgiving spirit. And certainly this is needed today.

**First**, our faith must see the enormity of God's grace in forgiving us and realize that our forgiveness is small stuff—peanuts, in comparison.

You remember the story Jesus told about the lord who forgave his bankrupt slave about \$12 million. This prodigious borrower was a miserly lender. He started to choke a fellow-slave who wanted an extension on his loan of about \$18. If our faith were increased up to mustard seed size, our sins before God and our brother's sins against us would be seen in their approximately million to one ratio of size. Then it wouldn't be so hard to forgive our brother's failures.

Second, we need our faith enlarged to believe that God can transform the incorrigible. Rescue mission faith is of this sort. So often weak brothers slip and fall again and again. Well does the mission worker pray for increased faith, especially if the erring brother has stolen his purse.

**Our faith** in God and our faith in God's working in the sinning brother can uproot the tree of sinful habit and cast it into the sea!

Turning back to Matthew's Gospel, we find the third place in which Jesus challenged His disciples to have faith. It is found in connection with the narrative of the curse which Jesus pronounced against an unfruitful fig tree. It is commonly understood that Jesus used this incident as a teaching tool to instruct His disciples concerning the impending judgment upon Israel, God's fig tree, to which Jesus came expecting to be received, but found rejection.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11).

**It would** appear that this interpretation would alone justify His sudden and angry-appearing act. It should be noted, however, that by the time the leaves are out in full on the fig tree, the fruit should be ripe. At least this was the case of a fig tree which used to be in the yard of a house we once rented. So to put forth leaves was to profess to have fruit. Israel professed to be fruitful, but it was a false profession as evidenced by its rejection of the Messiah.

Were it not for this typical use of the fig tree to teach His disciples, it would not appear becoming for Jesus to go about blasting fig trees, especially if they did not belong to Him. But we remember, too, that He is God, the possessor of heaven and earth.

**But now**, having said all this, I want to treat the story of the cursing and withering of the fig tree and the challenge to faith which arose out of it in light of the personal disappointment its barrenness was to the hungry man Jesus. Matthew tells us that "he hungered" and that He went to the fig tree expecting to get something to eat. Because it professed to have something for him but did not, He cursed it, and immediately it withered away (Matthew 21:19).

**I believe** that Jesus is seeking to teach us that faith can turn disappointment into gain for us. "If ye have faith," we cannot only do what was done to the fig tree but remove whatever mountain of disappointment or opposition may stand in our way. But it should be noted that Jesus did not use His mountain-moving faith to create a fruit-bearing fig tree to satisfy His hunger!

He had turned the disappointment of unsatisfied hunger into an opportunity to teach his disciples the terrible reality of Divine judgment soon to fall upon His unbelieving people Israel.

If we have faith, we shall counter “the groanings which we cannot utter” with the assurance that . . .

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

If we have faith, we would reckon that:

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17).

**We would** not count it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us. And through faith there would open up the possibility that “all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:22).

Who can measure the potential of faith? God’s power to overcome Satan, God’s power to fortify our faltering forgiveness, and God’s power to turn disappointment into gold and silver unto the praise of His glory—all these form but a part of the untapped potential of “faith as a grain of mustard seed.”

# 17

## How to Develop Your Faith

**The cry** of the disciples, “Lord, increase our faith,” finds an echo in our hearts. Inasmuch as pleasing God and appropriating the blessing of God is in large measure “according to your faith,” we want our faith to grow and be strong.

At any rate, I feel that I want my faith increased; and I trust you do, too.

In the battle for your faith between God and Satan and between people, products and causes wanting your support, the bid for your faith has been made principally upon the basis that “faith comes by hearing.” We have a tendency to believe what we hear. By controlling what we hear, we can control the direction and development of our faith, whether it be faith in God, the devil, our fellowmen or ourselves.

**In discussing** the nature of faith, we have pointed out that faith is the confidence or assurance of things hoped for supported by evidence. We may develop faith, then, by hearing the evidence.

Faith in God takes on another dimension. It is conviction or enlightenment wrought by the Spirit of God. The facts, the experiences and the truths that form a foundation of evidence for faith become conviction to the mind illuminated by the Spirit of God. They form the conviction that God “is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is a blend of evidence heard and of enlightenment given. In the development of faith there is therefore a human responsibility to hear the evidence and a Divine undertaking to illuminate the mind. It would appear that the normal channel through which faith graciously flows from God to man is that of hearing the Word of God.

