

# CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF RUTH

## **Week Twelve** **Taking the Way of Life** **in the Lord's Recovery**

Hymns: E505 (E733)

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1:16-17, 20-21; 2:10-16; 3:1, 7-13; 4:9-15;  
Matt. 7:13-14

## OUTLINE

### §Day 1 & Day 2

- I. **The three books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth present a clear picture of the two aspects of God's move: His move in His economical Spirit, the Spirit of power, and His move in His essential Spirit, the Spirit of life—Judg. 13:25; 14:6; John 20:22; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:2:**
  - A. **With Joshua, Caleb, and all the judges we see the move of God in power, illustrated by Samson as one who moved in the Spirit of power but not in the Spirit of life—Judg. 14:6.**
  - B. **In contrast, the book of Ruth is a book of life; the purpose of this book is not to tell us anything about power but to reveal the things of life to the uttermost, using Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz as examples—1:16-17, 20-21; 2:10-16; 3:1, 7-13; 4:9-15.**
  - C. **In the Lord's recovery we should not take the way of the judges to be powerful and to do a great work; if we take the way of power instead of the way of life, whatever we accomplish will mean nothing.**
  - D. **It is crucial for us to see that only life can bring forth Christ—Luke 1:35:**
    1. **Only life can bring God into humanity, produce Christ, minister Christ, and supply the entire human race with Christ—Matt. 1:18,**

**20-21.**

**2. This was accomplished by Ruth and Boaz, persons of life, who took the way of life.**

**II. According to the divine and eternal nature of the life of God, God's life is the unique life; only the life of God can be counted as life—John 1:4; 10:10b; 11:25; 14:6:**

**A. Life is mysterious, for life is God Himself—1:1, 14; 5:26; Eph. 4:18:**

**1. The divine life may be considered the first and the basic attribute of God—v. 18; John 5:26; 1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:2.**

**2. Life is the content of God and the flowing out of God; God's content is God's being, and God's flowing out is the impartation of Himself as life to us—Eph. 4:18; Rev. 22:1.**

**3. Life is Christ, and life is Christ living in us and lived out from us—John 14:6; Col. 3:4; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a.**

**4. Life is the Holy Spirit—John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6.**

**5. Life is the processed and consummated Triune God dispensed into us and living in us—John 1:14; 7:37-39; 20:22; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11.**

**B. God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and according to His likeness was that man would receive Him as life so that man might become a man of life, a God-man, expressing God in His attributes—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.**

### **§Day 3**

**III. We need to know the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and turn absolutely from this tree to the tree of life—vv. 9, 16-17:**

**A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God in Christ to dispense Himself into His chosen people as life in the form of food—v. 9.**

**B. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life—John 1:1, 4, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5:**

1. **Speaking of Christ, John 1:4 says, “In Him was life”; this refers to the life signified by the tree of life.**
  2. **The life portrayed in Genesis 2 is the life incarnated in Christ—1 John 5:11-12; John 1:1, 4, 14.**
  3. **If we put together John 1:4 and 15:5, we will realize that Christ, who Himself is life and also a vine tree, is the tree of life.**
- C. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death to man—Heb. 2:14:**
1. **The tree of the knowledge of good and evil also signifies all things apart from God.**
  2. **Anything that is not God Himself, including good things and even scriptural and religious things, can be utilized by Satan, the subtle one, to bring death into the church—Matt. 16:18; Prov. 16:25; 18:21.**
- D. In John 4, 8, 9, and 11 are four cases that illustrate the principle of life versus good and evil:**
1. **We should care not for good and evil but for life—4:10-14, 20-21, 23-24; 8:3-9; 9:1-3; 11:20-27.**
  2. **The best way to discern a matter is to discern according to life or death, not according to right and wrong, good and evil—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 11:3.**

## §Day 4

### IV. Christ is our life—Col. 3:4:

- A. The life of God is the life of Christ, and the life of Christ has become our life—v. 4; John 5:26:**
1. **For Christ to be our life means that He is subjective to us to the uttermost—1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11.**
  2. **It is impossible to separate a person from the life of that person, for a person’s life is the person himself; thus, to say that Christ is our life means that Christ has become us and that we have one life and living with Him—John 14:6a; Phil. 1:21a.**
- B. The truth that Christ is our life is a strong indication that we**

are to take Him as life and live Him in our daily life—Col. 3:4; John 6:57:

