



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

A Pot of Oil

By George D. Watson

"The Anointed Life as Applied to Prayer, the Mental Faculties, the Affections and Christian Service"

G.D. Watson, (1845-1923) became known as "The Apostle to the Sanctified" due to his labours in urging the sanctified to go on to fully make manifest the exceeding greatness of God's power.

1. A POT OF OIL

The events recorded in the Bible were cast into a mould of divine providence for the purpose of revealing special truths to all generations. In the days before iron steamships, ship-builders would search the great forests and select those trees best adapted for making staunch vessels for transporting merchandise or people across the seas. In like manner, when the Holy Spirit was constructing the Bible, He searched out from human history those persons, and places, and events, and things that were most perfectly fitted for the forming of a great ship of divine instruction, and the carrying of the full cargo of truth over the seas of time, for enlightenment and feeding of the souls of men. No Scripture was written merely for the sake of the people then living, or as a cold, secular history. One of these items of events which is loaded with precious truth is that recorded in 2 Kings, chapter 4, where in answer to the prayer of Elisha the Lord multiplied the oil for the widow, to deliver her from debt and provide her substance to live on. In reading the account there given we notice seven points that can be made to apply to ourselves.

1. *The servant of the Lord in debt.* To be in debt is to be in bondage, and was never God's purpose, as applied either to money or to the spirit of obedience. Debt is the rod of Satan with which he scourges the children of men. Debt, dirt and the devil belong together. The poor widow mentioned in this passage had been left by her husband with an old debt against the family, and although her husband was a preacher, "one of the sons of the prophets," yet in his poverty he had gone in debt to a rich, hard-hearted neighbor, and perhaps it had been increased by usury; and now a crisis was reached, which wrung a pitiful cry from the heart of the widow and mother. In those days when the Holy Ghost had not been given as the universal Comforter, the prophet Elisha stood in many instances to fill the office of the Holy Spirit to God's people, and so this woman cried to Elisha as he was the special mouthpiece of God's will to the people. Here is a picture of multitudes of the Lord's people today; they are servants of God, but by being in debt they are hampered financially and spiritually, for debt wears heavily on the mind of an honest person who intends to pay it. It saddens the heart, destroys cheerfulness, weakens courage, brings a certain sense of degradation and, as Scripture says, "the borrower is servant to the lender." George Muller tells us that if we are in debt we should humbly repent of it the same as with other sins, and promise the Lord that we will not go in debt again, and keep that Scripture commanding us to "owe no man anything but to love one another." This is the way to please God. But the debt of this poor widow has a broader and spiritual application. There are many who are the servants of God who are yet in legal bondage, and are not yet paying the debt of perfect love to God which we owe to Him. The first of all laws is that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

This is the return which will satisfy the Lord for His infinite goodness to us; it does not pay Him for His infinite

goodness, but it is what He asks. Now as long as a Christian fails of loving God with all his heart, though he may serve God in a measure, he is constantly running in debt to his heavenly Father, not a debt of sentiment, but really and scripturally, he is, according to God's law, failing to pay what the boundless love of God has required.

2. *The demand of the creditor.* She said, "The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." Perhaps he was a hard-hearted, exacting creditor, but he had the civil law on his side, which became the very instrument of torture to this mother's heart, for how could she bear to have her two little sons torn from her side and bound out for service until they should reach their maturity? Have our hearts not ached at seeing similar sufferings on many a poor family resulting from an old debt? Let all who read this avoid going in debt as you would avoid a deadly disease. But this circumstance has an application to the demands of divine law upon our souls.

This creditor is a good type of the law of God which demands the full payment of perfect love. Let us remember that the law in its letter knows no mercy or deviation and, although Paul says it is holy, just and good, and has an office to fill of exact righteousness, and is essential in God's economy, yet it is not the minister of grace; that is reserved for the personal Christ Himself, for the law came by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ. When a servant of God fails to pay the debt of loving God with all his heart, the law is not thereby repealed, and will soon manifest its exacting nature by putting the spiritual debtor into legal bondage.

God's law is not a myth, nor a changeable option, but a real, divine spiritual force, and is applied to the soul by the judicial office of the Holy Spirit, just as really as grace is applied by the Comforter office of the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget, as a great many persons have done, that the Holy Ghost administers the law of Mt. Sinai to the conscience, just as literally as He administers the atonement to the heart of the obedient believer. This explains that vast world of religious life and experience known as "legal bondage." A soul in the early joys of justification does not feel any bondage of service, but if it fails to go on to the perfection of love, the law will soon put in its claim for perfect love, and if the subject still fails to yield it, the law will seize on that soul and make a "bondman" out of him, just as the creditor in this passage was going to do with the widow's sons. When this bondage is enacted in a Christian his whole life becomes one of restraint and constraint and, like the Jews in the wilderness who were not permitted to go back to Egypt, on the one hand, and not able to go up into Canaan on the other, but were constantly subjected to marchings and going about, making little progress, his very religion grows tiresome until he longs for death more than he thirsts for the fullness and sweetness of the living God. Such a soul feels it must serve the Lord, and yet there is a bondage in its prayers, in its spiritual reading, in its benevolence, in giving its tenth of the income to the Lord, in religious testimony or Christian work of any kind. The creditor of the law has really seized upon the inner, delicate fountains of the soul, and its grasp will never be relinquished until such a one yields himself up to an unlimited consecration, and to loving God just as the law requires. Many thousands of sincere religious people are in this condition.

3. *Only a pot of oil.* When Elisha asked her if she had any resources whatever by which to pay the debt, she said, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." Little did she dream that her little pot of oil could be attached to divine power and turned into a fountain of wealth. Little did Moses dream that the shepherd's rod in his hand could be made the vehicle of scourging Egypt and emancipating his people. Little did Dorcas imagine that her sewing needle would be the instrument of showing forth her saintly charity to all generations. How the dealings of God forever soar above all the conjectures of men, and His marvelous providence walks through the heavens, and uses the seemingly trifling things of life as stepping-stones.

Here we have an insight into God's government, how He is constantly joining the supernatural upon the natural, taking the little things and weak things of the creature and welding them to omnipotence and grace. Nothing is more wonderful than the way God unites Himself to created beings and things. He did not ignore the little pot of oil, but made it the nucleus of His exhaustless supply. God honors things that men despise, because He is God and He cannot despise anything in the universe except sin, and so a pot of oil, or a sewing needle, will be taken into His service just the same as a planet or a solar system. God does not bless nothing. There must be something as the basis of His blessing. This pot of oil, like the few loaves and fishes, would not of itself supply the demand, but it was a fraction of a supply, and instead of casting it aside, as man would do, the Infinite Creator saw it was large enough to take hold of and be utilized in producing an abundance. This is the key to God's operations, both in nature and in grace.

This pot of oil is the counterpart of something in every human being which, if utterly yielded to God's disposal, will be made the channel of endless wealth and blessing. It matters not how poor and fallen and helpless and utterly undone any poor creature may be, there is always some gift in one's life or being, some capacity of heart, or mind, or will, or voice, or hand, or personal magnetism, some unknown capacity of faith, or labor which, if in humility and obedience is put into the hands of God, He will gladly turn into a river of blessing beyond all that the poor, helpless soul could ask or think. God is able and willing to pull us through the greatest extremities, if there be only something in us that He can take hold of which will bear the strain of the divine pull. There are always great numbers of professed Christians who seem to desire that the Lord should use them, and they look with surprise and amazement at the work some other Christians do, and the extent to which the Lord uses them, and heave a sigh that they cannot be of more service. They are always waiting for greater gifts, larger fields, finer facilities, more definite leading, and more flattering opportunities, never dreaming that at this very hour there is some little thing within their reach, some humble gift, some special adaptation in their make-up, some little pot of oil hid away of which they take no account which, if utterly yielded in prayer to the Lord, God would gladly make an instrument of their everlasting fortune. Humble souls all around them, with less money, less talent, less social position, less physical or mental endowments, are throwing them into eclipse, and laying up treasures in Heaven beyond all calculation. The fact is, too many gifts are often a hindrance, by hindering the spirit of utter self-despair and entire dependence on God alone. It is not the measure of what we have that tells the most, but the measure in which our littleness is given up to the Lord, and led out into His purposes, and into the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord shows His glory by accomplishing amazing results with little things, and on the other hand Satan shows his wretched destructiveness by taking the greatest and reducing them to ruin. The Lord will take a poor hunch-back in utter poverty, without education, from a drunkard's home, as in the case of Dorothea Trudel, and work out through her a career of prayer and faith which will tell in eternity infinitely beyond what Satan could do with a million gifted Bonapartes or Byrons, because the little hunch-back girl had a pot of oil in the shape of humble prayer which was taken hold upon by the Holy Spirit.

4. *Borrow empty vessels.* As soon as Elisha found something in the poor widow's possession which could be utilized for her relief, the next thing was to provide room for the Lord to work His miracle. God works very fast and very lavishly when the time has come, and all the conditions are met. This command of the prophet was a tax upon the widow's faith, for the step was especially the step of faith, as she had never seen or heard of a pot of oil being multiplied. The command to borrow empty vessels in abundance, before ever seeing the means of filling them, required of her to act just as if she had Elisha's faith, and to trust and obey on a naked promise without feeling and before seeing any miracle. In like manner, when the Lord can find something in us that He can utilize, and it is utterly yielded to His will, the next step is for us to bring empty vessels, to make room for the inflow of the abundance of life and light. We also must pass this line of simple faith without feeling, or any kind of evidence except the inspired promise of God, and go out on lines of obedience, like Abraham, not knowing whither God may lead.

In many ways this same process has to be gone through, and whether it be in justification, or sanctification, or trusting for our health, or for open doors of service, or for financial relief, or for blessing upon others, in various ways we are to yield the pot of oil and go forth making room for great things. We must bring a mind which has been emptied of old prejudices, old traditional theology, human philosophy and false science, a mind so utterly humble and empty that the Lord can reveal to it great, bright worlds of truth and beauty, and such floods of spiritual understanding as we have never dreamed of. We must bring hearts that are emptied of multiplied earthly attachments and mere pious sentimentalism, old friendships, old day dreams, many a fond hope, many a tormenting fear, many an affection that has seemed so churchly and religious; emptied of anxiety and foreboding, and long cherished feelings, that the Holy Spirit may flood the love nature with great, strong attachments and divinely inspired loves which will never pass away. We must bring empty hands that have renounced our own works, and all planning and wire-pulling for self; hands that hold on to no toys, to no treasure; hands that bring no human stipulation or treatise of compromise, but so empty that they can grasp firmly and constantly the sword of the Spirit, the cross, and the crown, or the plow handles that God may put into them. God fills our nature and fills our lives just in proportion as they are emptied for Him. A great many suppose that we are to be emptied only of that which is recognized as sin, but there are many things which could not be classified as sin, even in the Scripture sense, which are a positive hindrance to the great ocean inflow of

God's power and knowledge into us.

Thousands of Christians allow their very religion to get between them and God, and this is true of the Protestant as well as the Papist. The Holy Spirit would love to fill professed Christians with pure love, with light on divine healing, and with bright floods of Scriptural knowledge concerning the coming of Jesus and His reign on the earth, and the understanding of Scripture on kindred themes, but their very church creeds, their old sermons, their stereotyped prayers, their devotion to what they think is good and holy, blinds their eyes, hardens their hearts, and fills them so full that the mighty ocean of God's light and love goes rolling past them but is unable to enter.

Oftentimes one's prosperity, or friends, or religious work, prevents him from making room for the inflow of divine things.

Oh, it is the miserable goody good things that in so many ways hinder God from filling us with His choicest and fullest blessings. A good thing may become bad if it prevents us from getting the best. And even sanctified souls may be so filled, in their reason, with rigid theories, or attachments to holiness associations, and pious friends, and traditional theology, as to see nothing in the marvelous Scriptures on the return of Jesus, and the reign of the saints over the nations, and allow themselves to speak foolishly and ignorantly of Jesus as a healer of disease. We understand the Scriptures to the extent that our minds are emptied of self-opinion and human tradition. Our hearts glow with sweetness, tenderest love in proportion as they are emptied of secondary affections. It takes faith to bring empty vessels.

5. Shut in with God. Elisha told the widow that having gathered the empty vessels, and brought them into the house, "thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons." They were to be alone with God, for they were not dealing with the laws of nature, nor human government, nor the church, nor the priesthood, nor even with the great prophet of God, but they must needs be isolated from all creatures, from all leaning on circumstances, from all traditions of history, from all props of human reason, and swung off, as it were, into the vast blue interstellar space, hanging on God alone, in touch with the fountain of all miracles. Here is a part in the program of God's dealings, a secret chamber of isolation in prayer and faith, which every soul must enter that is very fruitful. There are times and places where God will form a mysterious wall around us, and cut way all props, and all the ordinary ways of doing things, and shut us up to something divine, which is utterly new and unexpected, something that old circumstances do not fit into, where we do not know just what will happen, where God is cutting the cloth of our lives on a new pattern, where He makes us look to Himself.

Most religious people live in a sort of treadmill life, where they can calculate almost everything that happens; but the souls that God leads out into immediate and special dealings, He shuts in where all they know is that God has hold of them, and is dealing with them, and their expectation is from Him alone. Like this widow, we must be detached from outward things and attached inwardly to the Lord alone in order to see His wonders. The Psalmist says of sailors, "that they go into the deep and do business in great waters, and they behold God's wonders in the deep waters." So, in order to see God work, we must penetrate into His workshop, be shut in with Him.

6. Pouring out the oil. "Thou shalt pour out from the pot of oil into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full." Up to this point the whole process had been one of dry faith and obedience, without signs or evidences, apart from the simple word of the prophet. At the moment that the widow took the little pot of oil and began to pour it out into any empty vessel, at that moment the omnipotent Spirit of God began to multiply the oil. Then, and only then, the miracle was wrought, omnipotence was uncovered, the unseen hand of the mighty God was made bare, and she and her sons had all the evidence they needed. This is God's method of working still, for He hides Himself until our faith and obedience have touched the point, or the condition, which He has prescribed.

The miracle was wrought right at the point where the oil fell from the little pot into the large vessel, because the pot never got empty, and when she had finished pouring it out it was still full of the same oil she had before, but the oil which filled those large vessels was all fresh and sweet as when first pressed from the ripe olives. In feeding the five thousand men, the bread and fish were multiplied at the point where they left the hand of Jesus and were passed into the hands of the disciples, and just as soon as Jesus broke a loaf and gave it to the disciples

it became a whole loaf in their hands, and another whole loaf in Jesus' hands, and each half loaf became instantly a whole loaf, but never until the loaf was broken. It is the breaking and the giving out of things that causes the increase. The increase of a grain of corn never begins until it is broken by the sprouting in the moist earth and climbs up into a stalk with a hundred grains to one. The water that flowed from the rock in Horeb fell right from the spot which was smitten by the rod of Moses, and Paul tells us that the water did not come from the interior recesses of the rock, but it flowed out from the living Christ, who stood on the rock, for God said to Moses, "I will stand upon the rock when you smite it." If we put all these instances together it gives us a peep into the divine laboratory and we see how the wonder-working God works His beautiful miracle of abundant supply always in connection with the giving forth or the breaking to pieces or the outpouring of the creature. And right here lies the glory and wonderful fruitfulness of our highest service to God- in breaking ourselves and pouring ourselves without stint or fear or a mental reservation in His service.

As the widow poured out the oil the God of Israel wrought the increase.

The same Lord who made the olive tree, and caused it to suck up the juices of the earth and transform them into the olive berry with its rich oil, now stepped in at a poor widow's emergency and, laying aside the olive tree, became Himself the real divine olive tree, and produced the oil without the intervention of material chemistry.

This is the secret of the way the same Jehovah-Jesus works today in communicating peace and love and light to our souls and the imparting of health to our bodies. But if the widow had not poured out the oil it would never have multiplied, and if we do not pour out our faith, our gifts, our love, our money, our thoughts, our physical strength and the very substance of our lives for the Lord, and do it out of love to Him, the blessed miracle of increase in all these lines will not be brought for us. The stream never stopped flowing until the vessels were filled and she stopped pouring, and then the oil stayed. As long as we keep pouring out, the Holy Spirit will cooperate in a blessed increase. If we write out a thought that God gives us, there will come several other thoughts, deeper and sweeter, to take its place.

If we give our health, though feeble, at the command of God He will give us fresh vigor. If we give our money, He will give us more. If we utter forth kindness and love, the Holy Spirit will enlarge and sweeten the fountains of our hearts. How few learn this lesson- that we lose by saving and we gain by giving.

7. Paying the debt and living beside. This humble woman, when she saw the vessels all full of fresh golden oil, had enough grace not to take things in her own hand or act rashly, but she went and told the man of God. This was one of the most beautiful exhibitions of her character. Many souls will cry to God in their distress, and as soon as they are blessed or made prosperous, think they can manage their blessings, and fail to ask the Lord what to do with their benefactions. Prosperity ruins many more than does adversity. To keep humble and teachable under success is the highest test of all human character, and only a few deeply religious people are able to bear it.

The prophet said, "Go sell the oil and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children off the rest." So God had answered her cry above all she had asked or thought by not only enabling her to get out of debt, but He gave her a surplus to live on.

There came a time in my life of unspeakable extremity, and I cried to God for a certain amount of money to pay an urgent debt. The prayer was kept up for many weeks, with much fasting, and when the answer came, in a most marvelous way, God sent more than twice the amount which I asked for, so I could pay the debt and have some to live on after taking out the Lord's tenth.

God loves to be tested by His believing children. This miracle of the outpoured oil is a blessed invitation which our Father has hung up on the walls of time, as an index of what He is willing to do for thousands upon thousands who have yet to learn of that unlimited sea of divine love which waits only to be touched with obedient faith to pour forth streams of supply, both spiritual and temporal, for those who comply, as this poor widow, with God's plan of grace and provision.



2. FIRST-CLASS LOVE

Many suppose that when Jesus told the Ephesian Church that He had somewhat against them, because they had left their first love, He referred to the love they had in their first conversion, as babes in Christ. But I have often felt that our Lord meant something more than that, and that the love He referred to was not "first" in the order of time, but "first" in the order of rank; meaning they had left the state of pure, ardent, perfect love. So, in examining the Greek, I find this impression of what should be meant by first love is confirmed.

There are two words in the Greek Testament for love; the one is *philos*, which signifies natural affection, and the other *agape*, which signifies divine love, which is the pure benevolence of the divine nature. There are also two words for "first"; one is *mias* which, as a general rule, signifies the first in time, and the other is *protos* which signifies, as a rule, first in rank. These words may not be used invariably in these senses, but that is the main tenor of their usage. And in that verse, Rev. 2:4, the Greek word is *agape prote*, that is, divine love of the first or highest rank.

This is the sense in which we have utilized the Greek word *protos* in our language, as when we say "prototype," by which we mean a model type, or a pattern, conveying the idea of rank more than the idea of priority in time.

Also, we say "proto martyr," by which we mean not only the first martyr in time, but a model martyr.

The Ephesian believers were among the best and holiest of all the early churches, and from Paul's epistle to that church we learn the very high order of their faith and spiritual discernment and fruitfulness. John wrote the Revelation over thirty years after the epistles of Paul to the Ephesians, and nearly a whole generation had passed away, and while the blessed Jesus recognized their works, and patience, and hatred of false doctrine, yet amid all their zeal, and orthodoxy, and morality, they had lost the deep, pure, melting love to Jesus which always characterizes the high water mark of holy love.

Hence, we learn from this word *protos agape*, instead of *mias agape*, that the love of a young convert, as a babe in Christ, however strong it may be, is not the highest form of love. A great many ministers, in preaching from that text, who do not know the perfection of love experimentally, through the abiding fullness of the Spirit, give an erroneous interpretation to the passage, and represent that the love of a young convert because it is first in the order of time, is the best and the strongest form of Christian love. And so they deny any perfection of love, or any higher love subsequent to the new birth, and magnify the believer's infant love in justification as the grandest epoch in Gospel experience. And, instead of urging believers to a state of divine love, ten-fold stronger and higher than their first conversion love, they are always turning the eyes of old Christians back to their spiritual cradle, trying to realize their conversion over again, and singing the backward-looking hymn, "What peaceful hours I once enjoyed." The love that Jesus wants us to give Him is first class, first in rank, the very cream of the heart, the love of a spiritual bride, the *protos agape*, which outranks every other affection and every other degree of love which is possible to our nature.

