

Right and Wrong Thinking

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Contents

1.	Right and Wrong Thinking.....	1
2.	Right and Wrong Believing.....	15
3.	Right and Wrong Confessing.....	22

Chapter 1 Right and Wrong Thinking

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

— Romans 10:8-10

What we believe is a result of our thinking. If we *think* wrong, we will *believe* wrong.

If our believing is wrong, our *confession* will be wrong. In other words, what we say will be wrong. It all hinges on our thinking!

But the Word of God has been given to us to straighten out our thinking!

Jesus said in Mark 11:23, "*For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*"

Ordinarily, we talk quite a bit about the *believing* part, but we do not talk too much about the *saying* part. Of course, we will not be able to make the right confession until our thinking is right. Our thinking must be in line with the Word of God, because we cannot believe beyond the actual knowledge we have of the Word of God.

People who have been involved in the past with metaphysical, mind-science religions often get this teaching about right and wrong thinking confused with those religious teachings, because they still think that man is just a *mental* and a *physical* being. But man is far more

Right and Wrong Thinking

than that: He is also a *spiritual* being!

Advocates of metaphysics have taught so much about the mind that Full Gospel people are almost afraid to say a word about it — yet the Bible has a great deal to say about the mind.

For example, the Bible says, "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own UNDERSTANDING [mind]*" (Prov. 3:5). The Bible says, "*Casting down IMAGINATIONS [reasonings], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every THOUGHT [thinking] to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:5). The Bible also says, "*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your MIND, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" (Rom. 12:2).

We renew our minds by studying the Word of God. The Bible teaches us to have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). The only way we can have the mind of Christ is to study His Word, believe it in our heart, and act upon it.

The Word of God also teaches us to think on whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, or whatever has virtue or praise (Phil. 4:8). So the Word of God does have much to say about the mind!

However, we need to realize that thoughts can come into our minds from two different sources. In other words, the thoughts that come into our minds do not always originate in our minds. The devil puts many thoughts into our minds from *outside* ourselves. That's one source. Then, of course, thoughts from God come from *within us*. They come through our spirits into our minds.

As you stay in close fellowship with the Lord through prayer, meditation, and study of His Word, you will learn to distinguish the source of your thoughts. Naturally, evil thoughts are from the devil. God is love, on the other hand,

Right and Wrong Thinking

and love thinks no evil, hears no evil, and sees no evil. Those kinds of thoughts come from God.

I have found that Scriptures referring to the *mind* confuse many people. However, in Scriptures referring to *believing*, many think they do believe. (And they do believe in their minds, but not in their hearts.)

In Scriptures referring to *thinking*, about all many Christians can understand is the negative side of the subject (for there are both negative and positive sides, and the positive side is the more important).

For example, if one talks about "confession," most people think of confessing sin, weakness, or failure. The Bible says, "*// we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). But the Word of God has much more to say about the positive side of confession than the negative side. If people could understand that, it would make a great difference in their lives and thinking. But they have only heard one side of confession preached — the negative side. Therefore, they have only exercised the negative side: The "thou-shalt-not" side.

Yet Paul says in Romans 10:9, "*... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus....*" This does not refer to confession of sin, nor is it a confession of weakness. Instead, it is a confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This passage continues, "*... and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

This is not a negative confession; it is a positive confession! In fact, Christianity is called "the Great Confession." Hebrews 3:1 says that we should consider the Apostle and High Priest of our "profession" (a marginal note in some Bibles says "confession").

Right and Wrong Thinking

At this point, it would be helpful for us to define the word "confession." First, it is *affirming* something we believe. Second, it is *testifying* to something we know. Third, it is *witnessing* to a truth that we have embraced.

It is necessary that we do as Hebrews 4:14 admonishes, and "... *hold fast our profession* [confession]." It is also necessary that there be a continual confession of redemption from Satan's dominion and a confession of the fact that he no longer rules us with condemnation, fear, or disease. We are to "hold fast" to our confession because *our confession is Satan's defeat*. Jesus defeated the devil nearly two thousand years ago. But what Jesus did for us legally must become a vital, living reality in our lives. The experiential side of redemption is the vital side. We never shall thoroughly understand the Word of God until we can clearly see the two different sides of our redemption — the legal side and the experiential side.

An example of the legal side of redemption is this: We often pray, "God save this man," or "God, heal that woman." However, in the mind of God, He *has* already healed these people and saved them. In other words, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Jesus doesn't have to die again to save anybody. He already died once, didn't He? He doesn't need to shed His blood anymore. Legally, God has already done everything He needs to do to provide our redemption!

If one just deals with the legal side of redemption and preaches it exclusively, people will not actually experience anything in their lives. And that is the great problem with many churches. What is being preached is legally true, but the believers have become cold, dead, and formal because they have heard just one side of redemption preached — the legal side — and so redemption hasn't become a living reality in their lives.