1. **Christ must be our life in a practical and experiential way; day by day we need to be saved in His life—Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 5:10.**
2. **The new man is the spontaneous issue of our taking Christ as our life and living Him—Col. 3:3-4, 10-11.**

**V. There are two possible ways of our life and work before God—the way that leads to life and the way that leads to destruction—Matt. 7:13-14:**

**A. In order to take the way that leads to life, we need to enter in through the narrow gate and then walk on the constricted way—vv. 13-14:**

1. **The narrow gate deals not only with outward conduct but also with inward motive.**
2. **The old man, the self, the flesh, the human concept, and the world with its glory are all excluded; only that which corresponds with God's will can enter in—v. 21; 12:50.**
3. **First, we need to enter in through the narrow gate and then walk on the constricted way, a way that is lifelong and leads to life—7:14.**
4. **The word life in Matthew 7:14 refers to the ever-blessed condition of the kingdom, which is filled with the eternal life of God; this life is in the reality of the kingdom today and will be in the manifestation of the kingdom in the coming age—19:29; Luke 18:30.**

**B. The broad way is according to the worldly systems, satisfying the natural tastes, to get the crowd, to maintain a career of man, and to achieve man's enterprise; the destruction to which the broad way leads refers not to the perishing of a person but to the destruction of a person's deeds and works—1 Cor. 3:15; Matt. 13:31-33; Rev. 2:13, 20; 17:4-5.**

**C. The way of the Lord's recovery is the way of life that leads to a living reward in life in the manifestation of the kingdom of the**

heavens in the coming age—Psa. 16:11; Jer. 21:8; Matt. 19:29; Luke 18:30; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 15:58.

## §Day 5

**VI. We need to live by the sense of life—the feeling, the consciousness, of the divine life within us—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19:**

- A. The source of the sense of life is the divine life, the law of life, the Holy Spirit, Christ abiding in us, and God operating in us—Rom. 8:2, 10-11; Phil. 2:13.
- B. The divine life is the highest life, with the richest, strongest, and keenest feeling; this feeling is the sense of life—Eph. 4:18.
- C. The sense of life guides us, governs us, controls us, and directs us, causing us to know whether we are living in the divine life or in the natural life and whether we are living in the flesh or in the spirit—Rom. 8:6.

**VII. We need to be victorious over the attack of death upon the church and build up the Body of Christ in the resurrection life of Christ—Matt. 16:18; John 11:25; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16:**

- A. By the resurrection life of Christ in our spirit, we can be victorious over the attack of death upon the church—Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:24; 2 Tim. 1:10:
  - 1. From Eden onward, God's controversy with Satan has been on the issue of death and life—Rom. 8:6, 10-11; Heb. 2:15.
  - 2. Matthew 16:18 shows us from what source the attack upon the church will come—"the gates of Hades," that is, death; Satan's special object is to spread death within the church, and his greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death—Rev. 2:8, 10-11.
- B. We should be exercised in spirit to build up the Body of Christ in the resurrection life of Christ—Eph. 2:6, 21-22; 4:16; Rev. 1:18; 2:8; Phil. 3:10:

- 1. The nature of the church as the Body of Christ is resurrection, and the reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit—John 11:25; Acts 2:24; Eph. 1:19-23; 1 Cor. 15:45b.**
- 2. When we live by the divine life within us, we are living a life in resurrection for the building up of the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 3:15.**