**The blending** of the Divine and the human in the development of faith may well be illustrated by the new birth. James tells us that “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18). God causes us to be born again when we believe the Gospel. He gives faith when we hear His Word.

We are prone to think of heroes of the faith as those who do the impossible, whose faith harnesses the supernatural and whose exploits contravene or suspend the laws of nature. It might be well to get a more comprehensive view of the commonplace but important functions of faith in every day life.

**First**, there is that basic faith that perceives and responds to reality or truth. “By faith we understand.” God is that Ultimate Reality. He alone can adequately explain the universe. Faith’s primary function is to believe what may be known about God. In the words of Hebrews 11:6, “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and

that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Explicit in the biblical portrayal of God is the fact that He is Creator.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3).

That God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth has been written both in natural and special revelation. Certainly,

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

And His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen from creation (Romans 1:20).

**The Bible** confirms the record of creation found in nature. In unequivocal terms it bases its entire disclosure about God upon the fact that He is Creator: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

Satan has succeeded in foisting a counterfeit explanation of the universe upon man. Instead of worshiping and serving God as creator, man has “changed the truth of God into the lie and worshiped and served the creature more than (or rather than) the Creator” (Romans 1:25).

Man’s false faith in the eternity of matter and its evolution has supplanted faith in God as an explanation of the origin of all things. This diabolical lie has served to undermine faith in God as creator because it is so commonly taught in our public schools, colleges and universities.

Faith that we may have a personal relationship with God rests upon the revelation that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Such faith is basic. With-

out it there would be no hope for us in seeking to approach God and to win His approval. With the fundamental faith that God is a rewarder, we can persist in seeking His face and favor though the heavens seem as brass and though there is no approving voice from heaven.

**It was Job’s** basic faith that God would reward him for his God-fearing and upright life that both puzzled and sustained him in all his miseries. He was able to say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him” (Job 13:15).

The use of the word “rewarder” in Hebrews 11:6 implies that God is also a redeemer. In order to reward us for our imperfect and inadequate search for Him, He must forgive our sin.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:10).

A faith that perceives and responds to reality believes not only in the existence and accessibility of God but in the work of Christ as our Savior who became for us the Way to God (John 14:6). The greatest and most important area in which we should develop our faith is that which has to do with the manifold provisions for our salvation. When we appropriate justification, sanctification and security in Christ by faith, we have laid hold upon the most satisfying realities of our relationship to God. Protected by these provisions of God’s grace, we can live through the storms and trials of life.

**The second** kind of faith which we should seek to develop is that faith which submits to Divine providence. It accepts

the natural order of things. It receives both good and bad at the hand of God. With Job it says, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

Such faith believes that God sends us "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17) but that He also tries our faith through barren years, hardships and suffering. He teaches us to say "not my will but thine be done." This is the kind of faith that persists in spite of suffering, seemingly unanswered prayer and unrealized hopes. It endures unto the end. It clings to God when all goes wrong. It submits to trial and will be found unto praise, honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

**Faith** is not only intended for the crisis times or the times of continued stress but also for the pedestrian paths of daily walking.

They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

**Faith in God's** providential care is the antidote for fretful worry. It is the cure for anxious thought. In the sixth chapter of Matthew the Lord exhorts His people to be free from worry and to approach the father with carefree prayer. (Carefree is to be distinguished from careless). The Father knows what things we have need of before we ask Him (6:8, 32-34). In the ordinary matters of food and clothing, we should not be of a doubtful mind and of little faith (6:30); but we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto us (6:33).

Surely Jesus Christ is not advocating that we quit our jobs and neglect the ordinary responsibilities of providing for our households, but He is telling us to mingle faith with our work and to trust the providential care of God for daily needs. Our faith is to rest upon the fact that our Father knows about our needs and cares for our well-being.

**Faith in God's** great salvation and providential care can not only give us anxious-free living in the ordinary things of life, but it can carry us through the crisis times whether by miracles of deliverance or grace for endurance. In the catalog of the exploits of faith in Hebrews 11, note the shift of emphasis from that of the victorious warrior to that of the sufferer who says with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

The heroes of faith . . .

Subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Women received their dead raised to life again; (and now note the change from triumph to the acceptance of tragedy) and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (verses 33-37).

