

Son. Nothing has been withheld. All is embraced and included in the one great gift.

Is it not strange that everywhere men are praying and pleading for what has already been graciously given? They pray for peace, but the Father answers, "I have already bestowed My peace upon you in Christ. Receive Him, and you will have all peace." Men pray for life, and the reply is the same, "I have given you eternal life. It is in my Son. Receive Him, and you have life." Men cry to God for victory, and the answer is, "There is no victory for humanity except in the Victor."

Christ took our humanity, and won everlasting victory, not for Himself, but for men. In the same way that life and peace are gifts, so is victory a gift. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory." 1Cor. 15:57. Why do men struggle and fight to obtain what comes as a gift in Christ? They talk of victory on this point and victory on that point, when if they would only BELIEVE it, Christ is the victory on every point.

It is not some new gift from God that we need; it is a better UNDERSTANDING of the fact that He has ALREADY GIVEN US EVERYTHING in Christ. It is laying hold BY FAITH of the blessings which are ALREADY OURS in Him.

By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him,-by giving and taking. You are to GIVE all,-your heart, your will, your service,-give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must TAKE all,-Christ, the fulness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,-to give you power to obey." - Steps to Christ, page 70.

How many there are who have given all to God! They have made a full surrender to Him and desire only to do His will. Yet they are often filled with disappointment because of CONSCIOUS LACK AND FAILURE. The SECRET of this failure is here disclosed. They have GIVEN all, but they have not TAKEN all.

O for faith to lay hold of this as a blessed reality! Christ, the fulness of all blessing. To abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you POWER to obey. [Amen.]

The Law of Growth

It is a physical law recognized by everyone that growth is produced by partaking of food. It is also understood that there is good, wholesome, nutritious food that produces a healthy growth, and there is much so-called food that is unwholesome and even injurious. Most people can easily apply the theory of this to spiritual things. The chief difficulty is that so many have acquired perverted appetites, both physical and spiritual, by indulging in the injurious food. To restore the

normal appetite and feed the spiritual life so as to produce vigorous growth, is one of the most vital problems of Christian experience.

The Saviour's said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

Of course, man can live physically by bread or material food, but there is a higher life than the mere animal. There is a spiritual realm into which a man may enter and have fellowship and communion with God. With the spiritual faculties of the soul he may feel and hear and see God, and enjoy eternal life with Him day by day. This life cannot be sustained by bread alone. It must feed upon the word of God.

In order to appreciate this, it is necessary to understand the nature of that word. It is a living word.

God's message is full of life and power, and is keener than the sharpest two-edged sword. It pierces even to the severance of soul from spirit and penetrates between the joints and the marrow, and it can discern the secret thoughts and purposes of the heart. And no created thing is able to escape its scrutiny." Hebrews 4:12,13 (Weymouth).

The word is living in the sense that it never dies. The words we spoke yesterday are dead and forgotten today. Most of the words of the mightiest monarchs and philosophers, poets and sages, are forgotten or known by only a few. But God's word never dies and is never forgotten. It is known and loved by more people and printed in more languages today than ever before, though its latest page was written two thousand years ago.

It is also living in the sense that life is inherent in it and is imparted by it.

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

"The life of God, which gives life to the world, is in His word." - Gospel Workers, page 250.

Repeatedly in the Scriptures the word is likened to a seed. When one looks at a grain of wheat, he does not see any indication of life. But if the grain is planted in the ground, soon a green leaf is seen pushing up through the soil. It has sprung up out of the life in that tiny seed. The truth concerning Jesus Christ is the seed of everlasting life. When this seed is planted in the mind and heart, it springs up and produces a new life, and this life is, like the seed, divine.

The germination and growth of this divine seed are described in the Bible, and indicate the steps by which a sinner becomes a true child of God.

The first indication of the germination of the living word, we speak of as "CONVICTION." Paul says the word of God is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4: 12.

When Peter preached the word on the day of Pentecost, the people "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2: 37.

When the prophet Jonah preached the word of God to the great heathen city of Nineveh, with all its wealth and pride and sensual idolatry, it produced conviction of sin that resulted in one of the greatest miracles of all time.