## §Day 6

### **VIII. “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers”—1 John 3:14a:**

- A. Death is of the devil, God’s enemy, Satan, signified by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which brings death—Gen. 2:9, 17.**
- B. Life is of God, the source of life, signified by the tree of life, which issues in life—vv. 9, 16-17.**
- C. Death and life are not only of two sources, Satan and God; they are also two essences, two elements, and two spheres—John 5:24.**
- D. To pass out of death into life is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of life; this took place at the time of our regeneration—1 John 3:14a; John 3:3, 5, 15.**
- E. We know—have the inner consciousness—that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers; love (the love of God) toward the brothers is strong evidence of this—1 John 3:14a:**
  - 1. Faith in the Lord is the way for us to pass out of death into life; love toward the brothers is the evidence that we have passed out of death into life—John 5:24; 1 John 3:14a.**
  - 2. To have faith is to receive the eternal life; to love is to live by the eternal life and express it—John 3:15, 36; 1 John 3:11, 14-18; 4:7-12, 16, 19-21.**

## WEEK 12 — DAY 1

### Morning Nourishment

**Judg. 13:25 And the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him...**

**Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

**Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.**

The three books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth present a clear picture of the two aspects of God's move: His move in His economical Spirit, the Spirit of power, and His move in His essential Spirit, the Spirit of life.

In Joshua and Judges it is difficult to see God's move in life. With Joshua, Caleb, and all the judges we see the move of God in power. Samson is a typical illustration of this. He was powerful in his life and even more powerful in his death, which was a suicide. We see nothing of life in him. That he was a Nazarite indicates that he submitted himself under God's headship, not cutting his hair, eating unclean food, or drinking wine (Judg. 13:5-7). These may seem to be aspects of life, but they are actually only according to the divine regulation.... Samson had power by taking God as his Head, which is according to regulation, not according to life. Because he had nothing of life, he did not know how to restrain the lust in his flesh.... The matter of sex was a big stumbling block to Samson. He had no restriction in his indulgence and indulged himself wherever he went. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, p. 71)

### Today's Reading

Samson was the last judge in the book of Judges. Being last indicates the conclusion and consummation. The entire situation of the judges consummated in power without life. This is deplorable. It is difficult to explain how a Nazarite under God's headship, one who was full of

submission in being separated for and unto God and full of the divine power, could also be full of the indulgence of lust. Everywhere and with everyone he was powerful and at the same time fleshly in his fornication.... Although some of the Pentecostal preachers whom I saw in China were powerful, many were also reckless, without regulation, restraint, or control. [Some] persons preached the true, living God and Christ as the Son of God becoming a man to be our Savior. Their preaching was fundamental and right, but they were living in fornication. These preachers may be considered today's Samsons. Judges tells us that the Spirit of Jehovah moved Samson (13:25), and the other judges likewise were powerful...Although they were powerful, they too indulged their lust without shame, care, or restriction.

After the dark and black situation in Judges, there is the short book of Ruth, which is bright, white, and shining. Ruth deals with life, not power. Although Elimelech did not commit sin, he was chastised by God for leaving the Holy Land and moving to Moab, because by doing so, he did not live a life according to God's eternal economy...God chastised him and his sons, leaving his wife and two daughters-in-law as widows without children (Ruth 1:1-5). Naomi did not rebel against God but instead acknowledged Him as the One who stripped her of her husband and sons (vv. 20-21).

Only life can maintain the lineage to bring God into humanity for the ministering of Christ as the supply to the entire human race. Neither Samson nor Gideon nor the other judges were qualified to do this. In the past I encouraged the saints to gain the increase, but I did not intend that anyone do it as a Samson or a Gideon by not caring for life. It would be better not to have the increase, to seem to be powerless and without the success of a work, yet to be part of the lineage that brings Christ from eternity into time. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, pp. 71-74)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1955, vol. 4, "Further Talks on the Knowledge of Life," chs. 1-2, 4, 7, 10; CWWL, 1963, vol. 1, "The Enjoyment of Christ for His Increase," ch. 1

## WEEK 12 — DAY 2

### Morning Nourishment

**Ruth 1:16 But Ruth said,...Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you dwell, I will dwell; and your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.**

**Matt. 1:18 Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way: His mother, Mary, after she had been engaged to Joseph, before they came together, was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.**

