



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

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“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” -- Psalms 34:6.

My parents and grandparents were all of the highest type of religious people. Two of my grandparents were ministers, and one of them died in a foreign land, while on a religious mission. My father was an elder in the church, a man of devout and sterling piety, while my saintly mother was a preacher of the glorious gospel that she loved so much, and understood so well. They read and believed in President Finney, and he was their personal friend; but his Caleb-like spirit and full gospel was fully forty years in advance of our Israel; and, in consequence, “stoning with stones” (Num. 14:10) was a common occupation in those days, and not wholly a lost art in this.

Their greatest desire for their children was that they might glorify God in this life and enjoy Him forever. I cannot doubt that I was solemnly given to God from my birth. My infant lips were taught to pray, and when I said,

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,”

I really expected Him to do it. Precious is the memory of those days of childish innocence, and mother love, when home and heaven seemed almost interchangeable terms. My young heart was not a stranger to the gracious visitations of the Spirit of God, and was often melted under the power of His love. But as I grew up, I grew in sinfulness and in rebellion against God. Though mercifully preserved from many sins of a gross and disgraceful character, I was often in great distress of soul because of those I did commit. At such times I would earnestly repent in secret, and cry unto God for mercy. I deeply realized the wickedness of my heart, and the weakness of my efforts to withstand temptation. Many covenants were made with God, and often, though not always, broken. The prayers, restraints, and instructions of faithful parents were not lost upon me. God had respect unto their covenant for their children. I see it now as I could not then. I want to praise the Lord for His answer to prayers for guidance, even in my rebellious boyhood, and for His manifest direction in the most important undertakings of my life.

After being settled in life I renewed my covenants with God, and sought to do right, because it was right. I was a member of the church, and grew jealous of the peculiarities of my denomination. I was “zealous toward God, according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.” For ten years or more I proved that this law “gendereth to bondage.” I certainly did “fear the Lord,” but it is a poor service that is rendered by one who is only a servant, when he ought to be a son. And I had not “received the adoption of a son.” I know now that I was simply a legalist, “kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed.” In this dispensation of the Father, with the “bondwoman” for their mother, multitudes of professors that are in doubt as to their position, might properly locate themselves. “There is a remembrance again made of sins every year,”

since “the law makes nothing perfect,” not even the conscience. In a Methodist meeting, when more than thirty years of age, God met me in wondrous power. And I met the test of public confession of sins and need of the Savior. It was a hard struggle, for I was proud and stubborn, but my dear wife joined me at the penitents’ form, and we mingled our tears and prayers together. I thank God to this day for the depth and pungency of old-fashioned conviction. Rebellion against God was seen and felt to be the awful damning thing that it is. I was glad to submit to God, and agree to His terms – any terms in order to have peace with Him. But the witness of the Spirit did not come; and after all others had retired, I had it out with my Lord in the silent watches of the night, upon my library floor. And, as people sometimes say by way of emphasis, I was converted through and through. And I knew it! I was free as a bird. “Justified by faith,” I had peace with God. His Spirit witnessed with my spirit that I was born again.

I was at once a glad and willing witness to the power of Jesus to save. For a time I was faithful and obedient, and then came waywardness, neglect and disobedience. This brought severe chastening and suffering from the hand of the Lord, followed by restoration of soul. My consecration to His service was renewed from time to time. I longed to see God glorified in the salvation of souls and the liberation of the church. Several years had passed since I had found the liberty of the sons of God; and yet I had seen few brought into the kingdom. To be sure, I was only a business man, and was utterly averse to the idea of being a minister. I greatly desired to serve both God and men in a quiet and unobtrusive way. The church began to lay some work upon me, but I shrank from it with a deep sense of unfitness. And then I felt within me a quenchless protest against the formalism and regularity of death all about me. Irregularity is the most dreaded foe of a legal, lifeless church. My nature instinctively shrank from the conflict, I felt it far more than I could understand it. But I determined to have a meeting where the Lord should have right of way, and the practical work of soul saving be done. Accordingly, my house was opened to all who would come to evening meetings, during our yearly meeting week in 1869. Our parlors were filled with earnest people, and without were those who were watching and waiting to see whereunto this would grow. The Scriptures were read, prayers offered, hymns were sung, testimonies were given and souls were blessed. But it was all unusual, and quite irregular in those days. We had live meetings, and living things are always irregular, while dead things never are. I began to learn what real loyalty to God was to cost, and that if really led by the Spirit of God, according to His word, reproaches and other like blessings that Jesus had promised, would become a reality.

