



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

**THE TWO COVENANTS
AND
THE SECOND BLESSING
BY
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George Mueller and his Second Conversion

IN the life of George Mueller (1805-1898) of Bristol there was an epoch, four years after his conversion, to which he ever after looked back, and of which he often spoke, as his entrance into the true Christian life.

In an address given to ministers and workers after his ninetieth birthday, he spoke thus of it himself: "That leads to another thought---the full surrender of the heart to God. *I was converted* in November 1825, *but I only came, into the full surrender of the heart four years later*, in July 1829. The love of money was gone, the love of place was gone, the love of position was gone, the love of worldly pleasures and engagements was gone. God, God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him; I wanted nothing else. And by the grace of God this has remained, and has made me a happy man, an exceedingly happy man, and it led me to care only about the things of God. I ask, affectionately, my beloved brethren, have you fully surrendered the heart to God, or is there this thing or that thing with which you are taken up irrespective of God? I read a little of the Scriptures before, but preferred other books, but since that time the revelation He has made of Himself has become unspeakably blessed to me, and I can say from my heart, God is an infinitely lovely Being. Oh! be not satisfied until in your inmost soul you can say, God is an infinitely lovely Being!"

The account he gives of this change in his journal is as follows. He speaks of one whom he had heard preach at Teignmouth, where he had gone for the sake of his health. "Though I did not like all he said, yet I saw a gravity and solemnity in him different from the rest. Through the instrumentality of this brother the Lord bestowed a great blessing upon me, for which I shall have cause to thank Him throughout eternity. God then began to show me that the Word of God alone is to be our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can only be explained by the Holy Spirit, and that in our day, as well as in former times, He is the Teacher of His people. *The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally understood before that time.* I had not before seen that the Holy Spirit alone can teach us about our state by nature, show us our need of a Saviour, enable us to believe in Christ, explain to us the Scriptures, help us in preaching, etc.

"It was my beginning to understand this point in particular which had a great effect on me; for the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience by laying aside commentaries and almost every other book, and simply reading the Word of God and studying it. The result of this was that the first evening that I shut myself into my room to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously. *But the particular difference was that I received real strength in my soul in doing so.*

"In addition to this, it pleased the Lord to lead me to see a *higher standard of devotedness* than I had seen before. He led me, in a measure, to see what is my glory in this world, even to be despised, to be poor and mean with Christ I returned to London much better in body. And as to my soul, the change was so great that it was like a second conversion."

In another passage he speaks thus: "I fell into the snare into which so many young believers fall, the reading of religious books is preferred to the Scriptures. Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant of that precious Book which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written; therefore I ought to read again this Book of books most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation. Instead of acting thus, and being led by my ignorance of the Word to study it more, my difficulty of understanding it made me careless of reading it, and then, like many believers, I practically preferred for the first four years of my Christian life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the Living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say, for all true knowledge must be derived by the Spirit from the Word. This lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For it is the truth makes us free, by delivering us from the slavery of the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Word proves it, the experience of the saints proves it, and also my own experience most decidedly proves it. For when it pleased the Lord, in August 1829, to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different.

"If anyone would ask me how he may read the Scriptures most profitably, I would answer him:-

"1. Above all he must seek to have it settled in his own mind *that God alone, by the Holy spirit, can teach him*, and that, therefore, as God will be inquired for all blessings, it becomes him to seek for God's blessing previous to reading, and also while reading.

"2. He should also have it settled in his mind that though *the Holy spirit is the best and sufficient Teacher*, yet that He does not always teach immediately when we desire it, and that, therefore, *we may have to entreat Him again and again* for the explanation of certain passages; but that *He will surely teach us at last*, if we will seek for light prayerfully, patiently, and for the glory of God."

Just one more passage, from an address given on his ninetieth birthday: "For sixty-nine years and ten months he had been a very happy man. That he attributed to two things. He had maintained a good conscience, not wilfully going on in a course he knew to be contrary to the mind of God; he did not, of course, mean that he was perfect; he was poor, weak, and sinful. Secondly, he attributed it to his love of Holy Scripture. Of late years his practice had been four times every year to read through the Scriptures, with application to his own heart, and with meditation; and that day he was a greater lover of God's Word than he was sixty-six years ago. It was this, and maintaining a good conscience, that had given him all these years peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

In connection with what has been said about the New Covenant being a ministration of the Spirit this narrative is most instructing. It shows us how George Mueller's power lay in God's revealing to him the work of the Holy Spirit. He writes that up to the time of that change he had "not experimentally understood the office of the Holy Spirit." We speak much of George Mueller's power in prayer; it is of importance to remember that that power was entirely owing to his love of, and faith in, God's Word. But it is of still more importance to notice that his power to believe God's Word so fully was entirely owing to his having learned to know the Holy Spirit as his Teacher. When the words of God are explained to us, and made living within us by the Holy Spirit, they have a power to awaken faith which they otherwise have not. The Word then brings us into contact with God, comes to us as from God direct, and binds our whole life to Him.