If, on the other hand, only the vital side of redemption

Right and Wrong Thinking

is preached — the experiential side — wild fire, fanaticism, and extremism result. Also, if a minister preaches only the experiential side of redemption, some people will seek for experiences apart from the Word of God. (A balance must be achieved between the two so that one can enjoy everything God has legally provided in redemption.)

That which the Lord has legally purchased, wrought, and provided for us becomes ours, experientially, when we believe the Word of God in our heart and confess with our mouths that it is true and that it is ours.

For example, we can see this legal and vital side of redemption in Paul's writings to the Christians at Rome. In Romans 10:8, Paul said, ". . . *the word of faith, which we preach.*" Such an expression is not seen in the Old Testament, because the people in those times did not have the redemption experience available to them as we have. They did not even clearly understand what it was they had prophesied about regarding the coming Messiah! And in the four Gospels we do not see redemption outlined either, because the redemption Jesus came to bring was not actually available to the people while He was on earth. Jesus did forgive sins, but we have more than forgiveness of sins in redemption — we are made "new creatures"!

Redemption did not become available to us until after Jesus was crucified, was raised from the dead, and was seated at the right hand of the Father. In other words, the New Covenant was not in force until the High Priesthood of the New Covenant (or New Testament) was in effect. Jesus is the High Priest of the New Testament!

It is difficult for some people to understand this, because they think redemption was in force while Jesus was here on earth. But redemption was not yet in force. Some men on earth did have their sins forgiven then — but under the New Covenant we have much more than just forgiveness of sins. We have the New Birth, and we have become new

Right and Wrong Thinking

creatures in Christ Jesus.

If a person sins *after* he has been born again, he does not need to be born again time after time. A person can only be *born again* once — but he can be *forgiven* of his sins many, many times, thank God. The promise to believers who sin is, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ...*" (1 John 1:9).

As we have seen, Romans 10:9,10 says, "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness....*" When sinners hear the Word of God preached it straightens out their thinking. The Word shows them that they are lost, that they are sinners, that they cannot save themselves, and that they cannot make themselves righteous or redeem themselves.

The sinner simply needs to say to God, "Dear God, I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. I know according to your Word that I cannot make myself righteous, but I thank You because You love me, and You sent the Lord Jesus Christ to die for me. And through His righteousness, redemption is made available to me. I believe that Jesus died for my sins according to the Scripture. I believe that He was raised from the dead and is my justification. I confess Jesus now, and I take Him as my Savior."

This is thinking in line with the Word and believing what the Bible says. Confessing it creates a reality of salvation in the human spirit.

It makes a great deal of difference as to how the sinner is brought into salvation. For example, if a sinner's thinking is straightened out to begin with, and his believing and his confession are made right, then it will be much easier for him to not waver in his Christian walk. On the other hand, if he is not given sufficient instruction, then the devil will take advantage of what he doesn't know. He will be

Right and Wrong Thinking

defeated and robbed of that which God has already done for him. Because if he doesn't know the Word of God, and doesn't know how to hold fast to his confession of faith, the devil will camouflage the situation and try to make him feel he is not even saved. And when the new convert makes little mistakes, the devil will try to tell him, "Well, you're done for, so you might as well give up and quit!"

The same thing is true when it comes to healing. Remember that confession is Satan's defeat. Hebrews 4:14 says, "*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession*" (or saying the same thing). What does that mean? We have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. He is there representing us to the Father. Jesus is saying: "I died for them. I took their sins. I redeemed them. I became sin for their sin, that they might become the righteousness of God in me. I took their infirmities and bore their sicknesses. I delivered them from the authority of darkness. I created them anew, making them new creatures." That is what Jesus is saying in His Word. The Greek translations of this verse say, "Let us hold fast to saying the same thing." So that is to be our confession! Our confession will either imprison us or set us free. Our confession is the result of our believing, and our believing is the result of our right or wrong thinking.

First, it is necessary that we know what God has wrought for us in Christ, and that we believe it and confess it. It is our confession of it that creates the reality, and then it becomes real in our lives.

Second, it is necessary for us to know what God through the Word and through the Holy Spirit has wrought in us.

Third, it is necessary for us to know what the Lord Jesus Christ is doing for us now in His present-day ministry at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

Right and Wrong Thinking

Fourth, it is necessary for us to know what the Word of God will do for us through our lips, or what God can do through us. **Philippians 2:13** says, "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" God works in us. God works through us. God does not work apart from us. God gave the Church the authority and the commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

God's plan is to operate through us. The Holy Spirit is our Helper. The Holy Spirit, however, does not do the work for us. This is another place where our thinking has been wrong. "Let the Holy Spirit do it" has been the cry of many. But the Holy Spirit was not sent to do it! *The American Revised Version* says, "I will not leave you helpless. I will come to you. I will send you another Helper." The Greek word *paraclete* that is translated "Comforter" means "One called alongside to help."

No, God did not send the Holy Spirit to us for Him to do the job; God sent the Holy Spirit to us to help us do the job. Too much of the time the Holy Spirit is left to do it all. But if the Holy Spirit did it all, there would be no need for us to send missionaries.