Before going to Moab, Elimelech sold all his property. This left Naomi, a widow with two widowed daughters-in-law, empty-handed, not having any portion of land. As a godly woman, she returned to the Holy Land, that is, to the rest in God's economy, to participate again in the enjoyment of the God-promised land and to become related to Christ's genealogy. Although her returning was a great matter, it was not accomplished by power. Naomi believed in God, feared God, and regarded God, but she was simply like a beggar. For this reason Ruth, her daughter-in-law, went gleaning.... Ruth was a poor beggar, depending upon others' mercy. To be sure, there was no power in this. Nevertheless, Ruth was very much in the line of life. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, p. 73)

### Today's Reading

Naomi told Ruth that she had no more capacity to produce a husband to redeem her and bring forth a descendant of Elimelech, and she advised Ruth to return to her own parents. Ruth's reply was full of life. She told Naomi that she would return with her in poverty [cf. Ruth 1:16]...What Ruth did was in the spirit of the New Testament believers. The Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to forsake parents, children, relatives, houses, and all things and come to Him empty-handed (Matt. 19:29; Luke 14:26).

Besides Naomi and Ruth, the book of Ruth also has Boaz. The two widows were poor, and Boaz was rich, but all three were persons fully in

life. Boaz altogether restrained, constrained, and controlled his lust. Naomi instructed Ruth, “Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes; and go down to the threshing floor. But do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. And when he lies down, notice the place where he lies, and go and uncover his feet, and lie down. And he will tell you what you should do” (3:3-4). Without the proper restriction and control, no man could endure such a temptation. Upon waking up at midnight, Boaz found a woman lying at his feet (v. 8). Ruth said to him, “I am Ruth, your female servant. Spread your cloak over your female servant, for you are a kinsman” (v. 9). Boaz was not moved in his lust but instead addressed her as “daughter” (vv. 10-11), and he acknowledged that as her kinsman, and according to God’s ordinance, he had not only the right but also the responsibility to redeem the possession that was her father-in-law’s and her husband’s. Moreover, he agreed to marry her. This man had the highest standard of life.

Today in the Lord’s recovery we do not take the way of the judges to be powerful and to do a great work....None of the judges became a forefather of Christ.... Rather, it was one couple, Ruth and Boaz, who did this (Matt. 1:5). They did not fight a war or exercise power. Although Boaz was rich, he was still a farmer who slept with the sheaves of grain in the field during harvest. Even when a young woman offered herself to him, he told her, “My daughter,...there is a kinsman closer than I. Stay for the night; and in the morning if he will do the kinsman’s duty, fine; let him do it. But if he is not willing to do the kinsman’s duty for you, I will do it for you, as Jehovah lives. Lie down until morning” (Ruth 3:11-13). Boaz knew that if he did not care for the closer kinsman, the holy society of God would condemn Ruth for overstepping. This shows how lawful Boaz was. This was not related to power; it was altogether based on life. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, pp. 73-74)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ruth, msg. 2,5,8; CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, “The Knowledge of Life,” chs. 1-2, 5

## WEEK 12 — DAY 3

### Morning Nourishment

**2 Cor. 11:3** But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

**Rom. 8:6** For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

[In 2 Corinthians 11:3] the apostle Paul indicates that the teachings of the Judaizers can be compared to the deceitful word spoken by the serpent to Eve in Genesis 3. In other words, Paul likens the activities of the Judaizers to the serpent's work on Eve. From reading Genesis 3 we know that the serpent distracted Eve from the enjoyment of the tree of life. The way he turned her away from the enjoyment of the tree of life was to point her to another tree, to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which issues in death.

The tree of life is simple. With this tree, there is just one element, and that element is life. The tree of life issues in life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on the contrary, is complicated and also complicating. With this tree, we have good, evil, knowledge, and death.

The Bible as a whole is a development of these two trees. The tree of life signifies God in Christ as the Spirit to be life to us. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as death. Satan is the power of death. The tree of knowledge of good and evil signifying Satan as death includes knowledge, good, and evil. The serpent distracted Eve from the tree of life by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with its complications. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 465-466)

### Today's Reading

The proper understanding of death is that it denotes separation from the enjoyment of God. This means that if we do not have the enjoyment of God, we are in death. Likewise, if we are separated from the enjoyment of

God, we shall die.... In Romans 8:6 death is separation from the enjoyment of God. Life is the opposite, for it is the enjoyment of God. When we have the enjoyment of God, there is no separation between us and God, we are in life, and life operates in us.

