

The Battle With Self
by Arch Chater

Friends, I quote the words of the Psalmist so familiar to most of us, "Thy Word is a light unto my feet and a lamp unto my path." Ps 119:105. The Word of God illuminates the way and those that follow it need not stumble even though the way is beset with evil. The Psalmist also said, "Lead me O Lord, in thy righteousness. Make thy way straight before my face. Ps 5:8. And the Lord said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jer 31:5

Many times Friends, we need to be drawn, loving drawn back on course where there is light and shown the way to go for our God is a loving God and a protective God. He is very concerned for our welfare as a mother is concerned that her child isn't injured and it is this love that prompts the mother to warn the child against taking a dangerous course.

1 John 5:3

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

Paul agrees that the law is not grievous.

Rom 7:22

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:"

But there is a problem. He can't keep it.

Rom 7:19

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

He asks, "Why can't I keep it? He knows he can't keep it.

Rom 7:24

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Many people experience Paul's dilemma as they begin their walk with Jesus. The explicit commands and counsels of God to His people through His Word are not too difficult to understand and they are given to lead His people to attain to life eternal. What is it that makes the victorious Christian life difficult? And how can we be brought back onto a right course? That Friends is the message from God's Word that I wish to present this morning.

Consider the simple words to "come Out!" Even a child can understand what these words mean and they don't mean, "stay in" or "loiter or linger therein." Come out means exactly what God says. LEAVE – and God has sent His people a very important message when He said "come out of her my people." Come out of the fallen churches, Come out of Spiritual Babylon with her errors apostasies and traditions for she has become the habitation of devils (modern spiritualism) and the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird (Rev 18:20).

Here John the Revelator is using metaphors to describe the utter perversions and apostasy of Spiritual Babylon of today. God says "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins; that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev 18:4) Leave - do not loiter or look back. The message and warning could not be plainer. "Come Out" leaves not a possibility for misunderstanding of the words and the counsel given by God. Who would dare do as Lot's wife did, who loitered and was reluctant to leave Sodom behind her, her worldly possessions and the city of vice, who looked back in disobedience only to be turned to a pillar of salt and be lost. Friends, the punishment for those who know and remain and do not come out of Spiritual Babylon and those who remain attached and do not come out from the world and its pleasures and vices, will receive of the plagues of Rev 18:4.

The two warnings to come out of Babylon and Come out of the world are tied together. Very often when we are considering the messages of the 3 angels and especially the call to come out of Babylon the inclination is to focus our attention mainly on the truths and aspects of scripture relative to worship and doctrinal beliefs and practices. The counsel to "Come out of her my people" conveys to many the warning that we are not to partake of the false teachings, errors and worship practices of the fallen churches. However true this is, there is an aspect of warning in the counsel to "Come Out" which is not receiving the level of attention and commitment in the lives of many of us. "Come out from among them and be separate" (2 Cor 6:17) also means to come out from the world. This command is embodied in the counsel to "Come Out." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4) and "And be not conformed to this world" (Rom.12.2).

Friends, God's people are to separate themselves, not only from Spiritual Babylon and her false teachings, but also to come out from the world and her practices and be separate. On their return from ancient Babylon, the Jews were charged, they were instructed, not to carry back with them, anything, anything relating to pagan idolatry. "Come out and be separate." Likewise, friends, Spiritual Israel, of which we form a part, is charged with the same counsel. "Touch not the unclean thing" is the counsel given in 2 Cor 6:17.

"Come out from among them and be separate" means separation not only in the way that we worship, but separate from the world and allied to the **One True God** that we know and worship; separate from the world in holding to the doctrinal beliefs of the founders of the true church and separate from the world in every aspect and detail of our lives that should draw us away from living the truth of God's Word.

When Christ abides in our hearts through the renewing of our mind, the pleasures of the world that we formerly enjoyed lose their attraction. Our inclination then tends toward desiring spiritual communion with Christ. It then follows that we would guard the avenues of the soul that the devil previously accessed and gaining entry to our minds. Then we would be guarded in relation to what we do, what we say, what we watch, what we allow ourselves to hear, who we choose to associate with and there is much more. In every aspect of our lives we would then desire to be separate from the world and to be joined to Christ.