1. *The first-class love is the love of the spouse to the heavenly Bridegroom.* It has a great many marks to distinguish it from the love of the partially sanctified believer. While in both stages of experience the love is divine, yet this first, highest rank love is pure, unselfish, unmixed with earthly motives, and far more positive, and concentrated, and pungent, and prompt, and fearless. Among the distinguishing traits of this first-class, bridehood love, we may notice the following. It is intensely personal. In the weaker stages of Christian life, love for God is of a vague and general nature, and the affection for a divine personality is indistinct. It is a holy love in a general way for the church, the Bible, and good people, and for God, and Jesus, all more or less blended together. But in the higher rank of pure love for Jesus, as the Bridegroom of the soul, there is a bright and startling distinctness in it for Him as a person, a deep, interior attachment, a divine passion for the God-man, a personal love which is not confused in the love for the Father, or for the Holy Spirit, or for the saints, or for God's Word; a love which does not weaken but rather brightens every other love, yet so intensely personal for the blessed Jesus that if He were taken away, the soul, like a heavenly lover, would die of a broken heart. Again, this bridehood love is exceedingly tender, it is continually bathed in a sea of exquisite gentleness.

It cures the soul of harshness and rashness, and religious scolding and sanctified severity.

It is worth a hundred deaths for any Christian to get into that place of unspeakable tenderness of spirit which a

divine passion for Jesus will produce. Again, this highest rank love has a lightening-like vigilance in it; it has keen eyes to see divine things, it watches the dealings of God, the movements of the Spirit, the divine manifestations, the interior operations of grace; it follows close behind the Master and keeps in a frame of highest intellectual activity, and watches every opportunity of obtaining a deeper union with Christ. Again, it is very sensitive for the things of God; it is jealous for its Lord, and loses that miserable trait of touchiness which so many Christian people have, because it is so touchy toward the glory of Jesus.

It would gladly be a door mat for Jesus to walk upon. It is a sweet and lavish love, which enjoys suffering for His sake.

Again, this highest love is distinguished by an intense craving for God.

The heart pines for Christ as for an absent lover, and although it feels His presence warming the fountains of the soul, yet it craves to see Him, it yearns for the beatific vision of the three persons in the Godhead, and longs to see the King in His beauty coming in His kingdom; it is that leaping, bounding desire for Christ spoken of in the Song of Solomon. This love is covered all over with graces that correspond with the royalty of Jesus, and loves Him in all His forms, and all His offices, and adores Him as a loving despot under whose feet it delights to hide.

2. *First-class love for Jesus will prompt the soul to be and do its very best for God.* People who enter this state will have a singular prayer spring up in their hearts in which they will deliberately beg the Lord to do His infinite best in them, and through them. It will be no ordinary prayer, such as most Christians pray at random, but a deep, solemn, earnest thoughtful prayer, in which they look, as it were, into the face of all possibilities, and of all contingencies, and in view of every price it may cost, and of every suffering it may bring, they calmly and bravely meet the issue, and plead with tears that Jesus will take utter possession of them, and carry out in them the very best purposes of His love and will. Such a prayer, born out of bridehood love, will be accompanied or followed by wonderful revelations of Jesus, and of the beautiful possibilities of our union with Him. There will open up to the spiritual understanding, serene ocean depths into the character of God that make the heart quiver with holy fascination at the gorgeous things in the soul of Jesus. And this is followed by an inexpressible thirst that Christ would pour all of Himself through us, as blood through the veins of the body. From this time on the soul wants no character but that of Christ, it despises every thought except the Christ-thoughts, it wants no life but His life, no plans but His, no opinions but His, no love but His. Then in deed and in truth its motto is, "Not I, but Christ."

3. *This first-class love leads the soul instinctively to choose a first-class service.* The higher we ascend in fellowship with God, the more accurately we can discern the different ranks of service which people are rendering to God. There are Christian people who serve God on the plane of philanthropy, and humanitarian enterprises, or on lines of education and reform, and we should praise God for whatever can be accomplished in these departments of service. There are others who serve on the plane of their denominational church work, and their service is largely the outcome of sectarian zeal and denominational pride; they have hardly learned to deal with God directly, or to co-operate with Him in a personal way, and all their service is through the medium of a religious system. There are others who serve God in a more direct way, but still they have mixed motives. They desire to do something great for the Lord, but they are strongly attached to their own religious work, and they want some credit for what they do. But the highest love leads the soul out into the highest forms of service, which is a service in the power of the Holy Ghost, and a service to accomplish everlasting results in the saving and sanctifying of souls, and a service for Christ alone, regardless of self-interest.

Such believers aim at not merely reforming people, but saving them from all sin; not merely at blessing people in time, but blessing them in eternity. They seek not to build up a party, or a system, but to build up Christ in the soul. They don't try to get results by planning, but by prayer; not to accomplish certain results, but to have God accomplish His thoughts. In other words, all their service is up in the altitudes of the Holy Spirit. Many great and strong people are wasting their energies on some lower level of second or third-class service, with Utopian dreams, which at the best will produce only brief, or physical, or local benefits. First-class love for Christ will lead us to serve in the highest forms, with the highest agencies, from the highest motives, with the highest zeal, and under the highest light, for the accomplishment of the highest results, for the highest well-being which God has provided for us. Let us keep in mind that Jesus is very sensitive to any coldness in the hearts of His people. Inasmuch as His very nature is love, He is keenly alive to any lack of love in us, and everything else which it is

possible for us to give can never form a substitute for our warmest personal affections for Him. God loves to be loved. He made us to love Him, and if we fail in that love, it disappoints His infinite heart. Nothing will satisfy Him but our best love, and every thing we do for God is acceptable according to the love that is in it. Hence the heavenly Bridegroom is ever on the alert for the *protos agape*, for those humble and crucified hearts that love Him with their first-class love.



3. SIGNS OF PROGRESS

When a vessel starts out to sea, there are certain things by which the pilot measures his speed and direction, such as bouys, lighthouses, and casting the lead for soundings; but when he gets well out to sea all these things are left behind, and he measures his speed by the log, and his direction by the compass and the stars.

There is something very similar to this in the different modes by which a spiritual person measures his progress in the divine life. In the earlier stages of Christian life we measure our growth in grace by things easily recognized, and that lie close about us, such as our feelings, our contact with other Christians, our visible success in doing something for the Lord; but when we launch out into a life of unlimited faith, and God takes us into a real supernatural life with Himself, He carries us beyond the shore signs that we used to measure by, and we learn to make our progress by more hidden things, like the log at sea, and by far-off signs like the polar magnet and the heavenly bodies.

It generally puzzles a believer when he makes this transition from shore-line measurements to finding his latitude and longitude on the high seas.

There are many things in the life of faith which is best for us not to know about ourselves, such as just what God thinks of us, just what success we are having, just how much good we are doing, and just in what graces we excel, and what our strength in any given direction is; for the simple reason that we are living a life of faith, and if we knew all the facts about our spiritual progress we should largely cease the living of a life of real faith. While ignorance in certain things is essential to perfect trust in the all knowing One, yet there is much knowledge even about our growth in grace, which it is our privilege to have, and which we need to encourage us onwards.

1. One of the earliest signs that we are getting into deep water with the Holy Spirit is the clear spiritual [discernment between things and beings](#); between blessings from God and a secret personal union with Him; between the coming and the going of various spiritual emotions and a steady gaze and leaning upon the immutable character of God. This can come only by a revelation from the Holy Ghost to the soul who has passed through certain definite works of grace, and learned over and over again to repose in the Lord Jesus instead of trusting in its feelings about Jesus. It is very easy for souls to learn the use of certain terms in religious language, before they have the real experience of the words, and oftentimes young Christians will fluently expatiate on the difference between the "blessing and the Blesser," when it is all head talk, and they soon betray their need of a blessing or radical work of grace.

A deep, thoughtful Christian will never speak triflingly or depreciatingly of the blessings of God in forgiving or cleansing the soul, and to so speak indicates ignorance and a lack of reverence for our most holy God. But after the most radical and powerful of blessings, there will come to the soul that is led by the Holy Spirit a time of extraordinary revelation of the three personalities of the Godhead, and a deep, inward discernment of receiving these divine persons into the heart, and a weaning from various emotions and states of feeling, and a most powerful attachment to God Himself. When this becomes a sweet, powerful reality in the soul, it may be taken as a proof of progress.

2. Another sign of real advancement in the Christ life is a [growing disposition to appreciate little things](#). Youth is always impressed by something big and startling, and this is true of youthful experiences in grace as really as in the physical life. It takes age and much experience and a wide, thoughtful mind to see and feel and to

appreciate little things, little mercies, little friendships, minute answers to prayer, little whisperings of the Holy Ghost, delicate tokens from God, infinitesimal leadings of Providence, little attentions from strangers, and little crumbs of comfort in daily life. The closer we get to God the stronger our vision becomes to see the value of little things, and the more tender our hearts become to feel the touch of little mercies, whether they flow out from God directly or indirectly through His creatures.

A shallow-hearted or narrow-minded saint, regardless of his high profession, is constantly betraying his lack of divine union by depreciating little things, and by neglecting them in his manners, his spirit, his words, and his dealings with others.

The difference between a man of scruples and a man of deep love is, that the scrupulous man is always stumbling over small things and making them occasions for quibbling and doubting, and a wretched religious bondage; whereas the soul of deep love makes small things an occasion for gratitude, for charity, and for the adoration of God, by a broad-hearted appreciation.

Just as a millionaire will appreciate making a few pennies, and the great artist will appreciate one additional touch of the brush on a picture, and a great musician detect an almost imperceptible note in music which poorer and less trained minds would fail to notice, so it is a proof of spiritual progress when the soul sees God in the smallest things and appreciates Him everywhere. The greater the mind the more easily it comprehends the smallest details, hence the infinity of God is proved as much by the inconceivable wonders of the insect world as by the magnitudes of solar systems. In like manner the greater the heart the more minute and delicate the affections.

3. Another true mark of spiritual progress is [the art of going slow with God](#). This is the opposite of laziness or tardiness, which is the essence of disobedience. Going slow in divine things never comes in a Christian life until the impetuous will, the rash judgment, the hasty expression, the feverish excitement, and the green zeal of the soul have all been crucified and chastened by many a painful experience into a quiet, thoughtful, measured pace, which indicates a real likeness to God. In fact, there is no one thing in a saintly life more supernatural, more like the image of God, than the art of divine recollection and going slow. When Christians are first sanctified they are in a great hurry to grow, they are impatient about learning patience, they lose humility in being anxious to be humble, their quick decisions check their charity, and it requires many a mortification, many an apparent backset, in either the outward or inner life, to burn out the creature hastiness. To have a soul all on fire with divine love and zeal, like a great engine under an enormous pressure of steam, creeping slowly through a crowded street so as not to hurt the children, yet with a capacity of running seventy miles an hour, is the picture of a loving saint going slow with God.

To be slow in our words, in our judgments of people and things, in our prayers, in our religious reading, in deciding on any line of work, in our interior recollection and outward conduct, to be always occupied and never in a rush this is the carriage of spiritual progress, the quiet, majestic movement of a soul that is putting on the habit of the royal majesty of God.

Young Christians think it is almost a sin to go slow, and seem to think that there is great virtue in mere speed, hence are apt to sing, and pray, talk and act so fast as to put but little thought and real heavenly weight in what is done. Jesus walked but never ran.

4. Another sign of advance in holiness is a [growing sense of perseverance](#).

The Christian life is against the tide of everything in this world and in fallen human nature, and the more spiritual one is the more he is cut loose from the sympathies of earth, and in addition to thousands of outward trials and difficulties, and a great many inward weaknesses and hindrances, there are certain peculiar trials which spring from the spiritual life itself, such as its hiddenness, its mysteriousness and a certain strange monotony in it, so that perseverance is the greatest of all necessities in the spiritual life.

Multitudes of real, earnest Christians pass through experiences over and over again which seem to take nearly all their strength; they don't faint but they almost faint. Now, when these dear souls can detect a deeper settling of purpose to go all the way with Jesus, when they feel, as it were, the inward fibers of their soul tightening around the cross, when their will seems to be girded with a calm, fresh courage, and their secret prayers gather

new vigor, it is a good, heavenly sign of real progress.

5. I will mention one more sign of progress, and that is a **disposition to universal kindness**, especially the cultivation of kind thoughts towards everybody. There are persons who are naturally full of humanitarian kindness.

I mean something a thousand miles above that. I mean something more than the easy flow of religious love. I refer to that stage in Christian life where, seeing the infinite worth and beauty of kindness, the soul *deliberately* and on *set purpose* chooses to cultivate kind thoughts, loving interpretations, gentle and tender judgments, and to form this habit in the very fountains of the mind, not for any special outward results, but with a supreme choice to be like God in the hidden depths of his being. This is a sign that divine grace is rising to high tide in the soul. These are but a few among the particular marks of growth in holiness.



4. A SPIRITUAL MIND

The apostle tells us that to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Again he speaks of having our spiritual understandings enlightened; and again of being joined together in the same mind; and in another place of having the mind of Christ. Peter also tells us to arm ourselves with the mind which Christ had when He was crucified. All these, and many other passages, may help us to form a Scriptural idea of what is meant by a spiritual mind. It is having the intellectual nature spiritualized through the affections of a pure heart and brought into union with the Holy Ghost so as to discern things- to reason, to form spiritual conceptions in accordance with inspired Scripture- or, as the Psalmist expresses it, seeing light in God's light.

It takes something more than the grace of justification to have a spiritual mind; yes, and something more than the work of heart purity, in itself considered, for nothing less than the full baptism of the Holy Spirit will purge the natural darkness and carnal reasonings out of the intellect.

While sanctification is an instantaneous work of grace, to have a spiritual mind is acquired by habits of spiritual reading or by much prayer and, as Paul tells us in Colossians, by setting our mind on things above, not on things of the earth.

The mind is the central power of the soul between the affections and the will, and it is very difficult for the mind to act with vigor except in harmony with the affections. The intellect is the child of love, and follows the bent of desire, and can rapidly learn things which the heart loves. Hence, the cleansing of the heart, and filling it with pure love, is the condition of having the mental nature clarified and strengthened, to understand the things of God.

The following are some evidences of a spiritual mind:

1. **It is apt in learning the things of God.** It has a taste for spiritual reading, the biographies of holy people, books on the deep things of God, an avidity for the Scriptures, and a sweet relish for the psalms, the prophecies, the gospels and epistles, and finds many a sweet morsel of inspired truth hid away in the Old Testament where other minds, even able theologians, who are not divinely illuminated, see nothing but dry history. A spiritual mind is wide awake and can take in truth from a sermon or a song or a special providence with a quickness and zest which much greater minds that are not sanctified would see nothing in. Many a subject which most Christians have to take hours or days to look through and reason out and then only half see the truth and beauty therein, a spiritual mind will catch in a flash. An intellect that loves to think, and is entirely yielded to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has an agility of motion, a quickness of perception, a keen appreciation of a fine point in truth incomprehensible to a natural mind.

2. **Strength is another mark of a spiritual mind.** It takes hold on truth with tremendous vigor, is serious in its thinking, penetrates to the bottom of things and, in seeking knowledge on divine things, it means business and acts with deliberation and firmness. Most people professing religion seem to have an easy, lazy, wabbling, half-

trifling intellect, betraying a lack of perfect sincerity, and a feebleness in their mental grasp of the great teachings of Scripture. Multitudes of them joke over spiritual things, take up with silly, childish interpretations; they think the Scriptures were not made to be understood, and hence make no effort to understand them. A weak-minded Christian will hold a death grip upon the nonessentials of religion, such as the mode of baptism or forms of church service, but has hardly any grasp at all on the great truths of the three persons in the Godhead, or the new birth, or sanctification, or the second coming of Jesus, or prevailing prayer, or the power of the Holy Ghost, or pushing evangelistic meetings, or the resurrection of the body, or the overwhelming issues of the coming age. As a child will fight for a plaything and let a kingdom slip from his hand, so an unspiritual mind will magnify a religious toy, and let a crown and a place of honor in the kingdom of Jesus go neglected. I have known people with very meager mental powers, on being baptized with the Holy Spirit, within a few months' time manifest a vigor of intellect, an ability to grasp and remember long processes of Bible exegesis, and appreciate discriminations in doctrine a great deal better than able-minded persons who are not spiritual. Sin may sharpen the wits in inventing evil things, but it weakens the mind for apprehending the deep interior things of the soul.

A spiritual mind is marked by fullness and is ready furnished with stores of truth. When a person with a real spiritual mind begins to pray or speak or write, he does not betray any interior mental famine. There is a fullness of good solid ideas, and they are held, not in confusion, but in good order; and however odd the thoughts may be, there is a freshness and directness in their expression. Most professing Christians who have their heads crowded with many things, seem to have blank minds when it comes to Scripture or prayer or spiritual conversation. A spiritual mind will keep up a continuous daily thinking upon God, His perfections, the vastness and minuteness of His administration, the bendings in the stream of providence, and frequent reviews of revealed truth in the Old and New Testaments. and is always eager to acquire knowledge that will abide and bless forever. A shallow-thinking Christian is always liable to be duped by some heresy or trifling religious fad, and multitudes of such are always drifting from apostolic faith.

3. When the intellect of a believer is in full union with the Holy Spirit, there will be in it **a remarkable brightness**. I do not mean it will be a genius, or a wit, flashing outwardly with philosophic brilliance, but it will have an internal brightness of thought and perception. Such a mind will have lofty, vast, and beautiful ideas of God, very sweet and enticing conceptions of the eternal Father, and of the unspeakable loveliness and grace of Jesus, and rich, inspiring apprehensions of the blessed Holy Ghost. It will have well defined views of the different works of grace. Its theology will not be a tangled maze.

It will see moral and spiritual qualities, such as humility, love, perseverance, gentleness, and other graces, almost as clearly as the eye discerns colors and magnitudes in a landscape. God promises to keep the souls of His fully trusting children as well-watered gardens, and why should not the intellect of such a one be like a flower garden or a blooming prairie, full of spiritual and mental beauty? Bright thoughts are the blossoms of the mind. Great long vistas of coming glory that open up to a spiritual mind are the premonitions of what await the toil-worn feet of God's elect as they push their way over life's rugged surface. As the drunkard in his tremens has visions of snakes and grim monsters that are the prelude of hell, so a spiritual mind, filled with the wine of the Holy Ghost, will have at times bright visions that stretch away in soft and tranquil whiteness through the coming ages. Oh, that our minds could once be flooded with those great spotless radiant thoughts which angels and saints and our blessed Jesus are thinking this hour in the light of glory.

4. **Quick and well-defined discrimination** is another trait of a spiritual mind. It readily detects truth from error, not by a slow process of reasoning, but by a heavenly instinct, a Holy Ghost intuition, which hits the mark more accurately than theological argument. When God's love is strong enough to inundate the mind as well as the heart, it will discern the quality of error, and foresee its evil effects before they come to pass, for a heavenly mind has a prophetic capacity in it. It also will have power to detect the fitness of things as to time and place and circumstance and, if kept in a condition of teachableness, will be led to act often in the very nick of time. and with a wisdom of which it is not aware. And the most important part of this spiritual discernment is to apprehend the daily unfoldings of the heavenly Father's will, and recognize the secret impulses that come from the Holy Spirit. A spiritual mind has a fixed habit of mental prayer, and though the outward part may be occupied with current events and things, yet the inner mind is always in the attitude of kneeling before God,

either in praying or adoring, and as soon as the outward mind is free, it swings back like the needle to the polar magnet in mental communion with God, or the tracing out of His dealings and purposes.