In distracting the believers from the tree of life, Satan seeks to separate us from the enjoyment of God as our life. For centuries the subtle serpent has been using teachings to keep God's chosen people from enjoying Him as their life. For the most part, these teachings are related to knowledge, good, and evil. But such teachings result in separation from God.

The best way to discern a matter is to discern according to life or death. We need to ask questions like this: Does this teaching help me to enjoy the Lord more and bring me into life, or does it cause the poison of death to be injected into me? You may find that if you accept a certain kind of teaching or preaching, taking it into you, immediately your inward enjoyment of the Lord is cut off. Some things function like insulation that stops the flowing of the divine electricity. Therefore, we must learn to discern, to differentiate, matters by life and death.

Thank the Lord for the secret of real discernment. This secret is to discern a preaching or teaching by whether or not it helps us to enjoy the Lord and gain more life supply. If anyone's preaching cuts us off from the enjoyment of the Lord, that preaching must be of the serpent, of Satan....Many of those who have left the Lord's recovery have neither the life supply nor the enjoyment. This is an indication that they have taken in something that is not of the Lord. The genuine ministry of the Lord always strengthens us in the enjoyment of Him as our life supply. Anything that cuts you off from the enjoyment of the Lord is of the serpent. But anything that causes your enjoyment of the Lord to increase is of the Spirit and of the New Testament ministry. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 468-470)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1988, vol. 3, "Our Urgent Need— Spirit and Life," chs. 2-3; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 8, 41

## WEEK 12 — DAY 4

### Morning Nourishment

**Matt. 7:13-14 Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it. Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.**

Who can enter through the narrow gate spoken of in Matthew 7:13? Only the kingdom people with the nature described in the nine blessings in chapter 5. Those who enter the narrow gate must be poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, making peace with all men, willing to be persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and willing to be reproached for Christ. Only those with such a nature can enter through the narrow gate. Furthermore, those who enter through this narrow gate must be under the higher laws of the kingdom, the complemented and changed laws, and they should not have any anxiety concerning their living. Rather, they must have the confidence that their heavenly Father is taking care of them. Moreover, they should not be lazy or idle, but diligent and industrious. These are the people who enter through the narrow gate and walk on the constricted way. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 297-298)

### Today's Reading

The gate is narrow and the way is constricted because the new law of the kingdom is stricter and the demand...is higher.... It deals not only with outward conduct, but also with inward motive. The old man, the self, the flesh, the human concept, and the world with its glory are all excluded. Only that which corresponds to God's will can enter in....To enter the gate is simply to begin walking on the way, a way which is lifelong.

We all are happy to be in the Lord's recovery and appreciate the recovery very much.... As one in the Lord's recovery, are you walking on the

constricted way? We all must be able to say that we are not taking the way of Christianity, but the way of constriction....Those in Christianity can use rock music or other worldly methods in their services, but we cannot.... All young people desire to be free,...to put off all restriction. When [they] graduate from high school, they are like caged birds wanting to be free. However, many are so free that they have no constriction, no restriction. We in the Lord's recovery, on the contrary, are taking a constricted way....We in the Lord's recovery must walk in our spirit. Living in spirit and walking in spirit restrict us. Even when we are loving, rejoicing, and happy, we must be under restriction. We must not be like those who throw off all restraint in their excitement. Rather, we must be excited within the limit of the spirit. This must even be true in the meetings. Although we may fully release our spirit, we should be restricted as far as physical activity is concerned. In everything, we need to take the constricted way, not the broad way.

We must take the constricted way in our fellowship with the brothers. Do you intend to praise a brother? You must praise him in a constricted way. Are you about to rebuke a brother? You must rebuke him in a constricted way. Are you having fellowship with some brothers? This is excellent, but you must fellowship with them in a constricted way. Sometimes when you are having fellowship, you forget all limitation. You go on hour after hour without taking care of the need for food or rest. Furthermore, in your fellowship you talk...about everyone without any restriction. Praise the Lord that we are truly free. Nevertheless, we still have the limitations, restrictions, and constrictions.