We pray many times, "God, convict this friend of his sins. Bring real conviction on him!" But conviction will never come upon him until someone gives him the Word of God. Without hearing the Word of God, he will not be convicted. Paul said in Romans 10:13,14, "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*" The Bible says that God ordained that men should be saved through the preaching of the Word.

We certainly believe in signs and wonders, but signs and wonders do not save anyone. They attract people's

Right and Wrong Thinking

attention. Once signs and wonders happen, people can be told how to be saved.

If our thinking is not right along these lines, our believing will be wrong. Then our talking will be wrong, and we will be confused and defeated. We need to realize what the Word of God can do through our lips because, as we have seen, the Holy Spirit is sent to help us.

Too much of the time we just want to get blessed in church. And so we pray, "Lord, send the people in," and, "Lord, You just get out and save the people." The truth of the matter is that this is our responsibility. We have the Holy Spirit to help us get the people into church, to help us get people saved, and to help us to do the work of God. But unless we are willing to do the work, we are wasting our time with long hours of prayer that the Holy Spirit will do the work for us.

A woman in Dallas asked me to pray for her. She had fasted and prayed for three days and nights, seeking God's will for her life. When I asked her what the Lord had shown her, she replied that God wanted her to visit people, hand out tracts, and do personal work. I told her that I could have saved her three days of fasting had she asked me, because that's what the Word of God teaches, and that's what God expects of all His children.

I once suggested to a group of people in one church that every believer needs to prepare a Bible lesson of their own. Then, if they are ever called upon to speak to some assembly, they would have more material than they would ever be able to use, and they could help and bless the group. I proposed that believers read through the New Testament — and particularly the Epistles, because they are full of such expressions as, "in Christ," "in him," and "in whom." The expression is either used or inferred approximately 134 times in the New Testament. In every instance, the phrase is talking about the individual — about what he has, or

what he can have in Christ.

It is not only what you personally know about the Lord Jesus Christ that counts; it is what the Word of God says you are already "in Christ" that counts. Many Christians come to me and say, "Brother Hagin, I read thus and so in the Bible. I know that the Bible says this is true concerning Christians. I know I am saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, but the promise does not seem real to me."

I ask them, "Have you ever acted as if it were real? Have you ever told anyone that it is real? Have you ever confessed it to be so?"

They have answered, "Oh, no! I wanted to wait and be sure first."

I have replied, "Why? Do you think the Bible lied? The Bible says that it is so. Is the Bible a lie?"

"Oh, no, but I want it to become a reality within me first. Then I will say it."

But "... *with the mouth confession is made unto...*" A promise from God's Word must be confessed as a reality before it ever becomes so. According to the Word, it is already so. But to be made real in your life, *you* must confess it to be so.

I remember a woman who had attended Bible school for three years. She was not a minister, nor did she claim to be. She had gone to Bible school to get training. Her pastor told me she was the most outstanding laymember of this large church. She was a Sunday School teacher, and she took part in all the church activities. She said to me once, after I had preached at a fellowship meeting nearby, "Brother Hagin, I did what you said. I have not covered the 134 Scriptures you mentioned yet. However, I have read twenty-five of them with thoughtful meditation. I have been saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and have done the best I could for the Lord in all things for many years. But, you know, I feel as though I have just now been saved. These

Scriptures are so real, it seems I have just now been born again!"

I told her the truth of the matter was that she had been born again many years before, but she had never walked in the light of her experience. All of this had been hers all along; it had belonged to her, but because she had never dared to confess and claim it, she had never walked in what had rightfully belonged to her.

When you confess what you are in Christ, claim it, and walk in it, you are appropriating the reality of what is legally yours. Unfortunately, many will never realize this, and will remain baby Christians. They will never be able to enjoy the fullness of what they really are in Christ.

You see, a Christian is not *renovated* like an old mattress. An old mattress is just made over. But the New Birth is not a reformation or a renovation. A born-again Christian is *a brand-new creature*; a new creation. One translation of Second Corinthians 5:17 reads, "He is a new species." This new creature is simply something that never existed before!

Born-again Christians are not just forgiven sinners. We are not poor, weak, staggering, barely-getting-along church members. We are *new creatures* in Christ Jesus! I don't know about you, but this has been my testimony and my confession since 1933.

I saw these truths about redemption as I lay bedfast, studying the Word of God. And I promised God two things before I ever read the Bible: (1) I would believe and accept whatever God said in His Word; and (2) I would put into practice what God said in His Word. Much later I found books that contained these same revelations I had received while studying the Word as a bedfast teenager.

Much of the time, we see ourselves as just being saved from sin. We think that about all we can do in this world is just stagger along, continuing to live on "Barely-Get-

Along Street," in the last house at the end of the block, down by "Grumble Alley."

But Ephesians 1:7,8 says, *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."* Notice it says, *"In whom we have [our] redemption."* It is in Christ that we are redeemed. In Him we have our redemption. From what are we redeemed? Some will answer, "Sin." That is partially true. In reality, however, *we are redeemed from spiritual death* — the thing that made us sinners in the first place!

