



Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

4. See! There's the Answer!

Childlike trust opens the heart to a display of the Creator's power.

[Note: As is the way with every spiritual blessing the Lord gives us in His Word, there is also a spiritualistic counterfeit; so it is with the idea of 'picturing an answer to prayer'. When the author wrote this valuable book, New Age ideas did not have such a hold on society as they do today. The New Age counterfeit is popular even in our churches, and leads to serious results, actually separating people from the Lord and getting them to feel that the power of imagination in their own minds can create the answers to our problems, transform situations, or change other people. This opens the door for demonic influence and control, just as does Transcendental Meditation as taught in Yoga. The 'Mind over Matter' concept is a form of witchcraft, and so is the idea of visualizing Christ or some other being in the mind in meditation, and then imagining conversation with them. It may be better here to use the words 'thought of' or 'considered' rather than 'pictured' to avoid erroneous concepts, which can be misleading. Clearly, the author had no intention to promote these things, so in this chapter some expressions have been edited or notated.] TC

Amy Lower attended some of our meetings held in her city. She had had a rather difficult experience up to that time. She imagined people were persecuting her when they were not. Then she found a new way of life. It revealed itself in a new attitude, for example toward an ill-dispositioned deacon, Mr. Crutch.

Mr. Crutch never spoke to her in church, and Amy was hurt by this attitude. She found herself looking for pity for the way he treated her. Then one day she thought to herself, "No doubt Mr. Crutch is a noble soul. Perhaps he's gloomy and unfriendly because of some unfortunate experience he has had. What he actually needs is someone to show him love and kindness."

So Amy prayed to the Lord that He would fill her heart with Christian love for Mr. Crutch. She believed that God would fulfill her prayer. She claimed the answer and returned thanks that God had done what He had promised. The next Sabbath morning as Amy entered, she saw Mr. Crutch on the other side of the church. She eagerly stepped to his side and shook his hand warmly.

"Mr. Crutch was instantly a different man," she said later, "He was as truly the Christian man I had thought of in my prayer. My expressing a different attitude towards him allowed God to show me his brighter side."

Dr. Lessel, a dear friend of mine, was most helpful to me years before when I was passing through a personal struggle. Dr. Lessel gave me a formula for creative praying. I have long since forgotten the exact words he used, but he challenged me to picture in my mind's eye the very thing taking place for which I was praying. When I have done this through the years, I want to testify that it really works! This is the vital part of the true philosophy of the Lord's day. It points to Him who creates answers that appear

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impossible. Dr. Lessel was speaking of answers in the spiritual realm, not of selfish petitions that minister to vanity.

But it is not an easy exercise. It requires faith. We must find higher horizons of thought, of prayer, and of practice if we are to be in character like our Creator. At the beginning of history He looked out upon a world "without form, and void" and pictured light. When He commanded light to appear, it came—the expression of His thoughts.

Centuries passed; then the Creator came to this earth as a man. He walked into a synagogue one Sabbath morning to worship. A worshipper was sitting there that day who had an "unclean spirit." That morning, during the service, Jesus Christ saw that man as he would become. He spoke the word and cast the unclean spirit out of this man, and the cleansed man was free, happy, and well. His life had been empty, unproductive, and sinful; but the creative power of God came that Sabbath morning and changed his outlook—and his life!

Christ has always been a visualizing builder. He will always be. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." John 1:10 Yes, the Creator of heaven and earth tabernacled in lowly humanity, building men, building hope, and bringing happiness, because He saw men not merely as they were—He saw them as they could become through His creative power.

On another Sabbath, Jesus entered another synagogue. There sat a man with a withered hand. Our Lord, seeing this man's condition, healed him instantly. Another body was built, and with it another life was inspired with hope. This same God awaits to do the identical thing for those of us who need healing of spirit, not healing of the body.

On still another Sabbath day our Lord saw a man who was blind from birth. He gave him sight! The blind man saw: he rejoiced; he leaped for joy! Another life rebuilt by Him of whom the Word speaks when it says that by Him God made the worlds. Hebrews 11:3.

What a wonderful builder! His whole life was a continual prayer, fulfilled because He saw it as fulfilled before it happened. He saw men as they might become, and He made them all to be what He pictured them to be if they would but take hold of His almighty power by creative faith.

One day our Lord was standing by the grave of His close and trusted friend Lazarus. He cried out, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." John 11:42.

To tell the God in heaven that He always hears us is creative praying: and it makes the whole life blossom in good deeds to build other lives. This same wonderful Lord finally laid down His own life for you and me. But never forget that on this earth where He laid it down, He took it again. So the place of our most cruel apparent defeat may be the place of our spiritual resurrection; that is, if we will take the Creator into our thinking, our heart, and our life.