**It would** almost appear that we stepped out of the Old Testament and into the New Testament in the sudden turn from miracles of deliverance to patience in en-

durance in this list of faith's exploits. In the Old Testament, Israel was promised to be the head and not the tail, the victor and not the vanquished, so long as she obeyed God. But when we move into the New Testament, it would seem that God has a different method of chalking up the score of the victor. The power of God is not seen so much in destroying the enemy as in empowering his own people to suffer triumphantly. This is what Paul says in Romans 8:36-37:

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

**The carefree** faith of Matthew 6 is what can be expected in a well-ordered Christian society. It would appear that the adding of prosperity is not so much in the nature of a miraculous Divine reward as it is the out-working of Christian principles in a culture where God is honored. We believe that the great prosperity of America rests upon the basic Christian culture established by our founding fathers. And we believe that as we move away from that basic Christian foundation with its faith in God and faith in one another, we shall also experience economic disaster. Is it not observable that, where there is a basic Christian culture, operating on Christian principles, whether in a small community, a city or a nation, prosperity follows?

**But while** it is true that prosperity comes to the people whose God is the LORD, yet it is also true that we live in a world hostile to God; and the commission of the Church of Jesus Christ is not to con-

quer the opposition with the sword but with the love of Christ.

Ours is not a commission to exterminate a condemned world as was Israel's commission with reference to the nations occupying the then unholy land. And so God is pleased to show His love through our willingness to suffer and even to die at the hands of those we would win to Christ. And in so doing, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

**Let our** faith free us from anxious thought concerning the ordinary needs of life; and may it also fortify us to endure suffering and trial, rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer for his Name.

But this is not the kind of faith we prefer to develop. We prefer the kind that affords escape from suffering rather than endurance through it. And there is that faith which lays hold upon God to suspend the natural order. It is the third kind of faith for us to consider. It walks upon the water; it uproots mountains, holds back the sentence of death through healing; it receives money not by the sweat of the brow but from gifts whose donors were prompted by God. It's the kind of faith that does exploits because it lays hold upon the greatness of God. It commands Him concerning the work of His hands (Isaiah 45:11). It expects great things from God and claims them by faith.

**As we** consider the possibility of increasing our faith, let us think of its development in terms of its perception of the reality of the existence and responsiveness of God, of its submission to Divine providence, and, finally, of its plea for the supernatural suspension of the natural order of things. It believes that the creator nor-

mally operates through the natural laws. He established but is not bound by them.

In light of the important role which faith ought to play in our lives, let us consider how we can increase our faith.

From Hebrews 11:1, we learned that faith may be viewed as the supported confidence or assurance of things hoped for. It has a rational foundation in known facts and experiences. There is supporting evidence undergirding faith. The first principle of growth in faith, therefore, is to hear the evidence. "so then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

The faith-producing effect of hearing lies at the heart of the educational process. Information is imparted to alter attitudes, give direction to life and to equip with professional skills. "That faith comes by hearing" is what makes it pay to advertise. And clashing propaganda bids for the ears of man on the basis that faith comes by hearing.

**Certainly** "hearing" refers to the ear-gate to human consciousness, and there are undoubtedly special faith-producing values to hearing confession made by mouth; but "hearing" is used to refer to every avenue by which facts and truths impinge upon the human consciousness. In the context in which faith is said to come by hearing, the hearing includes the Gospel which was preached by word of mouth and was literally heard by the ear, and the hearing was also from the word which was seen in creation. God spoke through preaching and also through the heavens which "declare" His glory.

The faith-producing effect of uncontested hearing is obvious from the effect

upon character, conduct and career caused by education, advertising and political propaganda. So if we are passive in the educational process, we tend to become what we have heard. But in thinking of the development of faith through the process of hearing, we are advocating more than passive hearing. Our response is not to be "So what?" but rather, "What will you have me to do?" We must couple hearing with obedience.

**Since faith** has an intellectual content and involves rational perception of truth, faith in God will grow by hearing the evidence from the Word of God. The expression, "hearing the Word of God," in Romans 10:17 is preceded by reference to the written Word of God, and it is followed by allusion to the Word of God in creation. Verse 16 states that not all have obeyed the Gospel, even as Isaiah said, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" And verse 18 answers the question concerning their opportunity to hear the Word of God by saying, "Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." But this is a quotation about God's revelation of Himself in creation as found in Psalm 19:4.

**We cannot** overemphasize the importance of enlarging the intellectual content of our faith by hearing the evidence about God as Creator, Redeemer and Provider as found in nature and in His written Word. And because God has climaxed the process of revelation by speaking to us through His Son, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1).