5. It is a **source of physical vigor and longevity** to have a spiritual mind.

To keep the thought stayed on God is the condition of great peace, as Isaiah tells us that God will keep the man in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him. The habitual talking with the Lord in the mind Will serve as a thick mantle wrapped around the soul, from the noise and bustle and trifles, and the wretched going on of men and things in the world. A fire-baptized intellect is a "secret pavilion," a "second veil," into which the soul may quietly and softly enter and rest beneath the golden cherubim and listen to the voice of God, for He said to Moses, "I will speak to thee from between the wings of the cherubim."

Blessed privilege of thinking in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, of getting a peep into eternal day through the loop-holes of meditation! How it quiets the nerves, chastens our fears, invigorates the will, sweetens the affections, sprinkles the dew of kindness on our judgments of others, gently unties the cords that bind us to this life, gives us rehearsals of heavenly things, and enables us to do our work with calmness and deliberation, and in every way, as Paul tells us, conduces to life and peace.



5. A SPIRITUAL WILL

When we say that everybody is just as holy as he determines to be, it may at first sound a little extravagant, and most religious persons may think it incorrect. And yet such is exactly the case: everybody on earth is just as holy as he has determined to be.

This involves a great many things about the will; not merely one spasmodic act, or a few hundred acts, but it includes a supreme choice of the will, and also many thousands of minor volitions. And it involves a great deal as to the depth of the will, its magnitude, the intelligence under which it is acted, and the degree of perseverance, and the minutia of its acts; and then that marvelous quality, essence, or flavor of the will which we call the "spirit" of an action. Hence, the expression must be understood on a vast scale.

Nevertheless it is true- spiritually true, philosophically true, experimentally true- that every angel and man is just as holy as he determines to be; no more, and no less. Let us look at this a little in detail.

1. **There are two great departments to the will**- choice and execution; or, the elective and persevering acts. Both these forms of the will are involved in holiness. The soul must choose to be holy, or it never can be. The very angels were once on probation and had to choose obedient; and all their accumulated sanctity through thousands of years has been conditioned on their supreme choice of perfect obedience to God. The very first choices in repentance, to turn from sin, is choice of holiness. And after conversion, under added light and newly discovered needs, the soul again chooses holiness, with a depth and completeness of choice it never had the capacity for until it was born of God. But all choices of the will are fruitful only according to the amount of perseverance accompanying them, which is the will's executive side. It is sublime for a creature to deliberately choose God-choose to be good, and humble, and pure, and loving-greater than the creation of the physical world; but it is sublimer still to patiently persist in that choice through ten thousand difficulties day after day and year after year, through ever changing vicissitudes, over seemingly insurmountable hindrances, both in ourselves and in our environment, to keep reinforcing that choice, and pushing it to the front of every other choice, until the perseverance of the choice becomes a supernatural despotism of the soul- this is what tells.

Perseverance is the grandest quality possible for a created being to have.

Just look at it. Every choice, every possibility that the soul may have would amount to nothing without it. Perseverance in the creature corresponds exactly with the attribute of immutability in God; for what is divine immutability but the everlasting continuance of God in sameness of being, so that His immutability is His perseverance? Again: perseverance in the creature corresponds with the uniformity of natural law in creation.

Suppose the laws of nature should suddenly cease, or change, everything would be thrown into confusion the air might drown us, water burn us, and sunlight freeze us. The uniformity of natural law is but the beautiful ceaseless outflow of God's unchanging wisdom. And perseverance in the choice of holiness, on the part of the creature, is the lovely mirror of God's immutability and nature's uniformity. Thus a holy will must first choose holiness, and then persevere in the choice; and the latter requires a great deal more strength than the former, for a great many choose but fail to persevere.

2. A spiritual will not only chooses holiness, but is constantly repeating that deep interior determination **from a higher standpoint, and with a wider vision as to its import**; with an added depth of solemnity, and an increasing affection and sweetness in the choice.

Because the soul is invisible, and all its actions spiritual, and because we are not able to measure it by physical proportions, or exact intellectual data, it is difficult for us to understand many things about our interior lives. For instance: a quiet, thoughtful decision which we make today may be a hundred times stronger and broader than it was possible for us to make ten or twenty years ago. Our spiritual nature grows in quality, in intensity, in intelligence, in moral weight, in stretch of fervor, for which there are no outward measurements; and an act that we perform today may have in it a magnitude of meaning, a moral worth to God and ourselves, a hundred or a thousand times beyond what the same action would have had a few years ago. Hence the growth of the will, in conformity to God, involves this multiplied increase of holy determination.

3. The character of a holy will involves not only the choice to be holy in general, but the **multiplying of that choice as it runs out in all the details of life**.

We must not only choose to be saved, to receive Jesus and the Holy Spirit but, whether we know it or not, we shall each of us choose the particular type of piety that specially characterizes our lives. There is a dominant trait in every one's religious charactersome one thought around which religious life will crystalize. With some, it is duty; with others, work; with others, knowledge; with others, love; with others, suffering; with others, faith. And each of these types are blended with other types, in endless variety and degrees. While there is always something in each Christian's heredity, or education, or habits, or environment which predisposes him to a particular type of religious life yet, as he grows in grace, and becomes positively spiritual in his whole life, there comes out more and more the element of His will in choosing a special form of spiritual life, and also in choosing the degree of fervor and devotion that shall mark his life. And as he grows into fellowship with Jesus, this exercise of spiritual determination becomes more beautiful and more multiplied, as well as more persistent.

He chooses the various graces of the Spirit with deliberateness and firmness; he chooses in detail the various perfections of Jesus; he chooses to receive the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person; he chooses to cultivate special fellowship with God, until his whole will becomes spiritualized. How long it takes us to learn the vast stretch of that command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might"that is, with all thine affections; and then, with all thine intellect; and lastly, with all thy will. Just as the Holy Ghost is the Executive of the Godhead, and the last Person in the Trinity; so the flooding of our wills with grace is the last and highest form of religious life. And yet, as the third Person of the Trinity must produce conviction at the beginning of a religious life; so the will, in its choosing capacity, must act in the very first stages of a religious life; yet, taking the Christian life as a whole, the will, in its upper ranges of spirituality, is about the last part of our nature that graduates in the school of Christ, for the will never reaches its highest perfection until it chooses to be turned into love, and persistently unites itself to all the fullness of God.

4. God looks at the secret determination of our wills, and deals with us **according to the attitude of those wills toward Himself**.

Just as all God's character is embodied in the expression of His will; so God looks at everything in us as it is expressed through our deliberate choices and perseverance. Personality is the crown of all existence, and personality is clothed in the will. The Holy Spirit responds to our deliberate choices. We may feel utterly weak, and poor, and wretched, but if from the depths of our being we intelligently and deliberately choose God, then God responds to that choice and honors it. There is something in the boundless majesty of God which leads Him to put more honor on the first pious choice of a little child than He does on all the instinctive actions of all the animal creation; and every time that choice is repeated, and expanded, and intensified in a long life, it calls forth

a fresh recognition of honor and approval.

It is with the will that we touch God, as it is by His will that He sanctifies us. Every time we choose that which pleases God, it is like the blossoming of another flower in the spiritual world; and every time we persevere in a God-like choice it is like the ripening of the fruit of that flower.

It is by the Christ-like habits of the will that we become one with God, and see that our mission is revealed in the words: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."



6. NAMES OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

There is an inexhaustible wealth of truth and beauty in the Bible which bewilders us more and more as we advance in the knowledge of it. We shall never find but a tithe of its full meaning till we study it through a glorified vision. I believe that every noun and verb and person and place and incident mentioned in the Word of God has an ocean depth of meaning which to us in this life is fathomless. And then the blending and inter-blendings of persons and places were divinely arranged, so as to set forth a universe of fascinating truth which was utterly unknown to the persons while acting their part, just as God uses millions of raindrops in an afternoon shower to be so shone upon by the sunlight as to form the magnificent rainbow, and each drop is unconscious of the part it plays in that entrancing picture. Abraham is God's photograph of faith, and Isaac of ideal sonship, and Jacob a picture of religious experience. Thus faith begets sonship, and out of sonship comes religious experience, with its struggles and victories. And as from Jacob come the twelve patriarchs, so out of religious experience come the manifold forms of virtues and graces, and this corresponds with what the Holy Ghost says, "that the tree of life," that is, Christ living within us, bear twelve manner of fruit. This twelve manner of fruit was prophetically set forth in the names of the twelve sons of Jacob.

St. John describes the city of God built of transparent gold, and tells us that this same city is the Bride of the Lamb, composed of the sanctified believers in all the ages, and typified by the hundred and forty-four thousand; and he tells us that the twelve gates are the twelve names of Israel's sons, and the twelve foundations are the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

With God, a name always represents character. The "gate" is the covenant through which we enter into the Bridehood of the Lamb, and that covenant is an absolute consecration to God, and the covenants were made with the patriarchs. The "foundations" are the doctrines of God's Word, and these doctrines were set forth in their ultimate and perfect form by the twelve Apostles of Jesus, and upon these doctrines the sanctified soul is to stand firmer than the mountains stand on the earth. Hence in the names of the twelve patriarchs we have a list of experiences through which the perfect believer is to pass to qualify him for a place in the Bridehood of Jesus for, be it remembered, the Scriptures do not teach that all who are saved compose the Bride of the Lamb, but only those who have the three qualities of being converted, sanctified, and tried in this present life; and John tells us that the nations of those who are saved will walk in the light of that city and that that city is the Lamb's Bride. Now look at the panorama of graces set forth in the names of the twelve patriarchs.

1. **"Reuben," which signifies behold a son.** "Reu" means "to see," and "ben" means "a son." From this we learn that the first step to being a member of the city of God is the new birth. We are to become sons of God by repentance and faith in Jesus, and this sonship is to be so distinct that we can see it, and others can see it. The new birth lies at the basis of all spiritual experiences. It will be intensely interesting to notice that these twelve names describe a spiritual biography, not only of the elect saints, but of our Lord Jesus as well. Thus when Jesus was born the proclamation went forth in all worlds. "Behold my Son . . . and let all the angels of God worship him." See Heb. 1:4-6. And in like manner, something analogous to the birth of Jesus takes place when we are born of the Spirit, and the melodious news circulates in Heaven, "Behold, another son is born." This is our entrance through the Reuben gate into the city.

2. **"Simeon," which means "hearing;"** that is, God will hear and answer prayer. To get the beautiful shades of

meaning of these different names, we must not only consult a good Hebrew lexicon, but carefully read the account of the births and naming of the children, in which we will find special providential reasons for each name. And this gives us an insight into the motives of the parents in giving the names which opens a spiritual vision to us, even much larger than the literal meaning of a Hebrew root. Hence Simeon typifies a life of prayer, which we begin to live immediately after we see that we are sons of God. In our natural birth the first thing we do is to breathe in the vital air, and the next act is to cry. So in the new birth, we first receive the Spirit, the vital breath of God, and the next act is to cry, Abba Father, and begin to pray as a child and to receive answers from a Father.

Having been born, the child hears his Father, and the Father hears His child.

So we pass through the gate of hearing and answering prayer.

3. "Levi" signifies "joined," united as in marriage. Leah knew that Jacob loved Rachel the best, and she prayed that by giving Jacob a third son, she would win his heart to love her as he did Rachel; hence she named the child Levi which had in her mind the significance of the union of hearts. This typifies the complete sanctification of the believer, by which the heart becomes the spouse of the Lord Jesus. Thus we see the fruit of prayer is to bring us into holiness or perfect heart union with God's will. In all the typology of Scripture which set forth the steps in grace, the work of sanctification is always made to come soon after the new birth. Now to prove that this third name represents the believer finding the experience of holiness and heart union with Christ, we find that Moses in pronouncing the blessing on the twelve tribes follows the same spiritual order, though not the same literal order, for he says that Levi was God's holy one, who was to bear the Thummin and Urim, and the word Thummin means perfection in the plural number, and the word Urim means light in the plural number; that is, Levi typified holiness with multiplied perfection and multiplied light, Deut. 33:8.

Thus when we get to be Levi we pass through the sanctification gate.

4. "Judah," which signifies "praise." How true this is to experience, after the heart has been washed from every sinful affection, and joined in sweet wedlock to Jesus, then there breaks forth a life of praise. And Leah said, "Now will I praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah.

We cannot praise the Lord from the depth of our soul, and all through our being, until after the whole will has been joined by the Holy Ghost to the will of God, and then when we see things in the clear light of purity and love we can praise God, and even when the voice is silent, the very thoughts that ripple out from under the red throne of the heart go softly singing in the ear of God. When David said, "Let all that is within me bless his holy name," he certainly could not have had any depravity in him. Thus it is by praise out of a holy heart that we enter the Judah gate of the city of gold.

5. "Dan," which signifies "judging." The word as used here is not of condemning, or criticizing, but of honorable fair dealing, of the proper balancing in matters of equity. Dan was the first son of Rachel's maid, and Rachel said, "God had judged her cause," hence his name. Now see how true it is that we are not fit to judge in a real true Scripture sense, until we are filled with purity and praise. Thus out of the happy, praiseful Judah state can come forth the capability of rightly judging between man and man, and between cause and effect, and between places and things. Judah was the kingly tribe, and as soon as the king was enthroned he sat in judgment over the people, as in the case of young Solomon judging between the mothers who came to him.

All this is wrought out, not only in Jesus but also in His elect saints, for the Holy Ghost affirms that the elect saints shall judge the angels, and those who compose the Bridehood of Jesus are to reign with Him for a thousand years on the earth. And, again, Jesus says that they shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel. But a moody, melancholy, bias-minded person is not fit to judge.

Hence we must be Judahs in praise before we are fit to be Dans in judgment.

It is by impartial, loving discrimination that we enter the Dan gate.

6. "Naphtali," which means "wrestlings of God." This was the second son by Rachel's maid, and she wrestled with God in much prayer for him. But there is another side or meaning to it, for in her spirit she was wrestling in competition with her sister. When we get into advanced experiences of grace we have seasons of conflict with

the spirits of other people, just as conscious and distinct as if we wrestled with them physically. Sometimes they may be hundreds and thousands of miles from us, but the Holy Ghost annihilates space in spiritual experiences, and through the operations of the Spirit we can feel the moral condition of souls far away from us, and in burdens of prayer for them we can feel their antagonism, or their pride, or bitterness, or their yielding as the case may be. Madam Guyon speaks of this with great clearness. This also implies wrestling in prayer against evil spirits and powers of darkness.

God's true elect ones, after having passed wonderful states in grace, are sometimes permitted to undergo awful temptations, and dangerous trials, and heart-rending conflicts with demons that are absolutely appalling. The greatest things in every Christian life are never put in biography. The best biography ever written, except such as God writes, gives only the outward shell of one's life. Shallow-minded people think that if one goes through appalling conflicts with temptation and evil spirits that such a one is always to blame for it; but God allows some of His best loved children to navigate lonely high seas of stormy sorrow, and wrestle with cyclones of difficulty, for reasons which He does not explain in the present. It is always the outcome of one's life in the end that demonstrates the root of his character. It is these deep, lonely wrestlings of soul in the upper ranges of grace that is represented by Naphtali. It takes a soul that will wrestle its way through regiments of Satanic bayonets to enter the Naphtali gate.

7. "Gad," which signifies a "troop" or "company." It implies a vision of an army of soldiers, or a great company in a festival procession. Gad was the first son of Leah's maid, and she saw in his birth the prospect of raising another large family of sons, hence his name. Just as Dan or "judging" is a delicate and dangerous office to fill, and that state is succeeded by the awful conflicts and wrestlings of the Naphtali state, so after the stormy trials of the Naphtali period the soul is led forth in a calm, sweet place of extraordinary illumination, where it discerns the fellowship of saints and companionship of angels and glorified ones in such a supernatural way that very few Christians have any conception of, and of which even sanctified souls in their earliest stages will hardly accredit.

The Apostle Paul speaks positively of being brought by the Holy Ghost, where the soul has real communion with the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, with the members of the Bridehood of Jesus, and with an innumerable company of angels, and with those of the church of the firstborn, and with the Judge of all, and with the spirits of just men made perfect. This corresponds exactly with the Gad state in Christian experience, and St. Paul was not a modern spiritualist. Many teachers of holiness are hardly willing to accept of the extraordinary statements made in Scripture concerning the revelations of the Holy Ghost to a perfectly crucified soul for fear it may resemble fanaticism.

But God does give to us, when we are perfectly dead to self, spiritual apprehensions of heavenly companionships and visions of the coming glory and reign of Christ on this earth, in which we apprehend myriads and myriads of jubilant ecstatic beings, such as Isaiah saw in his vision, Isaiah 6; such as Jacob saw on his way to Canaan, Genesis 32; and such as John saw in Revelation. When we enter the Gad gate, we begin to apprehend our fellowship in the Bridehood of the Lamb as never in any previous state of grace.

8. "Asher," which signifies "happiness, joy." But in the sense in which Leah gave the name, it signifies a prophetic vision of the inexpressible happiness which will come to us in the future from the benedictions that are showered on us by the heavenly host. "And Leah said, happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed; so she called his name Asher." She had a vision of the blessings that would be poured upon her from the lips of millions of Hebrew mothers in the years to come. This agrees exactly with what David and Solomon describe in their writings about the elect woman, that is, the Lamb's Bride, being lauded by her companions, and praised as the fairest among women, as the most beautiful company among the saved ones.

It is possible for us to have in this life a remarkable insight through the Holy Ghost of the extraordinary happiness which will accrue to those who are counted worthy of the first resurrection, and of reigning with Christ in His kingdom. This happiness is the Asher gate.

9. "Issachar," which signifies "wages or reward." The soul that has followed Jesus thus far in His life will begin to realize, even in this world, many of the rewards which come to a perfectly humble and obedient heart.

It is as if the government bonds issued from the Holy Ghost treasury were already beginning to yield a fine interest, and that with sweet fruition we were getting the cash from the celestial coupons, for in keeping of them

there is great reward.

10. "Zebulun," which signifies "dwelling, abiding," but especially the being domesticated in a happy home. This thought harmonizes with that wonderful prayer which Paul prayed for sanctified believers, that they might be rooted and grounded in love; rooted like a tree in the soil of love, and as the Greek has it, "foundationed" like a house in love, with the view of dwelling in infinite love forever, for Paul's prayer implies a dwelling house with deep foundations, surrounded by beautiful shade and fruit trees, amid which the perfect believer is to keep house forever with God. This is the Zebulun stage of grace, and emblemizes the gate through which we pass into eternal fixedness in God.

11. "Joseph," which signifies "adding, increasing, unlimited progress." This name is wonderfully commented upon by the Holy Spirit in many places in Scripture. Jacob, on his dying bed, beautifully expounds the meaning of this name by saying, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." He compares him to a fine grape vine, planted by a well of water, not only supplying grapes for those in the family, but running over the garden wall and abundantly feeding the strangers who lived outside the wall. And how truly Joseph fed not only his father's house, but whole nations of Gentiles as well. Thus this name reveals to us that state of abundant, overflowing, tender, boundless love that leaps all boundaries, and runs over all partitioned walls, over all sectarianism, over all race distinctions, over all national boundaries, and pours itself out to the poor, the needy, the fallen, the crushed, the heathen, and sets no limit to its sacrifices for the saving and blessing of others. There are many, even among holiness people, who seem so narrow in thought, and love, and generosity that they apparently are a good ways yet from passing through the Joseph gate of limitless love and unmeasured increase. But there is a place in the Holy Ghost life where the charity, and sympathy, and tender love is simply boundless, and the whole soul is a fruitful bough that runs over the wall.

12. "Benjamin," which signifies "the son of the right hand," that is, the son lifted and crowned at the Father's right hand, to share in the Father's government as a prince. All the other sons were named by their mothers, and this last one was named by his dying mother "Ben-oni," that is, the "son of my sorrow." But Jacob changed the name to Benjamin, the son of my right hand.