Life in Matthew 7:14 refers to the ever-blessed condition of the kingdom, which is filled with the eternal life of God. This life is in the reality of the kingdom today and will be in the manifestation of the kingdom in the coming age (19:29; Luke 18:30). In the Lord's recovery today we are taking the constricted way which leads to life. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 298-299, 301)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 1, "Basic Lessons on Life," lsns. 3,7-8,11-15; CWWL, 1981, vol. 1, "God's Eternal Intention and Satan's Counterplot," chs. 2-3

## WEEK 12 — DAY 5

### Morning Nourishment

**Matt. 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

**John 11:25 ...I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live.**

Christ is the resurrection and the life. Since the church is the vessel of Christ on earth, it should express this life and resurrection. God intends for the church to manifest the life of Christ. Hence, the church must be full of life. In the church everything that issues from God is life, and everything that issues from Satan is death.

The main goal of the Lord coming to earth is for man to have life (John 10:10), that is, for man to receive God's life.... God's Christ is life, and God's Christ is resurrection, and the church is the vessel of this life and resurrection....Through the church—the vessel of Christ—God dispenses His life and riches to men. (CWWN, vol. 44, pp. 881-882)

### Today's Reading

Satan is God's rival. He attacks everything that God wants to do. Since God's goal today is the church, Satan's attacks are directed specifically against the church. Satan does not necessarily stumble Christians or the church with the enticement of sin or the world, because these things are too obvious. While we may be free from sin and not love the world, we can still be under Satan's attacks.... Dealing with sin and the world alone is not enough to stop the attacks of Satan. The ultimate weapon Satan uses to attack the church is death. Death is not easily identifiable; it can creep secretly into the church. This does not mean that Satan will not use the world and sin to attack the church. It means that Satan can use refined and moral things, not just filthy and treacherous sins to attack Christians. Many refined and moral things are filled with death, and Satan can easily utilize

these deadly things to attack the church.

Matthew 16:18 says that the foundation of the Lord's church is Christ the Rock, and the gates of Hades cannot prevail against this church. Hades is death. If the church has its roots in heaven, it will be impossible to cut it off from heaven, because...its roots are entrenched and death cannot prevail against it. The only reason that death cannot prevail over the church is that the church is built upon Christ the Rock.... Many Christians...know whether or not a sermon is well-delivered. But it is hard for them to distinguish between death and resurrection. But if the church is built on Christ the Rock, it will distinguish between death and life, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

Romans 8:10 corresponds with John 12:25. Romans 8:10 is on the body and the spirit, while John 12 is on the soul, both the preserving and the losing of the soul. In both cases the end result is related to death and resurrection. Everything that issues from the body or from the soul results in death, which is Hades, whereas everything that issues from the spirit results in life.... A Christian should not ask whether a thing is good or evil but should ask from where a thing originates. Does it originate from the natural life, the flesh, the soul, or does it originate from the spirit? Of all the things that a Christian possesses, only those that originate from the spirit are of life, and only they can give others life. Nothing else—no matter how good, profitable, or nice—gives life.

The church needs life, the resurrection life of Christ. No doctrine, idea, theology, or exposition can replace the life of Christ. Only the life of Christ and that which issues from it will prevail against the gates of Hades. Everything else is just disguised forms of death and cannot withstand the attacks of Satan. May the Lord be merciful to us, and may He keep us from touching death or bringing death into the church. May God fill the church with life, and may Satan find no opening to attack the church. (CWWN, vol. 44, pp. 882-885)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, "The Tree of Life," chs. 1-10, 14, 16; CWWL, 1964, vol. 4, "Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life," ch. 5

## WEEK 12 — DAY 6

### Morning Nourishment

**1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.**

**John 5:24 ...He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.**

Death is of the devil, God's enemy Satan, signified by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which brings death. Life is of God, the source of life, signified by the tree of life, which issues in life (Gen. 2:9, 16-17). Death and life are not only of these two sources, Satan and God; they are also two essences, two elements, and two spheres. To pass out of death is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of life. This took place in us at our regeneration. We know (oida) this, we have the inner consciousness of this, because we love the brothers. Love (agape—the love of God) toward the brothers is a strong evidence of this. Faith in the Lord is the way for us to pass out of death into life; love toward the brothers is the evidence that we have passed out of death into life. To have faith is to receive the eternal life; to love is to live by the eternal life and express it.

