



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

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(Methodist)

From being a pleasure-loving, Sabbath-breaking, gambling, swearing, drinking, skeptical sinner, the grace of God made me a rejoicing heir of heaven, and by the witness of His spirit with my spirit, assured me of my adoption into His family.

Glory be to God! Of this radical and most satisfactory change, this new creation I never have had, and I think I never can have doubt. I desired it should be borne in mind, I had a clear conversion.

After conversion I had a soul filled with a burning desire to lead others to a knowledge of the truth. I joined the Church on probation, in March, 1856, and was received into full membership in September or the same year. I received an exhorter's license on November 23, 1856, and was licensed as a local preacher on the 8th of July, 1859. On the 7th of April, 1860, I was admitted on trial in the Newark Conference, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, had tried to do what I could to bring sinners to the cross.

The Lord favored me with some success, and sinners were converted. At Summerville, N. J., in 1861-2, a great many were saved: but during 1862, I became greatly prejudiced against Mrs. Palmer and her method of promoting the work of scriptural holiness; I did not agree with her in advocating the obtaining of the blessing of purity as a second blessing, distinct from the blessing of regeneration. In fact, my notions of the subject became much confused, and my prejudice deepened.

In the Spring of 1863 I was sent to Perth Amboy, and before leaving the Conference, was informed, very much to my dissatisfaction, that there were several Palmerites on my charge, and it would be well for me to be some what careful, and avoid offending such in my ministration. I found several precious souls walking in the clear light of full salvation.

Never were two years spent more pleasantly with any people, than were two years with the Church at Perth Amboy. Prosperity was given; and yet I was greatly troubled. My members gave me no rest; I preached to sinners, and prayed for sinners; yet these sanctified members would persist in praying for entire sanctification of their pastor. Though these prayers were not answered during my stay upon that charge, yet, I must confess, I began to seriously reflect whether I might not be in error, and was not falling short of my privilege in the Gospel, and failing to measure up to the requirements of this great standard.

At my next appointment I was not so troubled by the sanctified;-- but One that is greater, the blessed Holy Ghost, led me into a thorough examination of myself. I now saw, that, though I enjoyed a sense of God's favor, there was still need of a more thorough work; there were needless self indulgences; the use of tobacco now, as never before, appeared to me as a sin. By the grace of God I was humbled, and a deeper work of grace wrought in me; but still my old prejudices were clinging to me concerning the subject of holiness.

In February, 1866, I heard that Dr. and Mrs. Palmer were laboring in the Central M. E. Church, Newark, N. J. Having a desire to hear them for myself, I went to Newark for that purpose and attended meetings on the 14th and 15th of February, -- and to the praise of God, I must confess, my prejudices were

removed, and I returned to my charge a seeker for this precious gift of power. I think it was about this time that the Rev. Henry Belden, (Congregational minister), moved upon my charge, occupied a house immediately in front of the parsonage, and kindly took part in our weekly prayer-meeting, and frequently worshipped with my congregation. Oh! How much I felt need of thorough work, and I sought it the more earnestly.

At last, on Sunday, July 29, 1866, after more than four months hungering and thirsting for full redemption, I preached from Dan. 5:27, "Thou art weighted in the balances, and art found wanting." I urged upon my people the importance of coming up to the Bible standards in our religious experiences, and the language of the text fell back upon my soul with tremendous power, "Thou art weighted in the balances, and art found wanting."

I could endure it no longer; I must, at any sacrifice, however great, have this whole matter settled. Accordingly, the next morning I started for the Pennsgrove Camp-meeting, giving no reasons to my family for doing this, though they knew that for years I had strongly objected to meetings of this character. I reached the camp-ground on Monday evening.

