

## #9 THE VISION AND A SPOKEN WORD.....

The following vision came after a time of spiritual refreshing at a Christian retreat. It occurred as I traveled home and stopped at a hotel for the night.

*In the very early morning while it is still quite dark I am awakened by a noise outside my bay window. I lie quietly for awhile to listen for further noise. To my surprise, I seem to be able to see through the darkness and discern a black form scrambling back and forth trying to get my window open with its arm. In this state I become aware that this is a spiritual experience not of the natural realm, for the arm of this creature is moving inside the window, a type of window that can not be opened. I now see more clearly that the dark form is a short, somewhat large-headed person still scrambling about trying to enter my room. I find myself more curious than anything else. I discern the spirit is of the demonic order, yet I am not afraid. Then the Lord speaks to me, "Yes, this is an evil spirit that has come to you as a thief, but can not get in this room unless you allow it."*

*As this is spoken I have an awareness of an angelic presence standing behind me, but do not look back as I am still quite occupied with this demon who is attempting entrance. A boldness comes over me and I have the strangest desire to chase this spirit away. I slowly slide my right leg off the bed and begin to brace myself to pursue the intruder. Suddenly, as if the demon perceives my thoughts, it stands still, looks intently at me, and scampers quickly away---I can hear its shuffling feet. I arise and open the door, searching outside but seeing nothing.*

Now as to whether this spirit was real in that room or was but a vision, I know not; its real significance for me was the lesson to be learned. I proceeded to look up this Scripture found in John 10:10:

"The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

Yes, our enemy the devil and his host of spirits come for these reasons. Their natures are evil and full of malice toward mankind, but especially toward true believers. As they tempt and urge us to sin and rebel against God, they also will try to rob us of the blessings which God has given us. In our spiritual pilgrimage we not only battle to gain higher ground and deeper levels, but we must also maintain that which has been won. As in an earthly war the same ground may be taken and retaken several times before one side finally holds it well. We all at times seem to experience this fact, do we not? Whether we overcome and hold any spiritual victory given by the Lord will be determined to the extent that we abide in it.

Maintaining spiritual victory is often similar to maintaining victory in the earthly realm. Consider dieting as an example. When we first begin it seems so hard and occupies so much of our thinking. It is such an effort to get started and, once we do, the difficult battle begins. All we can think about is food! Yet if we determine to persevere, it is easier to maintain each day. If we begin to see pounds drop off, then it gives us the needed encouragement to continue. One good slip, however, and it is back to square one or, worse, we put it off again till next Monday! So with our spiritual progress. As we win battles and press on it not only gets easier to maintain that level but it encourages us to go on to higher levels and to take more ground from the enemy. If we are constantly defeated by our spiritual enemies, we will sink lower and lower until one day we will find ourselves robbed of our spiritual progress.

The enemies of our souls will steal from us and destroy our progress by getting us to yield to their lies, seductions and temptations. No devil or human can ever make us sin. They can win over us, however, by tempting, deceiving and luring us away from God. Yes, we think it would be nice if once we won a victory we never would have to deal with it again, but this is not true! Once I went out into the yard to cut the grass with the mower. To my great surprise, I discovered a few weeks later it needed cutting again! I also found that if I was faithful to keep it cut and maintained, it was not a difficult project. Yet if I neglected it for months and then tried to use the mower, the mower would not be sufficient for the job. Then I would have to rent a tractor. Our spiritual lesson here is this: keep the grass cut and maintained regularly with a lesser output of labor, for if you do not, it will cost you a major output of labor later!