

The City of Man

by DeVern Fromke

The sixth message by Mr. DeVern Fromke at the Conference in Switzerland

(The second message was *At Ease or at Rest?*; The third message was *From Separation unto Revelation: From Revelation unto Worship*).

It seems as though, whenever I announce a subject for the next day — which is very infrequently — I always have to change it, but I am constrained today to stay with the study of the spirit and soul a bit longer. I would ask you to turn to one verse in Proverbs 25, but before we read it I want to give you the picture of man that Solomon gives us.

Solomon says that man is like a city, and this city has three parts. Ancient cities had a wall around them. At the centre of the city was the seat of government, and then we will see that in this city there are three streets. So we say that the wall of the city is like our body, the three streets are like the three functions of the soul, and the inner government is like the human spirit. We will name the three streets the mind, the will, and the emotions.

We must remember now that it was God's design to make the inner spirit, or government, a place for Himself to dwell in, and from the centre He would control the whole city, but when Adam was placed in the Garden with the opportunity to allow God to come into his spirit, it seemed that he said: 'No, I will rule over this little city by myself!' Now we are going to read our verse and see what happened because he tried to rule over this city by himself:

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28).

As we have already said, man's spirit was not made to stand, or be alone, and because there was an inner decay in the centre, the walls fell down and the streets were open to every bit of traffic from outside. Man's mind was corrupted by the world, his emotions were controlled by the world outside, and it even seems that his will was taken captive to the will of the devil.

So first of all God begins to prepare for His occupancy in our spirit, and we must turn to Titus 3 and read there of man's condition. Beginning at verse 3 it says: *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish" — "foolish" in our mind because we were controlled from outside.*

"Disobedient" because our will was in line with the will of the world.

"Deceived" in our mind.

"Serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another", in our emotions.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (v.4,5).

This washing is the washing of our spirit, and this renewing is the renewing of the mind, the will and the emotions. God washes our spirit that He might join His Spirit with our spirit, and then, working from within, He begins to clear out the streets. But we have known many of the Lord's children who have the Spirit within and yet their streets are open from outside, and this is why God must build up the walls and close some gates. Is

it not wonderful, then, that Paul says in Romans 12:1: "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"

Why does he want us to prepare our body, or the walls of our city? The next verse tells us: "*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.*"

God wants to renew the street of the mind and transform the city. Can you not see that if we have a gate open from outside and He is working from within, we have two-way traffic on a one-way street? As I have already said, if there are some strongholds, or some automobiles out in the street, you do not have a good street working from within. These streets were made for the government of God as a glove is made for the hand. In the unsaved mind the streets are working independently of the inner man; at least, we can say that the Holy Spirit is not there to strengthen the inner spirit. "*He that has no rule over his own spirit.*"

In the book of Proverbs there are two kinds of spirits mentioned. In Proverbs 14:29 it speaks of him "*that is hasty of spirit*". This is when my own spirit runs ahead of the Holy Spirit, when someone speaks to me quickly and I react, speaking back quickly. You see, your own spirit is hasty, running ahead of the Holy Spirit. Then, in Proverbs 18:14 we read of a "*wounded spirit*". This is when the Holy Spirit is trying to lead my spirit but my spirit drags its feet. It is a wounded, sulking spirit. When I begin to recognise my hasty tendency, or my wounded tendency, then it is that I must learn to say: 'I am under the Holy Spirit's control.' Sometimes I think of my spirit as being a little cork bobbing in a glass of water. I sense when it is in perfect buoyancy, but when it gets too active or hasty it bounces right out of the glass, but when it is wounded and depressed it is held under and is not buoyant.

So we realise that God made our spirit to come into a perfect walk with His Spirit. Now let us go on to Psalm 51 and we will see what David says about his inner man. In verse 6 we read: "*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*"

What are these inward parts? Now I must speak to you about the heart as one of the inward parts. I think it is safe to say that the heart of man is a composition of the three parts of the soul plus the conscience. I do not want to be too technical, but I want you to see that it includes a part of the mind, a part of the will and a part of the emotions, plus the doorway of the conscience. The Bible says: "*We love with all our heart*", so that we know that the emotion is in the heart. It says: "*As a man thinks in his heart*", so we know that some of the mind is in the heart. Daniel "*purposed in his heart*", so we know that some of the will is in the heart. In Hebrews it says that the heart is sprinkled with an evil conscience, and this would explain that the conscience is in the heart.

We go back to the Psalm that says: "*Thou desirest truth in the inward parts*", and the rest of the verse says: "*And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*"

Now we are saying that the hidden part is the place where the Spirit of God gives us divine seeing, or wisdom. You remember that Ezekiel 36:26 says: "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.*"

Now we must see how God moves in to work in the heart and in the spirit. Psalm 51:17 says: "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" Have you ever fellowshiped with a brother, only to find that he had a hard spirit instead of a broken and a contrite spirit? If the doorway of my conscience is open and broken before God there will be a release of my spirit through a broken heart of compassion. I know that I have heard some brothers minister and there is a flow of living water out of their spirit through a very broken, contrite heart. It is this

kind of release that has a penetrating effect upon the other person. I do believe that when we are really under the control of the Holy Spirit, He wants to flow out through us in this kind of a touch with others. Maybe I can illustrate with this incident.