"Word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Jonah 3: 6-8.

Many times men are convicted by the word of God, but refuse to acknowledge their sins and accept repentance. But where they respond to conviction by genuine repentance and confession, the word produces in their hearts a LIVING FAITH in the One who can deliver the transgressor from the GUILT and POWER of sin.

"So then faith cometh by HEARING, and HEARING by the WORD of God." Romans 10: 17.

Many complain of a lack of faith, and resolve to remedy the defect by spending more time in devotion or in missionary work; but the real need is MORE FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

"Faith that enables us to receive God's gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being. It grows as exercised in appropriating the word of God. In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in CONTACT with the word. - Education, pages 253 and 254.

The next step in the miraculous working of the word is REGENERATION. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God,

which liveth and abideth forever." 1Peter 1:23. By the "simple act of believing God, a new life is begotten" in the heart.

A story is told of an infidel who decided to read the Bible through in order to be able to quote it more intelligently. One day he suddenly stopped reading and said, "Wife, if this book is right, we are wrong." After reading on for some time, he stopped again, saying, "Wife, if this book is right, we are lost." Still later he stopped and with deep emotion said, "Wife, if this book is right, we can be saved."

Surely it is a wonderful word which, when applied to the vilest soul, produces CONVICTION, FAITH, and REGENERATION.

It is this word which cleanses the heart and keeps it pure in an atmosphere charged with every form of vice and evil. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." Ps. 119:9.

When this holy word is cherished in the heart, when it is the subject of conversation and meditation, it preoccupies the ground, and leaves no room for sin. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Ps. 119:11.

The word is also indispensable to spiritual growth. As a parting word to his dear children in the faith at Ephesus, Paul said: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up." Acts 20:32.

How many church members there are who never grow up, but remain babes or spiritual dwarfs, simply because they do not feed upon the living word. Evidently such were the believers at Corinth:

"I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." 1Cor. 3:1, 2. "Every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." Hebrews 5:13.

It is not strange that so many professed Christians neglect the diligent study of the Bible, since it is the living medium through which every essential element of the Christian life is produced? Men traverse the world, and spend time and money and life seeking what is right at hand in the Scriptures. The prophet of old said: "They words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jer. 15:16.

The joy produced by the mighty transformations of character and the precious promises for the eternal future, are not like the fleeting joys of this world. They are not affected by place or circumstances, nor by the passing of time. That joy may be found today as rich and full as by the prophet twenty-five centuries ago.

A much longer chapter than this would be needed to tell of all the miracles wrought by this living and powerful word. At least one more must be presented in this discussion.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. 126:5, 6.

Many seem to suppose that the power to win souls is a mysterious gift imparted only to ministers or a favored few of the elect. But the real power to save men is in the word of God. The farmer sows the seed, but he cannot make it grow and produce a harvest. The life is in the seed. So it is with the seed of everlasting life. It contains the same divine power, whether sown by the gray-haired minister, or the little child; the cultured scholar, or the humble and unlearned believer. It is only required that the sower be conscious of the sacredness of his ministry; that he love the lost enough to weep over them; and that he show by his own life that this divine, incorruptible seed produces conviction, faith, regeneration, cleansing, growth and joy.

Sanctification

When a man receives Christ by faith, he is "as a child born unto the kingdom of God." In the Scriptures he is spoken of as a "babe in Christ." Means have been provided by which he is to grow up into the full stature of manhood in Christ.

This does not mean that he is growing into holiness, but rather in holiness.

"The believer does not get disentangled from the sin gradually. He breaks with it in Christ once for all; he is placed by a decisive act of the will in the sphere of perfect holiness; and it is within it that the gradual renewing of the personal life goes forward. This second gospel paradox, sanctification by faith, rests on the first, justification by faith." - *The Way of Deliverance*, page 10.

As we seek to appropriate day by day the blessings that are in Christ for us, there is a constant growth and expansion of the spiritual powers. The capacity to see and feel and understand the things of God is constantly increased.