And, now, I wish it to be distinctly understood I was not a backslider. I rejoiced in God; the witness of the Spirit to my adoption was perfectly satisfactory; I was saved from my sins; I wanted the enduing "with power from on high." I attended meetings in those tents where the subject of holiness was made a specialty. I sought the blessing very earnestly; I bowed at those places prepared for seekers; I thought I made an entire consecration of myself to God; I said, "My all to Christ I've given," -- but I had no sense of anything different from what I had enjoyed before. So matters continued till Wednesday: throughout the morning of this day I was unspeakably happy, but after dinner I went into the Sharptown tent, and I now felt in my heart the old opposition to a distinct profession of this precious grace. Could I go back to my charge, and speak of this in the public congregation? Could I speak of it to my wife? I thought not. I rose to speak of my difficulties in the tent; I saw the folly of my cowardice, and standing there, in addition to my other consecration, I surrendered my will, and at three o'clock, as the trumpet was blown for the afternoon preaching, on the 1st of August, 1866, I entered upon such an experience as I had never realized before. Others may speak of it as they choose, but I must humbly confess to the glory of the Master, that then and there, I was "wholly sanctified throughout, soul, body, and spirit." Hallelujah! It appears to me that, since that hour, though frequently sorely tried, I have continually grown in grace, and rejoiced in the great salvation.

After the Pennsgrove meeting, I was permitted to attend the Centenary Camp-meeting at Barnsboro, N. J., after which I returned to my charge, and my first Sabbath at home, after receiving the blessing of purity, was a day never to be forgotten. I entered the pulpit with a deep sense of God's presence with me; almost overwhelmed. But now I was tried in a peculiar manner; Brother Belden was present, three brethren from leading churches in Newark were there, and it was suggested to me that I had better defer all allusion to this great matter till another time. Oh no! I could not do this; the grace of God had not been received in vain. I spoke, and the power of God rested upon the congregation; six or eight of my people testified to the power of Jesus' blood to cleanse from all sin, and at least fifty stood up, and there declared their desire for full salvation; this was on the 19th of August -- and very soon after, on the 4th of September, a glorious revival broke out on my charge, which lasted till conference, (twenty-three weeks), during which time about ninety of them joined the churches upon the charge, and some entered into the glorious rest of perfect love.

I was now sent to my present field of labors, Belvedere, N. J., and from conference till now, God has favored this charge with a most remarkable, powerful, and glorious revival of religion. From conference till the Vineland meeting the work was confined chiefly to the membership, -- though there were in that time several accessions to the Church by probation.

Bless God for Vineland Camp-meeting! The bower of prayer; -- especially the meeting in front of the stand of Brother Gorham's sermon, a time never to be forgotten; -- my soul was blessed again and again with the Holy Ghost and the powers from on High. Hallelujah!

From Vineland to Morristown meeting; and here it was my privilege to work for, and witness glorious triumphs on the side of full redemption. The work of sanctification and pardon went on simultaneously.

From Morristown to Belvedere: wave after wave of power now rolled in upon my soul, and also upon my congregation, till the morning of September 8th, when the Spirit was given in a wonderful manner. That night two persons came forward for prayers; and from that time till the present, (more than fourteen weeks), the work has gone on; nearly two hundred and fifty people have knelt at the communion rail as penitents, over two hundred have been converted, and of these, one hundred and sixty-five are now connected with the Church. The work has included among its subjects, some of the leading men of the place; a judge, a lawyer, an editor, a former tavern keeper, some that were moral, and many that were very profane; fifty-two are heads of families, and in instances whole families have been converted.

To God be the glory, both now and forever! And may thousands of our Israel son be set all on fire with the love of God, perfectly shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them!

O, when I saw the blood,
And looked at Him who shed it,
My right was seen to peace with God,
And I with transport read it.
And found myself to Him brought nigh,
And victory became my cry.

My joy is in the Blood,
The news of which hath told me
That spotless as the Lamb of God
My Father can behold me.
And all my boast is in heaven
Through whom this full salvation came.

My hope is in the blood.
Of being soon in glory,
And learning with the saved of God
The fullness of that story
Which made by blood-washed spirit cry,
And shout aloud for victory.

Source: "Pioneer Experiences" by Phoebe Palmer

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