As God's chosen people we are to be a peculiar people. We have our wonderful Saviour who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Will we not submit our lives then to Him and allow Him to fulfill His desire for us to become renewed in spirit and mind? How separate and distinct from the world are you? How separate am I? Do we qualify for the title of being God's peculiar people, those on whom God will place a mark, His seal? Do we think that God will receive honour and acknowledge a people so mixed-up with the world that they differ from the world only in the name they carry, whether it be Seventh-day Adventists or any other denomination?

The Lord says, "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14). God's people cannot mingle with worldlings and partake of their spirit and follow their example and at the same time, be children of God. Those that would be friends of the world are the enemies of God (James 4:4) and who really wants to be God's enemy? "

I'll read an extract from P&P where the prophet of the Lord to the church has much to say on this matter.

Patriarchs and Prophets, 1890 p 458

God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise. The warnings given to the Hebrews against assimilating with the heathen were not more direct or explicit than are those forbidding Christians to conform to the spirit and customs of the ungodly. Christ speaks to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4. The followers of Christ are to separate themselves from sinners, choosing their society only when there is opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of those who exert an influence to draw us away from God. While we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," we are to shun temptation, so far as possible."

So, Friends, there are lessons to be learnt from history. What does history tell us? On the banks of the Jordan River, on the borders of their destination, the promised land, the Hebrews associated themselves with the people of the world, with idolaters, the Midianites and joined in their festivities and transgressed God's laws, bringing God's judgments down upon them. Twenty-three thousand unfaithful Israelites paid the price and lost their lives. The Hebrews involved themselves in idol worship – and an idol doesn't have to be a stone image for one to be involved in idol worship. Hundreds of thousands of people to day worship idols, in one form or another, with seemingly uncontrollable passion. The rock music, the entertainers, sporting events and sporting identities, gambling, dancing, drugs, horse-racing and cherished false doctrines. All are idols to those involved with them and similar things of this world.

The Hebrews on the borders of Canaan, became involved in worldly music of the time, idol worship, dancing, alcoholic drinking, feasting, bingeing, nakedness and bodily exposure, illicit sex and prostitution, - all things of the world that brought about their downfall and are in evidence in the lives of many today. I'll read some extracts from P&P, p 454 relating to the Israelites and their worldly involvements in which brought about their downfall, so close to the Promised Land.

"They ventured upon the forbidden ground, and were entangled in the snare of Satan. Beguiled with music and dancing, united in mirth and feasting, and indulgence in wine where their senses became clouded and broke down the barriers of self-control; where they offered sacrifices upon heathen altars and participated in the most degrading rites." As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul... he employs the same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment." By temptation through the lust of the flesh, Satan will endeavour to lead to the violation of the other commandments.

P&P p 458

"So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin."

P&P p 459

"Satan is using every means to make crime and debasing vice popular. We cannot walk the streets of our cities without encountering glaring notices of crime presented in some novel, or to be acted at some theater (or TV). The mind is educated to familiarity with sin. The course pursued by the base and vile is kept before the people in the periodicals of the day (newspapers, magazines, books), and everything that can excite passion is brought before them in exciting stories (movies, videos). They hear and read so much of debasing crime that the once tender conscience, which would have recoiled with horror from such scenes, becomes hardened, and they dwell upon these things with greedy interest."

Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul."

Friends the counsels of the wise man says, "Keep your heart with all diligence for our of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23. Keep the mind surrendered to God for purity of the mind is the first requisite for a sinless life.

1 John 2:16 and John 8:44

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” and “is of your father the devil.”

Friends, we are warned against submitting to the cravings of the flesh, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, or as Paul describes it, the carnal mind, with its' inherent and cultivated desires to sin. We are admonished to guard against all strong desires for indulgence, the desire for material possessions and also against the desire for sensual satisfaction. All these things are contrary to God's character, which is unselfish love.

We need to define selfishness. It is the very character of Satan and is the root of all sinful desires. It is self-centredness and the exact opposite of the love of God. Christ gave Himself to others and for others to benefit them. Satan takes from others to benefit himself. Christ serves others at His own expense. Satan serves himself at the expense of others.

What is the character of God? It is revealed in 1 Cor 13.