A friend of mine told me how he went to a feed-mill one morning and there he met the miller, a friend, although he had not seen him for many months. This miller turned to my friend, Bob, and said: 'We were just thinking of you the other day, Bob. We decided that we should invite you to join our Square Dancing Club.' For a moment my friend was about to tell him that he did not believe in dancing, but he was checked in his spirit about being too hasty, and so, with real inner wisdom, he said: 'Well, you know, Mr. Miller, my wife and I have too many other things to do. I am one of the elders in our little local assembly and I need to read the Bible a lot to prepare my heart to speak.' Then the miller, with great openness, said: 'Oh, you know, my wife and I joined the church two weeks ago.' Again my friend was about to be hasty in spirit and tell the miller that it was not enough to join the church, but he said: 'Well, that is fine. I hope you are having a real good time of fellowship with my wonderful Lord.' And then the miller opened his heart's door and the door of his conscience and said: 'Bob, when I was in Korea several years ago I promised the Lord I would give him my life if He would just get me out of this battle alive, and for all these years I have forgotten about my promise.' And tears began to flood down his cheeks, but in that hour that they fellowshiped together brother Bob led the miller really to know the Lord Jesus in a personal, living way.

What am I trying to explain in this? How many people have taken a Bible course on how to win souls! They learn all the mechanics, but not how to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Oh, how the Lord's children must learn how to open the heart of another! If only we will wait, they will always speak of the thing their conscience is being bothered about. Suppose Bob had jumped down the miller about his dancing! He would have started an argument around a mental issue, and they would have parted mad at one another. But when the Lord can lead us in His way the heart opens, the conscience is touched, God can come in and He renews our mind about dancing. Suppose Bob had started an argument about just joining the church! The miller would have said: 'Which one is right?' But Bob watched the Holy Spirit open the miller's heart and the man spoke of the thing about which his conscience was bothered.

When I was taught in school how to win Jewish people to the Lord, I was told that first of all I must get them to see that Jesus Christ is their Messiah, but when I have tried it we have always ended up in conflict. When I spoke to a precious brother and his mother I learned this lesson again. My young brother said that he just knew that Jesus wanted to be Lord of his life and all the renewing of the mind came afterwards. If we really know how to be effective in touching souls we will not overpower their mind with things they ought to accept. This is why it says: "*When the heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away*" (2 Cor. 3:16).

I saw in a service some months ago that a son and daughter must have brought their mother to the meeting, but you could tell that she had been dragged in almost against her will because she sat in the second pew with a most disagreeable expression, and when the speaker spoke it seemed as though her mind was closed, and I know her heart was closed. About midway through the service I saw the Lord cause the speaker to do something that seemed rather foolish, but little by little I saw the expression change on this woman's face until by the end of the service she was sitting at the edge of her chair with her mouth open and tears coursing down her cheeks. I have observed for a couple of years how often God uses this brother to open hearts, touch the conscience and bring people into contact with God. I am ashamed to admit how often I have been so hasty in spirit and instead of opening the heart I have caused it to put up a defence, and the person became wounded in spirit.

I do pray that while it is wonderful to be eager to win souls, we will learn how to plant at one time, then water, and allow God's own timing. You see, this is the wisdom that comes out of the hidden part. People can have all the knowledge but lack that inner wisdom of how to use what they know. So often you follow this inner pulling without understanding what you are doing.

I remember one night, after a meeting had closed, a young lady came down to the front to talk to me. I could tell by one look at her face that she was filled with anger. As she pointed her finger in my face she said: 'I want to ask you a thousand questions.' Usually I would have tried to answer them one by one, but this time I said: 'All right, but before you start, let me ask you just one question.' That seemed fair, so she sat down with her ruffled feathers, and in the best way I knew how, very gently, I asked her this: 'When are you going to quit all this arguing with the Lord and say, "Yes, Lord"?' She said: 'Right now', and knelt by the pew where she had been sitting. She prayed: 'Lord, I have not been sleeping for many nights and I have been arguing with You about all these things that I do not understand, but I realise that it is not the understanding that You want. You just want me to open my heart, and I do.' As she got up I saw that twisted, cloudy face had changed, and I said: 'Now you have answered my question we will begin to take up some of yours.' Do you know what she said? 'Oh, I guess all my questions have been answered!'

You see, if we are living in the soul life and are controlled by the soul life, we are just full of questions, but if we have learned to dwell in the Spirit and be controlled by the Spirit, we are full of the Lord and can have confidence that He will show us everything we really need to know.

I do not seem to have got very far. In fact, I have only just started, but maybe the Lord is speaking to someone whose mind has been filled with so many questions. Your streets are all filled up with traffic from outside and you are wondering: 'How can I will the will of God? How can I understand some of these things that seem so different?' But God's way is simply to shut us up to living by the Tree of Life, and then we can learn how, from the inner source there in the hidden part, He gives the wisdom that we need.

Just in closing we might ask why there are some gates in the walls of the city. We have the five senses in our body: the eye-gate, the ear-gate, the mouth-gate, the touch-gate and the smell-gate, and let me just simply say that when my body is really the Lord's, He closes up some gates. That is the way He controls some of the traffic from outside and it is the only way in which He can really renew the streets: the renewing of my mind that I might *"prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."*