We can also say that we are redeemed from the curse of the law, because Galatians 3:13 states, *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."* When we look at the law of Moses, we see that the punishment for breaking God's laws was threefold: poverty, sickness, and death — spiritual death.

Jesus came to redeem us because we were sold into sin and spiritual death, and Satan was dominating us. But now that we have redemption in Christ, Satan's dominion over us has been broken! That means Satan lost his dominion over our lives the minute we were born again — the minute we became new creatures in Christ Jesus. It means we have received a new Lord and Master to reign over us — Jesus Christ. Before, Satan was our lord and master. He dominated us. But now that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, Jesus is our Lord. As Romans 6:14 points out, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*

If anything lords it over you, it has dominion over you. Sin and Satan are synonymous. In other words, they are alike, or nearly alike in meaning or significance. So one could interpret this verse to mean, "Satan shall not have

dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace."

Christ has redeemed us. He is our Head. He is the Head of the Church. If Christ is the Head of the Church, and if we are members of the Body of Christ — the Church — then Christ is *our* Head. Does Satan have any authority to rule over the Body of Christ? No! We are Christ's, and we are therefore to be dominated only by Christ. Satan cannot rule us, because if he were ruling us, he would be ruling the Body of Christ, which is the Church. But we know that Jesus is the Head of the Church.

Therefore, because we are no longer dominated by Satan, disease and sickness can no longer lord it over us either. Old habits can no longer lord it over us. Why? *Because we are new creatures in Christ Jesus!*

We need to believe that! Then we will begin to talk about it. Then it will become a reality in our spirits, and we will become overcomers, living a victorious life in Christ. As Revelation 12:11 says, "*And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony....*"

You can always locate a person spiritually by what he says. The majority of Christians quote the Scriptures about our redemption and pray that they will become real in their lives — not realizing that if they are born again in Christ, *the Word is already true in their lives*. All they have to do is claim these promises by reaching out and taking them; appropriating them for themselves.

Many will ask, "If it is so easily obtained, why don't I have it?" Well, if you had ten thousand dollars in the bank in your name, but you did not know it, you would not be any better off, either, even though the money was yours. And you would be a liar if you said the money was not yours. The same holds true with regard to spiritual things. If you don't know about the spiritual things that are

already yours, they will not do you any good. You have to make them yours — not from a legal standpoint, but from an experiential standpoint.

A favorite Scripture of mine that has helped me through the years is found in Isaiah 41:10. "*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* " This Scripture was written to Israel, but it is true concerning us today.

Even before I joined the ranks of Full Gospel people, I did not cry and beg God to help me. I opened my Bible to Scriptures such as Isaiah 41:10, fell down on my knees before God, and prayed. "Dear God, I am so thankful that You are with me. that You are my God, that You strengthen me always and uphold me with the right hand of your righteousness, and that I do not have to be afraid."

When some Christians feel they are under a cloud of gloom, they cry out, "O God, help us!" God does help, because He is a merciful God, and He will come down to our level. But it is much better for us to go up to His level for our blessings! We can feed our cloud of gloom by the wrong thinking, wrong confessions, and wrong believing. Or we can cause the cloud of gloom to lift by right thinking, right confessions, and right believing based on the Word of God.

We should all become God-minded — and the only way we can achieve this is to *think God's thoughts after Him*. In other words, think on what God says in His Word, and confess that it is true!

Chapter 2 Right and Wrong Believing

Believing with your heart, whether it is for salvation, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, healing, or some other answer to prayer, is the only way you can receive anything from God, other than through a manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But you must understand that the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate only as the *Spirit wills* and not according to our will or desire (1 Cor. 12:11). Therefore, believing with the heart is the only means which *we* can exercise to receive from God.

In Revelation 3:11, Jesus appeared to John and gave him this message for the churches in Asia Minor: "... *hold that fast which thou hast.*" We would say in modern speech, "Hold onto what you have." But the Scripture says, "Hold fast." The reason Jesus said this was because He knew that there is a power arrayed against us which would endeavor to rob us and defeat us.

Faith is like love: It is revealed only in action and word! Thus, there is no faith without confession, but faith will grow with your confession. Confession does several things for the believer. Confession gives direction and fixes landmarks for one's life. One cannot receive from God without right believing and right confession. And when we begin to realize that, we can begin to get somewhere with God.

The twelve spies sent to Canaan fixed the landmark of their lives by their confessions. Ten of them said, "We can't do it." They believed they could not; therefore, they could not. Israel accepted the majority report and subsequently **wandered forty more years** — a whole generation — **in the wilderness. But Joshua and Caleb had a different report. They believed they could conquer the Promised Land. They said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). That statement fixed**

the landmark in their lives. They alone lived long enough to enter Canaan.

Some people think God likes certain people better than others. That is not true. God does not have any "pets" or favorite children. He loves us all with the same love, and He has made the same provisions for all of us. God did not love Joshua and Caleb better than the other children of Israel, because God was willing to do for all of them what He did for Joshua and Caleb. All of Israel could have gone into Canaan's land — but they fixed the landmark of their own lives with wrong believing, which resulted in wrong confessing.