In conducting a few of these meetings, I learned a great deal of myself. I was somewhat troubled by the people and the circumstances around me, but I discovered one “old man” who gave me more trouble than all the others, and he was within me. “His deeds” had been put off, and truly there was “no condemnation,” but whenever I “would do good” he was present with me. His omnipresence was something astonishing to my opening eyes. And he was there, to “war against the law of my mind” with a resolute purpose to “bring me into captivity to the law of sin.” If he succeeded, even partially, I was humbled and grieved, and if he did not succeed, I was in distress with fear lest he might. Some special incidents were greatly blessed to me. I began to see quite clearly that the “law was weak through the flesh.” I hated pride, ambition, evil tempers and vain thoughts, but I had them, and they were a part of me. They were not acts to be repented of and forgiven at all, but dispositions lying behind the acts and prompting thereto, natural to the old man and inseparable from his presence in my being.

I began to cry to God to “cast him out.” As I did this, there came a great “hunger and thirst after righteousness,” that I might be “filled with all the fullness of God.” My new

nature speedily developed wonderful aptitudes for “holiness.” I longed for a “clean heart and a right spirit,” and this yearning increased until one memorable evening, after the close of the series of meetings referred to, when a few of us met at my sister’s for prayer and conference. Up to this time I had never heard a straight sermon on holiness, nor read a treatise upon it, nor seen any one who claimed the experience for themselves. It had never occurred to me that I had not received the Holy Ghost since I believed. Knowing as much of the work of the blessed Spirit upon my heart as I undoubtedly had, I supposed, as a matter of course, that I had been “baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” His creative work in regeneration, and His destructive work in sanctification, are distinctions of great importance, but were not clearly seen by me at that time. And I might have answered much as the Ephesians answered Paul in Acts 19:2, had I been asked the same question. I had not even heard of such an experience. But there was present with us a brother who had heard that grand and dauntless herald of the cross, John S. Inskip, and his noble band of compeers at Round Lake. And he earnestly told us of their wonderful meetings, and preaching of consecration and holiness. It was only a spark of God’s fire that was needed to kindle into a flame the sacrifice that was placed upon His altar. As I went upon my knees, it was with the resolute purpose of “presenting my body a living sacrifice to God,” and of proving His word that the “altar sanctifieth the gift.” But I speedily found myself in the midst of a severe conflict. There passed quickly and clearly before me every obstacle to entire consecration, and “a life hid with Christ in God.” How the “old man” pleaded for his life! The misapprehensions, suspicions, sneers and revilings of carnal professors were all pictured before me, and they were not exaggerations, either. Selfishness, pride and prejudice all rose in rebellion and did their utmost. But I could not, would not, draw back. Every “vile affection” was resolutely nailed to the cross. Denominational standing, family, business, reputation, friends, time, talent and earthly store, were quickly and irrevocably committed to the sovereign control and disposal of my Almighty Savior. It came to be easy to trust Him, *and I had no sooner reckoned myself “dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God,” than the “Holy Ghost and Fire fell” upon me, just as I suppose He did “at the beginning.”*

Instantly, I felt the melting and refining fire of God permeate my whole being. Conflict was a thing of the past. I had entered into “rest.” I was nothing and nobody, and glad that it was settled that way. It was a luxury to get rid of ambitions. The glory of the Lord shone round about me, and, for a little season I was “lost in wonder, love and praise.” I was deeply conscious of the presence of God within me, and of His sanctifying work. Nothing seemed so sweet as His will, His law written in the heart after the chaff had been burned out. It was no effort to realize that I loved the Lord with all my heart, and mind, and strength, and my neighbor as myself. My calmness and absolute repose in God was a wonder to me. But I cannot describe it all. It was a “weight of glory.”

*“O matchless bliss of perfect love,
It lifts me up to things above.”*

When I rose from my knees I was constrained to speak of what God had wrought, the best I knew how. The people looked so different! I had new eyes! I felt so different that I examined myself, to see if I was the same person. When the next day I rode out upon my farm, I felt that every acre belonged to God, and I was only a tenant at will. The hills and fields and flocks and trees were all more beautiful as they clapped their hands in praise. On the Sabbath following, I broke the silence of our meeting, by a testimony to the truth as I had found it in Jesus. I do not remember what I said, but I am sure that I preached about “perfect love,” for I was in the enjoyment of that blessing, though perfectly innocent of terminology, and I have been at it ever since.