All this was fulfilled in Jesus. When Christ hung on the cross He was "Ben-oni," the son of sorrow. But a few days after, when He was raised and enthroned at the Father's right hand, he was Benjamin. He was the only son who was born in the land of Canaan, the other eleven were born in Syria.

How strikingly all this is to be fulfilled in the elect saints. It can hardly be said that we have yet entered the Benjamin state, where we are lifted at the right hand of Jesus, just as He was lifted at the right hand of the Father, but He assures us that this will be fulfilled when He comes to reign on the earth; that we shall sit with Him on His own throne, and share in His government of the nations, just as He now sits with the Father. This present earth is our land of Syria in which we have, through the Holy Ghost, all the states of grace typified by the eleven names. But in the millennial age, which will be the Canaan of the world's history, we shall enter the Benjamin state and be sons at the right hand of Jesus. Thus all of the elect are to compass the entire city of gold and, in a mystic sense, enter through all the twelve gates, and thereby establish our membership as living factors in that city.



7. A CENSORIOUS SPIRIT

Censoriousness is composed of self-conceit and severity; a self-conceit that we are superior to others, and are entitled to some sort of lordship over them; and then a severity of judging others by the outward letter of righteousness instead of by the Spirit. There are other people besides Christians who are censorious, but it does not look so conspicuous in their lives, for it is the very nature of religion to make a streak of badness look more ugly.

Censoriousness has a special facility of fastening itself on a religious person, and on persons professing a great

deal of religion, and its very intensity is in proportion to the intensity of religious zeal, and seems to find its greenest pastures in those who profess the perfection of love. It is a parasite which, like the mistletoe, fastens itself on the tree of religion, and seeks to spread itself until it claims to be the tree and, in fact, if not killed off, will succeed in killing the tree which, indeed, it often does. There seem to be certain weaknesses, and ugly, disagreeable infirmities, latent in the soul that nothing ever develops till it becomes religious, and sometimes the more intense the religion the more glaring are these infirmities. There is nothing disagreeable in handling a piece of dry wood, but if you undertake to make the wood pass into a live coal of fire then will develop the unpleasant concomitant of smoke, and soot, and ashes, which would never have been known but for the process of burning; and there is something like this in the soul's transition from a state of nature to that of the pure, burning love of God, and though all souls do not manifest the same disagreeable things yet, as God's grace is burning us through, it seems inevitable that there will be a smoke in the shape of some religious infirmity.

Censoriousness is not grace, but it assumes the profession of grace, and oftentimes of great sanctity, and it seems to develop in some characters only when they are really under the operations of grace, as an iceberg throws off a heavy fog when it comes near the Gulf Stream. One thing is certain, that many professors of very high grace are very censorious, and they never were very censorious until some time after their declaration of entire yielding to God. Perhaps we can never understand the metaphysics of it, but we know it is a delusion of Satan to get religious people to mistake censoriousness for sanctity. One of the remedies against it is a clear understanding of what it is.

1. A censorious person sets himself up *as a standard of religious experience*, or practice, by which to judge all others. He has almost a boundless confidence in the superiority of his own character. He never admits that he has been backslidden in heart or life; he stoutly defends some ugly things in his disposition or conduct with the plea that they proceeded from the highest righteousness. His anger is clothed with the pretty title of righteous indignation. His stinginess is softened into holy economy. His harsh words are under the sweet cognomen of being true to other people's souls. He lives under the one supreme thought that he came into the world for no other purpose than to set people right. If he was not always reproofing somebody, or pitching into something, he would think himself false to his calling.

His opinion concerning any church, or any association of Christian workers, or any preacher, or evangelist, or writer, or book, is already made up in advance, and labeled like so many bottles of poison on the shelves of his judgment, and he is not going to change his opinion concerning any of these things, and does not want any further light, but knows enough already to settle him in his views. How many thousands of times have we denounced, or severely judged others, not so much because they were displeasing God, but because they were displeasing to us; not because they were in reality breaking the Word of God, but because they were breaking our notions and offending our artificial taste. Oh, it is a miserable view of life, to turn ourselves into wooden yardsticks, and metallic scales, by which to weigh and measure our fellow Christians, and then to do this under the profession of holiness.

2. A censorious person persuades himself that he has *a special religious calling to correct others*, and especially to correct them with severe methods, and that this is the greatest proof of his righteousness. If it were not for the religion that is in the censorious soul, and that it has a special vocation from God, it would lose all its seriousness and be a comical joke; but the censorious man thinks his salvation depends on the vinegar in his nature.

There are two sides to religious self-conceit; one is where the soul mostly contemplates its own superiority; this produces the peacock professor; and the other side is where the soul mostly contemplates the defects of others; this produces the bull dog professor. The censorious man belongs to the latter class, for while spiritual vanity is a part of his make-up, yet spiritual inquisition and severity with others constitutes the major part of his life.

There are many who think that mere power to detect evil is a proof of holiness, and that growth in grace shows itself by an increasing aptness to ferret out the weaknesses and shortcomings of others. Now, it is a fact that the practice of detecting the defects of others will soon reach a point of almost scientific accuracy.

The world is full of evil, and Christians have many defects, though they be not actually committing sin; and even fully sanctified Christians have weaknesses of manner, and taste, and conversation, and ways of doing

things that look to a critical eye as if something bad were behind it, and the well-practiced eye of a censorious spirit will, in most cases, diagnose a subject with great skill. When he finds he has hit his game so accurately, it is only another proof to him of his superior holiness. And so he lives on hunting his game, and resembles a hunting dog that is so passionately fond of the chase that he fails to take time to eat, and keeps himself a living skeleton because all his strength is spent in the pursuit of game. Who ever knew a censorious person to be genial in company, or a lover of little children, or sweet and amiable in his private life!

It is said that fortune tellers start out with a knack of reading natural character, and by some practice they soon find that a few general principles- such as a love affair, or some money, or a dark suspicion, or a dream of ambition- apply to most lives, and so they often tell things with amazing accuracy until, in some cases, the devil actually gets them to believe that they are prophets sure enough. So the censorious person practices his gift of ferreting out the evils of others until he loses all his love, mistakes a sharp eye to be a pure heart and, with the help of one of Satan's messengers, comes to think he is an ordained prophet of God, only instead of telling good fortunes he is always telling bad misfortunes. Hence these censorious people, with great calmness of decision, will consign their fellow Christians to hell for any trifling thing that does not agree with them.

3. A censorious spirit is **never fruitful** in saving or perfecting souls in grace, and fortunately if it grows on a person it becomes so offensive as not to reproduce its own self, and so often hinders others from becoming censorious. Persons who are gifted with the discerning of spirits are very seldom useful; in fact, never so, except in those cases where they have been crucified so thoroughly as to be utterly humble and loving, as was the case with Bramwell.

I have met several persons who had an extraordinary gift of discerning people, whose lives were almost utterly fruitless; and I have met a few who, like Bramwell, while having deep discernment, were deeply ballasted with meekness and charity. But discernment by itself is like a razor in the hands of a lunatic. The sharper the instruments, the greater need of brain in the surgeon that handles them; and power to detect sin needs fathomless humility and boundless love to render it useful. A censorious man is one who lives in his head instead of his heart. We can never keep our hearts warm except by living in them. A creature that should be nothing but an enormous eye, without a breast or heart, would be a monster; and a censorious person lives in his eye and lets his heart out to freeze. Truth of itself can never bear fruit.

It is only when truth is heated with love that it has the power of reproduction.

Censorious people think they bear fruit because they make such a stir, and if they can cause others distress, or vexation, or bring on a quarrel, or a sharp debate, or brow-beat some timid soul till he weeps, they think that is fruit.

Fecundity, that is the fountain of fruit bearing, lies in the heart and is destroyed by censoriousness. As a rule, a censorious person has some glaring and serious inconsistency in his own life, and while he represents the path of holiness as very hard to others, he makes it exceedingly easy for himself.

There is nothing more cheap than a rigorous theology, and nothing more costly than to let our love crucify our judgments, and always run out beyond our discernment. *A censorious spirit is a mule in the moral species, an adept at kicking, but having no fecundity.*

4. A censorious person is always **uneasy at the large-hearted charity of a holy soul**. He seems distressed lest some people should slip through the gates into Heaven that he thinks ought to go to Hell. Whenever he mentions having charity for others, he generally prefaces it with, "I believe in charity, but not in sentimentalism, or letting people off too easy." Nothing so shocks a censorious spirit as coming in contact with a great ocean-hearted love that makes allowances for people, and looks on the hopeful side. There is a sort of mania for religious severity which is developed by the practice of censoriousness. It is said that butchers, after a while, grow nervous, and morose, and develop a tendency to suicide, from the habitual slaughter of cattle and the sight of so much blood. The case is similar with a censorious person; if he is not tempted to commit literal suicide, he does kill himself spiritually.

Severity, even though accompanied with many gifts and some charitable grace, will soon wear its welcome out, make enemies where there is no need to, cripples weak believers by binding on them artificial burdens, disgusts

quiet, sensible people, keeps itself in constant hot water, and then imagines itself a heroic martyr.

In many cases censorious people at last get broken down and mellowed into a little love just before they die. It is not a rare occurrence that people prophesy the death of some professing Christians by this symptom of mellowness and love that at last breaks through the crust of their harsh lives, and proves that divine grace was strong enough to live hidden in their souls through years of frostiness of disposition. Oh, what a loss, to wake up at last and find that years have been thrown away in censorious, self-righteous fretting over the defects of others, instead of pouring the soul out in a constant stream of humble kindness and fruitful love for others! Even sulphuric acid cannot hurt pure gold, but a censorious spirit will terribly eat away the crown of rewards that is being prepared for many a brow.

A censorious preacher, in presenting Christ on the cross, will magnify the iron nails far more than the blessed person of Jesus. Some people talk as if there were nothing about crucifixion except the nails, whereas it is the living, loving heart that consents to be nailed, which is the only thing worth our attention. Severe people talk much of crucifixion, but the deepest crucifixion possible on earth is to agree persistently to have our whole nature turned into love. To make a censorious person forever relinquish all his severity toward all people, and at all times, and in all ways, would be the deepest crucifixion and would involve the most painful death to self possible in this life. So, after all, nothing kills us to sin and self but divine love.



8. A GENTLE SPIRIT

When God conquers us and takes all the flint out of our nature, and we get deep visions into the Spirit of Jesus, we then see as never before the great rarity of gentleness of spirit in this dark and unheavenly world. Even apart from the criminality and vileness of man's fallen condition, there is a host of deformities which sin has entailed upon mankind. Among these deformities may be classed roughness, hardness, severity, bluntness, harshness, sourness, rudeness, curtness, and the painful facility of using stinging, cutting words, and manners, and gestures, and looks, and tones of voice which are almost universally manifested, not only by sinners but by Christians, and good Christians, and even by many who advocate the higher life. It is so seldom we find a real gentle spirit, one who is gentle all through and gentle under all circumstances, that when we do meet such an one it seems like a calla lily in a field of briars, or a patch of blooming prairie surrounded by rough deserts.

I am not speaking of that natural grace which some people seem to inherit, for that is not deep enough.

One of the worst criminals I ever saw was a perfectly handsome young man, with a voice and manner as soft as a lady's. But I speak of divine gentleness which comes into the soul as a result of having all the nature and facilities perfectly subdued by the Holy Spirit. It is amazing what lack of gentleness there is among the Lord's own people. Among the reasons why so few Christians are thoroughly gentle in spirit may be the following:

1. [So few really apprehend the worth of a gentle spirit](#); they seem to overlook it as a cardinal trait in religion. There are so many Christians who regard real gentleness as a weakness, a soft sentimentalism, which in some way interferes with thorough righteousness, and boldness, and plain dealing, and a pushing zeal for God. The graces of the Spirit do not settle themselves down upon us by chance, and if we do not discern certain states of grace, and choose them, and in our thoughts nourish them, they never become fastened in our nature or behavior. Just as rough worldly men look upon experimental salvation as a weak thing, fit only for old women and children, so a great many sturdy, driving Christians regard perfect gentleness and quietness of spirit as too tame a thing to have much divine power in it. The more we possess of a certain grace, the more we see the value of it.

The reason why so few Christians seek perfect humility in everything is because they do not see the infinite worth of humility. The same is true of gentleness; in fact, gentleness is the expression of humility, like the odor is to the flower.

There is something about the character of God, and it pervades all His creation and every branch of His government, which bespeaks the infinite gentleness of His nature. He clothes all the vast and rugged forms of His works with a majestic quietness, and velvet gentleness, which betrays the character of His mind. He drapes the roughest mountain with green shrubbery, or the soft blue air; even storms are edged around with a fringe of delicacy; and none of the stupendous works of God in ocean, earth, or air, or flying worlds have that severe "raw-head and bloody-bone" appearance which would have been the case if a creature had made them.

God leaves a trace of divine refinement on everything He touches. And when we look at His moral government, and even at the outpouring of His wrath, on nations or individuals there is not a touch of personal revenge, but the highest proofs of patience and tender pleading. He punishes as if He wept while doing it, and His thunderbolts are both preceded and succeeded with pathetic accents, as if tender mercy were the garniture in which His fiery judgments were clothed.

God never does anything in a harsh or uncouth way. He often breaks the hearts of the toughest old sinners with a touch of gentleness, or a soft sweet voice, or the stroke of a motherly hand softer than the down on an angel's wing. Unless we have clear perceptions of the character of God it is not likely that we will have a positive thirst for that character. Vision precedes action.

We must see with our spiritual eye the graces of the Spirit before we live them out in our experience. The words, "Behold the Lamb of God," must always precede the words, "Who taketh away the sin of the world."

2. [So few professed Christians form a deep determination to become thoroughly gentle in their nature and life.](#) They look upon a gentle disposition as a beautiful flower which can grow only in favored spots, or as a spiritual luxury, a celestial cake and ice cream, which is pleasant to have in the feverish bustle of life but not as being an essential staple in Christian experience. This is why so few Christians are really gentle. Many wicked sinners think they cannot give sufficient emphasis to their language without loading it with oaths and rude swearing.

And in like manner, many Christians think if they are not rough, and loud, and impetuous, and cutting their words will have no power. Some think they must use "slang" and "rowdy expressions" to suit a certain class or strike truth home. But if such persons will consult the behavior of Jesus, and the Apostles, and preachers like Wesley, and Fenelon, and Fletcher, and Edwards, and Finney- men that God used in breaking the hardest of hearts- they will find that the purest, hottest truth requires no adjuncts of passion or street slang to give it edge. Unless we, from the bottom of our hearts, desire a gentle spirit, and then by the grace of God determine that we will have it, it is not likely that we will ever know its inexpressible blessedness.

It is possible for us to desire sanctification, and even resolve on having it, without involving the proper appreciation of having a soul filled with all the meekness and gentleness of Jesus. It is a law in the Spiritual life that we get from God just about what we determine to have. It is amazing how God watches and honors the deep, serious determinations of the will of His creatures. Most men do not know that they determine to go to Hell, but such will be proved to be the fact in the day of judgment. Most Christians are in one sense willing to be made holy, but a still fewer number from their hearts desire to be holy, and a still fewer number ever seriously determine to become holy, and a still fewer number determine to have all their nature turned into spotless, lowly, gentle love.

Every advance step in grace must be preceded by first apprehending it, and then a prayerful resolve to have it. Real gentleness is not a mere set of parlor manners that we can put off and on; it must be soaked into every fiber of our being, and must be drawn from a divine fountain.

3. [So few are willing to undergo the suffering out of which thorough gentleness comes.](#) We must die before we are turned into gentleness.

Crucifixion involves suffering, and it is not a painted death but a real breaking and crushing of self which wrings the heart and conquers the mind.

There is a good deal of mere mental and logical sanctification now-a-days which is only a religious fiction. It consists of mentally putting one's self on the altar, and then mentally saying the altar sanctifies the gift, and then logically concluding therefore one is sanctified: and such an one goes forth with a gay, flippant, theological prattle about the deep things of God; but the natural heartstrings have not been snapped, and the Adamic flint

has not been ground to powder, and the bosom has not throbbed with the lonely, surging sighs of Gethsemane, and the beautiful self-constructed air castles have not been crushed to pieces. And not having the real death-marks of Calvary there cannot be that soft, gentle, floating, victorious, overflowing, triumphant life that flows out like a spring morning from an empty tomb.

We must not only lie in the tomb when we are first sanctified, but that death must be carried out in the little hidden details of life. This involves a vast amount of quiet suffering, the unostentatious bearing of a thousand pains, and the speechless enduring of secret crosses, told only to God with silent midnight tears. But if we want to be filled with a gentle spirit we must be filled with death to self. Many Christians seem to not understand that, after the instantaneous work of sanctification, there is a vast stretch of progress in having the mind of Jesus; that the will can more and more sink into God's will until, in numberless ways, the choices and preferences on the smallest matters are sunk in the sweet, placid waters of the Father's will, and the thoughts can be more and more lifted to heavenly perceptions, and all the affections enlarged and flooded with the indwelling of Jesus until every expression, and tone, and manner in some way indicates the mark of God upon it.

To have a real gentle spirit there must not be the least secret feeling of anything bitter, or sour, or severe, or combative, or dictatorial, or a sitting in judgment, or religious braggadocio spirit. If we do not know how to suffer then we will never know how to be gentle.

4. **To be filled with the gentleness of Jesus we must put it above everything else;** that is, set a price on it in our hearts, above all Christian activity, above all preaching, or evangelistic work, or Scripture exegesis, or building of churches, or running a mission, or feeding the poor, or nursing the sick. or going to heathen lands, or cutting a great figure in the Christian world, or in the visible church. Who will believe this and comply with it? The ruin of spirituality among modern Christians is in putting the fussy doing of religion ahead of the deep, divine inward being like Jesus. Unless our hearts fairly break with the intense love of the humility and gentleness of Jesus, so that we appreciate being just like Him in all our inward spirit and behavior, and esteem that first and foremost in the moral universe, then we must fail of ever knowing Him in the deep sense that Paul refers to in the third chapter of Philippians. The Lamb of God reveals the very sweetness of His inner life only to those few who esteem Him in and for Himself, above all creation and all spiritual activities.



9. ABRAHAMIC RELIGION

Doubtless if we had lived with Abraham we would not have been impressed with the greatness of his character, and the extraordinary stretch of his faith; and it is possible we might have found other men living at the same time who would have made a much more favorable impression upon us.

Very few of God's real saints can be measured by those who are contemporary with them because every creature of the human race has inevitable imperfections and individual peculiarities which often serve to detract from the real magnitude of his character. But the work of God always has the characteristic of durability and of coming out into brighter light the more it is searched into.

The more closely we analyze God's works the more wonderful they become, and the longer our study of them is pursued the more momentous the impression they make on us. This is just as true of God's work in making a saint or a great hero as in making a tree, or a mountain, or an ocean.

God chose Abraham as a personal nucleus around which to crystalize the Jewish nation. Hence God providentially led him in such a way, and through such experiences, as to make him a typical character in setting forth the great race of Bible saints, and the divine pattern of religious experience.

1. We find in the life of Abraham all the items that go to make up a New Testament saint, and all the steps of Christian progress that belong to the advanced believer of these times. We see in Gen. 12:1 that the Lord called Abram away from his father's house and kindred into an unknown region, both of providence and of faith. "The

Lord said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee."

Migration of some sort is the starting point of all growth and development.

There can be no progress for the future except by disturbing and displacing the arrangements of the present. Abram was called to go westward, into a new country and away from old social environments, that his soul might not be entangled socially, politically, or financially, with his old surroundings; and this going forth into a new country was also a going forth of his soul into a new region of divine favor. This beginning step in Abraham's life must be the beginning step in some way or other in every life that is given to God, and into which the Lord can incorporate His principles.

In thousands of cases there must still be a literal emigration from our old surroundings of childhood and youth into a new section of country and new surroundings, that are providentially adapted to mold our lives and bring forth our latent capabilities. But if not literally, there must still be in spirit, and thought, and faith, the going forth of every soul into a new field of possibilities to which it is divinely called.