Paul used Israel as an example in exhorting us to take heed unto ourselves lest we fail because of unbelief to receive the promises of God (Heb. 3:12). Paul said the children of Israel failed to enter into the Promised Land because of their unbelief. Their believing was wrong.

One of the Greek words translated "unbelief" can also mean "failure to be persuaded." The children of Israel could not enter into the Promised Land because they could not be *persuaded* to act on God's Word.

There are two kinds of unbelief:

1. Some doubt God's Word because they do not know it. This is unbelief that is based on a lack of knowledge of the Word of God — because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. So if people do not hear and do not know the Word of God, they cannot have faith.

This kind of unbelief, then, is due to lack of having heard the Word. For example, this is why many Christians who are truly saved do not believe in divine healing. They have never heard what the Word teaches about healing. Some may say, "But they can read the Bible for themselves." Yes, they can, but they are like you and I once were; we had been taught a different way. I was affiliated with a denomination which does not believe in healing. I had been

taught from childhood that such things as healing **are not** for us today. Therefore, when I read about healing, it **would** not register in my spirit, because my mind was closed **on** the subject of divine healing, miracles, and manifestations of that nature. That's why one must have an open **mind** to God's Word. *The cure for unbelief is to study God's Word.* By studying God's Word for yourself, you can gain knowledge of what is yours "in him."

2. Another type of unbelief is failure to be persuaded. The children of Israel knew they were to take the Promised Land, because God had said He had given it to them. But they could not be persuaded to act on His Word. There are many believers who are informed about God's Word, **but** they cannot be persuaded to act on it. This is unbelief. *The cure for this particular kind of unbelief is obedience.*

Have you ever noticed that the majority of Christians are sincere, earnest, and honest, yet they are weak? That may seem to be a contradiction, but it isn't. The reason Christians are weak is because they have never dared to confess what they are in Christ. You can *know* who you are in Christ and what you have in Christ! The children of Israel *knew* what God had said belonged to them. He had said, "I will give you the land." Everything else God had said had come to pass. The children of Israel had seen God's faithfulness in everything else He had promised them, but they could not be persuaded to act on God's Word in this matter of taking the land.

Similarly, the majority of Christians today are not walking in the light they really possess concerning God's Word. Most are praying, "God, give me this," or "Do that for me." *But God is not going to do anything for them until they start acting on what they know.* When they act on the Word, they will get the answer.

When I was extremely ill and bedfast as a teenager, my family thought I was going to lose my mind because **I read**

the Bible so much. They even had one of my doctors, Dr. Robason, visit me and tell me that I should not read the Bible so much or I would lose my mind. (It would help many people if they *could* lose their natural minds and get spiritually minded instead!) But I knew that I was gaining health and strength from my study of God's Word, so I just kept on reading and studying it.

I saw that the Bible contains both Old and New Testaments, and I decided that the New Testament gave instructions for the Church Age. Therefore, I spent most of my time reading in the New Testament; especially in the Epistles, because they tell me who I am and what I have in Christ. That is the confession I like to maintain, because it is an overcoming confession, and it defeats the devil every time. Many pastors, evangelists, and lay people spend their time reading elsewhere in the Bible. (And it shows up eventually, because they never have a note of victory in their lives.)

I knew a minister who never preached on anything but prophecy. And he always preached the dark side of prophecy. Finally his people became tired of listening to him preach the negative side of prophecy all the time, so they went elsewhere to church. This preacher suffered a great deal physically before he died. Prophecy can be preached in a way that it is a blessing, or it can be preached in a way that it becomes a curse.

It is the same with preaching about demons. A preacher can show the authority Christians have over demons, and he and the people will be blessed. On the other hand, people can be very frightened by hearing wrong preaching about demons. Praise God, Christians do not have to tremble before demons or be frightened by them.

If we live in the Epistles, we will live in victory. Paul listed a number of things we would come up against in our Christian walk, but then he summed it up by saying, 'Way,

in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Notice Paul says we have room to spare, for we are more than conquerors.

When I preach about the mind, it frightens some congregations! They immediately think of Christian Science. Nevertheless, the Bible does have a great deal to say about the mind. For example, Isaiah 26:3 says, "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose MIND is stayed on thee*" The Word of God exhorts us to have the MIND of Christ (Phil. 2:5). And Philippians 4:8 says, "*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.*"

It makes a great deal of difference what one thinks. I believe that is why so many people remain sick, even after they have been prayed for by everyone in the country. They get in every healing line, yet never receive their healing. The reason why they are not healed is because they are thinking incorrectly.

In the past, I have noticed that many people seemed helped at the time I prayed for them. Some even testified that their aches and pains left for two or three days. However, I knew all the time that the sickness or pain would come back on them, because the "whine" was still in their voices. They simply kept thinking, believing, and confessing wrong until it came back on them.