Let us give you another example: I was in need of answered prayer in behalf of a very distraught member of the church who had come to camp meeting. This lady's husband had become very antagonistic toward her. A separation was pending.

We knelt together after reading the promise that God would give His children that for which they prayed. We asked, believed, and claimed the fulfillment of our request. I thought of the angels flying through the sky in the direction of that godless, rebellious husband. We rose from our knees, and I said, "Now we must believe that God has done for us what we asked. Goodnight and God bless you."

The next day the lady returned with great joy to relate what had happened. "It's the first time in our married life that he has apologized for his behavior. He's changed; I've never known him to be this way before!"

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Many of you have probably heard of the ABC's of Bible prayer before reading this book. You will see this method brought to your attention again and again here. This kind of praying is based on claiming Bible promises. Each Bible promise contains something which can be seen only by faith. For example, when Jesus said that the Word of God is seed, He was drawing upon His book of nature. In every normal apple seed there is actually a tiny, tiny embryo with trunk part, leaf part, and root part. You cannot see this tiny tree with the naked eye. It takes the eye of faith based on a scientific fact.

[There is another thought closely related to this: "Any person can count the number of seeds in an apple, but only God knows how many apples are in a seed"! God's promises each contain greater potential than any of us realize!] TC

So every promise of the Bible contains the gift promised. I have done something that helps me to believe that Rutherford Platt, the prize-winner in science, was correct when he said that every normal apple seed contains an apple tree. I have cut a wild persimmon seed open slantwise and have seen the tiny persimmon tree embryo there. And what makes it easier for me to pray with creative imagination is that I see the results of that kind of creative praying in the life of my Lord Jesus Christ. When He stood before the grave of Lazarus and said to His Father, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," and followed this prayer with the command, "Lazarus, come forth," I have no difficulty in believing that my Lord actually saw by faith Lazarus rising to life in response to His word.

The same wonderful Lord at the beginning of time looked out on a world that "was without form and void." It is not difficult for me to know that when He said, "Let there be light," Genesis 1:3, He knew there would be light. To know our Lord is to copy Him, imitate Him, study His character, and finally to become like Him. This creative philosophy is relevant to every area of the Christian life.

Take the experience, not of an internationally famous person, but rather of a housewife. Her name is Dorothy. We met her while we were ministering in California. Dorothy represents one of the so-called "average church members" who, through the Holy Spirit, is living creatively for our Lord. Dorothy's life was changed by the wonder-working power of our Lord.

Dorothy had been an agnostic. Her husband Roy, an atheist, was a most unhappy man. In his desire to find a happy way of life Roy began reading the Bible. In his enthusiasm, he wore out three Bibles in a short period of time.

Dorothy and Roy had an eleven-year-old daughter, Verline, a fourth-grader at the local public school. Dorothy was worried about Verline because as yet she could not read. Depending on her memory, and by looking at the pictures, she was sliding by. That same year, Dorothy's cousin suggested that Verline change schools.

"Why don't you send her to our church school?" suggested the cousin. After some consideration and discussion, Verline was transferred to the new school. Within a period of one month she was reading. This impressed Dorothy greatly, although the religion of the teachers did not.

"I was wild and enjoyed myself," confided Dorothy as she briefly sketched her experience in the world.

Roy's sister, a faithful Sabbath keeper, came to live with Roy and Dorothy. Three months later, when she left, she presented them with a gift book entitled, *The Great Controversy*. It was put on the shelf and left there.

Soon after this Dorothy took sick. While in bed she began to read the book. She became so engrossed that she read it straight through. Then she read it through the second time. On her third reading she marked the book with a red pencil wherever an important statement was made. Finally Dorothy read it through once more, this time reading the underlined portions.

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One week later Dorothy's heart was changed. Immediately she began to share her treasure with her husband and they were baptized into the Lord Jesus, uniting with the church.

In a few years Dorothy was urged to become a Sabbath School teacher for one of the children's departments, but she was not interested. The reason? She had tried once before with the junior department and once with a young couple. Yes, she had tried to give Bible studies as well as teach the juniors but had failed both times. She was not about to try again.

But every time Dorothy prayed, she heard a voice in her mind saying, "Go teach!" Dorothy dismissed it each time with the excuse that she just had no talent whatsoever in the field of teaching. Yet every time she read her Bible or knelt to pray, those words returned to her mind. "Go teach, go teach, go teach!"

Finally Dorothy decided that since she had absolutely no talent in this field she might better stop praying and reading her Bible. She was afraid, however that this would mean the loss of her soul.