2. The next distinguishing feature in the life of Abraham is recorded in Gen. 14:1-20, in which he returned from the slaughter of the kings, and had captured his nephew, and on his return from the north of Palestine to Jerusalem he met Melchizedec, the priest of the most high God, and gave to this priest of God one-tenth of all his spoils. Here we see that the giving to God and His cause one-tenth of what we receive was practiced by Abraham six hundred years before the giving of the law. Hence to teach that giving to the Lord a tenth of all we receive is merely a part of the Jewish ceremonial law is a great mistake.

If the facts could be gathered it would be seen that many thousands of God's professed followers do not prosper in business, and are much hindered in their spiritual lives, because they do not prove themselves to be the true spiritual seed of Abraham in this matter of giving one-tenth to the Lord.

Multitudes of Christians suppose this law is not binding on them, and while boasting that they live under a superior dispensation to that of the Jews, they do not begin to measure up in this matter to the old-fashioned righteousness that Abraham had before the giving of the law. I am constantly finding people who fail in their lives and finances solely because they rob God of His tenth.

And, on the other hand, I am continually meeting fresh cases where persons begin paying the Lord their tenth, on the Abrahamic line, and immediately God works wonders for them, both spiritually and temporally.

3. The next step in Abraham's life is recorded in Genesis 15, where he received the clear witness to the righteousness of faith. "After these things, the Lord said to Abram, Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted his faith to him for righteousness." It does not say that God's personal righteousness was imputed to Abraham, but that God accepted Abraham's faith, and counted his faith to him for righteousness. This event in Abraham's life is made by St. Paul a great, towering argument for justification by faith alone, without any righteousness on our part.

The Scriptures teach four kinds of justification: (1), without faith and without works, where Paul says that in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive, and that a free gift of justification unto life has passed upon all men, that is, upon all men in infant existence. (2), a justification that is by faith alone, without works or any merit whatever on our part, but simply accepting God's free gift of Jesus as our own, and our sin bearer, this is the justification of a penitent sinner of which the justification of Abraham in Genesis 15 is a great historical type and pattern. (3), the justification of the believer, which is by faith to be proved and accompanied by good works, that flows out from a loving faith. This is the justification described by St. James, and which so many people fail to understand, and fancy that James and Paul contradict each other. (4), a justification at the judgment day, which is by works alone, where the faith is never mentioned, for we see in all the accounts of the judgment that the rewards and punishments are based with great accuracy on the works of the person, whether good or bad. This life is preeminently a life of faith, but the judgment will be a realm of fruit or works, which have grown out of faith or the lack of faith.

Thus we see that this fifteenth chapter of Genesis is God's great lighthouse on justification by faith alone, which throws its cheering beams across the turbulent centuries, and guides every broken-hearted sinner and humble

penitent into the quiet harbor of peace with God, as a result of justifying faith.

In the same chapter we see how God gave to Abraham the witness of His favor, by sending a smoking furnace and a burning lamp to pass between the pieces of his sacrifice on the altar. This furnace and burning lamp very beautifully set forth the Holy Spirit in His operations in witnessing to our hearts the facts of our salvation.

4. The next epoch in Abraham's religious life is mentioned in Genesis 17, where he had a distinct call to Christian perfection, which was sealed by the rite of circumcision. "And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, and said, I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect." The word Almighty means the all-sufficient God; literally, the word signifies to be outpoured, as from a fountain. The Hebrew word signifies a mother's breast full of milk for her child, and the secondary meaning is a fountain pouring forth a continual and exhaustless stream.

Hence we see that God's call to perfection was linked with the affirmation that God is an eternal and exhaustless sufficiency of grace, and that by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon Abraham, He could make him perfect in his heart toward God.

At this call from God, Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, and made a covenant that Abram should be the father of many nations; and then God changed his name, indicating the thorough and radical transformation of Abraham's spiritual life. The Lord said, "Thy name shall no more be Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham." The name Abram signifies father, and the name Abraham means a high father, that is, a grandfather, hence the father of a great multitude. This divine act in perfecting the heart of Abraham in faith and love was accompanied by the rite of circumcision, as a seal to that great work of grace. In like manner, when believers are purified and perfected in their heart-life by the outpouring of the all-sufficient Holy Spirit, then their hearts are circumcised, and they become the true spiritual seed of Abraham. It is this work of heart circumcision, and the perfecting of the soul in love, that lifts the believer into the rank of the real elect, and constitutes him a member of the Bride of the Lamb.

The New Testament invariably speaks of justification as being a call of God, and of sanctification as being the work of election; hence Peter urges us to make our calling and our election sure, that is, our justification and sanctification sure. Paul often speaks of our justification as our calling, and then in Philippians, in speaking of his desire to be in the first resurrection literally, in the resurrection which is out from among the dead he speaks of it as the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This difference between the calling and the high calling corresponds exactly with the difference between the name Abram and Abraham, or father and high father. Thus Abraham had a definite epoch of sanctification in his life several years after his justification.

5. Another step in the religious life of Abraham was that of definite healing. We see in Genesis 20:17 that Abraham prayed unto God, and the Lord healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his servants. Thus Abraham was fully abreast with all the advanced religious thought and teaching and experiences of the present day. under New Testament light. There is not a single intimation that Abraham ever had any physician except the Lord, and if he was ever sick a day we do not know of it, though he lived to be one hundred and seventy-five years. What is still more wonderful, we have no account of the children of Abraham ever taking drugs, or having any physician, except the Lord, for about one thousand years, covering the time from the call of Abraham to the days of king Asa. Instead, then, of supposing that faith for divine healing is a new and erratic notion, be reminded that it was believed and practiced by the patriarchs hundreds of years before the first lines of Scripture were committed to manuscript. How slow the Christian church has been to get to the great fundamentals of religious life and experiences, as set forth in Abraham.

6. The next great step in Abraham's life was the remarkable testings of his faith as recorded in Genesis 22. "God did test Abraham's faith, and said, Take thy only son Isaac, and offer him up for a burnt offering in the land of Mount Moriah." This great event of offering up Isaac constituted the climax in Abraham's spiritual life on earth. After that great crisis had past, God then spoke to Abraham, saying, "Now I know that thou fearest God, and because thou hast not withheld thy son, by myself have I sworn, that in blessing I will bless thee." Many people suppose that the epoch in a Christian's life when he is fully sanctified and baptized with the Holy Spirit is the great crisis of his life, but such is often not the case.

We see in the life of Abraham, which God arranged to be the pattern for Abraham's spiritual seed, that the great

peculiar crisis in his life came after the making of his heart perfect, in the extraordinary trial of his faith, in which every part of his moral being of faith and obedience was stretched to its utmost tension. The Apostle James, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in searching for proofs of the effects of faith and the trial of faith, selects that one in Abraham's life, not where he was justified in Genesis 15, or sanctified in Genesis 17, but where his whole spiritual being was subjected to a crucial test, in the offering up of the son, and which forever settled the character of Abraham, for all ages, and for all worlds.

God still deals with His true servants on these old Abrahamic lines, and the great crisis of every saint's life comes after the work of sanctification.

It is these deeper testings of humility, and self-abnegation, and faith, and love that prove the very core of one's character, and lead the tried child of God out through a deeper death to self and into the ocean of boundless, spotless, tender love, into the abiding, fiery presence of the three persons of the Godhead, that glow like the sweet furnace of heavenly love in the soul.

Just as there are a great many justified believers who do not pass into the state of heart circumcision and Christian perfection, so there are many who are sanctified but who fail in the awful testings that afterwards come to their faith. They allow themselves to get discouraged, or they tone down, or compromise, and do not reach this great gulf stream experience of burning love which has been witnessed to by many saints in all the past.

7. Another item in Abraham's faith was that of the first resurrection. We are told in Hebrews 11:19 that God would raise Isaac from the dead, but the Greek says he counted that God was able to raise Isaac from among the dead, using the word which is constantly used to indicate the first resurrection. So Abraham believed in the resurrection of the holy dead previous to the general resurrection. In this respect he was way ahead of the great mass of theologians and preachers of the present time, who blindly fancy that they are in great advance of the Old Testament saints.

8. Another item in Abraham's faith was that he apprehended the bridehood of Jesus under the form of a glorious city of sanctified souls. We are told in Hebrews 11 that Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; and then again that God hath prepared for them a city. This city is spoken of by St. John in Revelation, and is emphatically denominated as the Lamb's wife, that is, an organic structure of purified and glorified human beings, in the form of a city. And this city is spoken of by John over and over again as that special number of glorified saints denominated by the peculiar number of one hundred and forty-four thousand, which is taking the divine government number of twelve, and multiplying it by itself, and then multiplying this twelve times twelve by one thousand. This is the city whose soft golden light fell on the eye of Abraham's faith.

And in connection with his apprehension of the bridehood of the Lamb, he also, by faith, apprehended the millennial reign of Jesus, when he would be glorified with Christ, and reign with Christ on this earth as "the heir of the world." Paul tells us in the fourth chapter of Romans that Abraham, through the promises of God, became "the heir of the world." Hence this thought of the saints coming back with the Lord Jesus, as heirs of God, and joint heirs of Jesus, to own and govern this world, filled the faith of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament. We are told over and over again in the Book of the Psalms that the meek shall inherit the earth, and that the righteous shall inherit the land forever, and that those who keep the Lord's way shall be exalted to inherit the land.

Now look at this array of thoughts and experiences in the life and faith of Abraham, sweeping the entire range of justification, sanctification, divine healing, the giving of the tenth, the first resurrection, and the millennial reign on this earth with Jesus and His sanctified ones; then compare this vast field of Abrahamic religion with the dwarfed, and sickly, and indefinite experiences of the great bulk who profess Christianity, and we see that Abraham, way back yonder in the morning of the ages, without a church, or a preacher, or a Bible, or a hymn book, had the knowledge of God and of His kingdom, and an experience in the things of God, and a sweep of faith which throws into eclipse millions of those who profess to be living under the full blessing of New Testament light. Well may St. Paul, in the fourth of Romans, in speaking of the traits of a real Christian, designate him as one who walks "in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." It is for those who walk in

these steps of old-fashioned Abrahamic religion to be among the number that, in the coming kingdom of Jesus, shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.



10. VESSELS OF PRAYER

To be a vessel of prayer implies a good deal more than the practice of ordinary professors of religion in having a few daily seasons of prayer for their own salvation or their temporal needs. A vessel of prayer, in the true sense of it, is where a soul has come into full union with the Holy Spirit, so that God can call it to a mission of prayer, making such an one a partner with Christ in his life of intercession. There are many degrees of prayer, and each degree may be diversified in numberless ways.

The first stage of prayer, in many instances, is that of moral necessity, where the soul cries out in great distress for help and deliverance, such as, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," or "Lord, save, I perish." The next stage of prayer is a more thoughtful seeking of God to supply one's needs, either in the spiritual life, or in temporal or physical blessings.

Then comes the widening of the spirit of prayer for larger interests, such as the family, or intimate friends, the neighborhood, or those concerns that touch our personal sympathies. Beyond this is a deeper state of prayer, where the soul thirsts for God and yearns for inward holiness, for the Spirit, for victorious communion with God. As a rule it is after all these stages of prayer have been more or less experienced that there comes a launching out into God, a life of universal, holy love, and the real ministry of prayer.

1. Among the principles involved in this condition of spiritual life is a definite inward *call* which the soul has to a life of prayer.

There comes upon such a soul a sweet, constraining conviction that God wants to use it in a special ministry of divine communion and intercession, and make it the channel of divinely inspired petitions. It is no longer the emergency prayer of necessity, nor the prayer of special self-interest, nor confined to things of local and proximate importance, but the soul is sweetly drawn out to lend itself unlimitedly for the uses of prayer that shall be selected and in-breathed by the Holy Spirit.

It has no particular choice of objects, or localities, or persons; but looking upon prayer as a vast spiritual kingdom, the soul abandons itself to the Holy Spirit, as a heavenly soldier, to be assigned to any department of prayer, or to any object of prayer, that God may choose for it.

God has so organized His creation that only a few things are accomplished except through the prayer of His creatures, and when the Holy Spirit has complete dominion over a soul He will assign to it burdens of prayer for persons, places, or things according to His wisdom.

Hence deeply spiritual people cannot pray *ipse dixit*, that is, from their own choice, or for any thing they please for, having surrendered their liberty to the Lord, they ask Him for their prayers as for their daily bread, but not in such a way as to contravene any true scriptural prayer for self or others. The Holy Spirit can pray only through His union with creatures, and as Jesus prays through His humanity, so the third person in the Godhead prays through His body, the true regenerated church of God. Still He does not pray through all the members of that body with equal power and efficiency, for as the blood does not flow through all the members of our body with the same volume and force, so in like manner those saints in closest union with heart and head of Christ have a larger, warmer, and more fruitful current of the spirit and prayer of Christ flowing through them. The call to a life of prayer in the sense here indicated seems to be very rare among Christians, and though all Christians must pray more or less, yet to be led by the Holy Spirit to give one's self up to the ministry of prayer is one of the highest and choicest vocations to which God ever calls a soul.

There are multitudes who feel called to preach, or teach, or do mission work, and all such need to pray a good deal; but occasionally we find those who have given themselves to the ministry of prayer. This is one of the

highest offices of service for it brings the worker into very blessed and deep union with Christ, and it is a service which allows of no field for external gifts, or showing off of talents, like singing, or preaching, or writing, and hence must be united with the hidden life of God; it is also a service of the highest fruitfulness, as being more spiritual than other forms of service.

2. One who is a vessel of prayer will be honored of the Lord by receiving many requests for prayer and intercession on behalf of others.

In times of revival, one of the premonitions that the Spirit is going to move on the people in power will be the number of requests for prayer that are made. Revival efforts without earnest requests for prayer accomplish but little. The same principle applies to individuals.

When you receive requests from many people, both near and remote, either by word or letter, requesting your prayers, it is a great honor God is putting on you which should be duly appreciated, and if you deliberately take the time in private prayer to spread such requests before Him, pleading the promises and merit of Jesus, you will be surprised to learn of the remarkable answers that will be granted, and also at the enlargement and sweetness that will come to your own heart. If you are unfaithful in this ministry of intercession the requests for prayer will decrease, and your inner life will grow arid and tiresome. So let us look for God's providential calls to service in this direction, and let us appreciate every opportunity and privilege as a direct favor from our Lord.

3. To be a vessel of prayer, in the scriptural sense, admits the believer into a region of great spiritual light and intuitive understanding of divine things.

This is what Paul prays, that the saints in Ephesus might have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and the eyes of their understandings enlightened, that they might know the hope of their calling, and the riches of Christ's glory in His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power, which involved partnership with Christ in His resurrection, His exaltation over all things, and His dominion in the coming age. There is a place in the spiritual life into which God has admitted people of humble and prevailing prayer in all generations, where the soul has the spirit of prophecy, and of remarkable insight into the divine personalities, the heavenly world, the movements of divine providence, especially in connection with the true church of God, the coming of Jesus and His kingdom. There have always been plenty of false prophets and deluded visionaries who make loud predictions which never come to pass; but in spite of all these things God has always had His humble and anointed ones, close enough to Him as to perceive and feel the oncoming of divine things. This region of heavenly revelation belongs especially to a life of prayer. The highest office a soul can fill is that of taking hold on God through the grace of Jesus for the things which He has promised to mankind. It is not the office of prayer to change God's nature, or reverse His purpose, but to unite with His nature, and to meet the conditions of His purposes, and take hold upon His willingness to accomplish great and mighty things. Our fruitfulness in the kingdom of Heaven as what we persuade the Lord to do in harmony with His promises.

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly, that is, with a divinely inspired prayer, that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit. Elijah's closet of prayer is still open for candidates to enter in.



11. DRYNESS IN PRAYER

One of the almost universal experiences which spiritual-minded persons at some time have to pass through is that of dryness in prayer. It is spoken of by all deep spiritual writers who treat of the interior life in any way. It is always a great puzzle to souls while passing through it. It tries their faith and perplexes the judgment, and is a cause of much annoyance. It cannot be defined, but it can be described and its general features noted. Among them are the following:

1. **Dryness of thought.** The mind seems to be very sluggish on spiritual matters and to act slowly, and only with more or less effort. Many persons find their intellectual faculties bright and active on all other matters, but as soon as they begin a season of prayer there comes a numbness over the thinking power. This mental dryness is especially noticeable in two particulars. One as dullness of perception. It seems difficult to form distinct ideas of God, or of the three divine personalities, or of the attractiveness of Jesus, or of the beauty and richness of the promises, or of our relationship to God. A mist hangs over the spiritual landscape, and while all divine objects are there, they seem very indistinct. In the next place this dryness of thought is manifest by narrowness in the range of vision. The mind lacks immensity and largeness of apprehension. This will be especially trying to persons who are naturally of a broad, liberal mind, and who love a vast sweep of vision.

In great dryness the mind seems cramped, like a sort of spiritual headache.

All this is very trying to persons who love to pray with all their understanding as well as their hearts.

2. **Dryness in feeling.** There seems at such times to be no moisture in the affections. The emotions will not respond to God and truth as it seems they ought to. It seems difficult to make the soul behave as in the presence of God, and to make itself feel that God is a blessed reality. There is a conscious belief in all divine verities, and there is no lack in theology, but the person of God seems vague, He seems to have faded out in an impersonal system of laws, and it seems difficult for the heart to make itself feel alive toward Christ. Also, this sterility in the emotions is toward the truth of God as well as His person. At such times the Scriptures seem dry, and the sweet pathos of its biography seems gone, and there is no music in its heavenly imagery, and no spicy pungency in its promises. There is a dearth of tears, and the prayer seems a force-put, a mere skeleton of will power, without the warm flesh of holy feeling.

3. **Dryness of utterance.** The nervous system partakes of the dearth and the tongue seems unable for fluent expression. Oftentimes this state is accompanied with physical drowsiness, and the devout person, who really wants to pray with all his heart, falls asleep in the very attitude of prayer.

There have been many instances where very spiritual people have had unaccountable attacks of drowsiness in prayer, and fall asleep against all their will power, and sometimes this has continued more or less for months. I am not explaining the reason for all this now, but only stating facts, though there are reasons for all these phenomena which form a part of the soul's testing in a life of faith.

4. **Distractions in prayer.** The mind seems to lose the ability of concentration in divine things. Oftentimes when persons begin to pray in secret, the imagination becomes eccentric and flies hither and thither on vain or absurd subjects. The law of mental association seems caught in a tempest and, with the most intense desire to worship God and draw near to Him in communion, great waves of foolish thoughts break in tantalizing distractions on the mind, and the soul is puzzled to know if it really is worshiping God or not.

Now let us notice the uses to be made of this dryness.

First, if the soul is entirely yielded to God these seasons of dryness will serve to purify the will, and make prayer to be more perfectly the fixed and deliberate act of choice. The will, more than any other part of our nature, expresses the depth of our character in the sight of God. And when our prayers are not accompanied with brilliance and sweep of perception, or with freshness of feeling, but are the firm attitude of the will, a stronger evidence of the worshipful purpose of the heart is given. It is a law in the physical organism that a faculty or member becomes intensified in its action as the associate faculties or members are destroyed; as when persons are blind, the ear doubles its acuteness for the hearing of sound, and those who are deaf have greater quickness of vision. So it is in the spiritual life; when the will has to act, as it were alone, without the aid of vivid thoughts and feelings, it becomes more purely the act of the moral and religious personality; while prayer in such a state seems very unsatisfactory to the believer, it is in reality very pleasing to God, because such a prayer rises from the deepest fountains of religious choice and determination.