“Love seeketh not its own.” In other words, love is unselfish.

Now compare the examples of selfishness with that standard of love.

The prophet of the Lord, Sister White, defines the character or spirit of Satan in the following quote as self-seeking:

Advent Review and Sabbath Herald

5 July 1887, par 1

“A spirit to work plans for our own selfish interest, so as to grasp a little gain, or to labor to show a superiority or rivalry, is an offense to God. “

How are the following - examples of selfishness?”

- Gossip (discuss) – endeavouring to tare down another to make self appear righteous;
- Or what about smoking? (discuss) – no concern for the others – poisoned air, burden health system, increased resources, emotional pain of others, self first again;
- Watching immoral videos, pornography, reading immoral books? (discuss); - self is receiving gratification from another's degradation; stealing from God also by polluting the temple of God
- Criticism and sarcasm? (discuss)

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p 189

Workers with God

“Self will ever cherish a high estimate of self. As men lose their first love, they do not keep the commandments of God, and then they begin to criticize one another. This spirit will constantly be striving for the mastery to the close of time.... This is not the work of the Holy Spirit; a power from beneath is working in the chambers of the mind and in the soul temple to place his attributes where the attributes of Christ should be.”

All these sins are examples in one form or another of selfishness. Like the root of the tree of selfishness, (Satan's character) the branches display the fruit in all its forms.

In contrast to the tree of Satan, is the tree of Christ's character. Its root of selflessness – sole concern for others - is displayed in all its branches, as displayed on the contrasting two trees and in the words from:

Matthew 7:12

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

Isaiah 58:6, 7

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? “

Some might say I find it difficult to avoid and overcome the allurements and temptations of the world. There is only one way and that is through our petition to God, as was that of David when he said in Psalm 51:10:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” and having been in earnest in our prayers and with full acceptance of the heavenly gift of His holy spirit, we are to go on in faith unto character perfection, kept by the power of God unto salvation (1 Peter 1:5). We have work to do to resist temptation. We must guard well the avenues of our souls and withdraw ourselves from the world and its attachments and the allurements of idols in all forms, its vice and its corruption. The evils that exist today are little different from those that caused the Israelites to apostatise at the borders of the Promised Land to the loss of 23 thousand lives.

Friends, God is not mocked.

Gal 6: 7,8

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh (makes a selfish decision) shall of the flesh (selfish desires) reap corruption (reap death); but he that soweth to the Spirit (accepts God's unselfish will) shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Phil 4:8

“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.”

Friends to have our minds fixed on pure and holy things is an achievement only possible through prayer, watchfulness, the study of God's word and the abiding influence of the holy spirit of Christ. Paul instructs us how to withstand the attacks of the devil, which are designed to destroy us through the weaknesses in our flesh. We need to be covered, with the armour of the spirit of God.

Eph 6:11-12

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. “

MSR # 33 (1911)

“He who sent a legion to torture one human being cannot be repulsed by human wisdom or power alone.”

The heart, the mind must be renewed by divine grace or in vain do we seek for purity of life and we fight a losing battle. So how is this achieved? (Discuss)

Please open your Bibles to find the answer in Romans 12:2.

Romans 12: 2

“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.”

Let none think that it is impossible for that purity of life to be achieved in fallen, human flesh. Just as Christ, in His humanity overcame through the indwelling mind of His Father, so we too might overcome with that same divine power, the Divine Mind of Christ, dwelling in us. It is our privilege to be filled with that same power - the divine mind - at conversion when we surrender ourselves to Christ.

Paul tells us in Col 2:9 that the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Jesus Christ. Everything needful for each one of us dwells in Jesus Christ, having come from the Father.

Col 2:9

“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Friends that divine fullness can come to every man and woman by the indwelling of Christ in the heart.

Let us read Ephesians 3:17-20

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”

All the divine power which Christ had dwelling in Him, we might have in us by His grace, for Jesus will freely bestow it upon us. He is able and he is anxious to give us strength and capacity as Scripture promises in verse 20 where it is written that He Jesus is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.” The life of

Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God, we might have too (paraphrase of 5 Bible Commentary, 1124 (1896).