Such hearing of the Word of God should not only come from listening to men of God expound the Scriptures, but it should come from our own diligent study of them. We should “search the Scriptures.” We need to “study to show ourselves approved unto God.” It is through the Scriptures that we can be able to say with the Apostle Paul, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

**It is from** the Scriptures we learn that our faith in Christ is not in vain because He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:2, 14, 17) and that He “was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). And glorification is sure for every believer whom God has pronounced righteous in Christ (Romans 8:29-30). “We may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). Such is the faith of every one who is “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).

We need to know the great redemptive acts and truths of the Gospel so that our faith in Christ may become blessed assurance of an eternal salvation and issue in life pleasing to God.

**Our faith** will grow as we hear the evidence derived from experiences with God. They may be our own or the experiences of others. The experience may have to do with laboring together with others in prayer so that faith is mutually strengthened. Jesus had this in mind when He said to His disciples, “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (Matthew

17:21). Then, answers to prayer may serve to increase our faith.

Years ago, we designed a little book in which to record prayers and their answers. It is called *In Account With God*, and it is made like an account book with a column for requests and their dates and their corresponding answer and dates. To recall how God has answered prayer in the past is an encouragement to believe that He will do so again. It can strengthen our faith.

**We can** increase our faith by repeating and meditating upon promises from the Word of God. This can be done by reading them or by recalling them from memory. The practice of thus “pleading the promises” makes direct use of the principle that faith comes by hearing and can materially enlarge our faith.

Faith not only grows through hearing supporting evidence, but faith grows and becomes conviction by the Spirit of God. Faith in God involves an enlightening work wrought in us by the Spirit of God.

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 (2 Corinthians 4:6).

**The faith** of the Corinthians did not rest in the wisdom of men but in the illuminating ministry of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4-5 and 14-15). Faith is measured out to every man by God (Romans 12:3), and he is to exercise his various gifts according to the proportion of faith given to him (verse 6). Faith is a gift of the Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12:9. But that it is a gift of the Spirit does not release man from the obligation of seeking it (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail in the hour of his temptation and denial of Christ (Luke 22:32). He now makes intercession for us, and it could well be that His prayer for us includes prayer that our faith will not fail but rather increase. We do well to follow the example of the disciples in asking Him, “Lord, increase our faith.”

**Faith** not only comes by the hearing of evidence and by the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit, but it comes by *exercise*. Paul speaks of the Thessalonians’ “work of faith” (1 Thessalonians 1:3), and James tells us that faith is made perfect by works (James 2:22). Faith was given us to live by; it was given that we could endure hardship, and faith opens the door to good works and daring exploits. Faith grows by exercise. And some of the exercises that develop faith are the trials which God permits or the chastisement which He administers to us (1 Peter 1:7; Hebrews 12:11). Whether faith lays hold upon the grace to endure hardship or opens up a way of escape from it, the productive use of faith serves to nurture and strengthen itself.

**Our family** faith in God grew through an experience in which He graciously supplied our need for more room for our family of nine children. We were led to employ a carpenter to nearly double the size of our old farmhouse. We encouraged ourselves to believe that God would supply the funds with which to enlarge our home in addition to the then meager earnings from a small church and a new school. A number of promises from the Bible strengthened our faith that God would answer our prayers.

For about a year and a half we pled with God to supply funds miraculously, but instead we borrowed money and managed to meet each mortgage payment on time out of our small earnings. We had prayed that God would set aside the natural order that man should pay his way by the sweat of his brow, but God gave us a substitute answer to prayer enabling us to meet payments by the more painful route.

**But we** could not understand why no answering miracle met our prayers. Our faith wore down from *claiming faith* to *clinging faith*. We trusted God even though we could not reconcile our apparent leading to trust Him for a miracle and the fact that none happened. The failure, we knew, must be ours, not His.

And then, after we had just about abandoned the idea that God would send in the money we needed, a check in the amount of \$5,000 came to us from a total stranger.

God showed us He could answer our prayer in line with the natural order of work and pay, and He strengthened our faith by rising above the natural order and performing a miracle for us.

**Let us join** the disciples in praying, “Lord, increase our faith.” And let us seek the faith which the Spirit of God gives to those who seek it.

And, finally, let us set about to develop our faith by hearing the Word of God.

May the evidence of God’s greatness and goodness, the enlightenment of His Holy Spirit and the practical exercise of faith cause our faith to increase and abound!