In the second place, seasons of dryness give the soul an opportunity to test and perfect its holy intentions. It learns to worship God in the spirit and to examine its intentions to live alone for God. Such a soul might appropriately say, "Thou art my blessed God, my Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and last End. I desire with all my heart to love Thee, to worship Thee, to please Thee, but I am a poor helpless creature, loaded with

numberless infirmities, afflicted with this dryness in prayer, with dullness in my mind and lack of feeling in my heart, and with many foolish distractions of fancy, and often drowsy in body; yet, in spite of it all, I choose Thee to be my God, my Justifier, my Sanctifier, my Provider, my All in All, for whom I intend to live, and who art the ultimate object of my existence; accept of me, not according to my thoughts or feelings, but according to the singleness of my intention to be eternally Thine, through the merit of Thy precious Son Jesus, and by the operation of Thine own eternal Spirit." This habit of examining and purging the intentions forms in the soul a deep interior prayer, and out of it comes the heavenly habit of mental prayer; and when the believer learns the art of continual mental prayer, it is like a new world in the religious life. If the soul perseveres in a life of prayer there will come a time when these seasons of dryness will pass away, and the soul will be led out, as David says, "into a large place," but the margin reads, "*into a moist place.*" Then all the phenomena of prayer come back with redoubled freshness and vigor, the three persons of the ever-blessed Godhead are clearly apprehended by the eye of faith, Bible truth becomes sweet and fascinating, and worship becomes not only prayer but a continual delight in God; the heart grows warm at the very thought of Jesus, the eye moistened with holy feeling, and the verity of the promise concerning "the latter rain" is proved.

So let nothing discourage you. If the soil is dry, keep cultivating it, for they say that in a dry time three harrowings of the corn is equal to a shower of rain. Fix the will on God alone. Love Him for His own sake, and He will prove Himself equal to all His words.



12. THE TRINITY OF PRAYER

A perfect prayer has a great deal of God in it. It is inspired by His Spirit, prompted by His purpose, strengthened by His will, and in a deep, mysterious way sets forth the operation of the Godhead. All creation sets forth the trinity.

In the heavenly luminaries there are sun, moon, and stars. In the world there are earth, water, and air. In the zones there are frigid, temperate, and torrid.

In human destiny there is life in this, and then the disembodied state, where soul and body are separated, and then the glorified state, with soul and body united in the believer's glorification. In Scripture there are three dispensations of the Father- through law, and in the Son, and by the Holy Ghost- Mount Sinai, Mount Calvary, and Mount Zion.

When Jesus gave us a synopsis of prayer, in Matthew 7, He evidently spoke out of His own experience, saying, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Here are three stages in prayer: the asking, the seeking, the knocking. Jesus lived a life of prayer as no other being on earth ever did, and He knew in His human soul all the depths and mysteries of prayer. When we look into His words we should remember they were not only spoken out of the infinite knowledge of His eternal Person, but also out of the acquired knowledge of His human soul. Let us look into these three steps of prayer:

1. "Ask." This is the prayer of the heart, of request, of conscious want.

This is the easiest and simplest stage of prayer. The prayer of asking can be offered by little children, by sick people, by those who are just beginning a life of prayer. This form of the simple, outspoken prayer of the affections involves a sense of need. All prayer has its origin in a sense of need; and the greater the feeling of want, the stronger and more direct is the prayer. There must be a sense of need for pardon, or cleansing, or enlarging, or mellowing, or filling, or for healing of disease, or for temporal supplies, or deliverance from trouble, or divine guidance, or a deep sense of want for others' welfare, where we, as it were, take their needs upon ourselves.

This prayer of the heart also includes desire, more or less heart longing for some promised good, some state of happiness or holiness which is held out before the soul. This intense yearning of the heart in prayer is more than

the supply of absolute need; it is a definite desire for well being and blessedness over and above our actual needs.

While we should not pray selfish prayers, and God will not hear such prayers yet, on the other hand, it is right and proper to pray earnestly for our highest interest and well being. Madame Guyon was accused of teaching the annihilation of self to such an extreme as to ignore all self-interest in our present and eternal well being. But in her "Justifications" she carefully explained that a soul of man or angel could not in the nature of things be indifferent to his highest welfare, and that she only meant that the soul in prayer should not have selfish motives. Fenelon explained that our self-interests were to be merged into motives for the glory of God. And later Faber wrote most beautifully and accurately of how God had arranged all our highest interests and His highest glory to be one and the same thing. So the prayer of the affections includes the greatest longings of the heart for our possible well being in holiness and usefulness.

2. **"Seek."** This is the prayer of the mind, of the most intense activity of the understanding in searching after God. Of course, we must remember that in the prayer of the heart the activity of the mind is involved, and also that of choice and determination, for all the faculties act in concourse. But what I mean is that the prayer at this stage seems to centralize itself more in the mental powers than in the affections or emotions, and the beautiful storm of divinely-inspired prayer has swept onward from the incipient stage of mere want, and the storm center is now in the thinking power where the prayer engages all the wit, and reflection, and spiritual investigation of the mind.

To seek is the prayer of searching. God has told us, "Ye shall seek and find me, when ye search after me." This prayer of the mind implies searching into our own moral conditions to find whether there is anything in us, or in our lives, to prevent the answer to our prayers. Such a person will say, "Lord, is there anything between us to hinder my prayer, have I grieved Thee in anything; have I wounded Thy tender love; am I selfish; have I neglected something; have I left some wrong unrighted? Help me to search into my own life, and into my motives, and intentions, and to discover any lack of obedience on my part, and give me such perfect humility to confess and obey that it will be your pleasure to answer my prayer." This searching prayer of the mind involves also the hunting up of precedents, or similar cases to our own, in Scripture and in the lives of God's people, and pleading them before the Lord. This, a great point with lawyers in courts of human equity, and a clear case of parallel precedent, has wonderful power to sway the decision of a judge. We find instances in Scripture where God's servants would plead what God had done for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or for Job, or David, or Elijah; and by searching out the points of analogy between their cases and God's deliverance of their forefathers, they made, as it were, a strong fulcrum on which to place the lever of their prayer. It pleases God to have us get wide awake, and bring all our mental energies to bear upon His dealings in the past and plead them in our own behalf.

This seeking prayer of the understanding also involves searching into the disposition of God, into His character and attributes, plunging our thought into the beautiful bright abysses of the ocean of the Godhead, and appealing to His creative love, His eternal wisdom, His impartial compassion, His gentleness of nature, His ease of power, His ultimate glory, that by the answering of our prayer all His perfections will be illustrated, the precious blood of His Son will be honored, and His most loving purpose accomplished.

It has often been the case with persons of prevailing prayer, to lay before the Lord in detail the various reasons why the prayer should be answered, both from the human standpoint and from the divine. This is the prayer of diligence, of searching, and far-reaching investigation. This is the kind of prayer that makes wonderful discoveries. Please notice the various forms of answer to the various degrees of prayer. Those who "ask, receive," but those who "seek, find," or make discoveries.

3. **"Knock."** This is the prayer of the will, of continued perseverance, of an unflagging and constantly-increasing zeal. The will has two forms of action; first, that of choice, then that of perseverance. The will is the highest and ultimate expression of personality, both in God and in man; hence the prayer that begins in the heart, then utilizes all the searching power of the understanding, and then rises to the possession of all the energies of the will, is a perfect prayer. Thousands begin to pray but stop before reaching the stage of deep, abiding perseverance. This stage of prayer is attended with the least noise and scantiest exhibition of emotion of any of the previous stages, because it has ceased to be a rippling mountain current and has become the resistless flow of a great river which combines, unites, and impels every power of the soul in one direction toward the throne of

God.

This prayer of perseverance is the one specially magnified in the teachings of Jesus, as in the case of the widow with the unjust judge. In his parable of asking for "three loaves," which, by the way, is another instance of the trinity of prayer, the bread is granted, not on the basis of friendship, "but because of importunity"- the prayer of perseverance. In this stage of prayer there is a growing sense of holy determination in the suppliant, as if God had come over on our side and encouraged us to prevail with Himself. Seasons of discouragement are followed by reduplicated zeal to "give God no rest," as Isaiah exhorts us.

This form of prayer has a triumphant ignoring of all sorts of hindrances and seeming impossibilities. In spite of darkest appearances, and in the face of being criticized, or undersized, or ostracized, and of the doleful prophecies of others against us, the soul secretly "laughs at impossibilities, and cries, It shall be done," as if it had discovered a secret gold mine for itself in the will of God, and was inwardly jubilant over the mighty spoil.

Again, this highest form of prayer finds a way of uniting all its private and personal interests with the personal honor and interest of God, so as to make common cause with the infinite One. This is the prayer that is answered with great "openings" open doors, open fields of service, open visions into Scripture, open windows into Heaven to see the coming King and kingdom, open vistas of possible experiences where the soul stands victorious on the mountain peak and waves its banner over a newfound world.

In getting gold, men first begin "asking" for information of all kinds; then they begin "seeking," prospecting all over the mountains; then they begin "digging," and opening up shafts to find the gold, which beautifully illustrates the three stages in the trinity of prayer, the "asking," and "seeking," and "knocking," which brings the soul into loving, intelligent, and persistent co-operation with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



13. JOSEPH A TYPE OF JESUS

There were many lives in the Old Testament which were prophetic types of the Lord Jesus, but no two of them were duplicates or shadowed forth our Saviour in exactly the same office and relationship. The infinity of God breaks forth in the exhaustless variety which He gives to His creatures, and no two types of Jesus are just alike. Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Samuel, David, and many others, were all pre-figurations of the Lord Jesus, yet each one furnishing a likeness differing from the rest, because Christ is of such magnitude in glory that there is no end to the different forms in which He may be set forth. Moses is the greatest type of Jesus in His prophetic office, Adam the greatest type in being the head of a new race, Joshua the greatest type of Christ as a warrior, David the greatest type as founder of a kingdom, Solomon the principal type of tranquil reign after conquest, Isaac the greatest type of Christ as an obedient son offered up to death, but Joseph is the greatest type of Jesus in his relation to the Jews. It is this marvelous prophetic life of Joseph, as setting forth our Lord in His relation to both Jews and Gentiles, that I wish to trace out in this chapter, and may our hearts be kindled with a stronger love for Jesus and a deeper interest in the welfare of Israel than ever before.

1. Joseph was pre-eminently the **son of his father's love**. In the account in Genesis we learn that Rachel, the mother of Joseph, was the woman that Jacob loved, and from all we learn in Scripture the only woman he ever loved as a wife. Hence Joseph, being her firstborn, was in an especial way, over and above all his other children, the son of his love. So we read, "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children."- Gen. 37:3. In a very special way this sets forth the blessed Son of God as the only begotten Son of the Father, and He is called by the apostle "the Son of God's love," and when Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost the Father spoke from Heaven, "This is my Son, the beloved one, in whom I am well pleased." We have not space here to dilate upon the eternal generation of the Word, the personality of the Lord Jesus, from the bosom of the Father, except to say that there was a divine necessity in the eternal blissful nature of God for the expression of God's knowledge of Himself, and that necessary, blissful utterance constitutes a divine person of outspoken love, co-equal and co-

eternal with the Father; and from the mutual love of these two infinite persons there proceeds an eternal out-streaming bliss of their united loves which is the person of the Holy Ghost, who is the joy, the jubilee, the ecstasy of the Father and the Son, and of equal nature, majesty, and eternity. Thus the divine personality of Jesus is the only begotten of His Father's love, and then His temporal generation in flesh and blood was produced by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, by which He stands, in both His divine and human natures, the Son of infinite love, infinitely above all angels and saints, and of which Joseph, being especially Jacob's first love child, is a faint shadow.

2. Joseph's father sent him on a [mission to his brethren](#), a mission of benevolence and brotherly relief. While Joseph's brethren fed their flocks some distance from home, Jacob said to him, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again." When not finding them at the appointed place he still kept hunting for them, and being accosted by a stranger the young lad said, "I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks." Here is a pure, beautiful youth, with a heart as guileless as the light, seeking his brethren who were bearing the heat and burden of the day, with gifts and love messages from home for them. How perfectly this sets forth that pure and spotless Lamb of God who came from Heaven, seeking the lost sheep of the house of Israel, with a love for them unspeakable in its purity, tenderness, and unselfishness, bringing gifts and the best of news from their heavenly Father.

Though Jesus came with love to redeem all men, yet the divine order was "to the Jew first and then to the Gentile." Christ observed this order, and in an especial sense "he came unto his own," the twelve tribes of Jacob, and His own blood kin of Israel received Him not; hence He told the woman of Canaan that His special ministry was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

3. The brethren of Joseph [hated him and plotted to kill him](#), and would have done so, but Reuben, his oldest brother, who loved Joseph, planned to screen the lad and to deliver him back to his father. (Gen. 37:22.) In this respect Reuben typifies those Jews who believed on Jesus, and would gladly have delivered Him from the rulers, and who will form a part of the church of the first-born. The Jewish brethren hated Him and crucified Him from the same motives that Joseph's brethren acted that of jealousy and hatred for they hated him because he was the beloved one, and because of his righteousness in reporting to Jacob their wicked conduct, and because of his piety and prophetic dreams from the Lord. So the scribes and Pharisees hated Jesus because His life of spotless purity and His words of impartial righteousness were such burning rebukes to them, and because He had such a large following among the common people, and because He declared Himself the Son of God.

There is no race of men that can hate more savagely, and more continuously than the seed of Abraham; and while they have the capacity, under divine grace, of boundless love, as proved in the cases of David, Paul, and others, yet their envy and cruel hatred has had strange and unnatural manifestations in their treatment of Moses in Egypt, and of Joseph, and Jesus, their greatest benefactors. Joseph's brethren sold him for twenty pieces of silver, amounting to ten dollars, and the Jewish brothers of Jesus sold Him for thirty pieces, or fifteen dollars.

There are many who think that "envy" is no great sin, but it is the very essence of murder, and has caused the bloodiest crimes ever committed. Envy is an ill will to others because of their superiority in gifts, or goodness, or success, and the least spark of this feeling in the heart is the seed of hell, for it sold Joseph, rejected Moses, cursed David, killed the prophets, crucified the lowly, loving Jesus, and kindles the flames of endless torment. If you have the least feeling of envy, flee to the cleansing blood of Jesus.

4. The pit and the grave marked the dividing line between Joseph and his brethren, and between Jesus and Israel. While they did not actually kill Joseph, yet they virtually did it, utterly repudiated him as a brother, cast him into a pit, and then sat down to feast themselves, very probably on the delicacies that Joseph had brought them, while the innocent lad was crying in distress and begging for mercy. That pit was, in a striking sense, a grave to Joseph who had been stripped of his beautiful garment and subjected to a mortification, which was a species of crucifixion to him. Thus the meek Lamb of God was stripped of His seamless robe, which hands of tenderest love had woven for Him, without a seam, like the seamless robe of holy love which the Father put on His soul and, having killed Him, they buried Him in the earth.

5. From the pit and the grave, Joseph and Jesus are [both taken up and sent forth](#) into a far country to obtain a kingdom. Hence in both cases the pit and the grave are alike a great chasm, separating Joseph and Jesus from

their brethren according to the flesh. It is true that thousands of Jews have believed on their brother Jesus, but in doing so they have been lifted from the earthly Israel into the church of Christ, and the church is a heavenly body of regenerated souls of both Jews and Gentiles, and very different from the rank and calling of earthly Israel, or the twelve tribes in their national office.

The grave of Jesus was the passage-way by which Christ got closer to His church, but it was the chasm which separated Him from national Israel as an earthly people. God called Joseph by His providence to be "separated from his brethren," for which he received extra blessing (Deut. 33:16), and to go into a foreign country to be the agent of salvation, and to obtain a kingdom, as we read, God sent Joseph before his brethren to be sold for a servant, until the king sent and loosed him and "made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance, to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom."- Psalm 105. In like manner Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God to be a Prince and a Saviour, whom the heavens must receive until the fullness of the Gentiles is accomplished, and then God will send Him back again. (Acts 3:15-21.) To this typology of Joseph agrees the parable of Jesus in which He is the nobleman leaving the earth and going into a far country to obtain a kingdom, and to return. (Luke 19.) Scripture affirms that "Moses was king in Jeshurun" (Deut. 33:5), and Joseph was king in Egypt. So the tribes of Joseph and Levi furnished kings outside of Canaan on Gentile territory; and the tribes of Benjamin and Judah furnished kings in the land of Canaan, the land of Israel proper, which things are not without prophetic significance.

6. The brethren of Joseph supposed, when they saw him leave for Egypt, that they had made an everlasting finish with his meddlesome piety and his tantalizing dreams. They dipped his beautiful coat in goat's blood and told their father Jacob a lie, supposing that would put a quietus on the history of their lovely brother. In like manner, when the Jews saw their brother Jesus dead and buried, and the grave sealed and guarded with Roman soldiers, they thought that was the end of His career, and would terminate His tormenting doctrines. But when the sons of Jacob saw their father rending his clothes and weeping, and their sisters weeping, their consciences were lashed with many an invisible whip, and the pangs of secret remorse never left their bosom until they were reconciled to that banished brother. In like manner, when the Jewish rulers condemned their innocent, lovely brother Jesus to death, saying, "his blood be upon us and our children," little did they know of the unspeakable woes they would bring on themselves, both in soul and body and in national distress. And there are secret pangs in the breasts of poor Israel, wherever they may wander in the earth, that will never be healed until they are restored to their absent brother.

7. In both instances, while the brethren of Joseph and Jesus supposed they were utterly dead, and knew nothing as to their whereabouts, both of those brethren were working mightily among the Gentiles and making friends with myriads out of other nations, and by their wisdom and grace were building up great kingdoms of strength and glory. The children of Jacob could not have the least imagination of the sublime providences that were transpiring in Egypt, and the poor, despised brother, whom they supposed filled the grave of an Egyptian slave, was at the head of the greatest empire at that time on earth, and exercising a wisdom, and love, and sovereignty, and winning his way over ancient prejudices, and capturing the hearts of many heathen in such a manner as to render him the wonder of the ages.

This clearly sets forth the condition of things as between the earthly Israel of today and the absent brother, the Prince of the house of David. The natural Jew has no conception that his brother Jesus is really alive and at the head of a vast kingdom. The more serious and thoughtful Israelites may be puzzled at the vast growth and durability of the religion of Jesus among the Gentiles, and they know that Christ has millions of followers from among the Gentiles, and that the civil condition of Gentile nations has been lifted from barbarism to marvelous improvement by the teachings of Christ, but they have no conception that Jesus is absolutely alive, and as an omnipotent person is at the head of the church, and pouring out from Himself the wisdom and grace and strength that accomplishes all these marvels of salvation and reformation among men. Thus in both instances, under Joseph and under Jesus, a wonderful work is wrought among Gentiles, while their brethren supposed them to be mouldering in the grave.

8. The first meeting of the sons of Jacob with their brother was fraught with trouble and distress. The whole account as given in Genesis is one of the most pathetic portions of Scripture, and can hardly be read without tears.

Some have wondered why such a long, detailed account is given to it when other biographies are so brief; and others have wondered why Joseph acted just the way he did. Remember that these things were written and divinely ordered in every particular by the Holy Spirit, not for their sakes but, as Paul says, for the sake of those upon whom it is to come the end of the age.

Just as Joseph appeared to his brethren, first as a stranger and then as their own brother, so the second coming of Jesus back to this earth has two stages to it, the first stage to catch away His saints, at which time the earthly Israel will not recognize Him as the Messiah Brother, and they will have great trouble and distress immediately following that event. It is very likely that Israel will largely be gathered into their own land by the coming of the Lord; and during the great tribulation, it would seem from many Scriptures, all the Jews in the world will gather into their own land. It was famine that drove Jacob's sons into Egypt to find bread, never dreaming of finding their lost brother. In like manner it will be a sort of national, or political, or social necessity, for the Jews to go back to Palestine and, like Joseph's brethren, in a state of ignorance about their brother, the Christ.