Yes, it is much easier to follow what man thinks about things than to follow what God says about the situation. Sometimes it is the hardest thing in the world to get one's mind to give up what man says and go with what God says. We need to meditate and think on God's Word as well as believe it in our hearts. For example, all my doctors and all my friends said I could not possibly live through the

illnesses I had, but instead of listening to them, I chose to believe what God's Word said God had done for us in Christ. Yes, it would have been easier to listen to my friends, my doctors, and what my senses were telling me. But I chose to stand upon God's Word — and I am well and healthy today because of it.

The reason why faith is held in bondage by Christians so much is because they have not dared to simply believe and confess what God says about them! Is it because they have never read the Word of God to find out who they are? Is it because they have dwelled too much in the past history of the Bible — the Old Covenant — never realizing that we have a *New* Covenant and are *new* creatures in Christ; never realizing that God loves us and wants us to have the best of everything? Or is it because their minds are so occupied with little worldly things in life — things that will profit nothing when all is said and done?

To build a solid faith life, you need to believe and confess daily what God the Father is *to* you, what Jesus is doing *for* you now at the right hand of the Father, and what the Holy Spirit is doing *in* you. Then you will grow to the place where you will not be afraid of circumstances any longer; and you will not be afraid of any disease or any condition. Instead, you will face life fearlessly — a conqueror! In time, you will learn that Romans 8:37 is true: "*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.. .*" (But you will never *be* a conqueror until you confess that you *are* one.)

A wrong confession, of course, is a confession of defeat, failure, and the supremacy of Satan. Some people are always talking about their combat with the devil. They magnify the devil by doing this. Anytime one talks about **how** the devil is holding him in bondage, how the devil is making him sick, or how the devil is keeping him from success — it is a confession of defeat and failure.

On the other hand, when a believer confesses the good

things **of God and what God has done in his life, that** is a confession which glorifies the Lord. So let's start **living** a victorious life by making the right confession.

Once I say that God has heard my prayer, I never go back to it. I do not care what I see, what I feel, or what my senses tell me — I stay with my confession. I take hold of it with the tenacity of a bulldog, and I do not turn loose of it.

Get into God's Word and stay with it. Do what Jesus said: Hold fast to your confession, and fight the good fight of faith. Do not let the devil maneuver you out of your firm position.

I have stood my ground for certain things for days, weeks, and even months. I have not budged an inch. I have stood my ground because I knew that God had heard my prayer, and that I had the answer for the matter I had been praying about.

Few Christians realize that our confessions imprison us, and that *only the right kind of confession will set us free*. It is not only our thinking, but it is also the words we speak which build power or weakness into us. Our words snare us and hold us in captivity, or else they set us free. Our words become powerful in the lives of others. It is what we confess with our lips that really dominates our inner being.

If we *talk* about sickness, it is because we *believe* in sickness. If we *talk* about weakness and failure, it is because we *believe* in weakness and failure. We unconsciously confess what we believe: "... *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*" (Matt. 12:34).

Chapter 3 Right and Wrong Confessing

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession [confession].

— Hebrews 4:14

It is easy to say, "I believe this. Yes, this is in my heart," and make a positive confession. However, the first thing we know, we are saying something contrary — something negative — with our mouths. We must be careful to have the word of faith in our mouths instead.

It is amazing the faith that Christians have in the *wrong* things! If they would take the same faith and believe in the *right* things, they would become successful. In fact, they wouldn't need any more faith than what they already have in order to be successful!

When people confess their lack, they build a sense of lack and inadequacy into themselves, and then these deficiencies gain the ascendancy in their lives. But Jesus is our Lord, and if we hold fast to the confession of His Lordship, then Jesus will gain the ascendancy in our lives and lead us into success. *We shall never rise above our confessions!*

The confessions of a believer's lips that have grown out of faith in his heart will absolutely beat the devil in every combat. However, if a believer does not believe in his heart the confessions his lips are making, these confessions will not work. And if he confesses Satan's ability to hinder him and to keep him from success, Satan will gain dominion over him.

But Colossians 2:15 says, "*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*" If Christ defeated the devil

for us, then why does the devil do so many things against us? Why does he dominate people? Because **people** allow him to!

Many people think that God is responsible for all the things that happen to them, when actually God is not responsible for any of these things! People also think it is up to God to do something about their troubles. Actually, it is up to the individual to do something about his troubles! Why? Because after Christ's ascension, the work that He did in carrying out the great plan of redemption was turned over to the Church, and now it is up to believers to "possess the land."

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and after He had made everything, He turned it over to Adam. God told Adam that He was giving him dominion over all the works of His hands; Adam could do whatever he wanted to do with creation. Unfortunately, Adam committed high treason and sold out his dominion to the devil! Throughout the ages, mankind has been mystified by Adam's actions. People have wondered, "God knew what was going to happen. Why did God let the devil take control of the world?" People say these things because they do not know the Bible. The Bible plainly states that God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1), and that God gave the dominion over all the works of His hands to mankind (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:6). After God gave us dominion over all things, He was no longer responsible for them. Man was then responsible.