Not loving the brothers is evidence of not living by the essence and element of the divine life and not remaining in its sphere. It is living in the essence and element of the satanic death and abiding in its sphere. (Life-study of 1 John, pp. 236-237)

### Today's Reading

Through regeneration we have passed out of the source, essence, element, and sphere of death into the source, essence, element, and sphere of life.... First we have the source. Then out of the source comes the essence. The essence forms an element, and eventually this element becomes a

sphere. Therefore, regarding life, we first have the source of life. Out of this source of life comes the essence of life. The essence forms the element of life, and this element of life then becomes the sphere of life.

We may use a fountain to illustrate the difference between the source of life, the essence of life, the element of life, and the sphere of life. Water flows out of a fountain and becomes a river. The fountain is the source. We may say that H<sub>2</sub>O is the essence of what comes out of the fountain. This essence then takes the form of water, and the flowing water becomes a river. Here we have the fountain as the source, the H<sub>2</sub>O as the essence, the water as the element, and the river as the sphere. Therefore, in the sphere of the river we have the water as the element, and the essence of this element is H<sub>2</sub>O. The source of it all is the fountain.

As children of God, we have received the divine life from God. God is the source, the fountain, of the divine life. The essence of the divine life is the very being of God. Hence, God's being, His essence, is the essence of the spiritual water we have received as the divine life. This life also is an element by which and in which we can live. When we live in the element of the divine life, the divine life becomes the sphere of our living. Now we are living in the sphere of the divine life, possessing the element of the divine life, and enjoying the essence of the divine life. Furthermore, as we enjoy the essence of the divine life, we are organically joined to God as the source of this life. This is the reason we say that with the divine life we have the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere.

The principle is the same with death....We were living in the sphere of death, possessing the element of death, and suffering the essence of death. Moreover, we were joined to Satan, the source of death. Therefore, before regeneration, we were experiencing and suffering the source, essence, element, and sphere of death. (Life-study of 1 John, pp. 245-246)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 John, msgs. 28, 34; CWWL, 1963, vol. 3, "Basic Principles of the Experience of Life," chs. 1-4; CWWL, 1984, vol. 3, "The Divine Economy," chs. 4-5

## « WEEK 12 — HYMN »

### Hymns, #733 In Eden's garden fair we see

#### Various Aspects of the Inner Life — The Two Trees

- 1 In Eden's garden fair we see  
That God before two trees placed man,  
The trees of life, and knowledge too,  
Which for the Lord and Satan stand.
- 2 The tree of life the center is  
Of God's eternal, perfect plan,  
Denoting God in Christ as life  
To be received as all by man.
- 3 The tree of knowledge standing there,  
Bespeaks a sure and warning voice:  
Outside of God there is a source  
Of death to all who make this choice.
- 4 If man would eat the tree of life,  
Then God as life he will receive,  
And be transformed to precious stones,  
God's will and Purpose to achieve.
- 5 If man the tree of knowledge takes,  
Then Satan enters into man  
As sin, which brings him into death,  
That he may not fulfill God's plan.
- 6 This signifies that only God  
Is our full source of life and breath;  
To touch ought else is but to touch  
The source of knowledge and of death.
- 7 For knowledge only bringeth death,  
Though evil or though good it seem;  
For any thing apart from God,

- Is but the fruit of Satan's scheme.
- 8 Not only evil, but the good  
Is contradictory to Christ;  
Not only knowledge of the bad,  
But even good is versus Christ.
- 9 Lord, teach us only Thee to touch,  
That with Thy life we filled may be,  
And not to touch the good or bad,  
Or anything apart from Thee.