Now, if we read carefully of the first meeting between Joseph and his brethren- how he seemed to be rough and severe, speaking to them through an interpreter on purpose to hide himself, and yet inquiring so particularly about their family and estate, then charging them as spies, then demanding they bring the youngest brother, then binding Simeon before their eyes, and yet mingled with this severity giving them back their money in their sacks- do we not see in all this an inspired history of what Paul describes in Romans 11 about God's dealing with Israel as he exclaims, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God," and says this in connection with a prophecy of the restoration of Israel, after the age of the Gentiles is completed, and of God's purpose to graft the broken off branches of the twelve tribes into the sweet olive tree, which is Christ. (Rom. 11:15-26.) Then when Joseph's brethren returned to their father, there was fresh trouble, notwithstanding they had a supply of food, for when they recited all the incidents to their father he was in great distress. "And Jacob their father said unto them, Me ye have bereaved. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, having been bound in Egypt, and now ye will take away Benjamin; all these things are against me." It was indeed a troublesome time for the dear old patriarch. The trouble did not end there, but starvation drove them back to Egypt, and they must needs take Benjamin, and leave old Jacob to weep alone; and then in Egypt, though they received much kindness from the unknown king, yet when the cup was found in young Benjamin's sack, they were on the verge of despair. It is indeed a touching history of grief and anguish, and they confessed that their sins of other years were now finding them out.

There are abundant prophecies that a similar history is at no distant day to be accomplished upon the twelve tribes of Israel, the fleshly brothers of Jesus. At His appearing to gather out His elect from the four corners of the earth, earthly Israel will see in Jesus only a divine being of alarm and distress, who speaks to them in a strange judgment speech, and then will come "the days of tribulation upon all the earth," in which will occur the blowing of the trumpets of woe, the pouring out of the vials of wrath, spoken of in Revelation, and in those troublesome times the tribes of Israel will go through their last great sufferings just before the millennium. It is spoken of as a time of trembling and of fear, and of men going half bent with agony, like women in travail, and as being the time of Jacob's trouble, when all nations will fight against them, and the anti-Christ will try to exterminate them. (Jer. 30:4-7; Rev. 11:1-3.)

9. At the second meeting of Joseph and his brethren, though they were brought to the keenest agony, yet at the climax of their anguish Joseph revealed himself to them as their brother. Then Joseph could not refrain himself, and he caused all to leave his presence while he made himself known, and wept aloud and said, "I am Joseph." And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And then in tender love Joseph said, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near, and he said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." (Genesis 45.) Those words, "your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt," were sufficient proof to them, for they had never let out the secret, and the revelation of that great sin by this stranger proved that it was Joseph. So at the second stage of the coming of Jesus, after He has caught away the church of the first-born, and gone through the wedding feast with His elect saints in the heavens, and the world and Israel have passed through the judgment tribulation, Jesus, the Prince of Glory, as the theocratic son of David, will return with His glorified saints, the retinue of His court, to this earth and to Jerusalem, and at that time Israel, the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, will meet again their long-lost brother and, right in the climax of their sufferings, when

the antiChrist seems on the verge of exterminating them, Jesus, like Joseph, will no longer be able to refrain Himself, but will drive His enemies out of His presence and reveal Himself to all the house of Israel, and show them by infallible signs that He is their brother whom they sold and crucified.

Jeremiah says, "At the very time of Jacob's sore trouble he shall be saved out of it."- Jer. 30:7. And Hosea tells us that after the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king or a sacrifice, in the last days they will return and seek the Lord, and David, their king, proving that Jesus, as David, is to return to this earth, and reign over the Jews and all nations in the millennium. (Hos. 3:4, 5.)

Just as Joseph proved himself by referring to the act of his brethren, so Jesus will prove Himself to Israel by showing His wounds and telling them, "These are the wounds I received in the house of my friends, that is, from my kindred."- Zech. 13:6. We may well imagine how Joseph's brethren felt- cut to the heart with mingled feelings of sorrow, repentance, remorse and fear- when they knew that it was Joseph speaking to them, and they were liable to sink with grief, and Joseph saw it necessary to comfort them and said, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me, for God did send me before you to preserve life." In like manner Jesus will reveal God's great redeeming purpose to Israel at their restoration, and show them that while the Jewish rulers, and all the Jews who have sanctioned their conduct, were guilty of Christ's blood, yet it was by that very crucifixion a way of salvation was provided for both Jew and Gentile. As Joseph's brethren repented with deep sorrow, so the prophet Zechariah has told us of a day coming when the Jews, as a people, will repent at the return and revelation of Jesus as their brother and Messiah. "In that day I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, and the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei (or Simeon) apart, and their wives apart; and all the families that remain apart, and their wives apart."- Zech. 12:10-14.

Could anything be more explicit? Here is a prophecy that has never yet been fulfilled, for it is not the repentance of individual Jews, but a national repentance, by tribes and by families. And it takes place not in London, or in New York, but in Jerusalem, and in the land God gave to Israel. And it is a repentance produced not by preaching the Gospel, as in this age, or by the teaching of the church, but produced by the open, visible manifestation of the blessed Jesus to the eyes of the Jewish people living at that time, for they look on Him whom they have pierced just as really as Joseph's brethren looked into the living face of him they sold. And the scene of weeping, mourning, supplication, and heart-rending cries depicted by Zechariah is a scene of repentance on such a large, national scale, and of such soul-bursting agony, as has never yet taken place at any one time, since the fall of Adam.

The Jews, failing to see in their Scriptures that Christ must first come in humiliation, and suffering, and then come again in glory and royal majesty, have always looked for their Messiah the way we Christians are looking for Him to come again, and the day will come when they will see Him on the throne of David in glory and power just as really as Jacob's sons saw their rejected brother on the throne of Egypt.

10. Then Joseph sent for his father and all the family to come to him. So Joseph had a command from Pharaoh to send wagons out of the land of Egypt to bring all of Jacob's family, their wives and their little ones, into the land of Egypt; also he supplied them with changes of raiment, and silver, and abundance of provision. Do not forget that when Joseph gathered all his kindred to himself he brought them from the north down into a south land, and this is exactly what the prophet Jeremiah foretells of the last ingathering of Israel into their own land. "Behold, the days come, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. And they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but they shall say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land."- Jer. 23:5-8.

This prophecy has never yet been fulfilled. When the Jews first entered Canaan, they entered from the south, and then in the partial restoration from the Babylonian captivity they entered from the east, but the Holy Spirit

positively affirms that in the last days they are to be gathered from the north and other countries.

Now look at it, one-half of the Jews are now in Russia, which lies north of Palestine, and the other half of them are scattered among all nations; and as Joseph gathered his blood kindred from the north, so the Jehovah Jesus, the son of David, will gather Israel, His kindred in the flesh, from the north of Palestine and from all other countries. And this prophecy refers expressly to Christ's personal reign on the earth, for it says that this king, the Branch of David, shall reign, and prosper, and execute judgment and justice *in the earth*. And this prophecy embraces both the tribe of Judah and all the other tribes of Israel, for they are both to be saved and dwell safely, which agrees with the words of Paul, that Israel shall be saved and the natural branches are to be grafted in, after the fullness of the Gentiles has come. (Romans 11.) And this gathering of the kindred of Christ, according to the flesh, is not to be in Europe, or America, or in the Christian church, but emphatically "*in their own land*," for nearly a hundred times God's Word declares they are to be gathered "in their own land," and "never wander any more," and the last great gathering is to be mostly from the north. Notice also that Joseph's kindred were gathered to him in wagons furnished by the Gentiles, for king Pharaoh gave commandment to send his horses and wagons to bring all of Jacob's family to live with their brother. To this agrees the prophecy of Isaiah.

"For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land, and the strangers shall be joined with them and bring them to their own place." Isa. 14:1, 2. And again, "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, unto the name of the Lord, because the Holy One of Israel hath glorified thee; and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings minister unto thee," just as Pharaoh ministered to the family of Jacob. (Isa. 60:9, 10.) These and many other Scriptures indicate a time when Gentile nations by government authority will transport the Jews in ocean steamships and railroad trains, and other modes of rapid transit, from all countries on earth to their own land free of charge.

11. After Joseph met his dear old father and all the loved ones, and they had wept with joy, and all the darkness of other years had been explained, he then gave them the best of all the land of Egypt, the land of Goshen, to dwell in. In like manner the land of Palestine is to again become the richest and most productive land on the earth. In many places prophecy affirms that the land of Israel shall again be productive, like it was at the beginning, and the barrenness will be removed, and the land shall bring forth abundantly, and it shall be like the garden of the Lord. (Ezek. 36:30-35.) 12. Joseph, having settled his kindred in a rich land, reigned over them, forgave them for all their sins, poured his love upon them in every way, and saved them from famine. Under his sovereignty they multiplied rapidly and soon became mightier than the Egyptians. So the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Zechariah, and other prophets abundantly testify that when all Israel is gathered again in their own land, and Jesus reigns on the restored throne of David, His kindred, according to the flesh, are to be saved and exalted to prosperity and leadership of all the nations on the earth, far transcending the prophetic reigns of David and Solomon. Just as willow trees along the water courses grow stronger and taller than the waving sedge grass, so Israel, in her national capacity, when restored under the reign of Christ, will rise among the nations "as willows among the grass." (Isa. 44:1-5.) Through the Christian church God deals with individual hearts, calling them as individuals, whether Jews or Gentiles, to repentance and faith in Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to form a heavenly body which is to outrank the earthly Israel just as far as they outrank the Gentile nations. But be it known that God never has converted the whole, or the majority of any nation, or any city, or any province, or any town through the church, and never will, for it is not promised in Scripture, but only individual souls from among the nations.

But in the coming age God will institute, according to Scripture, a new order of converting nations as such, and cities as such, and in doing so He will begin by restoring and saving the twelve tribes of Israel in their national capacity and giving them the Holy Ghost, and all the glory which their prophets have foretold. Then through regenerated Israel He will work upon the other nations in their national capacity, and nations will be born to God, and while the glorified church of the first-born will share the sovereignty of Jesus, and with Him reign on the earth for a thousand years, yet in all national administrations Israel will come first. "In that day he will cause the seed of Jacob to take root, Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit."- Isa. 27:6. These words have never yet been fulfilled. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem, and he will cause the house of Israel

to be gathered *from the north land*, unto the inheritance of their fathers, and give them the land of their desire, and give them the heritage of glory, and of beauty, among the hosts of the nations." - Jer. 3:19. (Marginal readings.)

How explicit this prophecy which does not refer to the Christian church, but emphatically to restore Israel, with the throne of world-wide government, in the city of Jerusalem, and all nations, by their representatives, will be gathered there, and the tribes of Israel will be the most glorious and at the head of the hosts of nations. The church is God's heavenly elect, especially the church of the firstborn, but Israel is God's earthly elect from among the nations. The church deals with individuals, but Israel deals with nations. Thus all the way through, God honored the patriarch Joseph by making him a type of the blessed Lord Jesus, in his relation to his kindred according to the flesh, and there is yet to come a glorious day of reconciliation of the seed of the sons of Jacob to their meek and lowly brother, the heavenly Joseph.



14. FABER ON JUDGING OTHERS

With regard to our judgment of others, we may safely say there has never lived a Christian that did not, at some time, have to repent for judging his fellows too harshly. And, on the other hand, there never has lived a Christian that ever had to repent of being too loving, compassionate, or charitable.

Faber, in one of his books, writing on the different classes of believers, has some excellent remarks on the judging of others which I think are very helpful, and so omitting those phrases which are peculiar to Catholics, and compiling his thoughts from different pages, I will give the reader the substance of his remarks.

1. "It is a universal law that when we judge others, whether individuals or multitudes, we come to erroneous conclusions from the mere fact that we naturally judge over-harshly. It is one of the effects of our fallen nature to put the worst construction upon what we see or hear about others, and to make small, if any, allowance for the hidden good that is in them. Also, we unwittingly judge of others by the worst parts of our own disposition, and not by the best. It is natural for us to judge of ourselves by the best things in us, but we judge of others by the worst things in us. It is so common to impute our evil to others, but to think our goodness is peculiarly our own."

2. "Severity is one of the natural accompaniments of a young and immature state of grace. Many religious people think that the power to detect evil in others is a special gift from God, to be prized and cultivated, and if such people are inclined to hunt for evil they can always find it to their satisfaction; but the practice begets a habit of suspicion which is utterly ruinous to the deep love of God and to Christlikeness of disposition. Men are never industrious in finding out the good about others, but have a terrific swiftness in seeing the evil, and even religious people, in many instances, have an awful propensity for circulating the evil, but they are very slow to tell the good." It is also a trait among human beings to be most severe with those of their own class, or guild, or profession. Whoever knew a musician to speak commendatory words of another musician. Merchants are severe on merchants, and it is proverbial the world over that religious people are severe on their fellow religionists. This is partly accounted for because each class of mankind is more familiar with the defects, and infirmities, and sins which are liable to affect their class.

3. "When we see evil in others, we never can see the amount of inward resistance which the person has given to the evil, or the amount of humiliation and sorrow which they may have for their own failures and defects. The violence of temptation is always invisible, and its peculiar oppressiveness, owing to heredity, or education, or previous modes of life, can never be estimated by a fellow creature. There are depths of invincible ignorance, not only in the intellectual nature but in a man's moral nature, which every individual character has in some one or more directions, and it is almost universally true that even among good religious people there is one point of moral excellence upon which they seem stupid. This explains why we meet so many very excellent people who seem to have some one glaring inconsistency and everybody has some inconsistency, only they all have not the

deep humility to see it. In judging others we fail to see how many odd crossings there are in people's minds, which tell upon their motives and hamper the free action of their moral sense. Much sin lies at the door of a warped mind, but how much guilt there is in the sin can be known to God alone. The heart is the jewel that He covets for His crown, and if the habitual attitude of the heart is better than any particular action which we see, God be praised for it. The fall of man is so great that in this present world it may be there is no one entirely free from obliquity in the perception of perfect, universal justice."

4. "The evil in our fellows strikes us with bold, startling proportions, whereas goodness is more quiet and hidden, and often passes unobserved as a very tame affair. It must be observed that evil, of its own nature, is more visible than goodness. Evil is like the world- loud, rude, anxious, hurried, impetuous, and ever acting on the self defensive; goodness partakes of the nature of God and imitates the ways of God, of quietness, unobtrusiveness, slowness, non-combativeness, meekly suffers instead of defending itself, and is saturated with the Spirit of God in his feelings and conduct." "The evil we see, or think we see, in others is easily recognized, but oftentimes the people we are judging are more keenly alive to their defects than we imagine, and may grieve over them in secret and feel in their hearts a humiliation and sorrow for them which we cannot know of, for if sorrow for evil were ostentatious and glaring, that would destroy its true character.

God has so contrived the moral world that the greater part of goodness must of necessity be hidden like Himself. There are many things that baffle our judgment as to the sincerity of a man's conversion, but we may depend upon it that in a thousand spots which look to us like desert waste, God's mercy is finding something there for His glory."

5. "One of the frightful features of the world, and which is hard to dwell upon without some gloom passing over our spirits, is that of the appalling activity of Satan, and under his leadership myriads of demons are incessantly plying our fellow creatures with every possible subtlety and device for their ruin. To judge of others, without taking into consideration the widespread tyranny of evil spirits, would be both unscriptural and unjust. Satan is persecuting the good, even stirring good Christians against good Christians, weaving webs of diplomacy and compromise around the advocates of Christian perfection, or bending all his energies on the ruin of someone who is doing a notable work for God, or sapping the foundations of a revival church, or causing Christian warriors to misinterpret their orders on the battlefield, causing them to fire into each other's ranks, and working in a thousand ways, both with individuals and bodies of men. This terrible work of evil spirits, described by St. Paul in Ephesians, unconsciously affects our judgment of others. But we fail to see that God is ten thousand times more active than Satan, though He seems to be less so. The reason is because we do not know how to follow God in the deep seclusion of His work, for He works opposite to the methods of Satan, and is constantly accomplishing marvelous things in human souls which we do not suspect, because we are not heavenly-minded enough to trace the footprints of His operations. If we actually saw what God is doing in the very people we often criticize and condemn, we would be utterly astonished at the immensity, the vigor, and the versatility of the magnificent spiritual work which God is doing all around us in the world.

"Satan is active, but grace is more active. If the vigor of God abides in every atom of the inanimate world, shall we doubt that His presence pervades and controls in the world of human souls, by the energies of an all-wise Providence, beyond all our conjecture, especially when all His majestic operations have for their single end the accomplishment of infinite love?"

6. "We see the evil in our fellows much sooner than the good. On a very short acquaintance with persons we discover their defects, and the things in them which are disagreeable to us, and soon find the weak point in them where they are most likely to fall, but their better nature is more slowly unfolding itself. This invisible character of goodness is not so obtrusive as defects, because there is an instinctive bashfulness in real goodness, even without a man's intending it. When we know people a long while, especially if we love them, there is apt to be the continual breaking forth of virtues in them we never dreamed they possessed, and oftentimes in little things, in the ordinary wear and tear of life, there will come forth in unostentatious ways traits of humility and self depreciation, or a patience, and sweetness, and unselfishness beyond what we expected of them."

7. "In our opinions of others we fail to distinguish between the sinfulness of sin and the deformity which has resulted from sin. There are many things in truly good people that are extremely very disagreeable, which may not involve real sin, and it is this disagreeableness, or deformity, which spreads itself out and covers a greater

extent in our estimation of people than does their actual sin, for this deformity infects the manners, taints the tone and atmosphere of a person, and altogether makes a much greater show than real sin. We judge of people, not so much by how they stand to God as by the inconvenient or disagreeable way in which they may stand to us." "Much that the eye catches, which is offensive to our moral sense, may not be real sin, and yet we condemn it with a bitterness and severity much more than the real sin which does not happen to interfere with our interests or personal tastes."

"This is why an impartial God must condemn us so often for the very condemnation we give to others, because our judgments do not proceed from the love of God but from personal taste. Goodness always tends to be graceful, but in this life there are always to each man a thousand causes which prevent or delay a work of grace in the heart from becoming graceful in life. Grace may work instantaneously, but gracefulness in the details of life operates more slowly, at least in the majority of cases."

8. "Nothing is more amazing than the patient, gentle charity that God displays to His creatures. There is something adorable in the compassion of God for mankind which looks like a voluntary blindness to their evil. He seems either not to see, or not to appreciate, the utter unworthiness of man; at least, He goes on His way as though He did not see it. The Bible is full of instances of this in His dealings with both nations and individuals, where His justice seems to move with tortoise pace, constantly pursuing but seemingly on purpose to be a long while catching up with the one to be punished, as if to give him every allowance possible to infinite mercy. Now, the more we are with God, and the closer our union is with Him, and the more deeply we drink of the interior sweetness of His life, the more shall we catch something of His gentleness and compassion of spirit which will destroy our proclivity for harsh judgments and take away the keenness by which we discover evil in others. Even where judgments are legitimate and unavoidable, we may lay it down as a rule that the severity of our judgments is an infallible index to the lowness of our spiritual state. Green sanctity is ever swift and sharp and thinks God is too lenient, and often acts as if His judgment throne wanted an occupant."

"Mature, mellow sanctity is always slow, gentle, and compassionate, making allowances for others which it never feels justified in making for itself. We must therefore be on our guard for the more severe we are, the lower we are in love, and in proportion as we get milder to others we are strict with self."

"The Gospel nowhere tells us that sinners are punished to the uttermost of their demerits, but it does tell us that the righteous shall be rewarded 'with good measure, and shaken together, and running over;' so it is in the rewards of goodness that our merciful Creator seems bent on doing His uttermost."



15. TRUE AND FALSE FIRE

The true saints of God, who have clear heads and pure, warm hearts, have in all generations had to walk between the two extremes of cold formality on the one side, and wild, ranting fanaticism on the other. Both dead formality and the false fire of fanaticism are Satan's counterfeits, and he does not care into which extreme a soul plunges, just so he can prevent it from having that Scriptural type of holiness which is "full of faith," and "full of the Holy Spirit," and "full of wisdom," and of a "sound mind." There is a state of deep, divine fervor described in Scripture as a "hot heart," "fervent, or boiling in spirit," and having a "tongue of fire." Inasmuch as this state of grace is the most fruitful for the glory of God, it is the policy of Satan to either counterfeit it, or else to inject some of his wildness into it to destroy its efficiency, and break the soul down by a false fire, just as a hotbox on a railway train will melt the axle and cause a wreck. There are some things by which we can detect the difference between true and false fire.