Have you ever noticed how every one of the authors of the New Testament told *us* to do something about the devil? That's why Christians should "live" in the Epistles, the letters written to the Church. Peter said, for example, ". . . *your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). I have heard believers say such things as, "The devil is after me!

Pray for me that he won't get me."

Praying like this does no good. You might as well be saying, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." Peter did not stop with his warning that the devil is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. In the next verse, verse nine, Peter continued and told *us* to do something about the devil: "*Whom resist steadfast in the faith . . .*" *We* are the ones who must do something about the devil!

We must tell the devil, "The Word of God says that Jesus defeated you. You are a defeated foe, devil. The New Testament — the New Covenant that God has established with man through the blood of Christ — says that you have no authority over me, because Jesus was, "... *made a surety of a better testament* [covenant]" (Heb. 7:22). This New Covenant says that you have no authority over me, Satan — but, rather, I have authority over you! Satan, leave me alone, because you are defeated!"

This is making the right confession — a confession that will defeat the devil. But making the wrong confession will allow Satan to have dominion over us. James said, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). James was writing to believers. Notice he did not say we were to pray to God so that God would resist the devil and cause him to flee from us. James did not say we were to telephone the pastor and have him pray that the devil would go away.

No, unless *you* resist the devil, he will not flee from you. I can resist him and he will flee from me, but I cannot resist him for you. I can pray for people in faith, but if they maintain the wrong confession, it will do no good for me to pray for them; their wrong confessions will nullify the effects of my prayers (1 Peter 5:8; James 4:7).

Some people actually know so little about the Word of God that they believe that I can just pray a prayer of faith for them, and whether they believe anything or not, they will still receive an answer. This is foolish on their part,

and it is contrary to the Word of God.

Many claim to believe the New Testament, but actually they do not. They are ignorant concerning the Word of God. They ask, "If you heal the sick as Jesus did, then why don't you heal *everybody?*" A man who says that Jesus healed all the sick is a liar, because the Word of God plainly shows that Jesus did *not* heal *all* the sick. The people's unbelief kept Jesus from doing many mighty works. For example, Mark 6:5,6 tells us that in His hometown of Nazareth, Jesus "*... could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.*"

Jesus could do no mighty work in Nazareth! Not that He *would* not. He *could not!* Why couldn't He? The Bible says it was because of the people's unbelief.

Sometimes we read in the Bible that all the people present on a particular occasion were healed. Sometimes all the sick people in one of my services have been healed. At other times, only a few have been healed. Why? *The difference is in the faith or unbelief of the individuals present.*

We see this throughout Jesus' ministry on earth. Matthew 13:58 says, "*He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*" If unbelief hindered Jesus from working while He was here on the earth, *and He ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit without measure* (John 3:34) — and if Jesus is working today through His Body, the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit in us — then people's unbelief will still hinder Jesus from working *through us.*

When Christ arose from the dead with all authority in heaven and on earth, He delegated the authority on earth to the Church, the believers. It is now up to us as believers to do something with the authority that God has given us.

It is not up to God. It is up to us to believe, and to act upon what we believe.

Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus, "*Neither give place to the devil*" (Eph. 4:27). What does this mean? It means that we should not give the devil any place in us, because the devil cannot dominate us in any way unless we allow him to do it. When we resist the devil and make the right confessions, we can maintain our dominion over the devil. But if our confessions are not in line with the Word of God, then they glorify the devil, and they fill our hearts with a spirit of fear and weakness.

We will rise above all satanic influence when we declare, "*... greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (1 John 4:4). Greater is Christ who is within us than any force that is arrayed against us. Our confession is the battleground on which we fight. And it is here that we determine whether we will succeed or fail.

Confessing doubts and fears, on the other hand, denies the grace and the ability of God. Believers should never deal with doubts and fears, because they are the devil's narcotics! Paul said, "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*" (2 Tim. 1:7). God has given us a spirit of *power, love, and a sound mind*. Praise God!

We are members of God's family. We are God's children. Because faith, love, and power belong to us, we will not confess our doubts and fears. Instead, we will confess what the Word of God says, and our faith will grow stronger and stronger as we maintain that confession.

If we were to confess weaknesses or diseases, we would be openly confessing that God's Word is not true, and that God has failed to make good His Word. But what does God say about sickness and disease? In First Peter 2:24, God's Word says, "*... by whose [Christ's] stripes ye were healed*" Matthew wrote, "*That it might be fulfilled which was*

spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17).

T. L. Osborn states in *Healing the Sick*, "Confessing pains, aches, and diseases is like signing for a package that the Express Company has delivered. Satan then has the RECEIPT — your confession — from you, showing that YOU HAVE ACCEPTED his package. Do not accept anything sent by the devil." When you confess weakness or disease, instead of confessing that Jesus bore all sicknesses and diseases and put them away, you are confessing that you still have them.

In the early years of my life, I had two serious, organic heart problems. The doctor said that either of them could cause my death. My body was almost totally paralyzed. I was so anemic, my blood was pale orange in color.