When the Holy Spirit thus feeds us on the Word, our whole life comes under His power, and the fruit is seen, not only in the power of prayer, but as much in the power of obedience. Notice how Mr. Mueller tells us this, that the two secrets of his great happiness were, his great love for God's Word, and his *ever maintaining a good conscience*, not knowingly doing anything against the will of God. In giving himself to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, as he tells us in his birthday address, he made a full surrender of the entire heart to God, to be ruled by the Word. He gave himself to obey that Word in everything, he believed that the Holy Spirit gave the grace to obey, and so he was able to maintain a walk [free from knowingly transgressing God's law](#). This is a point he always insisted on. So he writes, in regard to a life of dependence upon God: "*It will not do-it is not possible ---to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is.*" Again, speaking of the strengthening of faith: "It is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an *upright heart and a good conscience*, and therefore do not knowingly and habitually indulge in those things which are contrary to the mind of God. All my confidence in God, all my leaning upon Him in the hour of trial, will be gone if I have a guilty conscience, and do not seek to put away this guilty conscience, but still continue to do things which are contrary to His mind."

A careful perusal of this testimony will show us how the chief points usually insisted upon in connection with the second blessing are all found here. There is the [full surrender of the heart](#) to be taught and led alone by the Spirit of God. There is the higher standard of holiness which is at once set up. There is the tender desire in nothing to offend God, but to have at all times a good conscience, that testifies that we are pleasing to God. And there is the faith that where the Holy Spirit reveals to us in the Word the will of God, [He gives the sufficient strength for the doing of it](#). "The particular difference," he says of reading with faith of the Holy Spirit's teaching, "was that I received real strength in my soul in doing so." No wonder that he said: *The change was so great, that it was like a second conversion.*

All centres in this, that we believe in the New Covenant and its promises as a ministration of the Spirit. That belief may come to some suddenly, as to George Mueller; or it may dawn upon others by degrees. Let all say to God that

they are ready to put their whole heart and life under the rule of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, teaching them by the Word, and strengthening them by His grace. He enables us to live pleasing to God.

NOTE D. -CHAP. X *Canon Battersby*

I Do not know that I can find a better case by which to illustrate the place Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant, takes in leading into its full blessing than that of the founder of the Keswick Convention, the late Canon Battersby. It was at the Oxford Convention in 1873 that he witnessed to having "received a new and distinct blessing to which he had been a stranger before." For more than twenty-five years he had been most diligent as a minister of the gospel, and, as appears from his journals, most faithful in seeking to maintain a close walk with God. But he was ever disturbed by the consciousness of being overcome by sin. So far back as 1853 he had written, "I feel again how very far I am from enjoying habitually that peace and love and joy which Christ promises. I must confess that I have it not; and that very ungentle and unchristian tempers often strive within me for the mastery." When in 1873 he read what was being published of the Higher Life, the effect was to render him utterly dissatisfied with himself and his state. There were indeed difficulties he could not quite understand in that teaching, but he felt that he must either reach forward to better things, nothing less than redemption from *all* iniquities, or fall back more and more into worldliness and sin. At Oxford [he heard an address on the rest of faith](#). It opened his eyes to the truth that a believer who really longs for deliverance from sinning must simply take Christ at His word, and reckon, without feeling, on Him to do His work of cleansing and keeping the soul. "I thought of the sufficiency of Jesus, and said, I *will rest* in Him, and I did rest in Him. I was afraid lest it should be a passing emotion; but I found that a presence of Jesus was graciously manifested to me in a way I knew not before, and that *I did abide in Him*. I do not want to rest in these emotions, but just to believe, and to cling to Christ as my all." He was a man of very reserved nature, but; felt it a duty ere the close of the Conference to confess publicly his past shortcoming, and testify openly to his having entered upon a new and definite experience.

In a paper written not long after this he pointed out what the steps are leading to this experience. *First*, a clear view of the possibilities of Christian attainment---a life in word and action, habitually governed by the Spirit, in constant communion with God, and continual victory over sin through abiding in Christ. *Then*, the deliberate purpose of the will for a full renunciation of all the idols of the flesh or spirit, and a will-surrender to Christ. And then this last and important step: *We must look up to, and wait upon our ascended Lord for all that we need to enable us to do this.*

A careful perusal of this very brief statement will prove how everything centred here in Christ. The surrender for a life of continual communion and victory is to be to Christ. The strength for that life is to be in Him and from Him, by faith in Him. And *the power* to make the full surrender and rest in Him *was to be waited for from Him, alone.*

In June 1875 the first Keswick Convention was held. In the circular calling it, we read: "Many are everywhere thirsting that they may be brought to enjoy more of the Divine presence in their daily life, and a fuller manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power, whether in subduing the lusts of the flesh, or in enabling them to offer more effective service to God. It is certainly God's will that His children should be satisfied in regard to these longings, and there are those who can testify that He has satisfied them, and does satisfy them with daily fresh manifestations of His grace and power." The results of the very first Convention were most blessed, so that after its close he wrote: "*There is a very remarkable resemblance in the testimonies I have since received as to the nature of the blessing obtained, viz., the ability given to make a full surrender to the Lord, and the consequent experience of an abiding peace, far exceeding anything previously experienced.*" Through all the chief thought, was Christ, first drawing and enabling the soul to rest in Him, and then meeting it with the fulfilment of its desire, [the abiding experience](#) of His power to keep it in victory over sin, and communion with God.

And what was the fruit of this new experience? Eight years later Canon Battersby spoke; " It is now eight years since that I knew this blessing as my own. I cannot say that I have never for a moment ceased to trust the Lord to keep me. But I can say that so long as I have trusted Him, He has kept me; He has been faithful."