1. True fire has its seat in the heart. David says, "My heart was hot within me." It melts the affections, and expands the sympathies, and simplifies the desires, and all its furnace flames are centered in the love nature. False fire runs up into the head and centers itself in the imagination, and produces rashness, a reckless impetuosity; it evolves impracticable schemes, extravagant air castles; it produces an unbalanced view of truth; it magnifies non-essentials and minifies the most essential needs; it puts a typhoid fever into the judgment by

which it ignores the beautiful fitness of things as to time and place, and in the same proportion that the head becomes overheated the heart becomes cool. A fanatic has a hot head and a cold heart; a true saint has a hot heart and a calm, equable mind. The same fire that blesses us while kept in the stove will ruin us if it gets in the furniture.

2. The true fire of the Holy Ghost in a pure heart will feed and fatten the soul with strength and divine nourishment, but false fire irritates and excites the faculties without really feeding them. Ripe fruit or grain is very nourishing to the body; when it is turned into alcohol it gives no nourishment, but intoxicates and, carried to excess, produces delirium and death. In like manner the words of Scripture, when applied to the soul by the Holy Ghost, are just like pure bread and ripe fruit, so healthful, and sweet, and fattening.

But when those same words of Scripture are applied to the mind by Satan, with his perverted interpretation, it is like corn whiskey and peach brandy.

How few people understand that Satan is constantly using the Bible to pervert true holiness and a life of pure love, and that as men take God's pure grain to make the devil's whiskey, so Satan takes God's pure word and, passing it through his distillery, makes wild fire. The identical same piece of bread which will feed the body, when turned into whiskey, will destroy it; so the identical words of Scripture which will feed the soul with all the graces of the Christ life, when perverted by Satan will make the soul drunk with fanaticism.

3. The true fire produces great tenderness of spirit; it puts a sweetness and gentleness in the voice, the manners, the expressions of the face, and a deep, gentle yearning in the soul for the welfare of everybody. False fire puts a hardness and combativeness in the spirit, and makes one deck himself out in war paint. It puts a severity in the voice, a critical cutting look in the eye, a boisterousness and dictatorialness in the manners, a stubborn and unteachable self-conceit in the mind. It makes one denunciatory and argumentative and tiresome. It always wants to be in a fight, and thinks it must stir up the snakes, and be always in hot water, and looks upon the meek and quiet spirit, or true Christian refinement, as a tame sort of thing. It prefers to warm itself at the wild, dangerous crater of a volcano instead of at the good old fireplace of a quiet home.

4. The true fire of God strikes deep in the interior nature, it produces a profound inward life with God, it lights up the vast hidden chambers of the soul, leads to a profound mental prayer, reveals fathomless depths of humility, weans the mind more and more from outward things, and unites it in an inexpressible way in the hidden life of God. On the other hand, false fire flares, and fumes, and smokes, and crackles in the external life. False fire, in its very nature, seeks to make itself seen and felt; it must of necessity be notorious. It goes in for great demonstrations; it magnifies bodily exercise, which the Bible tells us profits but little; it measures its power by the loudness of the voice, or the height of its jump, or by some attitude, or posture, or gesture, or sound; in fact, by anything that will appeal to the senses. The true fire of God will have its demonstrations, but it does not emphasize them, nor measure its sanctity by them, nor prescribe them to others, nor condemn others for not having them. The divine fire seeks, above all things, to be perfectly genuine to the core, perfectly simple and unostentatious, and prefers rather to hide itself, like God, in deep humility than to make a show of itself.

5. True heavenly fire is always seeking for God Himself. It is united to the three divine persons of the Godhead; it continually magnifies the personality of God; it seeks a divine person and communes with and enjoys a divine person. The false fire unconsciously takes the glory from a divine person and gives it to "the fire," to "a blessing," or a "state," or a "thing," or an "it." God declares Himself over and over again to be a jealous God, and He will not give His glory to another, or to a thing, or a blessing. There is more religious idolatry in the world than people have any idea of. We talk about the heathen worshiping idols, but then the Romanists worship saints and images, and many Protestants worship their churchism, and some go into still finer idolatry and make an idol of their religious blessings, or their experiences, or their demonstrations, and some make an idol of the fire, and put the word "fire" and the word "sanctification" where they ought to put one of the adorable persons of God. We had just as well learn once and for all that the living God abominates idolatry in every form and degree, and He will severely punish the idol worshiper, even though his idol may be holiness or the baptism of fire. The true illuminated saint lets nothing in the universe, not even the gifts of the Holy Spirit, get between him and God. This is truth easily said, but a thousand times more difficult to learn in the very depths of our souls. When people insist on having certain phenomena, or seeing certain lights, or hearing certain sounds, or having certain thrilling sensations, it is a proof that they are putting a "thing" in the place of a divine person. This is

proof that it is a false flame and not the living God Himself.

6. The true fire of God's presence in the soul is ever bent on saving souls, on getting new converts, on widening the realm of grace, on leading believers into the fullness of Christ. The false fire seeks after proselytes; seeks to build itself up by tearing other things down; it is not so much bent on saving souls as it is in perverting those that are already saved. Have we not noticed that Mormons, and Spiritualists, and annihilationists, and fanatics of all sorts and sizes will hang around a meeting of true Christians and seek to proselyte and subvert the faith of God's people? They are not able to save sinners, and so spend their strength in perverting God's people. The sifting days are on us, and every true soul will be tried by a block of ice on one side and a volcanic wild fire on the other.



16. TRIED BY THE LORD

An old saintly writer has observed that there are three ways by which a true Christian is tried to bring him into a state of abiding union with the three persons in the Godhead. At first he is tried by his neighbor, and then he is more sorely tried by himself, and then the climax of trial is when he is tried by the Lord. This last form of trial is often referred to by Job, and of Joseph it is said that after all his other trials "the word of the Lord tried him" in prison. Volumes could be written upon each of these three great departments of trial. I have only space for itemizing some ways in which the Lord tries His own elect.

1. The Lord tries a perfect believer according to his peculiar make-up and condition in life. Hence the instruments of his trying may often be the very opposite in different persons, and in different periods in life. He puts one soul to a test by giving it riches, and another by giving it poverty, and sometimes He tries a believer by giving him both these experiences at different times, to see how his soul will behave in the opposite extremes. He sometimes gives a soul excessive joy, and to another excessive sorrow, to see how faith and obedience will act in each case. He sometimes gives one apparently more work than he can do, and deprives another of work, in order to test the hidden principle of patience and fidelity in each case. He sometimes gives an abundance of friends, and sometimes makes one stand alone, seemingly friendless, but in both instances He is proving the secret life of the soul in a way we do not begin to comprehend. At one time He may flood the mind with excessive light on heavenly things and then, at another time, allow everything, both in nature and grace, to seem a blinding mass of gloom. At one time He may allow us to be eminently successful, and then turn the scale and make all our life seem a failure. As in nature there are excessive floods, and then long droughts, so God's dealings in the realm of grace partake of the same features of His physical providence. As in making good watches, the mechanism is put in ice, and then in fire, until the movement will be correct in either severe temperature, so God deals with the hearts of those He dearly loves, that by all sorts of opposite and apparently contradictory dealings He may prove the delicate mechanism in the fountains of holy character. While one extreme will put to a test certain principles of the soul, it requires just an opposite treatment to test other parts of Christian character.

2. Another way the Lord tries a saint is by giving him bright visions of the possibilities of life and service, and begets within the heart a sweet and uncontrollable desire to do a certain service for the Lord, then binds the soul in utter helplessness, and gives it no facilities for accomplishing its high and heavenly longings. In reading of the lives of Bible characters, and the burning prayers expressed in the Psalms, and seeing the lives of holy people; this feature of experience is largely expressed. A great eagle in a cage, with his eye piercing the great spaces of heavenly blue, which seems to invite his wings, is a picture of this form of trial.

3. Another form of trying the soul is leading it into an unlimited abandonment to God, by which it renounces its own liberty, and plans, and hopes, and fears, by which it entrusts itself unspeakably to the guidance of the Lord, and then, after all this, the Lord seems to entrap such a soul and take advantage of its unlimited consecration by putting it into awful circumstances, and loading it down with burdens that seem too heavy to bear, and getting it

into a prison house of sorrow and trouble, and at the same time rendering it absolutely helpless. Many a soul has been amazed with a mysterious fear and grief at this form of trial, not knowing that such trial is the very thing that seals the consecration, and causes it to actually experience the very thing it agreed to, and that this position of going through, of utter abandonment in real knowledge, is what proves the soul's perfect fidelity to God.

4. Another phase of trying the perfect believer is the monotony of spiritual life which never belongs to any of the fresh and early stages, either in justification or sanctification, but is one of the features in a life of perfect faith. This monotony of the spiritual state is not to be permanent, but it is a phase of testing the grace of perseverance. There come periods to the most perfectly consecrated soul when it must push its way through a sameness of things, and over dreary, monotonous plains, where the thoughts, and emotions, and prayers, and duties are like a tiresome treadmill, day after day, week after week, and month after month, in which there come no new visions, no fresh gushes of prayer, no bright thoughts of heavenly beauty, and everything in religion seems to be dull and tiresome. This experience will prove just exactly the quality of energy in the soul, and if it can push bravely on through these monotonous portions of the journey, it will sooner or later come into a place of new and manifold riches of divine things.

5. The best of souls have had another kind of trial- being led to do a work for the Lord, a work which called forth all the energy and painstaking care of devoted love, and sometimes a work that required all of one's money, or health, or influence and, after all, to see hardly any fruit of their labor or expenditure. Many of the prophets were tried in this way, and the Psalmist speaks of those "who sowed in tears," and then lay down in the field of toil and fell asleep in Jesus, waiting for the time of the harvest when they shall return with Jesus, bringing their golden sheaves into the kingdom festival.

These are some of the many ways in which God makes Himself a trial to His loved ones. How slow we are to learn of God Himself. The apostle speaks of a believer as first being full of love, and then abounding in all fruitfulness, and then beyond this "increasing in the knowledge of God." But how can we know God except by His direct and thorough dealings with us? One way of knowing God better is to die to our previous views of God, for be it remembered that we know nothing of God until we are born of the Spirit, and then our views of Him are small and crude. Even when we are sanctified, our knowledge of God just begins on a higher scale, and as He leads us onward through His school we must be constantly dropping our narrowness and misconceptions of Him as He tries us with fire that we may learn Him in the perfect truth of His Word. To know God inwardly and consciously is the very essence of eternal life, and we get our deepest knowledge of God by having Him try us.



17. ELEMENTS OF FANATICISM

Many suppose that fanaticism is but the excess of good things, as if an excess of faith should destroy reason, or an excess of light should produce severity, or an excess of love should run into license; but such is not the case.

It is impossible to have any virtue or grace of the Holy Spirit in too great a degree. As no amount of increase of gold would turn it into lead, so no degree to the increase of any virtue could turn it into fanaticism.

Fanaticism is produced by spurious elements which assume the form of grace, like a clown trying to play the king. There are several principles which simulate some form of grace, but a little examination will prove their counterfeit, as Milton describes the touch of Ithuriel's spear making the toad to break forth into a full-fledged Satan.

1. Expecting effects without the proper causes is one among the first principles of fanaticism. This is the counterfeit of real faith. Some evil spirit persuades a Christian that he can neglect using the proper means, and take an attitude of shiftless idleness, or indolent waiting, and still see marvelous results accomplished while ignoring all the legitimate causes to produce the effects. One man expects the place of worship to be filled with people without advertising it in any way, or letting the people know what the meeting is and where it is to be. Another expects money to flow in, or to drop down from Heaven, without giving the people an opportunity of

making a free will offering. Another expects Christian people to gratuitously supply him with all the comforts of life when he is not proving himself a Christian worker that needeth not to be ashamed. Another expects to go in the pulpit and preach a luminous, melting sermon without any preparation of deep reading and thinking and much private prayer. The list could be lengthened indefinitely. Such people not only fancy that they have faith, but they secretly pride themselves on having an extraordinary faith beyond all other Christians, and imagine that they are imitating the apostles, and George Muller, and such characters. They wind up by going hungry and ragged and seeing nothing done, and then get vexed because the mountain was not cast into the sea, and because the eagle did not drop a large fish at their front door, as in the case of Huntington, forgetting that they were not working with all their might for God like he was. These are just the people for whom St. James wrote his epistle. True faith always looks for the proper causes to produce the effects, both in the inner experience and the outer life.

2. Another element of fanaticism is found in people who wait for some voice or definite impression to tell them what to do on points that are distinctly stated in Scripture. True, there are many things in the details of life upon which all Christians must seek for special light and guidance from the Holy Spirit. But when a duty is distinctly expressed in Scripture, or universally recognized by the unwritten rules of civil life, then it is fanaticism to be looking for special revelations from God to decide such matters. One person will not visit the sick and pray with them without some special, tremendous impression upon his emotions, when the Word of God plainly says that pure religion is to visit people in their affliction.

Another will not give his tenth to the Lord, and never contributes to support the work of God, or help the poor, without some voice or special conviction to almost force him to unclasp his stingy purse, when the Scriptures abound in passages on giving the tenth, and giving liberally, and helping the needy. Another will not put off his jewelry and gaudy attire until he gets a special telegram from the skies, when the Word of God plainly forbids such things.

Then there are many things not written in Scripture, but are the unwritten laws of civil manners in social conduct and in polite behavior which need to be recognized without waiting for special impressions from the Lord.

There are hundreds of comparatively good people at this moment lazily waiting for some special revelation to do something which Scripture and common sense would lead them to go at immediately. One thinks he must not read the Scriptures except when he has an impression to do so, another thinks he must neglect secret prayer until a supernatural voice tells him to pray, but the Bible explicitly commands on these points.

In all such instances, some evil spirit has attempted to play the part of the Holy Ghost, and gets people to ignore their common sense under the delusion of extraordinary sanctity. In every single instance the results are disastrous, both as to experience and practice.

The Holy Ghost is above reason and outside of Scripture, but never contradictory to either.

3. Another principle of fanaticism is the passion for leadership, a spiritual itch to be a boss of something or of somebody. Because God has given some special gift, or extra illumination, to be used in humble love for His glory, the evil one sees his opportunity and comes to the soul with soft, sweet flatteries, and gets it to believe that it is foreordained to be the founder of some new and startling enterprise that will surpass all the tame affairs of humble plodding Christians.

Now it is true that God does have in every generation some of His servants prepared for leadership, but His leaders are the lowly, the loving, the praying, the weeping, the cross-bearing, the suffering, the tried ones who never attempt to boss their brethren or to cut the sheep with swords. When they have to exercise authority they do it in love, and they have a holy fear when responsibility is put on them, such as Moses and Paul had. But the fanatic has in him the principle of braggadocio, and strut, and loud talk, and dictatorship, and threatening. If his underlings go to hear anybody else preach, or don't give him their money, or don't do as he says, they are called hard names or are excommunicated. Even the most ignorant soon see through his sanctimonious robes of authority and realize that he is a fraud or a backslider. The desire to be a great leader is dreadfully dangerous. The secret itch of the mind to head some great mission, some new departure, some startling revolution, some original pious fad is always born of self and Satan, and always runs a brief race, makes a display of skyrockets,

ruins the usefulness of the would-be-leader, and hinders and weakens many a poor soul.

A soul really called to a great mission, and who keeps in union with God, will go slow, pray much, make little noise over it, and seek to keep self in the background.

4. Another principle that enters into fanaticism is that of tremendous exaggerations.

There is always a consciousness that the facts are inadequate for the occasion and an effort must be made to put on the coloring as bright as possible; so the least little thing in the person's favor, or in the line of success, is magnified into great proportions.

A little congregation of a hundred is reported to be several hundred, statistics as to religious meetings are run up into fabulous figures, a little financial prosperity is spoken of with such inflated terms as to make it sound like Wall Street.

Fanaticism finds mountains in mole hills, construes some little passing incident to be a great fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and imagines that some ordinary dream or mental flashlight in prayer is the signal for something startling and world-wide in its import, it uses high-sounding phrases, and always construes history, prophecy, providence, revelation, grace, and glory in such a way as to put self conspicuously in the center, and instead of a sweet divine passion to give Christ the pre-eminence in all things, it magnifies itself to be almost equal to Jesus. I heard a person publicly declare that Jesus told her that she stood next to Himself in the point of suffering, that her trials had surpassed everybody's on earth. That is a sample of the awful exaggeration of little minds. The real saints have always shunned the spirit of exaggeration, for a lie is none the less a lie for being wrapped in the pious garb of religious enthusiasm. Have you noticed that Jesus uses simple, positive words, without excessive adjectives, because He meant just what He said?

5. Another fanatical element is found in a tendency amounting almost to a predilection to turn away from things practical and available to something that is fanciful and impracticable. Its eye overlooks the plain common sense work right at hand, to some faraway, misty scheme across the sea or in some future years. Instead of giving money to carry on the missions and revivals that are already going on, it builds air castles of some new and vast enterprise of benevolence which is to take place in the bright future or some faraway locality. There is a bias in every mind to build great air castles of imaginary enterprises, and it takes a great interior crucifixion, as Paul gives us to understand, to bring down those lofty imaginations into the captivity of Jesus, and set them to work doing something practical for God and souls. Money is being hoarded for future imaginary benevolence, which ungodly relatives will get hold of and God's cause will be defrauded, because the owner has not enough wisdom to use it at once for the salvation of the world. It is amazing how few professors of holiness there are who use their money for God; when they are dead, the world, or the flesh, or the devil will carry off the spoils. It is rank fanaticism for present stinginess to be dreaming of future benevolence. The same waste applies to one's mind, or influence, or gifts, refusing to use the present opportunity, and planning for something which will turn out to be a shadow.

6. Building a theology, or an experience, or a practice of conduct on one single text of Scripture is another evidence of fanaticism.

There are persons who form a habit of harping on one single passage of Scripture, and that perhaps a figurative one, until it seems to overshadow everything in the Bible; or they take some precept which could apply literally only to the Jews or the Apostles, and insist that it must apply literally to themselves, as when a preacher says he cannot preach until he raises money and takes a trip to Jerusalem, just because the Scripture says "beginning at Jerusalem."

Hence one set magnifies the seventh day until it is greater than everything else in the Bible; another makes water baptism the only real thing in religion; another fights all the ordinances of the Christian church, and builds a whole theology on that text where Paul says the Jewish ordinances were nailed to the cross; another set takes the passage, "these are they which were not defiled with women," and run it into irrational conclusions, even teaching that living in the marriage relation is a hindrance to true holiness; and many other solitary expressions of Scripture are twisted to contradict the rest of the Bible, and are made the foundation of a soap bubble system of religion.

7. The last principle we have space to mention here as entering into fanaticism is that of bitter denunciation, which always proceeds from a supposed infallibility of self.

There never has been a single instance where persons were of a harsh, denunciatory spirit, that there was not something crooked about them, such as that they were either dishonest, or stingy, or tricky, or quarrelsome in their families, or had secret sin, or used opium, or something was in their lives by which an evil spirit could get hold of them. If any man have not the spirit of Jesus, Scripture affirms that he is none of His.

A crooked-hearted professor of religion endeavors to show a great degree of holiness by the way he pitches into everything and everybody except himself. He can denounce outward forms of sin in such a way as never to get anyone to forsake those sins. Denunciation may draw a few followers, but never saved souls.

A flash of lightning is hot, but it never makes flowers to blossom or corn to grow. Lightning can scathe and kill, but it takes sunshine to dress the world in sweet verdure. There is no substitute in the universe for the genuine, pure, humble love of God. Perhaps no Christian has entirely escaped some touches of some of these principles of fanaticism, for the Christian that can affirm that he has had perfect immunity from these things must have an almost infinite degree of self-conceit which is the root of all fanaticism. If we discover any of these traces in us, let us humbly confess them to God, and seek earnestly to be turned into spotless, boundless love, for love is the only cure for the multiplied ills of the world.



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