2 Cor 5:21

“For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us who knew no sin that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Friends, more could not have been done for us, than has been done. When we desire to walk with Jesus and feel our weakness and need and ask our Lord in faith, He will supply the power, the peace and the joy.

It might be considered by some that the thrust of this message is too negative. The history of the Israelites and their errors are recorded and given as lessons that we do not also succumb to the same errors. There is much on the positive side that we can be thankful for and be joyful about. And what is joy? (1 John 1:4) It is a hope and assurance of salvation and eternal life, the natural result of fellowship with Christ. It is the feeling one has when living a life void of any offence toward God, then joy and peace are our experience.

What we enjoy is determined by which spirit controls our minds. Firstly we need to ask for the new heart, before we experience the joy.

Psalms 51:10

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

Then with the new mind of selflessness (sole concern for others) we find joy in serving others and we might be able to say, as did the Psalmist,

Psalms 40:8

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

There is a wonderful hope and power in the promise of Col 1:27 - “Christ in you, the hope of glory;” - a short promise, but a magnificent expanse of assurance and hope.

There is only one choice worth making, friends. It is the acceptance of Jesus Christ our Saviour; to accept what He has done for us and what He is currently doing, and to respond to His plea to come out of Babylon and to come out from the world and be separate and as Paul is urging us in Romans 12:2, try, taste and prove that the Lord is good.

Phil 4:7

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

We have the love of Christ and the joy of knowing He will never leave us nor forsake us. Beyond these things, the joy is experienced when Christ brings into us, the new divine mind.

Col 1:27

“Christ is you, the hope of glory.”

Quality	Definition	Unconverted Humanity	Converted Humanity	Christ
Enmity (hostility, hatred)	Awareness of the wrongfulness and rightfulness of desires, a resistance to evil	Rom.8.7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed	Yes, by partaking of the divine nature	Yes, the divine nature is enmity against sin
Sinful Flesh	Mind and body inherited at birth, having not yet committed sin, but having weaknesses to sin.	Born with sinful flesh and unrenewed mind	Born with sinful flesh, but is given a new mind at conversion	Born with sinful flesh ie. body, but not developed into carnal mind which only exists when a being commits actual sin
Carnal Mind	Mind inherited from birth, which in a conscious decision choose and committed sin;	Yes	Yes	No
Mind	Character and thoughts	Yes, the mind of Satan	Yes, the mind of Christ	Yes, His Father's mind
Mind of the Spirit	Thoughts and character of God			
Conscience	Christ in you, Holy Spirit, Mind of Christ; awareness of choice			
Lust of the Flesh	Sinful thoughts that are cherished in the mind			
Lust of the Eyes	Coveting			
Pride of Life	Possessions			

Humanity – born with sinful flesh, with fallen human mind that is drawn to self pleasing

Christ – in the womb of Mary inherited sinful flesh (body that is drawn to self-pleasing, however at birth was filled with the Father's Divine Mind – fallen human body in-filled with the Divine Mind of the Father. Christ's human mind was that of a born-again Christian (EJ Waggoner's description). The hereditary tendencies to self-pleasing in the body, though still present were continually submitted to the Divine Mind of His Father.

Converted humanity – born with sinful flesh (a mind that naturally tends to serve self). Being born without the Divine Mind makes it impossible that humanity won't sin. Eventually a selfish act or thought is committed making the human being a sinner. The mind that at birth, with its tendency toward serving self, inevitably sins and becomes a carnal mind. The drawing of the sinful flesh becomes more difficult to resist since selfishness is strengthened through practice. At conversion, the carnal mind is renewed by the (self-less) Divine Mind. The original mind with tendencies to sin can still war against the body, creating pressure and discomfort, but power is available to resist those temptations and to live the perfect life of Christ.

Romans 7:24, 25

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

HUMANITY BEFORE SIN - ADAM head of human race

Adam– created in the image of God and filled with the Divine Mind (mind that is drawn to selflessness –pleasing others)

HUMANITY AFTER SIN

Humanity – born with sinful flesh, with fallen human mind that is drawn to pleasing self - devoid of Divine Mind

CHRIST – THE SECOND ADAM

Humanity – born with sinful flesh, (human body that is drawn to pleasing self) but filled with the Divine Mind of His Father