There was no chance of my ever getting well except through the mercy of God. But I began to read my Grandmother Drake's old Methodist Bible. (I call it a "Methodist" Bible because she had been saved years before during a Methodist campmeeting in Tennessee.)

I found out that the Word of God had something to say about the sickness and disease I had: "... *by whose stripes ye were healed*" (1 Peter 2:24). But there I was, suffering two or three heart attacks a day.

Don't think for a minute that I had not prayed. In fact, I had prayed practically all night long many nights. I had prayed for hours and hours. I am not minimizing prayer, but it takes more than prayer to get the job done in a case like this. It takes *believing prayer!* The trouble with many Christians is that they do a lot of praying without any believing — or acting on what they believe — and it does not accomplish anything.

There is no place in the Bible where Jesus or anyone else said that prayer alone would get the job done. But Jesus did say, "... *when ye pray, believe that ye receive*

them, and ye shall have them " (Mark 11:24). Jesus also said, "*... all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive*" (Matt. 21:22).

Christians will say, "I'll tell you, I really believe in prayer." That doesn't mean a thing in the world. You can go to Tibet and find a religion older than Christianity whose adherents also believe in prayer. The people pray constantly. Their priests turn a prayer wheel constantly.

Again, I want to emphasize that I am *not* saying we should stop praying! I am simply saying that prayer is not all there is to it. If you believe what the Word says, then you must *act* on the Word when you pray.

Pray, forget about it, and begin to conduct yourself as if the answer came the minute you prayed! It takes more than prayer. It takes believing the Word and acting on it.

I was beyond all human help as a bedfast teenager. God knows the hours I spent in prayer, yet I had made no progress at all in receiving my healing. I decided something was wrong somewhere — and I knew it couldn't be on God's side. I knew I had to make whatever change was necessary, because God never changes.

So I asked, "Lord, what is wrong? Something is wrong somewhere. I am not making contact with You. I am not receiving what I am praying for." God showed me what it was by His Spirit through the Word. / *had to believe I was healed!*

My natural mind really rebelled against that. It *shouted* against it! (You can make as much noise with your mind as you can with your hands or feet.)

Even though my mind kept saying, "You are crazy. You are crazy," I said, "No, I see it. I see it exactly. Here is why I have not received my healing: I am still confessing I have my heart trouble. I am still confessing I am paralyzed. I can feel how my heart acts, so I am still confessing that I am sick. But God's Word says / *am*

healed! God's Word says that He did something with the sickness and disease. I am holding onto the sickness by confessing it, and as long as I hold onto it, I am going to have it. I have to turn loose of it. I have to start confessing that what God's Word says is so. I have been accepting what my five senses — seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting — tell me instead of the testimony of God's Word. What I must do now is accept the testimony of God's Word instead of my senses — because God's Word says that I am healed!"

I just kept fighting the devil like this. Friends, don't think you won't have a fight when you make a confession like that. You won't rest on a flowery bed of ease. Oh, no! God did not say you would. He said we were to "*Fight the good fight of faith ...*" (1 Tim. 6:12). He said we were to "*... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). He said we were to "*... hold that fast which thou hast ...*" (Rev. 3:11). And He said we were to resist the devil "*stedfast in the faith*" (1 Peter 5:9). All such terms as these denote that some strenuous effort needs to be put forth on our part. "*For we WRESTLE not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*"¹¹ (Eph. 6:12).

Wrestling denotes strenuous effort put forth. This Scripture doesn't mean strenuous *physical* effort, such as wrestling with a man; it means wrestling against spiritual forces in the spirit realm. It's *spiritual* wrestling. The verses we have just read refer to the fact that we must fight — wrestle — resist — put forth an effort — against evil powers in the spiritual realm.

So you must hold fast to your confession. Do not hold it loosely or halfheartedly, but hold fast to it. Hold fast to your confession, as I held to mine. I said, "No, devil, the Bible says I am healed." And that is exactly what you

will have to do to get what you need from God.

I stopped holding onto the confession of my senses, and I held onto what God's Word said instead. That's what put me over, and it will put you over too.

Let's get accustomed to acting on the Word. The Word will heal you, if you put it into practice! God's Word says, "*He sent his word, and healed them . . .*" (Ps. 107:20).

Proverbs 4:20-22 says, "*My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*"

Suppose you went to a doctor who gave you a prescription. You had it filled, and then you placed the medicine on the shelf after you got home. You just sat there and looked at it, but you wouldn't take it. It certainly wouldn't help you, and you couldn't expect it to. You would have to act on the doctor's orders and take the medicine. Not only that, but in order for it to work correctly, you would have to take it according to his directions.

Get *soaked* with the Word of God until you are so Word-conscious that you think about the Word continually. While others are talking about everything else, you should be talking about what the Word says. For example, the Word says that God will meet your every need. God's Word says that He has healed you. Your right confession will become a reality, and then you will get whatever you need from God. Act on God's Word today!