I record this narrative of the way in which I have been led by the good hand of my God, with the hope and earnest prayer that He may make it a comfort and a blessing to those

who may read it. It is both a duty and a privilege to “show forth the praises” of the Lord Jesus. It is of Him and His work that I speak, and not of myself, or “frames of mind.” It was Jesus that I found as a complete Savior. And it is Jesus that abides as my sanctification, wisdom and redemption. It is His blood that cleanses from all sin, and His Spirit alone that protects from the assaults of the devil. It is to the Holy Spirit that I look for the power that preserves from committing sin, and He is able to do it, and to “keep us from falling.”

The special experience just related is now twenty-three years in the past, and might be a dead and forgotten thing, except that moment by moment the blood has cleansed, and the Spirit has indwelt in answer to a perpetuated faith and obedience to God. During all these years the mode of my life, which was inaugurated in that hour, when I received the “baptism with the Holy Ghost,” has been totally different from that which preceded it. It began a new era in my Christian life. I have had abundant time and occasion to scrutinize the reality and nature of the work wrought then, and perpetuated ever since. I have often had such a sense of my own unworthiness and human imperfections as to be well nigh overwhelmed. But then I had settled it that Jesus was my worthiness, and as to human or legal perfection, David had seen the “end” of that long ago. In and of myself I am neither holier nor stronger than before.

“But this I do find We two are so joined, That He’ll not be in glory And leave me behind.”

What I am, I am by the grace of God. What I do, I do “through Christ who strengtheneth me.” And if God cannot “work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” we cannot retain our experience. We must “work out our salvation.” “The willing and obedient shall eat the fat of the land,” and none others.

But entire sanctification, and the filling of the Spirit, means a quickened conscience, as tender as the apple of the eye. It means a keen sense of the revealed word of God. It means an obedience that does not stand to debate and reason, and wonder about results. It means the priestly service of a true Levite, who is bearing the ark of God some paces in advance of the rank and file of the slow marching church, that has much of its inheritance on the wilderness side of Jordan.

It is only when men are really “crucified with Christ” and “filled with the Holy Ghost” that they are fitted to act as the forerunners of the Lord Jesus. For all such must pass through their Gethsemanes alone, in a distant likeness to Christ. Too advanced for the multitude, they are even strange to the best of friends. Then there is the consciousness of unrequited toil, unacknowledged sacrifice and unappreciated service, that would be fearfully galling were it not for that sweet sense of privilege, which comes of “putting on Christ,” and seeking “the reward that comes from God only.” And self-devotion is the secret of all heroic life. Calling forth the very best there is in us, and always strengthened by a tonic of “bitter herbs.” Oh! The blessedness of trusting God to keep all of our accounts, sure that He will see to it that we get our dues, without any jealous anxiety on our part.

All of this, and much more, is involved, if we continue to “walk in the light as He is in the light, and have fellowship with God.”

And it is in this matter of obeying Him, of keeping His commandments, of “walking as he walked,” that multitudes draw back and lapse into their old ways of thinking and acting. When “iniquity abounds the love of many shall wax cold,” many “hearts are overcharged with surfeiting and cares of this life.” And then the spirit of persecution is still rife in the church. The same generation carries it on, that “were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.”

Paul's custom was to "reason and persuade" and "warn," though "all men forsook" him, which indeed they did. But he lived in the thirteenth of Corinthians, and "the Lord stood with him and strengthened him." The family of "Demas" (popular) is a very large one, and, true to the instincts of the old nature, "love this present world," and will always go back to it, rather than go forward with Christ, at the cost of being unpopular and suffering reproach. To "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings," is almost a lost art in our day. Oh! That we may believe that Jesus means what He says when He bids us "Rejoice and leap for joy, when men shall hate you and shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."

Now the secret of victory is in trusting God and holding still in quietness and assurance; allowing Satan to stretch the last link in his chain without you quivering. And if thus kept in the love of God, and in sweetness and patience, while "fighting the fight of faith," we shall "always triumph through Christ." Glory be to Jesus! It takes a little time for Haman to build his gallows, and get things all fixed, but Mordecai has no concern about it, whether it takes a time longer or shorter, since the coming execution is not to be his, but Haman's. He simply did his duty without compromise.

"Oh for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!"

How the lives of the old saints who "quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, and waxed valiant in fight," inspire us with loyalty and courage! How much more such lives of faith in the Son of God, and victory through Him, when lived all about us! There are some such. May God increase the number! I pray that these utterances may be used of Him to assist some into the land of victorious warfare, and encourage others already there to push the battle to the gate. I have written for such as these and not for the "wise," or "the disputer of this world"; not for such as are "ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth." For these I pray, and for myself, that I may more and more be enabled to publish this great salvation, and continually to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." Glory to His name!



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