Finally, one day when the words came again. Dorothy replied. "All right, Lord, You win." So it was that in a short time Dorothy began to teach. This time, however, it was under the leadership of a teacher of child psychology.

Within one year Dorothy was helping to teach student teachers in child evangelism, under the guidance of her instructor! Talents came to the surface that Dorothy never dreamed she had. During the following years Dorothy not merely became one of the finest teachers of tiny tots, but also a teacher of teachers. She composed more than forty beautiful songs for these tiny tots plus scores of little poems in connection with her teaching program.

She and her associates have created a small "museum" of many kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, etc., to use in teaching the children during the Sabbath School hour every Sabbath day.

In my years in the ministry I have yet to see anything to compare with Dorothy's Sabbath School "museum." It all came from one who had "no talent for teaching." No, excuse me, it came from God. Stuffed animals are part of the museum. Cutouts, pictures, etc., are carefully cataloged and indexed for future use. When the Sabbath morning arrives, every table has been prepared with the thought, skill, and love one would find in those preparing for royalty. After all, the royal King of the universe was there!

Many kinds of nature and home arrangements are placed before the tiny tots week by week. God's out-of-doors combines with the beauty of obedience to create the most friendly atmosphere of worship, study, and joy!

Among other things we saw in Dorothy's "museum" was a whole set of tails of various animals. Dorothy had found a little book which teaches the wisdom and discretion of our Lord. It is illustrated by a chart of tails. There is the monkey. What could he do had he received a peacock's tail? He needed the one given him by his Creator so he could swing from the limbs in the forest. And what good would a skunk's tail be to a fish? The fish could not swim with a skunk's tail! It could be of no possible use to him.

Isn't it wonderful how creation points to a Creator, how He outfitted each of His creatures with just the equipment it needs? Talk about the power, the wisdom, and the discretion of our Maker! The philosophy of the Lord's holy day leads us to laud our Creator for His wisdom, discretion, and power, and to partake of His creative Spirit.

Dorothy has several ladies assisting her. She gives credit first to the Lord for the success that has attended her. Then she gives sincere credit to her associates for the creative help they have been. There is a "second blessing" that these ladies have found in their work in the Sabbath School: They are so busy being creative, preparing the material for these children, that they have no time to gossip, criticize, or find fault.

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How wonderful it is to be used by God, transformed into a useful vessel. the result of the power of heaven making us His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. This fits into the philosophy of creative Sabbath keeping. Dorothy thought she could not teach. She is now a teacher of teachers. She didn't think she had any talent as a poet or musician. Yet she has written many poems and composed scores of songs.

The same Creator who helped little Verline to read in a single month has taught her mother to do the things she thought were absolutely impossible.

After becoming a Christian and raising her first children, Dorothy wanted another child. The atmosphere in which her first children were reared was that of atheism, agnosticism, and skepticism. Now she wanted a child reared in the atmosphere of a Christian home. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," rang through Dorothy's mind. How she wanted that next child! But it seemed that she could not have another baby, so she began to pray as did Hanna, Samuel's mother. God graciously answered Dorothy's prayer and gave her a sweet little girl they called Millie.

God creates new physical hearts, new spiritual hearts, and even gives us babies when it is humanly impossible! The Lord's day, properly understood, points to this Creator! It tells us that He is relevant in every area of life.

Reflection: Dear Reader: You can start a prayer group. Begin with one prayer partner. Then expand to five or six in number. Whether in a group or alone, we suggest you try heaven-oriented imagination in prayer. As you claim these promises "If 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 and "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 John 2:25, ask believingly for forgiveness and cleansing of all past transgressions and actually consider yourself as receiving eternal life in Jesus Christ now.

Seven Great Bible Facts:

1. Our Lord declares His word to be "seed" "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. " Luke 8:11. Note. Could we look within an apple seed, we should see a tiny tree embryo with trunk part, two leaf parts, and root part.
3. When we claim a Bible promise for wisdom, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5; "Christ . . . is made unto us wisdom" 1 Corinthians 1:30.
3. "God . . . calleth those things which be not as though they were"; for He "spake, and it was done" Romans 4:17: "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9.
4. When Christ by faith called, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43). He saw Him coming out of the grave, for He said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me" (John 11:41).
5. We too can picture a tempted, tried member of Christ's body actually receiving life, for Jesus has promised, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. " 1 John 5:16.
6. This heaven-oriented imagination, called faith, is commanded by our Lord who says, "Believe that ye receive . . . , and ye shall have" Mark 11:24.
7. Our Lord, being infinite, promises that often our prayers will be answered in a way we least expect, for He says it will be in a way that "thou knowest not" "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3.